



Current Affairs April - 2016

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SHANMUGAM

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1. Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi gets new role as special adviser

Myanmar's president signed a bill giving Aung San Suu Kyi a new role of state adviser, shoring up her influence across all branches of government despite vehement opposition from the still-powerful military. Suu Kyi is determined to rule the former junta-run nation regardless of an army-scripted constitution that bars her from becoming president, as she strives to meet the aspirations of millions of voters who gave her pro-democracy party a landslide election victory last November. She is already foreign minister and met her Chinese counterpart for talks yesterday, prioritising Beijing in her first foray into international diplomacy since her National League for Democracy officially took power last week. The bill outlining her advisory role, which mentions the Nobel laureate by name, enables Suu Kyi to wield influence over parliament as well as in the cabinet in a position officially called "state counsellor". Aung San Suu Kyi was born on June 19, 1945 in Yangon, Myanmar, a country traditionally known as Burma. Her father, formerly the de facto prime minister of British Burma, was assassinated in 1947. Her mother, Khin Kyi, was appointed ambassador to India in 1960. In 1991, her ongoing efforts won her the Nobel Prize for Peace, and she was finally released from house arrest in November 2010.

2. Indian-South African judge Navaneetham Pillay bags top French honour

South Africa's first non-white woman judge who is of Indian origin, has been conferred upon the highest French civilian honour. Pillay, 74, was the first non-white woman judge of the high court of South Africa and has also served as president of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda which tried leaders of a genocide that left nearly a million people dead. Pillay, the daughter of a bus driver who qualified against great odds through community support, said she considered it a great honour to have received the *Commandeur de la Legion d'Honneur* (the Legion of Honour). A former UN high commissioner for human rights, Pillay became the first non-white woman to open her own law practice in Natal Province where she was born. French ambassador to South Africa Elisabeth Barbier said the award was a recognition of Pillay's work for international justice system, human rights and women's rights. During her 28 years as a lawyer, Pillay defended anti-apartheid activists and helped expose the use of torture and poor conditions of political detainees. In 1973, she won the right for political prisoners on Robben Island, including anti-apartheid champion and South Africa's first black president Nelson Mandela, to have legal representation.

3. G20 summit: China asks participating countries for terror suspects list

China has asked countries participating in this year's G20 summit in the Chinese city of Hangzhou to provide lists of possible terror groups and terrorists who might target the meeting. The summit, expected to be held in early September, will gather major world leaders together like Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Barack Obama. A senior Chinese counter-terrorism official said China is facing a grim task in fighting terrorism, and sought participating countries' cooperation to ensure the safety of such large-scale meetings.

4. Smriti Irani unveils bronze bust of Aryabhata at UNESCO HQ

A bronze bust of ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer Aryabhata has been unveiled at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. The bust has been sculpted by renowned Indian sculptor Ram Sutar. It was unveiled by HRD Minister Smriti Irani. She was in the French capital to attend the International Conference on Zero. The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, through the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO, and together with the Pierre and Marie Curie University, Paris, will host an International Conference on the Zero on 4-5 April, 2016 at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. National Mathematics Day- 22nd December, which is the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan Director General of UNESCO - Ms. Irina Bokova

5. Sigurdur Ingi Johannsson named as new Iceland PM

Iceland ruling coalition has named Sigurdur Ingi Johannsson as the new Prime Minister, with early elections to be held in the autumn. Mr Johannsson, 53, is Agriculture and Fisheries Minister and deputy leader of the Progressive Party. The move comes after Prime Minister and PP Chairman Sigmundur Gunnlaugsson stepped down in the wake of the leaked Panama Papers. The leaks, from Panama law firm Mossack Fonseca, showed Mr Gunnlaugsson owned an offshore firm with his wife. It was not declared when he became an MP. Sigurdur Ingi Johannsson

Jhannsson is an Icelandic politician and the acting Prime Minister of Iceland. He is a member of the Progressive Party.

6. International Convention on World Homoeopathy Day

The Central Council for Research in Homeopathy (CCRH), an autonomous research organization of Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India and an international organisation Liga Medicorum Homeopathica Internationalis (LMHI) are jointly organizing the International Convention on World Homoeopathy Day, with the support of Ministry of AYUSH on 9-10 April, 2016 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The event is being organized to commemorate the 261st birth anniversary of the founder of Homoeopathy, Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, who was a great scholar, linguist and acclaimed scientist. Honble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee will inaugurate the convention. The theme of the Convention is Integrating Homoeopathy in healthcare Samuel Hahnemann is the [Father of Homeopathy](#), [Father of Human Pharmacology](#), [Father of Nano Medicine](#) and the Father of Infinite Dilution concept in Chemistry

7. World Bank launches ambitious climate action plan

The World Bank has unveiled an ambitious climate action plan that will help developing countries add 30 gigawatts of renewable energy, bring early warning systems to a hundred million people and develop climate-smart agriculture investment plans for at least 40 nations. World Bank has set the target for achieving this by the year 2020. The Climate Change Action Plan comes just two weeks before world leaders officially sign the landmark Paris Agreement in New York.

World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim said the bank is moving urgently to help countries make major transitions to increase sources of renewable energy, decrease high-carbon energy sources, develop green transport systems, and build sustainable, livable cities for growing urban populations. The World Bank is an international financial institution that provides loans to developing countries for capital programs. The World Bank Group has set two [goals](#) for the world to achieve by 2030: End extreme poverty by decreasing the percentage of people living on less than \$1.90 a day to no more than 3% Promote shared prosperity by fostering the income growth of the bottom 40% for every country

8. Reducing food waste would mitigate climate change

Reducing food waste around the world would help curb emissions of planet-warming gases, lessening some of the impacts of climate change such as more extreme weather and rising seas, scientists said on Thursday. Up to 14% of emissions from agriculture in 2050 could be avoided by managing food use and distribution better. Agriculture is a major driver of climate change, accounting for more than 20% of overall global greenhouse gas emissions in 2010, Avoiding food loss and waste would therefore avoid unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions and help mitigate climate change. Between 30 and 40% of food produced around the world is never eaten, because it is spoiled after harvest and during transportation, or thrown away by shops and consumers. The share of food wasted is expected to increase drastically if emerging economies like China and India adopt western food habits, including a shift to eating more meat, the researchers warned. Richer countries tend to consume more food than is healthy or simply waste it, they noted.

9. Hashim Thaci sworn in as Kosovo's new president

In Kosovo, new President Hashim Thaci was sworn-in in a Parliamentary session boycotted by Opposition parties. Thaci, who replaces Atifete Jahjaga, was elected on 26th of February in the absence of nearly all opposition lawmakers who had earlier tried to disrupt the voting with tear gas. After taking the oath, Mr Thaci said, his goals were Kosovo's integration into NATO and European Union, and the continuation of the process of normalizing relations with Serbia. Hashim Thaci Leader of Kosovo's largest political party - the Democratic Party of Kosovo, which evolved from the Kosovo Liberation Army Prime minister when Kosovo unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in 2008 Stayed in office until the end of 2014 Kosovo After the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, Serbia responded to separatist pressure from Kosovo by launching a brutal crackdown on the territory's Albanian population, which was only brought to an end by Nato military intervention in 1999. Until 2008 the province was administered by the UN. Reconciliation between the majority Albanians, most of whom support independence, and the Serb minority remains elusive.

10. Asean-Northeast Business Summit opens in Imphal

The first business summit of the Asean with India's northeastern region focus on road connectivity, trade and tourism. A two-day North East-ASEAN Business Summit begins this afternoon at the City Convention Centre in

Imphal. The Summit is organized by Manipur Commerce and Industries Department in collaboration with the Union Ministries of External Affairs and Development of North-Eastern Region(DoNER), Indian Chamber of Commerce(ICC) and Indian Chamber of Service Industries(ICSI).

Bangladesh Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, Manipur Legislative Assembly Speaker Thokchom Lokeshwar, State Commerce and Industries Minister Govindas Konthoujam, delegates from the member nations of the Association of South-East Asian Nations(ASEAN) - Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Brunei and eight North-East states of the country are participating in the Summit.

The Summit aims at attracting investment from both domestic and foreign firms to the North-East states of the country to increase productivity and generate employment in the region.

11. India wins Asian Nations Cup Chess tournament

Indian men won the Asian Nations Cup Chess tournament with a 3-1 victory over Vietnam in the final round as they pushed formidable China down to second place. India collected 17 points, two more than World and Olympiad champions China, to clinch the title. Top seed China beat UAE 4-0 in their final round match. Kazakhstan and Iran took the third and fourth places respectively. In the final round match against Vietnam, Grandmasters S P Sethuraman and K Sasikiran won on the second and fourth boards while GMs B Adhiban and Vidit Santosh Gujrathi drew their respective matches on top and third boards. This was the third time that Indian men won the event. They won at Esfahan, Iran in 2005 and Kolkata 2009 previously when China did not participate on both occasions. In the women's section, top seed China won the title with 15 points. Uzbekistan were second with 14 and Kazakhstan third with 13 points. Seeded second in the tournament, Indian women finished fourth with 12 points after drawing Iran in their final round match.

12. Vijayawada to be the first city to implement the National Energy Efficient Fan Programme

In order to make country more energy efficient, the Union Government today launched two schemes namely National Energy Efficient Agriculture Pumps Programme and National Energy Efficient Fan Programme in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. FEATURES OF NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENT AGRICULTURE PUMPS PROGRAMME Smart BEE star rated Energy Efficient Agricultural Pump sets be distributed to farmers. Farmers can replace their inefficient agricultural pump sets free of cost. Pumps to come with Smart Control Panes that has a SIM card and a Smart Meter. Smart Control Panel will enable a farmer to switch on or switch off these pumps through his mobile and sitting at the comfort of his home. Smart meters to ensure the farmers to monitor consumption on real time basis. EESL to distribute 200,000 BEE star rated pump-sets to the farmers under this programme, which will lead to 30% of energy savings by 2019. This translates into an annual savings of approx Rs20,000 crore on agricultural subsidies or a saving of 50 billion units of energy per year. FEATURES OF NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENT FAN PROGRAMME Energy-Efficient, 50 Watts and 5-Star Rated Ceiling Fans. These fans are 30% more energy efficient as compared to conventional fans, which range from 75- 80 Watts. At present, two energy efficient fans will be provided to each consumer at Rs 60 a month per fan on EMI basis. Scheme will be available to the consumer on providing a copy of latest electricity bill along with a copy of residence proof at the designated distribution centre. Consumers can also purchase the fan by making UPFRONT payment of Rs. 1,250 for 50 watts fan It is estimated that consumers electricity bill will reduce by about Rs 700-730 per year- which means that the cost of this fan can be recovered in less than 2 years. Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to adopt more than 1.8 crore LED bulbs under the UJALA scheme which has helped the state government to save Rs 2.6 crore daily. Andhra Pradesh has always been a pioneer in adopting Energy efficiency programmes. To add to the success of UJALA in the state we will now implement energy efficient fan programme and the energy efficient agriculture pumps programme. This will help us to manage our peak demand and in-turn help the state become energy sufficient

13. 80 year old Grewal walks from Kanyakumari to Delhi in support of the blind

Minister of Urban Development Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu today received the 80 year old Shri Balwant Singh Grewal (Bobby) at the India Gate in the national capital on the conclusion of the latter's walk from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu to Delhi in support of the blind. The Minister felicitated Shri Grewal on his marathon accomplishment.

Shri Naidu said that to undertake such a mission in support of a noble cause is inspiring and commendable and would inspire many to come forward for eye donation for the benefit of visually impaired. He said that the Government has

been taking several measures for the benefit of differently abled to make them realise their inherent potential.

Shri Grewal, an NRI heading India Association started the 3,000 km walk on October 26 last year to create awareness about corneal blindness and raise funds for an organization Saksham working for the cause of the blind and for Prime Ministers National Relief Fund for assisting visually imapaired.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Grewal said his walk has generated substantial awareness about blindness and at a Gurudwara in Nagpur, about 200 women came forward to donate their eyes.

14. Mother Teresa conferred with Founders Award posthumously in UK

Mother Teresa has been posthumously conferred with the UK's prestigious Founders Award this year which is given to recognise and reward exemplary achievements of people within the global Asian community. Teresa's only living relative, her 72-year old niece, Agi Bojazhiu flew especially from Italy to receive the award yesterday. Teresa, who will be made a saint on September 4, founded the Missionaries of Charity and spent 45 years serving the poor, the sick, the orphaned, and the dying on the streets of Kolkata. She died at the age of 87 in Kolkata in 1997.

The Founders Award at the 6th Asian Awards takes place in the UK to recognise and reward exemplary achievement within the global Asian community across 14 categories that include business, philanthropy, entertainment, culture and sport.

The Asian awards was launched in 2010 by Paul Sagoo, entrepreneur and founder of the Lemon group.

15. Chinese medicine plant secrets probed

Scientists have unravelled one of the secrets of a plant used in traditional Chinese medicine. The Chinese skullcap - known as Huang-Qin - is traditionally used for fever, liver and lung problems. Scientists have discovered that the plant uses a special pathway to make chemicals with potential cancer-fighting properties. They say it is a step towards being able to scale up production to make new drugs. Prof Cathie Martin, of the John Innes Centre in Norwich, is lead researcher of the study, published in [Science Advances](#). Working in collaboration with Chinese scientists, her team deduced how the plant, *Scutellaria baicalensi*, synthesises the chemicals, known as flavones. Flavones are found widely in the plant kingdom, giving some plants vivid blue flowers. In 2015, Tu Youyou was awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine for her work on artemisinin, an antimalarial drug derived from the sweet wormwood plant, *Artemisia annua*. The fever-reducing properties of the plant were first recognised in the 4th Century by Chinese physicians.

16. Saudi Arabia and Egypt announce Red Sea bridge

Saudi Arabia's king has announced that a bridge linking the country to Egypt will be built over the Red Sea. King Salman said in a statement that the bridge would boost commerce between the two allies. He made the announcement during the second day of his visit to the Egyptian capital, Cairo. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries have supported Egypt with billions of dollars since President Sisi took power in 2013 following mass street protests. Saudi Arabia regards Egypt as a crucial partner in efforts to build a bloc of friendly Sunni Muslim states as a bulwark against growing regional influence of Shia-led Iran. "This historic step to connect the two continents, Africa and Asia, is a qualitative transformation that will increase trade between the two continents to unprecedented levels" he added. President Sisi said it marked "a new chapter on the road of Arab joint action". A Red Sea bridge linking the two countries has been proposed several times before but has failed to become a reality. Previous estimates for the bridge project suggested a cost of around \$3-4bn (2-3bn), but no further information has yet been released for the latest plan.

17. SpaceX rocket launches inflatable room to the ISS

An inflatable habitat has launched into space, atop a private SpaceX rocket contracted by Nasa. The inflatable room will attach to the International Space Station (ISS) for a two-year test and become the first such habitat to hold humans in orbit. In a major success for SpaceX, the reusable main stage booster of its rocket successfully landed on an ocean platform for the first time. The inflatable habitat was built by Nevada company Bigelow Aerospace and is intended to pave the way towards the use of such rooms for long space trips, including to Mars. Its launch is the first Nasa cargo run for SpaceX since its [June 2015 mishap](#), when an unmanned cargo rocket exploded soon after take-off. The Falcon 9 rocket lifted off on schedule from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. A capsule, containing the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module (Beam) alongside other supplies for the ISS and its crew of six, is scheduled to dock at the

Space Station on Sunday morning, starting at around 09:30 GMT. After putting the Dragon capsule into orbit, the main-stage booster of SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket separated and landed on a floating platform, known as a drone ship, off the coast of Florida. This accomplishment, attempted four times previously without success, is part of the firm's effort to kick off a new era of reusable rockets and affordable private space travel. Despite the difficulties with its ocean platform configuration, SpaceX - run by tech entrepreneur Elon Musk - did successfully land a Falcon 9 on the ground. Meanwhile, the launch is a huge moment for Bigelow Aerospace, the project of real estate billionaire Robert Bigelow. The company has launched prototype expandable habitats before, but none have been occupied by humans. This 1,400kg contraption, once attached and inflated in about a month's time, will be visited periodically by ISS personnel. Made of many layers of fabric and covered with a flexible Kevlar-like material, the Beam will be tested to see how well it stands up to fluctuating temperatures and high levels of radiation.

18. North Korea 'tests long-range missile engine'

North Korea has successfully tested an engine designed for an intercontinental ballistic missile. The new type of engine would "guarantee" the ability to launch a nuclear strike on the US mainland. The test was conducted at the country's long-range missile launch site near its west coast. Last month, North Korea threaten "indiscriminate" nuclear strikes [on the US and South Korea](#) as they held big joint military drills, which the north sees as a rehearsal for an eventual invasion. US [imposed new sanctions](#) on North Korea following a [nuclear test](#) in January and a [satellite launch](#) in February, widely seen as a test of banned missile technology. The US has also held talks with South Korea aimed at deploying a US missile defence system to the Korean peninsula, a move strongly opposed by North Korea, Russia and China. February 2016: Launch of rocket [reportedly carrying satellite](#) May 2015: North Korea announces it has [successfully tested a submarine-launched missile](#) for the first time, but scepticism is then poured on the claim Dec 2012: North Korea launches three-stage rocket, says it successfully put a satellite into orbit; US defence officials confirm object in orbit Apr 2012: Three-stage rocket explodes just after take-off Apr 2009: Three-stage rocket launched; North Korea says it was a success Jul 2006: North Korea test-fires a long-range Taepodong-2 missile

19. Rajasthan becomes the first state in India to clear land title Bill

In yet another first move in the country, the [Rajasthan](#) government has managed to pass the Rajasthan Urban Land (Certification of Titles) Bills 2016 in the state assembly. It means the state residents living in urban areas, which are governed by the municipalities or state development authorities, can seek a certificate of ownership of their lands by paying a nominal fee to the state government. The state government will set up an authority, akin to transport authorities which issue driving license and fitness certificate. The authority will be headed by an Indian Administrative Service Officer. It will seek all the documents from the landowners, and will verify it against records held by the state. The authority will first issue a provisional certificate, for which the state will not stand guarantee. If there are no objections or dispute arises, the authority will issue a certificate and a map to the owner other land or property with state guarantee. Experts believe that this Bill will give a clear title to the owner and will reduce litigations in the courts. This is seen as one of the key steps towards land reforms and Rajasthan has become the first state to introduce in the country. Since the [Vasundhara](#) Raje-led Bharatiya Janata Party took charge two years ago, the state has undertaken a series of labour and industry reforms. It has also opened many sector for public-private partnership, earning mixed response from residents, activists and industrialists.

20. Shani Shingnapur temple allows women inside inner sanctum

After the Bombay High Court had ruled that women cannot be barred from entering the temple Shani Shingnapur temple allows to go into the inner Sanctum. In a land mark decision the court said there should be no gender discrimination as far as entering a place of worship is concerned. The 400-year-old tradition at the temple in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district has traditionally banned women from entering the shrines sacred platform. The men were earlier allowed to offer prayers inside the inner sanctum. However, after the controversy over women's entry unfolded, the temple trust had banned the entry of all.

21. Jat agitation: Two-member Commission of Inquiry appointed

Haryana Government named a two-member Commission of Inquiry, headed by former Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice S N Jha, to probe conspiracy behind violent incidents during [Jat](#) agitation in February that left 30 people dead and heavy damage to property. The Commission has been asked to submit its report within six months from the date of its first hearing. It will inquire into "the sequence of events leading to, and all facts and circumstances

relating to, the occurrence of violence leading to loss of lives, damage to properties, both private and public including roads, canals, railway stations, police stations and illegal felling of trees and violation of human rights from February 18 to 23,2016 in Rohtak, Jhajjar, Sonapat, Jind, Hisar, Kaithal and Bhiwani." The Commission would also find out if there was any "deep rooted" conspiracy to damage the social fabric of the society and any such matter as may be found relevant in the course of the inquiry. The other member of the Commission is former IPS officer N C Padhi, who was Secretary Security, Government of India.

22. NITI Aayog Launches the "Grand Innovation Challenge"

NITI Aayog launched today the first phase of the Grand Innovation Challenge to seek citizens inputs on the key developmental challenges facing India. The Grand Innovation Challenge is being launched on the MyGov portal, to involve citizens at the very first stage in innovating for Indias development. The idea is to work together with the States and every citizen as Team India to ensure progress. leaving no one behind. The focus is on the social sector, the most vulnerable sections and to involve citizens in crowd sourcing ideas to address challenges facing Indias development. In Phase I of the Grand Innovation Challenge, NITI Aayog will seek the views of the citizens on the key challenges facing India, across areas significant for the countrys development. The idea is to find out from the people what are the critical issues which need to be addressed to develop the social sector and the challenges which need to be tackled on a priority basis. Phase I of the Grand Challenge ends on April 25th. NITI Aayog is leading this key goal for India by formulating guidelines for implementing the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM). With the launch of AIM, NITI will provide fillip to the swelling Innovation potential in the country. Partnering with the best minds nationally and internationally will bring together experts in academics, technology, industry, entrepreneurship and research.

23. Puttingal temple fire: PM Modi leaves for Kerala to take stock of situation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has left for Kerala to take stock of situation arising due to Puttingal temple fire tragedy in Kollam district which claimed at least 105 lives. A team of doctors including burn specialists is accompanying him. 350 people have been injured and admitted to various hospitals. The fire accident occurred due to the explosion of crackers at Puttingal temple during a festival at Paravur early this morning.

The Prime Minister has directed that no protocol formalities be observed on his arrival in Kerala and focus remains on relief and rescue operations in Kollam.

Expressing deep anguish and shock over the disaster, Mr. Modi directed the Indian Air Force to ferry the injured to hospitals in Thiruvananthapuram for treatment.

Mr. Modi also announced ex-gratia relief of two lakh rupees each from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) to the next of kin of the dead, and 50,000 rupees each to those injured in Kollam temple fire in Kerala.

24. Bihar CM Nitish elected as president of Janata Dal (United)

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been elected as president of Janata Dal (United). Election took place in National Council Meeting of the party held in New Delhi . Mr Kumar will replace Sharad Yadav who declined to contest for the fourth consecutive term.

Mr Yadav, who is one of the founder leaders of the party along with Mr Kumar, had helmed the party since 2006. He was re-elected for a third term in 2013 by amending the party's constitution which then allowed a maximum of two tenures. The Janata Dal (United)'s origins go back to before the 1999 General Elections. A faction led by then Karnataka Chief Minister [J. H. Patel](#) had lent support to the National Democratic Alliance, leading to the split in the Janata Dal leading to the formation of [Janata Dal \(Secular\)](#) under [H. D. Deve Gowda](#), who wanted to remain equidistant from both national parties; and Janata Dal under [Sharad Yadav](#). The Janata Dal (United) was formed with the merger of the Sharad Yadav faction of the Janata Dal, the Lokshakti Party and the Samata Party. On 30 October 2003, the Samata Party led by [George Fernandes](#) and [Nitish Kumar](#) merged with the Janata Dal. The merged entity was called Janata Dal (United) with the arrow symbol of Janata Dal (United) and the green and white flag of the Samata Party. The uniting force is believed to be common opposition to [Rashtriya Janata Dal](#) in Bihar especially after the RJD welcomed Samata Party rebels like [Raghunath Jha](#) into the party. In the [Bihar Legislative Assembly election, 2015](#) JD(U) contested the election in an alliance with the RJD and Congress. It won 71 seats out of the 101 seats it contested and the alliance won 178 seats out of the 243 seats in the assembly. Subsequently, Nitish Kumar again became the Chief Minister of Bihar.

25. UN to observe birth anniversary of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar for 1st time

The birth anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and Dalit rights activist, would be observed at the United Nations for the first time with focus on combating inequalities to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Permanent Mission of India to the U.N. in association with the Kalpana Saroj Foundation and Foundation For Human Horizon will commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of the Dalit icon on April 13 at the U.N. headquarters. Babasaheb's birth anniversary to be observed at U.N. for 1st time with focus on combating inequalities to achieve SDGs, India's Permanent Representative to the U.N. Syed Akbaruddin tweeted. He is an inspiration even now. A note circulated by the Indian mission has said that as India celebrates the 125th birth anniversary of the national icon, Babasaheb remains an inspiration for millions of Indians and proponents of equality and social justice across the globe. Fittingly, although it's a matter of coincidence, one can see the trace of Babasaheb's radiant vision in the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the U.N. General Assembly to eliminate poverty, hunger and socio-economic inequality by 2030, it said. Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891. He died on December 6, 1956 and was posthumously conferred with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in 1990.

26. BSNL testing WiFi-based network to connect about 1 lakh village panchayats

As the government's rural broadband project is facing long delays, telecom PSU BSNL is testing an alternative WiFi-based network to connect about 1 lakh village panchayats in a year with high-speed internet. The state-run firm is testing sustainability of technology in three villages in Alwar district of Rajasthan. Under the project, a wireless network over six kilometres has been set up connecting WiFi towers in three villages -- Karenda, Phalsa and Bahadri -- with BSNL's exchange in Bhiwadi. About 500 test connections have been provided to various users, including schools. A domestic telecom equipment maker firm, Vihaan Networks, is implementing the pilot project for BSNL. The project is being handled by a special purpose vehicle under the Telecom Ministry which has distributed work to three central public sector units -- BSNL, Railtel and Powergrid. It expects to complete roll out by 2018 and connect only 1 lakh panchayats with broadband by end of this year.

27. Foreign Ministers of G-7 countries begin meeting in Hiroshima

Foreign Ministers of the Group of 7 countries have begun in Hiroshima. The gathering is the first of 10 ministerial talks Japan will host around the G7 summit in central Japan in late May. Japan hopes holding the meeting in the atomic-bombed city will boost the international movement toward a world without nuclear weapons. The meeting is hosting Foreign Ministers from both nuclear and non-nuclear armed states. On Monday, they will visit the memorial park and museum that commemorate the 1945 atomic bombing. Over 2 days, the ministers will also discuss a list of other global issues, including terrorism and the refugee crisis. Group of Seven (G7), international organization officially established in 1985 to facilitate economic cooperation among the world's largest industrial nations; summit meetings of the member nations began in 1975. Members are Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

28. U.S. Navy leading 30-nation maritime exercise across Middle Eastern waters

The US Navy is leading a 30-nation maritime exercise across Middle Eastern waters which it says will help protect international trade routes against possible threats, including from Islamic State and al Qaeda. The exercise, which is partly being held in the Arabian Gulf, comes as tensions run high between Gulf Arab countries and Iran over its role in the region, including its support for President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war, for the Houthis in the Yemen conflict and for Hezbollah in Lebanon. The International Mine Countermeasures Exercise (IMCMEX) started with a symposium in Bahrain where the US Navy's Fifth Fleet is based, in part as a bulwark against Iran. US President Barack Obama will attend a summit in Riyadh on April 21 with the Gulf Cooperation Council states Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain - on Iran's role in the region.

29. Joshua claims American's world International Boxing Federation title

Briton Anthony Joshua lived up to his billing as the new superstar of heavyweight boxing as he stopped Charles Martin in the second round to claim the American's world International Boxing Federation (IBF) title. Joshua became the first boxer in history to hold the Olympic super heavyweight crown and a version of the world heavyweight title simultaneously with his stunning triumph at the O2 Arena, a few miles from where he won gold at the London 2012 Games. The 26-year old Briton handed Martin the first defeat of his career to annex the title in his 16th professional fight, knocking him down twice in the second round with magnificent right hands.

30. I&B Ministry forms panel for content regulation of govt advertising

Information and Broadcasting Ministry has constituted a three member committee for content regulation of government advertising. the Ministry said, the committee has been formed in compliance with the Supreme Court directions to address the issues related to content regulation in government Advertising. It will be chaired by Former Chief Election Commissioner B B Tandon.

As per the terms of reference, the committee will address complaints from the general public of violation on the implementation of the guidelines set out by Supreme Court. The Committee will also take suo motu cognizance of any violation and deviation of the guidelines of Supreme Court and recommend corrective action to the Ministry and Department.

It will recommend suitable changes to the Supreme Court guidelines to deal with new circumstances and situations that may arise from time to time, without making major policy changes within the policy direction of the Apex Court. Brij Bihari Tandon, is a former [Chief Election Commissioner of India](#) serving from May 16 2005 till June 29 2006. He is a 1965 batch [Indian Administrative Service](#) officer belonging to the [Himachal Pradesh](#) cadre. He joined as Election commissioner in June 2001. Currently he is serving as Independent director in Filatex India Pvt Ltd

31. First water train leaves Miraj for drought-hit Latur

The first train transporting water to drought-hit Marathwada region of Maharashtra today left from Miraj Town of Western Maharashtra for Latur. 50-wagon train, which can carry 2 Lakh 75 Thousand litres of water reached Miraj. The wagons, which are used to transport fuel and oil, were steam-cleaned to remove traces of these substances in the Railway Workshop at Kota in Rajasthan before sending them to Miraj.

The Sangli district administration is working day and night to complete the 2,700-metre supply line to bring water from the railways' filter house to the railway yard. The work, at a cost of 1.84 crore rupees, started on Saturday morning. It will take at least four more days to complete the pipeline.

32. India, Maldives sign six agreements in different sectors

India and Maldives have signed six agreements in different sectors including avoidance of double taxation, conservation and restoration of ancient mosque, tourism and defence. The pacts were inked after comprehensive talks between visiting Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House in New Delhi. Mr Modi said, progress, security and economic development is at the core of India-Maldives relations. He said, India's economic development is incomplete without progress of its neighbours. The Prime Minister called for cooperation between security agencies of the two countries to tackle the menace of rising radicalisation of youth and terrorism.

Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom said, India is the most important friend of Maldives and ties between the two nations are based in civilizational roots. He said, efforts are being made to improve country's economy. Maldives is located south of India's [Lakshadweep Islands](#) in the Indian Ocean. Both nations established diplomatic relations after the independence of Maldives from [British rule](#) in 1966. Maldives' first democratically elected President from 2008 to 2012 [Mohammed Nasheed](#), was arrested on 22 February 2015 on terror charges. India and US expressed concern over Nasheed's arrest and manhandling.

33. Lee Chong Wei wins 11th Malaysia Open title

Malaysia's badminton star Lee Chong Wei has won his 11th Malaysian Open title. In the final at Kuala Lumpur on Sunday, Lee defeated world number one Chen Long of China in straight games 21-13, 21-8 in a match that lasted 42 minutes.

The 33-year old Lee cruised to victory with a flurry of devastating smashes against the world's top player. The victory is a much-needed boost for Lee's pursuit of a still-elusive Olympic gold medal.

Lee, one of Malaysia's most popular sports stars, has repeatedly fallen short in his pursuit of the sport's top prizes -- the world and Olympic titles -- despite reaching three world championship finals and two Olympic deciders.

But he has set his sights firmly on crowning his career by winning his first Olympic title in Rio de Janeiro.

34. international meet on Tiger conservation

Prime Minister inaugurated the third Asia ministerial conference on tiger conservation where tiger range countries will discuss key issues including anti-poaching strategies.

"More than 700 tiger experts, scientists, managers, donors and other stakeholders are gathering to discuss issues related

to tiger conservation," an official statement said.

Ministers and government officials from all tiger range countries namely Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, India, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russian Federation, Thailand, Vietnam, besides Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan, having ranges of snow leopard will participate in the conference.

While several tiger range countries like India, Nepal, Russia and Bhutan have registered an increase in tiger population, the status of tiger remains "endangered" and tiger population has decimated to non-viable level in some range countries, which is a cause for concern.

"We have allotted Rs 380 crore to the Project Tiger in the current fiscal year, which is an all-time high and indicates that the Government of India is committed to the conservation of our national animal 'Tiger'," said environment minister Prakash Javadekar.

35. Govt reconstitutes IGNCA board

The Government today reconstituted the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, IGNCA, board. Culture Ministry in a release said that Ram Bahadur Rai has been appointed as the Chairman. The new board has 20-members. The IGNCA established in 1987 is an autonomous institution under the Culture Ministry which works as a centre for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts. The newly appointed members include Dr Sonal Mansingh, Chandraprakash Dwivedi, Nitin Desai, K Arvinda Rao, Vasudeo Kamath, Dr Mahesh Chandra Sharma, Dr Bharat Gupta, Dr M Seshan, Rati Vinay Jha, Professor Nirmala Sharma, Harsh Neotia, Dr Padma Subrahmaniam, Dr Saryu Doshi, Prasoon Joshi, DP Sinha and Viraj Yagnik. Ram Bahadur Rai is a renowned Hindi Journalist and former news editor of Jansatta newspaper. He has also authored books on VP Singh named Manjil se Jyada Safar and Rahvari ke Sawal on Chandrashekhar. Ram Bahadur Rai was a close associate of the Gandhian socialist Jayaprakash Narayan, and was also part of the 11-member Steering Committee that spear-headed the JP Movement. Veteran journalist Ram Bahadur Rai was the organising secretary of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) during the 1974 Bihar movement led by JP Narayan against the misrule and corruption in the government of Bihar. Ram Bahadur Rai was one of the first journalists to report about the 1991 Hawala Bribery scandal while working with Hindi daily Jansatta. Back then, many important politicians like L. K. Advani, V. C. Shukla, P. Shiv Shankar, Sharad Yadav, Balram Jakhar, and Madan Lal Khurana were implicated in the list.

36. US conducting joint patrols with Philippines in South China Sea

The United States Navy is conducting joint patrols with the Philippines in the South China Sea. The US rarely conducts joint patrols with its partners in the region. Defence Secretary Ash Carter said the US would also increase rotations of its forces and military support in the Philippines. Tensions have escalated in the South China Sea in recent years, with China steadily expanding its military presence in the region. The joint naval patrols, which began last month, "contribute to the safety and security of the region's waters," Mr Carter told reporters after a meeting with Philippines President Benigno Aquino. US troops and combat aircraft are currently participating in joint combat exercises with Philippines forces. Recent flashpoints The most serious trouble in recent decades has flared between Vietnam and China, and there have also been stand-offs between the Philippines and China: In 1974 the Chinese seized the Paracels from Vietnam, killing more than 70 Vietnamese troops. In 1988 the two sides clashed in the Spratlys, with Vietnam again coming off worse, losing about 60 sailors. In early 2012, China and the Philippines engaged in a lengthy maritime stand-off, accusing each other of intrusions in the Scarborough Shoal. In July 2012 China angered Vietnam and the Philippines when it formally created Sansha city, an administrative body with its headquarters in the Paracels which it says oversees Chinese territory in the South China Sea. Unverified claims that the Chinese navy sabotaged two Vietnamese exploration operations in late 2012 led to [large anti-China protests](#) on Vietnam's streets. In January 2013, Manila said it was taking China to a UN tribunal under the auspices of the UN Convention on the Laws of the Sea, to challenge its claims. In May 2014, the introduction by China of a drilling rig into waters near the Paracel Islands led to multiple collisions between Vietnamese and Chinese ships. In April 2015, satellite images showed China building an airstrip on reclaimed land in the Spratlys. In October 2015, the US sailed a guided-missile destroyer within 12-nautical miles of the artificial islands - the first in a series of actions planned to assert freedom of navigation in the region. China warned that the US should "not act blindly or make trouble out of nothing".

37. Maharashtra assembly passes historic bill to prohibit social boycott

In a first in the country, the Maharashtra assembly on passed the Prohibition of Social Boycott Bill, which aims at

eradication of social boycott by extra-judicial bodies such as caste panchayats and communities. The bill has a provision for punishment of up to three years and fine of up to Rs 1 lakh. Chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said the bill was brought as the existing laws were inadequate to curb instances of social boycott. The CM said in addition to the bill, the existing laws such as the Indian Penal Code, laws related to protection of the human rights will be applied in case of violations. The bill provides for compensation to the victim, which can, in some cases, be recovered from the accused. It has provisions to prevent certain acts that may lead to boycott and withdrawal of cases with the consent of the victim and permission from the court. In case of a withdrawal, the accused will have to perform community services, according to the directives of the court.

38. India world's largest remittance recipient in 2015: World Bank

India remained the world's largest remittance recipient in 2015 despite experiencing a one billion US dollar drop from the previous year. In its annual report Migration and Development Brief, World Bank said, India retained its top spot in 2015, attracting about 69 billion US dollars in remittances, down from 70 billion in 2014. Other large remittance recipients in 2015 were China, with 64 billion dollar, the Philippines (28 billion), Mexico (25 billion) and Nigeria (21 billion dollar). Global remittances, which include those to high-income countries, contracted by 1.7 per cent to 581 billion US dollar in 2015, from 592 billion in 2014.

39. India to notch up to 7.5 pc growth in 2016-17: IMF

International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that India's growth is projected to notch up to 7.5 per cent in 2016-17, overtaking China's GDP by more than 1 per cent. Retaining its last October forecast, the IMF in its latest, World Economic Outlook report said, a recovery of private investment is expected to further strengthen growth. It said, growth will continue to be driven by private consumption, which has benefited from lower energy prices and higher real incomes.

The report said monetary conditions remain consistent with achieving the inflation target of 5 per cent in the first half of 2017, although an expected public sector wage increase pose upside risks. It also makes a pitch for fiscal consolidation to continue, underpinned by revenue reforms and further reductions in subsidies. The report said, sustaining strong growth over the medium term will require labour market reforms and dismantling of infrastructure bottlenecks, especially in the power sector.

40. El Salvador declares water shortage emergency for first time ever

El Salvador declared a water shortage emergency for the first time in its history. citing the effects of climate change and the El Nio phenomenon, the country's president said. In the last four years, rainfall has decreased considerably in the Central American country, and river and water reserve levels have reached a critical state, President Salvador Sanchez Ceren said. In recent weeks, residents from neighborhoods on the outskirts of the capital city of San Salvador have protested because of water shortages in their communities. Countries across Central America declared an agricultural alert last year as a result of the severe drought which has affected some 1.6 million people in the region, in particular growers of coffee, corn and beans. El Salvador is a tiny Central American nation known for its Pacific Ocean beaches, surfing and mountainous landscape. Its Ruta de Las Flores is a winding journey past flowering coffee farms, rainforest zip-line sites and towns

Capital: [San Salvador](#) **Currency:** [United States Dollar](#) **Official language** : [Spanish](#)

41. Mystery of migration of monarch butterflies solved

Scientists have built a model circuit that solves the mystery of one of nature's most famous journeys - the great migration of monarch butterflies from Canada to Mexico. Monarchs are the only insects to migrate such a vast distance. So, by teaming up with biologists, mathematicians set out to recreate the internal compass they use to navigate on that journey. Lead researcher Prof Eli Shlizerman, from the University of Washington, explained that, as a mathematician, he wants to know how neurobiological systems are wired and what rules we can learn from them. "They end up in a particular location in Central Mexico after two months of flight, saving energy and only using a few cues." Prof Shlizerman worked with biologist colleagues, including Steven Reppert at the University of Massachusetts, to record directly from neurons in the butterflies' antennae and eyes. "We identified that the input cues depend entirely on the Sun," explained Prof Shlizerman. "One is the horizontal position of the Sun and the other is keeping the time of day. The monarch butterfly or simply monarch is a milkweed butterfly in the family Nymphalidae. Other common names depending on region include milkweed, common tiger, wanderer, and black veined brown. **Scientific name:** [Danaus](#)

plexippus [Higher classification: Danaus](#) [Rank: Species](#)

42. **Delhi govt bans all forms of chewable tobacco for one year**

Delhi government has banned the manufacture, storage, distribution and sale of pan masala, gutkha and all forms of chewable tobacco for one year. According to a notification issued by the Department of Food Safety, unpackaged products of chewable tobacco too are covered under the scope of the ban.

Delhi government had issued a notification in September, 2012, in pursuance of a series of directions from Supreme Court for a ban on gutkha in the city. But since the term gutkha was used in that notification, tobacco retailers started selling the components of gutkha, betel nut and raw tobacco in separate pouches, thus defeating the purpose behind the ban on gutkha. The health department therefore, came up with a new proposal for banning all raw chewable tobacco products in Delhi.

43. **2nd phase of odd-even scheme in Delhi starts from today**

The second phase of Delhi Government's odd-even car rationing scheme comes into effect in the national capital from today. The scheme, which will continue for 15 days, aims at curbing vehicular pollution and reducing traffic congestion.

Under the scheme, four-wheelers with odd registration numbers will ply on odd dates and those with even numbers on even dates. The rule will be in operation from 8 AM to 8 PM. However, it will not be applicable on Sundays.

President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Union Ministers and other VIPs have been exempted. Besides, vehicles driven by women, emergency vehicles, CNG vehicles and cars carrying school children in uniforms will be exempted. However, the rules of the odd-even scheme will apply on Delhi Chief Minister and his cabinet colleagues. The violation of rule will attract a penalty of 2,000 rupees. The city government has roped in over 5,000 Civil Defence Volunteers at various traffic points who will motivate the people to follow the rules of the scheme.

Delhi Transport Minister Gopal Rai said, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation will run 200 metro trains which will make over 3,200 trips per day till the 30th of this month. He said, Paryavaran bus service will be available to the commuters in addition to DTC buses.

44. **Super computer Param Kanchenjunga launched at Sikkim NIT**

The National Institute of Technology (NIT) Sikkim has secured a rare distinction of having a supercomputer, which is said to be the most powerful and fastest among all the 31 NITs. The supercomputer, named Param Kanchenjunga, was formally unveiled by Sikkim Governor Shrinvas Patil at the NIT Sikkim campus at Ravangla in South Sikkim District. Pune-based Centre for Development of Advanced Computing C-DAC and the NIT Sikkim have jointly established the supercomputer at a cost of Rs. three crore. The supercomputer is expected to help achieve excellence in engineering education and research in the north-east region.

45. **69th Himachal Day being celebrated in the State**

Himachal Pradesh is celebrating 69th Himachal Day. On the occasion, a state-level function would be held at Ghumarvin town in Bilaspur district where Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh will unfurl the national flag. Similarly, the ministers of state council would preside over functions in all the district headquarters.

After independence, the Chief Commissioner's Province of Himachal Pradesh came into existence on 15 April 1948, with the merger of 28 petty princely states. Himachal became a part C state on 26 January 1950 with the implementation of the Constitution of India and the Lt. Governor was appointed.

Then Legislative Assembly was elected in 1952 and Himachal Pradesh became a Union Territory on 1 November 1956. On 1 November 1966 some parts of Punjab were merged with this hill state. According to a 2005 [Transparency International](#) survey, Himachal Pradesh is ranked the second-least corrupt state in the country after [Kerala](#). Himachal Pradesh Act was passed by Parliament, and the new state came into being on 25 January 1971. Thus Himachal emerged as the 18th state of the Indian Union.

46. **India, US to collaborate on tackling offshore tax evasion**

India and the United States have agreed to enhance collaboration on tackling offshore tax evasion and increase co-operation in sharing of cross-border tax information. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and US Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew co-chaired the 6th US-India Economic and Financial Partnership on the sidelines of the annual Spring Meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in Washington.

Both leaders noted the progress in sharing of financial information between the two countries under the Inter-Governmental Agreement pursuant to Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA). The statement said, India and US will continue to engage in discussions on full reciprocal arrangement on the FATCA.

Acknowledging enhanced co-operation in tackling money laundering and combating financing of terrorism through increased information sharing and cooperation, the two leaders agreed on the importance of fighting illicit finance in all forms as an important means of tackling global terrorism.

The joint statement also said, US will support India's endeavour to find ways to fund its massive drive for building modern infrastructure and to create more jobs. Mr Jaitley said, both the countries are working together to support India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund in order to increase financing options for India's infrastructure growth. Under the US-India Investment Initiative launched in January last year, the two governments have worked in collaboration with private sector to identify specific policies, regulatory reforms and technical collaboration aimed at mobilising capital from both domestic and foreign investors to build infrastructure and create jobs.

Meanwhile, India has expressed concern over the hike in visa fee by the US, saying it is discriminatory and largely affects Indian IT professionals. During a bilateral meeting with US Trade Representative Ambassador Michael Froman in Washington, Mr Jaitley underlined the need for early conclusion of Totalisation Agreement which would benefit Indians working in America.

47. 7th Public Sector Day

7th Public Sector Day and gave away SCOPE Excellence Awards in a function jointly organized by Standing Conference of Public Enterprises (SCOPE) and Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) in New Delhi. SCOPE EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2013-14 INSTITUTIONAL CATEGORY Institutional Category I (Maharatna/ Navratna PSEs) Oil Natural Gas Corporation Limited Institutional Category II (Miniratna I II PSEs) SJVN Limited THDC India Limited Institutional Category III (Other Profit Making PSEs) Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd NTPC-SAIL Power Company Pvt. Ltd (Commendation Certificate) Special Institutional Category (Turnaround) BEML Limited INDIVIDUAL CATEGORY Individual Leadership Category- I (Maharatna/ Navratna PSEs) Ms. Nishi Vasudeva, Former CMD, HPCL Mr. S. Varadarajan, CMD, BPCL Individual Leadership Category- II (Miniratna I II PSEs) Mr. R. K. Gupta, CMD, WAPCOS Limited Outstanding Women Manager In PSEs Mr. Vartika Shukla, ED, EIL

48. National Workshop on Fire Services Day

Minister of State of Home Affairs, Shri Kiren Rijiju will inaugurate the national workshop on An Integrated Approach to Fire Safety on the occasion of the Fire Services Day. The day long workshop is being held to deliberate upon the integrated approaches to fire safety. The theme of this years Fire Services Day is Prevent Fire Accident, Promote Nations Development. The Ministry of Communications and IT, Department of Posts will release a postage stamp on the theme Fire Services in India.

Fire Services Week will be observed throughout the country from 14th-20th April, 2016.

Fire Services Day is observed on April 14th every year since 1968 in memory of the sacrifices made by the firemen during the devastating fire on SS Fort Strikine ship in Mumbai Dock in the year 1944.

49. India and United Arab Emirates on cooperation in preventing and combating of Human Trafficking

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) on cooperation in preventing and combating of Human Trafficking.

The MoU will strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries and increase the bilateral cooperation on the issues of prevention, rescue, recovery and repatriation related to human trafficking especially women and children expeditiously.

The following are the salient features of the MoU:

- (i) To strengthen cooperation to prevent all forms of human trafficking, especially that of women and children and ensure speedy investigation and prosecution of traffickers and organized crime syndicates in either country.
- (ii) Taking preventive measures that would eliminate human trafficking in women and children and in protecting the rights of victims of trafficking.
- (iii) Anti-trafficking Cells and Task Forces will work on both sides to prevent human trafficking.
- (iv) Police and other concerned authorities will work in close cooperation and exchange information which can be used to interdict human traffickers.

(v) The repatriation of victims would be done as expeditiously as possible and the home country will undertake the safe and effective re-integration of the victims.

(vi) A Joint Task Force with representatives from both sides would be constituted to monitor the working of the MoU.

50. **Maritime India Summit 2016**

The first Maritime India Summit in Mumbai, besides resulting in business agreements for Rs 82,905 crore investments, played a key role in highlighting the role of port led development for faster and sustainable economic growth. The National Perspective Plan of Sagarmala project, which was released by the Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi on April 14, underlined Governments seriousness in boosting port led infrastructure development.

The summit provided a platform for participation, engagement and interaction from 42 countries. More than 5000 delegates from around the globe participated in the Summit. The 3 day exhibition organized during the Summit also drew enthusiastic response from 197 exhibitors including 81 international companies, 80 Indian private sector companies and 36 Government owned entities.

Maritime Heritage Museum A top draw

One of the top attractions at the Summit was the Maritime Heritage Museum, built in the form of a container ship with interiors resembling a Spanish Galleon. The museum depicts the 5000 years rich maritime heritage of India, right from the earliest port at Lothal to the modern days of shipping in the form of artefacts, replicas, photographs, maps and navigation equipment.

51. **Death toll in earthquake in southern Japanese city of Kumamoto rises to 20**

Death toll in the late lastnight's earthquake in the southern Japanese city of Kumamoto has risen to 20. Media reports say, more than 1,000 were also injured in the 7.3 magnitude powerful earthquake that hit the Kyushu region a day after an earlier tremor killed nine people.

Meanwhile, Relief and rescue efforts are under way to help the victims. Around 20,000 troops have been deployed in the operation in the region. Dozens of people are feared trapped in the rubble of collapsed buildings. Rescuers dug through the rubble of collapsed buildings and mud and debris today to reach the trapped persons , but continued aftershocks hindered rescue efforts. Quakes continue to rattle Kumamoto Prefecture and the surrounding regions.

Japan's only operating nuclear power plant is also in Kyushu. Officials say there are no irregularities with the two reactors. Officials say around 69,000 people in Kumamoto Prefecture have been evacuated from their homes. Utility services have been disrupted. Hundreds of thousands of households are without power, gas, and water.

The quakes are also affecting transportation. Officials at Kumamoto Airport shut the terminal building after it was damaged by the tremors.

52. **Malian photographer Malick Sidibé dies aged 80**

Award-winning Malian photographer, Malick Sidibe, has died at the age of 80. Sidibe, who died on Thursday, is known for his black and white studio portraits that captured the lives of young Malians in the 1960s and 1970s. Critics say, his photos of Mali's post-colonial period helped people see the West African nation in a new light. In 2007, he became the first African winner of the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement at the Venice Biennale.

53. **World has two weeks to replace problem polio vaccine: WHO**

World Health Organization (WHO) has given countries, two weeks to replace a problematic polio vaccine blamed for some outbreaks of the crippling disease. It has warned that the live polio virus used in some vaccines is one of the biggest obstacles to eradicating the disease. The WHO has called for swapping of the trivalent version of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), that causes most vaccine-derived outbreaks with the bivalent one. In a statement, WHO said, for the past year and a half years, 155 countries and territories have been gearing up to make the shift away from the trivalent vaccine, with the big switch set to begin on Sunday and to be completed by May 1.

The trivalent vaccine protects against all three types of polio, including type 2, which no longer exists in the wild but which causes most vaccine-derived outbreaks.

54. **China economy slows down to 6.7%**

China's economic growth has slowed to 6.7 percent in the first quarter of 2016, the slowest pace seen since the height of the global financial crisis seven years ago.

State media reported today that the nation's gross domestic product grew 6.7 percent compared to the year before,

reaching 2.4 trillion dollars. The National Bureau of Statistics reported that the growth rate narrowed from the previous quarter's 6.8 percent.

But the new estimate was within the range of government expectations, keeping the economy on track to meet the official full-year target of 6.5 to seven percent.

This was the slowest first-quarter growth seen in China's economy since 2009, when growth was measured at just 6.2 percent. Chinese authorities have responded by cutting interest rates and investing in public works, hoping to reduce the nation's dependence on manufacturing and exporting products.

55. Table Tennis: Soumyajit Ghosh, Manika Batra book their Rio berths

Indian Table Tennis players, Soumyajit Ghosh and Manika Batra have booked berths in the forthcoming Rio Olympics. Both the paddlers won their groups in the Asian Qualifiers in Hong Kong yesterday to book the tickets to Rio. The competition was restricted to India alone as no other country from the region participated in the South Asian Zone qualification event. Four players in each section played against one another to grab a spot.

Ace Indian paddler Sharath Kamal managed just one win. Sharath will now play in the main Asian Qualifiers which begin after the conclusion of other Zone qualifiers. Even if he loses then, Sharath should automatically qualify for the Games based on his Olympic rankings which the International Table Tennis Federation will release next month after all qualification tournaments.

World Number 2 Ding Ning has gone down to Japan's Ito Mima 4-2 in the Women's Singles. Ding Ning is the 2nd top player from China to bow out of the tournament, after top-ranked Liu Shiwen was bounced in the first round.

56. World bamboo conference

A three-day 'World Bamboo Conference' began in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on 8th April. Experts and representatives in from more than eleven countries are participating in the conference.

At the conference, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari said government has planned to encourage bamboo cultivation in the country through various measures, including plantation of its saplings along the national highways. The National Bamboo Mission commenced in 2006 has been renamed as National Agriculture Forest and Bamboo Mission.

More than 137 species of bamboo is grown in the country which are used for 1500 diversified utilities.

57. Ghotiya Village embraces 'Clean India Campaign'

People of village Ghotiya in Chhattisgarh have collectively decided to make their village the cleanest in the state. Village Ghotiya has a population of 2500 people and it stands apart from other villages. The inhabitants of this village believe in a clean India. No longer people of this village have to go in fields to do toilet.

Today every house of this village has a toilet and twice a week men and women clean the lanes and by lanes of this village together. It's not only the villagers but also the school children who are participating in making the village clean. They make sure that the area around their school is clean and teachers too collaborate to make sure that the venture becomes successful. Dust bins have been placed across the village and as a rule everyone makes sure all the waste is thrown in the bin.

Under the Indira Awas Yojana houses are provided to many people in the village. Focus is also in providing clean water to the villagers. Under 'Nal-Jal Yojan'a clean water is provided to the entire village and each house has a potable water connection. With this work is on progress to make all weather roads and better drainage system across the village. People of Ghotiya have truly imbibed the meaning of Swachh Bharat and this small village has become an inspiration for not only the state of Chhattisgarh but the entire country.

58. Delhi ranked 44th among world's 50 'future-ready cities'

The national capital has been recognized as one of the 50 future-ready cities around the world that are embracing technology to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing and globalised future, according to a report by IT major Dell. Delhi is ranked 44th on the list which is topped by San Jose, followed by San Francisco. The 'Future-Ready Economies Model' scores large, high-growth global metropolitan areas based on attributes that enable people and organizations to access new tools and ideas that deliver better connectivity, better economic performance and a greater ability to attract talent.

The cities positioned in the list were evaluated along three dimensions -- human capital, infrastructure and commerce.

59. Google's free Wi-Fi to be launched at Bhubaneswar station

Expanding the high speed Internet network facility for rail users, railways will launch the Google's free Wi-Fi service at Bhubaneswar station on April 17, the second station to be covered under the project. Designed to offer rail users the best internet experience, Wi-Fi will be available to any user who has a smartphone.

After Mumbai Central, Bhubaneswar will be the second station to have Google's free Wi-Fi service in the country. Rail users would be able to stream high definition videos while waiting for their respective trains at the railway station with Wi-Fi becoming operational.

Under the Digital India initiative, Railways is committed to providing better internet facilities to the passengers at 100 busiest stations by the end of this year. Besides Bhubaneswar, trials are going on at about 10 more stations including Jaipur, Patna, Ranchi, Ernakulum, Allahabad, Lucknow and Guwahati to have the Wi-Fi service shortly.

Railtel, a PSU of the Railways, in collaboration with Google is providing free Wi-Fi service at stations. As per the plan, Railtel will be the ISP, while Google will provide the Wireless Area Networks (WAN) and will set-up the points of access at platforms.

Eventually, the service will be rolled out at 400 stations across the country covering all major rail premises.

60. Graphene may help generate power from rain

Solar cells could generate electricity even during rains by making use of the 'wonder material' graphene.

Many technical advances have made solar cells quite efficient and affordable in recent years. A big disadvantage remains in the fact that solar cells produce no power when it is raining.

However, Chinese researchers have now introduced a new approach for making an all-weather solar cell that is triggered by both sunlight and raindrops.

For the conversion of solar energy to electricity, the team from the Ocean University of China and Yunnan Normal University developed a highly efficient dye-sensitised solar cell.

In order to allow rain to produce electricity as well, they coated this cell with a very thin film of graphene. Graphene is a two-dimensional form of carbon in which the atoms are bonded into a honeycomb arrangement.

It can readily be prepared by the oxidation, exfoliation and subsequent reduction of graphite. Graphene is characterised by its unusual electronic properties: It conducts electricity and is rich in electrons that can move freely across the entire layer.

In aqueous solution, graphene can bind positively charged ions with its electrons. This property is used in graphene-based processes to remove lead ions and organic dyes from solutions. This phenomenon inspired researchers to use graphene electrodes to obtain power from the impact of raindrops.

Raindrops are not pure water. They contain salts that dissociate into positive and negative ions. The positively charged ions, including sodium, calcium and ammonium ions, can bind to the graphene surface.

At the point of contact between the raindrop and the graphene, the water becomes enriched in positive ions and the graphene becomes enriched in delocalised electrons.

This results in a double-layer made of electrons and positively charged ions, a feature known as a pseudocapacitor. The difference in potential associated with this phenomenon is sufficient to produce a voltage and current.

61. NASA's Kepler spacecraft discovers new 'hot Jupiter'

NASA's Kepler planet-hunting spacecraft has discovered a new Jupiter-like exoplanet, orbiting a 2.6 billion-year-old star located about 545 light years from the Earth. Researchers, led by Marshall C Johnson of the University of Texas at Austin, used the data from the K2 mission to search for possible transiting planets. They identified two targets designated EPIC 211089792b (K2-29b) and EPIC 210957318b (K2-30b).

While K2-30b was confirmed as a "hot Jupiter" exoplanet during previous observations, K2-29b is a new addition to the long list of Kepler's confirmed extrasolar worlds.

The astronomers also used three different ground-based spectrographs to conduct high-resolution spectroscopic observations of K2-29b, in order to definitely verify it as a "hot Jupiter."

"Here, we present K2 photometry for two late-type dwarf stars, EPIC 211089792 (K2-29) and EPIC 210957318 (K2-30), for which we identified periodic transit signals, and our follow-up spectroscopic observations," the researchers said.

62. Unique machine converts pollutants into ink

While the world is looking for innovative ways to reduce pollution in the environment, four students of chemical

engineering in IIT Delhi have found a unique way to curb pollution from diesel generators. In fact, they have developed a machine that helps in converting pollutants in to usable ink.

Have you ever imagined that these polluting fumes, that slowly poison our environment can be utilized for some good use too? You may be surprised but it is true.

This brilliant idea is made possible by 4 students from IIT Delhi. These students are Ishani, Prateek, Kushagra and Arpit. They have created this unique device called Ink.

As per a survey, over 14000 mobile towers in Delhi are run by diesel engines. After running for 8 to 10 hours every day, these generators produce about 2100 ton particulate matter. And this is a major contributor to air pollution. The device invented by the IIT students prevents the particulate matter from being released in the air.

This device is connected to the exhaust pipe of the generator. With the help of a special solution, this device collects 70% of the soot from smoke. This collected particulate matter is then used to make ink.

This was one of the projects selected during the initiation of the StartUp India program. The popularity of this unique device has also reached China.

The ink produced using this machine is very useful. You can use it to create design on cloths or paint objects of domestic use. And the biggest benefit of course is how the environment is saved from more pollution.

63. Solar plane ready to resume flight from Hawaii

A solar-powered plane attempting to circumnavigate the globe is ready to continue on its record-breaking journey. The Solar Impulse team said in a statement that they were now re-entering "mission mode" to fly toward North America," which could come as soon as on April 17.

The aircraft, called the Solar Impulse 2, was grounded on the island of Oahu, Hawaii since July as a result of battery damage caused during the plane's record almost 118-hour trans-Pacific flight from Japan to Hawaii last July.

The Solar Impulse 2's batteries store energy from the sun during daylight hours to keep the aircraft powered overnight, allowing it to remain aloft around the clock on extreme long-distance flights.

64. Diarrhoea: Leading causes of death among children

Diarrhoea is one of the leading causes of death among children under five globally. Diarrhoea causes loss of water and electrolytes. It upsets the balance of minerals (salts and sugar) in the body. It leads to dehydration. It may cause severe consequences.

SYMPTOMS OF DEHYDRATION

- Restlessness or irritability
- feeling thirsty
- dry mouth

It is both preventable and treatable. The most severe threat posed by diarrhoea is dehydration.

It is important to identify the signs of dehydration in the child.

MANAGEMENT OF DIARRHOEA

Give oral rehydration salt solution (ORS) to the child.

Rehydrate the body by drinking plenty of fluids.

In infant, Do not stop the breast feeding

SEVERE DEHYDRATION: SIGNS IN CHILDREN

- Feeling unusually tired or lethargic
- drowsiness
- Refusal to feeds
- Sunken eyes
- Fast breathing
- Not passing urine for eight hours
- Altered senses

SEVERE DEHYDRATION

Severe dehydration is a medical emergency. It requires immediate medical attention. Take the child immediately to the hospital. If signs of severe dehydration appear, intravenous fluids may be required to restore the substantial loss of fluids.

Proper management of diarrhoea in children is must to avoid the severe consequences.

65. Jharkhand to Have 2 Percent Employment Reserved for Sportspersons

Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das announced the government would reserve two per cent employment in various departments for meritorious sportspersons of the state. Inaugurating the National Archery Championship (Indian round) by darting an arrow at Arjuna stadium here, Das said currently two per cent job quota for medal-winning sportspersons is there only in state police department. Now it will be applicable in all departments, he said. The government would host sports events at panchayat, district-level, besides a state-level competition before November 15, the Foundation Day of the state. Das said the government has been providing Rs 3000 stipend to archers whereas, the welfare department provide Rs 3 lakhs for purchase of equipment. The Chief Minister assured all possible assistance to the sportspersons to get due recognition at International level. Around 1500 sportspersons including 750 from Jharkhand will be enrolled in the proposed Sports University in the state, he said.

66. TN's first transgender candidate is standing against Jayalalithaa

C Devi, a 33-year-old transgender person, is set to take on AIADMK supremo Jayalalithaa in the RK Nagar constituency in Chennai. She is the first transgender person in Tamil Nadu to contest in the assembly elections. She will be contesting on behalf of the Tamil party, Naam Tamilar Katchi. But Devi doesn't see herself as standing against Jayalalithaa in the elections. Jayalalithaa is one of the biggest leaders in the state. 'I'm not standing against her, I'm standing for the people in the constituency, she said. Devi hails from Salem and has worked with various NGOs from 2004, focusing on the empowerment of sex workers and transgender people. In 2009, she started a home called Thaimadi for the homeless, which now hosts more than 60 residents. Devi currently stays in RK Nagar with her mother, and runs the Thaimadi Trust. The K Prithika Yasini was also from the same city who became the first trans-woman sub-inspector in Tamil Nadu and was probably the first transgender sub-inspector in India

67. Pakistan, China launch joint air force training exercise Shaheen 5

The Peoples Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) and the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) kicked off a joint training exercise. The military drill, code-named Shaheen (Eagle)-5 began on April 9 in Pakistan and is scheduled to run for three weeks until April 30. China's Air Force hopes to widen the scope of cooperation and dialogue with all countries and regions, Neither China nor Pakistan offered additional details on where the exercise is being held or how many aircraft and troops including combat pilots, air defense controllers, and technical ground crew will be involved in the next three weeks. Last year's installment of the military drill, dubbed Shaheen-4, featured fourth-generation fighter jets and bombers as well as airborne early warning and control (AEWC) aircraft. The PAF alone participated with three different types of frontline fighter aircraft from different squadrons (likely the JF-17 Thunder, Dassault Mirage III/5, and F7 PG fighter aircraft). The PLAAF and PAF have held regular drills since March 2011 with the first Shaheen exercise held in Pakistan. The second training exercise took place in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region in western China in September 2013, the third was held in Punjab, Pakistan, in May 2014.

68. Azerbaijani journalist Khadija Ismayilova awarded UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2016

Khadija Ismayilova, an investigative journalist from Azerbaijan, has been chosen to receive the 2016 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. An independent [international jury](#) of media professionals recommended Ms Ismayilova in recognition of her outstanding contribution to press freedom in difficult circumstances. Khadija Ismayilova highly deserves the Prize and I am happy to see that her courage and professionalism are recognized, said [Ljiljana Zurovac](#), President of the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 2016 Jury. Ms Ismayilova, a freelance journalist and contributor to the Azerbaijani service of Radio Free Europe, was detained in December 2014, and, in September 2015, was sentenced to seven and a half years imprisonment on charges relating to abuse of power and tax evasion. The Prize will be awarded during the celebration of [World Press Freedom Day](#), 3 May, hosted by Finland this year. Created by UNESCO's Executive Board in 1997, the annual UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize honours a person, organization or institution that has made an outstanding contribution to the defence and, or promotion of press freedom anywhere in the world, and especially when this has been achieved in the face of danger. The \$25,000 Prize is named in honour of Guillermo Cano Isaza, a Colombian journalist who was assassinated in front of the offices of his newspaper, El Espectador, in Bogot, on 17 December 1986. It is funded by the Cano Foundation (Colombia) and the Helsingin Sanomat Foundation (Finland).

69. Priyanka Chopra to be awarded with Dadasaheb Phalke Film Foundation Award

The Bajirao Mastani will be given [Dadasaheb Phalke](#) Film Foundation's Best Actress of the Year award. This would

be Priyanka's second award from the Foundation after she received her first award for Most Memorable Performance for 2011 film Saath Khoon Maaf. The Dadasaheb Film Foundation will honour the Fashion actor with Best Actress of the Year award on the occasion of 147th Dadasaheb Phalke Jayanti. The ceremony will be held in Mumbai on April 24. Not just Dadasaheb Phalke Film Foundation Award, Priyanka Chopra has also been awarded with Padma Shri this year. She also became the first South Asian actor to win People's Choice Awards (Favourite actress) for her American TV show Quantico. The Baywatch actor has gone that extra mile to achieve the success and she even went on to present the Oscars this year.

70. **Varanasi Kathak dancer breaks world record**

Soni Chaurasia, a Kathak artiste, has set the world record for the longest dance by performing Kathak continuously for more than 123.30 hours at Mount Litera Zee School. Her name will now be registered in the Guinness Book of Records. Chaurasia broke the record of Hemlata Kundalu of Trichur, Kerala, who performed Mohiniattam (a classical dance) continuously for 123.20 hours. Soni Chaurasia continued to perform even after the recordbreaking feat. She started her effort on April 4 at 6pm under the guidance of her teacher Rajesh Dogra and reached the milestone on Saturday late evening. A medical team was present at auditorium of the school near Khushipur bypass where she broke the record. Kathak is one of the most important classical dances of India. The word is derived from the word katha, meaning the art of storytelling. These dances are performed straight-legged and the ankle bells worn by the dancers are skillfully controlled

71. **IIT-Kharagpur Wins Top Award For Patents**

The IIT-Kharagpur has won an award the by the Indian government for being the top academic institute for patents in 2016.

IIT-Kharagpur director Partha Pratim Chakraborty said they have received a letter from the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry saying the institute has been awarded the prize for 'Top Academic Institute for Patents 2016'. "Our '100 patents drive' efforts are now giving results," he said while congratulating his team.

The award will be given on April 26 in Delhi by Union minister Nirmala Sitharaman at a function jointly organised for the celebration of World Intellectual Property Day by the Indian Intellectual Property office. The Indian Intellectual property office confers national intellectual property awards on outstanding innovators, organisations and companies in the fields of patents, designs, trademarks, and geographical indications on the occasion of World IP Day every year. The National IP Award carries an amount of Rs. 1,00,000, a citation and a memento.

72. **Endangered bird spoon-billed sandpiper spotted in China**

spoon-billed sandpiper was spotted in south China's Hainan province, the third time the endangered bird has been seen on the tropical island.

Luo Lixiang with the Xinying Mangrove National Wetland Park photographed the sandpiper on while he was patrolling the park. He did not notice the rare bird till he checked the photos later at night, Xinhua reported.

Spoon-billed sandpipers are listed as "critically endangered" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. There are fewer than 200 spoon-billed sandpipers living in the wild due to environmental degradation, according to Lu Gang, an expert with Kadoorie Conservation China. "Spoon-billed sandpipers migrate to wetlands in southeast Asia every spring and autumn, and during the course they make stops in China's Jiangsu, Hainan and Guangdong provinces," Lu said. In 2009, English birdwatcher Paul I. Holt and his assistant found a spoon-billed sandpiper in Hainan's Haikou city, the first time it was spotted on the island. Another spoon-billed sandpiper was spotted in Hainan two years later.

73. **Danny Willett: first British to win US Masters in 20 years**

Danny Willett has become the first British person in 20 years to win the US masters, which is one of the biggest golf tournaments in the world. The new champ had the joint lowest score on the final day - overtaking favourite to win American Jordan Spieth, who had been leading the competition - to claim golf's famous green jacket. It's been a very busy week for Danny, who became a dad for the first time last Tuesday. Willett is only the second Englishman to win the Masters. He bagged the 2007 English Amateur Championship and in early 2008 became the worlds top-ranked amateur. Danny turned professional in 2008 and clinched his first European Tour victory at the 2012 BMW International Open in Germany. He had two European Tour in the 2015 season and made his Masters debut where he finished tied 38th.

74. **National Safe Motherhood Day**

According to the 2011 census data, the national average of maternal mortality has come down by 17 per cent in India. National Safe Motherhood day is being observed across the country April 11 to create awareness on proper healthcare and maternity facilities to pregnant and lactating women. The Indian government has written to the states to strengthen implementation of Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojna maternity benefit scheme. The review of the progress of the IGMSY will be conducted from the 15th to 25th of this month. Surviving childbirth is a basic right of every woman and a social responsibility. Ensuring institutional delivery, reducing anemia among women by providing Iron-Folic Acid supplements and better pre and postnatal health care are necessary for mothers. Prevention of child marriages which are indirect causes of maternal deaths is also an important factor. Right to good quality nutrition and health services during and after pregnancy and childbirth and the removal of barriers that contribute to maternal mortality would go a long way towards safe motherhood. In India, the national average of maternal mortality has come down by 17 per cent according to the 2011 census data and efforts are on to achieve the millennium development goal of reducing maternal mortality rate to 139 per one lakh live births by 2015.

75. Shan-e-Punjab Express becomes India's first train fitted with CCTV cameras

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on Friday flagged off the country's first train with CCTV cameras in all coaches, to ensure improved safety for passengers. The Shan-E-Punjab Express, between Amritsar and Delhi, has four to six cameras on all its 21 coaches and video footage can be recorded and stored for a month. Live video stream of ladies coach will also be available on the LCD screens in rail guards compartment. Crimes against women The Railway Ministry said that surveillance cameras on coaches would significantly reduce crime against women and other crimes such as theft. While emphasising that safety was his top priority, Mr. Prabhu said a cyber security audit would soon be conducted for all zones of the Railways.

76. J&K govt announces Mufti Sayeed Food Entitlement Scheme

[Jammu and Kashmir](#) government launched the [Mufti Mohammad Sayeed](#) Food Entitlement Scheme (MMSFES) to supplement the National Food Security Act in the state. Under the scheme, all those persons who are covered under the state's public distribution system, will get additional 5 kg of ration per person in addition to 5 kg of ration they are entitled to get under NFSA. Additional quota of ration under MMSFSES would be provided to the consumers at the subsidised rate of Rs 13 per kg for atta (flour) and Rs 15 per kg for rice.

77. Maharajas Express among top-rated trains globally

Indias Maharajas Express is among the top-rated trains in the world, while The Plaza New York was rated among the best hotels for the super rich. According to a survey by research firm New World Wealth, Maharajas Express is ranked fourth on the list of preferences of the super rich, while Eastern and Oriental Express (Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand) was rated the best globally. According to The Maharajas Express website, the train has redefined the luxury travel experience by offering guests the opportunity to explore fabled destinations providing a glimpse of the rich cultural heritage of Incredible India... It offers various travel packages with train fares ranging from around \$3,000 (Rs. 2 lakh), and going up to nearly \$24,000 (Rs.16 lakh). Other top-rated trains globally include Blue Train (South Africa), Pride of Africa (Rovos Rail) and The Orient Express (Europe and Turkey). With regard to luxury hotels, the iconic Plaza Hotel of New York, owned by the crisis-ridden Sahara group, has been rated second best by the worlds wealthiest. The list was topped by The Bellagio, Las Vegas. New World Wealth said it interviews over 800 high-net-worth individuals every year in order to determine their preferences. Hotel Mandarin Oriental (London) was ranked third on the list. Hotel du Cap-Eden-Roc (Antibes) and Raffles (Singapore) were placed in the fourth and fifth places respectively. Maharajas Express The luxury train service was started in March 2010. The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) and Cox and Kings India Ltd., had signed a joint venture to set up a company called Royale Indian Rail Tours Ltd. (RIRTL) to oversee the functioning and management of the Maharaja Express. This joint venture was terminated on 12 August 2011 and the train is now being operated exclusively by IRCTC.

78. Ex-army chief JJ Singh gets highest French civilian honour

Former army chief Gen. (retd) JJ Singh was conferred with the highest French civilian distinction, Officer of the Legion of Honour. Singh was chosen for the honour in recognition of his "stellar role" in modernising the Indian Army and initiating robust exchanges between the Indian and French armies leading to "unprecedented" levels of cooperation and inter- operability and creation of enduring ties and promotion of mutual understanding between the two countries, the French Embassy said here. 'Officier de l'Ordre national de la Legion d'Honneur' is the highest civilian award given

by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality of the recipients. Singh was conferred the honour by French Ambassador to India, Francois Richier. An alumnus of the National Defence Academy and holder of a master's degree in Defence Science, Singh was commissioned into the 9th Maratha Light Infantry on August 2, 1964. In January, 2003, he was appointed as the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Army Training Command (ARTRAC) and took over as Army Commander - Western Command in January, 2004. On January 31, 2005, Singh assumed the office of Chief of Army Staff. In 2007, he also held the appointment of Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee of the three forces. Working tirelessly for the enhancement of military cooperation between the Indian and French armies, he led an inter-services delegation to France that year. It was during his tenure that he mooted the idea of holding joint army exercises at the level already existing between the two countries' air forces (Garuda) and navies (Varuna). "It was thus that the 'Shakti' inter-army exercise later came into being in 2011," the statement said. In 2009, he was invited as the Guest of Honour for the French National Day military parade in Paris in which an Indian Army contingent took part for the first time. After his retirement in September 2007, Singh served as the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh from 2008 to 2013.

79. India's first woman biker Veenu Paliwal passes away in a road accident

In a tragic incident, Veenu Paliwal, India's top woman biker died in a road accident in Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh. Paliwal with Harley Davidson was on a nationwide tour along with fellow biker Dipesh Tanwar. The 44-year-old Jaipur resident's death took place as her bike skid off a road near Gyaraspur, 100 kilometers from state capital Bhopal. Paliwal was rushed to a primary health centre and then to the Vidisha district hospital, where doctors declared her brought dead, police said. Paliwal was also planning to make a documentary on her motorbike journey across the country.

80. International Day of Human Space Flight

The UN General Assembly, in its resolution A/RES/65/271 of 7 April 2011, declared 12 April as the [International Day of Human Space Flight](#) to celebrate each year at the international level the beginning of the space era for mankind, reaffirming the important contribution of space science and technology in achieving sustainable development goals and increasing the well-being of States and peoples, as well as ensuring the realization of their aspiration to maintain outer space for peaceful purposes. 12 April 1961 was the date of the first human space flight, carried out by Yuri Gagarin, a Soviet citizen. This historic event opened the way for space exploration for the benefit of all humanity. The General Assembly expressed its deep conviction of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived there from. The 55th anniversary of First Human Space Flight [was commemorated](#) at United Nations on 12 April 2016.

81. Indo German Agreement on Namami Gange Signed

According to the Ministry of Water Resources, the objective of the agreement is to enable responsible stakeholders at national and state levels to implement integrated river basin management for the rejuvenation of the river Ganga in line with the successful river basin management strategies used for Rhine and Danube. This will be based on Indo-German knowledge exchange and practical experience on strategic river basin management issues, effective data management system and public engagement. The ministry highlighted that the project will closely co-operate with other national and international initiatives including Indo-German bilateral projects such as Support to National Urban Sanitation Policy (SNUSP) and Sustainable Environment-friendly Industrial Production (SEIP). The project duration is three years i.e. from 2016 to 2018 and the German contribution in the project will be Rs. 22.5 crore. Initial activities will focus on Uttarakhand, with scope of expansion to other states along the upstream stretch of the river. Namami Gange programme, is a flagship programme of Government of India to decrease river pollution and conserve the river, which is the lifeline of India in many ways.

82. Haryana Government renames Gurgaon as Gurugram

The Haryana government has decided to change the name of Gurgaon district to Gurugram, reverting to an ancient description for a place identified with swanky malls, luxury apartments and state-of-the-art offices. The government said the decision was taken on the basis of a request by residents and politicians. An official gazette said Gurgaon got its name from Guru Dronacharya, the tutor of the Pandavas in the epic Mahabharata. It said the Pandavas gifted the village to Drona, and the area was later known as Guru Ka Gram (village of the master) before becoming Gurgaon. Gurgaon,

on the outskirts of Delhi, is known as the cyber city which houses offices of renowned IT firms. It is also a popular destination among party-goers. Haryana is a historic land of the Bhagwat Gita and Gurgaon had been a centre of learning. It had been known as Gurgaon since the times of Guru Dronacharya. Gurgaon was a great centre of education where the princes used to be provided education, an official said. The government has also decided to change the name of Mewat district to Nuh. Mewat was not a district but a geographical and cultural unit. It is spread beyond Haryana in the adjoining states of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

83. Cabinet nod to adopt statute of South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network to check wildlife crimes

The Union Cabinet gave its nod for India adopting the statute of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) which will help in checking cross border wildlife crimes.

The approval by the Cabinet at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi allows the country to become a formal member of SAWEN in order to strengthen ties with the member countries in controlling the trans-boundary wildlife crime through communication, coordination, collaboration, capacity building and cooperation in the region. SAWEN is a regional network comprises eight countries in South Asia --Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka-- and aims at working as a strong regional intergovernmental body for combating wildlife crimes by attempting common goals and approaches for combating illegal trade in the region.

84. India ranks 44 in 2016 Global Connectivity Index

Huawei has announced its third Global Connectivity Index report during the Global Analyst Summit 2016 in Shenzhen, China. The report sheds light on various global improvements in the field of internet connectivity. In terms of numbers, United States, Singapore and Sweden top the rankings, while India is ranked 44. The report which measures the progress of 50 nations in investment and deployment of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), says that globally broadband connectivity and speeds have improved enormously from last year. India with a GCI score of 30 ranks number 44 in the report, and is seen as starter in the world of ICT deployment. India may not have ranked well, but the situation might change rapidly in 2017. Huawei Global Connectivity Index 2016 notes that the Indian governments Digital India initiative is driving growth, and improved broadband penetration.

85. Nauru becomes 189th member of IMF, World Bank

Tiny South Pacific island nation Nauru has become the 189th member of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Nauru applied for membership in the Washington-based IMF and World Bank in April 2014, after joining the United Nations in 1996 as the world's smallest independent republic. The World Bank, which helps developing countries to spur growth and fight poverty, welcomed Nauru as its smallest member by land mass, at 21 square kilometers (eight square miles). By joining the World Bank, Nauru gains access to financial support, technical support and special expertise in dealing with Pacific area issues, such as water and sanitation and disaster risk management amid the threat of climate change and rising sea levels. With the IMF, Nauru can benefit from the crisis lender's advice on managing government finances and monetary policy. Before Nauru, the last country to join the IMF and World Bank was South Sudan, in April 2012.

86. Golden Tobacco Company breaks ranks on pictorial warnings

With the health ministry maintaining its firm anti-tobacco stand, one of the oldest cigarette manufacturers Golden Tobacco Company was the first to implement the new and larger health warnings. Golden Tobacco Company, the manufacturer of Panama and Golden Gold Flake cigarettes, have started carrying 85% pictorial health warnings on both sides of its tobacco product packets bearing April 2016 as the manufacture date. Last year, the health ministry had issued a notification for implementation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Amendment Rules, 2014, which came into force April 1 this year. These amendments prescribe 85% increase on the size pictorial warnings on both sides of tobacco products, instead of 40% as of now on one side.

87. Jammu-born poet Padma Sachdev gets Saraswati Samman

Jammu-born poet and novelist Padma Sachdev has been chosen for the prestigious Saraswati Samman for the year 2015 for her autobiography in Dogri language.

The 76-year-old writer's autobiography 'Chitt-Chete', published in 2007, was selected for the 25th Saraswati Samman from among five works that were shortlisted from 22 works in as many languages published between the years 2005-2014.

The selection for the award, given every year for an outstanding literary work written in any Indian language by an Indian citizen and published during the last 10 years, is made by a jury presided by former Chief Justice Justice A S Anand.

The award carries an award money of Rs 15 lakh, a citation and a plaque.

Sachdev, who writes in Hindi and native Dogri, has 60 books to her credit. She has been a recipient of Sahitya Akademi in 1971 for her book of poetry 'Meri Kavita Mere Geet'.

The award was instituted by K K Birla Foundation, a literary and cultural organisation which has also instituted two more awards in the field of literature, including the Vyas Samman (for Hindi) and Bihari Puraskar (for Hindi and Rajasthani writers of Rajasthan).

Previous recipients of the Saraswati Samman include former Union Minister M Veerappa Moily, S L Bhyrappa, K Aiyappa Panickar, Vijay Tendulkar and Harivansh Rai Bachchan.

88. Deepak Kashyap appointed anti-corruption official in BSNL

Railway service officer Deepak Kashyap was appointed as Chief Vigilance Officer (CVO) of [Bharat](#)Sanchar Nigam Limited.

The CVO acts as distant arm of Central Vigilance Commission to check corruption.

Kashyap, a 1985 batch officer of Indian Railway Traffic Service, has been appointed to the post for an initial period of three years.

IAS officer Manoj Kumar has been appointed as CVO in [Delhi](#) Development Authority (DDA). He is a 1988 batch IAS officer of [Himachal Pradesh](#) cadre.

Kumar has been appointed to the post for a combined central deputation tenure of seven years i.e. Up to August 22, 2018.

Revenue service officer Sushma Singh has been appointed as CVO of National Institute of Fashion Technology. Singh is a 1990 batch officer of Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax cadre).

IPS officer Deepak Kumar has been appointed as CVO of Heavy Engineering Corporation Ltd Ranchi. Kumar is a 1993 batch IPS officer of Jammu and Kashmir cadre. He has been appointed to the post for three years which is further extendable up to three more years.

89. "Deep" E-Bidding & E-Reverse Auction Portal

Piyush Goyal, Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal and New Renewable Energy launched DEEP (Discovery of Efficient Electricity Price) e-Bidding e-Reverse Auction portal for procurement of short term power by DISCOMs. The web portal is accessible to all the stakeholders in the Power Sector through [www.mstcecommerce.com](#). The link is also available in the websites of Ministry of Power [www.powermin.nic.in](#) and PFC Consulting [www.pfcclindia.com](#)

90. 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar

The 125th birth anniversary Dr. Ambedkar was commemorated on 13 th April 2016 at the UN headquarters in New York. This is the first time, United Nations observed the birth anniversary of B.R. Ambedkar. Hyderabad will feature a 125-foot tall statue of B R Ambedkar, the architect of Indian Constitution, just beside the citys famous landmarks such as Hussian Sagar Lake and the state secretariat, in a year from now. PM Narendra Modi launches National Agriculture Market portal that will have 21 mandis from 8 States to connect e-mandis in several states at a function in the national capital on the 125th birth anniversary of Ambedkar.

91. NPCI launches Unified Payments Interface

Mobile phones will soon double up as virtual debit cards after National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched its unified payments interface. The interface will allow account holders across banks to send and receive money from their smartphones using just their Aadhaar unique identity number, mobile phone number or virtual payments address without entering bank account details. Any kind of payment, including for shopping and paying taxi fares, can be done using an application downloaded on a smartphone once all banks adopt the system. The pilot project will be launched in about four-five months, managing director and chief executive officer A.P. Hota said. NPCIs unified payments interface will leverage on the technology used in Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), which allows a

customer to transfer money in an instant, anytime. It is a kind of layer that will allow interoperability, sitting atop the existing infrastructure of banks. Once it is adopted by all banks, money can be transferred from a bank to any other bank using a mobile phone, said [Nandan Nilekani](#), former chairman of Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). Nilekani will now be the honorary advisor on innovation and public policy to NPCI.

92. **Ajay Devgn, Kajol to be brand ambassadors of Andhra Pradesh tourism**

Bollywood actors Ajay Devgn and Kajol are all set to become the brand ambassadors of Andhra Pradesh Tourism. About 8 million tourists visited Andhra Pradesh in 2015, a 30% increase over the previous year, according to the state government. Of these, 237,000 were foreign tourists mainly from Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and West Asia. The celebrity couple were prepared to take up the role of brand ambassadors for the tourism of Amravati and the rest of the state.

93. **Kalinga institute of social sciences inks MoU with Centre's PSU**

The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS) and Educational Consultants India Limited (EdCIL), a central PSU, inked an MoU to work jointly in areas of education and human resource development. According to an official release issued here, Prashant Routray, CEO, KISS and Diptiman Das, chairman-cum-managing director of EdCIL signed the MoU. KISS and EdCIL will engage for academic collaborations and exchanges. EdCIL will provide financial support for organizing research projects and conferences. EdCIL distributed books worth over Rs 4.5 lakhs to around 9000 tribal students from class I to class V of KISS on the occasion.

94. **Govt appoints Susmita Pande as NMA chairperson**

Susmita Pande, a professor at Ujjain's Vikram University, has been appointed as the new chairperson of the National Monument Authority (NMA).

"The position was lying vacant since last five months after the term of Himanshu Prabha Ray, professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University, ended," Navneet Soni, Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to Union Culture and Tourism minister, said. He said the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet selects the person for this post, which has a three-year term. Pande currently heads the School of Studies in Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology in Madhya Pradesh's Vikram University.

NMA, under the Culture ministry, is responsible for the protection and preservation of centrally protected monuments and sites.

95. **Boxer Mary Kom Named AIBA Ambassador for Women's World Championships**

M.C. Mary Kom was named one of the eight ambassadors for the upcoming World championships by the International Boxing Association (AIBA). An elated Mary Kom (51kg), who has five World championship gold medals, said she felt honoured by the gesture. It's a great honour for me as an Indian. This title means that I will be representing international boxing and this is an honour which is not given to everybody, said Mary Kom. She is aiming to secure her second successive Olympic appearance through the world event which is scheduled from May 19 to 27 at Astana. The 33-year-old is currently training for the world event trials slated here on April 18 and 19. The AIBA-appointed ambassadors also include Nicola Adams of Great Britain, Team USA's Marlen Esparza, Adriana Araujo of Olympic host country Brazil, Bulgarias Stanimira Petrova, Morocco's Khadija Mardi.

96. **CWC to organise seminar on Multi-purpose Dev. of Water Resource on April 19th**

As a part of 125th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Dr. BR Ambedkar, Central Water Commission under Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation is organizing a national seminar on Multi-purpose Development of Water Resources and Present Challenges on April 19, 2016 in New Delhi to highlight his contribution in water sector and discuss way forward to realize his vision.

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar is well known as the main architect of India's Constitution and leader of the oppressed. However, his contribution in the field of management of India's water resources is not widely known.

During his tenure as Member (Labour) of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942-1946), Dr. Ambedkar steered formation of a definite All-India Policy for the development of water resources in the country. In order to further this task, he laid foundation of Central Waterways, Irrigation and Navigation Commission (CWINC) which was forerunner of the present day Central Water Commission (CWC).

Dr. Ambedkar advocated the concept of River Valley Authority or corporation for integrated development of the rivers.

He introduced the concept of multi-purpose development of river basin in the country and his efforts in this direction have culminated with multipurpose development of Damodar, Mahanadi and other rivers immediately after independence.

He was instrumental in inclusion of Entry 56 of List 1 and introduction of article 262 regarding the adjudication of disputes related to waters of inter-state rivers or river valleys. His vision for water sector in the country is still relevant even after lapse of more than 65 years.

97. Army conducts major exercise Shatrujeet in Rajasthan

Mathura-based Strike 1 corps is conducting a major exercise 'Shatrujeet' in the deserts of Rajasthan to evaluate the capability of the Army to strike deep into enemy territory in an integrated air-land battle environment. The operation-oriented exercise is focusing on "validating integrated battle theatre fighting concept" incorporating new-age technologies, weapon platforms and systems as well as long range precision targeting vectors. The Army undertakes such exercises at regular intervals at different levels to ensure forces are provided war-like situations and kept in high-state of battle readiness. The formation and units have been undergoing the training for past two month. Post preparatory training manoeuvres at subordinate units and formation levels, the corps is now poised to conduct integrated operational manoeuvres to validate its operational plans in simulated high tempo battlefield environment and terrain. The exercise would culminate on April 23. The exercise is of critical importance for the Indian Army as Pakistan has often flaunted its 60-km Hatf-IX missiles as a counter to India's conventional military superiority. Shatrujeet aims to fine-tune the strategy to tackle the threat.

98. Asia Pacific region nations vow to collaborate to combat AMR

Countries in the Asia Pacific region, including India, pledged to collaborate to combat the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and strengthen regulation of production and sale of antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines. Health ministers of various countries, including Indian Minister J P Nadda, who met in Tokyo to take part in health ministers meet on AMR also agreed to improve the way information is collected on AMR, which endangers global health by making life-saving antibiotics ineffective. Antimicrobial resistance threatens the effective prevention and treatment of an ever-increasing range of infections caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi. It is an increasingly serious threat to global public health that requires action across all government sectors and society. Antimicrobial resistance is present in all parts of the world. New resistance mechanisms emerge and spread globally.

99. New BRICS - supported bank approves first set of loans

A new multilateral lender set up by the BRICS nations has approved its first set of loans valued at \$811 million for renewable energy projects in four of its member countries, according to the bank. The New Development Bank (NDB), which formally launched full operations in February, is backed by the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The bank has been viewed as a challenge to other international institutions such as the World Bank. The first group of projects approved by the bank's board are in the area of "green" and renewable energy. A bank official told AFP on Saturday that the first batch includes four projects, one each in Brazil, India, China and South Africa. "There are many more new projects in the pipeline including projects from Russia. They are at various stages of consideration or appraisal," the NDB spokesperson said in an email, but gave no further details. China pushed for the establishment of the NDB, which is headquartered in its commercial hub of Shanghai, in what analysts say is part of government efforts to re-engineer the world's financial institutions. The NDB has authorised capital of \$100 billion, with initial subscriptions set at \$50 billion, according to its website. It is led by president K.V. Kamath, a former private banker from India. Another new multilateral lender backed by China, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), started business from its Beijing headquarters in January. The AIIB includes several European countries among its members, including Britain, but the United States and Japan declined to join. The AIIB and the World Bank joined hands with an agreement to co-finance projects, they said, easing some of the worries that the two might be rivals.

100. Paddlers Sharath Kamal, Mouma Das qualify for Rio Olympics

Indian Table Tennis players Achanta Sharath Kamal and Mouma Das have booked places in forthcoming Rio Olympics. Both the paddlers won their respective final rounds in Stage-2 of the Asia Olympic Qualification tournament at Hong Kong.

Earlier, Soumyajit Ghosh and Manika Batra had qualified for the Rio Games to be held in August.

It will be for the first time India will be represented by a full four-member squad in Table Tennis Singles events at the

Olympics.

101. Modi launches self-governance campaign for villages

Union Minister for Rural Development Birender Singh Tuesday said that people would take an oath of tolerance and social harmony across villages in the country on the first day of Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan on Thursday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the campaign, to mark the 125th birth anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar, on April 14 in Madhya Pradesh. The campaign will conclude on Panchayati Raj Day on April 24, when Modi is expected to address all gram sabhas in the country from Jamshedpur, Singh added. The Prime Minister will inaugurate the campaign in Mhow, Madhya Pradesh. The aim of the campaign is to generate nationwide efforts to increase social harmony across villages, strengthen panchayati raj, promote rural development and foster farmers welfare and livelihood of the poor, the minister said. He said that MPs and MLAs will be present at gram sabha meetings that will be held during the period in all states, except the poll-bound states of Kerala, Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. At Village Farmer Assemblies, farmers will also be given information about government schemes. Jharkhand to honour sanitation workers Ranchi: Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das will Wednesday honour sanitation workers across the state on the eve of 125th birth anniversary of Bhim Rao Ambedkar. The sanitation workers will be given Rs 1,000 each as incentives. In all, there are an estimated 23,000 sanitation workers in the state. Das will address a gathering of sanitation workers in Ranchi. Similar programmes involving senior officials and ministers will be held across the state. Ambedkar was born in Mhow cantonment town of Madhya Pradesh on April 14, 1891. The state government has built a grand memorial at his birth place. Modi is the first Prime Minister of the country to pay a visit to Ambedkar's birth place, Mhow,.

102. How does HIV virus evades immune system

Scientists at the University of North Carolina (UNC) School of Medicine and Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP) have identified a human (host) protein that weakens the immune response to HIV and other viruses. The findings, published today in Cell Host-Microbe, have important implications for improving HIV antiviral therapies, creating effective viral vaccines, and advance a new approach to treat cancer. "This research shows that the host protein NLRX1 is responsible--it's required for HIV infection and works by repressing the innate immune response." The innate immune response works by producing a cascade of signaling chemicals (interferons and cytokines) that trigger cytotoxic T cells to kill pathogens. Increasing evidence suggests that mounting an early, potent innate immune response is essential for the control of HIV infection, and may improve the effectiveness of vaccines. How NLRX1 reduces innate immunity to HIV Although HIV is a single-stranded RNA virus, after it infects an immune cell it's rapidly reverse transcribed into DNA, increasing the level of DNA found in the fluid portion of a cell (cytosol). Elevated cytosolic DNA triggers a sensor called STING (stimulator of interferon genes) that turns on the innate immune response.

103. Vaccine switched in 'milestone' towards ending polio

More than 150 countries have begun switching to a different polio vaccine - an important milestone towards polio eradication. The new vaccine will target the two remaining strains of the virus under a switchover 18 months in the planning. There were just 74 cases of the paralysing disease in 2015 and there have been 10 so far this year. All of the cases were in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Africa has been free of polio for more than a year. Switching the vaccine from one successfully used to fight polio for more than 30 years is a huge logistical exercise. Thousands of people will monitor the changeover in 155 countries during the next fortnight. It is taking effect mainly in developing countries, but also in richer ones such as Russia and Mexico. The new vaccine will still be given as drops in the mouth, so healthcare workers will not need fresh training. It will no longer include a weakened version of type 2 polio virus, which was eradicated in 1999. What is polio? Polio, or poliomyelitis, mainly affects children aged under five. It is a highly infectious disease caused by a virus. It invades the nervous system and can cause total paralysis in a matter of hours. Initial symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness of the neck and pains in the limbs. One in 200 infections leads to irreversible paralysis. Among those paralysed, 5% to 10% die when their breathing muscles become immobilised. Today, only two countries - Afghanistan and Pakistan - remain polio-endemic, down from more than 125 in 1988.

104. Dipa Karmakar becomes first Indian woman gymnast to qualify for Olympics

Dipa Karmakar on Monday created history by becoming the first Indian woman gymnast to qualify for Olympics as

she booked a berth for the Rio Games after a strong performance at the final qualifying and test event. The 22-year-old garnered a total score of 52.698 points in the Olympics qualifying event to book a berth for artistic gymnastics in Rio Games to be held here in August. Apart from being the first Indian woman, she will also be an Indian gymnast qualifying for the quadrennial extravaganza after 52 long years. Since the independence of the country, 11 Indian male gymnast have taken part in the Olympics (two in 1952, three in 1956 and six in 1964) but this will be the first for an Indian woman at the Olympics. The International Federation of Gymnastics (Federation Internationale de Gymnastique) has confirmed Dipas Rio Games qualification in its official release. Dipa, who hails from Tripuras Agartala, did not enter into gymnastics by choice. In fact, it was a sport she had abhorred ever since she was initiated into it by her father, Dulal, a weightlifting coach. She was afraid of falling! However, with the passage of time, not only did she get used to the sport and overcome her apprehensions and dislike, she also began nurturing a burning need to carve a niche for herself. Trained by B.S. Nandi and Kaplana Debnath in Agartala, she improved in leaps and bounds. Dipa came into the limelight last year at the Commonwealth Games (CWG) held in Glasgow, Scotland and won a Bronze, making it Indias first-ever medal by a woman gymnast in the CWG. She might have narrowly missed her moment of glory in the Asian Games held at Incheon, South Korea last year, but her bronze this time around, has her scaling greater heights.

105. Rafael Nadal beats Gael Monfils to claim ninth Monte-Carlo Title

In Tennis, world number five Rafael Nadal won his 9th Monte Carlo Masters title last night. The Spaniard, who is known as the King of Clay, defeated Frenchman Gael Monfils, 7-5, 5-7, 6-0 to record his 68th win from 100 finals on the ATP World Tour. Nadal has, now, claimed clay-court titles in each of last 13 years. Before losing the 2013 final to world number one Novak Djokovic, Nadal had won eight consecutive titles. The win also helped the Spaniard equal Djokovic's record of 28th Masters titles.

106. Lionel Messi, Usain Bolt, Serena Williams among top contenders at Laureus awards

From football genius Lionel Messi to sprint king Usain Bolt, a shimmering array of the world's greatest sports stars are in the race for the top honours at the prestigious Laureus World Sports Awards -- also called the 'Oscars of Sport' -- to be presented here on Monday. The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual award ceremony honoring remarkable individuals from the world of sports along with the greatest sporting achievements throughout the year. It was established in 1999 by founding patrons [Daimler](#) and [Richemont](#) and is supported by its global partners [Mercedes-Benz](#) and [IWC Schaffhausen](#). The first ceremony was held on May 25, 2000 in [Monte Carlo](#).

Nominees for the 2016 Laureus World Sports Awards:

Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award: Usain Bolt (Jamaica, Athletics), Stephen Curry (US, Basketball), Novak Djokovic (Serbia, Tennis), Lewis Hamilton (UK, Motor Racing), Lionel Messi (Argentina, Football), Jordan Spieth (US, Golf). Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year Award: Genzebe Dibaba (Ethiopia, Athletics), Anna Fenninger (Austria, Skiing), Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce (Jamaica, Athletics), Katie Ledecky (US, Swimming), Carli Lloyd (US, Football), Serena Williams (US, Tennis). Laureus World Team of the Year Award: All Blacks (New Zealand, Rugby), FC Barcelona (Spain, Football), Golden State Warriors (US, Basketball), Great Britain Davis Cup team (Tennis), Mercedes AMG Petronas Formula One team (Germany), US Women's football team. Laureus World Breakthrough of the Year Award: Chile Men's Football team, Jason Day (Australia, Golf), Tyson Fury (UK, Boxing), Adam Peaty (UK, Swimming), Jordan Spieth (US, Golf), Max Verstappen (Netherlands, Motor Racing). Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award: Dan Carter (New Zealand, Rugby), Jessica Ennis-Hill (UK, Athletics), Mick Fanning (Australia, Surfing), Michael Phelps (US, Swimmer), David Rudisha (Kenya, Athletics), Lindsey Vonn (US, Skiing).

107. Herath retires from ODIs, T20Is

Sri Lanka left-arm spinner [Rangana Herath](#) has announced his retirement from limited-overs cricket in order to focus on the remainder of his Test career. Herath informed Sri Lanka Cricket of his decision to step away from the shorter formats in the past week, and the board has since accepted his decision. He has 74 wickets from 71 ODIs, but will be remembered more fondly for his impact in T20 internationals. Herath played a key role in Sri Lanka's victorious 2014 World T20 campaign, delivering the side's spell of that tournament. His 5 wickets for 3 runs in a virtual quarter-final [against New Zealand](#) is arguably the best-ever T20 bowling performance. He was also effective in the semi-final and final of that tournament, and had also been incisive in the 2012 World T20 semi-final, [against Pakistan](#), where he

claimed 3 for 25. Overall, he has 18 T20I wickets from 17 matches. "Sri Lanka Cricket wishes Mr. Herath nothing but the best as he continues to play cricket in his chosen discipline, and in all future endeavours," a board release said.

108. **Bhimrao Ambedkar Awas Yojana for Widows in Jharkhand**

Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das launched a new housing scheme for widows named as Bhimrao Ambedkar Awas Yojana on the 125th birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar. The state government has set aside a budget of Rs. 80 Crores for the scheme. A target of constructing 11,000 homes within current financial year has been set under the Bhimrao Ambedkar Awas Yojana. Under the Bhimrao Ambedkar Awas Yojana, the state government will provide a financial assistance of Rs. 75,000/- to widows to build a home in hilly areas and Rs. 70,000/- in plain areas. The assistance money will be disbursed to the beneficiaries in three installments into their bank accounts. The launched housing scheme for widows can be really helpful and turn out to be one of the best welfare schemes by the state government.

109. **Panagarh Airbase Renamed After Former IAF Chief Arjan Singh**

In a first, Panagarh airbase was on Friday renamed as Air Force Station Arjan Singh after the former Indian Air Force chief. "It is for the first time that we have taken a conscious decision to rename an airbase after an individual." Panagarh, approximately 150 kms from Kolkata, is located in Burdwan district. The airbase in Panagarh was constructed in 1944 during the Second World War. Air Force Station, Panagarh, post the Second World War, played a significant role in the 1965 and 1971 wars with Pakistan. Singh was the IAF chief from August 1964-69. He was the first Indian Air Chief to be elevated to the rank of Air Chief Marshal on January 16, 1966. In recognition of his lifelong services, the government conferred the rank of the "Marshal of the Indian Air Force" on Arjan Singh on January 28, 2002 making him the first and the only 'Five Star' rank officer with the Indian Air Force. Singh was born on April 15, 1919, in Lyalpur (now Faisalabad, Pakistan), and completed his education at Montgomery (now Sahiwal, Pakistan). At the age of 19, he was selected to the Empire Pilot training course at RAF Cranwell. In 1965, when Pakistan launched its Operation Grand Slam, with an armoured thrust targeted at the vital town of Akhnour, Singh led Indian Air Force through the war with courage, determination and professional skill. He inspired IAF to victory, despite the constraints imposed on the full-scale use of Air Force combat power. Then Defence Minister Y B Chavan wrote about him, "Air Marshal Arjan Singh is a jewel of a person, quiet efficient and firm; unexcitable but a very able leader". He was awarded Padma Vibhushan for his astute leadership of the Air Force during the war. Subsequently in recognition of the Air Force's contribution during the war, the rank of the CAS was upgraded and Arjan Singh became the first Air Chief Marshal of the Indian Air Force. He remained a flyer to the end of his tenure in IAF, visiting forward bases and units and flying with the squadrons. He retired in August 1969, thereupon accepting Ambassadorship to Switzerland. He was Lieutenant Governor of New Delhi from December 1989 to December 1990.

110. **T N Ninan gets Mumbai Press Club's lifetime achievement award**

The [Mumbai Press Club](#) on Friday selected T N Ninan, Chairman and Editorial Director of Business Standard, for this year's 'RedInk Award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism'.

The award will be presented to Ninan by the Governor of Maharashtra C Vidyasagar Rao on April 26 here.

The Award recognises Ninan's extensive contribution to business [journalism](#) through good editorial leadership which he provided over the years to a host of publications.

The 'RedInk Journalist of the Year' Award would be given to NDTV India's senior Executive Editor [Ravish Kumar](#) for his consistent and good reporting on politics and issues that concern the common man.

The RedInk Awards for Excellence in Journalism are given in 10 categories for meritorious work in TV, print and digital formats. The categories are Politics, Crime, Health Wellness, Business, Environment, Human Rights, Photography, Science Innovation, Entertainment Lifestyle and Sports.

The selection of winners was made by eminent people from various walks of life including Justice (retd) B N Srikrishna for Human Rights, Shobha De for Entertainment Lifestyle, SBI Chairperson Arundhati Bhattacharya for Business, Harsha Bhogle for Sports and Sudheendra Kulkarni for Politics.

In the past, doyens of journalism including Vinod Mehta, Kuldip Nayar, N Ram, Mrinal Pande and (last year) Dr Prannoy Roy have been honoured with the 'RedInk Award for Lifetime Achievement'.

111. **Gujarat Appoints Geeta Johri As Itâ€™s First Woman DGP.**

The Gujarat government on Friday appointed Geeta Johri as the Director General of Police (DGP). With this

appointment, Johri becomes the first female DGP of Gujarat. She also has the distinction of being the Gujarat's first woman IPS officer. The 1982-batch IPS officer first came to limelight in the 1990s when [she took on underworld king of Gujarat, Abdul Latif by raiding his house](#) in Dariapur district and arrested his gunman Sharif Khan. However, Latif managed to escape. In 2006, Johri, who was posted in Criminal Investigation Department (CID), headed the investigations into the Sohrabuddin Sheikh fake encounter and the killing of his wife Kausar Bi. She was appointed to the case after Sohrabuddin's brother Rubabuddin filed a petition in the Supreme Court. She gathered evidence that confirmed that the encounter was 'fake' and implicated the role of several officers in the fake encounter. The evidences led to the arrest of 13 police officers, including ex-Gujarat cop DIG DG Vanzara, SP Rajkumar Pandian and Dinesh MN. In May 2007, Johri's investigations revealed that the policemen who killed Sohraubddin and his wife Kausar Bi did so because they wanted promotions and rewards. Finally, she managed to prove that it was all a political conspiracy. In the same year, the CBI issued summons to Geetha Johri on charges of destroying crucial documents.

112. Netaji's driver becomes oldest human alive at 116 yrs!

With rumors amuck of late freedom fighter [Subhash Chandra Bose](#) making an appearance as the mysterious godman Gumnami Baba, Netaji's driver Colonel Nizamuddin is now set to make headlines by opening a bank account at the ripe old age of 116-years. According to Colonel Nizamuddin alias Saifuddin's voter identity card and passport, which he produced as proof of identity before the [State bank of India](#) for opening the account, he was born in 1900. In February this year, a Japanese man, who was believed to be the oldest man alive, passed away at the age of 114. That way, Colonel Nizamuddin is the oldest human being alive on the planet right now as he completes 116-years 3 months and 14 days today. Another startling aspect is that Colonel Nizamuddin's wife, Ajbunisha, is 107 years old and the couple have opened a joint account with SBI. Locals and the district administration were delighted to know about Colonel Nizamuddin amazing feat of being the oldest man alive. They are, infact, proud of the fact that such an elderly person is part of their neighbourhood.

113. World Hemophilia Day â€œ April 17

World Federation of Hemophilia (WFH) marked April 17th as World Hemophilia Day in order to raise awareness about bleeding disorder or hemophilia. Started in 1989, this particular day was chosen to pay tribute to Frank Schnabel, the founder of WFH, whose birthday falls on the same date. Across the world, the number of people suffering from this unique medical condition is quite low. According to WFH, globally 1 in 1,000 people has bleeding disorder but most of them are not diagnosed or receive proper treatment due to lack of awareness. What is hemophilia? Hemophilia is a rare genetic blood disorder in which the blood loses its tendency to clot normally. Due to lack of sufficient blood-clotting proteins, Hemophilia patients bleed for a much longer time after an injury. In this condition internal bleeding can damage organs and tissue, and may be life-threatening. Types of hemophilia Hemophilia are of two types- Hemophilia A and Hemophilia B. Each of them is categorized with low levels of certain clotting factor. Hemophilia A is a common type and is mainly associated with low levels of clotting factor VIII (8). Hemophilia B is a rare condition and is linked with low levels of clotting factor IX (9). The only way to diagnose hemophilia is through a blood test. If the blood sample shows the level of clotting factor between VIII and IX, this means that the person is suffering from bleeding disorder. What causes hemophilia? Hemophilia is caused by genetic mutation. It is transmitted by genes of parents and caused when antibodies formed in one's own body destroys one of the genes that determines how the body makes blood clotting factor VIII or IX. Symptoms Spontaneous bleeding Bleeding into muscles or joints Prolonged bleeding after surgery or major injury Unusual bleeding after vaccination Blood in toilets or stools Unexplained nosebleeds Cure Hemophilia is currently incurable but that doesn't mean we can't defeat it. Many health experts belief that gene therapy is a suitable solution of this problem. At personal level, a hemophilia patient should follow a proper lifestyle. Regular exercise, less intake of painkillers and blood thinning medication as well as good oral hygiene can help in preventing various serious outcomes.

114. Government releases commemorative coins to mark Tatya Tope Martyrdom Day.

The NDA Government released a Rs.200 commemorative coin and a Rs.10 circulation coin on the occasion of the Martyrdom day of Tatya Tope, one of the outstanding Indian leaders of the 1857 revolt against the British. Union Minister of State for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mahesh Sharma issued the coins. "He fought during 1857 revolt along with Jhansi ki Rani and Nana Sahib, and gave his important contribution in the independence of India. Today the Government of India along with 125 crore people of India salutes him with pride," Ramachandra Pandurang Tope (1814 - 18 April 1859) was one of its notable generals of the 1857 revolt. He is better known by his nickname

Tatya Tope, which is also transliterated as Tantya Tope or Tantia Topi. A personal adherent of Nana Sahib of Bithur, he progressed with the Gwalior contingent after the British reoccupied Cawnpore and forced General Windham to retreat from the city. Later on, he came to the relief of Rani Lakshmbai of Jhansi and with her seized the city of Gwalior. He was captured by the British Forces on April 7, 1859, and after a hurried trial for waging war against the East India Company, was hanged to death on April 18, 1859 at Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh. The Culture Ministry has marked the 200th Birth Anniversary of Tatya Tope in association with the state governments of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh respectively. The Union Government is also considering constructing a memorial at Yeola in Nashik district in Maharashtra, and a war museum in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, in association with the respective state governments, to honour the memory of Tatya Tope.

115. Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana

Haryana Government has notified Affordable Plotted Housing Policy 2016 for Low and Medium Potential Towns, the policy will be named as Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana. This policy is intended to encourage the development of high density plotted colonies in Low and Medium Potential towns of the State wherein small plots are made available through a liberal policy framework. Features of Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana or Affordable Plotted Housing Policy 2016 Under the Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana, all the projects are required to be completed within 7 years from the date of approval of license. In any residential sector not more than 30% of the net planned area under residential zone, inclusive of the 20% area limit allowed for group housing projects, can be allowed for projects under this policy. However, if a residential sector has an area of less than 50 acres, one such project shall be allowed upto 15 acres. 65% of the licensed area is the maximum allowed area under residential and commercial plots. The minimum and maximum net planned area for such projects shall be 5 acres and 15 acres respectively irrespective of the Development Plan where such project is proposed. Not more than 10% of the licensed area should fall under sector roads. Area under commercial use should not exceed 4% of the licensed area. Minimum width of the roads in the colony should be 9 meters. The first licence may be obtained for an area of 5 acres or more and additional license for minimum 2 acres can be obtained to take the aggregated area of colony upto 15 acres. Minimum 7.5% of the licensed area should be kept as organized open space. Registration of independent floors in plots shall be allowed. Clubbing of residential plots for approval of integrated zoning plan of two adjoining plots under same ownership shall not be permitted in the colonies approved under the present policy. Grant of licence shall be considered under this policy, initially, against 20% group housing area limit in such sector. Once the area under 20% limit stands exhausted on account of either group housing licences or affordable housing policy 2013 projects or under the present policy; grant of any further license under this policy shall be considered only upto a further limit of 10% of the net planned area under residential zone of such sector. Under the Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojana, max allowed area of the plot would be 150 Sq.Mt.. The minimum and maximum density per acre is 240 and 400 people respectively.

116. National Meeting of Tribal Women Gram Panchayat Presidents

National meeting of tribal women Gram Panchayat presidents from fifth scheduled areas is planned to be held on 19th April under [Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan](#). The meeting has been planned to discuss The role of women gram panchayat presidents in the development of the fifth scheduled areas Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Himachal Pradesh. An unprecedented move to strengthen Panchayati Raj through the leadership of Tribal Women Gram Panchayat Presidents. The venue of the meeting would be A Convention Center, Valluru Poornachandra Rao Road, Labbipet, Viiayawada, Andhra Pradesh

117. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme extended to 61 more districts

Union women and child development (WCD) minister Maneka Gandhi announced the expansion of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme to 61 more districts, the government listed these districts spread across 11 states. Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, NCT of Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are the 11 states where the scheme has been expanded. Initially implemented in 100 districts across the country, the scheme was launched on 22 January 2015 in Haryanas Panipat district by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The scheme aims at improving the trend of declining child sex ratio (CSR) in the country which, according to Census 2011 data, has plummeted from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 and 918 in 2011 and promoting gender equality. Among the 61 chosen districts, the maximum are from Uttar Pradesh (11), which already has 10 districts under the scheme, and has a CSR of 902 as per Census 2011. As for Jammu and Kashmir, which has a CSR of 862, the number

of districts added has doubled from five in 2015 to 10 in 2016. Rajasthan, on the other hand, saw the sharpest fall in the number of districts chosen from 10 in 2015 to only four in the current round of expansion, even though its CSR stands at 888, as per Census 2011. In the initial round of selection, maximum districts were chosen from Haryana, which has the worst CSR at 834, as per the 2011 Census. However, in the recent expansion, eight districts have been selected as opposed to 12 in 2015. This reduction can be attributed to the rise in the states sex ratio at birth. In January 2016, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar had said that the states sex ratio at birth had crossed the 900 mark and touched 903 in December, for the first time in a decade.

118. Science Express -Climate Action Special Train to be in Gujarat for 18 days from April 20

Science Express -Climate Action Special Train an exhibition on wheels will be in Gujarat for 18 days period from Wednesday, the 20th of this month. The train will halt at Valsad, Anand, Patan, Hapa, Junagadh and Gandhinagar railway stations for 3 days each. Activities such as quiz, painting, essay writing, demonstration model display etc will take place during halt of the train at various stations. The Air Conditioned train has a unique exhibition in its 16 coaches. Operated by Government of India, the exhibition train was flagged off on 15 October last year. It will cover 19,800 km distance in 7 months covering halts at 64 railway stations before reaching its final destination.

119. Borewell digging beyond 200 ft banned in Maharashtra

The soaring temperatures across Maharashtra has surfaced deep water crisis in many parts of the state, including many areas of Nagpur district. Given the pace at which ground water level is declining, the state government has stepped up to contain the loss and decided to ban digging of borewells beyond 200 feet. State Water Supply and Sanitation Minister Babanrao Lonikarsaid that special workshops were conducted for the concerned officials to discuss the ways for implementation of Maharashtra Groundwater Development and Management Act to control the excess water pumping through borewell. He informed that state government has provided total 4356 takers to Konkan, Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Amravati Nagpur. Besides the State Government has also approved Rs 750 crore scarcity fund of which Rs 500 crore have already been distributed to District Collectors for providing measures to meet the drinking water requirements of the people.

120. Maharashtra to use hologram tech to check spurious liquor

In order to check sale of spurious liquor, the Maharashtra Government has decided to make it mandatory to have a hologram on every alcohol bottle manufactured and sold in the State. The Government has decided to paste "polyester base track and trace" hologram, to be supported by a mobile app, which will help consumers find out whether the liquor is fake or genuine. Checking sale of spurious liquor, the technique will also help prevent loss of revenue due to cheap liquor being imported into Maharashtra from neighbouring States. Twenty-one states are already using the hologram technology.

121. Telangana's Balamallupalli village awarded as best Panchayat in country

In Telangana, Balamallupalli village in Karimnagar district has been adjudged as the best Panchayat at the national level. The proud Sarpanch of the Kasturi village. Tirupati Reddy said the small village could achieve this only due to villagers cooperation especially in tax payments, teamwork and commitment in implementation of programmes like Swachh Bharat. He will be receiving the award from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 24th of this Month in Jamshedpur in Jharkhand state.

The small village with a population of 480 took a major step before getting achieving these rare laurels. Most of the villagers are poor and small farmers. After holding discussions at their gram sabha, they decided to act united and every members expressed their commitment for abiding by the decision of Gram Sabha. After initial hiccups, all members of the panchayat started paying their house tax, water tax and Property tax. As on today, no one is due to their Panchayat. The Village has been implementing Swachh Bharat programme and achieved cent per cent personal toilets status as each household has one. The village constructed CC Roads at a cost of Rs 20 lakh and also extending support to the Self Help Women Groups. Not Only this, despite political promises of wavier of crops loans during elections and drought conditions prevailed in many parts of the state the farmers, most of them are small and marginal ones have repaid their crops loans in due time.

122. UP govt approves free hold land policy for setting up of industries

The Uttar Pradesh government has approved free hold land policy-2016 for the establishment of industries in the

state. As per the new policy, lands which were acquired by the state and handed over to private industries against land transfer or deed or on contractual basis for establishment of industrial units will now be converted into free hold land by the units.

The state cabinet also approved various concession and facilities to six mega projects in the state that will bring an investment worth more than three thousand corer rupees and employment opportunities over for 11000 people in the state.

According to official spokesperson in Lucknow Chief minister Akhilesh Yadav also approved amendment in existing policy to encourage setting up theme parks and amusements parks. The state cabinet also granted consent for guarantee of Agra -Lucknow expressway project to acquire loan from banks.

123. President Pranab Mukherjee presents Hindi Sevi Samman for 2012-14

[President Pranab Mukherjee](#) awarded 28 persons, including three journalists and an ISRO scientist, for their outstanding contribution towards the development and spread of [Hindi](#) language. The awards for the years 2010 and 2011 were given under seven categories at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Shamtorf Azad from Uzbekistan and Woo Jo Kim from South Korea were the two foreign nationals awarded the Dr George Grierson Award for the spread of Hindi in foreign lands. Senior ISRO scientist Kali Shankar was awarded the Amaram Award for his writings in Hindi on scientific and technical subjects. Acclaimed writer Ved Rahi and Asrar Wajahat were awarded the Mahapandit Rahul Sanskritayan award. The award is given for research in Hindi and travelogues. Incidentally, Wajahat is also a member of the Executive Council which nominates names for the awards. The 'Hindi Sevi Samman' under which awards are given in various categories was started by the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan of the HRD Ministry. Renowned Hindi poet, author, playwright and a social thinker Dharmaveer Bharti was among the first recipients of the Ganesh Shankar Vidyarti Award. Journalists Ravish Kumar, Dilip Kumar Choubey and Govind Singh were awarded the Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi Award for their contribution to Hindi journalism. The Hindi Sevi Samman scheme was initiated by Central Hindi Institute, Agra in 1989. 14 scholars receive this award in seven different categories every year for their contribution in the field of Hindi language and literature. The award consists one lakh rupees and a certificate.

124. Harsh Vardhan launches Twinning Network Program in Kohima

Minister for Science and Earth Sciences Harsh Vardhan today said the approach of science has to be people-centric and the common man should not remain deprived of its benefits.

"Common people should not remain deprived of the benefits of science," Vardhan said while launching the Department of Biotechnology, DBT, under Government of [India](#) funded Twinning Network Program on Chemical Ecology of North East Region with Bangalore-based scientists here.

Stressing on the intellectual acumen of young minds of the region, the Union minister said their coming together would produce dramatic [results](#) in meeting objectives of organic farming which is the need of the hour.

He also underlined the need for fostering better coordination and support among science professionals.

Twining Network Program on Chemical Ecology is a new collaborative and interdisciplinary programme in Chemical Ecology between institutions in the NER and partners in Bangalore.

This platform aims to provide a strong stimulus to ongoing research in the NER, while building enduring research and training links with partner institutions in Bangalore.

Vardhan, who was in the state as part of his two-day maiden visit, last evening inaugurated DBT funded Biotech Infrastructure Facility at ICAR-National Research Centre on Mithun at Jharnapani, Medziphema under Dimapur district.

125. Chief Justice Roberts uses sign language as Supreme Court swears in 12 deaf lawyers

The US Supreme Court is notoriously anachronistic when it comes to new technology. But in a rare move, it allowed several smartphones and tablets in the courtroom to swear in a dozen deaf and hard of hearing attorneys. Chief Justice John Roberts used American Sign Language instead of English for the first time to admit the largest group of deaf and

hard of hearing attorneys to the Supreme Court Bar. The 12 members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Bar Association (DHHBA) participated in the swearing-in ceremony with the help of sign-language interpreters and a real-time transcript delivered via a restricted wi-fi signal to their electronic devices. The use of electronic devices is usually strictly banned during sessions in the cavernous marble courtroom that can seat around 400 people. Justice Department appellate lawyer John Stanton, who is deaf, sponsored the group. A deaf lawyer has argued a case before the Supreme Court only once, in 1982 and lost.

126. Communist Laos appoints new president, prime minister

Laos's National Assembly appointed Communist Party chief Bounnhang Vorachit as the country's new president and named foreign minister Thongloun Sisoulith as prime minister. The picks are seen by many analysts as a continuation of the status quo in secretive Laos, where the communists have ruled since the end of the Vietnam War. State television broadcast a meeting of the single-chamber National Assembly, at which lawmakers listed the virtues of Bounnhang, who was appointed Communist Party leader in January. "The National Assembly has approved Bounnhang Vorachit as president, with more than two-thirds of the votes," said assembly chairwoman Pany Yathotou. The 149-member assembly completed the process of nomination and voting for both candidates in around an hour. Laos has close political ties to communist Vietnam and mirrors its political system. Communist neighbor China has been vying aggressively for influence in Laos, however, providing loans, aid and infrastructure investment. Laos is still struggling to rid itself of the painful legacy of the Vietnam War, when it became the most heavily bombed country in history after the U.S. and its allies dropped about two million tons of ordnance from 1964 to 1973. More than four decades on, the country grapples with millions of cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnance devices that kill and maim dozens each year.

127. World's nations urged to shift focus on drug problem

United Nations (United States) (AFP) - World governments at a UN meeting on the global drug problem were urged to move away from repression, abolish the death penalty for drug offenses and step up treatment. In the first such meeting in nearly 20 years, the UN General Assembly adopted a document that marks a shift away from the "war on drugs" launched in the 1970s, with its heavy handed approach centered on law enforcement and criminalization. Delegates from the European Union, Switzerland, Brazil, Costa Rica and Uruguay, among others, called for abolishing capital punishment for convicted drug felons, a practice widely used by China, Iran and Indonesia. Uruguay became the first county to fully legalize marijuana in 2013 and Canada is among countries looking at a similar measure.

128. Obama nominates Indian-American woman as US envoy to Chad

US President Barack Obama has nominated Indian-American Geeta Pasi as the country's next envoy to Chad. Ms. Pasi, who served as the United States Ambassador to Djibouti from 2011 to 2014, is a career member of the Foreign Service.

She is at present the Director of the Office of Career Development and Assignments in the Bureau of Human Resources at the Department of State. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1988, Ms. Pasi has also served at posts in Cameroon, Ghana, India and Romania.

129. Bhagat Puran Singh Health Insurance Scheme

More than 30,000 smart cards would be issued to the traders of Ludhiana district under Bhagat Puran Singh Health Insurance Scheme, for which the registration process is going on in full swing. The distribution of these smart cards would be done by Deputy CM Sukhbir Singh Badal at Mullanpur Dakha on April 19. Under this scheme, beneficiaries can get treatment up to Rs 50,000 in more than 400 (both private and government run) hospitals of the state. He said that in case the head of family dies in an accident or becomes physically challenged, the family would get Rs 5 lakh. Bhagat Puran Singh He was born on 4 June, 1904 in village Rajewal of [Ludhiana district](#) of [Punjab](#). He was the "Mother Teresa" of [India](#) and [Sikhism](#). In 1947, Bhagat ji founded the institute called Pingalwara meaning "the home of the crippled" with a few discarded crippled or sick patients.

130. Gujarat CM hands over 1,092 houses to beneficiaries in Vadodara

Gujarat Chief Minister Mrs. Anandiben Patel handed over 1,092 houses to the beneficiaries under Mukhya Mantri Gruh Yojna at Tarsali-Manjalpura area in Vadodara. The earthquake proof buildings have been built by Gujarat Housing Board at a cost of Rs. 163 crore. On the occasion Mrs. Patel said that the state government has planned to construct housing with all modern facilities for the people and government is moving ahead with faster pace to implement the

scheme. Over 5 lakh houses have been handed over to the common people with proper planning, she added. Mrs. Patel stated that the government has launched housing schemes in various categories to provide affordable housing to the people of different income groups. Gujarat Government has paid special attention on human development index, she added. Alongside, Mrs. Patel laid foundation for six developmental works of Vadodra Municipal Corporation worth Rs. 178 crore including storm drainage system works and said that construction work of the projects will be completed soon.

131. Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana for BPL Families in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh Government has announced a new housing scheme named as Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana in the Budget 2016-17. The scheme has been launched to provide affordable housing for people belonging to the BPL (Below Poverty Line). Subsidy Under Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana is aimed to provide housing subsidy of Rs. 75 thousands to each BPL family in general category. The housing subsidy will be given upon buying/building a new home. The new housing scheme has an outlay of Rs. 25 Crore for the financial year 2016-17. The State Government has been providing housing subsidy to SC/ST and BPL families under Indira Awas Yojna, Rajiv Awas Yojna and under Scheduled Caste Component Plan. In the past, houses have been constructed mainly of BPL families of SC STs. The BPL families of General Category have not got sufficient houses, hence the need of new scheme. New scheme named as Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana will be started from 2016-17 under which BPL families of General categories will be covered. The state government has proposed to construct 12 thousand houses with an investment of Rs. 97 crore, under various housing schemes during 2016-17.

132. Mukhya Mantri Vardi Yojana

Himachal Pradesh Government has announced Mukhya Mantri Vardi Yojana for students of 10+2 class. Under the Mukhya Mantri Vardi Yojana, the students of 10+2 will be provided uniform by the state government. The scheme is expected to benefit 1.34 lakh students across the state. Uniform to 10+1 students will also be provided. Mukhya Mantri Vardi Yojana is one of the several new initiatives announced by the Government of Himachal Pradesh in 2016-17 financial budget.

133. Mukhya Mantri Gyandeeep Yojana Loan Scheme

Government of Himachal Pradesh has launched a new loan scheme for all the Himachali students. The government has announced the new scheme named as Mukhya Mantri Gyandeeep Yojana in the financial budget 2016-17. Under the Mukhya Mantri Gyandeeep Yojana, the state government will provide interest subvention of 4 percent to all Himachali Students availing education loan upto Rs 10 lakh. The state government has launched the new loan scheme in order to encourage deserving and meritorious students pursuing professional/technical and higher education courses in recognised institution in the country. Under this scheme, interest subvention of 4 percent would be given to all Himachali Students availing educational loan from banks upto Rs. 10 lakh irrespective of income level.

134. Gram Sabha Meetings – 21-24 April Under Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday

Gram Sabha Meetings under the Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan will be held from 21st to 24th April. Under the Gram Sabha meetings, several welfare schemes will be discussed. Discussions and decisions will be taken on several village development programmes. These programmes will help village communities generate more income and improve their lifestyle. Schemes to be Discussed Under Gram Sabha Meetings [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana](#): Every villagers dream of owning a house to be realized by 2022 MGNREGA: Highest ever allocation of Rs. 38,500 Crore this year for providing employment to every family Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana: Banking facility for even the poorest along with insurance cover [Atal Pension Yojana](#): Monthly pension of up to Rs. 5,000 for the poorest senior citizens [Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana](#): Insurance cover of Rs. 2 lakh at a Premium of just Rs. 1 per month [Free LPG connection to BPL families](#): 5 crore BPL families to benefit; Connection in the name of woman member Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana: All villages to be connected with all weather roads by 2019 [Gramoday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan](#) is being held from 14 April to 24 April 2014 under which several welfare schemes will be discussed with villagers.

135. PM Modi inaugurates super speciality hospital in Katra, J&K

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) today inaugurated the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspeciality Hospital in Katra in Jammu and Kashmir. He will shortly address the convocation of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University. For the hospital operation the board has entered into an agreement with Narayana Hrudayalaya Ltd, Bangalore that operates 32 hospitals across the country.

136. Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi to inaugurate the Regional Conference of North-East states on Child Adoption

The Minister of Women Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi inaugurates a major One Day Regional Conference with North Eastern States in Shillong on the issues relating to Child Adoption.

The conference has been organised with a view to:

- (i) Familiarise the stakeholders with the adoption programme in North Eastern States about the provisions relating to adoption under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 ; and
- (ii) Orient them about the provisions of Adoption Guidelines - 2015 as well as the online adoption process through Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (CARINGS).

The Union [Ministry of Women and Child Development](#) issued revised Guidelines Governing Adoption of Children 2015 which became effective from August last year. The 2015 Guidelines issued by the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) replaced the 2011 Adoption Guidelines.

These Guidelines are intended to provide for more effective regulation for adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children and would bring more transparency and efficiency in the adoption system. Simultaneously, Central Adoption Resource Information Guidance System (CARINGS), as an e-governance measure created for the purpose of facilitating adoption of children, has also been revamped. For hassle-free adoption, CARINGS will contain a centralized data bank of adoptable children and Prospective Adoptive Parents (PAPs). Clear cut timelines for domestic and inter-country adoption have been laid down.

The revised guidelines coupled with the new IT enabled adoption system CARINGS, provide a transparent process of adoption under which all the child care institutions of the country have been brought into an integrated system.

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 came into force from 15th January, 2016 and repeals the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000. The Act contains a separate new chapter on Adoption to streamline adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children. It gives the existing Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) the status of a statutory body to enable it to perform its function more effectively. Separate chapter (VIII) on Adoption provides for detailed provisions relating to adoption and punishments for not complying with the laid down procedure. Processes have been streamlined with timelines for both in-country and inter-country adoption including declaring a child legally free for adoption.

137. International Defence Expo opens in Malaysia

Over 1,000 defence industries players, including big names like Airbus and BAE Systems, are participating in the Defence Services Asia (DSA) exhibition which opened here . Bell Helicopter, [SAAB](#) and [Thales](#) are also among the 1,200 companies from 60 countries to showcase static equipment of weapons and defence technology, weaponry systems and generic security solutions in the four-day exhibition. A total of 29 countries participate in the exhibition in the form of group pavilion, including Australian, China, Britain and the US. In China's pavilion, Poly Technologies, China National Precision Machinery Import and Export Corporation and [CETC International](#) bring their latest products to the expo. This year's [DSA](#) is expected to be the biggest one since its inauguration 28 years ago, according to Malaysia's Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein. A series of security dialogues and forums on topics including cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief will be held alongside the expo.

138. RBL Bank opens dedicated branch in Bengaluru for start-ups

RBL Bank, Kolhapur-based private sector lender, announced on Tuesday the launch of an exclusive branch for start-ups in Bengaluru (Bangalore). The branch will offer start-ups a range of banking services and help in tax and legal compliance through partners. "The dedicated branch will assist entrepreneurs in setting up new companies or enterprises and offers a host of banking products including, foreign exchange services, remittances and cash management," the bank, formerly known as The Ratnakar Bank Ltd. "India's rapidly growing set of innovative start-ups has demanded that we rise to the challenge and deliver services that are responsive to their fast-evolving needs," said RBL Bank Chairman Narayan Ramachandran. Earlier this year, RBL Bank had launched "India StartUp Club," an initiative to support early stage companies with a slew of banking services to commence their operations. RBL Bank Limited (formerly known as The Ratnakar Bank limited) is a scheduled commercial bank headquartered in the Kolhapur region of Maharashtra. Founded in August 1943, RBL is one of the oldest private sector banks in India.

139. FIH announces new structure of intâ€™ hockey events from 2019

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) announced a new annual global home and away league, involving worlds leading hockey nations, to be launched in 2019. It will replace Hockey World League Semi-Finals and Finals and the Champions Trophy. FIH said in a statement that the new league was designed to provide a regular calendar of must-see events played in packed stadia across the world throughout the year. FIH also decided that Champions Trophy held once in two years since 1978 will be scrapped and the 2018 edition in Amsterdam will be the last tournament. These proposals were approved by the FIH Executive Board in Lausanne, Switzerland earlier this month. The decision was made after more than 18 months of consultation, research and development between a number of stakeholders. It was overseen by a specially formed working group for this project. FIH President Leandro Negre said the changes were made with an aim of making hockey a global game. FIH CEO Kelly Fairweather said moving from a tournament based format to a home and away league will considerably increase the value of hockey.

140. International Hockey Federation promotes India's Durga Thakur to outdoor umpire

India's Durga Thakur has been promoted to international outdoor umpire by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) following her good performance at the recently-concluded Hawke's Bay Cup in Hastings, New Zealand. Thakur started her career as an umpire from the third Hockey India Sub-Junior Men Women National Championship (Finals) in Bhopal in 2013. A graduate of NSNIS in 2011, her first international assignment came in 2015 at the double six-Nation Cup in Breda, Netherlands. A physical education teacher at Modern School, New Delhi, Thakur has represented her state Himachal Pradesh in the National Championships in three sporting disciplines handball, basketball and hockey. She was one of the umpires in the finals of the last National Games. Thakur is an addition to a crop of young Indian umpires currently officiating at the international level. The list currently has 14 Indians in the elite league of international umpires (10 men, 4 women). She has also represented her state Himachal Pradesh in the National Championships in three sporting disciplines- Handball, Basketball and Hockey.

141. Doris Roberts, mom on 'Everybody Loves Raymond,' dies at age 90

Doris Roberts was born on 4 November 1925 in St. Louis, and grew up in New York. She won five Emmy Awards over the course of her career, four of which were for her work on the television series Everybody Loves Raymond. She was awarded her first Emmy in 1983, for her supporting role on the series St. Elsewhere. She was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in February 2003.

142. Second International Yoga Day in Chandigarh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to lead the second edition of International Day of Yoga in Chandigarh on June 21. More than 30,000 people are expected to be a part of the programme during the PM's visit his third to Chandigarh since assuming power. He had first visited the city on September 11, 2015, to attend the PGI convocation and hand over keys of Chandigarh Housing Board flats in Sector 63 to successful applicants. Modi's second visit to the City Beautiful came during French President Francois Hollande's India tour on January 24 this year. The first International Day of Yoga was observed [world over](#) by millions on June 21, 2015. In India, the [PM led](#) about 35,000 people, including a large number of dignitaries from 84 nations, who performed 21 yoga asanas (postures) for 35 minutes at Rajpath in New Delhi. While declaring the day during his address to the UN General Assembly on September 27, 2014, Modi had said, Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. This tradition is 5,000 years old. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfilment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day.

143. Goa appoints Justice P.K. Mishra as Lokayukta

The Goa government on Wednesday decided to appoint Justice P.K. Mishra, former Chief Justice of Patna High Court who had recently retired as chairman of Goa State Human Rights Commission, as Lokayukta of the State. Justice (Retd) Sudarshan Reddy, Goa's first Lokayukta, had resigned within seven months of his appointment on October 17, 2013 and since then the post was vacant for more than two years. By the time Justice Mishra takes over and sets up shop, the term of the BJP government, which has been embroiled in scams galore will be over, pointed out lawyer activist Aires Rodrigues. Goa will go to Assembly elections in March 2017. Born on 17.09.1947 in an illustrious family in Orissa. His father late Jaikrishna Misra, was a Judge of the Orissa High Court. His uncle Gatikrishna Misra retired as Chief Justice of Orissa High Court in November, 1975 and his elder sister Smt. A.K. Padhi, retired as Judge of Orissa

High Court in September, 1995.

144. Wax figure of India PM Narendra Modi to feature in 4 cities

The wax figure of India Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be housed in four Madame Tussauds museums, including the one in Singapore. Mr Modi's wax doppelganger will feature in Singapore, London, Hong Kong and Bangkok. He had earlier met his wax figure earlier this week in New Delhi, according to the press release by Madame Tussauds Singapore on Wednesday (Apr 20). What can I say? As far as art is concerned, the Madame Tussauds team is exceptional at what they do. What Lord Brahma does normally is what the artists there are doing," he said in the press release.

145. Loneliness, isolation may up heart disease, stroke risk

Loneliness and social isolation may increase the risk of having a stroke or developing heart disease. Results of a new study indicate that the size of the effect is comparable to that of other recognised risk factors, such as anxiety and a stressful job.

Researchers from University of York in the UK studied more than one lakh 81 thousand adults including 4,628 coronary heart disease 'events' (heart attacks, angina attacks, death) and 3,002 strokes recorded during monitoring periods ranging from three to 21 years.

Analysis of the data showed that loneliness and social isolation were associated with a 29 per cent increased risk of a heart or angina attack and a 32 per cent heightened risk of having a stroke.

146. Three day Naval Commanders' Conference begins in New Delhi

A three day Naval Commanders Conference will begin at New Delhi tomorrow. Navy Chief Admiral RK Dhowan will chair the conference to review various aspects involving operations, acquisition of assets, personnel and logistics issues.

It will primarily focus on reviewing the combat readiness and operational preparedness of the Navy including coastal security to address the dynamic security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region.

The conference is being held in the wake of the successful International Fleet review held by the Navy at Visakhapatnam, apart from a number of other notable operational activities such as the first Combined Commanders Conference on board Vikramaditya in Dec 15.

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar will address and interact with the Naval Commanders on the opening day and provide an opportunity to the Naval Commanders to interact with Ministry officials wherein relevant issues to further military synergy will be discussed.

During the conference, Naval Commanders will review the timelines for capital inductions of the Navy in consonance with the Make in India initiative.

147. Patnaik launches 100 drinking water projects

As many as 100 drinking water projects, worth Rs.63 crore, were launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to benefit people in 45 urban local bodies in Odisha. "The state government is committed to provide equitable, affordable, sustainable and safe water supply to all urban population with a special focus on urban poor," Patnaik said dedicating the projects to the people. Maintaining that the government is working towards providing 135 litre of water per person per day, Patnaik said piped water supply connection would be provided to all urban households including the slum areas. Patnaik said he will review the status of the water supply projects once a week and asked the ministers of panchayati raj, housing and urban development and rural development departments to conduct review meetings twice a week and inform him about the status of these projects. Meanwhile, official sources said that Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation schemes entailing an investment of Rs.325 crore (63 projects) have been approved for implementation in nine urban local bodies with more than one lakh population each. These include the municipal corporations of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur, Rourkela and Sambalpur and the municipalities in Puri, Baripada, Balasore and Bhadrak.

148. Gujarat govt exempts small salt producers from VAT

Gujarat government has announced exemption to small salt producers from industrial salt VAT. According to official press release, the state government has given exemption from tax to those manufacturers who produce salt on plots taken on lease from the state government. In addition to this, salt producers having plots smaller than 10 acre for

salt production or cooperative groups of salt producers are also exempted from tax. Salt producers who sell their entire produce to edible salt manufactures are also exempted from VAT. Such small salt producers are exempted from registration, filling of forms and taxpaying process under VAT.

149. Hong Kong's Irfan Ahmed suspended after ICC anti-corruption breach

Irfan Ahmed, the Hong Kong all-rounder, has been suspended by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for two and a half years for breaching the anti-corruption code of conduct, the governing body announced. The 26-year-old will not be allowed to play any form of cricket until May 4, 2018. Ahmed failed to report suspect approaches made to him between January 2012 and January 2014 to the ICC. During the hearing, he accepted the charges laid against him and decided not to appeal against the decision. He has played six One-Day Internationals and eight Twenty20 Internationals since his debut for Hong Kong in 2008.

150. BCCI appoints Rahul Johri as its CEO

Board of Control for Cricket in India - BCCI today appointed Rahul Johri as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Mr. Rahul Johri, was last serving as Discovery Networks - Asia Pacific's Executive Vice-President and General Manager for South Asia. He will take on his new role starting from 1st of June.

The creation of the post of the CEO was a change recommended by the three-member Lodha panel in its report in January this year. The panel had stressed the need for the BCCI to separate its governance and management duties, with the CEO taking charge of the management side.

Commenting on the appointment, BCCI President Shashank Manohar, said, Mr. Johri's vision, guidance and support will contribute towards the successful working of the BCCI. Meanwhile, BCCI secretary Anurag Thakur also said, Mr. Johri's appointment would help strengthen the working of the board.

151. Cabinet approves signing the Paris Agreement

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today gave its approval for signing the Paris Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of Parties held in Paris in December 2015.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar, will sign the agreement on behalf of India on 22 April 2016 at the high level signature ceremony convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Paris Agreement on climate change is a milestone in global climate cooperation. It is meant to enhance the implementation of the Convention and recognizes the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in the light of different national circumstances.

The salient features of the Paris Agreement are as follows:

- a) The Paris Agreement acknowledges the development imperatives of developing countries. The Agreement recognizes the developing countries' right to development and their efforts to harmonize development with environment, while protecting the interests of the most vulnerable.
- b) The Paris Agreement recognizes the importance of sustainable lifestyles and sustainable patterns of consumption with developed countries taking the lead, and notes the importance of 'climate justice in its preamble.
- c) The Agreement seeks to enhance the 'implementation of the Convention' whilst reflecting the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.
- d) The objective of the Agreement further ensures that it is not mitigation-centric and includes other important elements such as adaptation, loss and damage, finance, technology, capacity building and transparency of action and support.
- e) Pre-2020 actions are also part of the decisions. The developed country parties are urged to scale up their level of financial support with a complete road map to achieve the goal of jointly providing US \$ 100 billion by 2020 for mitigation and adaptation by significantly increasing adaptation finance from current levels and to further provide

appropriate technology and capacity building support.

India had advocated a strong and durable climate agreement based on the principles and provisions of the Convention. The Paris Agreement addresses all the important concerns and expectations of India.

152. Seven Women Officers Of SSC Granted Permanent Commission By Navy

In a step towards giving equal status to women officers, the Navy has granted permanent commission to seven officers and has formalised plans to grant permanent commission in eight branches from 2017. Recognising the importance of providing equal opportunities to women officers, seven women officers from the batch of Short Service Commission officers of the Education branch and Naval Constructor cadre, who joined in 2008-09, have been granted Permanent Commission, the Navy said. So far women were allowed permanent commission in select streams by the Army and the Air Force while the Navy permitted only Short Service Commission for 14 years which means they were denied pension. In a landmark judgement in October last year, the Delhi High Court granted permanent commission for women and pulled up the Defence Ministry and the Navy for a 2008 order which it called sexist bias. Officials later clarified that the 2008 order for permanent commission was gender neutral and it granted women permanent commission along with male officers in three streams - education, law and naval construction as other areas had logistical issues. The Air Force, which was the first to open its combat stream for women, is scheduled to get its first woman fighter pilot in June this year.

153. Europe becomes world's first malaria free region: WHO

Europe has become the world's first region to wipe out malaria, with zero cases reported last year, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. The number of indigenous malaria cases dropped to zero in 2015 from 90,712 in 1995, and the last cases were reported in Tajikistan in 2014, it said. Strong political commitment, improved detection and surveillance of malaria cases, mosquito control, cross-border collaboration all contributed to the wiping out of the mosquito-borne disease. World leaders committed to ending the epidemic by 2030 when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September. In 2015, there were 214 million cases of the disease, and it killed 438,000 people, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa. Until the end of World War Two, malaria was endemic throughout much of southern Europe. The Balkans, Italy, Greece and Portugal were particularly affected. Europe was declared malaria free in 1975, but the disease later re-emerged in the Caucasus, Central Asian republics, the Russian Federation and Turkey.

154. Women allowed to enter Maharashtra's Trimbakeshwar temple

Signalling a major social change, women today morning were permitted entry to the 'garbha griha' of the Trimbakeshwar temple in Nashik District of Maharashtra. The temple has one of the 12 'Jyotirlingas' in the country. A group of three women activists of the Swarajya Sanghatana led by Vanita Gutte, was allowed to enter the sanctum sanctorum amidst tight security.

The Trimbakeshwar Devasthan Trust had last week decided to allow women into the Lord Shiva temples sanctum sanctorum for an hour every day. The decision followed the agitation by Pune-based Swarajya Mahila Sanghatana. This significant development came 13 days after women were permitted entry to the Shani Shingnapur temple in Ahmednagar district on April 8.

155. Assam's Morigaon district takes step in water conservation

In Assam, Morigaon district is taking step in water conservation at a time when several areas of the country are facing drought. Morigaon Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar said that the district administration has taken up the project covering 109 bighas of land at Gobha village panchayat near Meghalaya border. He said that works are being carried out during past one and half years under MGNERGA. Mr. Kumar further said that on completion it will serve the entire area as source of water.

The initial project cost is two crore rupees which is likely to be completed in another six months. Nearly 400 job card holders of 10 villages under Govha gaon panchayat has been working daily basis on this project. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that water security through water conservation is the focus point of this ambitious project.

156. Government merges Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan with Khelo India

The RGKA, a centrally sponsored scheme named after Rajiv Gandhi, was launched by Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi and then sports minister Jitendra Singh in February 2014 to replace Panchayat Yuva Krida aur Khel

Abhiyan (PYKKA), which was Mani Shankar Aiyar's brainchild. The aim of the RGKA was to construct sports complexes in each block of the country, both for outdoor and indoor sports disciplines, over a period of five years (by 2020). However, with the NDA government at the Centre, Rahul's dream project never really took off before being merged with 'Khelo India' two years later by the Narendra Modi government. Khelo India is based on Gujarat's model of "Khel Mahakumbh", in which, schools and colleges from different parts of the country participate in about 27 disciplines. Similarly, the Sports Authority of Gujarat (SAG) organises summer camps under this project every year. It has been learnt that the sports ministry was trying to launch this scheme on April 16 recently, but non-availability of prime minister Modi forced it to fix some new date. Other schemes with Rajiv Gandhi's name which have been renamed... 1. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities has been renamed National Fellowship for Students with Disabilities. 2. Rajiv Gandhi National Fellowship for Scheduled Castes has been renamed National Fellowship for Scheduled Castes. 3. Rajiv Rinn Yojana, an instrument to address the housing needs of economically weaker sections/low income group segments in urban areas was subsumed in another scheme Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana as a small part "credit-linked subsidy scheme". 4. Scheme on rural electrification that was named after Rajiv Gandhi by Congress was subsumed in a broader scheme that carries the name of Deendayal Upadhyaya. This is one of the major schemes of the NDA government.

157. India ranked 133 in World Press Freedom Index

India ranks abysmally low at 133 among 180 countries, in the latest annual World Press Freedom Index which says Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems indifferent to the threats posed to journalists. The 2016 World Press Freedom Index released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), is led by Finland, which retained its top spot for the sixth consecutive year, followed by the Netherlands and Norway. India jumped three spots from the 136th position it had in 2015. Journalists and bloggers are attacked and anathematised by various religious groups that are quick to take offense, the report said. Among India's neighbouring countries, Pakistan ranks 147, Sri Lanka (141), Afghanistan (120), Bangladesh (144), Nepal (105) and Bhutan (94). China is ranked 176. The United States is ranked 44th and Russia, 148. The report shows that there has been a deep and disturbing decline in respect for media freedom at both the global and regional levels.

158. IFMR Capital initiates first capital market transaction for MUDRA

[IFMR Capital](#) has facilitated the first ever capital market transaction for [MUDRA](#) (Micro Units Development Refinance Agency), which focuses on providing low cost loans to [microfinance](#) and non-banking financial institutions.

IFMR Capital has exclusively structured and arranged a [securitisation](#) transaction Mjolnir IFMR Capital enabling Mudra to invest Rs 50 crore in the A (-) rated senior tranche of securitised MSME loan portfolio of Janalakshmi Financial Services, the Bangalore-based micro [finance](#) company. This will be a short term transaction with tenure of 1.5 years. IFMR Capital also participated as investor through their investment in the subordinated j tranche. This marks the first of many such capital transactions for MUDRA, which in turn will gain exposure to over 100 high quality MFIs and NBFCs in the country that IFMR Capital currently works with.

Small enterprises across the country continue to lack access to institutional credit. This is despite nearly 80% of the total estimated demand of Rs 32,50,000 crore originating from the informal sector, said IFMR.

159. US think tank launches India-US trade initiative

A top US think-tank has launched an India-US trade initiative aimed to strengthen economic ties and meet the two countries bilateral trade target of \$500 billion.

Launched by Atlantic Council, the initiative has the support of two powerful Senators John Corny of the Republican Party and Mark Warner of the Democratic Party. The two are also Co-Chairs of Senate India Caucus, the only country specific caucus in the US Senate.

As the largest and oldest democracies in the world, India and the United States share a relationship built on common values. By further increasing trade between our two countries, we have an opportunity to strengthen our unique bond, advance American interests in the region, and grow both economies, Cornyn said.

Atlantic Council Chairman Jon Huntsman said the US-India bilateral relationship holds immense economic potential for both countries and should be a priority for the incoming administration.

The Atlantic Council is committed to playing an active role in promoting trade relations between the US and India and helping cement a pathway for broader cooperation, he said.

160. Pulitzer Prize 2016

The 2016 Pulitzer Prizes were announced during a [You tube lives stream](#), which is similar to how the first awards were given in 1917: live, in the middle of a stream somewhere, while a few people on donkeys gathered to watch. (We assume.) It should come as no surprise that Lin-Manuel Miranda is taking home a Pulitzer for Hamilton, but it may come as a surprise that the Tampa Bay Times is also taking home a Pulitzer. Unless you live in Tampa Bay, in which case, you probably saw that coming. Twenty winners will receive a \$10,000 prize, while the journalism category's Public Service winner gets a shiny gold medal. The Winners of 2016 are Public Service Associated Press Breaking News Reporting Los Angeles Times Staff Investigative Reporting Leonora LaPeter Anton and Anthony Cormier of the Tampa Bay Times and Michael Braga of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune Explanatory Reporting T. Christian Miller of ProPublica and Ken Armstrong of The Marshall Project Local Reporting Michael LaForgia, Cara Fitzpatrick and Lisa Gartner of the Tampa Bay Times National Reporting The Washington Post Staff International Reporting Alissa J. Rubin of The New York Times Feature Writing Kathryn Schulz of The New Yorker Commentary Farah Stockman of The Boston Globe Criticism Emily Nussbaum of The New Yorker

161. Russia test-fires Iskander tactical missile at southern training range

A cruise missile of the Iskander tactical missile system has been live-fired from the Kapustin Yar practice range in the southern Astrakhan Region. The missile basically flew at an altitude of about 40-50 km. "The missile that incorporates reduced signature technology was not detected by a simulated enemy's electronic warfare means and successfully hit the target," the statement said. Iskander tactical ballistic missile systems are capable of hitting both small-size and large-area targets at a distance of up to 500 km to destroy missile and multiple launch rocket systems, long-range artillery guns, aircraft and helicopters at aerodromes, command posts and communications centers. The Iskander tactical ballistic missile complex includes a launcher, a loader-transporter, a routine maintenance vehicle, a command post vehicle, an information post, an ammunition equipment set and training aids.

162. Silicon Valley's Legendary Coach Bill Campbell Has Died

A former Ivy League football coach Bill Campbell passed away. He was 75. He was the management guru for Apple co-founder Steve Jobs and other Silicon Valley luminaries and he garnered the name The Coach for the sage advice and counsel. About Bill Campbell : Bill Campbell was born on 31 August 1940 in Pennsylvania He worked as head football coach for Columbia University from 1974 to 1979. He joined Apple in 1983 as a marketing executive and was appointed to the Apple board in 1997. He was chief executive officer of financial-software firm Intuit for five years in the 1990s and served as its chairman until January 2016.

163. How does the Reserve Bank estimate the amount of new currency to be issued in the economy?

One of the curious questions about central banking from a learner's angle is how does the RBI take the decision about the amount of new currency to be issued? First of all, the purpose of currency is to help us fulfill our purchase and selling. This is because people demand money to settle their transactions. So new money is to be issued to meet increased transactions. Transactions ultimately depend on our income. This means that if income (GDP growth) in an economy goes up, transaction will go up and the central bank should issue new currencies in accordance with increased GDP growth. The RBI, while preparing its annual monetary policy, makes an estimate about the quantity of new money to be issued next year based upon its expectations about next year's GDP growth. Higher the expected GDP growth, higher will be the new money supply. Now a conventional simple equation will give us how the RBI will estimate the volume of new currency to be issued. Suppose that GDP growth of the economy for the next year is 8%, the amount of new money to be issued will be: New money to be issued = $8 \times 2 + 4\% = 20\%$ Here, Expected economic growth for the next year = 9% Income elasticity of demand for money = 2 Four percent inflation is good for the economy = 4 (the income elasticity of demand for money says that people will demand double amount of money in accordance with the increase in their income. if your income has increased by Rs 10, you will demand currency of Rs 20 for making transactions).

164. 23 cities submit Smart City Plans under Fast Track Competition

Twenty three cities and towns that were given an opportunity to participate in the Fast Track Competition under Smart City Mission submitted revised Smart City Plans today to the Ministry of Urban Development. Today was the deadline for submission of proposals. The cities include Warangal, Chandigarh, Lucknow, Goa, Dharamshala, Shillong, and Imphal. The revised plans of these cities would be evaluated by 15th of next month. The

cities meeting the benchmark set by the winning cities in the first round of Smart City Challenge Competition will be announced for extending central assistance.

Bhubaneswar was ranked number one in the first list of mission cities announced this January.

165. Trichy holding sanitation work at pilgrim places as part of cleanliness drive

In Tamil Nadu, as part of the cleanliness drive, sanitation work is being done in pilgrim places of Tiruchirapalli city.

The city was selected as one of the most clean cities along with Mysuru and Chandigarh in Swachh Survekshana survey held earlier this year. Election campaign has not hindered the cleanliness drive in the Trichy city.

Tiruchirapalli city corporation started Swachh Bharat Abhiyan with new vigour from Tiruvannamalai Erumbeeswarar temple. More than 100 sanitary workers and voluntary workers were involved in the clean drive. The waste scattered around the temple and shrubs were removed.

Sanitary workers continued the campaign in Tiruvannamalai Jambukeswarar temple today. The Swachh Bharat Abhiyan will be extended to other public places including temples like Srirangam Ranganathar temple, Teppakulam St Josephs Church, Natharsha Pallivasal mosque. Pamphlets are being given to school children to use toilets and create awareness about the ill effects of open defecation.

166. Prime Minister confers awards for excellence in implementation of priority programmes

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi conferred awards for excellence in implementation of priority programmes on the occasion of 10th Civil Services Day here today. For the priority programme Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJSY), Nagaon, Assam was awarded in North East and Hill States category, Chandigarh in UTs and North 24 Parganas, West Bengal in Other States group. Under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), West Sikkim and Bikaner, Rajasthan were awarded in North East Hill states and Other States category respectively. Under Swachh Vidyalaya programme, Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Ananthapuramu, Andhra Pradesh were awarded in North East Hill states, UTs and Other States group respectively. In the implementation of Soil Health Card Scheme, Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh and Balrampur, Chhattisgarh were conferred award in North East and Hill states and Other States respectively.

167. Earth day being celebrated all over the world

We are now entering the 46th year of a movement that continues to inspire, challenge ideas, ignite passion, and motivate people to action. In 1970, the year of our first Earth Day, the movement gave voice to an emerging consciousness, channeling human energy toward environmental issues. Forty-six years later, we continue to lead with groundbreaking ideas and by the power of our example. And so it begins. Today. Right here and right now. Earth Day is more than just a single day April 22, 2016. Its bigger than attending a rally and taking a stand. This Earth Day and beyond, lets make big stuff happen. Lets plant 7.8 billion trees for the Earth. Lets divest from fossil fuels and make cities 100% renewable. Lets take the momentum from the Paris Climate Summit and build on it. Earth Day Network has made significant inroads across India and now has a permanent Indian Program EDN India located in Kolkata. The theme for this year is "Trees for the Earth" with the aim of mobilizing nearly eight billion plantings over the next five years.

168. Music legend Prince dies at 57

Pop music superstar Prince Rogers Nelson, popularly known as Prince, has died aged 57. He was found dead at his home in suburban Minneapolis. Police said, they were investigating the death. A few days ago, Prince's personal plane had to make an emergency landing, with the singer receiving medical attention for what was widely reported as a severe bout of flu.

Prince, the pioneer of famous song, "the Minneapolis sound", was renowned as an innovator and was widely known for his flamboyant stage presence and wide vocal range. He won seven Grammy Awards and earned 30 nominations. He also won an Oscar for the song score "Purple Rain". US President Barack Obama led his countrymen in mourning the death of legendary pop star. Mr Obama said, the world lost a creative icon.

169. Chadian President Idriss Deby wins fifth term

Chad's veteran leader Idriss Deby has won a fifth term in office after taking more than 60 per cent of the vote in the

first round of presidential polls. The country's Electoral Commission said, Deby secured 61.56 per cent of votes in the polls, which was held on the 10th of this month.

Opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo was a distant second on 12.8 per cent. Sixty-four year old Deby took first office in a 1990 military coup. More than six million people were asked to choose between 13 presidential hopefuls in the vote.

170. Hubble captures birthday bubble

A new Hubble Space Telescope image, released to celebrate Hubble's 26th year in orbit, captures in stunning clarity what looks like a gigantic cosmic soap bubble. The object, known as the Bubble Nebula, is in fact a cloud of gas and dust illuminated by the brilliant star within it.

Twenty six years ago, on 24 April 1990, Hubble Space Telescope was launched into orbit aboard the space shuttle Discovery by NASA and European Space Agency as the first space telescope of its kind. Every year, to commemorate this momentous day in space history, Hubble spends a modest portion of its observing time capturing a spectacular view of a specially chosen astronomical object.

This year's anniversary object is the Bubble Nebula, also known as NGC 7635, which lies 8,000 light-years away in the constellation Cassiopeia. Observations of these nebula help astronomers to better understand the geometry and dynamics of these very complicated systems.

171. WADA suspended Beijing's Anti-Doping laboratory for four months

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has suspended Beijing's National Anti-Doping laboratory for four months for failing to comply with international standards. WADA said in a statement that the suspension, which takes effect immediately, prohibits the laboratory from carrying out any WADA-related anti-doping activities. The laboratory has 21 days to appeal the decision to the court of Arbitration for Sport.

172. Simhastha Kumbh mela 2016 begins in Ujjain

The month-long Simhastha Kumbh mela, the largest congregation of Hindus, began in Ujjain early this morning. Large number of people have converged in the holy city for the mela, held after a gap of every 12 years. Over five crore people, including seers, are expected to visit the city during the month.

This time eunuchs have also set up their akhara and have taken out their procession in the city which was accorded a grand welcome by the people. AIR correspondent reports, while the first 'Shahi Snan' is slated for today, another is scheduled on 21st of next month and elaborate arrangements have been made.

Estimated 50 lakh pilgrims will take first shahi snan on the opening day of month-long fair. A number of ghats have been made over 10 km along the Kshipra River for the fair starting from Triveni to Gaughat.

Ramghat is considered the most sacred bank of the river Kshipra in Ujjain as Hindu holy- men and seers prefer to take their holy dip or shahi snan at the ghat. Administration have erected barricades at the ghats to regulate the crowd and people will be allowed to take bath in batches.

173. India overtakes China as top FDI destination: Report

[India](#) has knocked [China](#) off the pedestal of being the world's top foreign direct investment (FDI) destination. Citing the report, the Financial Times reported that India, with \$63 billion of FDI announced in 2015, has taken the top rank in the list of countries in terms of greenfield capital investment. Additionally, according to the report, India's project numbers increased by 8% to 697, although they still lagged behind China's 789 projects. The report said: "For the first time in many years, China was a laggard on regional FDI growth rather than an engine: it saw a 23 per cent decline in capital investment and a 16 per cent drop in FDI projects due to plateauing economic growth and rising costs." The RBI said that FDI in the country increased to \$42 billion during April-February in 2015-16, up 27.45% from the inflows in the corresponding period of the previous financial year. According to the report, in a comparison between Indian and Chinese states, Gujarat emerged as the top ranked state in terms of FDI attracting \$12.4 billion of capital investment in 2015. A comparative table, titled "FDI into Chinese and Indian states by capital investment", from the report shows that Gujarat took the top spot ahead of China's Shanghai Municipality which attracted \$10.57 billion in FDI in 2015. China's Jiangsu came in third on the list with \$9.53 billion, followed closely by Maharashtra at \$8.28 billion. Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Jharkhand were the other Indian states featured on the list.

174. Uttarakhand HC quashes President's Rule

The Uttarakhand High Court, on Thursday, quashed the order of the Central government that had put the State under

Presidents Rule on March 27. Deciding that the Congress shall return to power, the Division Bench of the Court also ordered that a floor test must be held in the Uttarakhand Assembly on April 29 where former Chief Minister Harish Rawats claim of having majority support shall be put to test. The Division Bench comprising Chief Justice K.M. Joseph and Justice V.K. Bisht had decided to reserve the verdict for later, but taking the apprehensions of Mr. Rawats counsel into consideration where it was being feared that the Central Government might revoke Presidents Rule and try and get the BJP to form government in the State before the Courts final verdict in the case, the Bench took the decisions on quashing Presidential Proclamation on Thursday itself. Prior to the judgment, the Bench slammed the Centre for planning to attempt the revocation of Presidents Rule before the Courts verdict. 'Pained by the Centre's actions' Chief Justice Joseph said that the Court was "pained" by the Centre's actions in the case on imposition of President's Rule in Uttarakhand where the Centre was acting like a "private party". He said that the Central government, which should be impartial, was acting like a "private party." We are pained that the Central government can behave like this. How can you think of playing with the Court?" Chief Justice Joseph said. Questioning the Centre over planning to attempt revoking President's Rule before court's final verdict, Chief Justice Joseph slammed the Centre for such attempts. The Chief Justice said, "If they [the Centre] revoke Article 356 and try and form a government... What is it but a travesty of justice?" In an application filed by former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat on April 7 it was apprehended that the Centre might revoke Article 356 from Uttarakhand and attempt to get the BJP in Uttarakhand to form government. The Centre had then assured the Bench that the Court would be informed about the Centre's decision but the assurance was only until April 17. However, when the Court questioned the Court again whether the Centre would indulge in such attempts, the Centres counsels remained silent, after which Mr. Rawats counsels requested that the Bench must pass an Order in the case on Thursday itself.

175. Union govt. allots Rs. 800 crore to clean up polluted lakes in garden city

The Union government has earmarked Rs. 800 crore to clean up Bengalurus polluted lakes. Last year, Bellandur lake saw frothing that rose to nearly six feet and, in some instances, caught fire. The citys lakes were once the model of water conservation the basic problem is that untreated sewage is flowing unchecked into the lakes, said Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar at a press conference in New Delhi. Sewage treatment plant Of the allotted funds, Rs. 500 crore is for laying down a 74-km trunk sewage pipeline, and Rs. 162 crore is to set up four sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Bellandur lake. The remaining is for the Urban Development Ministry for local water conservation activities. Detergents were touted to be the primary reason for the frothing in the 927-acre Bellandur lake. Phosphates form a major component in household detergents, and they make their way into the lake through the estimated 480 million litres of sewage that flows into Bellandur and Vathur lakes. Of this, 250 mld (million litres per day) of sewage is untreated, while another 230 mld is let into the lake after treatment. They do not disintegrate, and percolate in the water and make their way downstream with the water used in agriculture.

176. India, China agree for peaceful negotiations to settle border issue

India and China on Wednesday agreed to adhere to "peaceful negotiations" to settle the vexed border issue and reach a "fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution", amid negativity over Beijing's blocking of India's bid in the UN to ban Pakistan-based JeM chief Masood Azhar. The decision was taken during the annual 19th round of boundary talks here between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi to discuss the way forward to resolve the dispute which has bedevilled the relations between the two countries. Both the leaders had an "extensive, deep and candid" discussion on the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC), which remains undemarcated resulting in tensions between the two sides. Both sides agreed to adhere to "peaceful negotiations to settle the boundary question". They will make efforts to reach a "fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution", according to a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement.

177. Randstad Award 2016: Celebrating the most attractive employers

The Randstad Award is the largest independent employer branding survey in the world. The award is presented each year to the most attractive employer in various countries across the globe. In its 6th year in India, and 16th year globally, you can expect the event to be bigger, better and a whole lot more insightful. Randstad Award Winner 2016 : Award for most attractive employer: Google Runner up award for most attractive employer: Mercedes-Benz India Special recognition award in the consumer electronics sector: Samsung India Special recognition award in the IT sector: Dell Special recognition award in the e-commerce sector: Amazon India

178. Intel India inaugurates 'Unnati Kendras'™ in 10 Telangana towns

Intel India said today it has inaugurated its Unnati Kendras (UKs), an initiative aimed at digitization and delivering government-related content to the citizens, across 10 towns in Telangana. A part of Intel Indias Ek Kadam Unnati Ki Aur programme, these UKs are part of the companys nationwide plan to create a blueprint for the digitization of non-urban India, the Indian arm of the US-based chip maker said in a statement. Intel India would collaborate with 10 Common Service Centers (CSCs) across the districts of Warangal, Nalgonda, Medak, Karimnagar, Mahbubnagar, Adilabad and Ranga Reddy, to drive the relevance of PC adoption", it said. Each Unnati Kendra will be equipped with Intel powered devices, local language content, and relevant training modules for non-urban citizens in the state. Trained personnel at these centers would conduct in-depth sessions on digital literacy, computer skills and Internet facilities every week, along with dedicated guidance sessions in entrepreneurship, language and vocational training, the statement said. The centers would also be used as platforms for delivering government-related content to the citizens digital literacy, financial inclusion and healthcare.

179. Vishnu Vardhan is first ATT champion

Former national champion Vishnu Vardhan put his name into the record books by becoming the first champion of the Asian Tennis Tour (ATT) after he beat Sidharth Rawat 7-6(7), 6-3 in the final of the \$5,000 event at the DLTA Complex here on Wednesday. It was a battle of wits, albeit only in the first set, as top seed Vishnu saved two set-points in the tie-break, with strong overheads, before accelerating in the second for a smooth finish. In the national championship final two years ago, Vishnu had taken three sets to beat Rawat. Vishnu Vardhan: Vishnu Vardhan is a professional tennis player from Andhra Pradesh. He was a member of the bronze medalist Indian mens team for 2010 Asian games in Guangzhou China. He paired-up with and Sania Mirza for mixed doubles and won silver medal. Vishnu who also had played doubles at the London Olympics with Leander Paes.

180. PM Modi inaugurates 10th Civil Services Day

Introduction: Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi Inaugurated 10th Civil Services Day and expressed his thoughts on civil servants that they are not only doing a job but also a service to the Nation and he added that at energy level, to be an agent of change. PM Modi confers awards to civil servants on 10th Civil Services Day Prime Minister accorded awards to Civil Servants for Excel in Implementation of Programmes and Schemes made by Government No. of Districts were awarded: 10 Under the four Priority Programmes Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna Opening Zero Balance Accounts Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Clean India Programme Swachh Vidyalaya Clean India: Clean Schools Soil Health Card Scheme To Farmers for health or quality of a soil

181. Govt approves over Rs 842 cr drought, floods aid to Karnataka, Puducherry & Arunachal

The Centre on Friday approved assistance of Rs 842.7 crore for Karnataka, Puducherry and Arunachal Pradesh, which have been affected by drought or floods. The decision to provide assistance was taken by a high-level committee meeting chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, an official spokesperson said. The committee examined the proposals based on the report of the central team which visited Karnataka, affected by drought, and Puducherry and Arunachal Pradesh, which have been hit by floods. An amount to the tune of Rs 723.23 crore was approved to Karnataka, Rs 35.14 crore was approved for Puducherry and Rs 84.33 crore for Arunachal Pradesh. The central assistance of Rs 84.33 crore to Arunachal Pradesh includes Rs 18 crore under National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). In total, 10 states, including Maharashtra and Karnataka, have declared drought in their parts. More than Rs 10,000 crore central assistance has been given to these states to tide over the situation. While Puducherry was hit by floods due to heavy rains in December 2015, Arunachal Pradesh too was affected by floods last year.

182. Ardh Kumbh Snan to conclude today in Haridwar

In Uttarakhand, last Snan of Ardh Kumbh Mela is going on amidst tight security at Har Ki Padi in Haridwar today. People across the nation are taking holy dip. With the last Snan, the Ardh Kumbh will come to an end today. For the first time pilgrims witnessed the Dev Dollies in Ardh Kumbh. Nearly 1,200 idols of Deities from Garhwal and Kumon region participating in the Ganga Snan. Dev Dollies from Mauritius, Mumbai, Chandigarh and Delhi are also taking part.

183. India, China agree to establish army hot-line

India and China have agreed to establish hot-line between their armed forces. Replying to a media query on the

recently concluded Special Representatives level talks in Beijing between the two countries, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Vikas Swarup said, modalities to set up the hot-line will be worked out. He said, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval participated in the 19th round of talks.

He said, the discussion focused on efforts to find out a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary issue and maintenance of peace and tranquility on the borders.

He said, it was noted in the meeting that no major incidents have taken place during the recent pasts. Mr Swarup said, the NSA also discussed regional and international issues of mutual interests.

184. Swamy, Sidhu, Swapan Dasgupta nominated to Rajya Sabha

BJP leaders Subramanian Swamy and Navjot Singh Sidhu and journalist Swapan Dasgupta have been nominated to Rajya Sabha.

Official sources said, economist Narendra Jadhav, Malayalam actor Suresh Gopi and Boxer Mary Kom have also been nominated to the Upper House.

There are 12 nominated members in Rajya Sabha and at present seven seats are vacant. Persons having special knowledge in literature, science, art and social service and sports are nominated in this category.

Although independent, the nominated members always vote along with the government and the filling of vacancies will bolster the NDA's numbers in the Upper House where it lacks majority.

Lyricist Javed Akhtar, Therater artist B Jayashree, Journalist H K Dua, Congress leader Mani Shankar Aiyar, Economist Bhalchandra Mungekar, Proffesor Mrinal Miri, Dr Ashok Ganguly had completed their terms as nominated members.

185. Centre sets up panel to prepare roadmap to double farm income

The government has set up a panel to prepare a blueprint for doubling farmers' income by 2022 as promised by the Prime Minister.

A senior Agriculture Ministry official said, the committee will chalk out a plan to shift farm policies from being production-oriented to income-based.

The eight-member panel will identify potential areas of agriculture where more investment is needed. It will suggest ways to reduce the risk of farming by diversifying to horticulture and allied activities like livestock and fisheries to boost income.

The inter-ministerial panel will also look at reducing the cost of cultivation and addressing unpredictability of weather and price fluctuations in farm sector.

The committee will be headed by Ashok Dalwai, Additional Secretary in the Agriculture Ministry. The other members will be officials from Agriculture and Food Ministries as well as experts from the Delhi-based National Council of Applied Economic Research and National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research.

186. Bhupendra Kainthola appointed FTII Director

Indian Information Service officer Bhupendra Kainthola has been appointed as Director of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII).

Kainthola, a 1989 batch IIS officer, has been appointed to the post for three years, an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training.

Pune-based FTII, is an autonomous body under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and country's premier institute that provides training for acting, film making, video editing, direction and production.

187. Haryana to increase area under horticulture to 25%

Haryana Agriculture Minister O.P Dhankar today said that the area under horticulture would be increased from seven per cent to 25 per cent to increase horticulture production from 62 lakh metric tonnes to five crore metric tonnes.

The Minister was speaking on the concluding day of a 2-day workshop on Horticulture Vision-2026, organised by Haryana Horticulture Department in New Delhi, today. He said that protected cultivation would also be encouraged to change the scenario of agriculture sector in the State.

He said that a vision document would be prepared on the basis of suggestions given by technical experts, scientists and progressive farmers in the workshop.

An action plan would also be prepared to effectively implement this vision document. He said that a workforce of those well versed in agriculture economy would also be prepared to ensure skill development of farmers.

188. AIR Pasighat celebrating 50 years of service

In Arunachal Pradesh, All India Radio Pasighat today completed 50 years of service. The Golden Jubilee Celebration started with plantation of trees in and around office premise followed by a seminar on topic Challenges of Akashvani to reached the unreached at Jawaharlal Nehru College auditorium in Pasighat.

AIR Pasighat was established in 1966 with 1.5 Watt capacity covering just Pasighat Township. Now, the station serves more than one lakh population covering a major portion of East Siang district, parts of West Siang, Upper Siang and Dibang Valley districts.

The station so far had won two National Awards for its continuous effort in production of value based folklores and mythology of local tribal community.

189. Chhattisgarh to get urea production plant based on coal gasification

A state-of-the-art urea production plant, based on coal gasification technology, will be set up in Chhattisgarh, Union Minister for Chemicals and Petroleum H N Ananth Kumar announced today in Raipur.

Speaking at the inaugural function of Central Institute of Plastic Engineering Technology (CIPET) near Bhanpuri in the outskirts of Raipur, he said that the proposed urea plant with a production capacity of 13 lakh MT would be set up at an estimated cost of Rs 6000 crore.

Besides generating employment to local youth, the urea production facility will be a major leap towards states efforts towards the ongoing make in India campaign.

Chief Minister Raman Singh and Union Minister Ananth Kumar jointly inaugurated CIPET, a plastic engineering institute, set up by both the state and the centre at an estimated cost of Rs 51.32 crore.

The institute will offer undergraduate, post graduate and Diploma courses besides short term courses under the centres skill development programme. CIPETs academic session will start from next year. This is the 28th plastic engineering institute of the country.

Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister also announced setting up of a plastic re-cycling plant at an estimated cost of Rs 1 crore at CIPET premises and establishment of plastic park in Rajnandgaon that would help generate employment to local youth.

Addressing the gathering Chief Minister Raman Singh said the projects announced today would generate employment opportunities to the youth.

190. Delhi govt announces app-based Premium Bus service

Delhi government has announced App based Premium Bus Services to strengthen public transport system in the city. On the lines of app-based taxi services, Delhiites can book their seats in premium buses through their smart phones.

Only air-conditioned buses will ply under the scheme. Transport Minister Gopal Rai said, the Cabinet has approved the policy for the premium services, looking at the importance of the city to have a modern, comfortable and efficient bus service to attract car owners.

As per new policy, bus aggregators will determine the routes on which Premium buses will ply and specify such routes along with the time schedule of each trip on its web-based application. In view of women safety, bus aggregators will have to ensure panic button in their Apps adding that the registration of such buses will start from June.

191. Flame for Rio Olympic Games Lit in Greece

The Olympic torch for the upcoming Rio Games in Brazil has been lit in southern Greece. The flame, which was lit by Greek actor Katerina Lehou at an ancient Greek site, will be carried by various runners on international relay. The relay will culminate on the opening ceremony of the Games at Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on the 5th of August. In yesterday's ceremony, the actor, portraying a priestess, offered a mock prayer to the old Greek god. She knelt to the ground and lit the torch by using a concave mirror to catch the sunlight.

The ritual was established 80 years ago for the Berlin Games, based on a ceremony in Ancient Olympia where games were held for more than 1,000 years. The Olympic flame will burn at a permanent home in Rio during the Games, and not in a stadium, as has been traditional. The caldron will be lit at the opening ceremony and, then, travel to a permanent home that is yet to be disclosed.

192. Rashtrapati Bhavan to host second batch of Inspired Teachers from Central Universities under its In-Residence programme

The second batch of 13 Inspired Teachers from Central Universities across the country will stay at Rashtrapati Bhavan for a period of seven days from April 23 to 29, 2016 as part of an In Residence programme. The first batch of 31 Inspired Teachers stayed for a week at Rashtrapati Bhavan in the June last year. The In-Residence programme for Inspired Teachers was instituted by the President of India at the annual Conference of Vice Chancellors of Central Universities on February 5, 2015. Similar programmes exist for writers, artists, grass root innovators and NIT students. The Inspired Teachers, during their stay at Rashtrapati Bhavan, will interact with various Union Ministers and senior Government officials as well as visit educational institutions in Delhi-NCR. They will also participate in various activities of Rashtrapati Bhavan.

193. Prime Minister to address the Panchayati Raj Sammelan On the Occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day On 24th April in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will address the Panchayati Raj Sammelan on the Occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day on Sunday the 24th of April, 2016 in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. The main function is being held at the J. R. D. Tata Sports Complex, Jamshedpur. The Prime Minister Shri Modi will be welcomed by the Union Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj Drinking water Sanitation Chaudhary Birender Singh along with the Chief Minister of Jharkhand Shri Raghuvar Das and other central and state ministers.

Around 3,000 Panchayat Representatives from all states of the country will participate in this programme. The Prime Minister will address the gathering, which will be beamed live to all the Gram Sabhas all over the country. People will gather in villages across the country to hear the Prime Ministers address.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been celebrating the National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD) on 24 April since 2010, as on this day, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment came into force in 1993. So far, NPRD was celebrated in Delhi, but this year, as part of the Gramoday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan, the National Panchayati Raj Day is being celebrated in all Gram Panchayats in the country (except in poll bound States), as Gram Sabhas are being held between 21-24 April 2016 nationwide.

The Prime Minister will also give away prestigious awards on this occasion:

Awards to States that have devolved maximum powers to Panchayats so far (Cumulative Devolution Index awards), i.e., Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Sikkim.

Awards to States that have devolved maximum powers to Panchayats in the last three years (Incremental Devolution Index awards) to Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim and Odisha.

Awards to States that have made greatest progress in aligning their laws to Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act 1996, which have been given for the first time, to Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

States that have made maximum efforts to e-enable Panchayats, i.e. Karnataka, Kerala, West Bengal and Assam

In addition, a new Mandate of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj will be released along with the Devolution Index Report by the Prime Minister on this occasion.

The Minister for Rural Development, Drinking Water Sanitation and Panchayati Raj Chaudhary Birender Singh will present the Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar and Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar to Best Performing Panchayats and Gram Sabhas. These awards are to be given to 183 Panchayats, which includes 21 District Panchayats, 39 Block or Intermediate Panchayats, and 123 Gram Panchayats.

Celebrating the National Panchayati Raj Day, Gram Sabha meetings are being held from 21-24th April, 2016 across the country (except poll-bound States). Prabhat Pheris (or morning walks) are being organized in the villages and programmes on sanitation, cultural programmes as well as sports programmes are being observed. The Gram Sabhas are being organized to hold discussions in the areas: -

Gram Panchayat Development Plans for local economic development,

Optimum utilization of funds available with Panchayati Raj Institutions,

Clean drinking water and sanitation,

Role of women in village and rural development.

Social inclusion

Information regarding various schemes for socio-economic development is being shared with the villagers and farmers in the Gram Sabhas for better awareness. States have taken up this campaign with enthusiasm. Around 300 Central Government officers are visiting to various districts to attend these programmes of the Gramoday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan.

The Central Government, in collaboration with State Governments and Panchayats, launched the Gramoday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan. The campaign began with Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's 125th Birth Anniversary on 14th April 2016, and culminates with the Panchayati Raj Day on 24th April 2016. However, some States, such as Madhya Pradesh, have extended the campaign to 45 days.

In this campaign, Nation-wide efforts have been made to strengthen Panchayati Raj, and through it, increase social harmony across villages, promote rural development, and foster farmers welfare livelihoods of the poor. The Prime Minister inaugurated the Gramoday se Bharat Uday Abhiyan on 14th April 2016 at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. From 14th April to 16th April, 2016 a Social Harmony Programme was conducted in all Gram Panchayats. Subsequently, between 17th April to 20th April, 2016, Gram Kisan Sabhas were organized in Gram Panchayats. A National Meeting of Tribal Women Gram Panchayat Presidents from Fifth Schedule Areas of 10 States was held at Vijayawada on last Tuesday 19th April, 2016. The theme of National Meeting was: Role of women Gram Panchayats in Development of Schedule V Areas.

194. India's first Cellulosic Alcohol Technology Demonstration Plant

Union Minister for Science Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated India's 1st Second-Generation (2G) Ethanol plant at Kashipur in Uttarakhand. Taking pride in the indigenously-developed technology and

its evolution into a demonstration plant, he said that more such examples are needed, for the initiatives like Make in India and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan to be truly successful. Such technological breakthroughs can make India stand out as a leader in the world's struggle to save the earth from challenges of global warming. Government of India has set a mandate of 5% blending of renewable biofuel in both petrol and diesel. While diesel biofuel blending is near zero, the petrol blending today stands at an overall of about 3% in the form of first generation (1G) or molasses-based Ethanol. While the annual requirement of 1G-ethanol stands at about 500 crore litres, the current total installed capacity is about 265 crore litres. In such a scenario, the targets of 10% blending by 2017 and 20% by 2020 look remote unless agricultural waste based ethanol i.e. 2G-Ethanol production technologies are successfully demonstrated. India's potential for 2G-Ethanol production from a mere 10% of its non-food and non-fodder agricultural residues, currently estimated to be available in excess of 300 million tons, stands at nearly 1000 crore liters of ethanol.

195. India signs Paris climate agreement along with over 170 nations at UN

India has signed the historic Paris climate agreement at United Nations in New York along with more than 170 nations, marking a significant step to combat global warming. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar signed the agreement in the UN General Assembly hall at a high-level ceremony hosted by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon last night. The ceremony was attended by heads of governments, foreign ministers, corporate leaders and artists from across the world.

In the agreement, all countries agreed to work to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius. In his message on the day, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the Paris accord, in conjunction with the Agenda for Sustainable Development, holds the power to transform the world. While noting that the countries are signing a new covenant with the future, Ban cautioned that the world is in a race against time. The signing is the first step toward ensuring that the agreement comes into force as soon as possible. After the signing, countries must take the further national step of accepting or ratifying the agreement. The agreement can enter into force 30 days after at least 55 Parties to the UNFCCC, accounting for at least 55 per cent of global emissions, ratify the agreement.

196. Govt asks smart cities to firm up bankable projects

Urban Development Ministry has asked the 20 cities, selected for smart cities in the first round, to quickly firm up bankable projects for obtaining loan from the Asian Development Bank, ADB, World Bank and BRICS Development Bank.

Urban Development Secretary Rajiv Gauba said this during a review meeting in New Delhi with the officials of eight smart cities, namely Ahmedabad, Surat, Pune, Bhubaneswar, Udaipur, Jaipur, Ludhiana and Jabalpur.

While BRICS Development Bank is keen to support smart city projects, the ADB has in-principle agreed to extend a loan of 1 billion dollars and the World Bank 0.50 billion dollars for the implementation of Smart City Mission.

Mr Gauba also stressed on mobilisation of resources through Municipal Bonds and urged the cities to act quickly to obtain credit ratings from agencies approved by the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

He said, the process for credit rating of 85 cities has already begun under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, AMRUT and all the 500 mission cities shall complete this process in the next one year.

The eight cities that participated in the review meeting furnished details of the projects--including affordable housing, water supply, sewage treatment plants, transport, Smart Street lighting, and solid waste management that could be launched by June.

197. Govt issues notification for protection of Good Samaritans

Government has issued a notification for the protection of Good Samaritans in the wake of the Supreme Court (SC) direction on helping accident victims.

As per the notification issued by Ministry of Road Transport Highways, good Samaritans have to be dealt with respectfully and disclosure of personal information such as name and contact details shall be made voluntary.

It also specifies that in case a Good Samaritan chooses to visit the police station, he/she shall be examined in a single sitting in a reasonable and time-bound manner.

Annually 1.4 lakh people die in road crashes in India and government reports suggest that at least 50 per of the fatalities can be averted if the victims are admitted to a hospital within the first one hour of a crash, called the golden hour.

198. Cuba removes ban on Cubans entering or leaving the country by sea

Cuba has removed a ban on Cubans entering or leaving the country by sea, clearing the way for a resumption of cruises from the US.

The Cold War era rule previously stipulated that Cubans could only enter or leave by plane. Cruise operator Carnival has been given permission by both governments to run ships between Florida and Cuba.

But the restriction meant it could not take bookings from Americans of Cuban origin. That led to protests and the company said it would postpone its cruises unless Cuba changed its entry policy.

The first US cruise to Cuba in 50 years is due to set sail from Miami on 1 May with up to 704 passengers on board.

Last month Barack Obama became only the second US president in history to visit Cuba, after Washington and Havana restored diplomatic relations last year.

199. US to buy Iranian heavy water as part of nuclear deal

The United States is purchasing 32 tons of a key component in the development of atomic weapons from Iran, in a bid to help Tehran implement provisions in the landmark nuclear deal. The US Energy and State departments confirmed on Friday the purchase of heavy water, which can be used to produce weapons-grade plutonium.

The plan was announced as US, Iranian and other officials met in Vienna to discuss implementation of the nuclear agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA.

Earlier, Iran sold low-enriched uranium to Russia to help implement the deal. Word of the US purchase came ahead of a yesterday meeting between Secretary of State John Kerry and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on the sidelines of the UN climate change signing ceremony in New York.

Iran has complained that it has not been getting the sanctions relief it deserves under the nuclear deal because of restrictions imposed by financial institutions.

Heading into the talks, Kerry said the US has not and will not stand in the way of business permitted in Iran since the nuclear agreement was implemented in January.

200. India ratifies WTO's trade facilitation agreement

India says it has formally ratified the WTO's trade facilitation agreement, which aims at easing customs procedures to boost commerce.

Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in Geneva last night that the move will supplement India's ongoing reforms to bring in simplification and enhanced transparency in cross border trade in goods.

India's WTO ambassador Anjali Prasad has handed over the instrument of acceptance to WTO Director-General Roberto Azevdo.

The Director General said that India is one of the most dynamic economies in the world today and has become a top recipient of foreign investment.

He said, ratifying the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) will help India further boost economic growth by reducing trade costs and supporting its integration into the global economy.

201. **India's foreign exchange reserves surges by 333.7 million USD**

India's foreign exchange reserves have surged by 333.7 million US dollars to reach a fresh life-time high of 360.250 billion dollars in the week ended 15th April.

A RBI press release said that foreign currency assets, a major part of the overall reserves, rose by 341.4 million dollars to 336.187 billion dollars in the reporting week.

In the previous week, the reserves had risen by 157.4 million dollars to 359.917 billion dollars. Gold reserves remained unchanged at 20.115 billion dollars in the week. India's special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund declined by 2.9 million dollars to 1.498 billion dollars, while the country's reserve position with the Fund also dipped by 4.8 million dollars to 2.450 billion dollars.

202. **Centre to provide plastic park to Andhra Pradesh**

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers Ananta Kumar said that Andhra Pradesh would be the plastic hub in a short while from now and that the Centre would provide a plastic park to the State with Rs.1000 crore.

He said research would be undertaken here on how to use the plastic for agriculture.

Speaking after laying the foundation stone for the Central Institute of Plastic Engineering and Technology (CIPET) at Surampalli village of Gannavaram mandal, near Vijayawada on Friday along with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in the presence of a host of guests including Union Ministers M Venkaiah Naidu, Hansraj Gangaram Ahir and others, he said the Centre is planning a bulk drug park to come up in 500 acres in Visakhapatnam soon.

Mr. Ananta Kumar said though the Centre wants to complete the construction of CIPET Vijayawada in 3 years time, the Chief Minister wants it to be completed in one years time.

Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu said that the coming up of CIPET in Vijayawada would enhance more employment opportunities.

He said the Centre has come forward to establish another CIPET in Anantapur.

He lauded the Union Ministers for extending all the help to Andhra Pradesh after bifurcation especially thanking Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, saying that he understood the problems being faced by Andhra after the partition and voiced for justice in the Parliament earlier.

He said the vision of Mr. Venkaiah Naidu can be seen in the development that is happening in urban areas of the country.

He also praised Prime Minister Narendra Modis leadership and Mr. Anant Kumars initiatives which have resulted in finding a lasting solution for the urea scarcity in the country that was prevalent during the Congress regime.

The new CIPET campus would be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 50.73 crore and spread over an area of 12.04 acres.

The campus will be introducing different courses in tune with future needs of the industry in a phased manner. CIPET Vijayawada had already commenced courses from its rented building in Kanur in Vijayawada since August 2015.

At present, it is offering one-month, two-month, three-month and six-month skill development training programmes.

CIPET is aiming to make 6.2 lakh plastic technology engineers and technicians ready in the next 3-4 years.

203. **SEBI seeks inputs from mediators trading in commodity derivatives**

Market Regulator SEBI has sought inputs from mediators trading in commodity derivatives on new products as well as widening the markets by bringing in more participants such as foreign investors.

In a meeting with commodity brokers and participants held in Mumbai on Friday, SEBI Chairman U K Sinha discussed various issues to deepen the commodities market.

The SEBI began regulating commodities markets in September 2015 following the merger of other watchdog Forward Markets Commission with it.

The brokers, who participated in the meeting, also suggested launching new products in commodity derivative trading.

Sinha informed the brokers they would be allowed to trade in commodities as well as securities from the same broking platform.

The move would help investors as the procedure for brokers is same for equities and commodity derivative trading activities.

204. Piyush Goyal with French Environment Minister launch programmes under ISA

Power Minister Piyush Goyal along with French Environment Minister and President of COP21 Sgolne Royal has launched programmes under International Solar Alliance ISA at New York. Ministers and Representatives from over 25 countries participated in event.

The ministers during the meet agreed to take concerted action through targeted programmes launched on voluntary basis, to better harmonize and aggregate the demand for solar finance, mature solar technologies and future.

While announcing the programmes, Mr Goyal expressed his confidence that these programmes will serve the interests of the farming communities in the prospective ISA member countries and ensure that there is sufficient flow of affordable finance for solar projects.

205. Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi Samman for 3 Odiya artists

Three Odiya artists Prafulla Kar, Alok Kanungo and Sadasiv Pradhan have been selected for the prestigious Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi Samman from Odisha.

This was announced in a meeting of the Kendra Sangeet Natak Akademi held in Agartala recently. While Prafulla Kar will receive the award for Sugam Sangeet, Alok Kanungo will be awarded for Odissi dance and Pradhan will receive the award for Chhau dance respectively. The artists will be awarded later by the President of India in ceremony in New Delhi.

206. Indian athletes presented life insurance cover of Rs 1 cr

In a first of its kind move, the Olympics-bound Indian athletes were on Saturday presented life insurance cover worth one crore rupees even as the Indian Olympic Association roped in three sponsors in its quest for financial independence.

Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance of financial conglomerate Edelweiss Group, which will be the principal sponsor of the Indian contingent at Rio Olympics, on Saturday offered the life insurance cover.

Besides Edelweiss, the IOA also roped in sporting goods company Li Ning as the apparel partner and Herba Life as the nutrition partner.

207. Salman Khan named goodwill ambassador for India at Rio Olympics

Bollywood actor Salman Khan was named goodwill ambassador of the Indian contingent for the upcoming Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. The announcement was made in the presence of Olympic medalists and Rio star athletes such as boxer M C Mary Kom, hockey captain Sardar Singh, and shooter Apurvi Chandela, among others.

Salman said Olympics do not get the viewership it deserves, and as a goodwill ambassador, he will try to popularise the games. Indian Olympic Association President N Ramachandran said, Salman's association will not only attract sports lovers but also help motivate the players to do well in the Olympics.

208. Maneka Gandhi appeals for helping Divyang-disabled persons

In Uttar Pradesh, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi has appealed to all well-off and competent people for helping Divyang-disabled persons in the society.

Addressing Gromday Se Bharat Uday Programme at her parliamentary constituency Pilibhit on Saturday, Smt Gandhi said, central government has started various welfare schemes for uplifting of these people.

She said that after inception of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, farmers will not face destruction as this scheme gives security cover to their crops from natural calamities.

She urged farmers and people to make maximum utilization of government schemes. She distributed helping aids and tools to more than seven thousand disabled beneficiaries on the occasion.

209. Centre to provide Rs 25 cr subsidy to contain prices of pulses

The Centre has decided to grant a subsidy of 25 crore rupees to the States on Tur and Urad dal to contain the rising prices of these commodities in market.

An official release said, the subsidy is given to the States for distribution of pulses after milling at rates not exceeding 120 rupees per kilogram. The Centre has decided to allocate eight thousand tonnes of Tur and two thousand tonnes of Urad dal to States for distribution.

An unmilled Tur dal is being allocated at 66 rupees per kilogram after providing a subsidy of 27 rupees and Urad at 82 rupees after a subsidy of 14 rupees per kilogram. The Centre has asked the Chief Secretaries and Food and Consumer Affairs Secretaries of the States to project their demand immediately to ensure timely allocation of pulses from the buffer stock.

They have also been asked to keep a close watch on the prices of pulses and to take stringent action against hoarders. The center has already empowered the States to impose stock limits on the pulses to ensure availability.

The release also said, the government agencies have made procurement of about 50 thousand tonnes of pulses from the farmers during the Kharif Marketing Season, 2015-16.

26 thousand tonnes of pulses have also been contracted for import. The Government has initiated procurement of Rabi pulses and has set a target of procuring around one lakh tonnes of Chana and Masur to further build the buffer stock.

210. Centre notifies new rules to revamp SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act

In a move to ensure speedy justice to members of the Dalit community, the Centre has made it mandatory for cops to file chargesheet within 60 days after a complaint is lodged.

Centre has notified new rules on Babasaheb Ambedkars birth anniversary to revamp Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

For the first time, there is provision of relief for offences of rape and gang rape. Centre has delinked requirement of medical examination for getting relief amount for non-invasive kind of offences against women.

There is also provision of relief in cash or in kind or both within seven days to the victims of atrocity, their family members and dependents.

The new rules also provides for regular reviews of the scheme for the rights and entitlements of victims and witnesses in accessing justice.

211. 400th death anniversary of Shakespeare

April 23 has been designated as the World Book Day since 1998. It encourages people to discover the pleasure of reading. It is also the day to honour great writers.

A ceremony to launch the 'English and Chinese bilingual edition of William Shakespeare: Complete works' has been held in Beijing to commemorate the Bard's legacy.

This year marks the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, which is marked with celebrations, performances, lectures and discussions all around the globe.

212. **China's carbon trading market to become most active in world next year**

Chinese authorities say they are confident that the country's carbon trading market is going to become the most active in the world next year.

Right now most of the world's carbon trading takes place in the European Union. However, once the new Paris Climate Change deal comes into effect, companies in China will purchase carbon emission quotas.

The Carbon Trading Quotas currently cover industries such as petroleum, petrochemical, power generation and non-ferrous metals. Companies in these industries with annual carbon emission over 26 thousand tons have to purchase emission quotas in the 7 different pilot zones.

213. **UN launches 72-million USD appeal for quake-hit Ecuador**

The United Nations has launched an appeal for an immediate 72-million US dollar to help Ecuador following the massive earthquake last week. The UN said some 720 thousand people are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

The UN Refugee Agency says it has begun the distribution of core relief items, including tents, sleeping mats and mosquito nets. The UN Development Program has also allocated half a million dollars as emergency funding.

Ecuador is suffering from the effects of a 7.8 magnitude earthquake on Saturday which has left more than 600 dead and over 130 others still missing. The quake zone continues to be hit by strong aftershocks this week.

214. **N Korea tests submarine launched ballistic missile in Sea of Japan**

North Korea on Saturday tested a submarine launched ballistic missile - SLBM in the Sea of Japan. South Korean defence ministry said they are keeping close tabs on the North Korean military and maintaining a full defence posture.

North Korea has been pushing to acquire SLBM capability that would take its nuclear strike threat to a new level, allowing deployment far beyond the Korean peninsula and the potential to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack. It has conducted a number of SLBM tests, but experts question the claim.

215. **Gulmarg, upper heights in north Kashmir receive fresh snowfall**

World famous ski resort of Gulmarg and all upper heights in north Kashmir received fresh snowfall on Saturday. Affarwat, the highest skiing point connected with Cable Car, Kongdori and Khilanmarg on Saturday received fresh snowfall on the slopes, which are already under white blanket.

Light snow at Gulmarg brought much awaited delight to the tourists. Tourism officials said fresh snowfall will send a positive signal to tourists around the country, where heat wave has claimed more than hundred lives so far.

216. **Joint conference of CMs, CJs of High Courts on judicial reforms begins**

A Joint Conference of Chief Justices of High Courts and Chief Ministers of States is being held in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the conference. Supreme Court Chief Justice T.S.Thakur will preside over the function.

The conference is held periodically to address pressing issues relating to the administration of justice in the country. The Joint Conference is an occasion for the executive and the judiciary to reaffirm their resolve to support a speedy, efficient and quality justice delivery in the country, and to discuss steps required to surmount the various challenges facing the justice system, such as inordinate delays in disposal of cases in courts, facilitating access to speedy resolution of

commercial disputes by economic operators, making the justice system user friendly and affordable to all and improving the quality of legal aid services in the country.

During the conference, Chief Ministers and Chief Justices will deliberate on the further steps required to ensure that the justice delivery system dispenses speedy, affordable and quality justice to all as well as contributes to the ease of doing business in order to achieve the desired economic growth.

217. PM to address Panchayati Raj Sammelan at Jamshedpur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address a Panchayati Raj Sammelan on the occasion of the National Panchayati Raj Day at Jamshedpur in Jharkhand. Mr Modi's address will be beamed live to all the Gram Sabhas of the country through Radio and Doordarshan. around 3,000 Panchayat Representatives from all over the country will participate in the programme.

This programme will be the culmination of the Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan campaign, started from 14th April on the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at his birthplace at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh.

218. Govt to appoint 10000 new LPG distributors in current financial year

Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that ten thousand new LPG distributors will be appointed in the current financial year. he said at present, there are 18,000 gas distributors in the country. He said that 2,000 new distributors will added in the coming three months and by the end of this financial year 8,000 more distributors will be made.

Mr Pradhan said besides increasing production in refineries, the government is taking other steps to increase availability of LPG for consumers. The Minister is overseeing the preparations for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit on the 1st of May in Ballia to launch Ujjwala Yojana. This 8 thousand crore rupees ambitious scheme will provide five crore free LPG connections to the BPL families using the money saved from 1 crore and 13 lakhs cooking gas users voluntarily giving up their subsidies.

objective of the scheme is to make every poor house hold free of smoke. He said 61 percent families in country are having LPG connection, while in Uttar Pradesh it is only 53 percent.

219. Air India starts additional flights for Simhastha Kumbh

National carrier Air India has started additional flights to Indore from Delhi to cater to the extra rush during the Simhastha Kumbh .

Air India already operates a daily direct service on this sector. While the first 'Shahi Snan' was concluded on Friday, another is scheduled on 21st of next month. Elaborate arrangements have been made for the Kumbh mela.

Simhastha is one of the four legs of the Kumbh Mela, each taking place by rotation every 12 years. Over five crore pilgrims are expected to visit Ujjain and other holy places during the fair.

220. Congo Republic president names one-time opposition leader Clement Mouamba as PM

Congo's President Denis Sassou Nguesso named former Finance Minister Clement Mouamba as the Prime Minister, bringing a one-time opposition leader into the government. State television said the appointment comes a month after Sassou Nguesso was elected to a five-year term that extends his long rule over the oil producing country. Sassou Nguesso led Congo between 1979 and 1992 and returned to power after a civil war in 1997.

The central African country has been gripped by political violence since the election.

221. Gram Sabha on Panchayati Raj Diwas on 24 April

[Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan](#), a nationwide movement towards social harmony, strengthening of Panchayati Raj, rural development and farmers progress will end on 24th April with PM Modis speech. Launched on 14 April, the 10 day nationwide event will be concluded with the Prime Ministers speech to each Gram Sabha on 24th April. The government will also distribute prizes to outstanding Panchayats at the conference of Panchayati Raj representatives in Jamshedpur. Several programs were held during the Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan including Social Harmony

Programmes, [Gram Kisan Sabha](#) and [Gram Sabha Meetings](#) to make people aware of the government welfare schemes and collect feedback.

222. **Samajwadi Pension Yojana 2016-17**

The ambitious [Samajwadi Pension Yojana](#) of Uttar Pradesh Government has received a great response. The number of applications received for Samajwadi Pension Yojana 2016-17 were about 2 times the target number of beneficiaries. The state government set a target of including 16,000 more beneficiaries under the pension scheme for the financial year 2016-17. In the year 2015-16, the target was 61,452 for which only 58,026 applicants found to be eligible. Rest 3,426 people were to be given benefits of the scheme in current financial year. The social welfare department set a target of adding 1492 beneficiaries in Jhansi but the department received a total of 2,898 applications till the last date. The department distributed about 5000 application forms for the same. The applications will be reviewed and sent to the state government. The eligible applicants will start receiving the pension just after approval of the budget. The applicants if not found to be eligible for the scheme, their applications will be rejected. A monthly pension of Rs. 500/- will be provided to the eligible beneficiaries.

223. **PM Ujjwala Yojana for Free LPG Connections to BPL Women to be Launched on May 1st**

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is all set to be launched on May 1st by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The scheme is for providing free LPG connections to the women from BPL households. Announced in March 2016, the scheme will finally be launched and implemented from 1st May 2016. Prime Minister will launch the scheme on May 1 at Ballia in Uttar Pradesh and Dahod in Gujarat on May 15. [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana](#) is being launched with an aim of reducing the number of deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuels. Indoor air pollution is also responsible for a significant number of acute respiratory illnesses in young children. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana scheme will be implemented using the money saved from 1.13 crore cooking gas users voluntarily giving up their subsidies under the Give-It-Up campaign. Since the launch of Give-It-Up campaign in January 2015, 1.13 crore people have given-up LPG subsidies and are buying cooking gas at market price. With a budget outlay of Rs. 8000 crores, 5 Crore LPG connections will be provided to the BPL households. The scheme will run over three years in 2016-17, 2017-18, and 2018-19. In the years 2016-17 alone, there is a target of providing free LPG connections to 1.5 Crore BPL households with a budgetary provision of Rs. 2000 Crores. Under the [PM Ujjwala Yojana](#), government will provide a financial assistance of Rs. 1600 for LPG connection to each household. The amount will be directly credited into the bank accounts of the eligible beneficiaries. The scheme will ensure women empowerment and their health protection along with the reduction in time spent on cooking. The scheme will also benefit rural youth in providing employment in supply chain of cooking gas.

224. **Wrestler Sandeep Tomar books berth for Rio Olympics**

Wrestler Sandeep Tomar secured an Olympic quota place for India in the men's 57kg freestyle category with a bronze-medal finish on the final day of the 1st World Olympic Qualifying tournament in Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia.

The 25-year-old Sandeep became the fourth Indian wrestler after Yogeshwar Dutt (men's 65kg freestyle), Narsingh Yadav (men's 74kg freestyle), and Hardeep Singh (Greco-Roman 98kg) to book a berth for the Rio Games, to be held later this year.

Sandeep qualified for the Olympics by winning the playoff bout after having clinched the bronze medal.

However, other Indian men's freestyle grapplers in the fray today returned empty-handed.

Sumit got off to a poor start, losing his pre-quarterfinal bout to Hungary's Daniel Ligeti 4-6 but luckily got another chance to make it to the medal round as his Hungarian opponent reached the final of 125kg category.

Somveer (86kg) and Satywart Kadian (97kg), meanwhile, fumbled in the initial rounds of their respective weight divisions to crash out of the competition early.

225. **India cancels visa given to Chinese dissident**

India has cancelled the visa given to a leading Chinese dissident to participate in a conference in Dharamsala, after China's objection over it. Sources said the visa given to Dolkun Isa has been cancelled. Isa, a leader of World Uyghur

Congress, had been invited for the conference being organised by US-based 'Initiatives for China'.

India's decision to allow World Uyghur Congress leaders whom China regards as backers of terrorism in Xinjiang province had come in the backdrop of Beijing blocking India's bid to get Jaish e Mohamed chief Masood Azhar designated as a terrorist by the UN.

226. JD(U) suspends its RS MP Anil Sahani chargesheeted by CBI in LTC scam

The Janata Dal (United) has suspended its Rajya Sabha member Anil Sahani from the party's parliamentary board. He was charge-sheeted by CBI in the LTC scam recently. K C Tyagi said yesterday that the action was taken as the MP's reply to the notice was found unsatisfactory.

He said, the party had given Sahani show cause notice on April 16 after Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari gave the sanction to prosecute him in the case. Mr Sahani was asked to explain his conduct within a week before former JD(U) president Sharad Yadav, who is leader of the party in Rajya Sabha.

In his reply, the MP had told the party that he is a campaigner against corruption and is innocent. CBI had filed a chargesheet against Mr Sahani alleging that he, in collusion with other persons, used forged e-tickets and fake boarding passes to defraud Rajya Sabha to the tune of 23.71 lakh rupees as travel and dearness allowance reimbursement, without undertaking actual journey.

227. Army Commanders Conference begins

The Army Commanders Conference is beginning in New Delhi. The Six day Conference will appraise current and emerging strategic security scenario, review of operational preparedness of the Indian Army and aspects pertaining to training, administration, military technology and force modernization.

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar will inaugurate the conference. The Conference will be chaired by Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Dalbir Singh. All Army Commanders and other senior Army Officers will attend the conference.

228. Nine MPs take oath as Rajya Sabha members

Nine MPs from five states took oath as Rajya Sabha members. They include five from Congress, two from CPIM and one each from BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal. Of them, six are new members and three others were re-elected. Ripun Bora, Ranee Narah, Anand Sharma, Pratap Singh Bajwa, Shamsheer Singh Dullo are all from Congress.

The CPIM members are K Somaprasad and Jharna Das Baidya. The two other members are Shwait Malik of the BJP and Naresh Gujral of the Shiromani Akali Dal. Chairman Mohammed Hamid Ansari, who administered the oath of office to the members, welcomed the newly elected and re-elected members.

229. Ecuador govt declares eight days of national mourning

The Ecuadorian government declared eight days of national mourning as the death toll from the massive earthquake that hit the South American country a week ago has risen to 654. President Rafael Correa made the announcement in his weekly TV broadcast.

The quake, the worst in nearly seven decades, injured at least 12,500 people and left another 58 people missing along the country's Pacific coast.

Thousands of soldiers and police have been deployed throughout Ecuador to provide emergency relief. Officials said 113 people had been rescued alive from buildings damaged by the quake, which struck eight days ago.

The United Nations appealed for \$72.7 million to provide aid to 350,000 people over the next three months. UNICEF reports that the quake has affected at least 150,000 children, having damaged 119 schools. Electricity and water supplies are only being slowly restored.

230. New BOP opened in critical stretch of Tripura

A new composite Border outpost (BOP) was inaugurated at Kaptoli in southern stretch of the Tripura with

Bangladesh in Sabroom. The BOP would cover the critical portion of border sharing with Chittagong Hill Tract of Bangladesh that is believed to be contributed in better management of border and substantially contain cross border crime.

The inauguration of new BOP is adding one step ahead to dominate the bordering areas. Establishment of composite BOPs are done to improve the living conditions of those BSF jawans at the border, who round the clock and throughout the year, stay away from their families to maintain the sanctity of Indian borders.

231. Gopal Roy appointed as new CLP for Tripura

Senior legislator Gopal Roy was appointed as leader of Congress Legislative Party in the Tripura assembly. Roy is a four time MLA from Banamalipur assembly constituency of Agartala. Tripura Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Birajit Sinha said the Speaker has been requested to make suitable arrangements. The post fell vacant after resignation of Sudip Roy Barman from the post of CLP leader last month, Mr Sinha said.

232. Gram Sabha meet held in HP under Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday campaign

In Himachal Pradesh, the Gram Sabha meetings were organized in all the 3226 Gram Panchayats of the state under nationwide Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday campaign. Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P.Nadda also took part in the Gram Sabha meeting held at Aanji Maatla Panchayat of Kasauli assembly constituency in Solan District along with BJP MP Virender Kashyap. More than fifty percent Panchayat are in the hands of ladies representatives. Therefore these ladies took quite interest in preparing the schemes to develop their respective areas.

233. Odisha govt to take advantage of DEES

The Odisha government has decided to take advantage of the Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme and is preparing an action plan to avail benefit out of it. The Centre's new plan allocating 1,400 crore rupees for the dairy development, would bring a long-term solution for the Odisha milk federation, Omfed and dairy farmers in Odisha.

Currently, Omfed is procuring 5,25,000 litre of milk and selling 5,53,473 litres. While the Omfed plant is operating over and above its installed capacity, pressure is building up for collection of more milk. Quoting sources, as the Omfed plans to scale up collection of milk to 10 Lakh litre by 2019, a move is on to set up a new modern milk plant which would bring a long-term solution for the Omfed and dairy farmers.

234. Trade deficit with China growing

The government admitted in the Lok Sabha that trade deficit with China has been growing. Between April 2015 and February this year, the deficit stood at 48.68 billion US dollars compared to 48.45 billion US dollars in 2014-15. Stating this Commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said China sends manufactured items to meet the demands of fast expanding sectors like telecom and power.

Major imports from China include telecom instruments, computer hardware and peripherals, fertilizers, electronic instruments, organic chemicals, drugs and iron and steel. China exports all these items to India at competitive prices. In return, India exports primary and intermediate products to China. The Minister assured the House that India will never allow any sub-standard products from China.

235. Rower Dattu Bhokanal qualifies for Rio Olympics

Indian rower Dattu Bhokanal qualified for the Rio Olympics after winning a silver in the finals of men's single sculls at the 2016 FISA Asian and Oceania Olympic Qualification Regatta at Chung-ju in South Korea. The 25-year-old armyman clocked 7 mins 7.49 seconds in the 2km course to finish second and qualify for the Rio Olympics.

236. Mairaj wins India's first skeet medal at a shooting WC

Indian shooter Mairaj Ahmed Khan has won the silver medal in the Mens Skeet event of the ISSF Shooting World Cup in Rio De Janerio. Mairaj's feat, gave India its first skeet medal at a World Cup.

The 40-year-old Indian shooter finished with an overall tally of 14 in the gold medal match, but lost out to Marcus Svensson of Sweden. Earlier in the year, he became India's first ever skeet shooter to win an Olympic quota place after finishing at sixth place in last year's ISSF Shotgun World Cup in Italy.

237. Rafael Nadal wins Barcelona Open to equal clay-court record

In Tennis, Rafael Nadal has won the Barcelona Open to equal Guillermo Vilas' decades old record of 49 clay-court titles. In the Final last night, world number five and top seed Spaniard defeated two-time defending champion Kei Nishikori of Japan, in straight sets, 6-4, 7-5. This was Nadal's 9th Barcelona Open title, and he has now won his first 10 matches of the European clay-court season.

Argentine Guillermo Vilas had bagged 49 clay-court titles in 1970s and early 1980s. Nadal may break that record as he will play in Madrid and Rome next month before the French Open, the second Grand Slam of the season, which ends the clay-court season. Nine of Nadal's 14 Grand Slams have been at Roland Garros.

238. Kerala mosque welcomes Muslim women for the first time in 1000 years

For the first time in its history, the 1000-year-old mosque at Thazhathangady, famous for its rich architecture and wood carvings, has thrown open its doors for Muslim women in Kerala.

Women were allowed to enter the mosque on Sunday to take a look at its famed architecture. Thousands of Muslim women, including tourists, flocked to the mosque from various parts of Kerala and abroad. The move comes at a time when the demand for permitting women at places of worship is gaining ground. The Juma Masjid is a mosque situated at Thazhathangady, one of the Heritage Zones of Kerala, in Kottayam town. Situated on the banks of the Meenachil river, the mosque is famous for its rich architecture, wood carvings and beauty. The mosque, considered the oldest in India, is also known as the 'Taj Juma Masjid'.

239. India, Mongolia hold joint exercise 'Nomadic Elephant' to boost military cooperation

The Eleventh Indo-Mongolia joint training Exercise, Nomadic Elephant - 2016 to promote military associations between India and Mongolia has commenced at Mongolia. The aim of this exercise is to develop synergy and interoperability between the two armies to fight in Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism environment under the United Nation mandate.

Defence Ministry in a release said, a platoon of the Kumaon Regiment of the Indian Army along with a team of two observers will be taking part in the event. The Indian contingent will share their practical experiences of Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorism operations through a series of classroom lectures and outdoor demonstrations. The exercise will culminate on 8th of next month.

240. Gurudwara bill passed in Parliament

Parliament has passed the Sikh Gurdwaras (Amendment) Bill- 2016 with the Lok Sabha approving it today. The Bill provides for amendment in some provisions of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925. It will disentitle Sahjdhari Sikhs, who trim or shave their beard or hair, from casting their votes in elections to the Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC).

Under the 1925 Act, every Sikh who is above 21 years of age and is registered as a voter, is entitled to vote in the SGPC elections. The Act had created an exception for Sahjdhari Sikhs who trim or shave their beard or hair, and allowed them to vote. The new amendment will come into force retrospectively from 8th October, 2003.

Replying to a brief debate on the bill, Home Minister Rajnath Singh said that the amendment was necessitated in view of complaints received during the SGPC elections that those who do not follow the tenets of Sikh religion also cast their votes.

The Rajya Sabha had passed the Bill in the last session.

241. World Malaria Day

Today is World Malaria Day. The day is observed every year to create awareness among the people about this vector borne disease. Within the next four years, six nations in Africa, the region where malaria is most prominent, could be free of the disease, the World Health Organization said in a report published today to mark World Malaria Day. The six countries in Africa that could be rid of malaria by 2020 are Algeria, Botswana, Cape Verde, Comoros, South Africa and Swaziland.

The Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030, approved by the WHO last year, hoped to see an end to local transmission of malaria in at least 10 countries by 2020, but now the WHO estimates that 21 countries could achieve that goal, including six in Africa. In India, various campaigns are launched from time to time by the Centre and state

governments to educate the people and take preventive measures.

WHO says malaria infection rates are falling due to the use of insecticide-treated bed-nets, regular bug spraying inside dwellings and rapid diagnostic testing, though these techniques are becoming less effective as time goes on. While the outlook is promising, the group cautioned that nearly half of the world's population around 3.2 billion people are still at risk of contracting malaria. Just last year, 214 million new cases of malaria were reported in 95 countries. More than 400,000 people died from the disease.

242. Saudi Arabia agrees plans to move away from oil profits

Saudi Arabia today approved sweeping economic reforms aimed at moving the country away from its dependence on oil profits. Close to 80 percent of its revenue comes from oil, but it has been hit by falling prices in the past year. Announcing the reforms, Deputy Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman, described his country as being addicted to oil. One part of the plan will see shares sold in state-owned oil giant Aramco to create a sovereign wealth fund. He told Al-Arabiya news channel that the Vision 2030 plan would ensure Saudi can live without oil by 2020.

243. New coating may control spread of 'superbugs'

Researchers including one of Indian-origin have developed a transparent coating for everyday items such as smartphones and door handles that may protect people against deadly antibiotic-resistant bacteria, including MRSA and E coli. Suresh Pillai from Institute of Technology Sligo in Ireland said the discovery could control the spread of superbugs which experts fear are on course to kill 10 million people every year by 2050.

It will be of particular use in hospitals and medical facilities which are losing the battle against the spread of killer superbugs. Other common uses would include in swimming pools and public buildings, on glass in public buses and trains and in clean rooms in the medical sector.

The new water-based solution is sprayed on the product and then baked into it, forming a super-hard surface. The coating is transparent, permanent and scratch resistant. Important thing is that the coating is non-toxic and has no harmful bi-products. The findings were published in the journal Scientific Reports.

244. Punjab govt makes over Rs 4,200 cr e-transactions for wheat procurement

Punjab government has made online transactions of over Rs 4,200 crore for the procured wheat in the state till date. Earlier on Friday transactions over Rs 2,612 crore were made to the commission agents.

An official spokesman of the government said in Chandigarh that total 80 lakh 26 thousand tons of wheat has been procured in the state. The government agencies procured 79 lakh tons.

245. IMF expects USD 500 billion revenue loss for Mideast oil exporters

The International Monetary Fund has said that oil exporting countries in West Asia lost a staggering 390 billion dollars in revenue due to lower oil prices last year.

The IMF added that these countries should brace for even steeper losses of over 500 billion dollars this year. These losses translate into budget deficits and slower economic growth, particularly for countries like Saudi Arabia that are still heavily dependent on oil to finance their spending.

The IMF said economic growth in the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates will slow from 3.3 percent in 2015, to 1.8 per cent this year. With oil prices weak, most GCC countries have raised fuel, water, and electricity prices.

246. P-Notes investment climbs to Rs 2.23 lakh crore

Investments through participatory notes, P-Notes, into the country's capital markets increased to Rs 2.23 lakh crore in March, after having hit an 18-month low in February.

This also marks the first increase in investments via P-Notes in four months. But the percentage of FII investments via P-Notes fell to 10 per cent in March, from 10.7 per cent in February.

P-Notes are used mostly by overseas high networth individuals, hedge funds, and other foreign institutions to invest in the Indian capital markets through registered foreign portfolio investors.

247. Finance Ministry approves 8.7% interest on EPF for 2015-16

Finance Ministry has approved 8.7 per cent interest on Provident Fund deposits for over five crore subscribers of Employee Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO for 2015-16. The EPFO pays rate of return to its subscribers on the basis of returns it generates from its investments.

Employees representatives had demanded nine per cent rate of interest for the fiscal but the CBT at its meeting held on February 16 decided to provide an interim interest rate of 8.8 per cent for 2015-16.

EPFO had provided 8.75 per cent rate of interest in 2013-14 and 2014-15, which was higher than 8.5 per cent in 2012-13 and 8.25 per cent in 2011-12.

248. South Africa: Cricket, Rugby banned from hosting tournaments

South Africa banned the national rugby and cricket federations from bidding for or hosting major international tournaments for at least a year over their failures to create opportunities for black players. Sports Minister Fikile Mbalula made the announcement after receiving a report on 'transformation' in South Africa's five biggest sports, Rugby, cricket, soccer, athletics and netball. The athletics and netball federations were also banned from bidding.

The South African government has been pushing for years for the country's main sports, especially rugby and cricket, to create more opportunities for black players.

Mr. Mbalula said more than two decades after the end of apartheid, these two sports are still generally dominated by whites despite the fact that blacks make up over 80 percent of South Africa's population.

249. India to host 2018 Commonwealth Judo Championships

India will host the 2018 Commonwealth Judo Championships in Jaipur. This was announced by the Judo Federation of India in a press release in New Delhi. The Commonwealth Judo Congress had allotted the Championships to India at its meeting held at Port Elizabeth in South Africa.

The Championships dates are yet to be finalised. This will be the first time that Commonwealth Judo Championships will be held in India. India will also play host to the 10th Asian Cadet Judo Championships 17th Asian Junior Judo Championships from September 6th to 12th in Kerala.

250. e-Governance award to EPFO

Employees Provident Fund Organisation has been given Gold Award under category Cat-III Innovative use of Technology in e-Governance in the National Award on e-Governance 2015-2016 for its Universal Account Number (UAN) Programme. The award was presented during the 19th National Conference on e-Governance held at Nagpur, Maharashtra on 21st -22nd January 2016.

251. SC raps Maharashtra govt for not granting licenses to dance bars

The Supreme Court rapped the Maharashtra government for not granting licenses to dance bars on account of non-compliance of some conditions. Senior advocate Jayant Bhushan, appearing for Indian Hotel and Restaurant Association, had alleged that Maharashtra has not complied with the direction to grant licenses to the dance bar owners within ten days after they complied with the modified pre-conditions.

Bench comprising Justices Dipak Misra and Shiva Kirti Singh warned Maharashtra government not to overstep its powers by defying the apex court order.

The bench asked both dance bar owners and the police to comply with mutually-agreed terms which were part of earlier court orders. Apex Court asked all dance bars to get criminal antecedents of their employees checked by local police, besides installing CCTV cameras at all entry points of dance bars. The bench had granted three days to dance bar owners to comply with the modified conditions.

The bench said it is better for women to perform than begging on streets or doing something unacceptable for earning livelihood. However it said state has to ensure that there is no obscenity in dance bars and the dignity of women is

protected there. The court has now fixed the matter for further hearing on May 10.

252. Start-ups are biggest source of Job-creation in any country: Raghuram Rajan

Reserve Bank of India Governor Dr. Raghuram Rajan said that Start-ups are the biggest source of job-creation in any country.

Delivering a lecture on 'Starting up India' at Y. B. Chavan Centre in Mumbai today, the RBI Governor said that Conditions for starting a small firm improving day by day in India. He said for any country to progress economically, needs easier entry and exit norms to businesses. He added that basic safety net like health, employment insurance are other two critical factors needed for ensuring further job creation from the businesses. He further said that business firms also needs transparent tax regime, protection of property rights to open up newer job opportunities.

Dr. Rajan said India has created a strong foreground for all businesses to grow and expand by providing a safe and encouraging business environment. He added that government is focused on improving business opportunities for smaller firms by giving them access to infrastructure and cutting down the stringent norms.

Dr. Rajan informed that with the progressive business scenario in the country, there will be need of strong and wider banking sector. He also stated that India may get 18 more banks by the next year.

253. Lok Sabha passes Regional Centre for Biotechnology bill

The Lok Sabha passed the Regional Centre for Biotechnology bill 2016 to provide statutory status to the existing Regional Centre for Biotechnology, training and education, Faridabad.

The bill also declares it as institution importance. Replying to the debate, the Minister for Science and Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan said the institution will produce skilled human resource tailored to drive innovation in biotechnology, particularly in the areas of new opportunities and also fill talent gap in deficient areas.

The Minister said modern biotechnology has been recognized globally as a rapidly advancing science wherein molecular techniques and processes are employed to develop health care solution for human and animals, for agriculture and environment technologies.

254. Manipur implements Food Security scheme

Manipur Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh has launched implementation of the National Food Security Act in Imphal. Initially the implementation of the Act will cover only 14 assembly constituencies in Imphal West and Imphal East Districts and the remaining 46 assembly constituencies in nine districts of the state will be gradually covered in a phase manner.

Mr. Ibobi Singh said that his government has no intention to take political mileage from the implementation of the Act. He also appealed to all MLAs of the state and elected representatives of urban and rural local bodies to closely monitor the targeted public distribution system under the Act to ensure that the food grains reach the beneficiaries without any leakage. The Chief Minister further said that state government is working on to cover 87 per cent of the states total population under the Act.

255. Haryana approves blueprint for NIFT centre in Panchkula

National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) would be set up at a cost of Rs 100 crore at Panchkula over an area of 10.45 acres with a view to develop textile, handloom and cottage industry in Haryana. This was informed in a meeting chaired by Haryana Chief Secretary D.S. Dhesi at Chandigarh.

In the meeting, approval was granted for the blueprint and construction work of the institute. Mr Dhesi said that the construction work on the building of the institute would begin soon, which would be carried out by Haryana Police Housing Corporation. He said that government has also decided to start the classes from the next academic session in this institute.

The annual intake in the proposed courses would be 230. He said that as many as six regular degree courses would be offered at the NIFT and these include four-year Bachelor of Design with major in Fashion Design or Textile Design, four-year Bachelor of Fashion technology with major in Apparel Production, two-year Master of Fashion Technology, two-year Master of Design, two-year Master of fashion Management and Certificate Programme of

one-year-and-six-months as a part of the Continuing Education Programme.

256. Nagaland govt undertakes cleanliness drive on World Malaria Day

World Malaria Day is being observed across Nagaland under the theme, End malaria for good. In this connection, Directorate of Health and Family Welfare organized a sanitation drive in all the district headquarters to mark the occasion.

In the State Capital Kohima, the drive began from 7am this morning. Officials from Health and State Malaria Department and District Municipal members monitored the cleanliness drive.

Speaking to AIR, Kohima, the District Vector Borne Officer, CMO Kohima, Dr. Benny said, the department undertook the drive with the hope to motivate the community to think and plan for a cleaner environment, which would ultimately result in a malaria free environment.

The State Vector Borne Disease Control Programme credited the much-improved scenario to various preventive measures taken. However, despite sincere effort and success being made over the succeeding years, malaria still remains to be a major challenge. Total Malaria positive detected in the State in 2015 is 1527 as against 1936 in 2014. With more sincere effort and with prompt detection and treatment, the department aims to bring down the record to zero in the next decade.

257. Govt hikes minimum wage for contract workers to Rs 10000

The minimum wage for contract workers has been increased to ten thousand rupees per month. This was informed by Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya in the Lok Sabha. He said that the wage hike has been done based on a Supreme Court verdict. Asserting that the government is committed towards the betterment of the working class, Mr Dattatreya said workers are being protected through all the rights. He said, the Ministry has also linked the minimum wage to pension and bonus.

258. ICMR, Sun Pharma join hands for research in preventive health

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Sun Pharma have entered into an agreement for research and innovation in preventive health. This was announced by Union Health Minister JP Nadda in New Delhi at a function on the occasion of World Malaria Day .

He said, this unique initiative is a significant step in the health sector and reiterated the commitment of the government to strengthen health research in the country. He said this collaboration, which is Indias first public-private-partnership for research and innovation, will prove to be a milestone in the governments strategy to address the issue of Malaria in the country.

In addition, ICMR and Sun Pharma will jointly conduct scientific research for development and testing of medical products including drugs, biosimilars and vaccines as well as undertake disease control and elimination programs. They will setup a Joint Working Group to identify and collaborate in disease surveillance and elimination that are relevant to India.

Both will expand cooperation in the area of translational health sciences research with the objective of developing new and improved medicines for infectious and chronic diseases. They will jointly work to strengthen capacity and facilities required for conducting research and trials aimed at testing safety and efficacy of medical products.

259. Dangs' Didi Poornimaben Pakvasa passes away

Freedom fighter, Kasturba teacher, Padma Bhushan and greatest contributor in the field of tribal girls education, Didi of tribal Dang district Purnimaben Pakvasa passed away. She was 103 years old. Pakvasa had been working for empowerment of tribal women in the hilly region of tribal Saputara in South Gujarat for the last five decades. So far, more than 7,000 tribal girls of the Dangs and Surat districts, have been educated in Pakvasas Ritambhara Vishwa Vidyapith at Saputara. Her Shakti Dal formed in early 1950s, has so far trained over 26,000 tribal women across the country. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba during freedom movement, Pakvasa not only believed in

empowering women for overall development but also advocates physical training to make them strong. Like her father and uncle, Pakvasa, went to a military college in Amreli and learnt flying aircraft flying in Nagpur. Pakvasa first met Mahatma Gandhi at Ranpur when she was just eight years old. She took part in satyagrah at Limdi and at Rajkot worked as a volunteer with Subhash Chandra Bose and helped underground Congress worker during salt satyagrah in 1932. At 18, she was jailed for participating in the Dandi March. Her inmate in the jail was none other than Kasturba Gandhi, who was like a foster mother to Purnimaben. Kasturba trained Purnimaben in yoga, lathi charge and self-defence techniques. In return, Purnimaben taught Kasturba to read and write. Impressed by her intuitive teaching capability, Kasturba Gandhi asked her to teach other inmates as well. Thus Pakvasa's fledgling teaching career began in the close confines of a stony prison cell. So far, thousands of tribal girls of the Dangs and Surat districts, have been educated in her Vidyapith run by Ritambhara Gramin Vikas Trust, but in initial days the challenge for her was to convince the Dangs (local tribals) parents to send their daughters to school. She would go door to door urging people. The school was started with only 15 girls. Pakvasa has been for multipronged approach for development of tribal women for the past several years. Not only she believes in empowering women for overall development but also advocates physical training to make them strong. The mother of dancer Sonal Mansingh, Purnimaben also had widely travelled the world and has been to Russia, Europe, Singapore, Thailand, Bangkok, Burma, Berlin. About ten years back, India's then President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam visited her school at Saputara. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi expressed grief over Pakvasa's passing away. He tweeted: Sad to hear about demise of Purnimaben Pakvasa. She was a phenomenal personality who did exceptional work towards educating tribal girls. Purnimaben led a long life, leaving us at the grand age of 103. Recall my interactions with her whenever I visited Saputara. Spoke to late Purnimaben's daughter Sonal Mansingh and expressed my deepest condolences.

260. Venezuela court rejects bill to cut president's term

Venezuela's Supreme Court has rejected a proposed constitutional amendment to cut President Nicolas Maduro's term from six to four years. The court ruled that the amendment could not be applied retroactively to Mr Maduro's current term. The amendment was proposed by the opposition, which won control of the legislature last year.

The opposition has tried various means to oust Mr Maduro, including constitutional reform and a referendum. In its judgment, the Supreme Court ruled that the proposed amendment was constitutional, but could not be applied retroactively. Members of the opposition have expressed frustration at what they say are stalling tactics from the government.

Mr Maduro, 53, replaced Hugo Chavez in 2013 but his popularity has since fallen as the country battles recession. According to Venezuelan law, leaders can be recalled halfway through their term by a popular referendum. Mr Maduro's six-year term reaches its midpoint today. If Mr Maduro loses a referendum this year it will trigger a new presidential election but if he stands down in the final two years of his term the current Vice President, Aristobulo Istariz, is entitled to take over.

261. US approves Charter purchase of Time Warner

The US Department of Justice (DoJ) has approved Charter Communications purchase of cable operators Time Warner Cable and Bright House networks. The deal will create the second largest cable broadband provider in the US. Charter had to agree to not stop its content providers from separately selling shows online, as part of the approval.

The deal also still needs approval from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) before it can go ahead. But the head of the FCC Tom Wheeler said he was seeking approval for the deal, noting the merger conditions will directly benefit consumers by bringing and protecting competition to the video marketplace and increasing broadband deployment.

262. APEPDCL becomes first e-office among power utilities in India

The Andhra Pradesh Eastern Power Distribution Company Limited APEPDCL based at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh has become the first e-Office electricity distribution company among all power utilities in India. Among the 62,291 files created in e-Office in Andhra Pradesh, 50,036 are of APEPDCLs i.e., 80.32 per cent of the total files created achieving first position.

About 2843 e-office users working in 532 offices of APEPDCL have contributed to achieve the feat by creating the 50036 files and 91585 receipts in e-office. This contributes to saving large number of trees which otherwise would have been cut for producing 4.5 lakh of A4 size sheets estimated as saved by APEPDCL through e-office. The e-Office was launched on 14 August 2015 in the Corporate office and made it into paperless.

From 30 November, all the five circle offices of the APEPDCL became e-office and entire net work connected with Corporate office. The object of the e-office is to clear the files without delay, transparency, and accountability. The software is capable of handling department files in electronic format and has features such as knowledge management system, personal information system, collaboration and messaging services. The software is user friendly and can be used by the public to view the status.

The Distribution Company (Discom) has one corporate office, five circle offices, 20 divisional offices, 81 sub-divisional offices, 31 electricity revenue office and 309 section offices in its jurisdiction across the five coastal districts of Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavri.

263. Haryana govt to give free laptops to first 500 meritorious students

Haryana Government has decided to give free laptops to first 500 meritorious students, who would secure a minimum of 95 per cent marks in annual Board examination of Class X in 2016-17. Stating this at Chandigarh, Finance Minister Capt. Abhimanyu said that the laptops would be provided under State Merit Scholarship scheme, under which a scholarship of Rs 150 per student for 12 months is given. Now the proposal to give laptops instead has been approved by Chief Minister, Mr Manohar Lal. He said that the State Government would bear an additional expenditure of about Rs 2.50 crore.

He said that while one hundred laptops would be given to top 100 students as per merit list of the Board irrespective of their caste, sex or economic status, an equal number of laptops would be given to top girl students belonging to general category. He said that laptops would also be provided to top one hundred boys and an equal number of top girls belonging to Scheduled Castes, and the remaining one hundred laptops to students belonging to Below Poverty Line families placed in the merit list of the Board.

264. Haryana pays compensation of over Rs 55 cr for Jat quota damages

Haryana Government has paid a total compensation of 55.23 crore rupees to those persons whose properties were damaged in the recent Jat quota agitation in the State. It includes both, the interim as well as final payment. Stating this at Chandigarh today, an official spokesman said that the Government has so far received 2,078 claims for compensation, 1,840 from urban areas and 238 from rural areas.

He said that private and government insurance companies have so far made payment of about Rs 11,95,92,153 to those whose insured properties were damaged. He said that 2,040 FIRs were registered during the agitation, of which 446 were theft-related, 873 property-related, 16 death-related and 705 were for blockading of roads and encumbrance in government duty.

265. Govt to provide Rs 1 lakh per month to Rio-bound athletes

Union Sports Ministry has decided to provide one lakh rupees per month as out of pocket allowance to the sports persons under the Target Olympic Podium (TOP) scheme in their preparation for the Olympics and Paralympics Games at Rio de Janeiro.

77 Indian athletes in eight disciplines have qualified for the Olympics till date and many more are likely to qualify in the next two months. Target Olympic Podium scheme is a sports ministry initiative under which Olympic medal prospects are funded by the government for top class training as part of their preparations for the Games.

266. Heart of Asia conference begins in New Delhi

Heart of Asia (HoA) conference begins in New Delhi. The conference is with the objective of bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan and speeding up its reconstruction with a focus on enhancing investment and connectivity to the country. The conference to be attended by officials of a number of countries including Pakistan Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry, is likely to deliberate on a host of issues like combating challenge of extremism and terrorism.

The key elements of HoA process have been to devise a sustained, incremental approach to implementation of the confidence building measures (CBM) in Afghanistan and the officials are set to deliberate on them during the conference. Energy, infrastructure and investment deals to shore up economic growth of Afghanistan may figure in the talks.

India hosted the senior officials Meeting of the Istanbul process in January 2014 in New Delhi and is set to host the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the HoA Process in the last quarter of this year. The 14 participating countries in HoA process are Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and UAE. The supporting countries include Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Iraq, Japan, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, UK, US and the EU.

267. Shyam Benegal panel submits report on Censor Board functioning

The Shyam Benegal committee has recommended that Central Board of Film Certification should only be a film certification body whose scope should be restricted to categorizing the suitability of the film to audience groups on the basis of age and maturity.

In its report submitted to Information and Broadcasting Minister Arun Jaitley, the committee said, the board can refuse certification when a film contravenes the provisions of Cinematograph Act.

It said, certification can also be refused, when content in a film crosses the ceiling laid down in the highest category of certification. It said, the applicant must specify the category of certification being sought and the target audience.

The panel was set up on January this year to take a relook at the functioning of the board. The committee was asked to take note of the best practices in other parts of the world, especially where the film industry is given sufficient and adequate space for creative and aesthetic expression.

The panel also includes actor-filmmaker Kamal Hassan, filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, adman Piyush Pandey and film journalist Bhawana Somayya, among others.

268. Par panel suggests fine, jail for celebrities of misleading ads

A Parliamentary Standing Committee has recommended to hold celebrities accountable for misleading advertisements and stringent provisions including jail term up to five years and penalty up to Rs 50 lakh. The committee's report on the Consumer Protection Bill 2015 was tabled in Parliament today.

It has suggested legal teeth to Advertising Standards Council Of India to curb misleading ads besides proposing severe penalties, jail and cancellation of license of those involved in food adulteration.

The committee headed by TDP MP J C Divakar Reddy also advocated to empower Department of Consumer Affairs to make laws to regulate e-commerce, direct selling and multi-level marketing where consumer complaints are on the rise.

The government introduced the Consumer Protection Bill 2015 in the Lok Sabha in August last year to repeal the 30-year old Consumer Protection Act. The panel's report will be studied before final passage of the bill.

269. NHRC's Right to Food meet begins on Thursday

National Human Rights Commission is organizing a two day conference on Right to Food this Thursday in New Delhi. The aim of the Conference is to assess the implementation of the National Food Security Act across the states and Union Territories.

Access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people, public distribution under Antyodaya Anna Yojana, nutritional support to pregnant and lactating women, prevention and management of child nutrition are among the issues which will be discussed in the Conference.

Our correspondent reports senior officers from the Union Ministries, states and Union Territories, besides members and

senior officers of the NHRC, will take part in the conference.

270. Tourism Ministry launches National Monuments Authority's web portal NOAPS

Tourism Ministry today launched National Monuments Authority Web Portal called NOC Online Application and Processing System (NOAPS) to facilitate single window clearance for construction.

The applicant needs to fill up a single form which will be sent to the concerned agencies by the local body, from whom no objection certificate is required. The web portal of National Monuments Authority has now been integrated with the online portal of local bodies of Delhi and Mumbai.

Launching the portal in New Delhi, Tourism Minister Mahesh Sharma said, technology and expertise of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has been used, and the process of mapping three thousand 686 protected monuments and sites is on.

He said, a user friendly Mobile App has been developed, which can be downloaded free of cost by an applicant and can be used to upload the geo coordinates of his plot which falls within the prohibited and regulated area of the monument.

However, large projects involving construction of building beyond 2000 sq mt. have been kept out of the purview of Single Window Clearance System, keeping in view their possible impact on the Monument or the site.

271. President's rule to continue in Uttarakhand, no floor test on April 29: SC

The Supreme Court has directed to continue the President's rule in Uttarakhand for the while.

Hearing on the Centre's plea, the apex court today extended the stay on Nainital High Court's order quashing the central rule in the Hill state.

Today's directive implies there will be no floor test on this Friday (April 29) in the Uttarakhand Assembly. The matter has now been posted for further hearing on next Tuesday (May 3).

The two-judge division bench also posed seven questions to the Centre asking it to justify imposition of President's rule in Uttarakhand. It asked if proceedings in the Assembly can be considered by the President for imposing Central rule.

The court also sought answer to the question as to when the President's role comes in picture with regard to Appropriation bill. It asked, whether a delay in the floor test can be a ground for proclamation of President rule.

Observing that the Speaker is the master of the Assembly, the court asked the Centre whether disqualification of MLAs by the Speaker is relevant for the purposes of invoking President's rule under Article 356.

The Centre had introduced President's Rule in Uttarakhand on 27th March, one day before Chief Minister Harish Rawat was to take a trust vote in the assembly.

The members of the assembly however had started hectic preparations after the High Court on last Thursday (April 21st) revoked the Central rule and had scheduled the trial of strength on Friday (April 29th).

272. Lobsang Sangay re-elected PM of Tibetan govt-in-exile

The Tibetan people living in asylum at Dharmshala in Himachal Pradesh reelected its incumbent Prime Minister Dr. Lobsang Sangay for another five year term. He defeated speaker of Tibetan Parliament Penpa Tsering.

The chief election commissioner, Sonam Choephel Shosur accompanied by Ven Tempa Tashi and Mr Tenzin Choephel, the two additional election commissioners, declared the consolidated results of the final Tibetan general election today.

Dr Lobsang Sangay has got a total of 33,876 votes (57.08 % of the total vote share) as against the 24,864 votes (41.89% of the total vote share) in the name of Penpa Tsering

273. Skill certificates given to Air force personnel going on retirement

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar today handed over skill certificates and job offers to 50 Air force personnel who are going on retirement in near future.

Speaking on the occasion, Skill development Minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy said more than 50 thousand defence personnel retire every year and there is a need to provide skill to these personnel to provide them post retirement opportunities.

He said, today for the first time 50 Indian Air force personnel were certified and have been offered employment. The Minister said, special focus is to utilize services of the retiring personnel as trainers and assessors in skill development ecosystem.

Ministry of Skill development and Ministry of Defence had signed an MoU in July last year to partner for various skill development initiatives.

274. Seminar on giving legal aid to people from middle income group in Odisha on April 30

Supreme Court Middle Income Group Legal Aid Society is organizing a seminar on providing legal aid to persons belonging to the group in Cuttack in Odisha on 30th of this month.

Briefing media in New Delhi today, Secretary of the society and Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar said, six High Courts namely Odisha, Kolkata, Patna, Jharkhand, Allahabad and Chattishgarh will participate in the seminar.

Mr Kumar said, while legal services are provided free of cost to some sections of the society, but there is no such help for the middle income group. He said, middle income group people can get their cases argued in the Supreme Court for a nominal fees between 15 thousand to 25 thousand rupees. Mr Kumar said, to fulfill the requirement the annual gross salary should not exceed Rs 7.5 lakh and the monthly income Rs 60 thousand.

He said, the general public is not aware of it and efforts are being made to create awareness among the general public on the beneficial scheme.

275. Centre asks states to put stock holding limits on sugar

Government has decided to allow States to impose and enforce stock limits on sugar to check the price rise of sweetener in the market.

The decision to bring sugar under the purview of stock holding limits on dealers of sugar, was taken in Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi this evening.

The Government has noticed that in spite of sufficient availability of sugar stocks with the Sugar Mills, the wholesale and retail prices have shown a spurt.

The decision will empower State and Central agencies to impose stock limits and regulate supply, distribution, storage and trade of sugar to bring down sugar prices at reasonable level by curbing unscrupulous trading.

The Cabinet also gave its nod to enhance investment by Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) in Bharat Oman Refineries Limited (BORL).

An official release said, the investment amount could be enhanced upto 3000 crore rupees in BORL by way of subscription of convertible warrants and other instruments.

The infusion of funds will enable BORL to overcome the implications on account of the erosion of the net worth.

Besides it will enhance the availability of petroleum products in the Northern and Central parts of the country, industrial development of Madhya Pradesh and substantial increase in employment and tax earnings in the State.

The Cabinet also approved utilization of 400 hectares of un-cultivable farm land at the Central State Farm , Jetsar in Sri Ganganagar District of Rajasthan for setting up of 200 Mega Watt solar Power Plant.

In an another decision, the Cabinet gave its nod for signing an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Papua New Guinea on cooperation in the field of Healthcare and Medical Science. The MoU will encourage cooperation between the Health Ministries of the two countries through joint initiatives in the health sector.

276. President embarks on two-nation tour to Papua New Guinea, New Zealand

President Pranab Mukherjee leaves New Delhi for a two Nation tour to Papua New Guinea and New Zealand this evening. The Minister of State for Agriculture Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan and three Members of Parliament would be accompanying the President for the visit. This is the first ever state visit of an Indian President to these two countries.

Symbolizing the growing strategic and economic engagements with the Pacific Island countries, the Presidents first stopover will be Port Moresby, the capital of Papua New Guinea. He would be holding talks with the Governor General Michael Ogio and Prime Minister Peter O'Neil among others.

The President will also interact with the business community and the Indian diaspora. Papua New Guinea is looking towards increasing cooperation in health sector, IT, agriculture and infrastructure. The visit is likely to brighten up the prospects of Indian pharmaceutical companies in the Pacific nation after the local government withdrew a ban three months ago.

In the second leg of his visit, the President would be arriving at Auckland, New Zealand on Saturday. Cooperation between India and New Zealand has been on the rise over the years in various fields. The President will be holding talks with the Governor General, the Prime Minister and the leader of opposition. He would also address the Indian community and a business forum.

277. End 'madness' of nuclear weapon testing: UN chief

UN chief Ban Ki-moon today called the US, China and other nuclear-armed states to end the 'madness' of atomic testing by finally ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Speaking at an event in Austrian capital Vienna, Ban noted that the nuclear testing poisons water, causes cancers and pollutes the area with radioactive fallout for generations to come.

The CTBT is a multilateral treaty by which the nations agree to ban all nuclear explosions in all environments, for military or civilian purposes. It had opened for signature in 1996. The treaty has been ratified by 164 including Russia, France and Britain, three of the nine countries which have the nuclear weapons. But the other six in the nuclear club - the United States, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel are yet to ratify it. In the absence of these countries' ratification, the treaty won't come into force.

India has not signed the CTBT because of its discriminatory nature in its present format as it is advantageous to the nuclear weapon holders. Despite its reservations on the CTBT, India met the basic requirements of the treaty by stating on May 27, 1998 that it would observe a voluntary moratorium and refrain from conducting the underground nuclear test explosions.

278. Papua New Guinea to close detention centre used by Australia for asylum seekers

Papua New Guinea is to close a detention centre used by Australia for asylum seekers, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill has announced.

His statement followed a Supreme Court ruling yesterday that detaining people in such a camp was unconstitutional.

Australia sends asylum seekers to the Manus Island detention centre under its offshore processing policy.

Earlier today, Australia's Prime Minister said the asylum seekers were the responsibility of Papua New Guinea.

Currently about 850 men are held on the island, about half of whom have been judged genuine refugees.

Mr O'Neill said that, following the ruling, Papua New Guinea will immediately ask the Australian government to make alternative arrangements for the asylum-seekers currently held at the Regional Processing Centre.

279. North Korea to hold first party congress in nearly 40 years

North Korea has said its ruling Workers Party will hold its first congress in nearly 40 years next month. The gathering, which will take place in Pyongyang from 6th May, will be only the seventh in the party's history and the first under leader Kim Jong-un.

It will be closely watched for signs of major policy shifts, movement among senior officials or comment on North Korea's nuclear programme. The statement from North Korea's KCNA news agency today gave no details of the event and did not specify how long it would last.

But it is widely expected that Mr. Kim will use the gathering to both reinforce his role as Supreme Leader and to push his agenda of economic development coupled with nuclear progress. The last North Korean congress was in October 1980, before the current leader Mr. Kim was born.

280. Nearly 90% girls deprive of sunlight in Pakistan schools

In Pakistan, according to a recent study, nearly 90 percent of teenage or adolescent girls in Islamabad and Rawalpindi are deprived of sunlight, exposing them to diseases which affects their growth.

The study was conducted by the department of health sciences at the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute for Environment Development Action Research, under a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

The study found that since teenage and adolescent girls cannot participate in outdoor activities due to cultural barriers, they do not get enough vitamin D. They also suffer from skin diseases, because they do not spend time in the sun. AIU Vice Chancellor Dr. Shahid Siddiqui said that although girls and boys are equally intelligent and are naturally equal, society sets out different roles for boys and girls well before their birth. He said, the only way to address the issue is to provide girls and boys with equal opportunities.

281. India, Sri Lanka to start negotiations on ETCA

India and Sri Lanka will start negotiations on Economic and Technological Cooperation Agreement in the next few months. This was stated by Sri Lanka's Deputy Foreign Minister Harsha de Silva while speaking to foreign media in Colombo. The Minister clarified that the two countries will not sign a framework agreement as earlier announced, but will directly go for final negotiations.

He said that closer economic integration with India necessary to lift Sri Lankan economy out of the low level equilibrium in which it is stuck. He said that the pact will be asymmetric in Sri Lanka's favour. The Minister added that Sri Lanka will also consider such agreements with China and other countries after the pact is finalized with India.

ETCA is facing resistance from a section of professional bodies and opposition parties in Sri Lanka. These bodies claim that once Sri Lanka integrates economically with India, Indian professionals will flood Sri Lanka and take away jobs from the local people. Sri Lanka's government has clarified that the proposed pact does not envisage permission to allow professionals from one country to work in the other.

282. Venezuela orders two-day working week for public sector workers

In Venezuela, Government has ordered a two-day working week for public sector workers as a temporary measure to help it overcome a serious energy crisis. Vice-President Aristobulo Isturiz today announced that civil servants should turn up for work only on Mondays and Tuesdays until the crisis is over and it will affect two million public sector workers. Venezuela is facing a major drought, which has dramatically reduced water levels at its main hydroelectric dam.

283. **Turkey's new Constitution will guarantee Secularism: PM Ahmet Davutoglu**

Turkey's Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu says, the country's new constitution will feature the principle of secularism. He said Turkey's secular and democratic character was not up for debate.

His comments came a day after a key member of the ruling AK party (AKP) called for secularism to be taken out of the constitution.

Parliamentary Speaker Ismail Kahraman, who is overseeing the draft charter, said Turkey was a Muslim country and should have a religious constitution. Turkey is a Nato member and aspires to join the EU, which has traditionally regarded the country as a model of secular democracy in the Islamic world.

But critics of the government fear the modern state's secular foundations are being eroded. Opposition parties also fear the new constitution could concentrate too much power in the hands of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who wants an executive presidency to replace the current Parliamentary system.

In a speech today, Mr Davutoglu said Secularism will feature in the new constitution, draft as a principle that guarantees citizens' freedom of religion and faith and that ensures the state is an equal distance from all faith groups.

284. **AAP announces new National Executive, includes seven women**

The Aam Aadmi Party, AAP today announced its new National Executive, party's second-highest decision making body with 17 new names, including seven women members for the first time.

The 25-member body also features many names from Punjab, scheduled to go to polls next year, the party's next big focus in the electoral arena. Besides, five state conveners have become ex-officio members of the National Executive .

The members include party chief and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, Gopal Rai, Pankaj Gupta, Ashutosh and Kumar Vishwas.

The new entrants are Yamini Gomar, Rajendra Pal Gautam, Preeti Sharma Menon, Durgesh Pathak, Bhagwant Mann, Kanu Bhai Kalsaria, Harjot Bains, Baljinder Kaur, Raghav Chadha, Ashish Talwar, Atishi Marlena, Sadhu Singh, Dinesh Vaghela, Meera Sanyal, Bhawna Gaur, Rakhi Birla, Imran Hussain and Amanatullah Khan.

The National Executive has undergone a major change over the last one-year due to a spate of expulsions and resignations which began with the fallout of Yogendra Yadav and Prashant Bhushan with the party's top leadership.

285. **Maha govt raises jail term upto 5 yrs for chain snatchers**

The Maharashtra government has decided to increase the punishment for chain snatching up to 5 years of rigorous imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 25,000. The state Cabinet has cleared the amendments to relevant sections of Indian Penal Code.

In a statement, the state government noted that there has been a rise in incidents of chain snatching with a view to earn easy money. According to statement, the hearing of such cases will be conducted in the court of First Class Judicial Magistrate.

According to the police crime statistical report of last year, a total of 2,305 cases of chain snatching involving stolen gold chains worth Rs 14.2 crore were reported in Mumbai in 2014-15.

286. **BJP wins mayoral polls in South, East MCD**

BJP councillors today won the Mayor and deputy Mayors posts in both South Delhi and East Delhi Municipal Corporation.

BJP Shyam Sharma was elected as the new South Delhi Mayor as he defeated his Congress rival in the polls. In the East Delhi BJP's Satya Sharma trounced Congress rival Taj Mohammed.

In the elections for deputy mayor posts in Shashi Prabhakar and Raj Kumar Dhillon won over her Congress rival.

The MCD has been BJP-controlled for the past nearly 10 years. All three outgoing mayors are from BJP.

287. RBI takes various steps for recovery of NPA: Jayant Sinha

The total outstanding of top one hundred of Non-Performing Accounts (NPA), borrowers of public sector banks stood at 1.73 lakh crore rupees as on 31st December 2015. The Reserve Bank of India has taken various steps for recovery of NPA.

These include formation of joint lenders forum for revitalizing stressed assets, flexible restructuring for long term project loans to infrastructure and core industries and strategic debt restructuring scheme. The information was given in the Rajya Sabha by the Minister of State for Finance Jayant Sinha.

He said the recovery in NPA accounts has increased from 66 thousand, 634 crore rupees in March 2014 to 74 thousand 130 crore rupees in March 2015. He said, the government has also taken specific measures to address issues in power, roads, steel, textiles and sugar sectors where the incidence of NPAs is higher.

Besides, the government approved the setting up of six new debt recovery tribunals to speed up the recovery of loans. Mr. Sinha also said, a bill on the insolvency and bankruptcy code 2015 was introduced in the Lok Sabha in the winter session, which provides for establishing an insolvency regulator.

288. EPFO aims to make Aadhaar as identifier to settle PF claim

Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) plans to make Aadhaar as primary identifier for settling Aadhaar-seeded Provident Fund (PF) accounts without employers' attestation. This is part of EPFO's special drive to consolidate multiple accounts of an employee. In a statement, EPFO said that in case of members having Aadhaar-seeded Universal Account Number (UAN), there will not be any requirement of attestation of claims by the employers.

EPFO has been advising members to link all their PF account numbers with the UAN so issued and to also seed KYC data against their UAN number. KYC primarily means Aadhaar, PAN and Bank Account. Integration of members' multiple PF accounts will enable continuance of lifelong PF membership and ease in claim settlement.

289. IT dept to pay interest on TDS refund

Income Tax department will now add interest amount to a delayed refund made on excess Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) deductions and will also not litigate with the deductor on this issue in the future. Central Board of Direct Taxes yesterday issued a directive in this regard to the assessing officers of the IT department. Latest communication is based on a 2014 Supreme Court order where the apex court had made it clear that the taxman is bound to pay interest on refund made under the TDS category. TDS is primarily deducted by the employer from the salary paid to an employee.

290. Removing cotton export subsidies to help developing nations: India

India has said, removing cotton export subsidies by developed nations would help the Indian farmers and also prevent dumping of the subsidized natural fibre in India.

The World Trade Organization in its meeting in Nairobi last December had decided on elimination of export subsidies on cotton by the developed countries. The decision will create a level playing field for domestic farmers in the poorest countries, the commerce ministry said in a statement.

Noting that India is not a major user of the export subsidies, the statement said, India's push has helped in the Nairobi decision.

It added that the government has been taking every step to protect the cotton-growers which includes procurement through Cotton Corporation at minimum support prices.

291. **Deepika Kumari equals world record in recurve event at Archery World Cup**

India's Deepika Kumari has equalled the world record in Women's Recurve event at the qualifying stage of Archery World Cup being held in Shanghai.

Padma Shri recipient Deepika recorded a score of 686 out of 720 to finish 1st in qualifiers and equal the world record set by South Korea's Ki Boe Bae at the World University Games in Gwangju last year.

She has already qualified for the Rio Olympics with her performance at the Copenhagen World Championships last year. In the previous editions of the World Cup, Deepika had won silver medals 2011, 2012 and 2013 in the individual events.

292. **No tennis wild cards for Rio Olympics, clarifies ITF**

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) will not offer any wild cards for the tennis events at this year's Rio Olympics which means Indian players will have to qualify for main draws solely on the basis of their rankings. ITF Secretary General Juan Margets has clarified that no National Association can apply for wild cards.

In a statement, Mr. Margets said, in previous Olympic Games the ITF had a degree of discretionary oversight on the allocation of Final Qualification Places, considered similar to wild cards. Now, in line with IOC requirements, this has changed for Rio 2016.

While Final Qualification Places remain there, they will now be allocated strictly according to the criteria outlined in the Qualification System.

In a draw of 64 in the men's and women's singles competition, 56 are direct entries, six are final qualification places and two are tripartite commission invitation places.

In doubles, 24 teams have direct entry and eight are final qualification places. Any doubles player ranked 10th or better will gain direct entry and have a choice of partner.

Besides Sania Mirza, Rohan Bopanna, at present, is India's top-ranked doubles player at number 11 followed by Leander Paes ranked 52. Saketh Myneni at 113 and Purav Raja at 115 are next best followed by Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan on 140. Players have time till 6th of June to improve their ranking since world standings on that day will be considered for entry into the Rio Games.

293. **Fast Breeder Reactors**

Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam Limited (BHAVINI), a Public Sector Undertaking of this Department is presently constructing a 500 MW capacity Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu which is at an advanced stage of commissioning. In addition, it is proposed to add two more Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR) 12 (2x600 MW) at Kalpakkam Site.

PFBR is being constructed with an approved cost of Rs. 5677 Crore. Cost for Fast Breeder Reactors 12 is yet to be finalised. PFBR at Kalpakkam is expected to go critical by end 2016. The tariff of electricity produced from PFBR is comparable with that of other contemporary base-load electricity generating technologies like coal based thermal power stations in the region.

294. **J&K Cabinet approves 5% interest subsidy for flood-hit traders**

Jammu and Kashmir government has approved five per cent interest subvention to flood-hit traders with effect from 1st April this year.

The subsidy will have a cap of five lakh rupees per affected business unit for a period of four years. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti in Jammu.

Education Minister Naeem Akhtar told reporters that to ensure proper implementation of the interest subvention assistance scheme, the Cabinet ordered constitution of a high-level Coordination Committee.

The panel will be headed by Chief Secretary and comprising representatives of Relief Rehabilitation department, Finance department, Planning and Development department.

He said the Cabinet sanctioned the second tranche of assistance proposed to be given to small traders and business establishments who have been given start-up incentive with turn over up to Rs 10 lakh.

295. Ninth Green corridor in Indore in seven months to transport organs

In Madhya Pradesh, body organs of a brain-dead boy will be transported through a green corridor in Indore.

To facilitate the movement of the organs, traffic will be stopped and the green corridor created. This is the ninth green corridor created in Indore to transport organs in different destinations in last seven months.

Green corridor will be created at around 11.00 am today to transport Kidneys, heart and liver of an 18 year old boy to recipients .

The boy had met with a road accident and pronounced brain dead at local hospital yesterday. The kidney will be transplanted in recipients selected from the priority order from the local hospitals.

The liver will be flown to Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences in New Delhi and the heart will be taken to Medanta Hospital in Gurugram.

296. Indian Naval Ships Veer and Nipat to be decommissioned in Mumbai

Indian Naval Ships Veer and Nipat, serving under the illustrious 22nd Killer Squadron will be decommissioned in Mumbai.

Both the ships, which are 1241 RE class missile vessels have completed 29 and 28 years of commissioned service respectively.

These ships are the first of Veer Class of ships to be decommissioned from the Indian Navy. During their splendid service, the ships have participated in numerous operations and successfully completed many deployments.

To ensure security of valuable assets off Gujarat coast, Veer and Nipat have been forward deployed off Gujarat and International Maritime Borderline on numerous occasions.

A Defence Statement has assured that Navy has executed re-basing of some ships to ensure that adequate force levels are maintained in the West Coast of the country.

297. Government taking steps to deal with mounting bad loans: Arun Jaitley

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee has cleared the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Code and is likely to be discussed in the current Budget Session of Parliament.

Addressing the second meeting of the Consultative Committee on Non Performing Assets , NPAs yesterday, Mr Jaitley said the government is taking various steps, including introduction of Bankruptcy Law in the Lok Sabha, to deal with the problem of mounting bad loans.

The Minister said, government has taken various measures to deal with the issue of NPAs in Banking Sector especially in case of Public Sector Banks. He said there are two categories of defaulters, those who are unable to pay back due to economic slowdown and other reasons outside their control as well as wilful defaulters.

Mr Jaitley said the government has taken various measures to deal with both these categories of defaulters. He further said in order to deal with default due to economic slowdown, government has taken various measures to revive the stressed sectors which include steel, textiles, power and roads.

Later the Members of the Consultative Committee gave their suggestions with regard to recovery of loans and bringing NPAs under control.

Members suggested that there is need for bringing more transparency in the system and list of all the defaulters whose loans have been written off by the Public Sector Banks to be made public. They asked for exemplary action against the wilful defaulters so that others do not indulge in similar activities.

298. Fed keeps key rate unchanged, express confidence in US economy

The US Federal Reserve has kept interest rates between 0.25 per cent and 0.5 per cent, the rate it has held since December. The Fed said while conditions have improved, the central bank is still waiting for inflation to reach two per cent. In its statement the Fed said it would carefully monitor actual and expected progress toward its inflation goal as it weighed when next to raise rates.

Most investors expected rates to remain on hold, and were looking for changes to the Fed's assessment of the economy. In its statement accompanying yesterday's decision, the Fed's Open Market Committee pointed to strengthening in the labour market and improved household spending, as positive signs.

299. GST rollout, infra funding are difficult task before govt: Moody's

Implementation of the Goods and Services Tax, and bridging the large infrastructure deficit are difficult tasks before the Indian government, according to Moody's Investors Service.

In a report, Moody's said a history of double-digit inflation, elevated government debt, weak infrastructure and a complex regulatory regime have constrained India's credit profile.

On a more positive note, Moody's observed that easing of constraints on investment, and the Reserve Bank's inflation targeting and ongoing efforts to clean up bank balance sheets could propel growth. Moody's has a 'positive' outlook on its 'Baa3' rating on India.

Moody's said its positive outlook on the country's rating is based on its expectation of continued but gradual policy efforts to reduce the sovereign risks posed by high fiscal deficits, volatile inflation, and weak bank balance sheets.

Moody's said the government is also working on steps to modernize the country's infrastructure and is looking for avenues to fund development.

300. Indira Awas Yojana Renamed to Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana

Narendra Modi Government, making one of the biggest changes in its rule has renamed Indira Awas Yojana (IAY). The scheme will now be known as Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana, if media reports are to be believed. Launched in 1985 by then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the scheme is a rural housing scheme. This is the first time the scheme has been renamed according to Reports in Amar Ujala. Its not just the name, the central government has also increased the amount to be sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana scheme. Under the new scheme, an financial assistance of Rs. 120,000/- in plain areas and Rs. 130,000/- in hilly areas will be provided for construction of homes. A loan of up to Rs. 70000/- can also be availed by the beneficiaries, but it is optional. In the new rural housing scheme, the government has also increased the unit area from existing 20 sq.mt. to up to 25 sq.mt. including a dedicated area for hygienic cooking. The government will also provide an additional assistance of Rs. 12000/- to each beneficiary to construct toilet in the housing unit. The new [Pradhan Mantri Gramin Awas Yojana](#) will be implemented with a budgetary provision of Rs. 81,975 in a span of three years from 2016-17 to 2018-19. Under the scheme, government has set a target of developing 1 Crore Pucca homes for the rural poor in these 3 years.

301. Naval detachment set up at Lakshadweep

As part of measures to enhance surveillance of crucial shipping lanes, the Navy established a new naval detachment at Androth islands of Lakshadweep. Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands occupy a strategic location in the Arabian Sea. A number of shipping lanes pass close to these islands. Setting up of a Naval Detachment at Androth Island will enhance the Navys reach and surveillance, and contribute significantly to strengthen maritime security and stability,

Vice-Admiral Girish Luthra, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Naval Command, said after inaugurating the facility. Naval officials said the detachment would extend the naval presence at Androth Island, part of the Lakshadweep Minicoy group of islands in the Arabian Sea, provide communication network connectivity with mainland, enable Sea Lanes of Communication monitoring and function as an observance and reporting post, besides radar surveillance. As part of larger measures the naval detachment at Kavaratti was commissioned as a naval establishment, INS Dweepprakash, in 2012. A number of infrastructure facilities at naval units located on Kavaratti, Minicoy, Agatti and Androth islands are also being progressively upgraded.

302. Saudi Arabia unveiled Vision 2030 cutting reliance on oil

Saudi Arabia's cabinet has agreed on a broad-based economic reform plan, known as Vision 2030, revealing how the oil-reliant state plans to diversify its economy over the next 14 years. Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the deputy crown prince, said on Monday that the country was building up its public investment fund to become a major player in global markets. He said Saudi Arabia was restructuring its housing ministry to increase the supply of affordable housing, and creating a "green card" system within five years to give expatriates long-term residence. Salman al-Ansari, founder and president of the Washington DC-based Saudi American Public Relations Affairs Committee (SAPRAC), told Al Jazeera the green card system gives more rights to expatriates to invest in the country. The country has proven oil reserves of 267 billion barrels and potential reserves of up to 900 billion.

303. Bangladesh brings in law to impeach Supreme Court judges

Bangladesh is introducing a law with provision to impeach Supreme Court judges if allegation of misconduct or incapacity is proved. The Cabinet, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, approved in principle a draft of the Supreme Court Judge (Investigation Act) 2016, that, once passed, will empower the Parliament to impeach a judge. The approval was made under a constitutional obligation as Parliament in September 2014 had unanimously passed the 16th constitutional amendment bill, empowering the Parliament to remove Supreme Court judges. Explaining the law in the making, Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Shafiqul Alam said the Cabinet will give its final nod to the draft after discussion with the stakeholders the Supreme Court judges. The draft law says any citizen with evidence will be able to submit allegations of misconduct or incapacity against a Supreme Court judge to the Speaker of Parliament. A 10-member parliamentary body will investigate the allegations. The Speaker will then form a high-powered committee with former a Supreme Court judge, a former Attorney-General and noted jurists to review the primary report. The committee's findings will be placed before Parliament which will forward its recommendations to the President for necessary action.

304. NABARD lent 1000 crore rupees to HSWC for wheat procurement

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) in the last week of April 2016 sanctioned a loan of 1000 crore rupees to Haryana State Warehousing Corporation (HSWC). The loan is sanctioned for purchase of wheat during the ongoing rabi marketing season. Haryana is one of the major contributors to the country's central pool of foodgrains. During the 2015-16 kharif season, NABARD had disbursed an amount of 500 crore rupees to the corporation for paddy procurement. How the loan will help HSWC? The loan will help the HSWC for payment of wheat purchased from farmers in various mandis/outlets in Haryana, in line with the government's resolve to pay the farmers' dues at the earliest. The objective of food grain procurement by the government agencies is to ensure that farmers get remunerative price for their produce and do not have to resort to distress sale and build buffer stocks. The Haryana Government has authorised five agencies, namely Food and Supplies Department, HAFED, Haryana Agro Industries Corporation, Food Corporation of India and HSWC to procure wheat at minimum support price during the 2016-17 marketing season. The Haryana Food and Supplies Department expects around 75 lakh metric tonnes of wheat in the current season.

305. Jagendra Singh gets Press Club award for bravery in journalism

Uttar Pradesh-based journalist Jagendra Singh, who was killed allegedly for his exposes on illegal sand mining and other misdemeanours, was honoured posthumously with "RedInk Veer Patrakar Puraskar" by [Mumbai](#) Press Club here.

Singh's daughter Diksha Singh received the award on behalf of her father.

Singh used to run a [Facebook](#) page, Shahjahanpur Samachar, wherein he exposed the "corrupt" practices of an [Uttar](#)

[Pradesh](#) minister. One of the issues taken up was illegal sand mining.

He was allegedly set on fire on June 1 last year by some local policemen and criminals for the expose. Singh had worked for Hindi language media for 15 years.

The UP government has claimed that the journalist had set himself on fire. A writ petition was filed by journalist Mudit Mathur from Lucknow, which is pending before the Supreme Court.

Besides Singh, 25 other journalists were awarded for their commendable work at the function.

T N Ninan, Chairman and Editorial Director of Business Standard, was bestowed upon the Lifetime Achievement award while NDTV India's senior Executive Editor Ravish Kumar got the 'journalist of the year' award.

The others winners included Gunjan Sharma (The Week), Pallava Bagla (NDTV), Aniruddha Ghosal (Indian Express) and Meher Ali (The Wire).

The Mumbai Press Club for the first time had included the 'start-up of the year' category. The award was won by thewire.in.

Maharashtra Governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao was the chief guest on the occasion while Union minister Piyush Goyal the guest of honour.

A number of journalists and personalities from various fields attended the event.

306. Pak radio journalist selected for prestigious WHCA scholarship

A Pakistani radio journalist in the US is among 18 budding journalists selected for the prestigious annual scholarship of the [White House](#) Correspondents Association (WHCA).

"Misha Euceph of [Rawalpindi](#) is the recipient of a USD 5,000 grant through the WHCA to help finance a post-graduate degree for a student in the Government and Public Affairs reporting track," according to a statement by WHCA.

The scholarship would be presented by US President [Barack Obama](#) and the First Lady Michelle during the annual WHCA dinner here on Saturday.

Misha, Chicago-based radio broadcast journalist, is pursuing a Masters of Science in journalism at Medill where she specialises in social justice, political and investigative reporting.

She also works for the podcast, The City, part of WNYC, the media release said.

307. NASA launches new X-plane program to create cleaner, more efficient planes

NASA has [announced](#) the launch of the New Aviation Horizons initiative, which will lead to a new generation of X-planes that are fueled by greener energy, use half the fuel, and are half as loud as commercial aircraft in use. A 10-year initiative, New Aviation Horizons is a reminder of the importance of the first A in NASA. Through a series of research and development investments, NASA hopes to identify new technologies that can push the commercial aviation industry forward. NASA stated that design-and-build will take several years with aircraft starting their flight campaign around 2020, depending on funding. The first contract of the initiative, [awarded](#) to a team at Lockheed Martin in February, begins work to design a quieter supersonic passenger jet. Through the 17-month \$20 million award, the team is required to complete a preliminary design for Quiet Supersonic Technology (QueSST). For over 100 years, NASA and its predecessor NACA (the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics) have used experimental aircraft to advance aviation technology. Through government funds, the agency has reduced the expensive research and development burden on private companies and shortened the time it takes to commercialize new aviation technologies. NASA's With You When You Fly campaign reminds the public of the aeronautics advancements it has made through the years. The agency states that streamlined aircraft bodies, quieter jet engines, and drag-reducing winglets are a few of the

advances NASA has brought to the commercial airline industry. Originally known as XS-planes for eXperimental Supersonic and later shortened to simply X, the X-planes are a family of experimental aircraft intended solely for research. Over 56 X-plane concepts have been created and they represent some of the greatest strides in aviation research that NASA has made over the years. One of the most historic X-planes was the [X-1](#), the first high-speed aircraft built solely for aviation research, and the plane that Chuck Yeager used to break the sound barrier. But perhaps the most notable of all the X-planes was the [X-15 rocket plane](#). Built in the 1950s, the X-15 became the fastest and highest-flying winged aircraft of its time. During nearly 200 flights, the X-15 program gathered valuable data about high-altitude hypersonic flight. With the New Aviation Horizons initiative, NASA aims to bring to life a new generation of X-planes. This time, the focus is on advancing green aviation technology. Over the next decade or so, data gathered from QueSST and other yet-to-be-determined X-planes will help enable commercial aircraft to become quieter, faster, cleaner, and more fuel-efficient.

308. **Mumbai noisiest city, Delhi at number 4**

Delhi may be the dirtiest city in terms of high air pollution but the dubious distinction of being the noisiest city goes to Mumbai which reported the maximum [violation of safe noise levels for consistently longer periods during 2011-14](#).

Delhi, in fact, was at number four as Lucknow and Hyderabad turned out to be noisier than the capital which has an advantage of relatively higher green cover and road side plantations. Though the most common source of noise pollution is motor vehicles, the other sources like generator sets, office machines, aircraft, industrial and construction [activities too substantially contribute to increasing the noise level in the cities](#).

The observation came from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) which in its latest report also noted how the noise pollution (noise level beyond the prescribed limits of 55 dB during day and 45 dB during night) can cause aggression, hypertension, hearing loss, tinnitus and sleep disturbance. Tinnitus can lead to forgetfulness, severe depression and at times panic attack," said the country's national pollution watchdog that compiled the real time monitoring data from 35 locations in seven cities and flagged its conclusion by averaging the location-wise day time and night time noise level. The reason behind coming out with such a database is to help policymakers in setting standards and policy formulation for controlling noise pollution. Such data is also required to ensure compliance of existing rules. Though the noise level is currently monitored at 35 locations in seven cities, the CPCB plans to set up monitoring stations at 160 locations across 18 states in due course. At present, the noise level in Delhi is monitored at ITO, Dilshad Garden, Delhi College of Engineering (DCE), NSIT Dwarka and CPCB headquarters in East Arjun Nagar. Dilshad Garden, DCE and NSIT monitoring stations in Delhi showed the average noise level within the prescribed limits of 55 dB. The CPCB also came out with recommendations to check noise pollution, including creation of vegetation buffer zone, road side plantations, strict enforcement of noise level standards for fire-crackers, loud speaker and public address system.

309. **Mahrez is first African footballer to win 'Player of the year'**

Leicester City forward Riyad Mahrez has become the first African football player ever to receive the Professional Footballers' Association Player of the Year award. The winner of the award is decided by players across the football leagues and the Women's Super League who all have a chance to cast a vote. This season Mahrez has helped to put his team [at the top of the league](#), scoring 17 goals and making 11 assists in 34 games, Mahrez and his team mates arrived at the ceremony in style when a helicopter brought them straight to the awards from their impressive 4-0 victory over Swansea City. Mahrez was up against some top players, including his team mate Jamie Vardy, who set a new Premier League record scoring in 11 consecutive league matches. He said to reporters that it felt great to be the first African player to win the award but that he didn't think it made him the best African player. Other winners on the awards night were, Sunderland striker Beth Mead who won 'Womens Young Player of the Year' and Dele Alli of MK Dons who was also named 'Young Player of the Year'.

310. **Japan unveils Tokyo 2020 Olympic logos**

Japan's Olympic organisers have unveiled the new official logos of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. The logo, called Harmonized Chequered Emblem, replaces the first choice which was [thrown out last year](#) after the designer was accused of plagiarism. The designer denied stealing the idea. [Organisers said the new design](#) used traditional Japanese colours and patterns to represent the intercultural themes of the Games. "It incorporates the message

of 'unity in diversity'," they said, and the idea that the Games "seek to promote diversity as a platform to connect the world". When designer Asao Tokolo found out he had won the re-opened contest he said "my mind has gone blank". "I put a lot of time and effort into this design as though it was my own child." The first design was rejected after Belgian artist Olivier Debie alleged it copied his design for a theatre logo. The Games organising committee never agreed to the allegation of plagiarism but said there were too many doubts over the emblem for it to be used. The logo dispute came shortly after Tokyo decided to scrap the [designs for the main Olympic stadium](#) because of spiralling construction costs. A cheaper design, by Japanese architect Kengo Kuma, was chosen in December last year.

311. China Human Rights Campaigner Harry Wu Dies

Chinese human rights campaigner Harry Wu has died. He was 79. The cause of death wasn't known. Wu was born in a family in Shanghai that saw most of its property seized following the civil war victory of Mao Zedong's communists in 1949. He studied geology at university but fell afoul of the authorities for his criticism of the Soviet Union. Wu authored various books including his prison experience and later advocacy *The Chinese Gulag*, *Bitter Winds*, and *Troublemaker*.

312. India says sea lanes of communications should be devoid of tension & rivalry

India called for freedom of navigation saying sea lanes of communications should be devoid of tension and rivalry. In an interview to the 'Post Courier' newspaper of Papua New Guinea, President Pranab Mukherjee said, India does not see itself as in competition with any country in this regard. He was replying to a question about the future of security cooperation between Papua New Guinea, PNG and India against the backdrop of strong Chinese military presence in the region.

Mr Mukherjee is on a maiden two-day state visit to PNG, the largest island in the Pacific region. The President said, the waters and Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Pacific Island countries have seen a surge of illegal activities such as smuggling, illegal fishing, human and drug trafficking which impact on the economy and political security of the Island Countries.

The President said, India is ready to cooperate with Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island Countries in helping them secure their EEZs and also extend help in disaster warning and disaster mitigation. He said, India is also ready to share satellite images developed by Indian satellites for early warning system and help map the natural resources of each country using Indian satellite system.

313. PSLV-C33 Successfully Launches India's Seventh Navigation Satellite IRNSS-1G

In its thirty fifth flight (PSLV-C33), ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched the 1425 kg IRNSS-1G, the seventh satellite in the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) today afternoon (April 28, 2016) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota. This is the thirty fourth consecutively successful mission of PSLV and the thirteenth in its 'XL' configuration. Honourable Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, heartily thanked and congratulated all the ISRO scientists and team ISRO for completing IRNSS constellation and dedicated IRNSS to the nation as NavIC (Navigation Indian Constellation). He appreciated India's space community for making the country proud through such achievements which have helped in improving the life of common man. After PSLV-C33 lift-off at 1250 hrs (12:50 pm) IST from the First Launch Pad with the ignition of the first stage, the subsequent important flight events, namely, strap-on ignitions and separations, first stage separation, second stage ignition, heat-shield separation, second stage separation, third stage ignition and separation, fourth stage ignition and satellite injection, took place as planned. After a flight of 19 minutes 42 seconds, IRNSS-1G was injected into an elliptical orbit of 283 km X 20,718 km inclined at an angle of 17.867 degree to the equator (very close to the intended orbit) following which the satellite successfully separated from the PSLV fourth stage. After separation, the solar panels of IRNSS-1G were deployed automatically. ISRO's Master Control Facility (MCF) at Hassan, Karnataka took over the control of the satellite. In the coming days, four orbit manoeuvres will be conducted from MCF to position the satellite in the Geostationary Orbit at 129.5 deg East longitude. IRNSS-1G is the seventh of the seven satellites constituting the space segment of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System. IRNSS-1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E and 1F, the first six satellites of the constellation, were successfully launched by PSLV on July 02, 2013, April 04, 2014, October 16, 2014, March 28, 2015, January 20, 2016 and March 10, 2016 respectively. All the six satellites are functioning satisfactorily from their designated orbital positions. IRNSS is an independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide position information in the Indian region and 1500 km around the Indian mainland. IRNSS provides two types of

services, namely, Standard Positioning Services (SPS) - provided to all users and Restricted Services (RS)- provided to authorised users. A number of ground facilities responsible for satellite ranging and monitoring, generation and transmission of navigation parameters, etc., have been established in eighteen locations across the country. Today's successful launch of IRNSS-1G, the seventh and final member of IRNSS constellation, signifies the completion of the IRNSS constellation.

314. SC approves holding of MBBS, BDS entrance through NEET

Supreme Court cleared the decks for holding National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET), a single common entrance test, for admission to MBBS and BDS courses for the academic year 2016-17. The apex court approved the schedule put before it by the Centre, CBSE and the Medical Council of India (MCI) for treating All India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT) fixed for May 1 as NEET-1.

A bench comprising Justices A R Dave, Shiva Kirti Singh and A K Goel said that those who have not applied for AIPMT will be given opportunity to appear in NEET-II, which will be held on July 24. The bench said, the combined result will be declared on August 17 and admission process will be completed by September 30.

The order would imply that all government colleges, deemed universities and private medical colleges will be covered under the NEET. Those examinations which have already taken place or slated to be conducted separately stands scrapped. The apex court rejected objections raised by States such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

The court also rejected objections raised by Association of Karnataka Medical Colleges and minority institutions like CMC Vellore which had contended that NEET cannot be imposed on them. The apex court order also revives the Government's December 21, 2010 notification for holding single common entrance test through NEET with a clarification that any challenge on the issue would directly come before it and no High Court can interfere in it.

Health Minister J P Nadda has welcomed the order of the Supreme Court in the matter of conducting the entrance examination for admission to MBBS and Post Graduate Medical Courses through National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) this year. Mr Nadda said that it is a milestone judgment and the Ministry has been making efforts in this direction since a long time. The Minister said, that despite the challenges to conduct the exam this year the Ministry is geared up to work with other partners and stakeholders to ensure that the entrance exams are successfully held.

315. Parliament passes Constitution (SCs) Order Amendment Bill 2106

Parliament has passed the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2016 with Rajya Sabha approving it. The Lok Sabha had passed it in the last session. The Bill seeks to give effect to proposals of Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Odisha and West Bengal to modify the list of Scheduled Castes. The proposal relates to the inclusion of certain communities, modification and removal of area restriction in respect of certain communities and exclusion of certain communities in the case of State of Odisha.

Replying to a discussion over the Bill Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawar Chand Gehlot said, the government is committed to the welfare of the SCs and STs communities and it has taken several steps in this direction. He said, the backlog vacancies in central government department are being filled. The Minister also added that the law has been made stringent to check atrocities against these communities.

316. India, Papua New Guinea to sign four MoUs

India and Papua New Guinea will be signing four MoUs tomorrow to give a boost to their growing relationship. Briefing reporters at the end of a hectic day of discussions that President Pranab Mukherjee had with the top leadership of the Pacific Island country, in Papua New Guinea capital Port Moresby today, the Secretary East in the Ministry of External Affairs said, the MoUs relate to Agriculture, Health, Information Technology and Infrastructure.

The President who was accorded a ceremonial welcome followed by a traditional one on arrival, drove down to the Bomana War Cemetery to lay a wreath at the memorial built in honour of the soldiers of the World War II. He held talks with Governor General Michael Ogo, Prime Minister Peter O Neal, the leader of the Opposition Don Poyle and the

Governor of West New Britain.

Mr. Mukherjee said, his visit to Papua New Guinea is a precursor of intensified economic, development and security cooperation to realize the great potential that lies untapped in the relations between the two countries. He said, the institutionalization of the FIPIC Summit process is a clear indication that India intends to seriously engage with this entire region. Mr. Mukherjee said, the underlying narrative of Indias engagement with the developing world is non-exploitative and developmental.

The Health and Pharmaceuticals sector is poised for a big boost. The MoU on the subject envisages training of Papua New Guinea doctors and nurses in India and deputation of Indian physicians, nurses and trainers to Papua New Guinea. It also envisages Indian assistance in expansion and development of Government Hospitals in Papua New Guinea.

It is proposed in the MoU that India would support Papua New Guinea to establish a Pharmaceutical Production Unit which would meet the demands of crucial life-saving medicines. India has also agreed to provide anti-retro- viral products for 20,000 HIV/AIDS patients and ancillary equipment that will help monitor HIV etc.

Another MoU relates to the setting up of an ICT Training School of Excellence in Papua New Guinea. India will also provide a 100-million dollar Line of Credit for financing two crucial projects- one, to provide economic corridors of the coastal provinces and the highlands region. The second relates to the construction of a National Court complex in the Western highlands province.

India will also provide assistance in agricultural research, education and how to achieve high agricultural yield. India will work actively with the Government of Papua New Guinea in both upstream and downstream projects involving the Petroleum and Natural Gas Sector. Papua New Guinea on its part has agreed to provide visa on arrival for tourists and support Indias candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

317. The Industries (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015

The Industries (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015 was introduced in Lok Sabha on December 7, 2015. The Bill was introduced by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman. The Bill amends the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951. The 1951 Act provides for development and regulation of certain industries including metallurgical, telecommunications, transportation, fermentation (which includes production of alcohol) among others. The 1st schedule of the Act includes all industries that are regulated under the Act. The Bill amends the schedule to exclude production of alcohol for potable purposes from the ambit of the Act. The Supreme Court of India in its judgement on January 20, 1997, demarcated the regulation of production of alcohol between centre and states (Bihar Distillery and another vs. Union of India and others). The court ruled that centre should regulate the production of alcohol for industrial use and states should regulate the production of alcohol for potable purpose (domestic consumption). The Bill conforms to the Supreme Courts decision.

318. 19 States & UTs express willingness to participate in Vidyanjali programme: Irani

The HRD ministry said that 19 states and UTs have expressed willingness to participate in a programme 'Vidyanjali' which would involve retired defence personnel, people from Indian diaspora and women home-makers to volunteer for co-scholastic activities in schools.

In a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha, HRD minister Smriti Irani said the ministry is working on this pilot project.

"These volunteers will not be replacement for regular teachers and will not be involved in formal teaching," Irani said.

She added that in a meeting of state education ministers held on February 8, 2016, 19 states and Union Territories have expressed willingness to participate in this programme on a pilot basis.

In a written reply to another question, Irani said that of 72 ragging complaints received by UGO during last year and current year, 57 cases have been fully redressed.

The remaining 15 cases are at an active stage of investigation and redressal, she added.

319. **India to have around 15 crore population of elderly persons by 2021: Minister**

India would have around 15 crore population of elderly persons by 2021. Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Vijay Sampla told Rajya Sabha in a written reply today that the projected population of male 60 year and above will be over 7 core and female 7.26 core by then. The population of elderly persons would be around 12 crore by the end this year. Mr. Sampla said the government is taking several steps for their welfare.

320. **Russia launches first rocket from new cosmodrome**

Russia has launched the first rocket from its newly built Vostochny Cosmodrome earlier today following a 24-hour delay.

The Vostochny cosmodrome was built to reduce dependency on the Baikonur launch site in Kazakhstan.

The unmanned rocket is carrying three satellites. Roscosmos press service said communication have been established with all three satellites.

321. **UP govt forms Drought Monitoring Cell**

In Uttar Pradesh, state government has constituted a 'Drought Monitoring Cell' to monitor the grim situation of drought in state specially, in Bundelkhand region. The Cell will coordinate between NDRF and various departments and institutions at district level and gather information on drought from there . According to State Relief Commissioner Anil Kumar, enough funds have been made available to the concerned departments.

A toll free number-1070 (one zero seven zero) for any assistance have also been opened at state capital Lucknow. AIR correspondent reports that out of 75 districts in state 50 districts have been declared drought hit. Bundelkhand region comprising seven district is worst effected as it is facing drought situation for several years.

322. **Personal ornaments beyond limit should not be treated as excluded assets: Panel on Bankruptcy code**

A Joint Committee of Parliament has observed that personal ornaments beyond a prescribed limit should not be treated as excluded assets.

The Committee on Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2015 in its report submitted to Parliament also said that any person adjudged as an undischarged insolvent may also be covered under the definition of bankrupt.

The Committee also recommended that provident fund, pension fund and gratuity which provide social safety net of employees should be secured in the event of liquidation of a Company or bankruptcy of partnership firm.

The objective of the Code is to consolidate and amend the laws relating to reorganization and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time bound manner.

To protect the interest of workmen, the committee recommended increase in number of months for payment of dues from 12 to 24 months preceding the commencement of liquidation. The Committee also was against giving any discretionary powers adjudicating authority to exempt bankrupt from the disqualification under the code.

It has also favoured insertion of new provisions relating to cross-border insolvency saying the code does not have any provision to deal with such eventualities. The bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 21st of December last year and was referred to the Joint Committee of both the Houses.

323. **27th INDIA - INDONESIA Coordinated Patrol**

The Indonesian Navy and the Indian Navy have been participating in coordinated patrol (CORPAT) twice a year since 2002 to keep this vital part of the Indian Ocean Region safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.

The 27th series of India Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) is being conducted from 28 Apr to 19 May 16. Opening Ceremony of the CORPAT is being held at Port Blair from 28-30 Apr 16. Closing Ceremony will be held at Belawan, Indonesia from 16-19 May 16. The Indonesian Navy is being represented by the ship KRI Imam Bonjol and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN 235 whilst INS Karmuk and one Naval Dornier aircraft are representing the Indian Navy.

A high level Indonesian delegation for the 27th CORPAT arrived at Port Blair on 28 Apr 2016. Later in the day, senior officers of the delegation led by First Admiral Muhammad Ali, called on Vice Admiral Bimal Verma AVSM at his office, wherein the two discussed issues of mutual interest and cooperation.

Apart from securing the trade sea route, the coordinated patrol also serves to enhance mutual understanding and inter-operability between the two navies. The CORPAT thus reflects the shared concern between the two countries for a peaceful Indian ocean for the benefit of international community.

324. Target for generation of nuclear power

The Integrated Energy Policy formulated in the year 2006 had envisaged reaching a nuclear power capacity of 63,000 MW by 2032. Further, the government in its recent submission of Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) has also stated that efforts are being made to achieve 63 GW installed capacity by the year 2032, if supply of fuel is ensured.

The percentage share of energy from nuclear power by the end of the Twelfth Plan period is expected to be around 3%. In the 2016-17 budget speech, the Finance Minister has announced that the Government is drawing up a comprehensive plan, spanning next 15 to 20 years, to augment the investment in nuclear power generation. India has a flourishing and largely indigenous nuclear power programme and expects to have 14.6 GWe nuclear capacity on line by 2024 and 63 GWe by 2032. It aims to supply 25% of electricity from nuclear power by 2050. Because India is outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty due to its weapons programme, it was for 34 years largely excluded from trade in nuclear plant or materials, which has hampered its development of civil nuclear energy until 2009. Due to earlier trade bans and lack of indigenous uranium, India has uniquely been developing a nuclear fuel cycle to exploit its reserves of thorium. Since 2010, a fundamental incompatibility between India's civil liability law and international conventions limits foreign technology provision. India has a vision of becoming a world leader in nuclear technology due to its expertise in fast reactors and thorium fuel cycle.

325. Rahuri in Ahmednagar Becomes First to have Digital-Locker

Rahuri Municipal Council of Ahmednagar district in Maharashtra today became the first Municipal Council to attain the status of integrated with digital locker for the issuance of all essential Documents. Sh. Ravi Shankar Prasad formally launched this service here as part of Digital India Programme.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Prasad called upon civic bodies all around the country to follow Rahuri in expediting the process of digital governance. He said the process initiated by NDA Government has started gathering pace and States and local bodies should come forward to make this initiative a grand success. He said digitalization of governance was essentially meant to bring in transparency in the administration and restore people's confidence in Government. He also directed the department of Information Technology to help all municipal bodies in digitalizing governance and making administration paperless.

According to Dilipji Gandhi, Member of Parliament who personally took interest in the initiative, the Website is integrated as an issuer and Requester with DigiLocker where the Citizen will have access to all these documents at any time. They will have freedom to access them from anywhere in the world at any time. The citizen of the area can now apply for the certificates like Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates online without going to Municipal Council and these documents will be available in the DigiLocker signed to the citizens. This will also ensure them the peace of mind provided by the easy security of their documents forever.

326. Fee Hike in IITs Subject to Protecting Interests of Poor Students

It has been decided to revise the tuition fee in IITs to Rs. Two lakh a year from the academic year 2016-17, subject to the following for protecting the interests of the socially and economically backward students:

(i) The SC/ST/PH students shall get complete fee waiver.

(ii) The most economically backward students (whose family income is less than Rs. One lakh per annum) shall get full remission of the fee.

(iii) The other economically backward students (whose family income is between Rs. One lakh to Rs. Five lakh per annum) shall get remission of 2/3rd of the fee.

(iv) All students shall have access to interest free loan under the Vidyalaxmi scheme for the total portion of the tuition fee payable.

The interests of the socially and economically backward students have been protected adequately, and even furthered in the above dispensation.

327. Mahindra to build India's first automobile shredding plant

A unit of autos-to-technology group [Mahindra](#) intends to set up a network of [automobile](#) shredding plants, an executive announcing plans to build India's first such facility with a state firm. [India](#) is considering introducing a policy to [scrap](#) old vehicles, like the cash-for-clunkers programme the United States tried during the global economic recession to boost auto sales. India also plans to enforce stricter vehicular emission rules, potentially opening up an opportunity for companies like Mahindra, India's top utility vehicle maker by sales with a market capitalisation of \$17 billion, to recycle older cars and trucks. Mahindra Intertrade will set up the first plant in partnership with state-controlled MSTC Ltd near a port, aiming to begin operations within a year, said Sumit Issar, Mahindra Intertrade's managing director.

328. PM Modi invited to address joint session of US Congress on June 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited to address a joint meeting of the US Congress in Washington in June during his visit to the United States. Speaker of the US House of Representatives, Paul Ryan told reporters during his weekly press conference that they look forward to welcoming Mr Modi to the US Capitol on the 8th of June. Mr Ryan said, the friendship between the United States and India is a pillar of stability in an important region of the world. He said, the address by Mr Modi presents a special opportunity to hear from the elected leader of the world's most populous democracy on how the two nations can work together to promote their shared values and to increase prosperity.

Top American lawmakers have welcomed Mr Ryan's decision. Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee said, the address will serve as a sign of the deep and important relationship between the two countries.

Mr Modi, who was invited by President Barack Obama for a bilateral visit when he was in Washington for the nuclear summit, will be the fifth Indian Prime Minister to address a joint meeting of Congress, and the first since 2005. The White House has said, it is in close touch with a range of Indian officials to discuss a potential visit by Mr Modi to Washington.

Tulsi Gabbard, the first-ever Hindu lawmaker elected to the US Congress, said as the world's oldest and largest democracies, the US and India have many shared values and objectives. Earlier this month, Ms Gabbard, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and Pacific, wrote to Ryan encouraging him to invite Prime Minister Modi.

329. SC reserves order on Justice Katju's plea against Parliament resolutions

The Supreme Court has reserved its verdict on former apex court judge Justice Markandey Katju's plea seeking quashing of resolutions passed by Parliament for calling Mahatma Gandhi British agent and Subhash Chandra Bose Japanese agent in his blog.

Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi, whose assistance was sought by the court in deciding the plea, opposed the petition yesterday saying that such kind of Parliamentary acts are not open to judicial scrutiny. He told the bench, headed by Chief Justice TS Thakur, that Parliament would not have reacted had it been any Tom, Dick or Harry.

Echoing the views, earlier expressed by senior advocate FS Nariman who is assisting the bench as amicus curiae, Mr Rohatgi said, he is shocked that the former judge of the apex court has said about the father of the nation.

In a rejoinder, advocate Gopal Subramaniam, appearing for the former judge, said he would not have any problem if Parliament resolutions were mere opinions and not a censure kind of thing.

Justice Katju had moved the court seeking quashing of the resolutions passed by Lok Sabha on March 12 and Rajya Sabha on March 11 last year.

In his Facebook post, the former judge had criticised Parliament for censuring him without even giving him a hearing.

330. CBSE challenges Kerala HC order allowing Muslim girls to wear Hijab for AIPMET

The CBSE has challenged the Kerala High Court order granting permission to Muslim girls to wear the Hijab, a customary religious dress for All India Pre-Medical Test-2016. In an appeal filed before the division bench of the High Court yesterday, the CBSE said, the single bench had ignored the likelihood of millions of students being affected by its direction, particularly in view of the fact that arrangements for the conduct of examination have been completed.

It contended that since the judgment creates necessity for additional women invigilators, the CBSE would find conduct of the examination with such additional women invigilators trained to honour religious sentiments, extremely cumbersome, unmanageable and unworkable.

In his April 26th order, Justice Muhammed Mushtaq had permitted all candidates who, based on the religious practice, want to wear headscarf and full-sleeved length dress to appear for the examination but on condition that they be present at the hall half an hour before the exam for frisking, if necessary, by women invigilators. The bench is expected to consider the case today.

331. Bill to transfer control of potable alcohol to states passes in Parliament

Parliament has passed the Industries (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015, with the Rajya Sabha approving it. The Lok Sabha had passed the Bill in the Winter Session of Parliament last year. The bill seeks to bring industries engaged in the manufacture of potable alcohol under the exclusive control of States in all respects.

However, the Centre will continue to be responsible for formulating policy and regulating foreign collaboration for all products of fermentation industries, including industrial and potable alcohol.

The Centre conformed to the Supreme Court order in the Bihar Distillery versus Union of India case, wherein it held that where the removal or clearance is for industrial purposes, the levy of excise duty and all other control should be with the Centre.

Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had moved the Bill. Anand Bhaskar Ropolu of Congress, Rangasayee Ramakrishna of BJP and Bhupinder Singh of BJD participated in the discussion.

332. First meeting of GoM to guide reforms for road transport sector

The Group of Ministers constituted by the Central Government to guide reforms for the road transport sector will hold its first meeting in New Delhi. The GoM, headed by Rajasthan Transport Minister Yunus Khan seeks to find solutions to the various problems plaguing the road transport sector in the country so as to improve road safety and facilitate ease of transport.

Road and Transport Ministry in a release said, the country is facing severe problems in terms of deteriorating road safety. The number of fatalities has been increasing steadily and stands provisionally at one lakh 46 thousand deaths in the year 2015. The Ministry said, government is committed to reduce the number of road accidents and fatalities by 50 per cent by 2020.

The Ministry said, road transport sector plays a major role in the economy of the country, bearing 75 per cent of the total load of passenger and freight transportation. Its share in the country's GDP is close to 4.5 per cent.

333. SC reserves order on plea for National Court of Appeals

The Supreme Court has reserved its order on a plea seeking setting up of the National Court of Appeal with regional benches in major cities for deciding cases arising from the High Courts. The Centre has opposed plea saying the litigants cannot be deprived of the right to approach the apex court.

Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi told the three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice TS Thakur, that the Supreme Court should take some self-correcting measures and use innovative technology and impose heavy costs on frivolous petitions to reduce pendency. The bench indicated that it may refer the matter to larger constitutional bench for deliberations.

Earlier, the Centre had termed the plea as a fruitless endeavour which will not lessen the burden of two crore cases pending in trial courts.

334. 25 declassified files on Netaji to be released

The next tranche of 25 declassified files related to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will be released in New Delhi.

Last month, the Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma had released 50 declassified files relating to the leader and the files are available on web portal www.netajipapers.gov.in.

Our correspondent reports that the release of these files will further meet the continued public demand to access these files and this will also facilitate scholars to carry out further research on the doyen of the freedom movement.

First lot of 100 files relating to Netaji was put in the public domain by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 23rd January this year on the 119th birth anniversary of Netaji.

In October last year, Mr Modi had met the family members of Netaji and announced that the government will declassify the files relating to the leader whose disappearance 70 years ago remains a mystery.

While two commissions of inquiry had concluded that Netaji had died in a plane crash in Taipei on August, 1945 and a third probe panel, headed by Justice MK Mukherjee, had contested it and suggested that Bose was alive.

335. Austrian Parliament passes tough asylum laws to tackle migrant crisis

The Austrian Parliament has approved Europe's strictest asylum laws in response to the migrant crisis in the continent. The bill, passed by 98 votes to 67, permits the government to declare a state of emergency if migrant numbers suddenly rise.

The law also stipulates that asylum seekers would be turned back directly at the border, including those from war-torn countries like Syria. The legislation makes it more difficult for relatives of asylum seekers to join their family members in Austria.

Austrian Interior Minister Wolfgang Sobotka said, Austria had no other choice as long as so many other European Union members fail to do their part to stop the migrant and refugee influx. Opposition parties and rights groups have criticized the legislation.

Austria received about 90,000 asylum requests in 2015, the second highest in the bloc on a per capita basis.

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon yesterday told Austria's Lower House of Parliament that increasing restrictions on migrants will negatively impact Europe's commitments to international law.

336. Kohima declared Smoke-free City

Nagaland capital Kohima has been declared as a Smoke-free City. This was announced by Deputy Commissioner of Kohima, Rovilatuo Mor during a campaign for Smoke Free Kohima City. The campaign was organised by District Tobacco Control Cell under the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said, the guidelines and rules for adherence by public and enforcement by the district administration and police would be brought out without delay.

As part of the campaign, the 22 tobacco free schools through a representation maintained that school children are exposed to smoking directly or indirectly appealed to the authorities to protect the children from tobacco hazards.

Nagaland is the second highest tobacco consumer state in the country with 57 per cent tobacco users. It has also the record of about 28 percent school children who are tobacco chewers.

337. **India 3rd in worldwide dope violation: WADA report**

India may be lightweights in the sporting arena, but as far as doping is concerned, the country is again among the top-three violaters in the world. This was revealed in a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report based on the information supplied by various national sports bodies. India had the third highest Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) in 2014, with 96 cases, behind Russia (148) and Italy (123). Belgium (91), France (91), Turkey (73), Australia (49), China (49), Brazil (46) and South Korea (43) followed India in the top 10, according to the WADA report released. ADRV is a doping case in which a decision is rendered against an athlete following a full disciplinary process. The sanction is either a reprimand or a period of ineligibility. Out of the 96 ADRV's recorded by India, four are non-analytical (two each in athletics and wrestling) cases like failure to submit to appear for a test, possession, use or trafficking of a prohibited substance following an investigation. Out of these 96 dope violations, 79 (56 men and 23 women) failed in-competition tests while 13 (9 men and 4 women) were caught out-of-competition. India, whose medal count in the Olympics has been a mere 24 since 1920, has one of the highest number of dope offenders in the last few years. Among the sports which contributed most dope cheats in the country, athletics continued to maintain the top spot with 29 cases, followed by powerlifting (23) and weightlifting (22) as the trend of the last few years continued. Other sports whose athletes were caught for dope violations were basketball (3), judo (3), taekwondo (3), wrestling (3), wushu (3), boxing (2), canoe/kayak (1), shooting (1) and soft-tennis (1). There was a case of one dope violation each in para-athletics and para-judo as well. In worldwide dope violations in athletics, India with 29 such cases stood second behind Russia (39). Italy (15), France (14), China (13) and Kenya (12) are the other countries in top list of dope violations in athletics. Top Indian athletics officials have been saying that these figures were due to doping violations at the university, age-group and government departmental level competitions. These figures were mainly based on the information supplied by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) and updated by the WADA on the basis of cases received till February this year. The NADA tested 4,340 samples in 2014 (all urine samples), out of which 99 were found to have Adverse Analytical Findings. There was a case of no sanction in case of one athlete and seven cases are still pending, amounting to a total of 91 ADRV's. A total of 2,17,762 samples were tested and analysed in 2014 worldwide by WADA-accredited laboratories. 2287 samples were reported as Adverse Analytical Findings, out of which 1647 are ADRV's (1462 analytical and 185 non-analytical). The ADRV numbers are compiled after excluding cases of Therapeutic Use Exemption, no case to answer, no sanction and pending cases. Crisis-ridden athletics contributed the highest of 244, followed by another dope-tainted sport, cycling with 166. Weightlifting (142), football (80), wrestling (56), Rugby Union (52) and boxing (42) followed in the hall of shame.

338. **New Zealand's dazzling NZD \$5 bill named best Banknote of the year**

Mountaineer and Explorer Sir Edmund Hillary is featured on face of the \$5 bill currency note which is best Bank Note of the year Designed by: Canada Banknote Company About Edmund Hillary: Born in 1919, New Zealand He was a mountaineer, explorer and philanthropist Hillary and Tenzing Norgay (Nepal) became the first climbers to scale

339. **DBS Bank launches mobile-only bank**

Singapore-based DBS Bank, hitherto focusing on the affluent segment, has decided to shed that tag and instead go for mass-market retail (individual) customers.

To woo this segment, it has launched a mobile-only bank. It says this will be completely paperless and branchless, allowing customers to open accounts by using their Aadhaar card, the biometric authentication, at various companies it makes arrangements with. At present, it has tied up with 500 Caf Coffee Day outlets. Features of Digibank: The virtual bank will influence biometrics-integrated ID and Aadhaar card to ensure that that there is no paperwork. It will provide customer service via a 24/7 artificial intelligence-driven assistant networks. It will have an intuitive budget optimiser that will help customers do their budgeting, track expenses and analyse purchasing trends. The digibank is smart such that it can understand customer behavior and preferences, synthesise data, and provide recommendations. It also has embedded soft token security, avoiding the need to wait for SMS to arrive. Account should not need to maintain any minimum

balance requirements earn 7 per cent interest for accounts opened on digibank and can avail themselves of free cash withdrawals. Account holders will be provided with a physical debit card which can be used in all Visa-enabled online and POS transactions

340. Indian Institute of Management Calcutta Acquires EQUIS Accreditation

Indian Institute of Management Calcutta has been awarded the EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) Accreditation by EFMD, the globally recognized international organization for management development, with over 800 members from academia, business, public service and consultancy in 81 countries. The EQUIS Accreditation Board voted to confer EQUIS Accreditation on IIM Calcutta on April 12, 2016. IIM Calcutta has already been accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Association of MBAs (AMBA) in 2014. With EQUIS accreditation, IIM Calcutta becomes the first Indian business school to achieve the Triple Crown in accreditation, i.e. accredited by all the three major accreditation agencies in the world for management education. Only 5 other business schools in Asia and 73 business schools around the world are currently Triple Accredited. AACSB, The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business is based in Tampa, Florida in the United States; AMBA, The Association of MBAs, is based in London, United Kingdom; and EFMD which awards EQUIS Accreditation is based in Brussels, Belgium.

341. UN Chief Appoints Indian Academician To University Council

An Indian academician is among 12 people appointed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the global body's University Council to formulate its principles and policies, consider and approve biennial budget and work programme.

Radha Kumar, 63, the Director General of New Delhi-based think tank Delhi Policy Group was named to the governing UN University Council. The 12 appointees, who will take office next month, will serve for terms of either three or six years.

The main functions of the UN University Council are to formulate the principles and policies of the University, govern its operations, and consider and approve its biennial budget and work programme, a press statement said. Appointed members of the Council serve in their individual capacity and not as representatives of their country's government. They are selected with the aim of achieving a geographic and gender balance, with due regard for major academic, scientific, educational and cultural trends, as well as each member's fields of expertise.

Ms Kumar is a specialist in ethnic conflicts, peacemaking and peace-building. Formerly Director of the Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia University, Ms Kumar has also been a Senior Fellow in Peace and Conflict Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in the city.

She had also served as one of the three-member Group of Interlocutors appointed by the Government of India for Jammu and Kashmir.

The other members appointed to the UN University Council include Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana Ernest Aryeetey, Dean of Faculty of Law at National University of Singapore.

Simon Chesterman, lecturer at Harvard and MIT Isabel Guerrero Pulgar of Chile, Executive Director of Arab Reform Initiative Bassma Kodmani of Syria and Dean of School of Public Policy and Management at China's Tsinghua University Lan Xue.

342. China launches sounding rocket

[China](#) launched a sounding rocket designed to conduct research, take measurements and scientific experiments in the country's Hainan Province.

Kunpeng-1B was launched from Danzhou City in the early hours today by the National Space Science Center (NSSC).

The rocket fulfilled its mission of taking measurements in the upper atmosphere that will help with research of rocket sounding, high-speed flight and space tourism, the NSSC said.

Peaking at 316 km, the whole flight took about 10 minutes.

NSSC head Wu Ji said sounding rockets are an efficient tool for space exploration and scientific experiments, able to study physical phenomena including geomagnetic fields, cosmic rays and ultraviolet light.

343. TVS Racing signs up first woman rider

TVS Racing has signed its first woman rider Shreya Sunder Iyer - to race for their team. Shreya, 24, who is the first woman rider to be a part of any racing team in India, will be part of the TVS Racing team at the Indian National Rally championship this year. Shreya who has a dream of building a career in motor racing began riding at 17 and became the first Indian woman rider to successfully complete a ride across the sand dunes in Dubai. She has ridden extensively across India including the isolated Suru valley in the Himalayas and also completed a rigorous Southern India biking expedition of 2,000 kilometers in just 6 days. In a statement, Arvind Pangaonkar, Head of Team TVS Racing said, We believe that her participation will encourage women to consider racing as a career. TVS Racing is strongly committed to promote 2-wheeler racing in India and generate interest and improve support for the sport in India. We make continuous efforts to take the sport to as many section of the society as possible and create the ultimate machine and promote the riders for these machines. Shreya Sundar Iyer added, I am proud to be a part of the TVS Racing team. TVS Racing is by far the best Indian racing team with the best motorbikes and trainers. This association will help me work with the best in class machines, racers and technology. I also hope to encourage young bikers, especially women to follow their passion for racing and live their dreams. TVS Racing began 33 years ago when Sundaram Clayton Limited (a TVS Group company) introduced its 50 cc mopeds into road racing. Since then it has been actively participating on and off- road racing events such as road racing, Super-cross and Motocross, Dirt Tracks, Rally etc. In early 2015, TVS Racing became the first Indian factory team to take part in the Dakar rally, which is the longest and toughest rally in the world.

344. International Cricket Council suspends Cricket Association of Nepal

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has suspended the Cricket Association of Nepal on Tuesday in view of government interference in the board. During the second meeting of the year at the ICC Headquarters in Dubai, the ICC came to this conclusion. "In light of the ongoing court case involving the Cricket Association of Nepal and the Ad hoc Committee established by the Nepalese National Sports Council (NSC), which has led to a vacuum of cricket leadership in Nepal, the Board suspended the Membership of CAN for breach of Article 2.9 of the ICC's Articles of Association, which prohibits government interference and requires free and fair elections," the ICC said in a statement. The ICC board proclaimed that the membership of the CAN will remain suspended until it 'becomes free of government interference and is properly structured to begin exploiting the tremendous cricket talent and opportunities that exist in Nepal'. However, the board has ruled that Nepal cricket teams would be able to continue to feature in future ICC events though they wont receive any funds from the world cricket's governing body. It so happened that in December, the NSC had formed an ad-hoc committee to run the CAN in December. This happened soon after Chatur Bahadur Chand was elected the CAN's president in a controversial annual general meeting without the NSC's permission. Later, the Chand-led party moved to court, challenging the NSC's decision. The verdict is still pending.

345. Kerala cartoonist Toms, creator of 'Bobanum Moliyum', passes away

Eminent cartoonist Vadakkal Thoppil Thomas known as Toms has died at a private hospital in Kottayam due to agerelated illnesses. He was 86. His impression createdeverlasting cartoon characters likeBobanum Moliyum(Boban and Molly), Apart fromBobanum thecartoonist created kids lawyer Pothan, the flirty Appy Hippy, the nincompoop panchayat president Ittunnan (chettan), his wife (chettathi), Unnikkuttan, Kunchukuruppu and so many creatures. The Bobanum Moliyum strip was first published in Malayala Manorama in 1957. Toms retired from the newspaper in 1987.

346. World Day for Safety and Health at Work

World Day for Safety and Health at Work is observed worldwide on April 28 every year to promote a safe and healthy work environment for employees around the globe. The day is the brainchild of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). It has been observed by the ILO since 2003. United Nations reports saysabout two million men and women lose their lives through accidents and diseases linked to their work. The year 2016 will have the theme of Workplace Stress: a collective challenge, to tackle the stress levels in present stress induced environment.

347. International Dance Day (IDD)

In 1982 the Dance Committee of the ITI founded International Dance Day to be celebrated every year on the 29th

April, anniversary of Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), the creator of modern ballet.

The intention of the International Dance Day Message is to celebrate Dance, to revel in the universality of this art form, to cross all political, cultural and ethnic barriers and bring people together with a common language - Dance. Every year a message from an outstanding choreographer or dancer is circulated throughout the world. The personality is selected by the founding entity of the International Dance Day - the International Dance Committee of the ITI, which collaborates with World Dance Alliance, a Cooperating Member of the ITI.

348. April 29

1289 - Qala'un, the Sultan of Egypt, captured Tripoli.

1429 - Joan of Arc led Orleans, France, to victory over Britain.

1661 - The Chinese Ming dynasty occupied Taiwan.

1672 - King Louis XIV of France invaded the Netherlands.

1813 - Rubber was patented by J.F. Hummel.

1852 - The first edition of Peter Roget's Thesaurus was published.

1856 - A peace treaty was signed between England and Russia.

1858 - Austrian troops invaded Piedmont.

1861 - The [Maryland](#) House of Delegates voted against seceding from Union.

1862 - New Orleans fell to Union forces during the Civil War.

1864 - Theta Xi was founded in Troy, New York.

1879 - In Cleveland, [OH](#), electric arc lights were used for the first time.

1913 - Gideon Sundback patented an all-purpose zipper.

1916 - Irish nationalists surrendered to British authorities in Dublin.

1918 - Germany's Western Front offensive ended in World War I.

1924 - An open revolt broke out in Santa Clara, Cuba.

1927 - Construction of the Spirit of St. Louis was completed for Lindbergh.

1941 - The Boston Bees agreed to change their name to the [Braves](#).

1945 - The German Army in Italy surrendered unconditionally to the Allies.

1945 - In a bunker in Berlin, Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun were married. Hitler designated Admiral Karl Doenitz his successor.

1945 - The Nazi death camp, Dachau, was liberated.

1946 - Twenty-eight former Japanese leaders were indicted in Tokyo as war criminals.

1952 - IBM President Thomas J. Watson, Jr., informed his company's stockholders that IBM was building "the most advanced, most flexible high-speed computer in the world." The computer was unveiled April 7, 1953, as the IBM 701 Electronic Data Processing Machine.

1954 - Ernest Borgnine made his network television debut in "Night Visitor" on NBC-TV.

1961 - ABC's "Wide World of Sports" premiered.

1974 - Phil Donahue's TV show, "Donahue" moved to Chicago, [IL](#).

1974 - [U.S. President Nixon](#) announced he was releasing edited transcripts of secretly made White House tape recordings related to the Watergate scandal.

1975 - The [U.S.](#) embassy in Vietnam was evacuated as North Vietnamese forces fought their way into Saigon.

1981 - Steve Carlton, of the Philadelphia Phillies, became the first left-handed pitcher in the [major leagues](#) to get 3,000 career strikeouts.

1984 - In California, the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor went online after a long delay due to protests.

1985 - Billy Martin was brought back, for the fourth time, to the position of manager for the [New York Yankees](#).

1986 - Roger Clemens of the Boston Red Sox set a [major-league baseball](#) record by striking out 20 Seattle Mariner batters.

1988 - The Baltimore Orioles set a new [major league baseball](#) record by losing their first 21 games of the season.

1988 - Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev promised more religious freedom.

1990 - The destruction of the Berlin Wall began.

1992 - Exxon executive Sidney Reso was kidnapped outside his Morris Township, [NJ](#), home by Arthur Seale. Seale was a former Exxon security official. Reso died while in captivity.

1992 - Rioting began after a jury decision to acquit four Los Angeles policemen in the Rodney King beating trial. 54 people were killed in 3 days.

1994 - Israel and the PLO signed an agreement in Paris which granted Palestinians broad authority to set taxes, control trade and regulate banks under self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

1996 - Former CIA Director William Colby was missing and presumed drowned after an apparent boating accident in [Maryland](#). Colby's body was later recovered.

1997 - Staff Sgt. Delmar Simpson, a drill instructor at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, was convicted of raping six female trainees. He was sentenced to 25 years in prison and was dishonorably discharged.

1997 - Astronaut Jerry Linenger and cosmonaut Vasily Tsibliyev went on the first [U.S.](#)-Russian space walk.

1998 - The [U.S.](#), Canada and Mexico end tariffs on \$1 billion in NAFTA trade.

1998 - Brazil announced a plan to protect a large area of Amazon forest. The area was about the size of Colorado.

2002 - Kelsey Grammer and his production company, Grammmet Inc., were ordered to pay more than \$2 million in

unpaid commissions to his former talent agency.

2003 - Mr. T (Laurence Tureaud) filed a lawsuit against Best Buy Co. Inc., that claimed the store did not have permission to use his likeness in a print ad.

2009 - NATO expelled two Russian diplomats from NATO headquarters in Brussels over a spy scandal in Estonia. Russia's Foreign Ministry criticized the expulsions.

2015 - The White Sox beat the Baltimore Orioles 8-2 at Camden Yards. The game was played without a crowd present due to the ongoing riots and protests in Baltimore. This was the first time a Major League Baseball game was played in front of an empty house.

349. **Entrance exams for MBBS, BDS through NEET to go on as per schedule. SC**

The Supreme Court today said that entrance exams for MBBS and BDS courses through NEET to go on as per the schedule.

The apex court said, it is not going to have the bench to hear the matter today, adding that it will be heard in due course after the parties file applications seeking modification of its order.

The Centre today moved the Supreme Court seeking modification of yesterday's order to allow state governments and private colleges to hold separate entrance examinations for MBBS and BDS courses for the academic year 2016-17. The plea in this regard was mentioned by Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi before a bench of Justices A R Dave and A K Goel.

The AG suggested that the order passed by the apex court yesterday had allowed holding of a two-phased single common entrance test for MBBS, BDS and PG courses through National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) on May 1 and July 24 but there appear to be some genuine difficulties and there is a need for some change in the order.

He suggested that the first phase of NEET scheduled for May 1 be scrapped and all the students be allowed to take the exams on July 24. Rohatgi said there was a need to modify yesterday's order as there was a lot of confusion arising out of it.

350. **HC orders demolition of Adarsh Housing Society in Mumbai**

Bombay High Court has ordered demolition of the controversial 31-storey Adarsh Housing Society in Mumbai.

The High Court today also directed the Maharashtra Government to initiate criminal proceedings against politicians, ministers and bureaucrats, if not already done, for misuse of powers while granting permissions to Adarsh.

However, the Division Bench of Justice Ranjit More and Justice R.G. Ketkar have stayed its order for a period of 12 weeks during which Adarsh Society can file an appeal in the Supreme Court. Upholding the Union Environment Ministry's order to demolish the building, the High Court also ruled that the demolition will be carried out at the expense of Adarsh Society.

The multi-crore Adarsh scam, unearthed in November 2010 had sparked a political controversy in Maharashtra leading to resignation of then Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, whose name appeared in CBI charge sheet. Two former Maharashtra Chief Ministers, Sushil Kumar Shinde and Vilasrao Deshmukh were also allegedly involved in Adarsh Scam.

Standing on a prime piece of land in South Mumbai's Colaba, Adarsh Society was originally meant to be a six-storey structure to house Kargil war heroes and war widows but was eventually developed into a 31-storey high-rise flouting several environment norms and without requisite permissions. The building remains unoccupied and without electricity and water supply.

351. Gujarat govt to provide 10 % reservation to economically backward of higher castes

Gujarat Government will issue an ordinance on 1st May to provide 10 per cent reservation to economically backwards of higher caste. This decision was taken in BJP's core committee meeting presided by party's National President Amit Shah.

Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel and senior Ministers and senior party leaders were present in the meeting. Briefing the media persons at BJP state headquarters in Gandhinagar, state BJP President Vijay Rupani said that the new reservation will not affect the present reservation available to SC, ST and OBC.

He said that 10 percent reservation for economically backwards will be available to all non-reserved class, whose total family income is less than 6 lakh annually. AIR correspondent reports that this 10 percent reservation for economically backwards of higher caste will apply in government jobs as well as admission to the educational institutions from next academic year after issuance of ordinance.

352. Govt raises EPF interest rate to 8.8% from 8.7%

The government today raised the interest rate on employees provident fund (EPF) contributions to 8.8 per cent for 2015-16 against 8.7 per cent approved by the Finance Ministry last week.

Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya announced the decision to raise interest rate. Last month the government was forced to withdraw the Budget proposal to tax a certain portion of withdrawals. Subsequently, it withdrew tighter withdrawal norms.

353. Parliamentary Panel suggests low air fare in Gulf route

A Parliamentary Panel suggested that the Government should ensure that all the Indian carriers operating in Gulf Sector should provide a reasonably low fare for its citizens.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture headed by Dr Kanwar Deep Singh submitted its report in Parliament on demands for grants of Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The Committee desired that this issue will be looked by the government and take appropriate remedial action.

The committee noted that those who are using the Gulf Sector from Kerala airports are basically low paid workers. The report said exorbitant ticket fares are causing lot of financial troubles for already troubled workers due to their poor wages.

The committee observed that Air India has a social responsibility towards its population, that they are protected from predatory airfares.

The Committee appreciated Air India for making operating profits from December last year after a gap of 10 years. The Committee expressed hope that Air India will continue its journey of registering further profits in the coming months.

354. India to lead world towards clean energy rather than follow: Piyush Goyal

Minister of Power Piyush Goyal said India will now lead the world towards clean energy rather than follow. Felicitating 102 awardees at Concentrating Solar Thermal and Solar Cooker Excellence Awards in New Delhi today, Mr. Goyal said with 21 gigawatt of grid-connected new solar projects, India has signaled to the world that it is ready to lead. The Minister said, the country has exceeded solar targets by 116 percent this year and projects of 11,000 MW have already been awarded.

Mr. Goyal said solar programme will not only ensure energy security of the country but also provide power to the last person at the bottom of the pyramid. The awards were given to various stakeholder groups including state nodal agencies, manufacturers and suppliers of the technology and a wide range of beneficiaries to recognize their achievements made in the sector.

355. CAG criticises Centre for delay in NFSA implementation

The Comptroller and Auditor General, CAG has criticised the Centre for delay in implementation of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and extending its rollout thrice without Parliament approval.

In its audit report which was tabled in Parliament today, the CAG attributed the delay in implementation by non-implementing states to non-finalisation of beneficiaries. It said, the States have not identified beneficiaries of NFSA in a systematic manner.

The CAG has evaluated preparedness of 18 States and Union Territories for implementation of the law in its audit report. However, the Act, which came into force from July 2013, has been rolled out in 33 states so far.

The CAG noted that most implementing States used the old database for extending the benefits. To check anomalies in identification of beneficiaries, the CAG recommended that the Centre may issue, in consultation with state governments, guidelines on identification of beneficiaries to maintain transparency.

356. Swachh Bharat Mission loses its momentum: Parl Panel

A Parliamentary Panel has observed that the Swachh Bharat Mission has lost its momentum though drive had begun with great enthusiasm.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture in its report on demands for grants of Tourism Ministry for 2016-17 tabled in Parliament today said the general public did not give up their habit of littering in public places and throwing garbage here and there at tourist places.

The Committee recommended creation of awareness and imposition of mild penalties on offenders to make the drive a success.

On campaign for encouraging domestic tourists, the Committee said that the ministry has not made any concrete plan for the activities undertaken on the overseas promotion. The Committee felt that India has vast potential of domestic tourist market which should be given top priority.

357. Relief and Rehabilitation of violence victims governed by CrPC: Govt

The government today said, the compensation part of the rehabilitation of victims of violence including acid attack is governed by provision of the Criminal Procedure Code. Under the provision every State in co-ordination with the Central is required to prepare a scheme for providing funds for the purpose of compensation to the victim of crime.

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, the Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi said, Home Ministry has set up a Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) with an initial corpus fund of 200 crore rupees from the Nirbhaya Fund. As per the CVCS, the State Governments are required to modify the State Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS) suitably in view of the implementation of the CVCS guidelines.

358. Swat activist Tabassum Adnan wins 2016 Nelson Mandela Award

A women's rights activist from Swat valley of Pakistan, Tabassum Adnan, became the recipient of yet another prestigious award when she was bestowed with the Nelson Mandela Graa Machel Innovation Award 2016 in Bogota, Colombia. Talking to Dawn from Colombia soon after receiving her award, Adnan said she dedicates her award to her country, Pakistan. She won the award for the individual activist category on the concluding day of the International Civil Society Week held from April 25-28.

A victim of child marriage, Tabassum Adnan was married at the age of 13. The marriage which was marked by frequent domestic abuse, ended after 20 years when she gathered the courage to divorce her abusive husband.

359. Bindra says yes; IOA waits for Tendulkar, Rahman

Celebrated shooter Abhinav Bindra has been roped in as goodwill ambassador of India's Olympic contingent alongside Bollywood star Salman Khan.

India's first and only individual Olympic gold-medallist Bindra said he received IOA's invitation today and immediately agreed for the role. Bindra said, while his focus would be to perform at Rio, he will be writing to all the Olympics-bound athletes to motivate them.

The rifle shooter, who is also a former World Championships gold-medallist, will be competing in the Rio Games. IOA has also approached Sachin Tendulkar and Oscar-winning music composer A R Rahman with a similar offer. Both Tendulkar and Rahman, however, are yet to respond to the IOA's offer.

360. Memorial for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to be Set up in Delhi

The 3rd batch of 25 declassified files relating to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose were released online on web portal www.netajipapers.gov.in by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (I/C) and Civil Aviation in National Archives of India here today. Addressing on the occasion, the Minister said that the Government will soon set up a Memorial for Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the heart of Delhi to fulfill the long pending demand for it. He said that the release of declassified files on Netaji is a continuing process as it meets continued public demand to access these files and also facilitates research scholars and students to carry out further research on the doyen of the freedom movement.

361. Navy Cup Race 2016

The 2016 edition of the Indian Navy Cup Race was raced at the race course at 1545 hours on 29 Apr 2016 amidst a full house. Fourteen participants raced for the coveted trophy. Gucci Water owned by Mrs Kumud Sharma was the winner and Miss Duncan belonging to Bharat Prabhakar and Ravi Pathak was the runners up.

The chief of the Naval Staff Admiral RK Dhowan, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, ADC was the Chief Guest and give away the prizes.

The Indian Navy Cup Race was introduced in 1965 and was presented by the then Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral BS Soman. Over the years, the race has become a very popular annual feature at the Delhi Race Club.

362. Bank Board Bureau

With the approval of Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), the Government has set-up an autonomous Banks Board Bureau (BBB), which has started functioning with effect from 1.4.2016. The Bureau will search and select heads of public Sector Banks/Financial Institutions and help them in developing differentiated strategies and capital raising plans through innovative financial methods and instruments. The composition of BBB is as follows:

- 1) Shri Vinod Rai, former CAG of India Chairman
- 2) Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Ex-officio Member
- 3) Secretary, Department of Public Enterprises, Ex-officio Member
- 4) Deputy Governor, Reserve Bank of India, Ex-officio Member
- 5) Shri Anil K. Khandelwal, Former CMD of Bank of Baroda, Member
- 6) Shri H.N. Sinor, former Joint MD, ICICI Bank, Member
- 7) Ms. Roopa Kidva, former MDCEO, CRISIL, Member

In order to bring in transparency and objectivity in the selection of heads of Public Sector Banks and Financial Institutions, the Government has expanded the interview board/sub-committee of the Appointments Board from five members to six members so that there are three sub-panels comprising of the two members each. Each sub-panel interacts with candidates separately and at the end of interview process, weighted average marks are candidates marks for the interview.

363. Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram

The Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK) scheme is being implemented in all the States and UTs. Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK) has been launched on 1st June, 2011, and it entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to absolutely free and no expense delivery including Caesarean section. The initiative stipulates free drugs, diagnostics, blood and diet, besides free transport from home to institution, between facilities in case of a referral and drop back home. Similar entitlements have been put in place for all sick infants accessing public health institutions for treatment.

364. India Newborn Action Plan (INAP)

India Newborn Action Plan (INAP) was launched in September 2014 to give priority attention to the health of Newborn. Newborn health has been identified as the thrust area under National health mission as 56 % of child mortality is contributed by neonatal mortality.

The plan has clear timeline and goal to track the impact of various interventions specifically introduced to reduce neonatal mortality. INAP has set the target to reach single digit Neonatal mortality rate i.e. less than 10 by 2030. The present neonatal mortality rate is 28 per thousand live births.

INAP has considered life cycle approach to address the neonatal mortality. That means health of adolescents as well as care of mother during pregnancy; at the time of delivery and after delivery has direct bearing on the health of newborn. Accordingly six life stages have been identified with specific intervention to reduce neonatal mortality.

The concept of continuum of care i.e linking institutions with community care is another strategic approach in the India newborn action plan. The home based newborn care provided by ASHA addresses this issue appropriately.

The newer evidence based approaches like empowering ANM to give injection Gentamycin, Injection Vitamin K at birth, Kangaroo mother care for preterm newborn and strengthening of care of sick newborn services have been incorporated in INAP.

The state Governments have started implementing INAP and this is expected to reduce neonatal mortality and thereby overall child mortality in the country.

365. Longitudinal Ageing Study

The Government has launched the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) on 22nd March, 2016.

Longitudinal Ageing Study is the first long term survey of the elderly population in the country which is aimed at providing comprehensive longitudinal evidence base on health, social and economic well being of the elderly.

The objectives of LASI are to collect credible scientific data on burden of disease, mental health, functional health, healthcare and social and economic wellbeing of elderly population. LASI data shall be collected based on internationally comparable research design and tools by adopting scientific methods of data collection.

As per Census 2011, the total population above 60 years of age was 103.83 million in India, which forms 8.6% of the total population of the country. At the present pace of population growth rate, it is likely to rise more rapidly in the coming years due to further increase in life expectancy. At present, no representative dataset is available on older population in India. The LASI study will provide the comprehensive new scientific data which are needed to conduct analyses of health, economic and social challenges based on population ageing and to formulate mid-and long-term policies and programmes to address these and other challenges presented by ageing population. Such data shall help in monitoring programmes for the elderly population and also generate essential data required for scientific research on various aspects of ageing.

366. Trauma Care Centre on National Highways

The Ministry of Health Family Welfare has been implementing a scheme namely Capacity Building for Developing Trauma Care Facilities in Govt. Hospitals on National Highways since the 11th Five Year Plan with overall objective of

bringing down preventable deaths because of road accidents to 10 per cent by developing a pan-India trauma care network in which no trauma victim has to be transported for more than 50 kilometres and a designated Trauma Care Facility is available at every 100 Km of the National Highway. The scheme seeks to strengthen the existing trauma care facility in Government Hospitals along the National Highway and not to establish a stand-alone trauma center. A total of 140 trauma care facilities were identified in 16 States (118 trauma care facilities under this Scheme and 22 under PMSSY and self-funding along the National Highway).

367. Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)

The Government has initiated implementation of the following projects under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) in the State of Andhra Pradesh:

(i) Upgradation of Sri Venkateswara Institute of Medical Sciences, Tirupati with estimated cost of Rs.120 crore (Central Share Rs.60 crore for procurement of Medical equipments including consultancy fee and Institute Share Rs. 60 crore) under Phase 1 of PMSSY.

(ii) Upgradation of Govt. Medical College, Anantapur and Siddhartha Medical College, Vijayawada with an approved cost of Rs.150 crore (Central share- Rs.120 crore and State share- Rs. 30 crore) per Institute under Phase III of PMSSY.

(iii) The Cabinet has approved setting up of new AIIMS in Andhra Pradesh on 7th October 2015. Accordingly, establishment of new AIIMS at Mangalagiri in Andhra Pradesh is being implemented. The MoU has been signed between the Government of India and Government of Andhra Pradesh. Taking over of the land at Andhra Pradesh has been done. Soil survey, topographical survey has been completed. Tender for boundary wall has been awarded.

Initial project funds at the rate of 3% i.e. Rs.2.40 crore of the total cost of civil works for each Government Medical College has been released to HITES, the Executing Agency in respect of Government Medical College, Anantapur and HSCC (India) Ltd. in respect of Siddhartha Medical College, Vijayawada. The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable healthcare facilities in the different parts of the country in general, and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States in particular. The scheme was approved in March 2006.

368. More than 10000 cases registered under the Dowry Prohibition Act during 2014

As per the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data, a total number of 9038, 10709 and 10050 cases have been registered under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 during 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively. Similarly, a total number of 8233, 8083 and 8455 cases were registered of Dowry Death in the country during 2012, 2013 and 2014 respectively.

All the States except Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Mizoram and Nagaland where the dowry system is not in prevalence, have appointed Dowry Prohibition Officers. In most of the States, the duty of Dowry Prohibition Officer has been given as additional charge to existing State functionaries.

The Government of India regularly conducts awareness generation programmes and publicity campaigns on various laws relating to women including Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 through workshops, fairs, cultural programmes, seminars, training programmes etc. Advertisements are regularly brought out in the print and electronic media to create awareness on laws relating to rights of women. The Ministry also reviews with the States/UTs time to time for effective implementation of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

369. Mukhyamantri Amrut Yojana â€“ Nutritious Diet for Children

Mukhyamantri Amrut Yojana is all set to be launched in Chhattisgarh by the chief minister on 29th April at Sukma. The scheme is to provide nutritious diet to children at Anganwadi centers. Under the Mukhyamantri Amrut Yojana, the state government will provide nutritious diet to children in the age-group of 3-6 years. Under the scheme, sweetened and flavoured milk (100 ml) will be provided to the children in the age-group of 3-6 years on every Monday at the Anganwadi centers. The main objective of the scheme is to improve the nutrition level in the children and reduce the diseases caused by the low nutrition level. The scheme will be implemented by the Women and Child Development ministry of the state government. Once the scheme is implemented, Chhattisgarh will be the first state in the country to

provide sweetened flavoured milk to children in the age-group of 3-6 years. The scheme was announced in the financial budget of 2016-17 of the state by the chief minister Dr. Raman Singh. CM will also launch a new scheme named [Mahatari Jatan Yojana](#) for pregnant women on May 2 at Ambikapur. Chhattisgarh government is trying hard to improve the health of children and pregnant women in the state by launching such welfare schemes.

370. Mahatari Jatan Yojana – “Nutritious Diet for Pregnant Women

Mahatari Jatan Yojana is all set to be launched in Chhattisgarh by the chief minister on May 2 at Ambikapur. The scheme is to provide nutritious diet to pregnant women at Anganwadi centers. Under the Mahatari Jatan Yojana, the state government will provide nutritious diet and ready to eat food to pregnant women. Under the scheme, 250 gm hot cooked food will be provided to the pregnant women at all Anganwadi centers across the state. The main objective of the scheme is to improve the nutrition level in pregnant women and reduce the diseases caused by the low nutrition level. The scheme will be implemented by the Women and Child Development ministry of the state government. Once the scheme is implemented, Chhattisgarh will be the first state in the country to provide nutritious diet to pregnant women. The scheme was announced in the financial budget of 2016-17 of the state by the chief minister Dr. Raman Singh. CM will also launch a new scheme named [Mukhyamantri Amrut Yojana](#) for children on 29th April at Sukma. Chhattisgarh government is trying hard to improve the health of pregnant women and children in the state by launching such welfare schemes.

371. Urja Daksh LED Bulb Ujala Yojana – “LED Bulb Distribution Scheme

Urja Daksh LED Bulb Ujala Yojana is a new scheme by the Government of Madhya Pradesh. Under the scheme, the state government will distribute 3 crore LED bulbs across the state of Madhya Pradesh. The LED bulbs under the scheme will be distributed at a very low price of Rs. 85 per bulb. Introduction to Urja Daksh LED Bulb Ujala Yojana The bulbs to be distributed under the scheme would be of 9 watt but it would be illuminating like 100 watt bulb. The bulb under the Urja Daksh LED Bulb Ujala Yojana will come with a replacement warranty of 3 years. The minimum working capacity of the bulb would be 30,000 hours. Since the bulb will be illuminating like 100 watt bulb, the energy saving would be 91%. Distribution Network for Urja Daksh LED Bulb Ujala Yojana The bulbs under the scheme would be distributed through the medium of fixed distribution agents. Energy Efficient Services Limited of Indian Government will also help the state government in this regard. The LED bulbs under the scheme would be available at the following locations. Akshay Urja Shops Markets Post Offices Power bills collection centers How to Get the LED bulb under the scheme Any person can get the LED bulb under the scheme by showing his identity card and paying the minimum Rs. 85 per bulb. Use of single LED bulb can save up to 25 to 30 units of power per year converting to a money saving of Rs 150 to Rs 180 in a year. The Urja Vikas Nigam of [Madhya Pradesh](#) would implement the scheme at not profit no loss basis. The government is also trying that the Government and semi-Government officials shall purchase the bulbs from the corporation itself. If implemented successfully across the state, the scheme will prove to be a great initiative towards energy saving.

372. NASA’s Juno spacecraft to arrive at Jupiter on July 4

NASA’s Juno spacecraft will arrive at Jupiter on July 4th to study the planets origins and composition. Juno was built by the Denver based Lockheed Martin Space Systems Company. The Juno mission is part of the New Frontiers Program managed by NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. According to NASA, Juno will make two 53-day elliptical laps around Jupiter, before beginning the mission’s science phase.

373. UN council discusses move to enforce North Korea sanctions

UN Security Council diplomats were negotiating a draft statement that would push for tough sanctions on North Korea to be enforced worldwide after Pyongyang’s latest test firing of medium range missiles.

The draft statement requests that all UN member states report no later than May 31st on the concrete measures they have taken to implement the sanctions resolution.

It directs a UN sanctions committee to intensify its work to strengthen enforcement of resolution 2270, which was adopted in March after North Korea conducted its fourth nuclear test and fired a rocket.

The United States requested the meeting after a series of test firings and as fears grew that the secretive country is

preparing to conduct a fifth nuclear test.

Chinese Ambassador Liu Jieyi, who holds the council presidency this month, told reporters that work was continuing on the statement which must be unanimously agreed by the 15 council members to be released.

374. Legislation in US Senate for India's APEC membership

In the United States, top American lawmakers have introduced a legislation in the Senate which directs the secretary of state to develop a strategy for India becoming a member of Asia Pacific Economic Corporation (APEC) forum for 21 Pacific Rim member-economies that promotes free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

A media release said given the strong role India plays in the economy in the Asia-Pacific region, Senators Mark Warner from Virginia and John Cornyn from Texas this week have introduced the legislation. Warner and Cornyn are also co-chairs of the Senate Indian Caucus, the only country specific caucus in the Senate.

375. US Reports first death from Zika virus in Puerto Rico

The first death on US territory related to the mosquito-borne Zika virus has been reported. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said yesterday that a Puerto Rican man in his 70s died from internal bleeding related to a rare immune reaction to a Zika virus infection in late February.

Officials said the man recovered from the initial Zika symptoms but then developed a condition in which antibodies that formed in reaction to the infection started attacking blood platelets. Three similar Zika-related deaths have been reported in Colombia. Puerto Rico has been facing a widespread Zika outbreak for several months.

376. NABARD partners Germany for food security initiative

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has entered into a collaboration with German government for a special programme on 'Soil Protection and Rehabilitation for Food Security'. A press release said that the programme is part of the German government's recently introduced special initiative 'One World, No Hunger' initiative.

As part of the collaboration, NABARD is anchoring soil conservation and rehabilitation of degraded land programme in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. It is also conducting innovation of watershed development and climate change adaptation programmes in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Germany's 'One World, No Hunger' addresses areas such as food and nutrition security, promotion of innovation, protection and sustainable use of natural resources in rural areas and promotion of responsible land use and access to land.

377. Centre revises rates of foodgrains supplied under Mid Day Meal Scheme

The Centre has revised the rates of foodgrains supplied under Mid Day Meal Scheme from Below Poverty Line, BPL rate to the rate applicable under National Food Security Act, NFSA for the 1st two quarters of the year 2016-17. In a statement the Food Ministry said, the foodgrains will be now supplied at NFSA rate of 3 rupees per kilo for rice and 2 rupees per kilo for wheat with effect from 1st April this year. The state governments and administrations of Union Territories have also been informed of the above decision today.

Under the Mid Day Meal Scheme, hot cooked meals are served to more than 10 crore children in nearly 12 lakh Government and Government aided elementary schools on all school days. The Scheme also has a provision for serving of meals to the students in the eligible schools during summer vacations in areas where drought is declared by States. The cost of food grains is fully borne by the Central Government. The rice and wheat are supplied by Food Corporation of India and in some cases by the State Food and Civil Supplies Corporations.

As mandated under the NFSA, 2013, the Mid Day Meal Rules, 2015 were notified in September, 2015 which made the MDM Scheme eligible for supply of foodgrains at NFSA rates for wheat and rice. Additional expenditure on subsidy arising out of the above decision will be borne by the Ministry of Food and Public Distribution.

378. Prez Pranab arrives in Auckland on 3-day visit to New Zealand

After his historic visit to Papua New Guinea, President Pranab Mukherjee flew into Auckland early this morning on a three-day official visit to New Zealand. This is for the first time that an Indian President is visiting New Zealand. AIR correspondent Sitanshu Kar accompanying the President reports that factoring the growing relationship, a bilateral Air Services Agreement is likely to be signed during this visit of the President.

Mr Mukherjee will hold talks with the Prime Minister John Key and the leader of the Opposition Andrew Little will call on him. The President will lay a wreath at the Auckland War Memorial and address the students of Auckland University of Technology. He will also address a Business Forum and Indian Diaspora.

As many as 1, 75, 000 persons of Indian origin have made New Zealand their permanent home. There are about 23, 000 Indian students in New Zealand. The Wellington City Council has submitted a proposal for establishing a sister-city relationship between Wellington and New Delhi. The New Zealand Government is also keen to enhance defence cooperation with India.

379. Panama govt sets up panel to clean up country's financial system

The government of Panama has set up a committee of independent experts to make recommendations on cleaning up the country's financial system. The move comes after leaks of documents from the Panamanian law firm Mossack Fonseca caused an international uproar over offshore accounts.

President Juan Carlos Varela called for the review after the Panama Papers leak suggested rich foreigners were using the accounts to hide their wealth. He was speaking at the committee's inauguration yesterday. Mr Varela said, their administration is committed to bullet-proofing Panama financial services sector against threats from people and groups who want to use it for illegal activities.

The advisory group includes Nobel economics laureate Joseph Stiglitz, former Panamanian President Nicolas Ardito Barletta and former Panama Canal administrator Alberto Aleman Zubieta. The group is to present recommendations to Mr Varela in six months.

380. Subroto Bagchi to head Odisha Skill Development Authority

The Odisha government has appointed noted IT entrepreneur Subroto Bagchi as the Chairman of Odisha Skill Development Authority. Informing this in the Assembly yesterday, chief minister Naveen Patnaik said that Bagchi would be given the rank of a cabinet minister and assume office tomorrow.

Reacting to the appointment, Mind-Tree IT company founder Bagchi said he is deeply humbled and honoured to serve his motherland. He said that Odisha nourished him and it now time to give back. Bagchi will draw a salary of 1 rupee per year for his services to the state.

A government communique said Odisha Skill Development Authority will unify the initiatives on the ground and create momentum for youth of the state to receive skill training in a professional manner.

381. Online app for tribal caste validity certificate in Maharashtra

In a first for any state in India, the Maharashtra Government today launched a web-based application Adi Praman that will enable tribals to get caste validity certificates online. The portal named etribalvalidity.mahaonline@gov.in was launched by Maharashtra Governor CH Vidyasagar Rao in presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at Raj Bhavan. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Rao said this initiative will make the entire process of securing caste validity certificate transparent, fast and easy. He added that it would effectively curb the menace of bogus caste certificates.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the web-based application would help the government achieve the goal of inclusion as envisioned under the Digital India programme. Mr. Fadnavis informed that certificates will be barcoded with the unique identification number and authorities can directly verify the status of validity certificate using the unique barcode number. He added that applicants will also be informed on the status of their application through Email and SMS alert.

Mr. Fadnavis said the government aims to bring more and more services not just online but on citizens phones. Also present on the occasion, Maharashtra's Minister for Tribal Development Vishnu Savra said the availability of caste validity certificates online would especially help youths who are seeking employment and also candidates who are filing nomination papers for elections.

382. Kerala-IMA partners with UNICEF to promote safe health practices

In Kerala, UNICEF and the state branch of Indian Medical Association (IMA) has joined hands to promote safe and healthy practices for improving maternal and child health in the state.

The initiative will help Kerala achieve world class level in reducing child mortality rate.

The partnership is seen as a giant leap in the health scenario of the state. As part of the partnership, IMA and UNICEF will orient all the 35,000 doctors of the association in the state, on the importance of prescribing good practices to their patients, besides medicine.

Doctors will also counsel the patients on good health and behavior practices before writing medicines in the prescription note.

Each branch IMA in Kerala will adopt ten schools each for promoting behavioral practices among students who will carry the message to their homes.

383. Centre approves Rs 9005 cr for construction of houses for EWS

Centre has approved an investment of 9,005 crore rupees for construction of 73,205 houses for economically weaker sections in Maharashtra, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.

An official release said in New Delhi that an inter-ministerial Central Screening and Monitoring Committee, chaired by Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) Secretary Nandita Chatterjee, gave the nod for first batch of housing proposals during the current financial year.

These were also the first affordable housing proposals of the three states sanctioned under Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY-Urban). The central assistance for construction of the houses will be to the tune of 1,080 crore rupees.

Maharashtra has been sanctioned a total of 71,701 houses in 10 cities at a total project cost of 8,932 crore rupees with central assistance of 1,064 crore rupees.

For Punjab, construction of 1,280 houses for in-situ slum redevelopment in Bhatinda was approved with a total investment of 57 crore rupees for which central assistance will be to the tune of 12.80 crore rupees.

For Jammu Kashmir, construction of 224 houses has been approved with a total investment of 16.07 crore rupees with central assistance of 3.36 crore rupees. Under PMAY (Urban) launched in June last year, two crore houses for urban poor is to be built by the year 2022.

384. LED Bulb Ujala Yojana inaugurated in Bhopal

Union Minister of State for Energy Piyush Goyal said that over ten crore LED bulbs have been distributed so far across the country under the Centres LED Bulb Ujala Yojana. Inaugurating the scheme in Bhopal today, he said that there is plan to distribute over 70 crore LED bulbs till 2019.

Mr. Goyal said that the Madhya Pradesh government will distribute three crore LED bulbs in the next six months under the scheme. The minister said that the objective of the scheme is to save power and money and to reduce pollution. AIR Bhopal correspondent reports that the LED bulb of nine watt will be provided at 85 rupees under the Ujala scheme.

Common people will be provided these bulbs through haat-bazars, post offices and electricity bill centres of power distribution companies. According to the state government officials, after distribution of 3 crore LED bulbs, 75 to 90

MW power costing 450 to 540 crore rupees will be saved annually. Use of LED bulbs will also reduce emission of carbon dioxide by 31.75 lakh tonnes.

385. **RBI deputy governor calls for more green funding**

Reserve Bank Deputy Governor R Gandhi has expressed the need to balance green development and economic development.

Addressing a conference on sustainable finance in Mumbai on Friday, Mr. Gandhi said incorporating environmental concerns into commercial lending is a challenge in a country like India.

He informed that the new priority sector lending requirements announced by the RBI include devoting money to social infrastructure and small renewable projects, which will help support the objective of sustainability finance.

Mr. Gandhi added that Securities and Exchange Board of India has also worked out norms for raising money through green bonds, through which domestic financial institutions, like Exim Bank and Yes Bank have raised USD 1.1 billion in 2015.

386. **Sudha Singh qualifies for Rio Olympics in 3000 m steeple chase event**

Olympics-bound Lalita Babar smashed her own national record to win the gold while Sudha Singh also qualified for the Rio Games while winning silver in women's 3000m steeplechase on the second and penultimate day of the Federation Cup National Athletics Championships in New Delhi yesterday.

Maharashtra's Babar has already qualified for the Olympics in both the 3000m steeplechase and marathon. Sudha has also qualified for the Olympics in marathon but Athletics Federation of Indian officials said that both she and Babar will compete in 3000m steeplechase in Rio and not in marathon race.

Meanwhile, Rajiv Arokiya set the second national record of the day while winning the gold in men's 400m race with a time of 45.47 seconds. However, he missed the Rio Olympics qualification standard of 45.40 seconds by 0.7 secs at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

387. **APRIL 30**

0030 - Jesus of Nazareth was crucified.

0313 - Licinius unified the whole of the eastern empire under his own rule.

1250 - King Louis IX of France was ransomed for one million dollars.

1527 - Henry VIII and King Francis of France signed the treaty of Westminster.

1725 - Spain withdrew from Quadruple Alliance.

1789 - George Washington took office as first elected U.S. president.

1803 - The U.S. purchased the Louisiana Territory from France for \$15 million.

1812 - Louisiana admitted as the 18th U.S. state.

1849 - The republican patriot and guerrilla leader Giuseppe Garibaldi repulsed a French attack on Rome.

1864 - Work began on the Dams along the Red River. The work would allow Union General Nathaniel Banks' troops to sail over the rapids above Alexandria, Louisiana.

1889 - George Washington's inauguration became the first U.S. national holiday.

1900 - Hawaii was organized as an official U.S. territory.

1900 - Casey Jones was killed while trying to save the runaway train "Cannonball Express."

1930 - The Soviet Union proposed a military alliance with France and Great Britain.

1938 - Happy Rabbit appeared in the cartoon "Porky's Hare Hunt." This rabbit would later evolve into Bugs Bunny.

1939 - The first railroad car equipped with fluorescent lights was put into service. The train car was known as the "General Pershing Zephyr."

1939 - Lou Gehrig played his last game with the New York Yankees.

1940 - Belle Martell was licensed in California by state boxing officials. She was the first American woman, prizefight referee.

1943 - The British submarine HMS Seraph dropped 'the man who never was,' a dead man the British planted with false invasion plans, into the Mediterranean off the coast of Spain.

1945 - Adolf Hitler and Eva Braun committed suicide. They had been married for one day. One week later Germany surrendered unconditionally.

1945 - Arthur Godfrey began his CBS radio morning show "Arthur Godfrey Time." It ran until this day in 1972.

1947 - The name of Boulder Dam, in Nevada, was changed back to Hoover Dam.

1948 - The Organization of American States (OAS) held its first meeting in Bogota, Colombia. The institution's goal was to facilitate better relations between the member nations and to help prevent the spread of communism in the Western Hemisphere.

1952 - Mr. Potato Head became the first toy to be advertised on network television.

1953 - The British West Indian colonies agreed on the formation of the British Caribbean Federation that would eventually become a self-governing unit in the British Commonwealth.

1964 - The FCC ruled that all TV receivers should be equipped to receive both VHF and UHF channels.

1968 - U.S. Marines attacked a division of North Vietnamese in the village of Dai Do.

1970 - U.S. troops invaded Cambodia to disrupt North Vietnamese Army base areas. The announcement by [U.S. President Nixon](#) led to widespread protests.

1972 - The North Vietnamese launched an invasion of the South.

1973 - [U.S. President Nixon](#) announced resignation of Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and other top aides.

1975 - Communists North Vietnamese troops entered the Independence Palace of South Vietnam in Saigon. 11 Marines lifted off of the U.S. Embassy were the last soldiers to evacuate.

1980 - Terrorists seized the Iranian Embassy in London.

1984 - [U.S. President Reagan](#) signed cultural and scientific agreements with China. He also signed a tax accord that would make it easier for American companies to operate in China.

1991 - An estimated 125,000 people were killed in a cyclone that hit Bangladesh.

1993 - CERN put the World Wide Web software in the public domain.

1993 - Monica Seles was stabbed in the back during a tennis match in Hamburg, Germany. The man called himself a fan of second-ranked Steffi Graf. He was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm and received a suspended sentence.

1998 - NATO was expanded to include Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The three nations were formally admitted the following April at NATO's 50th anniversary summit.

1998 - United and Delta airlines announced their alliance that would give them control of 1/3 of all U.S. passenger seats.

1998 - In the U.S., Federal regulators fined a contractor \$2.25 million for improper handling of oxygen canisters on ValuJet that crashed in the Florida Everglades in 1996.

2002 - Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf was overwhelmingly approved for another five years as president.

2012 - One World Trade Center became the tallest structure in New York when it surpassed the height of the Empire State Building.

2015 - NASA's Messenger spacecraft crashed into the surface of Mercury. The space probe sent back more than 270,000 pictures to earth.

388. ANTI-CHILD LABOUR DAY IN INDIA - APRIL 30

In India, Anti-Child Labour Day is observed on April 30, a day before Labour Day, while the World Day Against Child Labour is held on June 12. In 2001, about 12 million children in India were in a hazardous job. UNICEF estimates that India, with its larger population, has the highest number of labourers in the world under 14 years of age. International Labour Organization estimates that agriculture and relatives activities at 70 percent are the largest employer of child labour in India. Since the Government amended the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986, enforcing a ban on employment of children under 14 in any kind of jobs in October 2006, situation has barely changed and child labour continues to flourish in both rural and urban India. Thus, though the country observes the Anti-Child Labour Day, hundreds of children continue to work hard as domestic help in houses, at roadside restaurants in the state and in other low-skilled labour-intensive sectors. Children who work miss the corresponding education and remain illiterate which limits their opportunity to develop properly as well as the ability to become prosperous for their own and for the community well being. In this way, Child Labour has a long term side effects for the country and its economic welfare. Proper education is essential for keeping an economy prospering. Education is the right response to end child labour. School is the best place to work for a child.

389. N K Singh gets top Japanese national award

The Government of Japan has announced the conferment of the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star, its second highest national decoration, on bureaucrat-turned-politician and former MP N K Singh for his contribution in boosting Indo-Japan relations over the last few decades. The prestigious award will be conferred on Singh by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at a ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on May 10 followed by an audience with Emperor Akihito. The honour is a recognition of the catalytic role played by N K Singh in the furtherance of Indo-Japanese economic relations over decades. He served in Japan during the investment decision of Maruti-Suzuki and the forays of the Japanese automobile companies to India. As a member of the board of Nalanda University, his continuing endeavours for a greater Japanese engagement in the university in strengthening educational and cultural relations as a symbol of Asian Renaissance.

390. Allahabad HC Judges agree to cut short summer holidays; to work during vacations

In the first move of its kind in the country, judges of the Allahabad High Court have agreed to cut short their summer holidays and attend to work during the vacations with a view to reducing the backlog of cases. Most of the sitting judges

of the High Court have given their consent to the proposal of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud in this regard.

The move assumes significance in the backdrop of an emotional appeal by Chief Justice of India T S Thakur, who had requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to help in filling up vacancies in the higher judiciary.

The judges have agreed to the proposal for devoting 15 days out of the month-long vacation towards conducting special hearings for clearing the backlog.

High Court Bar Association sources have also confirmed having received a communication requesting cooperation in speedy disposal of long-pending criminal matters.

391. New Sports Village in Nagpur to be named after Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Sarbanand Sonowal has asserted that sport is not only a tool of personality development, but also a way of life for enrichment of the society through nurturing of healthy and cultured populace.

He was speaking at the handing over ceremony of the land for the proposed Regional Centre of Sports Authority of India in Nagpur. The Minister announced that the new Sports Village would be named after the legendary leader Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.

Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari said that the local youth as well as those from Vidarbha region and parts of the Central India would benefit from the state-of-the-art sports facilities to be set up in Nagpur giving a big boost for development of sports culture.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis called for organization of national and international events in order to groom local talent.

Nagpur Municipal Corporation has provided 140 acres of land for this largest project in the country at the nominal cost of one rupee on the lease of thirty years.

The ambitious project slated to be developed with input cost of around 300 crore rupees would have the state-of-the-art sports infrastructure and allied facilities. The jurisdiction of the Regional Centre would include Maharashtra, Goa and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

392. Real Estate Act comes into force on may 1

After eight long years of efforts, the much awaited Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, will come into force on Sunday, the Ministry of Housing Urban Poverty Alleviation (HUPA) announced in a statement. The implementation of the Act will lead to the making of necessary operational rules and creation of institutional infrastructure for protecting the interests of consumers and promoting the growth of real estate sector in an environment of trust, confidence, credible transactions and efficient and time-bound execution of projects, the ministry stated. A proposal for a law for Real Estate was first mooted at the National Conference of Housing Ministers of States and Union Territories in January 2009. As per the HUPA notification announcing the commencement of the Act on May 1, rules under the Act have to be formulated by the Central and state governments within six months i.e by October 31, 2016 under the Section 84 of the Act. The HUPA Ministry would make rules for union territories without legislatures while the Urban Development Ministry would do so for Delhi. The Section 84 of the Act stipulates that the appropriate government shall, within a period of six months of the commencement of this Act, by notification, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act. Early setting up of Real Estate Regulatory Authorities with whom all real estate projects have to be registered and Appellate Tribunals for adjudication of disputes is the key for providing early relief and protection to the large number of buyers of properties, HUPA said. The Section 20 of the Act says The appropriate Government shall, within a period of one year from the date of coming into force of this Act, by notification establish an authority to be known as the Real Estate Regulatory Authority to exercise the powers conferred on it and to perform the functions assigned to it under this Act. These Authorities decide on the complaints of buyers and developers in 60 days time. The Section 20 of this Act also empowers appropriate Governments to designate any officer preferably Secretary

of the Department dealing with Housing, as the interim Regulatory Authority until the establishment of Regulatory Authority under the provisions of the Act. Regulatory Authorities, upon their constitution get three months time to formulate regulations concerning their day-to-day functioning under the Section 85 of the Act. The time limits of six months for formulation of rules and one year for setting up Regulatory Authorities and Appellate Tribunals are the outer limit and the states willing to act quickly could do so and the HUPA Ministry would notify the remaining sections of the Act to enable relief to the buyers under the Act as quickly as possible, the statement added.

393. **Rajan Bargotra new Coast Guard (East) Commander**

Rajan Bargotra today assumed charge as Coast Guard Commander and Inspector General of Eastern Region here.

Bargotra, a sixth batch officer of the Indian Coast Guard replaces Satya [Prakash Sharma](#) who retired after serving the maritime force for 36 years. Sharma was given a traditional farewell at a function, a Coast Guard release said.

New Delhi-born Bargotra, an alumni of National Defence College, had served in many responsibilities in the Coast Guard including Chief of Staff, Coast Guard Western region, and Commander, Coasts Guard District, [Gujarat](#) among others.

Prior to taking up the new role, Bargotra was the Principal Director (Logistics) at the Coast Guard, New Delhi.

A recipient of 'Tatrakshak Medal' for meritorious service, Bargotra stressed on strengthening the Coastal Security mechanism and to expedite the growth of infrastructure towards supporting Coast Guard operations in the region.

The 'handing over taking over' ceremony was held at Coast Guard Air Station with full military honours.

394. **Only CNG taxis to ply in Delhi, NCR from may 1**

In a major body blow for taxi operators, the Supreme Court on Saturday ruled that only CNG [taxis](#) will be allowed to run in Delhi and NCR from tomorrow.

All radio taxis, app-based cab operators will have to switch to [CNG](#) from May 1, the top court said, refusing to extend the April 30 deadline for taxis to convert into CNG.

Taxi owners had pleaded before the court that there's no technology available in the market to convert a diesel car into one that uses CNG.

"We gave sufficient time for private taxis to convert to CNG and we are not inclined to extend the deadline," the apex court told the operators.

395. **Madhya Pradesh High Court terms reservation in promotions in the State as unconstitutional**

The Madhya Pradesh High Court termed reservation in promotions in the state as unconstitutional.

The division bench chaired by Chief Justice A M Khanwilkar stated in its order that the reservation to underprivileged during appointments is logical but reservation in promotions frustrate talented people.

The court said that giving priority to reserved categories over general classes in promotions is not justice.

Several employee associations and social organisations had filed petitions against reservation in promotions in the court.

Petitioners had challenged the rules of the state government which provided reservation in promotion for Scheduled Castes and Schedule Tribes.

Petitioners urged that these rules are against provisions of the constitution.

All the reservation based promotions after 2002 will be cancelled after the courts judgement.

396. PM to launch Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana from Ballia

He will launch the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana from Ballia. This scheme aims to provide LPG connections to 5 crore women beneficiaries from BPL families over the next three years.

The Prime Minister will also visit his constituency, Varanasi. He will distribute e-rickshaws to beneficiaries. He will visit Gyan Pravah - Centre for Cultural Studies and Research at Varanasi. He will hold a meeting with prominent citizens in Varanasi.

The Prime Minister will launch a scheme for environment-friendly E-Boats at the famous Assi Ghat. These E-boats will not only reduce pollution, but will also bring down the operational costs, thereby enabling higher incomes for those who earn their livelihoods through such boats on the River Ganga.

SHANMUGAM IAS ACADEMY