

GK Digest September 2016

Ramandeep Singh



International Affairs

Pakistan to host 19th SAARC Summit on Nov. 9 & 10 this year

Pakistan will host the 19th SAARC Summit on November 9 and 10 this year.

- The SAARC Summit Cell is headed by Ambassador Amjad Sial.
- SAARC is an organization of eight countries located in the South Asia and it stands for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

India, Myanmar signed four agreements to boost bilateral cooperation

India and Myanmar signed four Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation and bilateral relations between the two countries.

- MoU on cooperation in the construction of 69 Bridges.
- MoU on cooperation in the construction / upgradation of the Kalewa – Yagyi Road Section.
- MoU on cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine.

India at 77th in World Risk Report 2016

While Bangladesh is among the top five countries at risk of disaster, India ranks 77 on the World Risk Index - marginally better positioned than Pakistan which is placed at 72.

- The index is part of the World Risk Report 2016 released by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS) and Bundnis Entwicklung Hilft in cooperation with the University of Stuttgart in Germany.
- The list of 171 countries was topped by Island state of Vanuatu.

Over 1000 Dancing Robots Set Guinness Record in China

A new Guinness World Record for the most robots dancing simultaneously has been set in China where 1,007 robots shimmied in unison, nearly double the previous record.

- Each of the 43.8 cm tall dancing machines at the Qingdao Beer Festival were controlled using just one mobile phone and they had to dance for a full minute in order to count towards the record.
- A few robots were disqualified because they did not dance or fell over, but the majority of the mechanical dance troupe completed the 60 second routine in perfect unison.

China's unmanned submersible sets new national record

China's unmanned submersible has dived to a depth of 10,767 metres at the world's deepest ocean point, setting a new record for the country to enable it to explore ocean beds for minerals and other natural resources.

- The submarine created the record by diving in the Mariana Trench in the western Pacific Ocean. It is the world's deepest ocean area.

India is 7th wealthiest country, China second

The New World Wealth, India is ranked 7th among the wealthiest countries in the world in terms of private wealth held by individuals. The New World Wealth is a research consultancy that tracks the global wealth sector.

- The value of total individual wealth in India – which includes property, cash, equities and business interests – is pegged at \$3,492 billion in 2015.
- The Top 5 Countries are: 1. US 2. China 3. Japan 4. UK 5. Germany

First-ever 'Pizza ATM' opens in the US

The first-ever 'Pizza ATM' has been installed at a university campus of US by French- based company Paline, which developed the ATM.

- The pizza vending machine on the campus of Xavier University (XU) in Ohio can hold seventy 12-inch pizzas and dispense them fresh and hot in just three minutes.
- Customers can select what kind of pizza they want using the 24-hour machine's touchscreen. The pizza ATM, which opens for public on August 10.

India's ranking as business destination improves: Survey

India's ranking as a business destination has improved as per a recent survey of Transparency International. It now ranks 76th as compared to the 94th position it held earlier.

- Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh stated this in the Lok Sabha.

US Postal Service honors Diwali Festival with a Forever Stamp

The United States Postal Service (USPS) announced to commemorate the joyous Hindu festival of Diwali with the launch of Forever stamp.

- The first-day-of-issue dedication ceremony of the Forever Stamp will take place at the Consulate General of India, New York on 5 October 2016.
- The launch of this stamp is an important recognition for the more than 3 million Indian-Americans who celebrate Diwali every year in US.

- The stamp design is a photograph featuring a traditional diya oil lamp beautifully lit, sitting on a sparkling gold background.

Forbes releases list of The World's Highest-Paid Actresses 2016

Forbes released the list of The World's Highest-Paid Actresses 2016. Indian actress Deepika Padukone is the only Indian star to make the cut.

- Jennifer Lawrence topped the Forbes magazine list for the second straight year with earnings of 46 million US dollars.
- The second position is grabbed by Ghostbusters star Melissa McCarthy (33 Million) followed by Scarlett Johansson (25 million US dollars) and Jennifer Aniston (21 million US dollars) at third and fourth position respectively.

Azim Premji, Shiv Nadar in Forbes list of 100 richest tech tycoons

Wipro Chairman Azim Premji and HCL co-founder Shiv Nadar are the only two billionaires from India in Forbes' list of the world's 100 richest people in technology.

- They are ranking in the top 20 ahead of Google boss Eric Schmidt and Uber CEO Travis Kalanick.
- While the '100 Richest Tech Billionaires In The World 2016' list has been topped by Microsoft founder Bill Gates with an estimated fortune of USD 78 billion.
- Premji ranks 13th on the list with a net worth of \$16 billion and Nadar comes in on the 17th spot with \$11.6 billion of net worth.

6,900 km gas pipelines to connect Bangladesh, Myanmar, India

The government has ambitious plan to lay 6,900 km of gas pipelines linking Bangladesh, Myanmar, most north-eastern states, and West Bengal.

- Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) signed an agreement in April this year to jointly set up a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) terminal plant in Chittagong port city which will help pipe gas to the north-eastern states.

WHO to remove trans genders from its mental disorders list

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is considering changing the way it classifies transgender identity.

- It came following calls from researchers and advocates to remove it from the WHO's list of mental disorders.

- The study was led by the National Institute of Psychiatry in Mexico.

China successfully launches the first satellite for mobile telecommunication

China has successfully launched the first Tiantong satellite for mobile telecommunication at southwestern China's Xichang Satellite Launch Center, with the Long March-3B carrier rocket.

- It is the first satellite of China's home-made satellite mobile telecom system and a key part of the country's space information infrastructure.
- Tiantong-01 was designed by China Academy of Space Technology and its ground service will be operated by China Telecom.

India extends \$ 1 million grant to Zimbabwe

India has provided One million US Dollars grant to Zimbabwe in the wake of El Nino induced drought disaster.

- External Affairs Ministry said, last week, Indian Ambassador to Zimbabwe handed over the assistance to Zimbabwe.
- Accepting the grant, Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet Dr. Misheck Sibanda thanked for the quick response by India to an international appeal made by his country.

India ranked 66th in Global Innovation Index

India climbed 15 spots, from 81 last year, to 66 in the Global Innovation Index (GII) and maintained the top spot in the Central and South Asia regions, according to the rankings released by Cornell University, INSEAD and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

- Switzerland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States of America and Finland have been placed as the top 5 in the index, while Singapore, Ireland, Denmark, Netherlands and Germany follow, including in the top 10 most innovative economies.

China successfully launches world's first quantum satellite

China successfully launched the world's first quantum satellite which boasts of establishing hack-proof communications between space and the ground as it is equipped with security features to prevent wiretapping and intercepts.

- The satellite nicknamed "Micius" was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre.
- Quantum communication boasts of ultra-high security as a quantum photon can neither be separated nor duplicated.

China begins operating bullet trains at 350 kmph speed

China began operating its indigenously designed bullet trains which can clock 350 kmph speed.

- The China Railway Corporation announced that Train No G8041 departed from Dalian for Shenyang, capital of northeast China's Liaoning.

India, Bangladesh to jointly make films on 1971 war, Sheikh Mujibur

India and Bangladesh will jointly produce a documentary on the 1971 War of Independence of Bangladesh.

- India will also facilitate the production of a "mega movie" by Bangladesh to mark the 100th birth anniversary of its Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 2020.

World's Longest, Highest Glass Bridge to Open In China

The world's longest and highest glass bridge opened to visitors in China.

- The bridge concreted with 99 panes of three-layer transparent glasses, hangs between two steep cliffs 300 metres altitude is maintained from the ground.
- The bridge has set 10 world records spanning its design and construction.

China's high speed train maker launches operation in India

China largest high-speed train maker has announced the launch of its first joint venture (JV) plant in India with USD 63.4 million investment to manufacture and repair railway locomotives.

- The joint venture, named CRRC (China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation) Pioneer (India) Electric Co Ltd, is housed in Bawana Industrial District of Haryana between New Delhi and Bombay.
- The Chinese side holds 51% of the share.

India pledges Rs 39.97 million for upgrading school in Nepal

India has pledged financial assistance worth 39.97 million Nepali Rupees for the construction of a new building and a hostel facility at a Sanskrit school in eastern Nepal.

- The project is being implemented through the Indian government's grant assistance under the small development programme.

India ranks 39th in Asia Pacific on fixed broadband

India ranks a low 39th in terms of fixed broadband adoption among Asia-Pacific countries, with just 1.3% of its citizens subscribing to such a service in 2015, according to a study by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

- Hong Kong, New Zealand, Japan, Macao, Australia and Singapore topped the list of 53 countries.

Taxis in Dubai to promote Kerala Tourism

Kerala Tourism has rolled out a promotional campaign in Dubai targeting Arab travellers and showcasing the state's backwaters and waterfalls on taxis plying in the bustling metropolis, with the onset of the outbound tourism season in the Middle East.

- In this regards, as many as 200 Kerala-branded taxis will ferry the message of 'A Faraway Land Four Hours Away' - with eye-catching visuals featuring hill stations, backwaters, waterfalls and also Ayurvedic therapies - through the streets of Dubai, the throbbing heart of the UAE.
- The campaign, inspired by the previous highly successful branding efforts on London taxis and the Mumbai metro, will run till August 15.

Kathakali dance troupe in Egypt for first time

A nine-member Kathakali dance troupe has performed first time in Egypt.

- The Kathakali dance troupe was a part the 14th Summer Festival organized by Bibliotheca Alexandrina.
- And as part of their tour, the Indian dance troupe will perform in different places including Port Said Cultural Palace, Ismailia Cultural Palace.



Union Minister Maneka Gandhi launches POCSO e-box

Women and Child Development Minister (WCD) Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has launched Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses, POCSO e-box, in New Delhi.

- It is initiative of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, for direct online reporting of child sexual abuse.

Bengaluru to host the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2017

- The IT-BT capital of the country, Bengaluru, will host the 2017 Bharatiya Pravasi Divas.

Scheduled to take place on February 7, 8 and 9 of 2017, the Ministry of External Affairs held a meeting with Tourism Minister R V Deshpande for a preliminary round of talks.

- It will see close to 3000 Non-Residential Indians (NRI) and PIO delegates from across the world.

Himachal Health Minister launches ambulance mobile app

Himachal Pradesh Health Minister Kaul Singh Thakur has launched a mobile application called '108 HP' to facilitate efficient access to ambulances for medical emergencies.

- On this occasion, he also flagged off five new ambulances under 108- National Ambulance Service from the historic Ridge Maidan.
- Quoting sources, our correspondent reports that now the number of ambulances under the service has increased to 199.

India's first textile university to come up at Surat

Gujarat government is planning to set up India's first textile university at Surat.

- The main aim of the university is to provide all kind of support including technology, research and development (R&D), skilled manpower etc.
- The university will build on over 250 acre land in Surat and it is expected to get operational in the next one and a half years.

22nd edition of Delhi Book Fair begins

The 22nd edition of the Delhi Book Fair begins at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi and will conclude on September 4.



- This year, the focus of the event will be to highlight initiatives undertaken by the central government for its Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan to inculcate better reading habits among the younger generation.
- The fair is being organised by the Indian Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) in association with the Federation of Indian Publishers.

ISRO tests Scramjet Rocket engine

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully test-fired its Scramjet Rocket Engine.

- It will use oxygen from the atmosphere thereby reducing launch cost, from the spaceport of Sriharikota.

PM launches Mission Bhagiratha and lays Foundation Stone of key development projects in Telangana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Telangana government's ambitious Mission Bhagiratha at Komatibanda Village, Gajwel, in Medak District of Telangana.

- The scheme has been launched by the State Government with an objective to provide safe drinking water to all.

- The Prime Minister also laid the Foundation Stones for important development projects. These included the 1600 MW Thermal Power station of NTPC at Ramagundam, revival of a Fertilizer Plant at Ramagundam, Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences, Warangal, and Manoharabad-Kothapalli Railway line.
- He also dedicated to the nation the 1200 MW Thermal Power Station of Singareni Collieries at Jaipur.

Odisha Government launches special assistance scheme for elderly weavers

The Odisha government launched a special assistance scheme- 'Baristha Bunakar Sahayata Yojana' for elderly weavers to mark the National Handlooms Day.

- The Baristha Bunakar Sahayata Yojana is for all senior weavers who are above the age of 60 years who have been working in this field for the last 20 years. Under this scheme all weavers who are above 60 years they will get a monthly pension of 500 rupees, and those above 80 years would get 700 rupees.

Aug 29 is Sports Day to mark Dhyan Chand's b'day

National Sports Day in India is celebrated on August 29 to mark hockey legend Dhyan Chand's birthday.

- Dhyan Chand, considered as the greatest player in hockey, played a key role in India's three consecutive Olympic triumphs in 1928, 1932 and 1936.
- Notably, the government gives away awards such as Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, Arjuna and Dronacharya Awards on this day.

HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurates IIT in Dharwad

Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar formally inaugurated the institute in Dharwad.

- The inauguration, which was planned last month end, had to be postponed due to the Kalasa Banduri agitation.
- The first batch of IIT-Dharwad began on August 1 with 120 students.

Amazon launches dedicated online Telugu book store

E-commerce portal Amazon.in has announced the launch of a dedicated online Telugu book store with a wide-range of over 10,000 Telugu titles.

- Readers can get Telugu translations of English bestsellers in the store.
- Currently, Amazon caters to Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Gujarati and Bengali languages.

Yes Bank launches its own mobile wallet Yes Pay

Private sector lender Yes bank has launched its own digital wallet Yes Pay for Android and iOS mobile platforms. The wallet application can be accessed through social media accounts of Facebook.

- Apart from mobile recharge and bill payment which are the key offerings for most digital wallets in India, Yes Pay also features functionalities that allow both 'users' and 'non users' to send and receive money through Yes Pay wallet.

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurates Chhattisgarh's first IIT

Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) - Raipur at the Government Engineering College campus.

- The IIT will have its own campus by the time its first batch of students pass out.

Irom Sharmila ends 16-year-long fast

Human rights activist Irom Chanu Sharmila (44) has ended her 16-year-long fast against Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and was granted bail by an Imphal court on Rs.10,000 personal bond.

- However, she will be examined in court again on August 23.
- Irom had earlier announced that she will contest 2017 Manipur Assembly election.

Maharashtra govt launches 'Quit India 2' movement to mark its 75th anniversary

To mark the 75th anniversary of Quit India Movement, Maharashtra Government launched Quit India 2-from Swaraaj to Suraaj initiative.

- The initiative would emphasize on freedom from illiteracy, farmer suicide, wastage of water, addiction among youth and corruption.

PM Modi, Russian Prez Vladimir Putin jointly dedicated Kudankulam Nuclear Plant Unit-I to the nation

The first unit of Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant has jointly dedicated to the nation by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalithaa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin through video conferencing.

- It has been built with Russian expertise following a pact between the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in November 1988.
- Now the first unit of Kudankulam power plant is generating its full capacity of 1000 megawatts of electricity since 2014.

PM Modi flags off 'Run for Rio'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off the Run for Rio event in New Delhi to celebrate the Olympic mood in the country.

- The mass run was announced by the Sports Minister Vijay Goel at a press conference.
- Around 20,000 school children participated in the event, which commenced from Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium in Delhi.

Anandiben offers to resign, asks party to elect new face

Faced with infighting in the party and huge disenchantment on the ground, beleaguered Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel offered to resign and asked the BJP to select a new face.

- Her decision comes at a time when the BJP's long dominance in the State appears to be under strain, just a year before the Assembly elections.

Suresh Prabhu flags off Agartala-Delhi train 'Tripura Sundari Express'

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu has flagged off maiden broad-gauge train service between Agartala and Delhi, 'Tripura Sundari Express'.

- The 'Tripura Sundari Express' will run weekly between Agartala and Anand Vihar in Delhi. The rail link was developed at an expense of 968 crore rupees.
- Apart from this, Prabhu along with Bangladesh Railway Minister Md. Mazibul Hoque also laid the foundation stone for Agartala-Akhaura International Rail Project. This train link would be part of the trans-Asian rail connectivity.

Sugamaya Pustakalaya – Online Library for Persons with print Disabilities

"Sugamaya Pustakalaya" is an online platform that makes accessible content available to print-disabled people.

- The library houses publications across diverse subjects and languages and multiple accessible formats.
- It has been created by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with member organizations of Daisy Forum of India and powered by TCS Access.
- Books are available in Accessible formats for people with visual impairment and other print disabilities. Over 2 lakhs books in diverse languages. Integrating libraries across India and the Globe, including the largest international library, Bookshare.

President Pranab Mukherjee launches Akashvani Maitree channel

India state radio broadcaster's Akashvani Maitree Channel, a special Bengali channel targeted at the Bengali-speaking audience of India, Bangladesh and in other countries, was launched by President Pranab Mukherjee.

- The initiative will provide a platform for blending content both from India and Bangladesh and preserving Bengali culture.
- It will be broadcast from a state-of-the-art brand new high power 1000Kw DRM transmitter.

Union Cabinet clears Surrogacy Bill

The Union Cabinet cleared the draft Surrogacy Bill 2016, aimed at regulating commissioning of surrogacy in the country in a proper manner.

- The bill aims to safeguard rights of surrogate mothers and make parentage of such children legal.
- It will now be introduced in the Parliament.

Maharashtra to have own law for internal security

The newly drafted Maharashtra Protection of Internal Security Act (MPISA) has proposed setting up of Special Security Zones (SSZ).

- In these Zones, movement of arms, explosives and inflow of unaccounted funds will be prohibited.
- Maharashtra is the first State in the country to draft its own internal security act.

Andhra Pradesh signs MoU with Japan to develop food value chain

The Andhra Pradesh government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Japan to develop a food value chain in the state.

- Under the MoU, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) will encourage direct investments by Japanese companies in the fields of agriculture and food-related industry in Andhra Pradesh.
- Along with developing a food value chain, it will also establish food industrial parks and develop cold chains.

Bihar Assembly unanimously passes GST bill

The Bihar state assembly has unanimously passed the crucial Goods and Services Tax Bill (GST Bill).

- With this, it has become the first non-Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled state to ratify the GST, Last week, Assam became the first state to ratify the Bill.
- The GST Bill needs to be ratified by at least 15 state legislatures before the President can notify the GST Council, which will then decide the new tax rate and other issues.

Tamil Nadu Jayalalithaa announces hike in pension to freedom fighters

Tamil Nadu Jayalalithaa has announced Rs 1,000 increase in the freedom fighters pension from Rs 11,000 to make it 12,000.

- The announcement came during her address after unfurling national flag at Fort St. George on the occasion of Independence Day.
- Central government has also hiked the freedom fighters pension by 20%.

Odia becomes Official Language in Odisha

Odia language will be used as the official language in all government offices in Odisha.

- According to the amendment of the Orissa Official Language Act 1954, all government letters, files will be carried in Odia language.
- Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi has prepared a panel to ensure mandatory use of the Odia as the State language in all Government offices across the state.

Uttar Pradesh cabinet approves Metro Rail for Allahabad

The Uttar Pradesh government has approved a Metro Rail project for Allahabad. The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav.

- The state cabinet also approved a scheme to provide free school bags and books to students till class VIII in government schools.

Kerala Govt. allots Rs 10,000 cr for govt schools

Kerala govt has earmarked Rs 10,000 crore for state-run and aided schools for the next 5 years.

- As part of the drive, around 60,000 new hi-tech class rooms will be set up in all govt and aided schools.
- About 1,000 schools will be elevated to international standards.

E-auction portal for power transmission

Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal launched the process of tariff-based reverse auction in the transmission sector and also inaugurated a portal for electronic bidding for transmission projects.

- Union Minister has launched “Tarang” mobile App, “e-Trans” and “DEEP” (Discovery of Efficient Electricity Price) e-bidding web portals developed by Rural Electrification Corp which reverse auction is being introduced in transmission sector on the lines of coal sector in order to facilitate better price discovery in such projects.

Sachin Tendulkar adopts village in Osmanabad under SAGY

Former Cricketer and Rajya Sabha MP Sachin Tendulkar has selected Donja village in Osmanabad district of Maharashtra for development under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna (SAGY).

- Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana is a rural development programme.
- Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana was launched in October 2014.

IIT-Kanpur Adopts Villages Under Namami Gange

IIT-Kanpur has adopted 5 villages under the Namami Gange programme and will use its expertise to restrict the flow of sewage into the river.

- The five villages adopted by the institute are Ramel Nagar, Khoyra Katree, Pratapur, Hari Hindpur, and Katri Ladhva Khera.
- Under the initiative, IIT-Kanpur will ensure sewage water is not disposed of in the river, and also keep a check on quality of drinking water and sanitation.

Shashi Shekhar Committee on World Culture Festival of AOL submitted report to NGT

The Shashi Shekhar Committee was in news in the third week of August 2016 as the NGT directed Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Art of Living (AOL) to submit its response within three weeks on the inspection report.

- The report of the expert committee dealt with the damage caused to the Yamuna flood plains due to the World Culture Festival.
- The festival was organised by the AOL in March 2016 along the River Yamuna in New Delhi.
- The inspection report of the committee concluded that the event has caused damage to the riverbed.

KVIC approves hike in wages of Khadi Artisans

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has approved a wage hike along with a hike in Market Development Assistance.

- The KVIC has informed that spinners will now earn 5.50 rupees instead of 4 rupees per hank with an additional 10 percent Market Development Assistance.

Maneka Gandhi Inaugurate Animal Birth Control Centre in Dehradun

Union Women and Child Development (WCD) Minister Maneka Gandhi inaugurated the state's first animal birth control centre (ABC) at Kedarpuram.

- The centre will take up birth control measures with stray dogs the population of which has been rising in the city and the state.
- The centres will be set up in Nainital and Mussoorie and other five municipal corporations in Haridwar, Haldwani, Kashipur, Haldwani and Roorkee.
- The Department of Urban Development has sanctioned Rs 2 crore to set up the centres.

PM Modi's monogrammed suit enters Guinness Records as 'most expensive suit sold'

The monogrammed suit worn by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his meeting with American President Barack Obama last year, which created huge controversy, entered Guinness Book of World Records as 'the most expensive suit sold'.

- The suit was sold at an auction for Rs 4.31 crore.

- Lalji Patel, a Diamond merchant from Surat bid highest to buy this suit.

Two-day meeting of BRICS women Parliamentarian's forum held in Jaipur

The two-day meeting of the BRICS Women's Parliamentarian Forum was held in Jaipur in which 42 delegates from member countries were participated.

- Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan inaugurated the meeting which had different plenary sessions.
- A total of 42 delegates attended the meeting.

Kerala Cabinet approves new debt relief scheme

Kerala government has approved a new debt relief scheme for low income and poor people who face the threat of revenue recovery proceedings after they fail to repay loans taken from various financial institutions under the government.

- The scheme, expected to cause an additional burden of Rs 40 crore to the exchequer, would benefit more than 10,000 persons.

Uma Bharti launches Rs 560 cr projects under Namami Gange

Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Sushri Uma Bharti launched various Projects on the Bank of Ganga worth Rs. 560 crore under Namami Gange programme at Ganga Barrage in Kanpur.

The Projects include:

- Interception and diversion plan of Sisamau drain—worth Rs. 63 crore.
- Networking schemes at Bithoor—Worth Rs. 397 crore
- River front development scheme at Bithoor—worth Rs. 100 crore.
- 14 Ghats and five crematoria will be constructed at Bithoor.

Central body approves Rs 400 crore for Ganga rejuvenation projects

A high-level panel of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) has approved various projects worth approximately Rs 400 crore for development of ghats (river fronts) and crematoria at different places along the river Ganga from Uttarakhand to West Bengal under the Centre's ambitious Namami Gange programme.

- The projects, approved by the empowered steering committee of the NGRBA, include development of ghats and crematoria in the stretch from Rudraprayag to Guptkashi in Uttarakhand, Kanpur, Allahabad, Bithoor and Bijnor (on Ramganga) in Uttar Pradesh, Kahalgaon in Bihar, Sahibganj and Rajmahal in Jharkhand and Bhatpara and Naihati in West Bengal.

India to host international summit on tobacco-control

India is going to host a crucial global summit in November to eliminate the illicit trade of tobacco products.

- The summit is scheduled for November 7-12 at the Indian Exposition Mart in Noida. In this summit delegates from 180 countries will take part.
- This is the 7th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP7) to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO-FCTC).

Naqvi launches websites for Ministry of Minority Affairs

The Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs (Independent Charge) & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi launched new Hindi website and updated and revamped English website of the Minority Affairs Ministry.

- The new improved and revamped website <http://www.minorityaffairs.gov.in> is very user-friendly and provides easy navigation.

South India's first Children Court was inaugurated in Hyderabad

After Goa and Delhi, Telangana has become the third state to inaugurate south India's first Children's Court was inaugurated in Hyderabad.

- This court is a child-friendly court and sixth in the country with features like separate waiting rooms for children and a video camera trial for the accused, mandated under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act-2012.

IITs blacklist 30 companies for not honouring job offers

In a first ever major overhaul, IITs across the country have blacklisted 30 companies, including 28 start-ups, for one year with immediate effect which meant they can't take part in forthcoming campus placements season.

- These companies are banned for a year and hence they can't take part in forthcoming campus placements.

92 paisa insurance premium for train traveller from August 31

A travel insurance cover of upto Rs 10 lakh can be availed while a booking train ticket online by paying less than one rupee from August 31.

- The new facility will be available to all passengers excluding those travelling on suburban trains while booking online irrespective of the class. It will be started on a trial basis.

- The cover will not be applicable for children upto 5 years of age and foreign citizens. It will be for passengers holding tickets such as confirmed, RAC and wait-listed ones, said the official.
- The scheme offers travellers/nominees/legal heirs a compensation of Rs 10 lakh in the event of death or total disability, Rs 7.5 lakh for partial disability, upto Rs 2 lakh for hospitalisation expenses and Rs 10,000 for transportation of mortal remains from the place of a train accident

Odisha government to recruit transgenders as jail warders

The Odisha government has decided to recruit members of transgender community persons as warders in jails of the State as per the directive of the Supreme Court.

- The home department has issued instructions to the Odisha Subordinate Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) to include the gender category.
- This is for the first time the state government will mention the third gender as a separate category in any of the recruitment process.
- As per the direction of the Directorate of Prison, the physical standards stipulated for transgender who will apply for the post of jail warders will be same as prescribed for women candidates.

Resolution for the renaming of Madras High Court passed

The Tamil Nadu Assembly has passed an unanimous resolution that the Madras High Court be renamed as Tamil Nadu High Court and not as High Court of Chennai as proposed by the Centre.

- The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Law and Justice, Ravi Shanker Prasad with an aim to modify the names of the High Court's (HCs) of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.
- The High Courts of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras will be known as the High Courts of Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai respectively.

Rajya Sabha passes historic GST Constitution Bill

Marking an end to the long and tumultuous debate on GST, the Rajya Sabha today approved the crucial 122nd Constitutional amendment to turn the bill into law. The Lok Sabha had already passed the key bill.

- The bill will now go back to the Lower House to incorporate the amendments approved by the Rajya Sabha. The bill will also have to be approved by 50 per cent of all the state assemblies.
- The Constitution (122nd Amendment) Bill, 2014 was approved by the Rajya Sabha with 203 votes in favour and none against.

WEF India Economic Summit in Delhi on October 6-7

World Economic Forum (WEF), will host its annual India Economic Summit on October 6-7 in New Delhi which would be attended by over 500 business and political leaders including top policymakers and CEOs.

- This year's meet will be convened under the theme, 'Fostering an Inclusive India through Digital Transformation'.

West Bengal Cabinet cleared proposal to rename the state as “Bengal”

West Bengal Cabinet cleared a proposal to rename the state as “Bengal” in English and “Bango” or “Bangla” in Bengali.

- Later, it will be sent to the Union Government for approval by the Parliament as changing of the name will require its approval.
- The other reason for changing the name of the state is that whenever there is any meeting of all states, West Bengal comes at the bottom of the list alphabetically.

Rajasthan becomes first state to approve sewage & waste water policy

Rajasthan has become the first state in the country to approve sewage and wastewater policy. It has been approved by Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje in Jaipur.

- Under this policy, all district headquarters, heritage cities, and cities in the state which have more than one lakh population will be included.
- Waste water treated under it will be used in irrigation and agricultural work.
- It will be compulsory for every house in the state to connect with sewage system in those cities which have 100% sewage system in next five years.

Six New IITS Get Parliament Nod

The Parliament has approved the establishment of six new IITs across the country by passing the Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2016 in the Rajya Sabha.

- These IITs will be started in Palakkad (Kerala), Goa, Dharwad (Karnataka), Bhilai (Chhattisgarh), Jammu, and Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh).

BHEL commissions 500 Mw Marwa Thermal Power station in Chhattisgarh

State-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has commissioned the second 500 Mw (megawatt) thermal unit at Marwa Thermal Power Station in Janjgir-Champa district of Chhattisgarh.

- The first unit of Marwa TPS was also commissioned earlier by BHEL. Marwa TPS has been set up by Chhattisgarh State Power Generation Company (CSPGCL).

LS Speaker inaugurates DRDO exhibition in Parliament premises

Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan has inaugurated the three-day Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) exhibition in the Parliament premises in New Delhi.

- The three-day long exhibition will showcase numerous state-of-the-art defence technologies, products, and systems developed by various DRDO laboratories indigenously.
- This would include the BrahMos missile, the 'Arjun' main battle tank, Airborne Early Warning and Control System, Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher 'Pinaka' Various type of Radars and other products. The DRDO will also organise a virtual reality display of Arjun Main Battle Tank, BrahMos Missile, AEW&C & LCA-Tejas.

Modi Launches PMO App at MyGov Anniversary Event

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the new PMO app at a function organised by MyGov in New Delhi. The app would correspond to the website of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

- The app is developed by a team of young engineering students from Delhi who has won the contest to develop the app.
- The new app will allow mobile users to connect with the website of the Prime Minister's Office.

2nd National Handloom day has celebrated

The second National Handloom Day has been celebrated all over the country, on August 7. As the first National Handloom Day was celebrated last year and Hon'ble Prime Minister was the Chief Guest in the main event held in Chennai on 7th August, 2015.

- But this time, the main function was held in Varanasi in which Sant Kabir Awards and National Handloom Awards has been presented by the Union Textiles Minister Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani who was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley inaugurated India's International Footwear Fair

A three day long India's International Footwear Fair (IIFF) has been launched by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.

- This year around 263 companies from India and abroad are participating in the event.

Naidu launches Swachh Survekshan for 500 cities

Union Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu has launched Swachh Survekshan-2017 for 500 cities in the country with an idea to make competitive environment make the cities clean in New Delhi.

- This is the second round of survey to cover 500 cities and towns, including those with a population of one lakh and above, besides capital towns with less than one lakh population and towns known for heritage, tourism, and hilly locations.

Javadekar inaugurated transit campus of IIT in Jammu

Union Minister for Human Resource and Development Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated the transit campus of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Jammu.

- Even a total of 90 students have been enrolled at IIT Jammu for the academic session.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) had also been signed between the Department of Higher Education, Jammu and Kashmir and the Department of Higher Education in the HRD Ministry, on May 1, 2016, in this regard.

Maneka Gandhi kicks off a campaign to mark 11 August as Daughters' Day

The Minister of Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi has launched a social media campaign to mark the Daughters Day to be celebrated on 11th August 2016 by tweeting a picture with her daughter-in-law and grand-daughter.

- The entire coming week will be celebrated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development as Daughters Week, as part of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme to check female foeticide, improve sex ratio and educate girls across the country.
- Through social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter etc, users from across the country will post photographs online with their Daughters, Daughters-in-law and Granddaughters using the hashtag #BBBPDaughtersWeek.
- This opportunity is being used by the Ministry to engage citizens to celebrate the young women and girls in their lives and spread the message of valuing the girl child.

PM Narendra Modi launches Yaad Karo Kurbani celebrations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched Yaad Karo Kurbani (remember the sacrifices) celebrations at the birthplace of freedom fighter Chandra Shekhar Azad at Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh.

- The Yaad Karo Kurbani is a 15-day programme aimed to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Quit India Movement (QIM) and 70 years of Independence.
- Later he also flagged off the Tiranga Yatra to mark the launch of the 70th Freedom Year celebrations with a theme song '70 Saal Azadi Yaad Karo Kurbani' which has been composed by Dr. Ghazal Srinivas.

Jaitley launches data bank portal of MSMEs

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has launched a data bank Portal of micro, small and medium enterprises, MSME in New Delhi. The portal aims to gather information about micro, small and medium enterprises.

- An Online Finance Facilitation Web Portal was also launched to provide collective funding options for MSMEs. Secretary in the MSME Ministry K K Jalan said.

- Six Online Finance Facilitation Centres in Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Guwahati, Lucknow, Peenya near Bengaluru and Delhi have been opened and six more will be unveiled in the near future.

CBDT constitutes committee to review media policy

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has constituted a new committee to "review" the existing media policy for communicating the activities of the board and the income tax department to the public.

- The 9 member committee will be headed by Mr. Gopal Mukherjee.
- The committee will make a guideline for the departmental contact with media and Journalists.

'Bhartat Parv' Inaugurated At India Gate Lawns by Shri Manohar Parikkar

Manohar Parikkar, Defence Minister inaugurated the week long "Bharat Parv" organized by the Government of India at the Rajpath Lawns, India Gate, New Delhi.

- Inaugural function was held in the presence of Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independent charge) for Tourism & Culture.
- The Event is open to the public and entry is free. However, identity proof is to be carried for entry.

President approves six new IITs across the country and one NIT in AP

President Pranab Mukherjee has given his nod to set up six new Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in places like Jammu, Tirupati, Palakkad (Kerala), Goa, Dharward (Karnataka) and Bhilai (Chhattisgarh) and also passed a law regarding the same.

- The law has also brought the Indian School of Mines (ISM), Dhanbad under its ambit. The ISM will now be called Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad, the legislation said. All these institutions will be institutions of national importance, as per the Act.
- The President has also given his assent to a law for the establishment of a National Institute of Technology (NIT) in Andhra Pradesh.

Badal inaugurates first 'Sewa Kendra' in Punjab

Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal has inaugurated city's first Sewa Kendra at Ladhewali where people will be able to avail services under one roof.

- While Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal has inaugurated Sewa Kendras at Mansa, Pathankot, Bholath and Amargarh.
- A total of 2,147 Sewa Kendras has been constructed at a cost of Rs 500 crore.

Assam becomes the first state to ratify GST

Assam has become the first state to ratify the Goods and Services Tax Constitutional Amendment Bill.

- The Parliament had earlier cleared the bill to usher in a uniform tax regime throughout the country, and it now awaits the ratification of at least 15 states to make it a law.
- The Centre seeks to roll-out the GST by April 1, 2017.

Smart Ganga City programme launched in 10 cities

Union Ministers M Venkaiah Naidu and Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti has jointly launched 'Smart Ganga City' programme in 10 cities located through video conferencing.

- Haridwar, Rishikesh, Mathura, Varanasi, Kanpur, Allahabad, Lucknow, Patna, Sahibganj and Barrackpore are the cities/town where the programme will be implemented in the first phase.
- These cities has been chosen by the National Mission for Clean Ganga where the programme will be established in the first phase for infrastructure development for sewage treatment on hybrid annuity mode on public private partnership basis.

Railway Budget set to be merged with Union Budget from next fiscal

Ending a 92-year-old tradition which started during the colonial era, Railway Budget will be merged with the General Budget from 2017-18 onwards.

- If the merger happens, the Railways will get rid of the annual dividend that it has to pay for gross budgetary support from the government.
- According to a report, the finance ministry has given a go-ahead signal to the proposal by the Railways ministry and has set up a five-member committee in this regard.

India's first BIO-CNG plant inaugurated in Pune

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

- It was jointly inaugurated by Union Minister of surface Transport Nitin Gadkari and Union Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar.

Banking & Economy

Karnataka Bank launches UPI app KBL-SMARTz

Mangaluru based Karnataka Bank has come up with a mobile application named KBL-SMARTz built on the unified payments interface (UPI) platform of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).

The App was launched by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer P Jayarama Bhat, Karnataka Bank.

World Bank sanctions Rs 980 cr for Brahmaputra dredging

The World Bank has announced a funding of Rs 980 crore for Brahmaputra dredging.

- It is a step to dredge the Brahmaputra as an initiative to develop waterways to Bangladesh and to other South East Asian countries which is give fillip to trade and industry in the Area.

IRCTC signs MoU with Manipur govt to provide hospitality & tourism services

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) and the Manipur government have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which seeks to provide improved hospitality and tourism services to their customers by making 'joint use of their capabilities and facilities'.

- The MoU entails upon both the parties to identify areas of cooperation and draw up detailed plans for the development of joint tourism products and opening and managing various catering and hospitality outlets, budget hotels and handicrafts shops at railway as well as non-railway locations.

Apple buys US machine learning startup Turi

Apple has confirmed that it has bought US machine learning startup Turi as Silicon Valley giants focus on a future rich with artificial intelligence.

- Turi specialises in enabling developers to imbue software applications with artificial intelligence.
- The move will help Apple to step up its artificial intelligence efforts to compete against rival services from Amazon, Google, and Microsoft.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates the first phase of SAUNI yojana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the first phase of the 4 phases Saurashtra Narmada Avataram Irrigation yojana (SAUNI) at Sanodara of Jamnagar district of Gujarat.

- Under the project, nearly 10 dams and reservoirs of Rajkot, Jamnagar and Morbi will be filled up with the water of Narmada river.
- First Phase of the project has been developed at a cost of Rs. 1,562 crore with 58 km of pipeline.

India's first military heritage website launched

India's first military heritage website "coloursofglory.org" has launched by Glory Foundation.

- The foundation will conduct various awareness programs throughout major cities in the Country to educate the people about the Nation's military history and heritage.

Job portal Monster sold for USD 429 million

Amsterdam-based human resource consulting firm Randstad Holdings has announced that it would acquire job portal Monster Worldwide for USD 429 million in cash.

- Post acquisition, Monster will keep its brand name and will operate as a separate entity.
- Randstad Holdings expects to complete the deal in the fourth quarter of this financial year.

Airtel and Vodafone unveils e-KYC solution to use Aadhar number for SIM activation

Bharti Airtel and Vodafone has started rolling out Aadhaar based e-KYC solution following the notification by the Department of Telecom, Government of India.

- Telecom operator Vodafone will roll out e-KYC facility across 4,500 stores in India that will quickly activate SIMs of its customers with an Aadhaar number.

TCS ranks among top 100 US brands: Survey

Indian IT major Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been ranked 58th among the top 500 brands in the US in a survey by a leading brand valuation firm.

- It was ranked 57th last year and downgraded by a place this year.
- With 78.3 points, it has earned an AA+ rating.

Madhukar Gupta Committee on border protection submits report to MHA

The Madhukar Gupta (former Home Secretary) Committee on border protection has submitted its report to the Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

- The Committee has been appointed in April 2016 for strengthening border protection and addressing the issue of gaps and vulnerability in border fencing along Indo-Pakistan Border.

India, Myanmar ink four pacts to boost bilateral cooperation

India and Myanmar have signed four agreements to enhance cooperation and bilateral relations between the two countries.

- The construction of 69 Bridges.
- In the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine.
- In the Field of Renewable Energy.
- The construction and up gradation of the Kalewa -Yagyi Road Section.

NHAI Signs MOU with IIT- Kharagpur for Research Project

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with IIT-Kharagpur for the research project on Laboratory and Field investigations on Paneled Cement Concrete Pavements for Highways.

- The duration of the research project is 3 years and NHAI have paid Rs. 1.25 crore for the project, excluding the cost of construction of trial pavement section on NH.

SEBI's first phase of new enterprise portal goes live

Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has initiated the first phase of its new enterprise portal to facilitate accurate and timely circulation of information to internal and external stakeholders.

- The portal, developed by IT firm Tech Mahindra, provides an e-platform to registered and prospective intermediaries to interact in a secure, transparent, and paperless manner with SEBI.

Oracle India Joins SBI To Foster Digital Skills Initiative

Global software major, Oracle India has announced a corporate citizenship collaboration with State Bank of India (SBI) and launched the 'D-Change' programme.

- It will support education and learning, women's empowerment and rural skills development in the country.
- The initiative will merge SBI's financial expertise and expansive reach with Oracle's technology leadership to help local communities drive substantial change and develop a skilled economy.

Hindustan Copper Limited inaugurated nickel production facility in Ghatsila

Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) inaugurated the Nickel, Copper and Acid Recovery Plant of Hindustan Copper Limited at Indian Copper Complex, Ghatsila in Jharkhand.

- This is the first facility in India to produce Nickel metal of LME grade from primary resource.
- This project will utilize an eco-friendly technology and will check pollution by eliminating the use of lead.
- It will have reduced liquid effluent, generate 75 percent less solid waste, utilize less energy, provide safe working environment and utilize and conserve natural resources.

Govt slaps Rs 2,500 crore penalty on Reliance Industries

Govt has slapped a penalty of USD 380 million on Reliance Industries and its partners for producing less than targeted natural gas from KG-D6 fields.

- The total penalty for missing the target in 5 fiscal years beginning April 1, 2010, now stands at USD 2.76 billion.

RBI imposes penalty on four cooperative banks

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed penalties on four cooperative banks for violation of various norms.

- Cooperative banks are: Cooperative City Bank, Guwahati – Rs 5 lakh, Indapur Urban Cooperative Bank, Indapur – Rs 2 lakh, Shri Dadasaheb Gajmal Cooperative Bank, Pachora – Rs 1 lakh and Model Cooperative Urban Bank, Hyderabad – Rs 1 lakh.

Unilever acquires Blueair

Unilever, the parent company of Hindustan Unilever (HUL), has acquired Swedish firm Blueair, a leading player in mobile air purification technology, for an undisclosed sum.

- With this deal, Unilever is making its foray in air purification, a move that will complement its existing water purification business.
- Unilever is an Anglo-Dutch multinational consumer goods company co-headquartered in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and London, United Kingdom.

SBI approves merger with associates

The board of country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) has approved share swap ratio to merge 5 associate banks and Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) with itself.

- In the swap ratio an acquiring company will offer its own shares in exchange for the target company's shares during a merger or acquisition.
- As per the approved merger ratios for each of the banks, the scheme provides for allotment of:
- SBI will give 28 of its shares for every 10 shares held of State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur.
- It will give 22 of its shares for every 10 shares held of State Bank of Mysore. The lender will give 22 of its own shares for every 10 shares held of State Bank of Travancore.

Doha Bank opens first branch in Kerala

Doha Bank QSC, one of the prominent banks in Qatar, is formally inaugurating its first branch in Kochi, Kerala.

- The branch offers all banking products to corporate and retail customers. It will be formally inaugurated by the State Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Cipla, Godrej recognized in Fortune 'Change the World' list

India's pharmaceutical giant Cipla Ltd and consumer goods conglomerate Godrej have been recognized by Fortune magazine in a list of global firms changing the world for the good and having a positive social impact through their activities.

- Cipla is ranked 46th in the list of 50 followed by Godrej on the 48th spot, the only Indian companies in the list.
- The list has been topped by British pharma giant GlaxoSmithKline and includes Swiss food products major Nestlé (5), India-born Ajay Banga-led Mastercard (7).

Railways to partner with Google for showcasing its heritage

Google has agreed to partner with Railways to digitise its heritage assets and help create a digital repository for universal online access free of cost.

- Indian Railway has a huge list of heritage assets including bridges, steam locos, buildings, artefacts and museums which can be showcased for global audience.

Uber China Merges with Didi Chuxing

China's Didi Chuxing and Uber have now both confirmed that Didi has agreed to buy Uber's separate business in China.

- The deal, according to a person familiar with the matter, that would value the combined company at \$35 billion.
- Didi Chuxing is China's leading taxi company and the service provider in the market with more than 85 percent stake. After the merger, Uber's stake will be 5.89 per cent in Didi Chuxing.
- Uber CEO Travis Kalanick and the founder of Didi companies Cheng Wei will be the board members. Chuxing will invest a billion dollars (about Rs 6,700 crore) in Uber out of China.28.

Freecharge inks partnership with PayUbiz

India's digital payments platform Freecharge has partnered with the leading payment gateway solution provider, PayUbiz, to further strengthen its merchant base and help consumers move from cash to digital payments.

- This integration allows Freecharge to tap PayUbiz's more than 10, 000 online merchants.
- The partnership draws Freecharge closer its vision of creating an ecosystem where organized and unorganized merchant networks can accept electronic payments through one secure platform.

Bank of Baroda ties up with start-up Fisdom

India's leading public sector bank, Bank of Baroda has tied up with a financial technology start-up Fisdom for personal wealth management services.

- Fisdome app helps users make financial investments in an easy and paperless manner by blending cutting-edge technology with personalised financial advice. It helps people manage their money with the help of a robo-advisor.
- Besides, the bank has also entered into a pact with six other fintech companies, proficient in different areas.

RBI launches new website 'Sachet' to curb Illegal Collection of Deposits

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan has launched 'Sachet- www.sachet.rbi.org.in', a web portal to curb illegal collection of deposits.

- Sachet is an SLCC (State Level Coordination Committees) website from which the members of the public would be able to obtain information regarding entities that are allowed to accept deposits, lodge complaints and also share information regarding illegal acceptance of deposits by unscrupulous entities.
- The website would also help enhance coordination among regulators and State Government agencies and thus be useful in curbing instances of unauthorised acceptance of deposits by unscrupulous entities.

RBI constitutes a Committee on Household Finance

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a committee to look at the various facets of household finance in India and to benchmark India's position vis-à-vis both the peer countries and advanced countries.

- The Committee will be chaired by Dr. Tarun Ramadorai, Professor of Financial Economics, University of Oxford and will have representation from financial sector regulators, namely, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) apart from Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The Committee is expected to submit its report by end-July 2017.

RBI imposes penalty on two cooperative banks of Chhattisgarh

Reserve Bank of India has imposed the penalty on two cooperative banks of Chhattisgarh under the Banking Regulation Act.

- The Zila Sahakari Kendriya Bank Maryadit, Raipur, and Raipur Urban Mercantile Cooperative Bank Limited are the two on which RBI imposed the penalty of five lakh rupees each.

Corporation Bank launches group credit life insurance scheme

Mangalore-based mid-sized public sector bank, Corporation Bank has launched 'group credit life insurance scheme' of LIC of India in Mangaluru.

- It has been launched by the Jai Kumar Garg, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Corporation Bank.
- The scheme has been made available initially at all the branches of Mangaluru zone. It will later be extended to all the branches of the bank.
- The scheme is available to customers in the age group of 18-60 years who have taken term loan from the bank.

Vinod Rai steps down from IDFC Bank's board

Former Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India Vinod Rai has stepped down from private sector lender IDFC Bank's board.

- However, he will continue to be the non-executive independent chairman of IDFC Ltd.
- He is also the current chairman of UN Panel of External Auditors and Honorary Advisor to the Railways as well as a member of the Railway Kaya Kalp Council.

Union Government fixes an inflation target of 4 percent for five years

The Union Government has set an inflation target of 4 % for the next five years for the next five years under the monetary policy framework agreement with the Reserve Bank.

- In this regard, Union Government will soon set-up Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to adhere to the target till March 31, 2021.

Railways, Chhattisgarh govt. ink agreement for the formation of JV

The Ministry of Railways has signed an agreement with the Chhattisgarh government for the formation of a joint venture (JV) company for focused resource mobilisation, implementation and monitoring of critical rail projects.

- Mr. S. C. Jain, Executive Director (Works) signed the agreement on behalf of the Railways Ministry while Mr. Subodh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Commerce & Industry, Chhattisgarh and Secretary to Chief Minister signed for the State.
- The JV company will have 51% share from Government of Chhattisgarh and 49% from Ministry of Railways and will work in identifying projects which may be taken up in Chhattisgarh.

IBM and Apple open first global development hub in India

IBM in partnership with Apple has launched a new global development hub at Manyata Tech Park, Bengaluru.

- The hub mainly aims to help the clients in India complete digital mobility process platform.
- IBM is also planning to launch satellite centres in many other countries including China, Romania, and Brazil.

Telangana signs MoU with ISRO for water resources info system

Telangana Irrigation Department has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indian Space Research Organisation for setting up a Telangana Water Resources Information System (TWRIS) on the 'Bhuvan' web portal.

- The MoU was inked in the presence of Irrigation Minister T Harish Rao and ISRO chairman A S Kiran Kumar at the Hyderabad-headquartered National Remote Sensing Centre of ISRO.
- The main aim is to capture every field-level irrigation network including dams/barrages, anicuts, main and field channels, etc. and mark every irrigation structure on satellite visualisation tool Bhuvan (similar to Google Earth).

IRCTC signs MoU with DRDO to get ready-to-eat food straight out of packet

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has signed a MoU with Defence Food Research Laboratory of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for Transfer of Technology of Retort Pouch Processed Foods so that ready-to-eat food can be warmed and eaten straight out of the packet.

- DRDO also grants a non-exclusive license to utilize the Technology by IRCTC for manufacture in India for a period of 10 years.

Intel acquires AI startup run by Indian-origin entrepreneur

Tech giant Intel recently acquired California-based deep learning startup Nervana Systems, run by an Indian-origin entrepreneur, allowing the the chip maker to foray into the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- The US-based chip giant isn't actually saying how much it is paying, but a source with knowledge of the deal said it is valued at around \$408 million, *Recode*, a technology news website that focusses on the business of Silicon Valley reported.

RBI transfers Rs 65,876 crore surplus to government

The Reserve Bank will transfer to the central government its surplus profit of Rs 65,876 crore which is marginally lower than the amount given last year.

- The approval to transfer the surplus was taken at the 559th meeting of the Central Board of the RBI, chaired by Governor Raghuram Rajan.
- The surplus is generated through RBI's investment activities, primarily in other sovereign bonds like that of the US T-bills, which is its single largest investment source.

NABARD sanctions Rs 26.06 crore to Punjab

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rs 26.06 crore to the Punjab government.

- The fund has been sanctioned for tackling waterlogging by constructing lift schemes in low-lying areas, village ponds, and other allied works.
- The project will reclaim 5,913 hectares of land in 87 villages of Muktsar and Fazilka districts.

Flipkart now on Kotak Mahindra Bank's mobile banking app

The private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank (KMB) has announced the availability of Flipkart's mobile site in its mobile banking app to give the customer a secure in-app shopping environment.

- KMB has been expanding the scope of offerings on its mobile banking app, and this move further strengthens its mStore which already allows booking of air tickets, hotels, and bus tickets.
- With the new feature, customers can now shop smoothly and even check out faster as billing and delivery details which are already available with the bank will not be needed to be entered again.

Syndicate Bank launches Project Ananya aimed at digital banking

India's major commercial banks, Syndicate Bank has launched a program called "Project Ananya" that focuses on improved customer service and offering the latest in digital banking services.

- Project Ananya over the next 2 years will upgrade the products, services and digital channels of the Bank to cater to the fast changing customer needs including those of the younger generation, who are more tech-savvy and prefer to do banking online.
- The bank plans to transform 10 % of its branches to the new format in the next 6-12 months.

SBI, Korea Development Bank join hands for business opportunities

The Country's largest public sector lender State bank of India and Korea Development Bank have signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance business synergies.

- The agreement was signed between SBI chairman Arundhati Bhattacharya, and chairman and CEO of Korea Development Bank (KDB), Lee Dong-Geol.
- Through this MoU, both SBI and KDB will gain direct access to both markets of operation, and will be able to use the vast combined network to expand their businesses abroad.
- In this regard, both the banks will also set up a Korea desk in India.

South Indian Bank, SBI Card to launch co-branded credit card

Kochi Based leading private sector Lender South Indian Bank, and SBI Card, one of India's leading Credit Card issuers, announced the launch of co-branded credit cards for the customers of South Indian Bank.

- Through this alliance South Indian Bank and SBI Card will launch two variants of credit card on VISA platform, namely South Indian Bank Platinum SBI Card and South Indian Bank SimplySAVE SBI Card.

UBI launches USSD based mobile app for basic banking needs with NPCI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) ties up with Union Bank of India to launch an USSD based *99# mobile application for their customers.

- This application can be downloaded in an android smartphone from the Google Play Store by the bank customers and can be used even without any internet connection as it does not require any data.

NPS: PFRDA lowers minimum contribution to Rs 1,000 per year

Insurance regulator PFRDA has substantially lowered the minimum annual contribution to Rs 1,000 to keep the account active in order to encourage more people to join the National Pension System.

- Priorly instead of 1000, a subscriber had to contribute at least Rs 6,000 in a financial year to keep the Tier-1 account running.
- TIER – I is the non-withdraw able permanent retirement account into which the accumulations are deposited and invested as per the option of the subscriber.
- Tier-II is a savings account; the regulator has decided to waive the requirement of annual minimum contribution of Rs 250 and minimum balance of Rs 2,000 at the end of a fiscal year.

IRDAI Slaps Rs 35 Lakh Fine on Bharti AXA General Insurance

Insurance watchdog, IRDAI has imposed Rs 35 lakh fine on Bharti AXA General Insurance Co Ltd for violation of various norms including outsourcing activities and corporate governance guidelines.

- The fine is based on violation related with an inspection finding during December 2012 to March 2013.

Appointments

P Kumaran appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar

Shri P Kumaran Indian Foreign Service, presently Joint secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the State of Qatar.

- He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

Sharmila Tagore appointed as a new member of the BCCC

Film actress Sharmila Tagore, theatre activist Arundhati Nag and film studies academician Ira Bhaskar have been appointed new members of Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC).

- The Board of Directors of Indian Broadcasting Federation (IBF) headed by Star India chairman Uday Shankar has approved these appointments for a term of three years in the eminent persons.

Former RBI Deputy Governor Anand Sinha joins IDFC Bank board

IDFC Bank has appointed former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor Anand Sinha to the bank's board.

- His appointment comes into effect from August 1.
- This comes after Vinod Rai, the former comptroller and auditor general (CAG) of India, who served as a nominee director representing IDFC Limited on the board of IDFC Bank, stepped down after serving on the board for a year.

P D Gupta appointed VC of Homi Bhabha National Institute

Eminent scientist P D Gupta was appointed as Vice Chancellor of Mumbai-based Homi Bhabha National Institute (HBNI).

- The HBNI is an aided institution of the Department of Atomic Energy and is deemed to be university under the UGC Act.



2 Indian-American women named White House fellows

Two Indian-American women have been selected for the prestigious White House Fellow programme that offers first hand experience of working at the highest levels of the US federal government.

- Astrophysicist Anjali Tripathi from California and physician Tina R Shah from Chicago are among the 16 White House Fellows appointed from across the nation for the year 2016-17.

Mukesh Mehta appointed as President of India Bullion and Jewellers Association

Mukesh Mehta was on 28 August 2016 appointed as the President of India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA). He is also a Director on the Board of IBJA.

- Mehta succeeds Mohit Kamboj, who resigned in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of IBJA on 24 August 2016.

SN Subrahmanyam appointed as next Larsen & Toubro chief

Indian multi-national conglomerate Larsen & Toubro's group named S N Subrahmanyam as the Managing director (MD) and chief executive officer (CEO) of India's largest infrastructure engineering company from October first.

- The appointment of Subrahmanyan had then come with the then chief executive and managing director KV Venkataramanan retiring.

Amit Chandra inducted as non-executive director of Tata Sons

Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group of companies, has appointed private equity firm Bain Capital's Managing Director Amit Chandra as non-executive director.

- The appointments, increases the total number of the company's board members to nine.

Dinesh Kumar Khara appointed Managing Director of State Bank of India

Dinesh Kumar Khara was appointed Managing Director (MD) of State Bank of India (SBI).

- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Khara for a period of three years, extendable by two years after review of his performance.
- At present, Khara is working as MD and Chief Executive Officer of SBI Funds Management Pvt Ltd.
- On the other hand, Ashok Kumar Garg and Raj Kamal Verma have been appointed as Executive Director (ED) of Bank of Baroda and Union Bank of India respectively.
- Gopal Murli Bhagat and Himanshu Joshi have been appointed as ED of Corporation Bank and Oriental Bank of Commerce respectively.

Mr. K M Hanumantharayappa New Chairman of Central Silk Board assumes charge

K M Hanumantharayappa has assumed charge as new Chairman of Central Silk Board, Union Ministry of Textiles, for a period of three years.

- He is the 25th Chairman of the Central Silk Board.
- He is a sericulturist and a weaver and succeeds N S Bissegowda.

Pawan Munjal reappointed as the CMD & CEO of Hero MotoCorp

Two-wheeler market leader Hero MotoCorp has reappointed Pawan Munjal as its chairman, managing director, and chief executive for a period of five years. His current tenure comes to an end on September 30 this year.

- While the company also elevated its head of operations and supply chain Vikram Kasbekar as a director on the company's board.
- Apart from Mr. Munjal and Kasbekar, the company has also appointed Neerja Sharma as the Company Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer.

Government to set up committee to review e-commerce rules

The government has decided to set up a committee to look into all issues including foreign direct investment norms pertaining to the fast-growing e-commerce industry in the country.

- The committee will be headed by the NITI Aayog CEO Mr. Amitabh Kant. The other members of the panel include officials from commerce and industry ministry and department of electronics and IT among others. Representatives from four states including Maharashtra and Karnataka are also members of the panel.
- The committee will look at all the issues including FDI pertaining to the e-commerce sector. The committee would also suggest ways to further promote the growth of the sector.

Govt sets up expert committee on caste census

An expert committee has been set up by the government to classify and categorise the caste names mentioned in Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC).

- It will work under the chairmanship of Arvind Panagariya, Vice-chairman, NITI AAYOG

Takehiko Nakao Re-elected For Second Term as ADB President

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Board of Governors has unanimously re-elected Takehiko Nakao as President of ADB for a further 5 years beginning on 24 November 2016.

- Mr. Nakao was first elected as President by the Board of Governors on 28 April 2013 to serve the 3 and a half years.
- He is the 9th President of ADB and was the sole nominee after ADB's Governors were invited to make nominations for the organization's presidency.

Justice Iqbal Ahmed Ansari sworn-in as Chief Justice of Patna High Court

Justice Iqbal Ahmed Ansari was sworn in as the Chief Justice of Patna High Court. His oath of office was administered by Bihar Governor Ramnath Kovind at Raj Bhawan in Patna.

- Justice Ansari had worked twice as Acting Chief Justice of Patna High Court since December 2014 before being sworn in as its 39th Chief Justice. Justice Ansari retires on 29 October 2016.

TVSN Prasad committee formed for exploring possible alternatives to Pellet Guns

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on 26 July 2016 constituted a seven-member expert committee for exploring possible alternatives to pellet guns as non-lethal weapons.

- The committee will be chaired by Joint Secretary (Police Modernisation) **TVSN Prasad**. It has been asked to submit its report within two months.

- The committee was constituted to rethink on the use of pellet guns after its use by CRPF for crowd control in Kashmir was blamed for causing fatal injuries and blindness among protestors during the recent unrest.

Tokyo elects Yuriko Koike as first female governor

Former Japanese Defence Minister Yuriko Koike was elected as the first woman governor of Tokyo, the capital city of Japan.

- Koike garnered more than 2.9 million votes in the election, defeating her opponents, Hiroya Masuda and Shuntaro Torigoe, by a wide margin.
- She served as the member of the House of Representatives of Japan from 1993 to 2016 when she resigned to run in the Tokyo gubernatorial election.

Four states to get new Governors

Recently Four new Governors have been appointed in four States.

- Banwarilal Purohit-Assam.
- V.P. Singh Badnore-Punjab.
- Jagdish Mukhi-Andaman and Nicobar
- Najma Heptulla-Manipur.



Urjit Patel appointed as next RBI Governor

Urjit Patel is the new Reserve Bank of India Governor, the Finance Ministry announced.

- Patel will succeed Raghuram Rajan as the RBI chair once he steps down on September 3, after his term comes to an end.
- He will be India's 24th RBI Governor.
- One of the RBI's four deputy governors, Patel, 52, was reappointed in January for another three years.

PM Modi to be new brand ambassador of Incredible India

Indian government's Tourism Ministry has decided that instead of getting a brand ambassador for the Incredible India campaign, it will make Prime Minister Narendra Modi the face of the campaign.

- His face will be used for the advertisements and promotional films. Even Gujarat Tourism's prosperity will also be mentioned.

Amul MD Sodhi appointed on board of India Post Payment Banks

Amul Managing Director (MD) R S Sodhi has been appointed as independent director on the board of India Post Payment Banks (IPPB) - the payments bank arm of postal department.

- Sodhi is one of the 5 independent members to be appointed on the board IPPB, which is set to be operational in March 2017.
- The India Post Payments Bank aims to become the most accessible bank in the world, riding on advanced banking and payments technology.

CRPF to appoint PV Sindhu as Commandant and brand ambassador

Central Reserve Police Force India (CRPF) has decided to appoint Olympic silver medallist Pusarla Venkata Sindhu as it's brand ambassador and bestow the honorary rank of Commandant.

- CRPF has moved a formal proposal in this regard to the Union Home Ministry and after getting required sanctions, Sindhu will be honoured.
- Few year back, Border Security Force(BSF) had appointed cricketer Virat Kohli as it's brand ambassador.

Yogeshwar Sangwan concurrently accredited as the Ambassador of India to Georgia

Shri Yogeshwar Sangwan, presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Armenia, has been concurrently accredited as the Ambassador of India to Georgia, with residence in Yerevan (Armenia).

- Georgia is a country in the Caucasus region of Eurasia located at the crossroads of Western Asia and Eastern Europe.

Vistara appoints Deepika Padukone as brand ambassador

Vistara, is an Indian domestic airline based in Gurgaon has announced that Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone will be their new brand ambassador.

- The airline has launched a new campaign featuring Deepika broadcasted on TV channels across India starting August 22, 2016.
- Tata Sons has a 51 percent stake in Vistara, while the rest is held by Singapore Airlines.

Rani Nair set to be new CBDT Chairperson

Senior Indian Revenue Service(IRS) officer Rani Singh Nair is set to be appointed the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chairperson, with incumbent Atulesh Jindal retiring

- Nair, a 1979-batch IRS officer, is presently working as member (legislation and computerisation) in CBDT, policy making body of the Income-Tax department.

Dilip Rath assumes additional charge as NDDB chairman

Dilip Rath took over as the chairman of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), after the department of personnel and training (DoPT), Government of India gave him the additional charge of the post until the appointment of a regular incumbent.

- The chairman's post fell vacant last week after T Nandakumar resigned before his five-year term ended.
- Rath is currently the managing director of NDDB.

Anant Maheshwari named as President of Microsoft India

Anant Maheshwari, President of Honeywell India was named as the President of Microsoft India by the parent company Microsoft Inc.

- Maheshwari will succeed Bhaskar Pramanik, who retires in March 2017.
- Maheshwari, who will join Microsoft India on 1 September 2016, will take over operations of the company on 1 January 2017.
- As president, Maheshwari will be responsible for all of Microsoft's product, service, and support offerings across India.

Bhaskar Khulbe appointed as Secretary to Prime Minister

Bhaskar Khulbe, a Senior IAS officer of 1983 batch of West Bengal cadre has been appointed as Secretary to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was Additional Secretary in Prime Minister's Office.

- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet has approved the appointment of Khulbe with effect from 7th August.
- He will look after work related to Cabinet Secretariat and thrust areas of the government.

Khandu expands cabinet, inducts 10 ministers

In its first expansion of the cabinet, Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has expanded his cabinet by inducting 10 ministers including former Speaker Nabam Rebia.

- The politicians included in the cabinet are : Tanga Byaling, Rajesh Tacho, Nabam Rebia, Honchun Ngandam, Wangki Lowang, Kamlung Mossang, Tapang Taloh, Kumar Waii, Takam Pario and Jomde Kena. All of them were sworn in as cabinet ministers.

Kerala cabinet appoints Achuthanandan head of administrative reforms panel

The Kerala cabinet has decided to appoint veteran CPI-M leader V.S Achuthanandan as the chairman of the Kerala Administrative Reforms Commission with cabinet rank.

- Former chief secretaries Neela Gangadharan and C.P Nair will be the other members of the three-member panel headed by Achuthanandan.
- The Kerala Assembly had earlier passed an amendment bill to pave the way for his appointment.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal elected as new Prime Minister of Nepal

Maoist Party Chief Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also known as Prachanda, has been elected as the new Prime Minister of Nepal.

- The Parliament elected him with 363 in favour and 210 against it. Dahal returns to the post for the second time after a gap of over seven years.
- Dahal who will be heading a coalition government comprising Nepali Congress, the largest party in parliament, will be taking the oath of office and secrecy at the President's Office.

D K Gayen new GM of East Central Railway

D K Gayen has assumed charge of new General Manager of East Central Railway (ECR) with headquarters at Hajipur in Bihar.

- Earlier, Rajeev Mishra, GM of Eastern Railways, was holding additional charge of ECR.
- Gayen was earlier working as Chief Mechanical Engineer of South Eastern Railway at Kolkata.

Nita Ambani becomes first Indian woman member of IOC

The founder and chairperson of the Reliance Foundation Nita Ambani became the first Indian woman member of International Olympic Committee after being elected at the 129th IOC Session in Rio.

- She is the only individual member from India and her appointment at the world body is until she attains the age of 70.
- Sir Dorabji Tata was the first person to represent India in the IOC. Raja Randhir Singh is currently holding the post of an honorary member after serving the international body from 2000-2014.

Sudhanshu Mani appointed as new GM for ICF

Sudhanshu Mani has been appointed as General Manager, Integral Coach Factory.

- Prior to this, he was Chief Mechanical Engineer, Rail Wheel Factory, Yelahanka Bengaluru. Mani belongs to 1979 batch of Indian Railways Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSME).
- He has over 36 years of experience in Indian Railways and worked in areas like workshop management, railway operations, project management, planning, and R&D. In his earlier capacities, he had worked as Advisor (Minister), Berlin, at Embassy of India, Germany, Divisional Railway Manager, South Western Railway, etc.

Vijay Rupani takes oath as Gujarat Chief Minister

60 year old BJP leader Vijay Rupani has sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Gujarat at the Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar.

- He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by the Governor OP Kohli.
- While Nitin Patel has sworn in as the Deputy CM of the state.

New head for BHEL Corporate R&D

KK Khurana, General Manager in-charge, has taken over as Head of BHEL Corporate R&D with effect from August 4, 2016.

- Prior to the elevation as GM I/C of Corporate R&D, he was involved in Project Engineering Management (PEM), Technical service among other areas in the company.
- He has wide experience in thermal power plant projects.

BHEL appoints Akhil Joshi as director

Power plant equipment manufacturer, Bharat Heavy Electricals limited (BHEL) has appointed Akhil Joshi as the Director (Power).

- Prior to this Joshi, 57, was the Executive director (ED) human resource at BHEL.
- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) owned by the Government of India, is a power plant equipment manufacturer and operates as engineering and manufacturing company based in New Delhi, India.

Saina Nehwal is the brand ambassador for ITC's Savlon

ITC's leading health & hygiene brand, Savlon, has announced the name of ace shuttler- Saina Nehwal as its brand ambassador.

- In its new campaign, Savlon seeks to inspire parents to let go of their fears and encourage children to push their limits and maximize their potential to succeed in life.

Birender Singh Yadav appointed as next HC to Ghana

IFS officer of 1997 batch Birender Singh Yadav currently working as Joint Secretary in the Ministry, has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the West Africa's Republic of Ghana.

- Yadav will succeed K. Jeeva Sagar in Ghana.

Union Government constitutes National Committee on Trade Facilitation

The Union Government has constituted a National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF) to develop the pan-India road map for trade facilitation.

- It has been constituted in line with the World Trade Organisation (WTO's) Trade Facilitation Agreement (FTA), which India also has ratified.
- The NCTF will inter – ministerial body on trade facilitation and will be headed by Pradeep Kumar Sinha, who is the Cabinet Secretary of India.

Manjula Chellur appointed as Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court

Justice Manjula Chellur has been selected as the new Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court. Currently, she is the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court.

- She will succeed CJ Dhirendra Hiralal Waghela who retires on August 24, 2016. She will be second woman Chief Justice of the Bombay HC, after Sujata Manohar in 1994.

Awards

M S Subbulakshmi to be honoured by A R Rahman at UN on Independence Day

Renowned carnatic vocalist M. S. Subbulakshmi will be honoured at the United Nations on 15 August 2016, India's 70th Independence Day, by a performance by A.R. Rahman at the United Nations General Assembly.

- With this, Rahman will become the second Indian artist after Subbulakshmi to perform at the UN.
- She was invited by the then UN Secretary General U Thant to perform at the UN headquarters in 1966.
- She was the first musician ever to be awarded the Bharat Ratna.

Anita Gopalan wins 2016 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grants

Translator and artist Anita Gopalan has awarded with the 2016 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grants for her English translation of Hindi novel Simsim by Geet Chaturvedi.

- Gopalan is the second Indian translator to be selected for the grant.
- Simsim, the lyrical, award-winning novel was first published in 2008. It is recognized for its groundbreaking contribution to contemporary Hindi fiction.

Shubha Mudgal to be awarded Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award

The advisory committee of the Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award has decided that the 23rd Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award will be given to Shubha Mudgal.

- Mudgal will be honoured for her outstanding contribution towards the promotion of communal harmony, peace and goodwill on 20 August 2016 at Jawahar Bhawan Auditorium.

A.R. Rahman honoured with Tamil Ratna Award

Oscar-winning music maestro A.R. Rahman has been honoured by the America Tamil Sangam with its Tamil Ratna Award.

- Rahman was invited at the UNGA to perform a concert to honour M.S. Subbulakshi, the doyen of Carnatic music. The concert was sponsored by India's UN Mission and Sankara Nethralaya, a Chennai-based charity organisation.

Sehwag becomes MCC's honorary life member

Virender Sehwag, former India batsman, has been awarded the honorary life membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club

- The 37-year-old Sehwag played 104 Tests, 251 One Day Internationals and 19 Twenty20 Internationals during his illustrious career.
- Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly among others are already members of MCC.

UP announces Rani Laxmi Bai award for Sakshi Malik

The UP govt will honour wrestler Sakshi Malik with the coveted Rani Laxmi Bai award.

- The award carries a cash prize of Rs. 3.11 lakh and a memento.
- The 23-year-old won the bronze in the 58-kg category wrestling.

Hindi author Sunita Jain conferred Vyas Samman award

Hindi scholar and writer Sunita Jain was awarded the prestigious 25th Vyas Samman 2015 for her poetry collection "Kshama".

- West Bengal Governor K N Tripathi conferred the award on the scholar.
- The award instituted by the K K Birla Foundation carries a cash prize of Rs 2.50 lakh. It is given annually to outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by an Indian citizen.

Pt Shiv Kumar Sharma to get lifetime achievement award

Santoor maestro Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma will be conferred upon with the annual Sangeet Martand Ustad Chand Khan Lifetime Achievement Award this year.

- The award carries a cash prize of Rs 50,000, a memento and a citation.
- The 23rd edition of the festival that celebrates Indian classical art is scheduled to be held on September 13 and September 14.
- A Padma Vibhushan recipient, Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma was born in Jammu in 1938.

BEL head bags top award

SK Sharma, Chairman and MD, Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), has been awarded as the Most Enterprising CEO in Electronics Sector by the Indo Global Business Council (IGBC), a policy think-tank based in New Delhi.

- M M Joshi, Executive Director (National Marketing), BEL, received the award on behalf of CMD.

IOA chief Ramachandran awarded the Olympic Order

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) President, N. Ramachandran was awarded the Olympic Order for his outstanding services to the Olympic movement.

- The Olympic Order is the highest award of the Olympic Movement and is awarded for particularly distinguished contributions to the Olympic Movement, that is, recognition of efforts worthy of merit in the cause of sport.
- It was established in May 1975.

Kamal Haasan to get prestigious French honour

Famous Actor Kamal Haasan will be awarded the Chevalier de L'Ordre Arts et Lettres (The Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters) by the French government. The Order is part of France's premier award, the Legion of Honor.

- The order of merit is awarded "to recognize eminent artists and writers, as well as people who have contributed significantly to furthering the arts in France and throughout the world."
- Other Indians who have been conferred the Chevalier Order include actors Sivaji Ganesan, Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai, Nandita Das and Shah Rukh Khan.

Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Sonam Kapoor win top awards at IFF Melbourne

Bollywood star actors Sonam Kapoor and Nawazuddin Siddiqui bagged the best actress and best actor awards at the Indian Film Festival (IFF) of Melbourne 2016.

- The theme for this year 2016 is 'Women Empowerment'. Angry India Goddess, will bring the curtains down for the festival.

Sports

Gymnast Dipa Karmakar becomes first Indian to qualify for Vault Finals

Dipa Karmakar, the Indian Gymnast, created history by becoming the first Indian gymnast to enter the Olympic final at the Rio Olympic Centre.

- She scored 14.850 by performing her much-vaunted 'Produnova' vault cleanly on the vault.
- While American Simone Biles, the three-time world all-round champion topped the charts with a score of 16.050.

Padma Sachdev gets Saraswati Samman for the year 2015

Eminent poet and novelist from Jammu Padma Sachdev (76-year) has been chosen for the prestigious Saraswati Samman for the year 2015 (25th)for her autobiography "Chitt-Chete"(in Dogri language).

- She was felicitated by Delhi's Lt Governor Najeeb Jung in New Delhi.
- Sachdev is the first women poet in Dogri language has been a recipient of Sahitya Akademi Award in 1971 for her poetry book 'Meri Kavita Mere Geet'.
- Saraswati Samman is considered to be among the highest literary awards in India.

Sania wins Connecticut Open doubles title

Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza and her Romanian partner Monica Niculescu defeated Kateryna Bondarenko of Ukraine and Chuang Chia Jung of Taiwan in the final.

- The Indo-Romanian pair won 7-5, 6-4.
- This is a major confidence booster for Sania ahead of the US Open Grand Slam tournament.

Four years after London Olympics, Yogeshwar Dutt's bronze for India to turn silver

Indian wrestler Yogeshwar Dutt may be in for a pleasant surprise. The bronze medal that he won in the 2012 London Olympics is set to be upgraded to silver.

- The unexpected upgrade has been triggered by a positive dope test of the silver winner in the 60-kg freestyle event in London – Russia's Besik Kudukhov.
- With Kudukhov testing positive, Yogeshwar Dutt of India will get the silver.

India captain MS Dhoni sets world record in USA

India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has set a world record, he captained India in a record 325th game (most by a player in history), across all three formats, to break Australian skipper Ricky Ponting's mark.

- Dhoni was leading India in 71st T20I.
- He has already captained the side in 60 Tests and 194 ODIs.

Rosberg wins an eventful Belgian GP

Nico Rosberg won an incident-packed Belgian Grand Prix featuring a chaotic start, wild overtaking, a heavy crash, safety cars and a red flag.

- The Mercedes driver's win saw him close the gap on teammate Lewis Hamilton to nine points after the latter finished third behind Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo.
- Force India's Nico Hulkenberg was a season's best fourth ahead of team-mate Sergio Perez and Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, while Fernando Alonso was seventh for McLaren.

Abhijeet Gupta retains Commonwealth Chess championship crown

Grandmaster and former world junior champion Abhijeet Gupta has added another feather to his cap by retaining the Commonwealth Chess championship crown. As the title was also won earlier by him in 2015.

- This is the 20th Commonwealth Chess championship and was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- Besides, International Master Tania Sachdev also finished with a gold medal. Although in this edition all the medals were won by the Indians players in the senior category.
- Grandmasters S L Narayanan and Deep Chakkravarthy got the silver and bronze medals respectively in the open section.

Michael Phelps becomes first swimmer to win four consecutive golds in same event

Michael Phelps won his fourth consecutive 200m individual medley Olympic title. With this, he became the first swimmer ever to win four consecutive golds in the same event.

- Phelps clocked one minute, 54.66 seconds to grab the 200m individual medley Olympic title.
- Japan's Kosuke Hagino won the silver medal and China's Wang Shun took the bronze.

Lionel Messi announces to continue to play for Argentina

Lionel Messi has announced that he will play on for Argentina, reversing his decision in June to retire from international soccer.

- The Barcelona forward Messi had announced not to play for Argentina again after the team lost to Chile in the final of the Copa America in the United States.

PV Sindhu into the women's singles Final

PV Sindhu made history for Indian badminton when she reached the final of the women's singles event after beating Nozomi Okuhara 21-19, 21-10 in the semi-final and assure herself and country of a silver medal.

- This will be the first time India will have a silver place finish in badminton after Saina Nehwal had notched a bronze in the London Olympics four years back.

Wrestler Sakshi Malik wins bronze for India in Rio 2016

India's Sakshi Malik won a bronze medal in the wrestling 58kg category in Rio Olympics 2016.

- She beat Aisuluu Tynybekova 8-5 in the bronze medal bout.
- The 23-year-old became the 4th Indian woman to have ever won an Olympic medal
- Malik was born on 3 September 1992 in Mokhra village of Haryana's Rohtak district.

Narsingh Yadav banned for 4 years by CAS

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) accepted the World Anti Doping Agency's (WADA) appeal and sanctioned a four-year ban on wrestler Narsingh Yadav who had earlier tested positive for steroids.

- The ban will be accounted for from August 18, meaning he would not compete in the Rio Olympics.
- The CAS also ruled to disqualify all the competitive results obtained by Narsingh from June 25, 2016.

PV Sindhu creates history, wins silver medal in Olympics

PV Sindhu has won India's second medal of the 2016 Rio Olympics.

- Sindhu, tenth in the global rankings, lost to Spain's Carolina Marin, ranked No 1, 21-19, 12-21, 15-21 to settle for silver.

Sania Mirza gets No 1 spot in women's doubles by defeating Martina Hingis

Sania Mirza, paired with Barbora Strycova from the Czech Republic, defeated Martina Hingis and her partner Coco Vandeweghe 7-5, 6-4.

- This is the first win for Indo-Czech pair.
- With the win, Sania retained her number one status on the women's doubles ranking as Hingis slipped to 2nd spot.

India to host Kabaddi World Cup in October 2016

International Kabaddi Federation announced selected India to host The 2016 Kabaddi World Cup. The World Cup featuring 12 countries is scheduled to be held in October 2016, the dates for the event will be announced later.

- Participants of the tournament include India, USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Iran, Poland, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Korea, Japan and Kenya.
- Kabaddi became a part of Asian Games in the year 1990 and India has won all the gold medals since.

Pro Kabaddi season 4: Patna Pirates lift trophy for second time

Patna Pirates beat Jaipur Pink Panthers by 37-29 in the final of season 4 in the Pro Kabaddi League. Patna, who were the champions of season 3, dominated the game right from the first whistle.

- The Patna unit made history as they became the only team to lift the trophy twice in the tournament's history of four editions.

Narsingh Yadav gets clean chit from NADA, allowed to participate in Rio 2016 Olympics

The National Anti-Doping Association (NADA) on Monday gave clean chit to wrestler Narsingh Yadav in doping case and allowed him to participate in the Rio Olympics.

- A panel of the NADA, reviewing Narsingh's case, said the wrestler is a victim of sabotage as there is no fault and negligence on his part.
- The panel concluded by saying that the wrestler deserves the benefit of article 10.4 of NADA's anti-doping code.

Lewis Hamilton wins 2016 German Grand Prix title of Formula One

Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton has won the 2016 German Grand Prix title of Formula One. It was his fourth consecutive win in the 2016 season and overall fifth title of the 2016 season.

- Earlier in 2016 season, he had won Monaco (May 2016), Canadian (June 2016), Austrian (July 2016), British (July 2016) and Hungarian (July 2016) Grand Prix.
- Lewis Hamilton is a British Formula One racing driver from England, currently racing for the Mercedes AMG Petronas team.

'Wall of Wishes' inaugurated to celebrate Olympic mood

Sports Minister Vijay Goel inaugurated 'Wall of Wishes' at India Gate Lawns in New Delhi.

- The Wall of Wishes was launched in presence of Olympian Boxer M C Mary Kom to celebrate the Olympic mood in the country.
- Rio Olympics is scheduled to be held from 5 August to 21 August 2016.

Cristiano Ronaldo voted UEFA's 2015-16 best player in Europe

Cristiano Ronaldo has been voted UEFA's 2015-16 Best Player in Europe ahead of Real Madrid team mate Gareth Bale and Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann.

- Ronaldo scored 51 goals in 48 games in all competitions for Real who won the Champions League and finished runners-up to Barcelona in La Liga.
- The Portugal marksman also played a key role in his country's triumph at Euro 2016.

Harmanpreet Kaur first Indian to play in Women's Big Bash League

India women's team all-rounder Harmanpreet Kaur created history by becoming the first player from the country to get a contract from an overseas Twenty20 franchise.

- The 27-year-old is all set to play in the Women's Big Bash League in Australia after striking a deal with defending champions Sydney Thunder.

Sprinter Dharambir Singh's 'A' sample tests positive

Dharambir Singh, who had qualified in the 200m sprint, is the athlete who has failed a dope test and his participation in Rio Games has been cancelled.

- Dharamvir is the third Rio-bound athlete to test positive after wrestler Narsingh Yadav and shot-putter Inderjeet Singh. Yadav, however, was later given a clean chit by the National Anti Doping Agency.

IOC gives nod to addition of five new sports in Olympic Games Tokyo 2020

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has agreed to add Baseball-Softball, Karate, Skateboard, Climbing Sports and surfing in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

- The decision was taken by the 129th IOC session being held in Rio de Janeiro. The inclusion of the new sports will add 18 events.



IOA announces cash award for medal winning athlete in Rio Olympics

Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has announced a cash award of 50 lakh rupees for the gold medal winning athlete in the Rio Olympics.

- While 30 lakh rupees for silver and 20 lakh rupees for bronze. In addition, the coaches will be awarded an equivalent of 50 % of the amount that the athletes receive.

USA wins 1,000th Olympic gold medal

Simone Manuel anchored the U.S. women's 4x100 metres medley relay team to the 1,000th gold medal in her country's summer Olympic history, and the second of her career.

- USA has got its first gold in 1896 Athens Olympic.

Indian ace wins Australian Open squash

India squash queen Dipika Pallikal won the Australian Open squash title by beating Mayar Hany of Egypt by 10-12, 11-5, 11-6, 11-4.

- Notably, this is her first Professional Squash Association (PSA) title since February 2015.
- Pallikal stands on 10th in ranking table and this is Dipika's 11th PSA title.

Deaths

Former Arunachal CM Kalikho Pul found dead

Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Kalikho Pul was found dead in the house. He lived in the CM residence where he found hanging.

- Kalikho Pul was Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh for four and a half months, from February 2016 until July 2016.

Australian surfing champion Bernard Farrelly dies

Australian surfing champion Bernard Farrelly, best known as Midget for his slight size, has passed away. He was 71 years old.

- He won the first official surfing World Championship at Sydney's Manly Beach in 1964.
- Farrelly was inducted into the Sports Australia Hall of Fame in 1985. He was also the first president of Australia's oldest surfboard riders club.

Yoga guru TKV Desikachar passes away

Renowned Yoga Guru TKV Desikachar has passed away following a brief illness in Chennai. He was 78 years old.

- He was known for transforming the way yoga was practiced and turned it into both a wellness concept and a therapy.
- He also founded the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram where today about 1000 students visit every month to learn yoga.

First Speaker of Delhi Assembly Charti Lal Goel passes away

Charti Lal Goel, the first speaker of the Delhi Assembly has passed away after prolonged illness.

- Charti Lal, 89, breathed his last at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences.

Renowned Punjabi writer Gurdial Singh passes away

Prominent Punjabi writer and Jnanpith awardee Gurdial Singh passed away in Bathinda, Punjab. He was 83.

- He became known as a novelist when he published the novel Marhi Da Deeva in 1964.
- After Amrita Pritam, he is the second Punjabi writer to receive the Jnanpith Award.
- He has written ten novels, including Anhoe, Addh Chanani Raat, Anhe Ghore Da Daan, Parsa among others.

Former Fifa president and IOC member dies aged 100

Former FIFA President Joao Havelange has passed away at Samartino Hospital, Rio de Janeiro. He was 100 years old.

- He was 7th head of international football's governing body FIFA from 1974 to 1998.

Malayalam screenwriter TA Razaq passes away

Malayalam filmmaker-scriptwriter TA Razaq passed away in Kochi. He was 58.

- Razaq's film career began in the late 1980s, when he started work as an assistant director on the film Dhvani.

Love Story director Arthur Hiller is dead

Arthur Hiller, who received an Oscar nomination for directing the blockbuster romantic tragedy "Love Story". He was 92.

- The Canadian-born, dauntingly prolific Mr. Hiller ascended during the era of live television, and his versatility and workmanlike skill brought him a great deal of Hollywood work in TV and then film.

Former international umpire Subrata Banerjee dies

Subrata Banerjee, the former international umpire, died at the age of 71 in Kolkata.

- Banerjee had a 15-year career at the international level, where he officiated in 13 ODIs.
- The former Test umpire, also stood in 64 first-class matches, besides serving as a television umpire in ODIs, and a reserve umpire in a Test between India and England in Mohali in 2001.

Prominent Black Journalist, Publisher George Curry Has Died

George E. Curry, a journalist, civil rights activist and publisher whose syndicated column ran in hundreds of black-owned newspapers around the United States, has died. He was 69.

- Curry's syndicated column was carried in more than 200 African American-owned newspapers, and he served two stints as editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, a news service for black papers.

- He also served as editor-in-chief of Emerge magazine in the 1990s, and within the past year, he had been raising money to relaunch Emerge as a digital magazine covering racial injustice and other issues important to the black community.
- He became the first African-American to be elected president of the American Society of Magazine Editors.

Nobel Laureate Ahmed Zewail has passed away

Nobel Prize-winning Egyptian-American chemist Ahmed Zewail, a science and technology advisor to President Barack Obama and the first U.S. science envoy to the Middle East, has passed away in the United States. He was 70 years old.

- He was a member of the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) faculty and was the sole recipient of the Nobel chemistry prize in 1999.
- Mr. Ahmed was born in Cairo and studied at Alexandria University. He later moved to the United States and earned his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

Assamese Litterateur Mahim Bora passed away

Noted Assamese litterateur Mahim Bora has passed away due to old age problems. He was 92 years old.

- He was a Padma Shri and Sahitya Akademi winner.
- Mr. Mahim Bora's literary works include 'Kathanibari Ghat', 'Bohubhuji Tribhuj', 'Much aru Manuh', 'Top', 'Tinir Tini Gol'.

Vietnam Veedu' Sundaram passes away

Veteran South Indian film director and scriptwriter "Vietnam Veedu' Sundaram has passed away in Chennai. He was 76 years old.

- Sundaram was born in Tiruchi and 'Vietnam Veedu' became part of his name after he wrote the script, first for theatre and then for the film, starring Sivaji Ganesan.

Veteran Tamil writer-producer Panchu Arunachalam has passed away

Veteran film producer, script, lyricist and screenplay writer of Tamil cinema Mr. Panchu Arunachalam has passed away following a brief illness. He was 75.

- Mr. Panchu Arunachalam was born on 18th June 1941 at Sirukoodalpatti, Karaikudi, in Tamil Nadu.
- He is popular for writing over 100 Tamil films, including hits like Murattu Kaalai, Sakalakala Vallavan, and Apoorva Sagodhargal.
- He worked with Rajinikanth in 23 films, including Kazhugu, Pokkiri Raja, and Paayum Puli among others.

Legendary batsman Hanif Mohammad dies at 81

Pakistani Cricketing legend Hanif Mohammad died at a Hospital. The 81-year-old, who was suffering from lung cancer, was shifted to the ventilator a couple of days ago after his health deteriorated.

- Born on Dec 21, 1934, in Junagarh, the 'Little Master' played 55 Test matches for Pakistan between 1952 and 1969, averaging a fine 43.98 comprising twelve hundreds.
- His phenomenal 16-hour-long 337 against West Indies at Bridgetown – which saved Pakistan from imminent defeat – will be always be alive in history books. It remains the longest innings in Test history and was the longest in all first-class cricket for over 40 years.

Famous Lyricist Na Muthukumar passed away

Na Muthukumar passed away in Chennai at the age of 41 years.

- He was 41 and suffering from jaundice for the past few days. He won two national awards.
- He has written songs for more than 1000 films. In 2012 alone, he has written songs for about 102 films.

Akshardham founder Pramukh Swami passes away

Pramukh Swami Shantilal Patel, the 95-year-old founder of Akshardham temples and a saint of the Swaminarayan sect, passed away after prolonged illness at the Sarangpur temple.

- He was the president of the Bochasanvasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (BAPS), a sub-sect of the Swaminarayan sect, which during his tenure expanded globally, with over 3000 temples built in five decades worldwide.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the late President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam were among his followers.
- Kalam had written a book on his “spiritual experiences with Pramukh Swami” and during his tenure as President.

Books

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child book launched

The book based on the script of the play 'Harry Potter and the Cursed Child' launched globally.

- This is JK Rowling’s eighth Harry Potter story written along with Jack Thorne and John Tiffany.
- Thorne scripted the two-part play based on the original story, which begins 9 years after 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows', which was published in 2007.

R D Burmania: Panchamemoirs authored by Chaitanya Padukone released

A book titled R D Burmania: Panchamemoirs authored by Chaitanya Padukone was released. The book throws light on the legendary musician Rahul Dev Burman.

- It also claims that Burman hated composing such songs and even believed that the genre was just a passing fad.
- The book chimes a tribute that strings together amazing, amusing and fascinating anecdotes, incidents and idiosyncrasies as well as rare, startling photographs while unraveling the mystique behind Bollywood's most adored composer-singer RD Burman.
- This Memoirs also features exclusive tributes to Panchamda from illustrious luminaries like Amitabh Bachchan, Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Rishi Kapoor, A.R.Rahman, Zeenat Aman, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Hariharan, Sonu Nigam, Himesh Reshammiya, Shekhar Kapur, Mahesh Bhatt, Babul Supriyo and cricket legend Sunil Gavaskar, Hema Malini, 'late' Rajesh Khanna and many more.

President of India receives copy of book 'Grassroots Innovation'

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee received a copy of book 'Grassroots Innovation' authored by Prof. Anil K. Gupta of IIM Ahmedabad who is also the Vice Chairman, National Innovation Foundation at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

- Speaking on the occasion, the President congratulated Prof. Anil K. Gupta and said that he was deeply appreciative of his efforts and painstaking work about the innate creativity and innovative potential of our people.
- He stated that Dr. Gupta's book was about stories of extraordinary men and women who are silently contributing in the innovation movement for the economic development and advancement of society.