

INTERNATIONAL

Historic Global Greenhouse gas emission Agreement signed in Kigali

A historic global climate deal was reached in Kigali, Rwanda at the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (MOP28). The so called Kigali Amendment which amends the 1987 Montreal Protocol aims to phase out Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), a family of potent greenhouse gases by the late 2040s. Under Kigali Amendment, in all 197 countries, including India have agreed to a timeline to reduce the use of HFCs by roughly 85% of their baselines by 2045. HFCs are a family of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that are largely used in refrigerants in home, car air-conditioners and air sprays etc. These factory-made gases had replaced CFCs under the 1987 Montreal Protocol to protect Earth's fragile protective Ozone layer and heal the ozone hole over the Antarctica.

WHO releases Global Tuberculosis Report 2016

The World Health Organisation (WHO) released the Global Tuberculosis Report 2016 highlighting that countries need to move much faster to prevent, detect and treat Tuberculosis (TB) in order to meet global targets. The report highlights the considerable inequalities among countries in enabling people with TB to access existing cost-effective diagnosis and treatment interventions that can accelerate decline in TB worldwide. While efforts to respond to TB saved more than 3 million lives in 2015, however TB burden is actually higher than previously estimated, reflecting survey data from India. Six countries accounted for 60 percent of the total burden, with India bearing the brunt, followed by Indonesia, China, Nigeria, Pakistan and South Africa. Three countries carry the major burden of MDR-TB-India, China, and the Russian Federation – which together account for nearly half of all cases globally.

Russia & Turkey agree to intensify military, intelligence contacts

The Russia and Turkey have agreed to intensify military and intelligence contacts. They also have agreed on the need for aid to get to the northern Syrian city of Aleppo. Decision in this regard was taken after meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Russian President Vladimir Putin on sidelines of World Energy Congress in Istanbul. The two countries also have signed a deal to construct two TurkStream gas pipeline pipelines to send Russian gas under the Black Sea to Turkey. Turkey will use one pipeline for its domestic consumption and the other will supply southeastern Europe, bypassing Ukraine.

France becomes first country to ban plastic cups and plates

France has become the first country in the world to ban disposable plastic cups and plates. The country has passed a law in September 2016 that will go into effect in January 2020. The law will require all disposable tableware to be made from 50% biologically-sourced materials that can be composted at home. That number will rise to 60% by January of 2025. The measure is an addition to France's Energy Transition for Green Growth Act, a wide-reaching law adopted in 2015 with the aim of mitigating the impact of climate change.

WHO declares Region of the Americas as Measles free

The World Health Organisation, a specialised agency of UN has declared the Region of the Americas as Measles free. With this, the Americas became the first in the world to have eliminated measles, a viral disease that can cause severe health problems, including pneumonia, blindness, brain swelling and even death.

Cuba, Russia sign Agreement on Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation

Russia and Cuba have signed an agreement on cooperation in the field of peaceful atomic energy use. The agreement was signed between Russian state nuclear agency Rosatom and Cuba's Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment in Vienna. The agreement was signed on the sidelines of International 60th Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) General Conference held in Vienna, capital city of Austria. The deal lays down the basis for further cooperation in different fields from agriculture to training nuclear specialists.

Typhoon Megi Hits Taiwan

The powerful typhoon Megi has recently hit island-nation Taiwan with winds up to 230 km/hr that causing heavy rains and triggering damaging winds. It is equivalent to Category 4 tropical cyclone. Pakistan assembly passes marriage bill protecting Hindu women's rights Pakistan's lower house of parliament has passed a landmark bill that will address the Hindu minority's concerns over the registration of marriages, which is required for measures aimed at protecting women's rights. The bill will address other key issues of the Hindu community, including matters related to divorce and forced conversions.

Colombia, FARC sign Historic Pact ending 52-years Civil War

The Colombian Govt and left-wing FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) rebels have signed a historic agreement that formally brings an end to 52 years of civil war. The agreement was signed by President Juan Manuel Santos and rebel leader Timoleon Jimenez, known as Timochenko at the ceremony in Cartagena. Under the deal, the FARC will be re-launched as a political party and will be able to contest elections scheduled to be held in October 2016. Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is Colombia's largest rebel group and Latin America's oldest left-wing insurgency.

UNSC approves resolution for global implementation CTBT to ban nuclear weapons tests

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has approved a resolution urging quick global implementation of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban treaty (CTBT) to ban tests of nuclear weapons. The resolution has welcomed progress made towards universalization of the Treaty with 14 votes in favour of it and one abstention (Egypt). The CTBT bans all nuclear explosions for both civilian and military purposes. It was adopted by the UNGA under resolution 50 (1996). The Treaty will enter into force 180 days after the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification by all. So far, 183 countries have signed the CTBT and 166 States have deposited their instruments of ratification.

193 countries sign declaration to stamp out drug-resistant infections

The 193 countries of the United Nations (UN) have signed a landmark declaration to rid the world of drug-resistant infections or Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) or superbugs. It is the fourth time a UN declaration has been reached on a health issue, following HIV in 2001, non-communicable diseases in 2011 and Ebola in 2013. The signatory countries now have two years to submit action plan. These submitted plans are expected to address the seriousness and scope of the situation. It will also agree on sustainable, multisectoral approaches to addressing antimicrobial resistance. "Antimicrobial resistance happens when microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites change when they are exposed to antimicrobial drugs such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, antimalarials, and anthelmintics. Microorganisms that develop antimicrobial resistance are sometimes called as 'superbugs'.

Russia to lease another nuclear-powered submarine to India

Russia has quietly signed an agreement with India to lease out a second Russian Akula-2 class nuclear-powered submarine to the Indian Navy. The attack submarine will arrive in Indian waters in 2020-21. The lease agreement was signed between PM Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin during the BRICS Summit in Goa.

BRICS to set up credit rating agency

The five-nation group of emerging economies BRICS has agreed to set up an independent BRICS Rating Agency in its efforts to challenge western hegemony in the world of finance. It was announced during the 8th BRICS summit held in Goa, India. BRICS comprises five emerging economies – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The BRICS Rating Agency will be based on market-oriented principles to strengthen the global governance architecture. It will be launched as per the shared vision of the BRICS nations for institution-building to transform global financial architecture based on the principles of fairness and equity. It will assist BRICS and other countries to rate infrastructure and sustainable projects in the emerging economies. Thus, it will further bridge the gap in global financial architecture.

India, Russia sign 16 agreements across diverse sectors

“India and Russia have signed 16 agreements across diverse sectors including in defence, infrastructure, energy, space, ship building sectors etc. They were signed following delegation-level talks co-chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin during the 17th India-Russia Annual Bilateral Summit in Goa.” Some of the signed agreements are: “1. Agreement on cooperation in International Information Security.” “2. MoU for expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation.” “3. Shareholder agreement for establishing a Joint Venture to manufacture Ka-226T helicopter in India.” “4. MoU for developing smart cities in Andhra Pradesh and Haryana.” “5. MoU for setting up an investment fund of \$1 billion by the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF).”

Global hunger index – 2016

India ranked 97th out of 118 countries on the International Food Policy Research Institute’s (IFPRI) Global Hunger Index (GHI) in 2016, behind Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, among others, but ahead of Pakistan and three other Asian countries. It was positioned at 80 out of 104 countries the previous year. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a multidimensional statistical tool used to describe the state of countries’ hunger situation. It describes India’s hunger situation as “serious.” On a 0-100 point scale with 100 being the absolute worst in hunger levels, India scored 28.5 – a marginal improvement of a quarter point since the turn of the century. But with the country all set to be the most populous in the world in the next 10-odd years, the improvement may well reverse.

Pakistan announces postponement of 19th SAARC Summit in Islamabad

Pakistan has postponed the 19th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit after India and four other countries announced to boycott the Summit. The summit was scheduled to be held on November 9th and 10th, 2016 in Islamabad, capital city of Pakistan. Besides, it was also announced that new set of dates for holding the summit at Islamabad will be announced soon by Nepal, the Chair of SAARC. Pakistan’s decision is a boost for India’s diplomatic efforts to corner Pakistan over the terror attack at Uri.

IGI becomes Asia-Pacific’s first carbon neutral airport

The Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport has become Asia-Pacific's only and one of the world's few airports to achieve a carbon neutral status. The announcement in this regard was made by the Airports Council International (ACI) during the Airport Carbon Accreditation certificate presentation ceremony to IGI in Montreal, Canada. The Airport Carbon Accreditation certificated has upgraded the IGI airport's status to "Level 3+, Neutrality," the highest level for airports across the world. Less than 25 airports in the world and most of them are located in Europe, have earned this carbon neutral status.

India will not attend SAARC Summit in Islamabad MEA

India will not take part in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit in Islamabad (Pakistan) to be held in November 2016. This decision was taken in view of the continuous cross border terrorism by Pakistan which has created environment which is not conducive to successful holding of Summit. In this regard, the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has conveyed to current SAARC Chair Nepal. Besides, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Bhutan also have conveyed their reservation about attending the Summit. Increasing cross-border terrorist attacks in the region and Growing interference in internal affairs of member states by one country (not naming Pakistan).

India, US Joint Military Training Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2016 concludes

India and United States (US) Joint Military Training Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2016 concluded at the Chaubattia Military Station in Ranikhet, Uttarakhand. The bilateral military exercise was the twelfth edition in the YudhAbhyas series which started in the year 2004 under US Army Pacific Partnership Program. This was the third time the exercise is being conducted at Chaubattia in Uttarakhand. The YudhAbhyas 2016 aimed at strengthening and broadening the inter-operability and cooperation between the Indian and US armies. It had witnessed Field Training Exercises of Brigade Headquarter based Command Post Exercise and also discussions on issues of mutual interest by experts of both countries.

India, Russia begin joint military exercise in Vladivostok

The 8th edition of the Indo-Russia joint military exercise 'Indra 2016' was flagged off in Vladivostok in Russia. Indra, a portmanteau of the names of both the countries, is a biannual exercise which has been carried out between the two allies since 2003. This year, the focus is on Counterterrorism Operations in Semi Mountainous and Jungle Terrain under United Nations Mandate. Interestingly though, Russian troops arrived in Pakistan the same day for the first-ever Pakistan-Russia joint military exercise dubbed "Friendship-2016".

India, France ink deal for 36 Rafale fighter jets

The Union government has cleared the deal with France for buying 36 Rafale fighter jets in fly away condition at a cost of €7.878 billion. The deal will be signed, in the presence of French Defence Minister Jean Yves Le Drian. The contract for the deal was cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security earlier. The price was fixed in May. The government also cleared the Inter-Governmental Agreement.

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Union Govt proposes 4 GST slabs

The Union Govt has proposed a four-slab rate structure for the new indirect tax regime i.e. Goods & Services Tax (GST) ranging from 0 to 26 per cent. It was proposed at the meeting of the GST Council headed by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and included representatives from all states in New Delhi.

Outcomes of Meeting based on consensus Compensation of states due to loss of revenue after implementation of GST from 1 April 2017. Secular growth rate of 14% will be taken into consideration for calculating the revenue of each state in the first five years of implementation of the GST. Base year for calculating the revenue of states will be 2015-16. Good items along with other 50% items of common usage to be exempted from the tax to keep the inflation under check. The GST is proposed to be levied at 6% (lower rate), 12% (Standard 1 rate), 18% (Standard 2 rate) and 26% (Higher rates) on the goods and services. It will be 0% on host of goods and services, including food, health and education services, and 26% on luxury items, such as fast-moving consumer goods and consumer durables. On consumption of ultra-luxury items and demerit goods, such as big cars and tobacco products, cess must be imposed over and above a 26% GST rate.

2nd Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav

The second edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (RSM)-2016 was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts in New Delhi. The 10-day event aims to showcase the rich cultural heritage of India in all its rich and varied dimensions. RSM 2016 will show-case Handicrafts, Painting, Cuisine, Photography, Sculpture, Documentation and Performing Arts-Folk, Tribal, Classical and Contemporary in one place. Nearly 2,000 artists from across the country will showcase India's cultural heritage through performances, arts during the cultural extravaganza. It is one of the five such festivals planned in this financial year in different parts of India including Bangalore, Varanasi and Jammu and Kashmir.

PM launches National SC/ST hub and Zero Defect – Zero Effect scheme

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the National SC/ ST hub and the Zero Defect, Zero Effect (ZED) scheme for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at Ludhiana in Punjab. Besides, he also presented National Awards to MSMEs. He also distributed 500 traditional wooden charkhas (spinning wheels) among women. The objective of the SC/ ST (Schedule Castes/ Schedule Tribes) Hub is to provide professional support to entrepreneurs from the SC/ ST. It also seeks to promote enterprise culture and entrepreneurship among the SC/ ST population and to enable them to participate more effectively in public procurement. ZED Scheme aims to rate and handhold all MSMEs to deliver top quality products using clean technology. It will have sector-specific parameters for each industry. MSME sector is crucial for the economic progress of India and this scheme will help to match global quality control standards.

Ashok Leyland launches first India-made electric bus

Hinduja Group flagship Ashok Leyland today launched – Circuit – the first “Made in India” electric bus. The bus with a minimum seating capacity of 35 to a maximum of 65 can run up to 120 kilometres on a single recharge under standard test conditions.

Union Govt launches satellite-based illegal Mining Detection System

Union Government has launched Mining Surveillance System (MSS), a pan-India surveillance network to check illegal mining using latest satellite technology. MSS is a satellite-based monitoring system which aims to check illegal mining activity through automatic remote-sensing detection technology in order to establish a regime of responsive mineral administration. Mining Surveillance System (MSS) is developed by Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) in coordination with Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG), Gandhinagar.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates Shaurya Smarak in Bhopal

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14 October 2016 inaugurated ‘Shaurya Smarak’, the war memorial in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The ‘Shaurya Smarak’ was constructed by the state government in honour of

those who laid down their lives for the country. The Smarak built over an area of 12.67 acres of land. It was developed at an expense of 41 crore rupees includes a 62-foot Shaurya Stambh. It has light and sound facility to narrate stories of bravery of the nation's valiant soldiers, who have laid down their lives fighting enemies on the borders. Various stages of life, war, death and victory over death have been displayed here.

22 MPs from smaller parties, independents in Rajya Sabha recognised as a consolidated bloc

Vice-President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari has recognised a group of 22 MPs belonging to smaller parties and certain Independents as a consolidated bloc – the United Group. With this recognition the United Group, will be the third largest group of MPs in the Rajya Sabha, after the Congress and the BJP. This is only the third time in the history of Indian Parliament consolidated bloc has been recognised, the first was in 1983 and the second in 1990. In 1983, the first such consolidated group was called United Associations of Members was recognised by the then Rajya Sabha Chairman M.Hidayatullah. In 1990, the then chairman of Rajya Sabha recognised organised group of Parliamentarians and was re-named as the United Group.

Cabinet approves setting up of IIM Jammu

The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of an Indian Institute of Management school in Jammu on 13 October as part of PM Narendra Modi's development package for Jammu and Kashmir. The development package included better facility for education of children, employment to youths, modern facility for treatment, facilities for promotion of tourism in the state and special arrangements for production of fruits in the State. The government recently set up an Indian Institute of Technology in Jammu.

Draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 suggests basin-level management

The Central Govt has brought final draft of the National Water Framework Bill, 2016 to provide uniform national legal framework to manage water in a better and efficient way. The comprehensive draft Bill proposes model law for all states. However, water being a State subject under VII Schedule of constitution the law will be not binding on States for adoption.

Himansh, India's remote, high-altitude station opens in Himalayas

A high altitude glaciological research station in Himalaya called Himansh (meaning a slice of ice) began functioning above 13,500 ft (4000 m) in a remote region in Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. Researchers will use this station as a base for under taking surveys that would digitize the glacier motion and snow cover variations with exceptional precision. Himansh station will provide much needed fillip to the scientific research on Himalayan glaciers and its hydrological contribution. The re-search lab has been established by the National Centre for Ant-arctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) in Spiti Valley, one of the most uninhabited parts of the country The station houses instruments to quantify glacier melting and its relation to changing climate.

Union Government extends anti-dumping duty on certain Chinese products

The Union Government has extended anti-dumping duty on import of certain Chinese products, used in garment, toys and footwear manufacturing, for another five years i.e. till 2021. Decision in this regard was taken by Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) based on recommendations of the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD). This extension will protect domestic industry from the harm caused by dumping (import) of the cheap Chinese products. The DGAD made the case for continuation of the anti-dumping duty on Chinese products after its second sunset review of the anti-dumping duty in force on the imports. Earlier in October 2010, the Revenue Department of the Union Finance Ministry had extended the levy (anti-dumping duty) till October 2015.

Women can also be prosecuted under domestic violence law-SC

Not only men but women can also be prosecuted under the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence (DV) Act. The Supreme Court has struck down the words "adult male" from the pertinent provision in the DV Act to lay down that a woman can also file a complaint against another woman, accusing her of domestic violence.

India's first international arbitration centre inaugurated in Mumbai

The first International Arbitration Centre of India was inaugurated in Mumbai, Maharashtra to provide an arbitration platform for Indian business houses to negotiate commercial disputes. The Mumbai Centre for International Arbitration (MCIA) was launched by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. With this Maharashtra becomes first state in the country to clear policy for institutional arbitration. It is also considered as a major step towards making Mumbai an International Financial Services Centre (IFSC). The MCIA will be an independent, not-for-profit organization (NGO) governed by a council comprising eminent national and international legal luminaries. It will provide world-class infrastructure for arbitration, 24x7 functionality and live transcription services recording during arbitration proceedings for transparency. It will be in sync with the Make in India campaign and will provide a time bound and cost-effective facility to reinforce investor confidence.

India-Pakistan border to be sealed completely by 2018

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced that India-Pakistan border will be completely sealed by December 2018. Announcement in this regard was made after Union Home Minister held meeting of representatives of 4 states sharing border with Pakistan in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. Central government has formulated time-bound action plan to completely seal the entire stretch of 3,323-km-long border between the two countries. The process of sealing border will be monitored at Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) level, Border Security Force (BSF) level and chief secretary of states level.

Government integrates 250 mandis in 10 states with e-agriculture market in 1st phase

The government has integrated 250 mandis in 10 states with the electronic national agriculture market (e-NAM) in the first phase. In April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the e-NAM on a pilot basis with 22 mandis in eight states. The target was to integrate 200 mandis by September this year and total 585 by March 2018.

Union Government approves Rs.114 crore worth projects under HRIDAY Scheme

The Union Ministry of Urban Development has approved projects worth Rs.114 crore under HRIDAY scheme for improving infrastructure facilities around core heritage sites in five cities. These five cities are: Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Amritsar (Punjab), Dwaraka (Gujarat), Puri (Odisha) and Warangal (Telangana). Projects in these districts were selected based on recommendation of inter-Ministerial HRIDAY National Empowered Committee.

Cabinet approves amendments to HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2014

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to introduce amendments to the HIV and AIDS (Prevention and Control) Bill, 2014. The Bill seeks to safeguard the rights of people living with HIV and affected by HIV. It seeks to prevent social stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV (PLHIV). It also seeks to strengthen legal accountability and establish formal mechanisms for inquiring into complaints and redressing grievances to probe discrimination complaints against those who discriminate against PLHIV.

Election Commission of India collaborates with Facebook to register young voters

Social networking site Facebook is collaborating with the Election Commission of India in five states, which are going to polls next year, to run a voter registration drive aimed at encouraging youth to participate in the democratic exercise. Facebook is collaborating with the Election Commission and the office of Chief electoral officers in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand for the first time in the country to run a voter registration drive. With over 155 million people in India on Facebook, the 'Register to vote' button is designed to encourage citizens across these five states to exercise their vote in the upcoming elections. From October 6 to 9, Facebook users in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Goa, Manipur and Uttarakhand who are 18 years and above received a reminder in their News Feed to register to vote.

Union Govt launches Indian Bridge Management System

The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched the Indian Bridge Management System (IBMS). It was launched by Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi as a major step towards ensuring safety of bridges in the country. IBMS is being developed to create an inventory of all bridges in country and rate structural condition of the bridges. The rating will help for their timely repair and carrying rehabilitation work based on the criticality of the structure. IBMS is the largest platform in the world owned by a single owner, with database that could exceed one lakh fifty thousand bridge structures.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates India Sanitation conference in New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India Sanitation conference (INDOSAN) in New Delhi ahead of second anniversary of Swachh Bharat Mission. PM Modi in his inaugural speech highlighted need of behavioural change to achieve the dream of Swachh Bharat and also need to ensure a dirt free India like Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha which was instrumental for the end of colonialism. The Prime Minister also gave away cleanliness awards to Sindhudurg District (Maharashtra), Mandi district (Himachal Pradesh), Pune, Chandigarh and Mysore Municipal Corporations, Gangtok city (Sikkim), National Cadet Corps (NCC), Surat railway station, PGIMER Chandigarh, heritage site Rani ki vav in Gujarat and Kendriya Vidyalaya FRI Dehradun. INDOSAN is envisaged as an annual national event, that seeks to brings together all stakeholders working in sanitation.

Indian Army carries out surgical strikes on terror launch pads across LoC

Indian Army has successfully conducted surgical strikes on terror launch pads across the Line of Control (LoC) in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) i.e. along India's de-facto border with Pakistan. The surgical strikes were India's first direct military response to attack on Uri army base by Pakistan-based militants that had killed 18 Indian soldiers. The motive of the operation was to hit out at the terrorists who were planning to infiltrate into the Indian territory. During the operation, significant casualty was caused to terrorists. The cross-border action comes India reviewed Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan and pulled out of the regional SAARC Summit that was scheduled to be held in Islamabad, Pakistan as part of a wider diplomatic offensive to isolate Pakistan. Surgical strike is a military attack which is intended to only damage to the intended legitimate military target and no or minimal collateral damage to surrounding structures, general public infrastructure, vehicles, buildings and utilities.

Union Cabinet gives approves Varistha Pension Bima Yojana, 2003 and 2014

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for the Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) 2003 and Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) 2014. The Cabinet also granted approval for expenditure incurred on subsidy amount released to LIC for the both schemes. VPBY was launched on 14th July, 2003 and was open till 14th August, 2015 and VPBY was launched on 14th August, 2014. Both the schemes are closed for future subscriptions. These schemes were implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). Both are pension schemes intended to give an assured minimum pension to Senior Citizens based on an assured minimum return on the subscription amount. The

pension is envisaged until death from the date of subscription, with payback of the subscription amount on death of the subscriber to the nominee.

Shaheed Bhagat Singh's 109th birth anniversary observed across India

India is observing the 109th birth anniversary of revolutionary socialist Shaheed Bhagat Singh. He was born on 28 September 1907, and was an influential figure in the Indian independence movement. Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Bhagat Singh on his 109th birth anniversary. Delhi Government decided to commemorate the day by organising Shaheed Utsav.

Union Govt decides to suspend talks on Indus Waters Treaty

The Union Government has decided to suspend all talks on India-Pakistan Indus Waters Treaty in the wake of the Uri attack. Decision in this regard was taken by meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was attended by National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval, Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar, Water Resources Secretary and senior PMO officials. No review or abrogation of the Indus Waters Treaty. Decision to utilise water under India's share to fullest. Suspend talks on the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC), the dispute redressal mechanism until terrorism stops. Review the 1987 suspension of the Tulbul navigation project that Pakistan had objected. Build more run-of-the-river hydropower projects on western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, Chenab) to exploit full potential. Expedite construction of Pakal Dul, Sawalkot, Bursar dams in Jammu and Kashmir. Use 20% of river water allocated under treaty for Jammu and Kashmir farmers.

CSIR celebrates its platinum jubilee

India's largest civilian research and development agency Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) celebrated its platinum jubilee. The platinum jubilee celebrations were inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is also the President of CSIR. PM Modi also released seven new plant varieties developed at CSIR laboratories. He also witnessed exclusive CSIR Showcase on major technological contributions of CSIR.

Govt appoints ICICI Prudential AMC to manage new CPSE ETF

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management, Ministry of Finance has appointed ICICI Prudential Asset Management Company Ltd as the asset management company for the creation and launch of a new Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) comprising stocks of PSUs in the current fiscal with an estimated corpus of Rs 6,000 crore. The government proposes to create and launch the ETF in addition to the existing CPSE ETF, comprising stocks of listed CPSEs and the central government's stake in other corporate entities.

Union Govt to launch Mission Parivar Vikas for improved family planning services

The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is going to launch Mission Parivar Vikas for improved family planning services in 145 High Focus districts in seven states. The objective of mission is to accelerate access to high quality family planning choices based on information, reliable services and supplies within a rights-based framework. These districts are located in the seven high focus states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam. They are having the highest total fertility rates and constitute 44% of the country's population. They also have a substantial impact on maternal and child health indicators. As about 25 to 30% of maternal deaths and 50% of infant deaths occur in these districts.

Nation world's largest solar power plant in TN

Adani Green Energy (Tamil Nadu) Ltd, part of the Adani Group has dedicated to the nation the world's largest solar power plant of 648 megawatts (MW), set up at Kamuthi in Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu. The plant has been set up with an investment of around Rs. 4,550 crore. It is part of the state government's target to generate 3,000 MW in line with its new solar energy policy unveiled in 2012. The company sourced equipment and machinery from various parts of the world to set up the 648 MW capacity within a record time of 8 months.

Govt merges Railway Budget with Union Budget

The Cabinet on September 21 has approved the scrapping of the 92-year old practice of presenting a separate Railway Budget and merged it with the Union Budget. The Cabinet also approved the advancing of the date of presentation of the Union Budget to February 1, as against the current practice of presenting it on the last working day of February.

Indira Awas Yojana Renamed After Prime Minister

"The flagship rural housing scheme Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), started by former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, has been re-structured and renamed as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), which will be launched next month. The IAY will be subsumed by the PMAY from April 1 next year. Under the new scheme, the government is aiming to construct one crore houses by 2019. Under IAY, the government has set a target of constructing 38 lakh houses by end of the current financial year (2015-16), out of which 10 lakh have been completed. "Launched by Rajiv Gandhi in 1985, IAY is a centrally sponsored scheme funded on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and states in the 60:40 ratio, except in case of north east states and Union Territories (UTs). For north east states, the Centre funds 90 per cent of the cost and 100 per cent for the UTs.

STATES

Iron Sharmila announces formation of political party named PRJA

Human rights activist Iron Sharmila announced the formation of her political party named Peoples Resurgence and Justice Alliance (PRJA). The announcement was made with a promise to fight for justice and peace among the people. While launching the party, the Iron Lady of Manipur said that she is entering electoral battle to fight against injustice after ending her nearly 16-year long hunger strike. Sharmila further said her party will contest for at least 20 seats in the coming state Assembly election to be held early in 2017. She will contest from two seats, Thoubal and Khurai. Thoubal is her home constituency, while Khurai is represented by Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh.

Telangana Govt creates 21 new districts

Telangana Government in its the biggest administrative reform has created 21 new districts. With this reorganisation, the total number of districts in the State went up to 31 from 10.

The 21 new districts are: Siddipet, Jayashankar, Jangaon, Jagtial, Yadadri, Warangal (Rural), Peddapally, Sangareddy, Kamareddy, Mancheriyal, Kothagudem, Vikarabad, Rajanna, Asifabad, Suryapet, Wanaparthy, Nirmal, Mahabubabad, Nagarkurnool, Jogulamba and Malkajgiri.

Earlier 10 districts are: Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Ranga Reddy, Karimnagar, Medak, Adilabad, Warangal, Nizamabad, Khammam and Nalgonda.

MP to launch 'Lalima Abhiyan' to make state free from anaemia

With an aim to make Madhya Pradesh anaemia-free, the state government has decided to launch a scheme-'Lalima Abhiyan'- that will be effective from November 1. Under the campaign, free iron folic acid tablets will be provided in 'aaganwadis', academic institutions and hospitals. The Center has assured full cooperation to the state government in the matter. According to National Family Health Survey data, 52.5 percent of women, aged between 15 to 49 years, are suffering from anaemia. Natural, modern and traditional measures will be publicised during the campaign that will involve the Public Health Engineering, Ayush and School Education Department as well.

Jharkhand becomes first state to implement DBT in Kerosene

Jharkhand has become the first state in the country to implement Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in Kerosene Scheme. The scheme is being implemented in four identified districts of the state from 1st of October 2017. These districts are Chatra, Hazaribagh, Khunti and Jamtara. Under the DBTK scheme, PDS kerosene will be sold at non-subsidised price and the subsidy will be directly transferred to consumers directly into their bank accounts. It aims at rationalising subsidy based on the approach to cut subsidy leakages but not the subsidy.

Delhi Police launches Mobile App for senior citizens

The Delhi Police has launched a mobile application "Delhi Police Senior Citizen" for senior citizens to provide immediate assistance to them in distress. The facility was launched by Delhi Lieutenant Governor Najeeb Jung at a function in New Delhi on the occasion of International Day of Older Persons (observed on October 1). The application has an SOS button integrated with a dedicated existing helpline for Senior Citizen – 1291. The app has been designed with features that allow users to press the SOS button in case of an emergency. The call will reach a dedicated station. If the user is unwell, an ambulance will be sent. In case for any other reason, a beat constable will be asked to contact the user.

Gurgaon officially renamed Gurugram

The Union Government has given its approval to change the name of Gurgaon to 'Gurugram'. With this both the city as well as the district of Gurgaon would be known as Gurugram. It was announced by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar after presiding over the first meeting of the State-level 'Swarna Jayanti Celebrations Committee' at Panchkula. Gurugram is the mythological name derived from Guru Dronacharya, the master of archery in Mahabharata who groomed the Pandavas and Kauravas in war tactics. It is said the village was given as 'gurudakshina' to Guru Dronacharya by the Pandavas and hence it came to be known as Guru-gram.

Telangana ties up with ISRO for bandwidth to telecast coaching programmes

The Telangana Government has signed an agreement with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to get bandwidth to telecast Mana TV programmes. To start with, the TV channel will air coaching programmes for students appearing for various competitive examinations to get government jobs.

Agriculture Minister inaugurates Krishi Unnati Mela in Mathura

The Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh has inaugurated the 4 days Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay Krishi Unnati Mela – 2016, in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. Upadhyaya conceived the political philosophy Integral Humanism – the guiding philosophy of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The philosophy of Integral Humanism advocates the simultaneous and integrated program of the body, mind and intellect and soul of each human being.

TN government for Thaaliku Thangam scheme under marriage assistance programme

Tamil Nadu government has allotted Rs 204 crore towards the implementation of the enhanced gold scheme under a marriage assistance programme. Rs 204 crore has been allotted for 'Thaaliku Thangam' (Gold for Mangalsutra) scheme for the year 2016-17 to benefit 12,500 women. The scheme involves providing marriage assistance and gold for daughters of poor parents and widows among others to make 'thaali.' The assistance of Rs 25,000 for beneficiaries who have passed Class X and Rs 50,000 to those with an undergraduate degree or diploma is also given as part of the scheme.

Delhi's Race Course Road renamed as Lok Kalyan Marg

Delhi's Race Course Road has now been renamed as Lok Kalyan Marg. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence is located on this road. A decision to this effect was taken at a high-level meeting of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), presided by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. The NDMC also decided to rename the Gurdwara Rakabganj round-about adjacent to the Parliament complex as Guru Gobind Singh Chowk.

CONFERENCES

8th BRICS Summit concludes in Goa

The eighth BRICS summit was held in Goa from 15 to 16 October 2016. The summit concluded with adaptation of Goa Declaration. The two day summit was attended by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Michel Temer and South African President Jacob Zuma. The theme for the summit was "Building Responsive, Inclusive and Collective Solutions". BRICS nations condemn terrorism in all its forms and stressed that there can be no justification for such acts. International terrorism, especially the Islamic State (IS) is an unprecedented threat to international peace and security. The ninth BRICS Summit will be hosted by China in 2017.

First BRICS Trade Fair and Exhibition held in Delhi

The first BRICS Trade Fair and Exhibition held in the national capital, ahead of the BRICS political summit in Goa. The fair is a platform for respective BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa to exhibit state-of-the-art technologies and advances made in industrial development.

4th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial Meeting held at Jaipur

The 4th BRICS Science, Technology and Innovation Ministerial Meeting was held at Jaipur, Rajasthan. The purpose of the meeting was to further strengthen the collaboration amongst the BRICS countries in the areas of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). The meeting adopted a five-pronged approach, viz. Institution Building, Implementation, Integration, Innovation and Continuity. In alignment with the theme of India's Chairmanship of 8th BRICS Summit, Building, Responsive Inclusive and Collective Solutions, Jaipur Declaration was unanimously adopted. The BRICS member countries have resolved to intensify, diversify and institutionalize STI cooperation through the BRICS innovation and research initiative. India's proposal to establish a BRICS Science and Technology driven Entrepreneurship and Innovation Partnership Programme to harness innovativeness of youth was also agreed.

India to host 2016 Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction

India is hosting the 2016 Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) from November 3 to 5, 2016 in New Delhi. This will be second time India hosting AMCDRR. The conference will be hosted by Union Government in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). It will be first AMCDRR after advent of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRRR) which was adopted at 3rd UN World Conference in Sendai, Japan in March, 2015. India by hosting AMCDRR re-affirms its commitment to the cause of Disaster Risk Reduction. It will also set the direction of Sendai Framework implementation in the region. The aim of the conference is to trans-form the commitments of governments and stakeholders during the Sendai Conference into national and local action.

President Pranab Mukherjee inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit

The President of India Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the first edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit on the theme 'Beyond 2015: People, Planet and Progress' organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi on 06 October. WSDS has replaced TERI's earlier called Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS). The first DSDS was organised in 2005. The aim of the summit is to provide various stakeholders a single platform in order to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of the global community.

2nd SAARC Anti-Terrorism Mechanism held in New Delhi

The second meeting of the High Level Group of Eminent Experts to strengthen the SAARC Anti-Terrorism Mechanism was held in New Delhi. Delegations from all eight SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) member countries participated in the conference. SAARC members are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Issues of terrorism and the measures to strengthen the SAARC anti-terrorism mechanism were discussed. Besides, other important issues discussed during the meeting included terrorism financing, drugs trafficking and cybercrimes.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Robert De Niro to be honoured with Chaplin Award

The Film Society of Lincoln Center in the second week of October 2016 announced Robert De Niro as the recipient of the 44th Chaplin Award. De Niro will be presented with the award at an award gala on 8 May 2017. The Film Society of Lincoln Center is one of the world's most prominent film presentation organizations.

R.A. Mashelkar conferred award by Centre for Organisation Development

R. A. Mashelkar, former Director-General of CSIR, has been conferred the V Krishnamurthy Award for excellence by the Hyderabad-based Centre for Organisation Development. The former Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and Governor of Tamil Nadu, K Rosaiah, presented the award at a function in Hyderabad on 13 October. The award was instituted in 2000 to recognise excellence in management. V Krishnamurthy had contributed enormously to the public sector, BHEL and SAIL.

Bob Dylan wins 2016 Nobel prize in literature

The 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded to American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan, for "having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition". Dylan, 75, has won numerous awards, including twelve Grammys and one Academy Award.

Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank awarded by Ugandan govt for his literary work

Former Uttarakhand chief minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has been conferred with a prestigious award by the Ugandan government for promoting human values through his literature. Nishank, who is currently a BJP MP from Haridwar, has authored a number of books and anthologies.

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos

The Nobel Peace Prize for 2016 has been awarded to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos for his efforts to end his country's 50-year civil war. Mr Santos negotiated a peace agreement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc) guerrilla group but the peace deal was rejected by a narrow majority of Colombians when it was put to referendum. "The award should also be seen as a tribute to the Colombian people who, despite great hardships and abuses, have not given up hope of a just peace, and to all the parties who have contributed to the peace process," said a statement by the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Three win Nobel chemistry prize for molecular machines

Frenchman Jean-Pierre Sauvage, British born J Fraser Stoddart and Dutch scientist Bernard Feringa on 5th Oct won the Nobel Prize in chemistry for developing molecular machines. The laureates share the 8 million kronor (USD 930,000) prize for the "design and synthesis" of molecules with controllable movements, which can perform a task when energy is added. The academy said molecular machines "will most likely be used in the development of things such as new materials, sensors and energy storage systems." The chemistry prize was the last of this year's science awards. The medicine prize went to a Japanese biologist who discovered the process by which a cell breaks down and recycles content. The physics prize was shared by three British-born scientists for theoretical discoveries that shed light on strange states of matter.

Thouless, Haldane & Kosterlitz win the 2016 Nobel Prize in Physics

The Nobel Prize in Physics for 2016 has been divided, one half awarded to David J. Thouless, the other half jointly to F.Duncan M. Haldane and J. Michael Kosterlitz "for theoretical discoveries of topological phase transitions and topological phases of matter." Announcing the Prize on Oct 04 in Stockholm, a statement by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said that "This year's Laureates opened the door on an unknown world where matter can assume strange states. They have used advanced mathematical methods to study unusual phases, or states, of matter, such as superconductors, super-fluids or thin magnetic films. Thanks to their pioneering work, the hunt is now on for new and exotic phases of matter." Last year, Physics Nobel was awarded to Takaaki Kajita and Arthur B. MacDonald for their work with neutrinos.

Nobel Prize in Medicine awarded to Yoshinori Ohsumi

The 2016 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine has been awarded to Yoshinori Ohsumi "for his discoveries of mechanisms for autophagy." The professor is currently at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. Announcing the Prize in Stockholm, the Nobel Committee said that the cell biologist "discovered and elucidated mechanisms underlying autophagy, a fundamental process for degrading and recycling cellular components." The 1974 Medicine laureate, Christian de Duve, coined the term autophagy (meaning "self eating") in 1963. The 2015 Nobel Prize in Medicine was awarded for discoveries concerning novel therapies against river blindness, lymphatic filariasis and malaria to William C. Campbell, Satoshi Omura and Youyou Tu.

Murga wins first prize at Swachh Bharat Short Film Festival

Murga has won the first prize at the Swachh Bharat Short Film Festival (SBSFF). The short film was directed by young filmmaker Katyayan Shivpuri from Maharashtra. The Union Information and Broadcasting Minister M Venkaiah Naidu bestowed award upon Katyayan with a certificate and cash prize of 10 lakhs rupees. The SBSFF was organised and curated by National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) on behalf of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The festival was the cinematic presentation of short films of not more than 3 minutes duration, dedicated to the Swachh Bharat Mission initiative of Central Government.

The Hindu wins reader engagement awards

The Hindu has been awarded the Silver and Bronze awards in the 'Best Reader Engagement' category of the South Asian Digital Media Awards at the WAN-IFRA (World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers) India 2016 conference in Kolkata. The Silver award went to the Ask Ashwin Contest from The Hindu Group's sportstarlive.com. The Hindu's online coverage of the Tamil Nadu Assembly Election Campaign 2016 bagged the Bronze award in the Best Reader Engagement category. The awards were presented at a glittering ceremony. The awards, presented by WAN-IFRA and Google, recognise publishers who have adopted digital media and mobile strategies as part of their total product offering to meet the major changes in how people consume news today.

Syrian aid group White Helmets wins Right Livelihood Award

Syrian aid group White Helmets has won the prestigious Right Livelihood Award which is also known as 'alternative Nobel' prize. The White Helmets also known as the Syria Civil Defence is a Syrian civil organisation of emergency responders in rebel-held areas. It has been honoured for their outstanding bravery, compassion and humanitarian engagement in rescuing civilians from the destruction of the Syrian civil war. The White Helmets will share the prize with Russian activist Svetlana Gannushkina, Egypt's feminist leader Mozn Hassan and leading independent Turkish newspaper Cumhuriyet.

SPORTS & GAMES

Novak Djokovic retains top spot in ATP rankings

"Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic retained the top spot in the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) rankings. He is considered one of the greatest tennis players of all time. Djokovic lost 640 points after he was defeated by Spain's Roberto Bautista in the Shanghai Masters' semi-final clash. Scottish player Andy Murray garnered 640 points after winning Shanghai Masters to be at second spot with 10,485 points. "The current ATP rankings are: "1. Novak Djokovic (Serbia) 12,900 points "2. Andy Murray (Scotland) 10,485 points "3. Stan Wawrinka (Switzerland) 5,820 points "4. Milos Raonic (Canada) 4,690 points "5. Kei Nishikori (Japan) 4,650 points"

Andy Murray defeats Grigor Dimitrov to win China Open

British tennis player Andy Murray beat Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov in straight sets to win the China Open on 09 October 2016. Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska defeated British tennis player Johanna Konta 6-4, 6-2 to win the China Open Women's Singles at Beijing, China.

Kieren Dsouza becomes the first Indian to complete World's toughest race, Spartathlon

Bengaluru's Kieren Dsouza has become the first Indian to complete the Spartathlon, widely described as the "world's toughest race". The 23-year old completed the 246.6 km distance in the 2016 edition on Saturday, in 33 hours, one minute and 38 seconds. The Spartathlon is an annual run between Athens and Sparta in Greece, with a reported success rate of 50%.

Rani becomes 1st Indian woman to cross 60m in javelin

Javelin thrower Annu Rani broke her own national record and in the process became the first Indian woman to cross the 60m mark on the third and penultimate day of the 56th Open National Athletics Championships in Lucknow. 24-year-old Annu was representing Railways. Today's effort was his fourth national record in two years.

India wins historic 500th Test by 197 runs against NZ

India notched up a mammoth 197-run win in their historic 500th cricket Test to assert their supremacy in home conditions, bowling out New Zealand for 236 to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. After setting the Kiwis a rather improbable target of 434, the Indian bowlers, especially senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin (6/132), revelled in home conditions to rip through the visiting team's line-up with more than a session to spare.

Japan to host 2026 Asian Games Olympic Council of Asia

Japan's Aichi prefecture and its capital city Nagoya were confirmed as co-hosts of the 2026 Asian Games. The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) formally endorsed the bid after Aichi Prefecture governor Hideaki Ohumra and Nagoya city mayor Takashi Kawamura presented their joint offering to the OCA General Assembly in Danang, which is currently hosting the 5th Asian Beach Games.

Anup Kumar to lead India in Kabaddi World Cup

Star raider Anup Kumar from Haryana will lead India in next month's Kabaddi World Cup to be held in Ahmedabad. All-rounder Manjeet Chillar will be Anup's deputy in the 14-member squad for the tournament that is set to commence on October 7 and will feature 12 teams. The countries which will take part in the tournament are Iran, South Korea, Bangladesh, USA, England, Australia, Poland, Thailand, Japan, Argentina, Kenya and hosts India.

ECONOMY

Rosneft-led consortium buys India's Essar Oil for \$13 billion

Russian consortium led energy giant Rosneft Oil Company has agreed to acquire India's second biggest private oil firm Essar Oil in an all-cash deal valued at about US \$13 billion. The consortium includes Rosneft Oil Company, Netherlands-based commodities trader Trafigura and private investment group United Capital Partners. The business transaction was announced in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the 8th BRICS Summit in Goa. Under this deal Rosneft bought a 49% stake in Essar Oil's refinery, port and petrol pumps, while Trafigura Group Pte and United Capital Partners split 49% equity equally. It includes \$10.9 billion for Essar Oil's Vadinar refinery (India's second-largest refinery with a capacity of 20 million tonnes) and \$2 billion for a port terminal that helps feed refinery. It also includes Essar Oil's debt of \$4.5 billion and about \$2 billion debt with the Port Company and power plant.

In the First, Bank deposits cross Rs 100 lakh crore

According to the data released by the RBI, India's banking system reported total deposits of Rs 100 lakh crore for the first time ever in September month of this year. With demand deposits crossing Rs 10 lakh crore and time deposits crossing the Rs 90 lakh crore mark, the month saw the highest-ever monthly rise of Rs 5.32 lakh crore – more than the total deposits in the banking sector 20 years back. Banks' deposits grew at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 12.88% in the last five years, they had grown at a CAGR of 19.9% in the previous five years.

India now the 12th largest holder of US govt bonds

India's holdings of the US government bonds touched a high of \$123.7 billion in July, making it the 12th largest holder, US Treasury Department's latest data showed. There has been a mixed trend in terms of India's holdings of these securities in recent months amid the world's largest economy seeing improved growth prospects. In July, China's exposure stood at USD 1.22 trillion, followed by Japan with holdings to the tune of USD 1.15 trillion. Latest data available with the US Treasury Department shows that India raised its exposure by little over USD 6 billion to USD 123.7 billion in July.

Forex reserves touch record high of \$372 billion

India's foreign exchange reserves scaled a new high of USD 371.99 billion, up USD 1.223 billion for the week to September 30. The increase was on account of a USD 1.468-billion surge in the foreign currency assets. Previously, they had touched a high of USD 371.279 billion in the week to September 9. Foreign currency assets which are a major component of the overall reserves surged by USD 1.468 billion to USD 346.71 billion.

IMF revises India's economic growth upwards to 7.6% for FY17 and 18

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 4 October raised projections for India's economic growth by 0.2 percentage points to 7.6 per cent for 2016-17 and 2017-18. The projections came in at a time when the Fund said global economic growth will be subdued this year, following a slowdown in the US and Britain's vote to exit the European Union. It, however, retained global economic growth at 3.1 per cent for 2016 and 3.4 percent for 2017.

Flipkart becomes 1st e-commerce in India to cross 100 million customers

Flipkart has crossed the 100-million registered users mark, becoming the first e-commerce company to hit the milestone in a single country outside the United States and China. The Bengaluru-based company has doubled its user base over the last year. It added 25 million users in the past six months alone. The e-commerce company's user-base represented about 63 percent of the total broadband users in the country.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India completes nuclear triad by commissioning INS Arihant

India has completed its nuclear triad by inducting the first indigenously built strategic nuclear submarine INS Arihant into service. With this, India becomes fourth country to have a nuclear triad i.e. capable of delivering nuclear weapons by air-craft, ballistic missiles and submarine launched missiles. Other countries having nuclear triad are Russia, United States and China. INS Arihant was formally

commissioned by Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba in August 2016. INS Arihant is nuclear submarine capable of carrying nuclear tipped ballistic missiles. It weighs 6000 tonnes and is 112 metre long. It is powered by 83 MW pressurised light water nuclear reactor with enriched uranium fuel. It will be armed with the K-15 Sagarika missiles with a range of 750 km.

China successfully launches its longest ever manned mission to space

China has successfully launched longest-ever manned mission by taking two astronauts Jing Haipeng and Chen Dong into the orbit. They were launched on board of Shenzhou-11 (heavenly vessel) spacecraft from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre near the Gobi Desert in northwest China. The spacecraft was put into orbit by a Long March-2F carrier rocket. Both astronauts will spend a month aboard an experimental space laboratory Tiangong-2 (Heavenly Palace 2).

IISER researchers use human hair to produce cheaper cathodes for solar cells

Researchers from Kolkata based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) have produced cost-effective, metal-free cathodes using human hair for use in solar cells. This is the first instance where a bio-waste-derived electrode (in this case human hair) has been used as cathode in a quantum dot sensitised solar cell device. IISER researchers have developed graphitic porous carbon cathode by cleaning and drying human hair and treating with sulphuric acid to achieve precarbonisation. It was then heated at different temperatures in the presence of inert gas for six hours to carbonise and bring better electrical conductivity for efficient charge transfer. This efficient green cathode achieves highly catalytic graphitic porous carbon stage at optimum temperature of 850 degrees C.

ISRO successfully launches GSAT-18 from Kourou in French Guiana

India's latest communication satellite, GSAT-18 was inducted into the INSAT/GSAT system on October 06, 2016 from Kourou, French Guiana by Ariane-5 VA-231. Weighing 3404 kg at lift-off, GSAT-18 carries 48 communication transponders to provide Services in Normal C-band, Upper Extended C-band and Ku-bands of the frequency spectrum. GSAT-18 carries Kuband beacon as well to help in an accurately pointing ground antennas towards the satellite. GSAT-18 is designed to provide continuity of services on operational satellites in C-band, Extended C-band and Ku-bands. GSAT-18 was launched into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) by Ariane-5 VA-231 launch vehicle. After its injection into GTO, ISRO's Master Control Facility (MCF) at Hassan took control of GSAT-18 and performed the initial orbit raising maneuvers using the Liquid Apogee Motor (LAM) of the satellite, placing it in circular Geostationary Orbit. The designed in-orbit operational life of GSAT-18 is about 15 years.

New species of pika named Ochotona sikimaria discovered in Sikkim

Scientists have discovered a new species of Pika, a mammal belonging to the rabbit and hare family in the Himalayas in Sikkim. It has been identified as 'Ochotona sikimaria'. It is quite distinctive from all other pika species based on the fecal pellets and tissue samples. Ochotona sikimaria Pika species looks similar to the Moupin Pika, genetically it is completely different. Their specific differences are not visible in physical observation. But they are genetically very different.

World's first three-parent baby born in Mexico

The world's first three-parent baby boy was born in Mexico to a Jordanian couple with the help a controversial new fertility technique that incorporates DNA from three people in the embryo. The 'three-parent' technique also known as Mitochondrial donation (Mitochondrial Replacement Therapy) allows parents with rare genetic mutations to have healthy babies.

ISRO successfully launches 8 satellites into two different orbits

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for first time has successfully launched eight satellites into two different orbits in a single mission. These satellites were launched onboard of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C35 (PSLV C35) from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikotta. It was PSLV's longest and most complex mission. It is also for the first time PSLV has successfully placed satellites in two different orbits in single mission. Among the eight satellites launched, three satellites were from India, three from Algeria and one each from Canada and United States. SCATSAT-1 satellite of India weighing 371 kg was the primary payload and remaining other seven customer satellites were secondary payloads (5 foreign and 2 domestic satellite) weighing 304 kg in total.

Indian Air Force successfully test fires long range air-to-air MICA missile

Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully fired recently acquired long range air-to-air MICA missile from Mirage-2000 Upgrade combat aircraft on a manoeuvring target. During the test, the missile achieved a direct hit on a target which was much smaller than an actual aircraft and flying at a low altitude. With this success IAF has become one of the few air forces in the world that have capability of launching such beyond visual range (BVR) air-to-air missile.

Sun Pharma signs deal with ICGEB to develop India's first dengue vaccine

India's largest pharmaceutical company Sun Pharma has signed deal with International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) for clinical development Cissampelos pariera (Cipa), India's first vaccine (drug) for the treatment of dengue. The partnership between Sun Pharma and ICGEB aims to develop safe, effective and affordable botanical drug Cipa. Under the deal, Sun Pharma will get access to all the intellectual properties (IP) rights of the drug across 17 countries. ICGEB will establish assay systems for the development of Cipa for the treatment of dengue infection. ICGEB had explored Indian traditional medicine, Ayurveda, to identify plants that could be a source of dengue inhibitory activity.

Researchers produce carbon from sugarcane waste for use in batteries

Researchers from Pune (Maharashtra) have produced high-quality carbon from sugarcane waste within minutes by using a low power microwave system. They had used a simple, cost effective and quick process to convert sugarcane bagasse into anode-grade porous, conducting, activated carbon material for use in Li-ion batteries. They had carried out initial carbonisation overnight at room temperature by mixing bagasse with concentrated sulphuric acid. The acid treatment had dissolved most of the inorganic impurities present in bagasse except silica. This helped in forming robust carbon double bond backbone structure. The solid product obtained from acid treatment was washed thoroughly and was oven-dried at 70 degree C. Later it was mixed with potassium hydroxide to form slurry. The slurry is then heated in a microwave oven for a few minutes. The heating had led to graphitisation and pores were formed when potassium hydroxide reacts with carbon.

PERSONS IN NEWS

A). APPOINTMENTS

Geeta Phogat appointed DSP in Haryana Police

Haryana Government has appointed international woman wrestler Geeta Phogat as a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) in Haryana Police. A proposal of the Home Department was approved at a meeting of the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

Sanjay Singh appointed Member Secretary, Law Commission

Former legislative secretary Sanjay Singh has been appointed as Member Secretary, Law Commission of India. President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed Singh to the post for a period upto August 31, 2018. The tenure of Twenty-first Law Commission, which was constituted on September 1, 2015 is till August 31, 2018. The Law Commission of India is mandated to identify laws which are no longer needed or relevant and can be immediately repealed.

Abdelilah Bekirane elected as Prime minister of Morocco

Abdelilah Bekirane was re-appointed as the Prime Minister of Morocco for second term. Benkirane has been serving as Prime Minister since November 2011. It was officially announced by Mohammed VI, the king of Morocco after Benkirane's Islamic Justice and Development Party (PJD) emerged victorious in recent general election. Now PM Bekirane will now reach out to other parties to form a coalition government as he does not have absolute majority in lower house.

Antonio Guterres appointed UN Secretary-General

Portugal's former Prime Minister Antonio Guterres was on 13 October appointed as the next Secretary-General of the United Nations by the General Assembly. The 193 member states of the General Assembly adopted the resolution by acclamation, appointing 67-year-old Mr. Guterres as the ninth U.N. Secretary-General to take over from Ban Ki-moon, whose tenure will end on December 31, 2016. Mr. Guterres, who was Prime Minister of Portugal from 1995 to 2002, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to December 2015, will assume his new role on January 1, 2017 for a five-year term that can be renewed by member states for an additional five years. Mr. Guterres had emerged as the frontrunner in all the six informal polls conducted in the Security Council to select the Secretary-General amid a heightened call by several U.N. member states and civil society organisations to elect a woman chief for the world body, which has had a man at its helm for all the 71 years of its existence.

Renu Pall appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Austria

Former Indian Foreign Service officer Ms. Renu Pall has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Austria. It was announced by Ministry of External Affairs. Austria is a German-speaking country in Central Europe, characterized by mountain villages and baroque architecture.

Obama nominates ambassador to Cuba

The United States President Barack Obama has appointed its first Ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis to Cuba in 55 years. The new ambassador DeLaurentis had been working at the new US embassy in Havana, which opened since 2014.

Jim Yong Kim re-appointed as World Bank President

Jim Yong Kim has been re-appointed as President of World Bank for a second five-year term beginning 1 July 2017. He was unanimously chosen by the Executive Directors of the World Bank. He was the only candidate in a process. Jim Yong Kim is a South Korean-American physician and anthropologist. He is the 12th President of the World Bank and for first time was appointed in 2012. He was a global health leader and was formerly the Chair of Department of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School. The Forbes Magazine had named him in its list of the world's 50th most powerful in 2013.

Sachin, Amitabh in new Swachh Bharat campaign

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has launched an ad campaign featuring Amitabh Bachchan and Sachin Tendulkar, for the Swachh Bharat Mission. Under this campaign, three ad films featuring.

B). RESIGNS

Visa CEO Charles Scharf to resign

The San Francisco-based payments network Visa's CEO Charles Scharf had resigned from his post October 18, 2016. The company named Alfred Kelly Jr, a former president of American Express Co and a current Visa board member, as CEO.

Usain Bolt to retire after the 2017 World Championships

Jamaican athlete Usain Bolt has confirmed that he is going to retire after the 2017 World Championships in London, and also informed that the Racers Grand Prix later this year will be his last race on Jamaican soil. Bolt is expected to feature in both the 100m and 200m events at the 2017 World Championships. Bolt is widely considered as the greatest sprinter of all-time and is the first man to hold both the 100m and 200m records as well as the record being a part of the 4X100m relay. The Jamaican is also the reigning world and Olympic champion.

British Olympics icon Jessica Ennis-Hill announces retirement from athletics

Jessica Ennis-Hill has announced her retirement from athletics. Ennis-Hill, 30, who won a gold medal for heptathlon at London 2012, hinted after winning silver at Rio 2016 that she could leave the sport, and confirmed her decision on 13 October. Ennis-Hill became the poster girl for London 2012 after her gold medal success in the heptathlon event on "Super Saturday". She returned to defend her title in Rio this summer but fell just short, finishing in second place behind Nafissatou Thiam of Belgium. The Sheffield-born heptathlete leaves her sport having also won gold medals in two world championships, one world indoor championship and a European championship.

Jawhar Sircar resigns as CEO of Prasar Bharati Corporation

Prasar Bharati Corporation CEO Jawhar Sircar has resigned four months ahead of the end of his tenure, which was to draw to a close in February 2017. As per rules of the Prasar Bharati (Broadcasting Corporation of India) Act, 1990, chairman or any other member may resign the office by giving notice thereof in writing to the President of India and on such resignation being accepted, the chairman or other member shall be deemed to have vacated his office.

Govt removes Sushil Muhnot as CMD of Bank of Maharashtra

The Centre on 26 September has sacked Sushil Muhnot, chairman and managing director of Pune-based Bank of Maharashtra, four days short of his scheduled retirement, and appointed Ravindra Marathe as the state-owned lender's new chief. Mr. Muhnot was appointed as the chairman of the bank in November 2013, and was scheduled to retire on September 30. The new chief executive officer Mr. Marathe, who was an executive director with Bank of India, took charge on 26 September. The head office of Bank of Maharashtra is in Pune.

Ritu Rani retires from international hockey

Former Indian women's hockey captain Ritu Rani has retired from international hockey after being deeply hurt following her axing from the Rio Olympics-bound squad. Ritu was controversially dropped from the

team for the Rio Olympics citing “attitude” issues. Under her captaincy the team qualified for the Olympics after 36 years after finishing fifth in the 2014-15 Women’s FIH Hockey World League Semifinals. The 24-year-old midfielder made the announcement in a mail to Hockey India president Narinder Batra.

C). DEATHS

King of Thailand dies

Thailand’s King Bhumibol Adulyadej – the world’s longest-serving monarch – has died aged 88. King Bhumibol, the ninth king of the 234-year-old Chakri dynasty. After the demise of the Thai King, 63-year old Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn is expected to become the new king.

Dario Fo, Nobel-winning playwright, dies aged 90

Italian satirical dramatist Dario Fo, who won the Nobel prize for literature in 1997, died on 13 October aged 90, prompting an outpouring of tributes for a provocative playwright unafraid to clash with authority. The writer and actor succumbed to complications arising from a lung condition he had suffered for several years. Left-winger Fo, one of the leading figures in 20th century farce and political theatre, was best known for his works “Accidental Death of an Anarchist” and “Can’t Pay, Won’t Pay”.

Style icon Parmeshwar Godrej passes away at 70

Parmeshwar Godrej, philanthropist and wife of Godrej group chairman Adi Godrej passed away in Mumbai on October 11 2016. She was 70. She was among India’s foremost style icons and a gracious host. She was Mumbai’s original queen bee and will be fondly remembered by many as a style icon in her signature beret, who hosted some of Mumbai’s most memorable evenings peppered with a globally eclectic guest list – including businesspersons, Hollywood actors and beautiful people – with an ease which no one has since been able to match. Godrej used her position and natural charm to champion many social causes. She campaigned for AIDS at a time when people were still embarrassed to talk about it. One of her biggest initiatives in philanthropy was joining hands with actor Richard Gere, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Clinton Global Initiative to combat AIDS through the launch of the ‘Heroes Project’ in 2004.

Oscar-winning Polish film director Wajda dies aged 90

Oscar-winning Film director Andrzej Wajda, best known for chronicling Poland’s struggle for democracy during half a century of communist rule, has died at the age of 90. One of his best-known releases, 1957’s “Canal”, showed the struggle of the Polish underground army in the Warsaw uprising.

Former boxing champion Aaron Pryor dies at 60

Aaron Pryor, whose erratic swings and stances won him the world junior welterweight boxing championship but also mirrored a career-ending struggle with cocaine addiction, died on 9 October at his home in Cincinnati. He was 60. The cause was complications of heart disease. Pryor built a 39-1 record with 35 knockouts during his career.

Shimon Peres, former Israeli president, dies aged 93

The former Israel’s defining political figures and a Nobel peace prize laureate, Shimon Peres has died at the age of 93. He had served twice as a prime minister and once as a president.

Golf legend Arnold Palmer passes away

US golfer Arnold Palmer passed away on 25 September 2016 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania due to heart complications. He was 87. Palmer is generally regarded as one of the greatest players in professional golf history.

Oscar-winning writer and director dies at 71

Oscar-winning writer and film director Curtis Hanson has died at his home in Hollywood at the age of 71. He is known for his work in films like Kevin Spacey-starrer LA Confidential, The Hand That Rocks the Cradle and The River Wild. Hanson won an Oscar in 1998 for best adapted screenplay for LA Confidential. He also directed Detroit hip-hop movie 8 Mile starring Eminem, who led the tributes.

D). VISITORS

India, Singapore sign three agreements

“India and Singapore have signed three agreements (MoUs) in the fields of skill development and IPR to boost bilateral relations between them. These agreements were signed in New Delhi during Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong’s official state visit to India.

Signed MoUs are:

1. Signed MoUs are: MoU in the field of Industrial Property Cooperation
2. MoU on collaboration in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (between National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and ITEES Singapore).
3. MoU on collaboration in the field of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (between Government of Assam and ITEES Singapore).

Abu Dhabi Crown Prince to be Chief Guest on 2017 Republic Day

The crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan will be the chief guest for the 68th Republic Day celebrations on 26 January 2017. In this regard, announcement was made by the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesman Vikas Swarup in New Delhi after the crown prince accepted invitation. Earlier Chief guests of Republic Day parades: 2016- Francois Hollande (French President), 2015- Barack Obama (US President), 2014- Shinzo Abe (Japanese Prime Minister), 2013- Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (King of Bhutan), 2012- Yingluck Shinawatra (Then Prime Minister of Thailand), 2011- Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Then President of Indonesia). It should be noted France holds distinction of being the guest of honour for the maximum five times of Indian Republic Day parade followed by Bhutan (four times); Mauritius and Russia (three times each).

E). MISCELLANEOUS

Mizoram’s Pachuau declared India’s oldest working journalist

The Mizoram government and the Mizoram Journalists' Association declared Lalbiakthanga Pachuau as the "oldest working journalist in the country". The 90-year-old former soldier is the editor of 'Zoram Tlangau', a Mizo daily, started by him in 1970. Notably, Pachuau studied only till class III before joining the British Army in 1945 at the age of 18.

Bathukamma Event Enters Guinness Book of World Records

The Telangana government on 8 October organised the traditional state festival of 'Bathukamma' on a grand scale at the Lal Bahadur stadium in Hyderabad. The event, attended by about ten thousand women, found a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. The Telangana government has declared 'Bathukamma' as a state festival.

World's largest radio telescope built in China

China has built world's largest radio telescope nicknamed Tianyan (Heavenly Eye" or "The Eye of Heaven) or the five-hundred-metre aperture spherical radio telescope (FAST). It has started its operation and is part of China's drive to become a science powerhouse. It is located in the Dawodang depression (vast natural crater), a natural basin in Pingtang County in the Guizhou Province, Southwest China. With its opening, the intensive testing phase of the telescope will begin. It is the world's largest filled aperture (single dish) radio telescope and the second largest radio telescope after the Russian RATAN-600, which has a sparsely filled aperture. It is made up of 4,450 panels and has reflector as large as 30 football pitches. It has 500 meters diameter, giving it more sensitivity.

Visaranai to take a shot at Oscar nomination

Visaranai, the Tamil docu-drama crime thriller, has been chosen India's official entry to Best Foreign Language Film category at the 89th Academy Awards to be held in 2017. The national award-winning film, directed by Vetrimaran, and produced by actor Dhanush's Wunderbar Films, documents four migrant workers who suffer police brutality and corruption after being jailed on false charges.

PLACES IN NEWS

Brazil opens Latin America's first elephant sanctuary

The first elephant sanctuary in Latin America has opened in Brazil to provide a home for an estimated 50 circus animals from across the region. Guida and Maia, both over 40 years old, are the first residents. They will be provided with veterinary care and live out their lives in forested areas with pastures. A US-based group bought the land to give the elephants a refuge as zoos in the region close and more laws prohibit the use of animals in circuses. Both elephants are thought to have come from Thailand, where they were illegally taken to be used in circus. The first phase of the project will host up to six animals. The sanctuary will not be open for visitors.

Powerful typhoon Chaba to hit Japan

Powerful typhoon Chaba barrelled toward Japan after it hit a South Korean resort island causing flight cancellations and flooding streets. The typhoon hit the South Korean resort is-land of Jeju, bringing heavy rains that flooded streets, forced flight cancellations and disrupted power to thousands of homes.

Books in News

Venkaiah Naidu releases book titled Modi's Midas Touch in Foreign Policy

M. Venkaiah Naidu, Minister for Information and Broad-casting, released the book titled Modi's Midas Touch in Foreign Policy. The book is authored by Ambassador Surendra Kumar. The book draws round the progress and the indelible imprint on the conduct of India's Foreign Policy by the Prime Minister Modi in the last two and a half years. It maps the different policy initiatives focusing on the vision of developing India into a strong economically developed nation.

Arundhati Roy's next novel to be out in 2017

Nearly, 20 years after Arundhati Roy's Booker prize-winning novel 'The God of Small Things' was published. Arundhati Roy has announced the release of her next novel titled "The Ministry of Utmost Happiness" in June 2017. She was born in Shillong, Meghalaya.

President, PM launch VP's book titled "Citizen and Society"

President Pranab Mukherjee and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched Vice President Mohd Hamid Ansari's book titled "Citizen and Society" at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. The book is a collection of lectures delivered by Hamid Ansari ranging from the role of women in a multicultural society to other dynamics of a democratic nation. Mohammad Hamid Ansari is the 12th and current Vice President of India, in office since 2007. Ansari is the only person to get re-elected for the post of Vice President of India after Dr. Radhakrishnan.

COMMITTEES

Saraswati River existed: KS Valdiya committee

"The K.S. Valdiya committee in its report submitted to the Union Water Resources Ministry has concluded that Saraswati River so far considered mythical, existed. The committee comprising of geologists, archaeologists and hydrologists say that they have found evidence of the course of the river Saraswati. Earlier, River Saraswati was considered as a mythological river and has been mentioned in the ancient Hindu scriptures like the Rig Veda, Ramayana, Mahabharata and others giving credence that it existed during those times. Committee found that Saraswati River originated in the Himalayas. It was approximately 4,000 km in length and flowed through saraswatiriver India and Pakistan before meeting Arabian Sea through Rann of Kutch. Two-third stretch of river measuring nearly 3000 km in length fell in India and reaming one-third of the river stretch fell in present-day Pakistan. The river had two branches viz. "(i) Western Branch: It represented by the Himalayan-born Satluj River of the past which flowed through the channels of present-day Ghaggar-Patialwali rivulets. "(ii) Eastern Branch: Palaeochannels (remnants of defunct rivers) Sarsuti-Markanda rivulets in Haryana were courses of eastern branch of river, known as Tons-Yamuna. "The confluence of the branches was near Shatrana, 25 km south of Patiala. From this confluence point river flow crossed dessert (Rann of Kutch) and meet gulf of western sea."

BCCI president Anurag Thakur part of powerful ICC sub-committee

BCCI president Anurag Thakur has taken charge as the member of the ICC's powerful Finance and Commercial Affairs committee. Anurag Singh Thakur is a member of Lok Sabha from Hamirpur in Himachal Pradesh.

Finance Ministry constitutes committee to consolidate regulation of pension products

The Union Finance Ministry has constituted a high-level committee to consolidate the regulation of pension products that is currently being done by three different watchdogs including insurance and stock market regulators. The committee would have representatives from all financial sector regulators SEBI, IRDA, RBI and PFRDA. Its mandate will be to look into the issue of bringing these companies which are offering pension plans under different regulators under the purview of PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority).

IMPORTANT DAYS & DATES

October 31: Rashtriya Ekta Diwas

Rashtriya Ekta Diwas (National Unity Day) is observed across India on 31 October to commemorate birth anniversary of Independent India's first Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhai Patel. Observance of the day provides an opportunity to re-affirm inherent strength and resilience of our nation to withstand actual and potential threats to unity, integrity and security of our country. National Unity Day 2016 Theme is: "Integration of India". To mark this occasion various activities and events are being organised across ministries and departments all over the country. Besides, Run for Unity was organised in New Delhi. The idea of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas was mooted by PM Narendra Modi in October 2014 to mark the birth anniversary of country's first Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbai Patel.

October 31: World Cities Day

The World is observing Cities Day globally on 31st October to work together for a planned and sustainable urban life in the wake of rapid growth of population and problems. The day aims to promote international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world. 2016 Theme is "Inclusive Cities, Shared Development". It highlights the role of urbanization as a source of global development and social inclusion.

Vigilance Awareness week commences from 31st October 2016

The Central Vigilance Commission, as part of its efforts to promote probity in public life and to achieve a corruption free society, observes Vigilance Awareness Week every year. The week in which 31st October, the birthday of late Sardar Vallabhbai Patel falls is observed as Vigilance Awareness Week. The observance of the Vigilance Awareness Week has commenced from today (31st October 2016), with pledge taking by public servants in the Ministries/ Departments/ Central Public Sector Enterprises/ Public Sector Banks and all other Organizations. "Public participation in promoting integrity and eradicating Corruption" has been chosen as the theme for Vigilance Awareness Week this year by the Commission.

28 October: National Ayurveda Day

The first National Ayurveda Day was observed on 28 October on the occasion of Dhanwantari Jayanti. The theme for this year is 'Ayurveda for Prevention and Control of Diabetes'. Ayurveda is the traditional Hindu system of medicine based on the idea of balance in bodily systems and uses diet, herbal

treatment, and yogic breathing. It has been incorporated in Atharva Veda, the last of the four Vedas. To celebrate this day, the Union Ministry of AYUSH had organized a day-long national seminar on Prevention and Control of Diabetes through Ayurveda in New Delhi. Besides, the Ministry also had launched Mission Madhumeha through Ayurveda on the occasion. The Mission Madhumeha will be implemented throughout the country through a specially designed National Treatment Protocol for effective management of Diabetes through Ayurveda. The national treatment Protocol was also released on occasion of National Seminar.

27 October: World Day for Audiovisual Heritage

World Day for Audiovisual Heritage was observed across the world on 27 October 2016. The theme for the day was "It's Your Story – Don't Lose It." It aims to raise general awareness of the need for urgent measures to be taken to safeguard audiovisual document. It also focuses on acknowledging the importance of audiovisual documents as an integral part of national identity.

October 24: United Nations Day

The United Nations Day is being observed globally on October 24. The day marks the anniversary of the entry into force of the UN Charter (the founding document of UNO) in 1945. It entered into force on 24 October 1945 after it was ratified by the original five permanent members of the Security Council-China, France, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (now Russia), United Kingdom, and United States and majority of the other signatories. With the ratification of UN Charter, the United Nations officially came into existence. This year's UN Day will be used to highlight concrete actions people can take to help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Besides, UN Day Concert is also organised in the United Nations General Assembly Hall with the theme 'Freedom First'. This day is part of United Nations Week, which runs from 20 to 26 October.

21 October: Police Commemoration Day

Police Commemoration Day was observed on 21 October. At the Annual Conference of Inspectors General of Police of States and Union Territories held in January 1960, it was decided that October 21 would be observed as 'Commemoration Day' in all Police Lines across India to mark the memory of police personnel who were killed in Ladakh in a faceoff with the Chinese Army and all the other Police personnel who have been killed on duty elsewhere. The faceoff took place at Hot Springs in North Eastern Ladakh. A memorial has been erected at Hot Springs and, every year, Police personnel from across India trek to Hot Springs to pay their respects. Since the year 2012, the Police Commemoration Day Parade is being held at the National level at the Police Memorial, Chanakyapuri. Loss of lives Since 1961, 32, 557 police personnel have lost their lives in service of the nation and society. Between September 2013 and August 2014, 662 police personnel throughout the country have lost their lives in the line of duty

17 October: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed globally on 17 October for eradication of poverty through-out the world. It seeks to promote awareness among people to eradicate poverty and destitution around the world particularly in developing countries. 2016 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty Theme is "Moving from humiliation and exclusion to participation: Ending poverty in all its forms". It high-lights importance to recognize and address the humiliation and exclusion suffered by many people living in poverty.

16 October: World Food Day

The World Food Day is observed globally on 16 October to mark foundation of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945. It aims to raise public awareness about hunger

challenges and encourage people around the world to take action in the fight against hunger. The theme of this year is "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too". It highlights the issue of food security related to climate change. It calls adopting sustainable practices for growing more food with less area of land and use natural resources wisely.

International Day of Rural Women: October 15

The International Day of Rural Women is observed across the world on 15 October. The theme for the day for the year 2016 is Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too. Under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, focus is on progress of rural women and enhancing their access to support and information they need to utilize their potential without leaving their communities.

World Student Day: October 15

Unarguably the most loved President of India, APJ Abdul Kalam was a scientist who made India proud with his missile defence programme. But his favourite job was teaching and that's how he wanted the world to remember him. Due to his love for students and focus on promoting education, the United Nations declared his birthday 15 October as 'World Student's Day' in 2010. He was the 11th President of India.

World Standards Day: 14 October

World Standards Day' or 'International standards day' is celebrated internationally each year on 14 October. The day honours the efforts of the thousands of experts who develop voluntary standards within standards development organizations such as the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) and Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). The aim of World Standards Day is to raise awareness among regulators, industry and consumers as to the importance of standardization to the global economy. 14 October was specifically chosen to mark the date, in 1946, when delegates from 25 countries first gathered in London and decided to create an international organization focused on facilitating standardization. Even though ISO was formed one year later, it wasn't until 1970 that the first World Standards Day was celebrated. The theme for World Standards Day 2016 is "Standards Build Trust". Around the globe, various activities are chosen by national bodies to commemorate the date.

International Day for Disaster Reduction: October 13

The United Nations General Assembly declared October 13 as the International Day for Disaster Reduction which is also a part of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. In the year 2002, the United Nations General Assembly declared the day to encourage the global culture of natural disaster reduction, promoting prevention, mitigation and pre-paredness. In 2009, October 13 was designated as the official date and the name of the day was changed to International Day for Disaster Reduction. International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction was observed in 1990s. This was done with an objective to decrease the loss of life, property, destruction and any kind of disruption caused by natural disasters. The day is celebrated to spread awareness and encourage citizens and the government about disaster risk reduction and building disaster-resilient nations. This year, the theme for the day is 'Live To Tell: Raising Awareness, Reducing Mortality'.

First World Tsunami Awareness Day to be observed on Nov 5

The government of India will be observing the First World Tsunami Awareness Day on November 5. It will be observed during the upcoming Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) 2016. The conference is slated to take place in Delhi between November 2-5.

International Day of the Girl Child : 11 October

International Day of the Girl is observed annually on 11 October; it is also called the Day of the Girl. The theme for this year's International Day of the Girl (11 October) is "Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress: What Counts for Girls". On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/ 170 to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world. The International Day of the Girl Child focuses attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights.

World Mental Health Day: 10 October

World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year, with the overall objective of raising awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilizing efforts in support of mental health. The theme of 2016 World Mental Health Day is "psychological first aid". The Day provides an opportunity for all stakeholders working on mental health issues to talk about their work, and what more needs to be done to make mental health care a reality for people worldwide.

World Post Day: 9th October

World Post Day is celebrated each year on 9 October, the anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern. The theme for this year 2016 is Innovation, Integration and Inclusion.

Indian Air Force Day: 8 October

The Air Force Day is observed annually on 8 October across India. This year is the 84th celebration of the Day which began in 1932. On this day, the most renowned aerobatics display teams, Red Arrows of the Royal Air Force, enthral audience at Indian Air Force Day celebrations in New Delhi. The Indian Air Force (IAF; IAST: Bharatiya Vayu Sena) is the air arm of the Indian armed forces. It is the world's fourth largest air force. Since independence, the IAF has been involved in four wars with neighbouring Pakistan and one with the People's Republic of China. Other major operations undertaken by the IAF include Operation Vijay, Operation Meghdoot, Operation Cactus and Operation Poomalai. Apart from conflicts, the IAF has been an active participant in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The President of India serves as Supreme Commander of the IAF. The Chief of Air Staff, an Air Chief Marshal, is a four-star officer and commands the Air Force.

5 October: World Teachers' Day

The World Teachers' Day (WTD) 2016 was observed across the world on 5 October 2016. The theme for the World Teachers' Day 2016 was Valuing Teachers, Improving their Status. It embodies the fundamental principles of the fifty-year-old Recommendation. It also throws light on the need to support teachers as reflected in the agenda's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2016 WTD also marks the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1966 ILO/ UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. It is also the first world Teachers' Day to be celebrated within the new Global Education 2030 Agenda adopted by the world community in 2015.

4–10 October: World Space Week

World Space Week is an annual event that is observed from 4 October to 10 October 2016 in various parts of the world including Europe and Asia. The 2016 theme is "Remote Sensing: Enabling our Future". This year's theme celebrates Earth Observation from Space for the betterment of the human race. By Resolution 54/68 of 6 December 1999, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed World Space

Week, to celebrate the contributions of space science and technology to the betterment of the human condition. The dates recall the launch of the first artificial satellite, Sputnik I, on 4 October 1957 and its entry into force on 10 October 1967, of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

3 October: World Habitat Day

The World Habitat Day (WHD) is observed every year on the first Monday of October throughout the world. This year it was observed on 3 October 2016. 2016 Theme is "Housing at the Centre". It aims to raise awareness about need for affordable housing for all in urban areas, cities and towns. Access to adequate housing is a global challenge due growing fast with urbanization. Around one quarter of the world's urban population continues to live in informal settlements and slums. An increasing number of urban dwellers, especially the poor and vulnerable groups are living in precarious conditions.

International day for non violence: 2nd October

The International Day of Non-Violence is marked on 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence. According to General Assembly resolution A/RES/61/271 of 15 June 2007, which established the commemoration, the International Day is an occasion to "dis-seminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness".

1 October: International Day of Older Persons

The International Day of Older Persons is observed on October 1 every year. The theme for International Day of Older Persons 2016 is Take A Stand Against Ageism. The theme for the 2016 IDOP draws attention to and challenges negative stereotypes and misconceptions about older persons and ageing. Ageism is a widely prevalent and prejudicial attitude that stems from the assumption that age discrimination, and sometimes neglect and abuse of older persons is a social norm and therefore, acceptable. On December 14, 1990 the United Nations General Assembly voted to establish October 1 as the International Day of Older Persons.