



Current Affairs May - 2016

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1. Andhra Pradesh first state in the country to become Open Defecation Free in urban areas

Andhra Pradesh is set to become the first State in the country to make all of its urban areas Open Defecation Free by October 2nd this year, marking the two years of the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

The State officials gave this assurance during a review of progress of Swachh Bharat Mission in all the 110 municipalities of Andhra Pradesh by Shri Rajiv Gauba, Secretary(Urban Development) at Visakhapatnam. Shri Gauba went to the port city for review of progress of urban missions like Smart city Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Swachh Bharat Mission. He held extensive discussions with the Collectors of all the 13 districts and Municipal Commissioners of all the 110 urban local bodies in Andhra Pradesh on their action plans for ensuring sanitation.

During the review, it emerged that Andhra Pradesh which has been in the forefront of construction of toilets in urban areas can make all 100 municipalities Open Defecation Free by October 2 this year as per the action plans in progress.

As against the Mission target of construction of 1,94,336 individual household toilets in urban areas of Andhra Pradesh, work has started in respect of 1,53,779 and construction of 1,04,732 toilets has already been completed.

In addition to the central assistance of Rs.4,000 per toilet, Andhra Pradesh Government is extending assistance of an additional Rs.11,000 per toilet giving a big boost for the programme.

Regarding Community and Public Toilet seats, as against the mission target of 4,614 seats, work has started on 3,887 seats and 1,952 seats have already been constructed.

In respect of Solid Waste Management, out of the total wards of 3,458 in 110 municipalities, 100% door-to-door collection and transportation of such waste is being done in 3,072 wards i.e 89% of total urban wards in the state.

The State Governments has also awarded works for construction of 10 Waste to Energy Plants for generating 63 MW of power from the 6,440 tonnes of municipal waste being generated per day in the state. Shri Gauba was informed that these plants would be commissioned during 2017-18.

Shri Gauba complimented the State Government and all concerned officials for good progress under Swachh Bharat Mission in urban areas and for becoming the first state to make all urban areas open defecation free much ahead of the target this year.

2. India aims to achieve Defence Technological Sovereignty

India has the third largest armed forces with an annual budget of around \$ 40 Billion. 40 % of it is for capital acquisition. The budget is also growing to take care of the needs of the armed forces. India also happens to be one of the largest importers of Defence goods. The nation aspires to change this situation. While ensuring that the Defence services always get the best quality equipment, India aims to achieve substantial self reliance and indigenization in Defence equipment technology. Outlining the roadmap to bold reforms in the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP), Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar announced the salient features of the new DPP during the 9th edition of DEFEXPO 2016, a biennial exhibition on Land, Naval Internal Homeland and Security Systems Exhibition, which was held in South Goa this year. Participation from 47 countries is a clear indicator of Indias growing prominence and stature internationally; this years exhibition was the largest Defexpo held till to date. In all, over 1000 companies, both foreign and Indian participated in the exhibition this year. Shri. Manohar Parrikar said that the Indian-Designed Developed and Manufactured (IDDM) category will have the topmost priority now. Further simplification of procedure, reduced timelines, quick decision-making, transparency are added features of the new DPP. Shri. Parrikar while answering a question on the importance of research and development said, RD is very close to my heart. Being an engineer myself I know that we are on the right path. Technology is changing almost every year and India is one country which has a huge pool of people in engineering and technology who can convert many defence requirements into actual production. Under the supervision of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), we have also been working with many academic institutions like the IITs, IISCs and NITs to take this cause to new heights. The Raksha Mantri added,

This DPP, I believe, can actually push the agenda of Make in India and India's target of achieving major successes in creating a defence industry network for its own need as well as for exports. Make in India is an initiative launched by the Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi to encourage multi-national, as well as national companies to manufacture their products in India. The major objective behind the initiative is to focus on job creation and skill enhancement in 25 sectors of the economy, including defence manufacturing. Talking about the steps that the Government of India has been taking in furthering the cause, Secretary (Defence Production), Ministry of Defence, Shri. Ashok Gupta in an exclusive interview said that during 2014-15 and 2015-16, 66 capital procurement cases which Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved at an estimated cost of Rs.1.98 lakh crore, 88 % of these cases by value have been approved under Buy Indian and Buy Make Indian categories which means that request for proposals will be issued to the Indian vendors and they either on their own or in collaboration with the foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) will supply these items. This is going to create a huge domestic demand. This implies that if foreign OEMs want to leverage the Indian demand, the only route available is to enter into collaboration with Indian vendors. Secretary (DP) also outlined several steps which have been taken in the last 2 years in order to promote the entry of private sector into Defence manufacturing : The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy for the Defence sector has been revised. Now, the composite foreign investment up to 49 % is allowed under automatic route and beyond 49 % also with the approval of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB). Several conditions attached to the policy have also been removed to make the process simpler. In order to reduce the entry barrier, the Defence products list for the purpose of issuing industrial licenses (ILs) under IDR Act has been revised and most of the components, parts, sub-systems testing equipments, production equipments have been removed from the list. Level-playing field has been provided to Indian Private Sector. Public Sector no longer enjoys the special status in terms of excise and custom duty levies. To create a level - playing field between the Indian and foreign industry, the Exchange Rate Variation (ERV) protection has been allowed on foreign exchange components to all Indian companies, including private companies in all categories of capital acquisitions. Since domestic industry cannot survive purely on domestic demand, the entire procedure for exports has been streamlined. Now NOCs for exports are issued online. The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the issue of No Objection Certificate (NOC) for export of military stores has been revised and put on the website. Under the revised SOP, the requirement of End User Certificate (EUC) to be countersigned / stamped by the Government authorities has been done away with, for the export of parts, components, sub-systems etc. For the first time, a specific Defence Export Strategy has been formulated and put in public domain. The strategy outlines specific initiatives to be taken by the Government for encouraging the export of Defence items. The provision of Make category of capital acquisition is a vital pillar for realizing the vision of the Make in India initiative. Make procedure has been restructured and a number of provisions have been made to incentivize the industry e.g. increasing the share of Government funding, full reimbursement in case of foreclosure and non issue of RFP (Request for Proposal) and giving preference to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in smaller projects. These Make projects will not only help in creating eco-system in terms of vendor development but also kick-start race for development and/or technology acquisition by the industry, which will help the Defence manufacturing in the long run. Such indigenously developed systems will also be available for export to establish India as a global Player in Defence market. Offsets (Liability of foreign OEMs to invest certain percentage of the contract value in manufacturing industry in India to offset a foreign exchange payment) play an important role in development of domestic industry and facilitating it to become part of global supply chain. Offset implementation has been one of major issues with foreign OEMs as far as doing business in India is concerned. We have undertaken the task of significantly overhauling the guidelines. The requirement of prescribing Indian Offset Partners and components for offset discharge for the entire period of contract, at the time of signing of contract, has been done away with. One of the major demands of the industry has been to re-instate the provision of services for discharge of offsets. This also has been done. With these measures in place, coupled with large pool of cost effective human resource, this is the best time to invest in India. I am also seeing things happening on ground. Of late, there is a marked increase in the issue of licenses and exports are also going up, said Secretary (Defence Production). Shri. Ashok Gupta. He added, The Government is fully committed and geared up for further changes required in policy, processes and promotional measures for the industry. Therefore, it is now for the industry to make the best use of this opportunity by investing in Defence Sector.

3. Venkaiah Naidu, Siddaramaiah flag off south India's first underground Metro

Union Urban Development Minister [Venkaiah Naidu](#) and Karnataka Chief Minister [Siddaramaiah](#) on Friday flagged-off the much awaited [East-West corridor of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited](#) (BMRL) - south India's first underground metro. "Namma Metro is to provide better commuting facilities in the city and all out efforts

would be made to complete the remaining portion of the phase I of Namma Metro within a few months," said Siddaramaiah, highlighting his government's attempts to provide better infrastructure in Bengaluru and sought further assistance from central government. "Phase II of Namma Metro would cost Rs.26,405 crore and the work has already commenced. If all goes well, it will become operational by 2020. The state government will contribute Rs.9,000 crore for this project and it has already released Rs.900 crore till now. The remaining amount will be released in the near future," he said. With a 5.12 km underground section, the east-west corridor passes beneath some of the city's most iconic landmarks such as the Vidhan Soudha, the GPO, Cubbon Park, the high court and others. Thousands of government employees working in several offices stand to benefit hugely along with the general public from the new Namma Metro link. The extended Metro will stretch from Baiyappanahalli to Nayandahalli and fare between the two points has been fixed at Rs.40.

4. NITI Aayog to launch Urban Management Program for Capacity Building in States and Urban Local Bodies

NITI Aayog chaired by Vice Chairman Dr Arvind Panagariya launched the Urban Management Programme on 27 April 2016 in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The state participation was at the level of Secretaries of Urban Development, Municipal Commissioners and other senior officials of State Government and parastatal bodies. About 150 participants were present in the event. An overview of the Urban Management Programme. The Programme is designed by NITI Aayog, Temasek Foundation and Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE) under the platform of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between NITI Aayog and the Singapore Cooperation Enterprise (SCE). It was to tap the expertise of Singapore in urban sector to build capacities in State Governments and ULBs to design efficient solutions to urban problems. As a part of NITI Aayogs mandate to promote cooperative federalism, NITI is reaching out to the States to resolve their issues pending with different Ministries. It is emphasized on improving governance particularly of the census towns whose number has significantly increased between census 2001 and 2011. The vision of urban transformation is achieved successfully only with the well built municipal cadre and provide stability of tenure to officials in municipalities.

5. SIDBI signs MoU with Saarc Development Fund

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and Saarc Development Fund (SDF) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for mutual cooperation and collaboration. The MoU envisages SDF and SIDBI to work together in co-funding of projects in Indian MSMEs on risk sharing basis in identified sectors, development of suitable financial products for SME financing for MSMEs of other Saarc states, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The MoU also calls for technology transfer and making available software to MFIs regarding loan tracking systems in other Saarc states and capacity development of SDF/SIDBI and SME funding institutions in SAARC countries, it added. The MoU was signed by SIDBI Deputy Managing Director A K Kapur and SDF CEO Sunil Motiwal.

6. Reliance Defence inks pact with 3 Ukrainian state firms

Reliance Defence has signed an agreement with three Ukrainian state-owned firms Ukroboronprom, Spetstechno Exports and Antonov to collaborate on a range of military products including transport aircraft, armoured vehicles, maritime gas turbines and unmanned aerial vehicles. This follows Reliance Group chairman Anil Ambanis meeting with the President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko in Ukraine this week, where they discussed issues of strategic interest between Indian and Ukrainian Defence and Aerospace industries. As a follow up of the meeting, a Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed between State-owned Ukroboronprom of Ukraine and Reliance Defence, which will allow it to collaborate with Antonov for its range of military and commercial transport aircraft, according to statement from Reliance Defence. Reliance Defence is a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure Ltd., a part of the Reliance Group. Under the agreement with Antonov, credited as the manufacturer of largest transport aircraft in the world, Reliance and Antonov will jointly bid for the Medium Military Transport Aircraft program of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Besides, both companies will also collaborate for the assembly and manufacture, and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) of Antonov series of aircraft to address the requirements of the Indian market and agreed global markets. The Indian Air Force currently operates more than 100 AN-32 aircraft, which form the backbone of its transport fleet. Market size HAL is looking at a market size of up to 300 aircraft in the medium range. This will be potentially the largest collaborative effort involving the public sector, private sector and global OEM as part of the Make in India and Skill India initiatives of the government with the value of the projects exceeding Rs.50,000 crore. Upgrades The cooperation between Reliance Defence and Spetstechno Exports, a foreign trade enterprise of Ukraine, will focus on upgrades for the amphibious infantry fighting vehicle (BMP 2), Armoured Vehicles, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)

and Marine Gas Turbines for the Indian Navy Frigate programme in India.

7. Indra Nooyi, Satya Nadella, Bhavesh Patel among highest paid CEOs in the world

As many as three Indian origin persons have been named among 100 highest-paid CEOs globally with PepsiCo's Indra Nooyi and LyondellBasell's Bhavesh Patel making it to the top ten list compiled by Equilar.

Chemicals company LyondellBasell Industries' top executive Bhavesh V Patel was ranked sixth on the list with a total compensation of \$24.5 million, while Nooyi, the chief executive of PepsiCo was ranked eighth on the list with a total pay of \$22.2 million.

Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft was ranked 26th on the list of 100 highest-paid CEOs with a total compensation of \$18.3 million.

The overall list was topped by Mark V Hurd and Safra A Catz of Oracle Corp with both boasting a total compensation of \$53.2 million.

Others on the top 10 include, Robert A Iger of Walt Disney (\$43.5 million), David M Cote of Honeywell International (\$33.1 million), General Electric's Jeffrey R Immelt (\$26.4 million), Randall L Stephenson of AT&T (\$22.4 million), Rupert Murdoch of Twenty-First Century Fox (\$22.2 million) and James P Gorman of Morgan Stanley (\$22 million).

This list is a snapshot of companies that file annual proxy statements before April 1 and aims to provide an early look at CEO pay trends for 2015.

The report further noted that the median pay for Equilar 100 CEOs was \$14.5 million in fiscal year 2015, up 3 per cent from the previous year.

Interestingly, eight CEOs on the list are female, and they far outpace the median pay for the Equilar 100 as a whole.

8. Giant duck-billed dinosaur fossil sets world record

A fossilized skeleton of a hadrosaur, or duck-billed dinosaur, in east China's Shandong Province has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the "largest hadrosaurid skeleton on display." The Zhuchengosaurus maximus skeleton in Zhucheng Dinosaur Museum, Zhucheng City, is 9.1 meters high and 16.6 meters long, while the average height and body length of hadrosaurs are four-five meters and six-nine meters. Experts with the city's dinosaur research center said Zhuchengosaurus maximus lived in lakes and swamps and fed on plants, clams and algae in the late Cretaceous period about 70 million years ago, when the area was a basin with a humid climate and heavy vegetation. Zhucheng is home to one of the largest dinosaur bone concentrations in the world. At least 10 dinosaur species have been found in excavations there since the 1960s. The skeleton fossil of Zhuchengosaurus maximus was unearthed during a round of excavations from 1989 and 1991.

9. China develops world's first graphene electronic paper for next-gen e-readers

In a major breakthrough, China has developed the world's first graphene electronic paper which will catapult the material to a new level. The new material has been heralded as "the world's first graphene electronic paper," by Chen Yu, general manager of Guangzhou OED Technologies, which developed it in partnership with a company in Chongqing Province. Graphene is the world's strongest and lightest known material; a single layer of graphene is only 0.335 nanometers thick, and it can conduct heat and electricity, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. It can be used to create hard or flexible graphene displays, used in electronic products such as e-readers and wearable smart devices. Compared with traditional e-papers, graphene e-paper is more pliable and has more intensity and its high-light transmittance means optical displays will be much brighter. In addition, graphene is derived from carbon, meaning production costs will be much lower than for traditional e-papers, which use the rare, expensive metal indium. E-papers have been produced on a commercial scale since 2014. Compared with liquid crystal displays, e-papers are thinner, bendable and energy efficient, meaning products are more portable. The team's graphene e-paper will be put into production within a year.

10. PM Modi launches scheme to provide free LPG connections to poor

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a Rs 8,000 crore scheme to provide 5 crore free LPG connections to poor families as he attacked previous governments for just paying lip service to reducing poverty.

Calling himself 'Shramik No.1' (Worker No.1), he listed out initiatives taken by his government for the welfare of labourers.

The launch coincided with May Day and Modi attacked previous governments for doing little for the poor. "Policies made by previous governments were not keeping in mind the welfare of poor but only ballot boxes," he said.

Poverty, he said, can be eradicated only if poor are empowered, given resources and opportunities as well as education, jobs, houses, drinking water and electricity.

He questioned the policies pursued by the previous government for poverty eradication, saying poverty has only increased during past years.

"We are working to fight poverty," he said, adding that under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, free LPG connections will be provided in name of women members of BPL households.

In the first year, 1.5 crore such connections will be released and the target of 5 crore will be completed in three years, he said, comparing it to the just 13 crore LPG connections provided in 60 years of independence.

"In my first speech in Central Hall of Parliament after BJP government came to power (in 2014), I had said my government is dedicated to poor. "Whatever this government does will be for the benefit of the poor and for the welfare of poor," he said as he listed out various labour-friendly initiatives, including raising minimum pension to Rs 1,000 and introduction of labour identification number (LIN). Also, the maximum wage that entitles bonus to workers has been raised to Rs 21,000 from Rs 10,000 per month previously, while the bonus limit too has been doubled to Rs 7,000. Provident fund (PF) portability has been provided to help utilise the Rs 27,000 crore of retirement benefits lying unused because of workers changing jobs or cities.

11. Ensuring job security, wage security & social security for workers is topmost priority for govt: Bandaru Dattatreya

Labour and Employment Minister Bandaru Dattatreya today said, ensuring job security, wage security and social security for workers is topmost priority for the government.

In his message on International Labour Day, Mr Dattatreya said, his Ministry is committed to employment generation by facilitating ease of doing business including that for startups and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs.

He said, employment creation is central to growth and development strategy as India is the fastest growing nation which is also endowed with the largest young workforce.

The Minister said, government is working for bringing transparency and accountability in enforcement of labour laws.

He said, his Ministry is working to simplify, consolidate and rationalize the provisions of the 43 labour laws in 4 Labour Codes.

These are Labour Code on Wages, Industrial Relations, Social Security and Welfare and Safety and Working Conditions.

12. Parl committee expresses anguish over shortage of faculty in higher education institutions

A Parliamentary committee has expressed anguish over shortage of faculty in higher education institutions, including Central Universities, IITs and IIMs. In a report tabled earlier this week, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD headed by BJP MP Satyanarayan Jatiya, voiced concern over acute shortage of faculty in higher education institutions across the country.

The panel said it was informed that the total number of sanctioned teaching posts in Central Universities is 16,600 out of which 2,376 are for the position of Professors, 4,708 Associate Professors and 9,521 Assistant Professors. Of the positions lying vacant 1,277 are for the post of Professor, 2,173 Associate Professor and 2,478 Assistant Professor.

In the IITs, the committee said in its report, the minimum qualification for a faculty member is PhD and there is a shortage of such candidates. It noted that institutes were engaging faculty on contract basis to tide over the shortage.

13. Indian Railways to plant 5 cr saplings on rail land before monsoon

In order to enhance the green cover along the rail tracks, Indian Railway has firmed up an ambitious proposal to plant five crore saplings ahead of the onset of monsoon on land owned by it.

Railways has created a separate directorate to carry out environment-related activities in a focused manner. A senior official in the Environment Directorate of the Railway Ministry said, they are finalising the varieties of trees such as neem, pilkhan, jamun to be planted on rail land including on both sides of the tracks. The saplings will be region-specific and vary from zone to zone.

Railways will be joined by the Environment Ministry and state governments in the massive drive. Railway official said, his Ministry will sign an MoU with the Environment Ministry to carry out the plantation exercise.

Besides, Railways will also rope in NGOs in the country-wide exercise. The official said, the tree plantation drive will serve dual purpose, an environment friendly exercise as well as preventing encroachment of rail land.

14. Indian-American journalist receives Edgar A Poe award

An Indian-American journalist was felicitated by U.S. President Barack Obama and the First Lady Michelle as she and her colleagues were presented with a prestigious award during the annual White House Correspondents Dinner here. Neela Banerjee and three of her colleagues from Inside Climate News John Cushman Jr, David Hasemyer and Lisa Song were presented with the prestigious Edgar A Poe award. The annual award by the White House Correspondents Association (WHCA) honours journalistic work of national or regional significance. A Washington DC based journalist Ms. Banerjee, before joining Inside Climate News, was energy and environmental reporter for the Los Angeles Times Washington bureau. She covered global energy, the Iraq War and other issues with The New York Times. A graduate of Yale University, she also served as a Moscow correspondent with The Wall Street Journal. The award was shared by Terrence McCoy of the Washington Post, who explored the issue of lead poisoning among poor black children in Baltimore after Freddie Gray died in custody in a highprofile case of alleged police abuse. As early as 1977, scientists at energy and oil giant Exxon Corporation told top executives that fossil fuel emissions were warming the planet. Over time, however, Exxon became a leader in denying climate change and argued that the science was inclusive, the judges wrote. Reporters Neela Banerjee, John Cushman, Jr David Hasemyer and Lisa Song of Inside Climate News, used documents, interviews and the public record from four decades to reveal a deeply disturbing trail from climate change discovery to denial, it said. The story prompted the New York Attorney General to issue a subpoena to force Exxon to disclose records in order to determine if it committed fraud under state law, the judges said. Misha Euceph, a Pakistani radio journalist from Rawalpindi was among the 18 budding journalists selected for WHCA annual scholarship. She was also felicitated by the US President and the First Lady. Euceph, is the recipient of a USD 5,000 grant through the WHCA to help finance a postgraduate degree for a student in the Government and Public Affairs reporting track. Among the judges for journalism awards included Indian American Indira Somani, an Assistant Professor of Journalism at the School of Communications, Howard University in Washington, DC where she teaches broadcast journalism courses.

15. India, New Zealand sign landmark Air Services Agreement

India and New Zealand today signed a landmark Air Services Agreement paving the way for introduction of direct flights between the two countries. The agreement was signed by Minister of State for Agriculture Farmer Welfare, Dr Sanjeev Baliyan on behalf of India and Transport Minister of New Zealand Simon Bridges in the presence of the President Mr Pranab Mukherjee and the New Zealand Prime Minister Mr John Key.

Business, Education and Tourism have grown exponentially between India and New Zealand in the recent years. There

are nearly 1,75,000 persons of Indian origin in New Zealand of which about 15,000 are Indian students. The two-way trade between the two countries has doubled in the last few years. The two-way tourist traffic has also witnessed sharp rise, partly due to the exotic and pristine locales of New Zealand shown in Indian movies.

President Mukherjee said the agreement will lead to easier connectivity that has inhibited both business travel and people-to-people contact in the past. New Zealand Prime Minister John Key also held talks with Mr Mukherjee. Briefing newsmen, Secretary East in the Ministry of External Affairs Preeti Saran said both sides agreed to expedite negotiations for an early conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement. President Mukherjee also addressed a large gathering of Business Leaders today. He said despite sluggishness in World Economy, India is progressing at a healthy 7.2% rate of growth and it will certainly be better in coming years.

He said India is offering many business and investment opportunities through a number of programmes evolved by the government including Make in India Skill Development. Talking about democracy and parliamentary system, he said, dissent is an important component of it and that without dissent, parliamentary system will become dysfunctional. The President addressed the Indian Community later in the evening. Tomorrow, Mr Mukherjee is scheduled to visit the Auckland University of Technology before returning home.

16. Venezuela's President orders 30 % increase in minimum wage

Venezuela's President has ordered a 30 per cent increase in the minimum wage. This is the latest move by the socialist government to grapple with high inflation and economic stagnation.

The boost announced last night by President Nicolas Maduro comes after a 25 per cent increase on March 1 this year. The new increase is effective from the International Labour Day today.

Venezuela's oil export-dependent economy shrank 5.7 per cent last year, shortages of basic goods multiplied and prices soared. The government has instituted rolling blackouts and state employees are working only two days a week to conserve electricity.

17. Tens of thousands join May Day rally in South Korea

Tens of thousands of South Koreans took part in today's May Day protests to criticise labour reforms pushed by the government and to call for a higher minimum wage.

Labour activists say the labour reform bill pushed by President Park Geun-Hye and her conservative Saenuri Party will make it easier for companies to lay off workers.

"Let's fight together against the evil bill!" labour activists and unionised workers chanted in unison during a protest held in Seoul Plaza in front of the city hall.

About 30,000 unionised workers at local companies took part, according to the Federation of Korean Trade Unions.

Elections last month saw Park's party lose its parliamentary majority for the first time in 16 years, as voters registered their dissatisfaction with the president's economic record and soaring youth unemployment.

The crushing defeat left Park, who has less than two years left of her single, five-year term, a lame duck leader who will increasingly struggle to push through her conservative economic agenda, including labour reforms.

Many at today's rally in front of the city hall waved banners reading "Down with easy layoff!" or "Protect our rights to work!" and chanted slogans including "Fight against Park's administration that suppresses labour rights!"

Many also waved giant flags reading "Minimum wage of 10,000 won(\$ 8.73)!" South Korea's current minimum wage is 6,030 won per hour.

Another protest involving thousands of workers was held in central Seoul, demanding the scrapping of the labour reform

bill and shorter working hours.

18. Punjab to be develop 200 smart villages

Punjab Government is committed to provide amenities in villages at par with urban areas. Disclosing this an official spokesperson of the Punjab Government said that the government has proposed to develop 200 smart villages during the current financial year 2016-17 which will be provided with ultra modern facilities like 4G connectivity, solar street lights, sewa kendras, sewerage and drainage facilities, bank branch and model school etc. The spokesperson further said that government has also started Rural Mission to improve rural infrastructure for socio-economic development of rural population. A sum of Rs.2, 000 crore is being provided for this purpose. He said that rural Mission has aimed to fill the gaps in physical infrastructure in rural areas by constructing school buildings, health dispensaries, Dharmshalas and by providing clean drinking water, sports facilities etc. and creating pollution-free environment in rural areas. The spokesperson further said that Panchayats and the rural people at large should come forward to responsible support and help the government in the development mission by maintaining and keeping the environment clean and pollution free.

19. Flying from Delhi to get cheaper from May 1

Flying out from the Indira Gandhi International Airport in the national capital will soon become cheaper, with regulator AERA directing the airport operator to discontinue levying development fee from May 1.

Currently, a domestic passenger boarding a plane from IGIA has to shell out Rs 100 per flight towards Development Fee (DF) while the amount is Rs 600 for international flyers.

Citing the average monthly collection of Rs 30 crore as DF, the regulator said the total sanctioned DF amount of Rs 3,415.35 crore is likely to be recovered by April 30, 2016.

"The DF of Rs 100 per embarking domestic passenger and Rs 600 per embarking international passenger... at IGI Airport shall be continued only till April 30, 2016," Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) said.

Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) is operated by Delhi International Airport Pvt Ltd (DIAL), which is a joint venture between GMR group, Airports Authority of India and Germany's Fraport AG.

The regulator had earlier allowed DIAL to levy DF through an order issued in December 2012.

"Keeping in view the average monthly collection of Rs 30 crore, the balance DF is likely to be recovered by April 30, 2016 after taking into account the dues recoverable from airlines," AERA said in a six-page order, dated January 25.

At the end of December 2015, the DF amount to be recovered from passengers stood at around Rs 121.48 crore. This included Rs 30.59 crore to be paid for ATC/CNS (Air Traffic Control/Communication, Navigation and Surveillance) on expenditure basis.

To cover the financial gap in developing the project, the allowable DF was determined at Rs 3,415.35 crore.

According to the order, the DF contribution by passengers till April 30 would be accounted by raising bills based on passengers' contribution details in airlines manifesto.

"DIAL/AAI shall take steps to collect the amounts due and the interest on belated payments from the airlines till all the outstanding receivables are realised," it added.

When contacted, a DIAL spokesperson said, "The decision is in line with the original AERA approved timeline. In the said order, AERA has also given six months time, post April 2016, to reconcile and address over/under recovery of Development Fee to settle the approved amount of DF."

Based on AAI's report, the regulator would review and decide on the treatment of over-recovery or under-recovery of DF.

20. RNU of AIR Ahmedabad celebrates its 57th installation day

Regional News Unit- of All India Radio Ahmedabad is celebrating its 57th anniversary along with the Gujarat foundation day today. Though, All India Radio- Ahmedabad was established on 16th April 1949, the Regional News Unit of AIR Ahmedabad had started functioning independently from RNU Mumbai when Gujarat state was bifurcated from erstwhile Mumbai State on 1st May 1960. Since then, Regional News Unit of AIR Ahmedabad is serving the Radio listeners by its popular Pradeshik Samachar bulletins and other news based programs like Samachar Darpan, Samachar Sameeksha, Jilla Samachar Patra, FM News Headlines etc.

The first Pradeshik Samachar in Gujarati language from RNU Ahmedabad was broadcast at 7.10 pm on 1st May 1960 by the most popular Gujarati News Reader late Shri Lamual Harry. Regional News Unit of All India Radio Ahmedabad had also served its listeners with special bulletins, flashes and news programs during the natural calamities like Earth Quack, Cyclones, droughts and other occasions like war, riots and elections. Similarly, the Regional News Unit of AIR Ahmedabad has also played key role in all round developments of the state since its inception by disseminating information of all development activities as its core news.

21. Taxpayers account for just about 1% of India's population

Taxpayers account for just about one per cent of India's population, as per the latest data disclosed by the government for assessment year 2012-13. The data has been made public as part of a transparency drive.

A total of 2 crore 87 lakhs individuals filed the Income Tax Returns for 20112-13, but one crore 62 lakhs of them did not pay any tax. It left the number of taxpayers at just about 1 crore 25 lakhs.

The tax outgo was less than one lakh 50 thousand for a vast majority of nearly 89 per cent taxpayers. The three individuals in the top-bracket of 100 to 500 crore paid a total tax of 437 crore rupees.

As many as 5,430 individuals paid income tax of over one crore rupees. As per the overall data, total income tax collections rose nine-fold to 2.86 lakh crore rupees in 2015-16, from 31,764 crore rupees in 2000-01.

22. Vijender Singh records 5th consecutive victory in Professional Boxing

Star Indian pugilist Vijender Singh recorded his 5th consecutive victory in Professional Boxing last night. He defeated Frenchman Matthieu Royer at London's Copper Box Arena via knock-out.

Royer was Vijender's most experienced rival till date, with 44 bouts, including 14 wins, under his belt before the match. However, India's Olympics bronze medalist's power-packed punches went unchallenged and he brought Royer to his knees with an onslaught of body blows.

Vijender, whose last four wins were all knock-outs or technical knock-outs, was declared the winner in the fifth round of the six-round super middleweight contest.

23. Indian team win one silver, two bronze in Archery World Cup

Indian women's team secured silver after losing to Chinese Taipei in the final, while men's trio and mixed pair won their respective bronze playoffs in the first stage of Archery World Cup at the Yuanshen Stadium in Shanghai.

Women's team comprising Deepika Kumari, Bombayla Devi Laishram and Laxmirani Majhi put up an inconsistent show and lost to the lower-ranked Chinese Taipei 2-6 in the recurve team final.

Later, the third seeded Indian men's recurve team of Atanu Das, Jayanta Talukdar and Mangal Singh Champia thrashed the ninth seed British team 6-0 to bag the bronze medal.

The mixed pair of Deepika and Atanu ended India's campaign on a high, getting the better of much fancied Koreans 5-4 in a nerve wracking shoot-off to end with another bronze.

24. ADMM Plus Exercise on Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism at Brunei and Singapore

In consonance with India's Act East Policy and Indian Navy's constant endeavour to enhance maritime security in the Indo-Pacific, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Airavat arrived at Brunei on 01 May 16. The ship will participate in the ADMM Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus) Exercise on Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism (Ex MS CT) from 01 to 09 May 16.

The Indian Navy has been a regular participant in maritime exercises conducted by the ADMM countries. ADMM Plus Ex MS CT is a multinational exercise under the aegis of ADMM Plus consortium. The current edition will commence at Brunei and culminate at Singapore, with various drills and exercises in the South China Sea. During the exercise, the Indian Navy would engage with participating navies from Brunei, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Myanmar, China, Japan, Russia, Australia, Republic of Korea and US, through professional interactions in harbour and complex operations at sea. Establishment of the ASEAN Security Community (ASC) Plan of Action which was adopted at the 10th ASEAN Summit, held in Vientiane on 29 November 2004 stipulates that ASEAN shall work towards the convening of an annual ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM). The inaugural meeting of the ADMM was held in Kuala Lumpur on 9 May 2006.

The ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN. The ADMM aims to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness. Objectives The objectives of the ADMM, as outlined in the Concept Paper for the Establishment of an ADMM endorsed at the Inaugural ADMM in Kuala Lumpur on 9 May 2006, are as follows: To promote regional peace and stability through dialogue and cooperation in defence and security; To give guidance to existing senior defence and military officials dialogue and cooperation in the field of defence and security within ASEAN and between ASEAN and dialogue partners; To promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness; and To contribute to the establishment of an ASC as stipulated in the Bali Concord II and to promote the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) on ASC.

25. International Labour Day (May 01)

International Labour Day is a celebration of labourers and the working classes, promoted by the international labour movement, anarchists, socialists, and communists. It takes place every year on May 1 which also matches with the Celtic spring festival. The theme of the International Labour Day of 2016 is 'Celebrating the International Labour Movement'. Significance of International Labour Day: The day has its origins in the labour union movement, particularly the eight-hour day movement, which supports eight hours for work, eight hours for recreation, and eight hours for rest. May Day has long been a crucial point for demonstrations by various socialist, communist and anarchist groups. May Day has been an important official holiday in countries such as the People's Republic of China, North Korea, Cuba, and the former Soviet Union. May Day celebrations typically feature elaborate popular and military parades in these countries. During the Cold War, May Day became intermittent for large military parades in Red Square by the Soviet Union and was attended by the top leaders of the Kremlin, especially the Politburo, atop Lenin's Tomb. It became an enduring symbol of that period. History behind International Labour Day: The date was chosen for International Workers' Day by the Second International to commemorate the Haymarket affair, which occurred in Chicago on May 4, 1886. Key points on the incident: In Chicago, on May 4, 1886, a bomb blast killed seven police officers and four civilians. The dynamite blast was a reply to the killings of peaceful demonstrators by police the day before. After the bombing, eight anarchists were convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to death. The case shaped international headlines because the indication suggested that none of those eight men had thrown the bomb. Three years later, a French socialist party created an international day to honour the labour movement and marked May 1 in commemoration of the Haymarket Massacre. International Labour day in India: The first May Day celebration in India was organised in Madras (now Chennai) by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan on May 1, 1923. This was also the time when the red flag was first used in India. The day is tied to labour movements for communist and socialist political parties. Labour Day is known as 'Kamgar Din' in Hindi, 'Kamgar Divas' in Marathi and 'Uzhaipalar Naal' in Tamil. It should be noted that May 1 is also celebrated as 'Maharashtra Day' and 'Gujarat Day' to mark the date in 1960, when the two western states attained statehood after the erstwhile Bombay State was divided on linguistic lines. Labour Act in India: In India, the Child Labour Act of 1986, which prohibited employing people below 14 years, was directed towards achieving better labour standards and to ensure there was no abuse or maltreatment of children by industries.

26. 2016: UN International Year of Pulses

The International Year of Pulses aims to heighten public awareness of the nutritional benefits of pulses as part of sustainable food production. What are Pulses? Pulses are legumes that are harvested solely for dry grain. Lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas are considered pulses. Pulses exclude legume crops harvested green for food. These are classified as vegetables. The term also excludes crops mainly used for oil extraction like soybeans. Nutritious and Sustainable Pulses are a good dietary source for proteins, fibers, and amino acids and can help prevent diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. Plant-based sources of protein are important for food security and climate. In addition, leguminous plants have nitrogen-fixing properties, which increase soil fertility and have a positive impact on the environment.

27. Today in History - May 1

0408 - Theodosius II succeeded to the throne of Constantinople.

1308 - King Albert was murdered by his nephew John, because he refused his share of the Habsburg lands.

1486 - Christopher Columbus convinced Queen Isabella to fund an expedition to the West Indies.

1707 - England, Wales and Scotland were united to form Great Britain.

1751 - Americas first cricket tournament was held in New York City.

1805 - The state of [Virginia](#) passed a law requiring all freed slaves to leave the state, or risk either imprisonment or deportation.

1863 - In Virginia, the Battle of Chancellorsville began. General Robert E. Lee's forces began fighting with Union troops under General Joseph Hooker. Confederate General Stonewall Jackson was mortally wounded by his own soldiers in this battle. (May 1-4)

1867 - Reconstruction in the South began with black voter registration.

1877 - [U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes](#) withdrew all Federal troops from the South, ending Reconstruction.

1883 - William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) had his first Wild West Show.

1884 - The construction of the first American 10-story building began in Chicago, [IL](#).

1889 - Asa Candler published a full-page advertisement in The Atlanta Journal, proclaiming his wholesale and retail drug business as "sole proprietors of [Coca-Cola](#) ... Delicious. Refreshing. Exhilarating. Invigorating." Mr. Candler did not actually achieve sole ownership until 1891 at a cost of \$2,300.

1898 - The [U.S.](#) Navy under Dewey defeated the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay in the Philippines.

1905 - In New York, radium was tested as a cure for cancer.

1912 - In London's Kensington Gardens, a statue of Peter Pan was erected.

1915 - A German submarine sank the [U.S.](#) ship [Gulflight](#).

1922 - Charlie Robertson of the Chicago White Sox pitched a perfect no-hit, no-run game against the Detroit Tigers. The Sox won 3-0. Another perfect game did not come along until 46 years later.

1927 - Adolf Hitler held his first Nazi meeting in Berlin.

1931 - The Empire State Building in New York was dedicated and opened. It was 102 stories tall and was the tallest

building in the world at the time.

1934 - The Philippine legislature accepted a [U.S.](#) proposal for independence.

1937 - [U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt](#) signed an act of neutrality, keeping the [United States](#) out of World War II.

1941 - "Citizen Kane," directed and starring Orson Welles, premiered in New York.

1944 - The Messerschmitt Me 262, the first combat jet, made its first flight.

1945 - Martin Bormann, private secretary to Adolf Hitler, escaped from the Fuehrerbunker as the Red Army advanced on Berlin.

1945 - Admiral Karl Doenitz succeeded Hitler as leader of the Third Reich. This was one day after Hitler committed suicide.

1948 - The People's Democratic Republic of Korea (North Korea) was proclaimed.

1950 - Gwendolyn Brooks became the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for her book of poetry called Annie Allen.

1952 - Production of Mr. Potato Head began.

1958 - James Van Allen reported that two radiation belts encircled Earth.

1960 - Francis Gary Powers' U-2 spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union. Powers was taken prisoner.

1961 - Fidel Castro announced there would be no more elections in Cuba.

1967 - Anastasio Somoza Debayle became president of Nicaragua.

1968 - In the second day of battle, [U.S.](#) Marines, with the support of naval fire, continue their attack on a North Vietnamese Division at Dai Do.

1969 - Leonard Rose bought the [NFL](#)'s Philadelphia Eagles for \$16,155,000.

1970 - Students at Kent State University riot in downtown Kent, [OH](#), in protest of the American invasion of Cambodia.

1971 - The National Railroad Passenger Corp. (Amtrak) went into service. It was established by the U.S. Congress to run the nation's intercity railroads.

1981 - The Japanese government announced that it would limit passenger car exports to the United States over the next three years.

1986 - The Tass News Agency reported the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident.

1986 - Bill Elliott set a stock car speed record with his Ford Thunderbird in Talladega, [AL](#). Elliott reached a speed of 212.229 mph.

1989 - Disney-MGM Studios opened.

[Disney movies, music and books](#)

1992 - On the third day of the Los Angeles riots resulting from the Rodney King beating trial. King appeared in public

to appeal for calm, he asked, "Can we all get along?"

1998 - Arrow Air was fined \$5 million for using spare parts that lacked federal approval in the [U.S.](#)

1999 - On Mount Everest, a group of [U.S.](#) mountain climbers discovered the body of George Mallory. Mallory had died in June of 1924 while trying to become the first person to reach the summit of Everest. At the time of the discovery it was unclear whether or not Mallory had actually reached the summit.

2000 - ABC aired the first celebrity "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

2000 - The "Barbie for President" doll was released in stores.

2001 - Chandra Levy was last seen in Washington, [DC](#). Her remains were found in Rock Creek Park on May 22, 2002. California Congressman Gary Condit was questioned in the case due to his relationship with Levy.

2011 - U.S. President Barack Obama announced that U.S. soldiers had killed Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

28. What is Term Repo? What is its role in RBI's monetary policy?

The RBI has designed a very systematic liquidity framework for the banking system. Under this liquidity framework, the central bank has arranged different facilities to provide immediate funds or liquidity to banks. Similarly, if there is surplus cash in the banking system, it will be absorbed by the RBI through a set of facilities. The overall objective of the liquidity framework is that banking system should not face any systemic liquidity crisis. Similarly, it should not be made unstable with excess liquidity (or cash). Most popular liquidity facilities of the RBI are the overnight repo and overnight reverse repo (which are usually referred as repo and reverse repo) available for commercial banks to adjust with their daily liquidity needs. Here, if a bank needs funds, it can get them by using the repo window. Similarly, if the bank has excess, it can park that fund with the RBI using the reverse repo window. Both repo and reverse repo are overnight or is available for just one day. **Meaning of term repo** A term repo is a repo of more than one-day duration. The word term denotes longer period. Hence it is a way for banks to avail money from the RBI for more than one-day duration. As in the case of repo, the loan seeking bank should submit securities to the RBI. Since the loan is for more duration, the bank should give higher interest than the repo rate. Under the RBI's new restructured liquidity framework, the term repo is named as Variable Rate Term Repo. It is called variable rate repo because the interest rate is varied depending upon the auction rate. In India, the term repo has different durations. The usual durations are 7 days, 14 days and 28 days. Overall, the objective of term repo is to ensure liquidity in the banking system. The utility of term repo If banks need funds for relatively more duration, like three day, seven day etc., the RBI will announce a term repo auction by intimating a total amount. But term repo is very different from repo in its functioning. Firstly, repo is available from Monday to Friday. But in the case of term repo, the facility is available for commercial banks only when the RBI notifies it, and it is usually available twice in a week. What will be the amount of funds given under term repo? In the case of term repo, a bank should participate in an auction to get money. Here, the total auction amount provided by the RBI for the entire banking system will be notified previously (like Rs 5000 crores etc). What will be the interest rate? Regarding interest rate under term repo, it is determined through the auction. A cut off rate above the repo rate is set for the auction. This means that banks can't offer lower interest rate than this minimum/repo rate. When term repo is declared? Whenever the RBI assess that there is the need for funds for three to 28 days for the banking system, it notifies the term repo auction. Similarly, the central bank also announces the amount it would like to provide to the banks in total. The auction amount will be within 0.75 % of the total deposit in the banking system.

29. Weak Dollar and US production cut brings crude closer to \$50

Crude price has recorded its biggest price gain in seven years one week after the US President Obama's visit to Saudi Arabia. The surprisingly strong recovery of crude is attributed to a major supply cut made by the US which is a non-OPEC producer. Market analysts found that the existing supply glut trend has eased with slowed production by the US. So far, crude price was ruled by increasing tussle between the non OPEC new boy - the US which was helped by the shale revolution and the OPEC. The Brent crude price has closed at \$48 on Friday. Besides the declining US production, declining dollar also added to the price gain. Market is yet to find a balance between demand and supply which will enable the commodity to settle near \$50; the price many see as a medium term equilibrium. But the US production cut

is a right signal that the rivalry between OPEC and non-OPEC countries including the US and Russia is settling. Despite the US production cut analysts see, the OPEC itself is not in consensus to cut production and this may put downward pressure on the price in near future. Scheduled restart in United Arab Emirates and Nigerian production, combined with a continued Iranian ramp-up, could result in OPEC production exceeding our third-quarter 2016 assumption, the Financial time quoted an analyst at Deutsche Bank.

30. What is Automatic route and Approval route in FDI?

The entry of Foreign Direct Investment by non residents into India is regulated through two routes automatic route and approval route. The automatic route is aimed for those sectors and levels of investment that are less restricted. On the other hand, in the case of approval route, government agencies regulate and scrutinise foreign investment while approving it. The automatic and approval routes are aimed to have monitoring over the investment activities at the same time to avoid wasteful procedural delays. In most cases, FDI up to certain limits (in Rs crores) and with certain conditions can be made through the automatic route. In the same sectors, FDI beyond a limit (in terms of percentage of investment made in a business venture) and that generally have critical importance need approval from the relevant agencies. Automatic route The automatic route stands for less restricted or more liberalized regulation. Under the Automatic Route, the foreign investor or the Indian company does not require any approval from the Reserve Bank or Government of India for the investment. The approval route FDI is allowable in all sectors and activities specified under the consolidated FDI policy. Approval Route Under the approval route or government route, the foreign investor or the Indian company should obtain prior approval of the Government of India agencies or bodies specified. Proposals for foreign investment under approval route as laid down in the FDI policy are considered by either Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) or Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs or Cabinet Committee on Securities. In certain cases, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) or Department of Industrial Policy Promotion are also assisting the above approving agencies. The FIPB considers those investments up to Rs 5000 crores for approval. Above this limit, approval will be made by CCEA. Which body or agency has to give the approval for a specific FDI proposal depends upon the sector and nature of investment specified under the consolidated policy on FDI. For example, as per the new FDI policy on defence sector, FDI more than 49% and also that involves more than Rs 2000 crores investment is to be approved by the Cabinet Committee on Securities.

31. What is Bitcoin's Blockchain technology?

One of the most fascinating inventions of our time that caught the imagination of technologists and economists simultaneously was the Bitcoin. But now the financial world, central banks, financial institutions and also governments are in deep love with the technology brought by bitcoin the blockchain technology. What is Blockchain and how Blockchain works under Bitcoin? The person who tries to solve a computationally difficult puzzle to win the bitcoin is called bitcoin miner. When a miner joins the bitcoin network, he gets a copy of the blockchain downloaded automatically. This blockchain is a shared public ledger in the form of a database that contains information about all Bitcoin transactions so far executed. (A ledger is a record of all financial transactions in a systematic manner). The mission of the bitcoin miner is to solve the software generated cryptographic puzzle. If he became successful, he will add a block into the blockchain besides winning the bitcoin. But solving the puzzle requires a highly powerful computer system with a high bandwidth network connection. New blocks will be added with new successful miners solving the puzzle and winning bitcoin. Remember every block contains the same information about the whole transactions in the network and is updated frequently with each new transaction. What is more important about blockchain is that it is a distributed network. This means that all data are updated with all members with each development. Each block contains the whole previous transaction records in digital format. Each block is chained with the next block; so it is called blockchain. If a new block comes, it will be updated in every block very quickly. Now, our hero is not the bitcoin; but the blockchain- the technology behind bitcoin. Blockchain is sequential transaction databases. As a distributed network, blockchain contains complete information about the addresses and their balances (of the networked people) right from the starting of the blockchain and distributes it among all the members. Recent studies declare that the blockchain technology will be backbone of future payment systems. Following are the advantages of blockchain if we use it for digital payments. Security: Blockchain ledger is distributed across thousands of computers and this means that hacking is almost impossible. Transparency: The sender and the recipient of every transaction are recorded and all transactions are publicly available for inspection. The blockchain shows how money flows around the financial system, and into which markets. As a shared ledger, blockchain tracks and keeps information about who owns a financial, physical or electronic asset (as in the case of bitcoin). Privacy: Users are anonymous and can move money around instantly and

securely. If blockchain technology is used for payments, no manual or centralized administration is needed to run it. Digital records can be kept and updated after every transaction without any central authority. Here, the benefit for banks is that they can save money for transaction costs. How the world sees blockchains future? "What if I told you that bitcoin was just the opening act with the blockchain ready to take center stage," Goldman Sachs said in a note in December 2015. It said that the technology could "change everything." The UK governments chief scientific adviser has brought a report about blockchain, observing that the technology will increase efficiency in the distribution of taxpayers money such as grants. About the introduction of blockchain technology, the British Minister Hancock said The government cannot bury its head in the sand and ignore new technologies as they emerge.

32. Govt working for upliftment of poor, says PM Modi; Distributes e-rickshaws, launches e-boats in Varanasi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said, BJP led NDA Government has been working for the upliftment of the poor through peoples participation. He said previous governments made many policies but these schemes were not framed keeping in mind the interest of the poor. Addressing a public rally at Maldeypur in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia, Mr Modi said, poverty can be eradicated only if poor are empowered, given resources and opportunities as well as education, jobs, houses, electricity and drinking water. Prime Minister also launched Rs 8,000 crore scheme to provide 5 crore free LPG connections to poor families across the country. Mr Modi said under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, free LPG connections will be provided in the name of women members of BPL households. In the first year, one crore and fifty lakhs such connections will be given and the target of 5 crore will be completed in three years. He also expressed his commitment for cleaning of river Ganga. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also launched 11 solar-powered "e-boats" at the Assi Ghat in Varanasi yesterday. He said this step is in line with his government's focus on making long-term interventions to empower the poor in their fight against poverty.

The Prime Minister said his government has made schemes, which empower the poor to fight and defeat the poverty themselves. Reaching out to the backward fishermen and boatmen communities and addressing them as brothers, the Prime Minister said his government is for the poor.

Underlining the importance of cleanliness, Mr Modi called upon the people to make Varanasi a clean city so that tourists return to their places with a good memory about this historic city. He also held a 'chaupal' with the rickshaw pullers in his Parliamentary constituency and handed over e-rickshaws to them. He interacted with few rickshaw pullers who were given e-rickshaws, replacing their old paddle rickshaws with new vehicle.

During his one-on-one talk with the rickshaw pullers, Mr Modi asked them to be more hard working besides being courteous with the passengers specially the foreign tourists.

British High Commissioner Dominic Asquith accompanied the Mr Modi in the interaction. During the 20-minute programme, the Prime Minister handed over a kit each to the new e-rickshaw holders containing uniforms, papers of the vehicles and other necessary documents.

The rickshaw pullers receiving the e-rickshaws, would be trained under the skill India scheme for running their vehicles and behaving well with the passengers.

33. Indo-China Border Trade through Nathula in Sikkim completes 10 years

The Indo-China Border Trade through a snow clad Nathula in Sikkim is completing its 10th year. Coming to an abrupt halt during the 1962 War between the two Asian giants, the centuries old trade through this traditional silk route had resumed on 6th July, 2006.

While 36 items are sent from this side of the border, 20 items are received from that side of the border. Trade between the Tibetan Autonomous Region and Sikkim across the India-China border at Nathula takes place from Monday to Thursday. It starts in May and concludes in November every year. The business hours have been fixed as 7:30 AM, Indian Time or 10 AM, Chinese Time to 3:30 PM, Indian Standard Time or 6 PM Chinese Standard Time.

34. Creator of Bitcoin digital cash reveals identity

Australian entrepreneur Craig Wright has publicly identified himself as Bitcoin creator Satoshi Nakamoto. His

admission ends years of speculation about who came up with the original ideas underlying the digital cash system.

Mr Wright has provided technical proof to back up his claim using coins known to be owned by Bitcoin's creator. Prominent members of the Bitcoin community and its core development team have also confirmed Mr Wright's claim.

35. First cruise ship sailing from US to Cuba in over 50 years

An American cruise ship is sailing to Cuba from the US, the first such trip in more than 50 years. 'The Adoni' sailed from the port of Miami carrying some 700 passengers. It is due to arrive in Havana today. Cuba and the US restored diplomatic relations last year.

But several Cold War-era restrictions on travelling and trading are yet to be lifted. The cruise trip only went ahead after Cuba scrapped a ban on its citizens entering or leaving the island by sea. The US company operating the cruise, Carnival, had been given permission by both governments to run ships between Florida and Cuba.

36. Andhra Pradesh CM launches Chandranna Bima Yojana

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched Chandranna Bima Yojana, an insurance scheme by the State government for the working class people on the occasion of May Day yesterday in Vijayawada. Speaking on the occasion, he said about 1.5 crore workers in the state would be covered under the scheme by which Rs 5 lakh would be paid if the insured worker met with an accidental death, Rs 5 lakh in case of permanent disability and 3 lakh rupees for partial disability.

The Chief Minister asked officials to conduct enumeration and enroll all the eligible workers under the scheme. He said, government would earmark Rs 132 crore for its implementation.

He appealed the labour unions and workers not to create problems in industries for the sake of their trade unions. Mr Naidu announced that the incentives to industries by State government would henceforth be transferred to the accounts of the industries and informed that online inspection of industries would be introduced to keep their functioning transparent. He also said, a single desk system was adopted in the State to give permissions for the establishment of industries.

37. Odisha Skill Development Authority becomes operational

The newly-formed Odisha Skill Development Authority, aimed at ensuring quality skill training standards, became operational yesterday with noted IT entrepreneur Subroto Bagchi assuming office as its head. Mr Bagchi, who is accorded the rank of a Cabinet minister, will begin his work with a visit to all the 30 districts of the State and report directly to chief minister Naveen Patnaik. The Odisha government targets to create 11 lakh jobs in five years and Odisha Skill Development Authority will unify the initiatives on the ground and create momentum for youth of the state to receive skill training in a professional manner.

38. 2-km walk on water conservation awareness held in AP

In Andhra Pradesh, a 2-km walk to raise awareness about the importance of constructing rain water harvesting pits to save water was held in Vijayavada this morning. Nearly 1,000 people, including students and youths, participated.

Construction of two water harvesting pits at Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium was also launched on the occasion. PTI reports that the state government is promoting construction of water pits in rural areas by providing funds to the farming community in the name of 'Neeru-Pragati' (water and development) scheme. The government targets to construct 8.5 lakh farm ponds this year in the state.

39. EPFO launches One Employee-One EPF Account drive

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO has launched a special drive to encourage EPF members to consolidate their multiple accounts. The members whose accounts are scattered face many inconveniences such as approaching multiple employers located at multiple locations for settlement of claims.

Launching the drive, Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya yesterday said in New Delhi that EPFO has taken several IT based initiatives to provide convenient and efficient services to its stakeholders.

The initiative of launching the Mission consolidation One Member One EPF Account is a step towards encouraging EPF members to access enhanced IT enabled services through Universal Account Number that are linked with Aadhaar. He said, this drive, will result in EPF members having just one EPF account and multiple conveniences. The Minister said, the success of this drive will not only reduce the burden of members but would also result in ease of work for EPF employees.

40. Indian shooters bag 3 gold, 1 bronze ISSF Junior World Cup

Indian shooters produced an impressive show by bagging three gold medals and a bronze on the opening day of the ISSF Junior World Cup in Suhl, Germany yesterday.

The Indians won a gold each in the team events of men's 25m standard pistol and women's 50m rifle prone competitions. India also earned an individual gold medal in the men's 25m standard pistol competition through Rituraj Singh. Gaayathri Nithyanadam bagged a bronze in the women's 50m rifle prone competition.

The Indian team of Rituraj Singh, Shivam Shukla and Arjun Das walked away with the gold medal in the team event of the men's 25m standard pistol competition, shooting a total of 1661. France won the silver medal with 1659 points while Australia had to settle with the bronze with 1648 points.

Indian women also showcased spectacular mental strength as they walked away with the gold medal in the team event of the 50m rifle prone competition. The team of Gaayathri Nithyanadam, Sonika and Ayushi Podder shot a total of 1846.6 to emerge winners.

41. What are the reform measures suggested by the Nayak Committee for PSBs?

The Public Sector Banks have to undergo some immediate and drastic reform measures if they have to continue in good financial health. There are two important problems that are to be settled by the PSBs. First is the high level of NPAs and second, the requirement of additional capital to meet the Basel capital standards by March 2019. The RBI appointed Nayak Committee with the main responsibility of making recommendations about the working of bank boards and suggest corrective measures. In its report, the committee made focused recommendations for governance of PSB boards. It has stressed that government's majority shareholding (50 and above) causes governance problems. The Committee observed that it will be better for the PSBs if the government continues to be the dominant share holder than the majority shareholder. The PSBs vis a vis private sector banks faces inconveniences due to multiple regulations by the government and the RBI and a level playing field is to be ensured by introducing reform measures.

1. Externally imposed constraints should be removed to set a level playing field between PSBs and private sector banks: The Report proposes that the Government shall distance itself from several bank governance functions which it presently discharges. For this, the government has to reduce its shareholding to below 50%. It will improve governance of banks and all externally imposed constraints will be removed. This will ensure a level playing field between PSBs and private sector banks. There are several external constraints imposed upon public sector banks which are inapplicable to their private sector competitors. These include dual regulation by the Finance Ministry and the RBI; board constitution, where there no director is independent; significant and widening compensation differences with private sector banks, leading to the erosion of specialist skills; external vigilance enforcement through the CVC and CBI; and applicability (limited) of the RTI Act.
2. Formation of BIC: The Government should set up a Bank Investment Company (BIC) to hold equity stakes in banks which are presently held by the Government. The BIC would be constituted as a core investment company under RBI registration and regulation, and its business would be like that of a passive sovereign wealth fund for the Government's banks. The Government and BIC should sign a shareholder agreement which assures BIC of its autonomy and sets its objective in terms of financial returns from the banks it controls. BIC in future will appoint directors to the boards of PSBs according to merit.
3. No discriminatory regulation on PSBs: The Government should cease to issue any regulatory instructions applicable only to public sector banks, as dual regulation is discriminatory. RBI should be the sole regulator for banks, with regulations continuing to be uniformly applicable to all commercial banks.
4. Professionalization of bank boards: The process of board appointments, including appointments of whole-time directors, needs to be professionalised and a three-phase process is envisaged. In the first phase, until BIC becomes operational, a Bank Boards Bureau (BBB) comprising former senior bankers should advise on all board appointments, including those of Chairmen and Executive Directors.
5. Enhancing investment in banks by other investors: In order to permit certain kinds of investors to take larger stakes, it is proposed that a category of Authorised Bank Investors (ABIs) be created,

comprising all diversified funds which are discretionally managed by fund managers and which are deemed fit and proper. 6. The shareholding pattern and voting by shareholder in banks to be liberalized to encourage more investment. The principle of proportionate voting rights should constitute part of the regulatory bedrock that fosters good governance. 7. The Government should end issuing instructions to public sector banks in pursuit of development objectives. Any such instructions should, after consultation with RBI, be issued by that regulator and be applicable to all banks. As a follow up to the recommendations, government launched a programme called Indradhanush for reforming the PSBs.

42. SRFTI to organize seminars on Satyajit Ray

In Kolkata, Satyajit Ray Film Television Institute, SRFTI, will organize a series of seminars on different aspects of late film maestro Satyajit Ray and his creativity on the occasion of Rays 96th Birth Anniversary. First of the seminars will be held on 7th of May, 2016 at SRFTI, Kolkata. Ramesh Sen, Subrata Lahiri and Anil Ghosh will speak on this occasion on the Maestro and his creativity.

Satyajit Rays 96th Birth Anniversary was observed today at SRFTI in a befitting manner. An exhibition of Rays illustrations in his edited magazine Sandesh was organized by the Institute to mark the occasion. Later a documentary by Aloke Banerjee and Jaideep Mukherjee on Pather Panchali, the Rays legendary masterpiece was screened.

43. Parliament approves Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, 2016

The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016 was introduced in Lok Sabha on March 16, 2016. The Bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. The Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 regulates the mining sector in India and specifies the requirement for obtaining and granting leases for mining operations. Transfer of mining leases: The Act allows for the transfer of mining leases which have been granted through an auction process. The holder of these mining leases may transfer the lease to any eligible person, with the approval of the state government, and as specified by the central government. If the state government does not convey its approval within 90 days of receiving the notice, the transfer shall be considered as approved. No transfer shall take place if the state government communicates, in writing, that the transferee is not eligible. The Bill allows for the transfer of mining leases which have been granted through procedures other than auction, and where the minerals are used for captive purpose. Captive purpose has been defined as the use of the entire quantity of mineral extracted in the lessees own manufacturing unit. Such lease transfers will be subject to terms and conditions, and transfer charges as prescribed by the central government. These transfers will be in addition to the existing transfers that are allowed. According to the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, this provision will allow for merger and acquisition of companies with captive mining leases. Leased area: The Bill adds a definition of leased area, as the area within which mining operations can be undertaken. This will also include the non-mineralised area required for the activities defined under mine in the Mines Act, 1952. The 1952 Act defines mine as any excavation where any operation for searching or obtaining of minerals is being carried out. It includes (i) borings, bore wells, and oil wells, (ii) all opencast workings, (iii) all workshops and stores within the precinct of a mine, and (iv) any premises being used for depositing waste from a mine or where any operations in connection with such waste is being carried out.

44. Veteran RSS leader Balraj Madhok dies

Rashtriya Swamyasewak Sangh (RSS) activist and former president of Bharatiya Jan Sangh (BJS) Balraj Madhok, aged 96, died on Monday. Madhok, who was ill for last few days died here around 9.00 a.m. at his residence in central Delhi's New Rajendra Nagar area, an RSS official told IANS. Madhok was born on February 25, 1920, in Skardu region of Jammu and Kashmir (now in Pakistans Gilgit Balitistan territory). He founded the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) in 1951. Madhok was also elected to the Lok Sabha in 1961. Union Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Harsh Vardhan tweeted, Balraj Madhok left for heavenly abode today-India loses a great intellectual, thinker and a social reformer. May his soul rest in peace.

45. First broad gauge train on trial reaches Tripura

The first broad gauge passenger train on trial reached Tripura this afternoon amid huge gathering of enthusiastic people at several stations. The train starting from Silchar (Assam) at 9 am arrived at Dharmanagar, the first railhead of the state at 14.05 pm. The first broad gauge train reached Agartala at 18.30 pm.

According to NF Railways officials, the train will leave for Silchar from Agartala tomorrow at 9 am. NF Railways officials said two trains will run for four days between Silchar and Agartala on trial basis from Silchar on May 2 and May 4 next, which will return to Silchar from Agartala on May 3 and May 5 with passengers from Agartala.

The Silchar-Agartala bound first passenger train, No. 05564 accommodated 12 coaches, including five general and second class compartments, five chair cars and two SLRs. NF Railway sources said, based on the success of trial run for another two weeks periodically, the Railway Ministry will decide the commercial run of the passenger trains from Agartala to Guwahati, Kolkata and Delhi.

46. Haryana govt ,Railways sign deal to plant saplings

Haryana government and Indian Railways today signed an agreement to plant saplings on railway land for the success of Green India Mission. Informing this at Chandigarh, Haryana Forests Minister, Rao Narbir Singh, said that under the agreement, 1.25 lakh saplings would be planted on 115 hectares along Sonpat-Jind and Rohtak-Rewari railway lines in the initial phase.

The agreement was signed by Haryana Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Dr. (Mrs.) Amarinder Kaur, and Chief Engineer/PD, Northern Railway, Mr. Pankaj Saxena, in the presence of Union Environment, Forests and Climate Change Minister, Mr. Prakash Javadekar, and Haryana Forests Minister, Rao Narbir Singh in New Delhi today. He said that plantation along railway track would not only reduce pollution, but would also provide employment opportunities and reduce soil erosion.

47. India's Kalvari stealth submarine starts sea trials

Kalvari, the Indian Navys first indigenous Scorpene-class stealth submarine, sailed out of Mumbai Harbour on Sunday for sea trials even as the plan to purchase heavyweight torpedoes for the vessel remains stuck due to the VVIP chopper scam. Kalvari is the first of the Indias six Scorpene-class submarines being built under the much-delayed Project 75 by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in collaboration with French company DCNS. In October 2015, Kalvari had been set afloat. The sea trials of Kalvari have begun today. It is a proud moment for us, a Navy official said. However, the plans to acquire heavyweight torpedoes is stuck in the Defence Ministry even though the Navy had been pushing for it, citing national security imperatives. WASS Italy, a Finmeccanica company, had emerged as a successful bidder in the procurement for the torpedoes for Project 75 submarines. Subsequently, because of the groups alleged involvement in the VVIP helicopter case, the procurement was put on hold in July 2014.

48. Book on Param Vir Chakra winners launched

A book celebrating the lives of 21 Param Vir Chakra winners written by a well-known Indian social activist was launched in London by the Indian High Commissioner to the U.K., Navtej Sarna. Param Vir: A War Diary by Manju Lodha captures 21 instances of bravery recounted by the friends and families of Param Vir Chakra awardees, the highest military honour bestowed by India to those serving in the Indian armed forces. Soldiers are the real heroes. If not for them, we would not be leading a peaceful life. I have the highest gratitude for them, said Ms. Lodha at a special launch event at Nehru Centre here. Writing about all these unsung heroes, even if I have not been able to meet with many of them, has been a most fulfilling experience. It is almost as if I have lived and experienced their lives, and everyone reading this book would know about their valour and bravery. I salute them, she said. Ms. Lodha, who is also chair of the Lodha Foundation, wants proceeds from the book to go to the foundation that will be passed on to the Indian Army.

49. Today in History May 02

1670 - The Hudson Bay Company was founded by England's King Charles II.

1776 - France and Spain agreed to donate arms to American rebels fighting the British.

1797 - A mutiny in the British navy spread from Spithead to the rest of the fleet.

1798 - The black General Toussaint Louverture forced British troops to agree to evacuate the port of Santo Domingo.

1808 - The citizens of Madrid rose up against Napoleon.

1813 - Napoleon defeated a Russian and Prussian army at Grossgorschen.

1853 - Franconis Hippodrome opened at Broadway and 23rd Street in New York City.

1863 - Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was wounded by his own men in the battle of Chancellorsville, [VA](#). He died 8 days later.

1865 - [U.S. President Andrew Johnson](#) offered \$100,000 reward for the capture of Confederate President Jefferson Davis.

1885 - The Congo Free State was established by King Leopold II of Belgium.

1885 - The magazine "Good Housekeeping" was first published.

1887 - Hannibal W. Goodwin applied for a patent on celluloid photographic film. This is the film from which movies are shown.

1890 - The [Oklahoma Territory](#) was organized.

1902 - "A Trip to the Moon," the first science fiction film was released. It was created by magician George Melies.

1922 - WBAP-AM began broadcasting in north [Texas](#).

1926 - In India, Hindu women gained the right to seek elected office.

1926 - [U.S.](#) Marines landed in Nicaragua to put down a revolt and to protect [U.S.](#) interests. They did not depart until 1933.

1932 - Jack Benny's first radio show debuted on NBC Radio.

1933 - Hitler banned trade unions in Germany.

1939 - Lou Gehrig set a new [major league baseball](#) record when he played in his 2,130th game. The streak began on June 1, 1925.

1941 - Hostilities broke out between British forces in Iraq and that countrys pro-German faction.

1941 - The Federal Communications Commission agreed to let regular scheduling of TV broadcasts by commercial TV stations begin on July 1, 1941. This was the start of network television.

1945 - Russians took Berlin after 12 days of fierce house-to-house fighting. The Allies announced the surrender of Nazi troops in Italy and parts of Austria.

1946 - Prisoners revolted at [California](#)'s Alcatraz prison.

1954 - Stan Musial of the St. Louis Cardinals set a new [major league](#) record when he hit 5 home runs against the New York Giants.

1960 - Caryl Chessman was executed. He was a convicted sex offender and had become a best selling author while on death row.

1965 - The "Early Bird" satellite was used to transmit television pictures across the Atlantic.

1969 - The ocean liner Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2) made its maiden voyage.

1970 - Student anti-war protesters at [Ohio](#)'s Kent State University burn down the campus ROTC building. The National Guard took control of the campus.

1974 - Former [U.S.](#) Vice President Spiro T. Agnew was disbarred by the Maryland Court of Appeals.

1974 - The filming of "Jaws" began in Martha's Vineyard, [MA](#).

1982 - The British submarine HMS Conqueror sank Argentina's only cruiser, the General Belgrano during the Falkland Islands War. More than 350 people died.

1993 - At Washington's National Gallery of Art, an exhibit of 80 paintings from the collection of Dr. Albert C. Barnes opened.

1993 - Authorities said that they had recovered the remains of David Koresh from the Branch Davidian compound near Waco, [TX](#).

1994 - Nelson Mandela claimed victory after South Africa's first democratic elections.

1999 - In Panama, Mireya Moscoso de Grubar, of the Armonista Party, was elected president.

2002 - It was reported that Phyllis Diller had retired from touring.

50. **Vijay Mallya resigns from Rajya Sabha**

Independent MP and liquor baron Vijay Mallya, facing a case of loan default of over Rs. 9,400 crore, on Monday resigned from Rajya Sabha, a day before Ethics Committee of the Upper House was set to recommend his expulsion. In his resignation letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari, he said, I am shocked that the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Government of India has provided factually wrong information to a Parliament Committee. "Nevertheless since I do not want my name and reputation to be further dragged in the mud and since recent events suggest that I will not get a fair trial or justice, I am hereby resigning as a member of the Rajya Sabha with immediate effect," said Mr. Mallya in the letter. This is Mr. Mallya's second term in Rajya Sabha and it would have otherwise come to an end on July 1.

51. **Salary disclosure requirement non-negotiable: Sebi to MFs**

The Securities and Exchange Board of India - SEBI has refused to withdraw its directives for mandatory disclosure of top-management salary by mutual funds. SEBI has said that the directive is 'non-negotiable' and investors must be provided data without any 'extra filters'.

As per SEBI's directives, all fund houses were supposed to publish the details today. While some fund houses, including HDFC, Reliance and ICICI Prudential Mutual Funds have put up the details on their website; some others had made an appeal to the regulator to relax the rules or at least extend the deadline.

SEBI has, however directed fund houses to comply with the directives with immediate effect. It has also clarified that investors in any scheme are entitled for the information and unhelpful and unnecessary filters in providing the information should not be applied.

While all fund houses ask for investor details like folio number and registered mobile number and email IDs for giving access to these details, a few of them have put in additional requirements such as name of the executive whose salary the investor wants to know.

52. **Paytm ties up with Wipro for payments bank**

Paytm, India's largest mobile payments, has joined hands with [Wipro](#) Ltd to create the requisite technology

infrastructure for its upcoming [payments bank](#) business.

According to Paytm, Wipro will be implementing the core banking solution for [Paytm](#) and also programme managing the integration of other key systems like the anti-money laundering solution and the regulatory reporting solution. "Wipro will play a crucial role in helping Paytm interface its existing systems with the core banking solution. It will also put in place and manage the data centres for the payments bank in order to ensure smooth functioning of the new unit," the firm said.

This part of the series of tie-ups, the firm has planned in run-up to its launch of its much-awaited payments banks. "Technology is an integral part of the value proposition we seek to create for customers of our upcoming bank. They have a demonstrated track record in banking technology in India that will be important in ensuring that our innovative solutions are integrated with core banking systems in a compliant and secure manner, creating the right platform for service delivery at large scale," said Shinjini Kumar, chief executive - designate, Paytm Payments Bank.

Paytm had received an in-principle approval to set up a payments bank in August last year. Payments banks can accept demand deposits and savings bank deposits from individuals and small businesses, up to a maximum of Rs 1 lakh per account.

53. Zone Startups to launch accelerator for women entrepreneurs

Mumbai-based technology startup accelerator Zone Startups is launching a first-of-its-kind six-week programme 'empoWer' to support women entrepreneurs who are building technology ventures. Set up as an international footprint of the Toronto-based Ryerson University and the BSE Institute of BSE, Zone Startups India is supported by Department of Science and Technology. For the 'empoWer' initiative, ZoneStartups India has partnered Department of Science and Technology, Germany's GIZ, Vodafone India, Google, Nishith Desai Associates, She The People TV and SheEO -- a Toronto-based women entrepreneur support organisation. "Through our accelerator programme and various bootcamps, workshops, demo days hosted by us, we realised the need for a focused programme that works with women entrepreneurs in tech businesses. The problems faced by a lot of women entrepreneurs is unique, and we feel that there is a case for having a dedicated accelerator programme for women entrepreneurs," Ajay Ramasubramaniam, Director, Zone Startups India, said. The programme participants will get access to mentoring, workshops, case studies of successful women-led startups, industry connect, peer network, investor connect and business development opportunities, he added. The 'empoWer' initiative will be launched with roadshows across Mumbai, Bangalore and NCR for attracting applications. Fifteen Women Entrepreneurs (or co-founders) will be shortlisted for the six-week customised programme, Zone Startups said. Over its 26 months operations, Zone Startups India has accelerated the growth of 72 startups. Eleven of these are being co-founded by women entrepreneurs, while three of these women entrepreneurs have gone on to raise in excess of Rs 30 crore in funding, the accelerator said. Zone Startups India will continue to support these women entrepreneurs for up to a year post-programme.

54. Apollo Hospitals signs MoU with Osler Health for research in chronic disease

[Apollo Hospitals](#) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with [William Osler Health System](#) (Osler) to collaborate on research and treatment services related to a range of diseases including Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Cancer. The organizations will initiate a pilot project to enhance the continuity of care for patients with complex needs traveling between India and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Canada for extended periods of time. As part of the pilot, Apollo and Osler physicians will identify patients and provide them with an option of going to Apollo and [Osler hospitals](#) when in the other country for chronic, acute or emergency care. In consultation with identified patients, medical records - including physician notes, laboratory tests, diagnostic imaging tests and medication records - will be securely shared to ensure medical information is available to clinicians delivering care. The company said that every year nearly 36 million lives are lost to the lifestyle diseases and more than 60 per cent of the population bear the brunt of chronic diseases, which would cost India \$6.2 trillion by 2030, adding to the already existing financial burden.

55. Indian Institute Science Professor Sriram Ramaswamy became Royal Society Fellow

Physicist Sriram Ramaswamy, Director of TIFR Centre for Interdisciplinary Sciences, Hyderabad, has been elected as the Fellow of The Royal Society. His name appeared on the list of 50 new fellows and 10 new Foreign Members announced by the Royal Society. Besides, biochemist Ramanujan Hegde, MRC Laboratory of Microbiology, U.K. and

applied mathematician Lakshminarayanan Mahadevan, Harvard University, are the other two Indian names who were also elected as the fellows of the premier scientific academy of the U.K. and the Commonwealth. Sriram directs the TIFR Centre for Interdisciplinary Sciences in Hyderabad, and is on leave from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. His research helped found the field of Active Matter, which studies the collective behaviour of objects, such as motile organisms. Lakshminarayanan Mahadevan's work attempts to understand the geometrical and dynamical patterns of shape and flow in physical and biological matter. His work has been recognized by awards that include the Edgerton Prize at MIT and the Ledlie Prize at Harvard. Ramanujan Hegde is a biochemist whose research has deepened humans understanding of how newly made proteins are localised correctly inside cells. The Royal Society is a self-governing Fellowship made up of the most eminent scientists, engineers and technologists from the UK and the Commonwealth. Fellows and Foreign Members are elected for life through a peer review process on the basis of excellence in science. The current Royal Society President is Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, who took up the post on 30 November 2015.

56. Housing.com appoints Dilip Tuli as Senior VP

Realty portal Housing.com has said it has appointed former KPMG director Dilip Tuli as senior vice president-Strategy and New Business Initiatives.

Dilip Tuli will assist with strategy and oversee new business initiatives such as transaction facilitation and fulfilment services, [Housing.com](https://www.housing.com) said in a statement. Tuli, who graduated from the Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi University, is a chartered accountant and a CFA Charter from CFA Institute. He has nearly 15 years of consulting experience of working across many different businesses. Jason Kothari, chief executive officer, [Housing.com](https://www.housing.com) said: "Housing.com is rapidly growing in popularity as a platform and in revenue generation, and Dilip will be focused on developing new business initiatives to fuel growth further".

57. Rohit Sharma signs as Brand Ambassador for Hublot watches

Star Indian opener Rohit Sharma today became the Brand Ambassador of world famous watch brand Hublot becoming second renowned cricketer after former Australian captain Michael Clarke to be associated with the brand. Rohit will be seen promoting the company's signature Classic Fusion Aerofusion Chronograph edition in the coming days. It has been created to celebrate the sport of cricket. I have always been a watch fanatic; so being associated with a brand like Hublot is an absolute delight. They create some incredible timepieces, unique and different, so to be on their roster and them on mine is incredible. Their involvement in sport has been remarkable, so that makes our association even more exciting, said Rohit. Hublot on their part expressed their excitement to be associated with the stylish Mumbai batsman who has the highest individual ODI score to his credit and is among the top-10 ODI batsmen in the ICC list. Hublot sees a lot of common between the Brand and Rohit Sharma as he combines traditional batting technique with entertainment, a press release stated.

58. Amazon surprises with new reef system

Scientists have discovered a new reef system at the mouth of the Amazon River, the largest river by discharge of water in the world. As large rivers empty into the world's oceans in areas known as plumes, they typically create gaps in the reef distribution along the tropical shelves something that makes finding a reef in the Amazon plume an unexpected discovery. Scientists from University of Georgia in the U.S. and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil on an expedition to study the Amazon River plume looked for evidence of a reef system along the continental shelf. The Amazon plume an area where freshwater from the river mixes with the salty Atlantic Ocean affects a broad area of the tropical North Atlantic Ocean in terms of salinity, pH, light penetration and sedimentation, conditions that usually correlate to a major gap in Western Atlantic reefs. Our expedition into the Brazil Exclusive Economic Zone was primarily focused on sampling the mouth of the Amazon, said Patricia Yager, an associate professor at UGA. The team used multi-beam acoustic sampling of the ocean bottom to find the reef and then dredged up samples to confirm the discovery. We brought up the most amazing and colourful animals I had ever seen on an expedition, Ms. Yager said. The Amazon River plume and its effects on the global carbon budget converged with the discovery of the reef system to provide scientists a wider view of the reef community. Microorganisms thriving in the dark waters beneath the river plume may provide the trophic connection between the river and the reef. The paper is not just about the reef itself, but about how the reef community changes as you travel north along the shelf break, in response to how much light it gets seasonally by the movement of the plume, said Ms. Yager. Reef transitions

In the far south, it gets more light exposure, so many of the animals are more typical reef corals and things that photosynthesise for food, she said. But as you move north, many of those become less abundant, and the reef transitions to sponges and other reef builders that are likely growing on the food that the river plume delivers, Ms. Yager said. However, the reefs may already be threatened. From ocean acidification and ocean warming to plans for offshore oil exploration right on top of these new discoveries, the whole system is at risk from human impacts, she said.

59. Nico Rosberg wins F1 Russian GP

Nico Rosberg on pole position for Russian Grand Prix in Sochi Lewis Hamilton up to second place after starting in tenth But world champion hit by water pressures late in race Sebastian Vettel hit on opening lap by Daniil Kvyat and is out the race The Russian Grand Prix is a 53-lap race in Sochi Lewis Hamilton produced a brilliant display to bounce back from his qualifying troubles, but was not able to prevent team-mate Nico Rosberg extending his lead at the head of the championship. Hamilton climbed from his starting position of 10th into second place, but by that stage was too far behind Rosberg to mount any serious challenge, particularly once a water pressure hampered his progress, leaving the German to win his fourth race of the season. Earlier in the race Sebastian Vettel had launched into a foul-mouthed rant after a collision with Daniil Kvyat ended his race on the first lap.

60. No Time to Pause – book by Pavithra Ramesh

About the Book: Have you ever thought to yourself I need to stay alone. I want some privacy and independence? Well, I thought the same.

Life of a young adult is filled with joy and mystery.

No Time to Pause is a narration of a typical college student who decides to stay miles away from her family to get value education. She faces a host of challenges, encounters varied adventures and meets people who leave a tremendous impact on her life.

With the college term ending, she leaves the institution not only as an academic achiever, but also a strong woman ready to face the rough world out there.

She realises that life keeps moving on and there is no time to look back or regret.

About the Author: Pavithra Ramesh is a graduate from Mount Carmel College, Bengaluru, looking ahead to pursue her MBA in International Business and Finance. She has been an excellent academic performer emerging as the second topper in school (Commerce Stream) in her CBSE Board exam. Commitment and perseverance is her basic mantra. While based in Dubai, she has written many articles for a Sharjah daily newspaper. She has been the PR Event head of the Commerce Core Team in College and an active participant in cultural programmes in the field of dance. She has also participated in National Level Business Fests. She was a member of the entrepreneurship cell in college and was involved in the editorial team of Bengaluru e-cell. Writing is her passion. She now ventures with her first book No Time to Pause. She believes that desire is the best driving force to success and trusts her instincts to find her goals and aspirations.

61. World Press Freedom Day

World Press Freedom Day is annually observed on May 3 to inform the international community that freedom of the press and freedom of expression are fundamental human rights. This day reminds people that many journalists brave death or face jail to bring daily news to the public. What Do People Do? World Press Freedom Day gives people the chance to pay tribute to media professionals who risked or lost their lives in the line of duty. Many communities, organizations and individuals take part in this day through various events such as art exhibitions, dinners featuring keynote speakers, and awards nights to honor those who risked their lives to bring news to the world. Public Life World Press Freedom Day is a global observance and not a public holiday. Background World Press Freedom Day was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in December 1993 as an outgrowth of the Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press. This seminar took place in Namibia in 1991 and led to the adoption of the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Media. The Windhoek Declaration called to establish, maintain and foster an independent, pluralistic and free press. It emphasized the importance of a free press for developing and maintaining democracy in a nation, and for economic development. World Press Freedom Day is celebrated annually on May 3, the date on which the Windhoek Declaration was adopted. Although World Press Freedom Day has only been celebrated since 1993, it has much deeper roots in the United Nations. Article 19 of the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression;

this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers". Each year since 1997, the UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize is awarded to honor the work of an individual or an organization defending or promoting freedom of expression, especially if it puts the individual's life at risk. The award is named after a journalist murdered in 1986 after denouncing drug barons. Last year it was awarded posthumously to a Russian investigative reporter who was murdered in a contract-style killing in 2006.

62. Today in History - May 03

- 1568 - French forces in [Florida](#) slaughtered hundreds of Spanish.
- 1802 - Washington, [DC](#), was incorporated as a city.
- 1855 - Macon B. Allen became the first African American to be admitted to the Bar in [Massachusetts](#).
- 1859 - France declared war on Austria.
- 1888 - Thomas Edison organized the Edison Phonograph Works.
- 1916 - Irish nationalist Padraic Pearse and two others were executed by the British for their roles in the Easter Rising.
- 1921 - [West Virginia](#) imposed the first state sales tax.
- 1926 - The revival of Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" opened in New York.
- 1926 - [U.S.](#) Marines landed in Nicaragua and stayed until 1933.
- 1926 - In Britain, trade unions began a general strike.
- 1927 - Francis E.J. Wilde of Meadowmere Park, [NY](#), patented the electric sign flasher.
- 1933 - The [U.S.](#) Mint was under the direction of a woman for the first time when Nellie Ross took the position.
- 1937 - Margaret Mitchell won a Pulitzer Prize for "Gone With The Wind."
- 1944 - Wartime rationing of most grades of meats ended in the [U.S.](#)
- 1944 - Dr. Robert Woodward and Dr. William Doering produced the first synthetic quinine at Harvard University.
- 1945 - Indian forces captured Rangoon, Burma, from the Japanese.
- 1948 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ruled that covenants prohibiting the sale of real estate to blacks and other minorities were legally unenforceable.
- 1952 - The first airplane landed at the geographic North Pole.
- 1966 - The game "Twister" was featured on the "Tonight Show" with Johnny Carson.
- 1968 - After three days of battle, the [U.S.](#) Marines retook Dai Do complex in Vietnam. They found that the North Vietnamese had evacuated the area.
- 1971 - Anti-war protesters began four days of demonstrations in Washington, [DC](#).
- 1971 - National Public Radio broadcast for the first time.

1971 - James Earl Ray, Martin Luther King's assassin, was caught in a jailbreak attempt.

1986 - In NASA's first post-Challenger launch, an unmanned Delta rocket lost power in its main engine shortly after liftoff. Safety officers destroyed it by remote control.

1988 - The White House acknowledged that first lady Nancy Reagan had used astrological advice to help schedule her husband's activities.

1992 - Five days of rioting and looting ended in Los Angeles, [CA](#). The riots, that killed 53 people, began after the acquittal of police officers in the beating of Rodney King.

1997 - The "Republic of Texas" surrendered to authorities ending an armed standoff where two people were held hostage. The group asserts the independence of [Texas](#) from the [U.S.](#)

1998 - "The Sevres Road," by 18-century landscape painter Camille Corot, stolen from the Louvre in France.

1999 - Mark Manes, at age 22, was arrested for supplying a gun to Eric Harris and Dylan Kleibold, who later killed 13 people at Columbine High School in [Colorado](#).

1999 - Hasbro released the first collection of toys for the Star Wars movie "Episode I: The Phantom Menace." [Today in Star Wars History](#)

1999 - The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed above 11,000 for the first time.

2000 - The trial of two Libyans accused of killing 270 people in the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 (over Lockerbie) opened.

2006 - In Alexandria, VA, Al-Quaida conspirator Zacarias Moussaoui was given a sentence of life in prison for his role in the terrorist attack on the U.S. on September 11, 2001.

63. Parliament panel suggests overhauling of police force in tribal areas

A Parliamentary panel has suggested overhauling of the administration particularly the police force in tribal dominated areas and make them responsive, alert and sensitive to the crimes against tribal women.

The Committee recommended to operationalize a special cell under the Station House Officer in each police station, particularly in tribal-dominated areas, to take on-time cognizance and remain accountable for any lapses in taking note of such offences.

The panel on Empowerment of Women, headed by Bijoya Chakravarthy today tabled its report in Parliament on empowerment of Tribal Women. The panel said, the existing laws to safeguard tribal women against atrocities have not been responsive enough to protect them such crimes.

The Committee said hoodwinked by non-tribal people, crimes of grievous nature, such as, murder, rape, molestation and grave hurt against tribal women are not rare despite the existence of stringent laws.

The Committee is also perturbed by the inaction of police and administration to such injustices, unwarranted delay in reporting of those cases, failure to register cognizable offences, time-lag in visits to the scene of crimes and also by the delays in charge-sheeting the accused persons.

64. Scientists uncover details of genetic events that cause breast cancer

Scientists in Britain say they now have a near perfect picture of the genetic events that cause breast cancer. The largest study of its kind resolved practically all the errors that cause healthy breast tissue to go rogue. To understand the causes of the disease, scientists have to understand what goes wrong in the DNA that makes healthy tissue turn

cancerous. The study, published in Nature, has been described as a milestone moment that could help find new ways of treating and preventing the breast cancer.

65. US asks Pakistan to make full payment for F-16, no subsidy

United States has informed Pakistan it will have to finance the purchase of US F-16 fighter jets itself after members of the US Congress objected to the use of government funds to pay for them.

The US government had said in February it had approved the sale to Pakistan of upto eight F-16 fighter jets as well as radar and other equipment in an agreement valued at 699 million US dollars.

US State Department spokesman John Kirby said congressional opposition meant funds from the US government's Foreign Military Financing allocation could not be used to purchase the aircraft.

Kirby said the State Department opposed putting conditions on the use of such funds and believed that effective engagement with Pakistan, including by supporting its counter-terrorism effort, was critical to promoting democracy and economic stability in the country.

66. UN to hold first World Humanitarian Summit

Some 80 countries so far are planning to attend the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul this month to re-think how to confront global crises, the UN aid chief said Monday. Among those, 45 will be represented by their heads of state or heads of government who will be asked to pledge funds and make commitments for action during the May 23-24 summit. Stephen O'Brien, the UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, said he found the turnout "so far encouraging", even though it amounts to fewer than half of the UN's 193 member-states. The world is witnessing the highest level of human suffering since the Second World War. This is why, for the first time in the 70-year history of the United Nations, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has convened the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on 23-24 May.

67. UN holding talks on legal framework to ban nuclear weapons

A United Nations working group is holding talks on a legal framework to ban nuclear weapons. The group opened its second meeting in Geneva on Monday after their first gathering in February. Representatives from 83 countries and regions are taking part, but none are from nuclear powers. In the opening address, the mayor of Hiroshima, Kazumi Matsui, appealed for constructive discussions toward the establishment of a treaty to ban nuclear arms.

German and Belgian representatives called for efforts to achieve realistic disarmament. Mexico and other countries, which advocated the establishment of the group, expressed support for a legal ban on nuclear arms.

68. Solar plane arrives in Arizona on latest leg of global trip

A solar-powered plane trying to fly around the world landed late yesterday in Phoenix, Arizona to complete the latest leg of its journey. The pilots of Solar Impulse 2 will next fly on a course toward New York before crossing the Atlantic Ocean for a stop either in Europe or Northern Africa. Their ultimate goal is making it back to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates where the trip began in March 2015.

The plane has also made stops along the way in Oman, Myanmar, China and Japan. Organizers say they want to show the possibilities of clean energy technology, and that already they have demonstrated it can work. Solar Impulse 2 has a 236-foot wingspan, longer than that of a Boeing 747. It is equipped with more than 17,000 solar cells that power propellers and charge batteries that store energy for night-time flight.

69. President gives away National film awards; Manoj Kumar honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke

President Pranab Mukherjee conferred National film awards for the year 2015 at a glittering ceremony in New Delhi. Veteran Film Actor Manoj Kumar was presented with prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award. A total of 21 Awards were given by the President in the Non-Feature film category while 51 awards in the Feature Film category. Three awards were given to Best Writing on Cinema.

In the Feature Film category, the Award for the Best Feature Film was given to Baahubali. The Award for the Best Popular Film providing Wholesome Entertainment was given to Hindi film Bajrangi Bhaijaan. The Award for the Best Film on Social Issues has been given to Nirnayakam.

Best Director Award was conferred on Sanjay Leela Bansali for his Hindi Film Baajirao Mastani. Best Actor Award was given to Amitabh Bachchan for his film Piku and the Award for the Best Actress was conferred on Kangana Ranaut for the film, Tanu weds Manu Returns. The award for the Best Children's Film was given to Hindi Film Duroto. Master Gaurav Menon was conferred Award for Best Child Artist for Malayalam movie Ben.

The Award for the Best Music direction has been conferred on M Jayachandran for Malayalam movie Ennu Ninte Moideen. Amdavad Ma Famous film got the award for best non feature film. This year National Film Awards included a special award given to the state of Gujarat for being the most film friendly state in the Country.

70. 1,020 families hit by 1984 riots to be given Rs 2 lakh

As many as 1,020 families, who were hit by the 1984 anti-Sikh riots and migrated to [Punjab](#) from different parts of the country, will be given Rs 2 lakh as part of a centrally-sponsored rehabilitation scheme.

Home Minister [Rajnath Singh](#) has approved reopening of the scheme for providing rehabilitation grant of Rs 2 lakh each to 1,020 families who had migrated to Punjab from [Delhi](#) and other parts of the country following 1984 riots, a Home Ministry official said.

These cases will be reopened only for a limited period of six months from the date of sanctioning of the scheme.

The move came following a recommendation of Justice (retd) G P Mathur Committee, which was set up by the [Narendra Modi](#) government in December 2014 to look into various grievances related to the 1984 riots.

Government has also approved the recommendation of the Committee to provide skill and upgrading of skill for members of the affected families to the Ministry of Skill Development and government of Punjab with the request to formulate a scheme in this regard.

Following assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31, 1984, anti-Sikh riots took place in Delhi and other places. Altogether 3,325 people were killed in the riots. Of them, Delhi alone accounted for 2,733 deaths and the rest deaths were in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and other states.

Government had already set up a Special Investigation Team, as suggested by the Mathur Committee, for conducting a fresh probe into all cases relating to the pogrom in Delhi and some other states.

The Justice Nanavati Commission had recommended reopening of only four of the 241 cases closed by police but BJP wanted re-investigation into all the other 237 cases.

However, it was not clear as to how many anti-Sikh riot cases have been recommended for reopening by the Justice Mathur Committee.

Of the 241 related cases, only four were reopened and re-investigated by CBI. In two of the cases, CBI had filed a charge sheet and in one of the cases five persons, including a former MLA, were convicted.

On December 10, 2014, the government had approved a proposal to give an additional compensation of Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

71. The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill, 2015

Highlights of the Bill The Bill establishes the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of India, and a State Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of each state. These Funds will receive payments for: (i) compensatory afforestation, (ii) net present value of forest (NPV), and (iii) other project specific

payments. The National Fund will receive 10% of these funds, and the State Funds will receive the remaining 90%. These Funds will be primarily spent on afforestation to compensate for loss of forest cover, regeneration of forest ecosystem, wildlife protection and infrastructure development. The Bill also establishes the National and State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authorities to manage the National and State Funds. Key Issues and Analysis The Bill establishes the Funds for compensatory afforestation and forest conservation. However, there are several factors (other than administration of funds) which affect compensatory afforestation and forest conservation. These factors are mentioned below. A 2013 CAG report noted that state forest departments lack the planning and implementation capacity to carry out compensatory afforestation and forest conservation. With the share of funds transferred to states increasing from 10% to 90%, effective utilisation of these funds will depend on the capacity of state forest departments. Procuring land for compensatory afforestation is difficult as land is a limited resource, and is required for multiple purposes, such as agriculture, industry, etc. This is compounded by unclear land titles, and difficulties in complying with procedures for land use. A High Level Committee on Environment Laws observed that quality of forest cover has declined between 1951 and 2014, with poor quality of compensatory afforestation plantations being one of the reasons behind the decline. The Bill delegates the determination of NPV (value of loss of forest ecosystem) to an expert committee constituted by the central government. As NPV constitutes about half of the total funds collected, its computation methodology would be important.

72. Commerce Ministry launches webbased dashboard for export, import data

The Commerce Ministry today launched a web-based dashboard to provide an easy access to detailed trade data of the country.

The dashboard would give an accurate perspective to the general public on the facts around the trade performance in India, Commerce and Industry Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#) said while inaugurating the dashboard.

'EXIM Analytics' would provide data graphically exposing patterns, trends and correlations that might go undetected in text based data.

It also gives a graphical collection of [exports](#) and [imports](#) from [India](#) for example the export turnover of the country, how it performs over time and what are the export destinations.

At present, monthly data from April 2014 till January 2016 has been provided. Older data will be added soon.

73. Saina, Sindhu among 7 Indian shuttlers making the cut for Rio Olympics

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) on Tuesday congratulated the seven Indian shuttlers, including Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu, who have made the cut for the Rio Olympics. Eclipsing the previous high of five shuttlers taking part in the 2012 London Olympics, this year seven Indian shuttlers have made the cut for Rio. The list includes two womens singles players in Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu, one men's singles player in Kidambi Srikanth, the womens doubles pairing of Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa, while Manu Attri and Sumeeth Reddy make up the mens doubles team. The shuttlers qualified on the basis of their rankings after the Badminton Asia Championships ended on Sunday. The cut-off date for achieving the required rankings is May 5. SAI hailed the shuttlers for achieving Olympic qualification on its official Twitter handle.

74. Sachin accepts IOA's invitation to become goodwill ambassador

Cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar has accepted Indian Olympic Association - IOA's request to become India's goodwill ambassador for Rio Olympics.

In a letter written to IOA today, Tendulkar has said that he will be happy to be a part of any awareness campaign that can rally the country around our athletes and motivate them.

The master blaster said that awareness of athletes' struggle, discipline and single minded focus will help develop many more world beating champions and encourage passionate following of Olympics in India.

Stating that welfare of sportsmen is very dear to him; Tendulkar said that he continues to bat for India off the field.

Extending his warm wishes, Tendulkar said that it will be his pleasure to meet India's world class athletes before they leave for Rio and learn about their experience and preparations.

Tendulkar will now join Olympic shooting champion Abhinav Bindra and Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who have already accepted IOA's request to become goodwill ambassadors.

75. Virat Kohli Nominated for Khel Ratna, Ajinkya Rahane for Arjuna Award

BCCI has nominated Indian Test captain Virat Kohli for the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award. Kohli's teammate Ajinkya Rahane has been recommended for the Arjuna Award. These nominations by BCCI have come after a gap of four years.

Other sports bodies and associations are also in the process of sending their nominations. Sports persons nominated for the Khel Ratna Award so far are Incheon Asian Games gold medallist shooter Jitu Rai, squash star Dipika Pallikal, athlete Tintu Luka and ace golfer Anirban Lahiri.

Athletes Lalita Babar and OP Jaisha, shooters PN Prakash and Apurvi Chandela, and archer Laxmirani Majhi have been nominated for Arjuna Awards.

Tennis player Sania Mirza was conferred with the Khel Ratna award last year. Khel Ratna award carries a cash prize of Rs 7.5 lakh while the Arjuna Award will carry a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh.

76. Leicester City crowned English Premier League champions

Leicester City were crowned champions of England for the first time in the club's 132 year history after nearest challengers Tottenham Hotspur could only manage a 2-2 draw with Chelsea.

Leicester City completed their contest for the Premier League title yesterday after Eden Hazard's stunning late goal enabled Chelsea a the draw with second-place Tottenham Hotspur.

Yesterday's result meant second placed Tottenham will not be able to surpass Leicester City who have a seven point lead at the top of the table. Leicester City began the season as 5,000/1 outsiders but the run of form that saved them from the drop last season showed no signs of ending. The Foxes became the first club to win a maiden league title since Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest in 1978.

77. Vaishali, Masoud winners in Rapid Chess at Asian Junior C'ship

[Tamil Nadu](#) youngster R Vaishali and Iranian International Master Masoud Mosadeghpour emerged victorious as the Asian Junior Open and Girls Chess Championships got off to a rousing start here today.

103 players from 12 different countries are participating in this nine day long prestigious championship, which have three formats of Rapid, Standard and Blitz events.

In the girl's Rapid event, Vaishali won the yellow metal with a perfect score of 9 points while Masoud finished first with 8 points.

Indian Grandmasters Aravindh Chithambaram and S L Narayanan finished as first runner up and second runner up respectively in open section while Uuriintuya Uurtasaikh of Mongolia won Silver and Bala Kannamma of [India](#) finished third in girl's category.

Earlier in a befitting opening ceremony, Asian Chess Federation Deputy President [Bharat](#) Singh inaugurated the championship by lighting the lamp and making the customary first move in presence of Jaidev Dutta, General Manager host Hotel Park Plaza and AK Verma, Secretary Delhi Chess Association.

The classical championship to decide Asian Junior Champions will start on Wednesday and the young Indian Grandmasters Aravindh Chithambaram, Karthikeyan Murali and S L Narayanan will spearhead the Indian challenge

while R Vaishali got the top billing in Girls section.

78. No retrospective sunset policy for SEZs: Commerce Minister

The government is not in favour of bringing a retrospective sunset policy in the SEZ review, hinted commerce Minister Nirmala Sitharaman at the Lok Sabha. The commerce Minister added that government will not hurt the industry by imposing a retrospective withdrawal of an already declared tax concession like the sunrise clause. India's SEZs are slow performers on export front compared to similar industrial and export agglomerations abroad. In a recent statement in the Parliament, the Minister stated that special economic zones (SEZs) have seen a slowdown in terms of exports, increased number of applications for denotification, slower operationalisation and fewer number of requests for setting up new zones. Nearly 138 SEZ developers have sought and granted more time to complete their projects in the last four years. "The slowdown may be due to a number of reasons including withdrawal of exemption from minimum alternate tax (MAT) and Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) provisions, uncertain fiscal regime for SEZs and global slowdown in exports," she said in an early reply. SEZ policy review is made periodically and in the context of the recent slowdown, the government is expected to give some extra push at least for the medium term to raise exports. India's exports have registered continuous 15-month decline conditioned by global recession.

79. What is loan or debt write-off? Whether it means no need for repayment?

In banking and finance, the term "write-off" is really just an accounting term. It means the bank or lender doesn't count the money borrower owes to it. The financial statement of the bank will indicate that the written off loans are compensated through some other way. This is needed to cleanse the balance sheet of the bank. Cleaning of the balance sheet means bad assets are replaced. There is no meaning that the borrower is pardoned or got exempted from payment. His debt will remain and recovery measures against him will continue. But on the balance sheet of the bank, a bad asset should remain bad forever. It should do some corrective action. In India, the major corrective action is provisioning. Here, the bank should use a part of its profit to replace the bad loans and it thus can be expressed as written off loans. Once the borrower repays the money, it will be replaced back into profit. Write-off thus does not mean that recovery comes to a stop. According to the RBI, writing off of NPAs is a regular exercise conducted by banks to clean up their balance sheets. Banks write-off advances at Head Office level as part of the balance sheet cleaning exercise and these loans continue to remain outstanding in the branch books. In India, loan write-off as a technical is done within the framework of Income Tax Act, 1961. Similarly, there is the RBI Guidelines regarding provisions for bad loans as per Standard Accounting Practices.

80. Big B, Kangana win top honours at 63rd National Film Awards

The 63rd National Film Awards ceremony here on Tuesday got a dash of glitz and glamour of Bollywood with Amitabh Bachchan and Kangana Ranaut getting Best Actor and Best Actress honours. President Pranab Mukherjee presented the awards at the ceremony at Vigyan Bhavan, which got talent from all the regional cinematic worlds across India under one roof. A total of 21 awards were given by the President in the Non-Feature Film category while the number of awards in Feature Film category were 51. And to add to it, three awards were given to Best Writing on Cinema. While Amitabh, dressed up in a black suit, picked up the award for his act as a Bengali father in "Piku", which also starred Deepika Padukone, Kangana looking radiant in off-shoulder gown got the honour for her superlative dual act in "Tanu Weds Manu Returns". She has previously won National Awards twice for her roles in "Fashion" and "Queen". In the Feature Film category, the award for the Best Feature Film was given to filmmaker S.S. Rajamouli's southern magnum opus "Baahubali: The Beginning", produced by Shobu Yarlagadda and Arka Mediaworks Pvt Ltd. The talent of the Hindi film industry was lauded along with regional film industries like Bengali, Marathi, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Assamese. The President said that the "Indian films truly reflected the Indian character of unity and diversity". Mukherjee complimented the award winners who included newcomers as well as legends of Indian cinema, and added that the awards this year reflected all aspects of cinema, including digitization and technology. It was the tragic romance saga of Maratha warrior Peshwa Bajirao I (played by Ranveer Singh) and Mastani (Deepika Padukone) in "Bajirao Mastani" that shone through the ceremony as it scooped up many honours. Sanjay Leela Bhansali got the Best Director award for it as Remo D'Souza won the award in Best Choreography. Shriram Iyengar, Saloni Dhatrak and Sujeet Sawant won for the movie's production design. In the audiography section, Biswadeep Chatterjee's sound designing and Justin Ghose's re-recording of the final mixed track for the Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone starrer, have been honoured. "Masaan" directed by Neeraj Ghaywan and produced by Phantom Films received the Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director. Superstar Salman Khan's on-screen journey to Pakistan from India via

"Bajrangi Bhaijaan" became the Best Popular Film providing Wholesome Entertainment. The film's director Kabir Khan, looking sophisticated in black bandhgala, received the award. The gala also witnessed the performances by 63rd National Film Award winners - Monali Thakur, who won the Best Female Playback Singer for the song "Moh moh ke dhaage" from "Dum Laga Ke Haisha" and Mahesh Kale, who won the Best Playback Singer (male) for the Marathi film "Katyar Kaljat Ghusli". Filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj bagged the Best Screenplay Writer (adapted) Award for "Talvar". The Best Screenplay Writer (original) was shared by Juhi Chaturvedi ("Piku") and Himanshu Kumar ("Tanu Weds Manu Returns"). Just post the announcement of the award winners back in March, many questions surfaced pertaining to why regional cinema and talent was sidelined. Hinting at the stir, the President also spoke of the importance of films in context of variety and diversity of India and the important role it played in unifying the nation. Amitabh, who has earlier won the National Film Award thrice for films "Agnepath", "Black" and "Paa", was cheered by his family including wife Jaya, son Abhishek, daughter-in-law Aishwarya Rai and daughter Shweta Nanda. Veteran Tanvi Azmi also won the Best Supporting Actress award for her act in "Bajirao Mastani", and actress Shabana Azmi and her husband Javed Akhtar were seen lauding their relative. In fact, they were so excited that they went on photo clicking spree when her name was announced. The award for the Best Children's Film was given to "Duronto" (Hindi) produced by Code Red Films. Master Gaurav Menon was conferred award for Best Child Artist for movie "Ben" (Malayalam). The Award for the Best Music direction (songs) has been conferred on M. Jayachandran for "Ennu Ninte Moideen" (Malayalam) and the award for the best music direction (Background Score) was given to Ilaiyaraaja for "Thaarai Thappattai" (Tamil). It was Bollywood touch in music as well. The award for the best lyrics has been conferred on Varun Grover for the song "Moh moh ke dhaage" from the film "Dum Laga Ke Haisha". A special jury award has been conferred on Kalki Koechlin, who exuded charm in a off-white sari with green border, for the film "Margarita with a Straw". This year National Film Awards included a special award given to the state of Gujarat for being the most film friendly state in the country and veteran film actor and director Manoj Kumar was conferred with the 47th Dadasaheb Phalke Award at the function.

81. FGIL and Saraswat Bank join hands

Future Generali India Life Insurance (FGIL) and Saraswat Bank have entered into a bancassurance partnership.

Under this agreement, Saraswat Bank will offer FGIL's customised solutions to its customers, through its network of over 250 branches, its sales force across the country as well as through their digital platforms.

The objective of this partnership is to reach out to their customers, thereby improving the insurance protection gap and strengthening the distribution network of FGIL.

This bancassurance partnership will be extended across all bank branches covering six major states - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa and Delhi, FGIL said.

82. Largest, tallest national flag to be hoisted in Hyderabad

India's largest national flag on the tallest flag-post will be hoisted on the banks of Hussain Sagar lake in Hyderabad. Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Reddy on Tuesday directed the officials to make arrangements for installing a 301 feet tall pole at Batukamma Ghat on the banks of the lake. He asked Chief Secretary Rajiv Sharma to take steps for installing the tallest pole and preparing largest flag in the country. Presently, the largest tri-colour is in Ranchi. It is 66 feet in height, 99 feet in width and stands on a 293 feet tall pole at Ranchi's popular Pahari Mandir, or 'Fansi Dungri'. KCR said the move will help promote sense of patriotism among citizens. The chief minister also decided to construct Telangana martyrs' memorial on the banks of Hussain Sagar lake, which divides twin cities of [Hyderabad](#) and Secunderabad. A pillar and a park will be developed on 12 acres of land to highlight the movement for separate Telangana state and the sacrifices made by the martyrs and leaders. The memorial will also showcase Telangana's history, culture, literature, arts and personalities. KCR will lay foundation stone for the memorial on June 2, the second anniversary of formation of Telangana state. He reviewed the arrangements for the celebrations. The chief minister directed officials to organise special events in the state capital, district headquarters and also at Telangana Bhavan in New Delhi. Last month, the chief minister had announced that 125-feet statue of B. R. Ambedkar will be installed near the lake. This will be the tallest statue of the architect of the Indian constitution.

83. CAB to use 'Pink-Ball' in Inter-Club championship

In order to be first among equals, the [Cricket Association of Bengal](#) (CAB) are all set to experiment with Pink ball day/night final match under the Eden Gardens floodlights in the first division Inter-Club championship. The news was confirmed by CAB joint secretary Avishek Dalmiya and the final will be held sometime in June. It is the idea of CAB president and former India captain [Sourav Ganguly](#), who wants to check out how pink ball day/night game shapes up before he can present his associations case for the day-night Test match that [BCCI](#) is planning against [New Zealand](#).

84. Piyush Goyal to unveil portal on payment to contract workers

Coal and Power Minister Piyush Goyal will today introduce a new portal for Contract Labour Payment Management System. In a statement, Coal Ministry said that the minister will also felicitate employees for their path-breaking work towards lighting up India in the last two years.

The Web portal is created for monitoring compliance of labour payment and other benefits to contract workers under the Contract Labour (Regulation Abolition) Act, 1970.

The system has in-built mechanism to validate minimum wages paid, generate wage slips and employment cards, among others, for contract workers as required under the Act.

The portal provides access to all contract workers through a Workers Identification Number to view their personal details and payment status. Contract workers can also register their grievances through this portal.

The Central Mine Planning and Development Institute (CMPDI), the consultancy arm of CIL, will maintain the portal.

85. Telangana to set up Spices Park in Nizamabad

The Telangana Government is setting up a Spices Park in Nizamabad. The park will come up in Padigal in Nizamabad district with an outlay of Rs. 31 crore. The park is coming up in 40 acres, catering to farmers in Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Adilabad and Warangal. We have sanctioned Rs. 15 crore for the project so far, Pocharam Srinivas Reddy, Minister Agriculture and Cooperation, has said. The park would primarily focus on turmeric farmers. The idea is to eliminate middlemen and provide the farmers with remunerative prices for the commodity, the Minister said. Addressing a press conference here on Saturday, he said the Agriculture Department is all set for the kharif season. We have kept sufficient stocks of seed and fertilisers. The weathermen have predicted a good monsoon and we expect good cropping season this year, the Minister said. The Minister asked the farmers not go grow cotton this year and go for alternative crops like soya and maize. Cotton dominates the acreage with 42 per cent of all the arable land of 36 lakh hectares. We are targeting to reduce this excessive dependency on the crop, the Minister said. Farmers grow cotton in 17.7 lakh hectares, followed by paddy with 10.59 lakh ha and maize with 4.78 lakh ha.

86. SC brings former CJI RM Lodha to reform medical regulator MCI

After fixing the countrys cricket board, former Chief Justice of India RM Lodha gets the responsibility to reform the Medical Council of India (MCI), which the Supreme Court described on Monday as unprofessional. The top court appointed a three-member panel headed by Lodha to oversee how the regulator of medical profession and education in India functions. All policy decisions of the MCI will require approval of the oversight committee. The committee will be free to issue appropriate remedial directions (to the MCI), ordered a five-judge constitution bench headed by Justice AR Dave. Besides Lodha, the panel has former CAG Vinod Rai and Dr SK Sareen. Initially the panel will function for a year, unless suitable mechanism is brought in place earlier which will substitute the said committee, the court said. Lodha headed a three-member panel appointed by the top court to look into the 2013 betting scandal in the Indian Premier league (IPL) and the functioning of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). IPL teams Rajasthan Royals and Chennai Super Kings were kicked out for two seasons on his panels recommendations. It also suggested changes in the worlds richest cricket board to improve transparency and weed out corruption. The court appointed the Lodha panel to oversee the MCI because the regulator is often accused of indulging in corrupt practices. It referred to reports of a government panel and a parliamentary standing committee that indicted the MCI for various malpractices.

87. ADB President Urges Action On Jobs, Private Sector, Climate To Ensure A Vibrant Asia

Creating quality jobs, developing the private sector, and combating climate change are critical for a vibrant and

sustainable region, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Takehiko Nakao said here today in the opening address at the 49th Annual Meeting of ADBs Board of Governors. He also said that Asia-Pacific's long-term outlook is strong, despite a slowdown in some economies this year. As ADB marks its 50th anniversary this year, its Annual Meeting, from 2-5 May, is gathering more than 3,000 government officials, academics, business and civil society representatives, and media. This is ADB's first Annual Meeting in Germany. Mr. Nakao thanked the Government of Germany and the City of Frankfurt for their hospitality and excellent arrangements. About quality jobs, ADB is contributing to job creation and improved workplace conditions by supporting education and skills development for the youth, particularly young women; promoting core labor standards; and investing in key infrastructure, such as power plants, roads, and railways, especially in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

88. NSE to launch platform for financing SMEs against bills

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) is planning to launch a new trading platform for bill discounting or trade receivables of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). The country's largest exchange has forged a joint venture with the Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) for the new platform, which is likely to go live by the end of this calendar year, according to people in the know.

The new electronic trading platform is aimed at easing the liquidity constraints of MSMEs. Bill discounting is a concept where a firm sells its accounts receivables to a bank or a factoring firm. Selling bills or accounts receivables helps the firm generate cash, which would otherwise have got realised at a future date.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had issued the final guidelines for setting up a Trade Receivables Discounting System in December 2014.

NSE and Sidbi are planning to call the new platform trades exchange, said a source.

89. BHEL commissions 600 MW thermal power plant in MP

State-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) announced the commissioning of a 600 MW coal-based thermal power plant in Madhya Pradesh. The unit has been commissioned at the 1x600 MW Jhabua Thermal Power Project (TPP) located in Seoni district in Madhya Pradesh, BHEL said in a release. The project has been developed by Jhabua Power Ltd (JPL), a subsidiary of Avantha Power Infrastructure Limited (APIL). This is the second project of APIL commissioned by BHEL after the 1x600 MW Avantha Bhandar TPP at Raigarh in Chhattisgarh, it said. BHEL's scope of work in the contract envisaged design, engineering, manufacture, supply, erection and commissioning of steam turbine, generator and boiler, along with associated auxiliaries and electricals, besides controls and Instrumentation and electrostatic precipitators, it added. BHEL is presently executing two supercritical units of 800 MW for NTPC at Gadarwara in Madhya Pradesh.

90. Indian American Sikh woman elected to key Republican position

An Indian-American woman Sikh lawyer from California has been elected to a key position in the Republican party at the national level. Chandigarh-born Harmeet Kaur Dhillon, 47, was elected as the newest national committee member of the Republican National Committee by thousand plus votes in attendance at the California Republican Party convention. She was earlier the vice chairman of the California Republican Party. She was the first woman elected to this position of vice chair of the California Republican Party. A nationally recognised trial lawyer, Dhillon was born in India, but raised in rural North Carolina after her Sikh parents moved to the US. "A little girl from Chandigarh, India, the Bronx, and Smithfield, North Carolina back in the day, to being one of Californias three votes on the RNC. For the next four years starting in late July, I will help shape the policies of the party of Abraham Lincoln and Harriet Tubman, the party of liberty and opportunity," Dhillon said after her election. Following her clerkship with Paul V Niemeyer of the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, Dhillon's practice in New York, London, and the San Francisco Bay Area has focused on federal and state commercial litigation and arbitration, with a particular emphasis on unfair competition/trade secret misappropriation, intellectual property (including trademark litigation and internet torts), complex contractual disputes, and First Amendment litigation. Based in San Francisco, Dhillon among other things also sat on the board of the American Civil Liberties Union, and once made a financial contribution to Kamala Harris campaign for local office ? Harris who is a US Senate hopeful and rising star in Democratic politics.

91. Scientists built the world's smallest nano-engine

University of Cambridge researchers have built the world's smallest working engine. The device, powered by light, could be the basis of future nanoscale machines that are just billionths of a meter in size. Fantastic Voyage, here we come! From the University of Cambridge: The prototype device is made of tiny charged particles of gold, bound together with temperature-responsive polymers in the form of a gel. When the nano-engine is heated to a certain temperature with a laser, it stores large amounts of elastic energy in a fraction of a second, as the polymer coatings expel all the water from the gel and collapse. This has the effect of forcing the gold nanoparticles to bind together into tight clusters. But when the device is cooled, the polymers take on water and expand, and the gold nanoparticles are strongly and quickly pushed apart, like a spring. The results are reported in the journal PNAS. Its like an explosion, said Dr Tao Ding from Cambridges Cavendish Laboratory, and the papers first author. We have hundreds of gold balls flying apart in a millionth of a second when water molecules inflate the polymers around them. We know that light can heat up water to power steam engines, said study co-author Dr Ventsislav Valev, now based at the University of Bath. But now we can use light to power a piston engine at the nanoscale.

92. Chemists use DNA to build the world's tiniest thermometer

Over 60 years ago, researchers discovered that the DNA molecules that encode our genetic information can unfold when heated. "In recent years, biochemists also discovered that biomolecules such as proteins or RNA (a molecule similar to DNA) are employed as nanothermometers in living organisms and report temperature variation by folding or unfolding," says senior author Prof. Alexis Valle-Blisle. "Inspired by those natural nanothermometers, which are typically 20,000x smaller than a human hair, we have created various DNA structures that can fold and unfold at specifically defined temperatures." One of the main advantages of using DNA to engineer molecular thermometers is that DNA chemistry is relatively simple and programmable. "DNA is made from four different monomer molecules called nucleotides: nucleotide A binds weakly to nucleotide T, whereas nucleotide C binds strongly to nucleotide G," explains David Gareau, first author of the study. "Using these simple design rules we are able to create DNA structures that fold and unfold at a specifically desired temperature." "By adding optical reporters to these DNA structures, we can therefore create 5 nm-wide thermometers that produce an easily detectable signal as a function of temperature," adds Arnaud Desrosiers, co-author of this study. These nanoscale thermometers open many exciting avenues in the emerging field of nanotechnology, and may even help us to better understand molecular biology. "There are still many unanswered questions in biology," adds Prof. Valle-Blisle, "For example, we know that the temperature inside the human body is maintained at 37 C, but we have no idea whether there is a large temperature variation at the nanoscale inside each individual cell." One question currently under investigation by the research team is to determine whether nanomachines and nanomotors developed by nature over millions of years of evolution also overheat when functioning at high rate. "In the near future, we also envision that these DNA-based nanothermometers may be implement in electronic-based devices in order to monitor local temperature variation at the nanoscale," concludes Prof. Valle-Blisle.

93. Free internet for visiting devotees at Golden Temple

Devotees visiting Punjabs Golden Temple will now have free Wi-Fi internet access within the temple complex and its peripheral area. The service would not be available inside the sanctum sanctorum of the temple and the marbled area around the water pond, keeping religious ethics in view, Additional secretary of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Daljit Singh Bedi said in Amritsar on Sunday. The facility would be available in all nearby routes around the periphery of Golden Temple, besides all the guest-houses run by SGPC for pilgrims in the temple complex. He said wi-fi would also be functional in all the offices of SGPC and related offices of Golden Temple, besides Akal Takht. Bedi said the free wi-fi facility will be provided by Videocon.

94. South Africa slip to sixth in Test rankings, Pakistan rise to third

South Africa have dropped to No. 6 in the Test rankings, while Pakistan have climbed to third place, in the annual update released by the ICC on Tuesday. Australia have taken a six-point lead over second-placed India, while Pakistan trail India by only one point. England and New Zealand benefited from South Africa's drop, moving to fourth and fifth respectively. West Indies retained their eighth-place ranking but lead Bangladesh by only eight points. South Africa and West Indies lost the most points in the update, 17 and 11 respectively. The calculation process dropped results from 2012-13, while outcomes from 2014-15 were weighted at 50%. Only the latest results had 100% weightage. As a result, South Africa's series victories over England, Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan in 2012-13 were not factored in. They lost series to India and England and drew with Bangladesh in the 2015-16 season. West Indies had beaten New Zealand,

Bangladesh and Zimbabwe in 2012-13 but lost to Australia and Sri Lanka in 2015-16. The update favoured Pakistan, because their 2-0 loss to Sri Lanka in August 2014 was weighted at 50%. In terms of points gained, Bangladesh made the most progress, getting ten points, followed by Australia, who gained six. Zimbabwe, ranked No. 10, have 12 points but were not included in the rankings table released by the ICC on Tuesday because they had not completed the required eight Tests in the new rating period. The ICC said Zimbabwe will be added to the table once they play two more Tests. Updated ICC Test rankings 1. Australia - 118 points (6 points gained) 2. India - 112 points (+2) 3. Pakistan - 111 points (+5) 4. England - 105 points (+3) 5. New Zealand - 98 points (+2) 6. South Africa - 92 points (-17) 7. Sri Lanka - 88 points (-1) 8. West Indies - 65 points (-11) 9. Bangladesh - 57 points (+10)

95. UN Security Council to meet on Aleppo crisis

United Nations Security Council will hold an urgent meeting today to discuss the crisis in Syria's frontline city of Aleppo, where fighting threatens to unravel international peace efforts. France and Britain called for the meeting as Russia said a new ceasefire in Aleppo could be announced within hours.

The 15-member council will hear a report from the UN's top political affairs official Jeffrey Feltman on the situation in Aleppo, where fresh fighting including a rocket attack on a maternity hospital left 19 dead yesterday.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in Moscow that efforts were under way to agree on a freeze in fighting in Aleppo. A surge of violence that erupted on April 22nd has left more than 270 people dead in the divided northern city and undermined efforts to revive peace negotiations.

96. Water scarcity to cost growth, spark conflict, migration: World Bank

The World Bank has warned that water scarcity, exacerbated by climate change, could impact growth, spur migration and spark conflict across the globe including in India. Several regions in India are facing water deficit.

The World Bank report released yesterday said the combined effects of growing populations, rising incomes and expanding cities will see a rise in demand for water.

A top World Bank official stressed the need to enhance efficiency of water use in India.

World Bank said property related violence increases by about four per cent in India when there is below average rainfall.

In Gujarat, when groundwater irrigation became less available or more expensive due to a declining water table, farmers migrated to cities, the report said.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim said water scarcity is a major threat to economic growth and stability around the world, and climate change is making the problem worse.

97. EU to grant visa-free travel for Turkish citizens

European Commission is set to recommend granting visa-free travel for Turkish citizens inside Europe's passport-free Schengen area, despite unease among some EU lawmakers. The change could take effect from July, but first it requires approval by the European Parliament and member states. EU officials insist that Turkey has yet to meet some key EU criteria. The deal was offered in return for Turkey taking back migrants who crossed the Aegean Sea to Greece. The EU fears that without this deal, Turkey will not control migration.

98. Education of nearly 75 million children in danger: UN

Nearly 75 million children in countries hit by war and disaster are in desperate need of education and help to stay in school, the United Nations children's agency has said. A quarter of school-age children, 462 million, live in countries affected by such crises, UNICEF said, adding that only 2 percent of global humanitarian appeals were, on average, dedicated to education. UNICEF also announced details of the Education Cannot Wait fund, which will be launched at the first World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey this month. It aims to raise nearly \$4bn to reach 13.6 million children within five years and 75 million by 2030. "Education changes lives in emergencies," Josephine Bourne, UNICEF's

education chief, said in a statement. "Going to school keeps children safe from abuses like trafficking and recruitment into armed groups and is a vital investment in children's futures and in the future of their communities. "It is time education is prioritised by the international community as an essential part of basic humanitarian response, alongside water, food and shelter." In Syria, more than 6,000 schools are out of use, having been attacked, occupied by the military or turned into emergency shelters. In the Central African Republic a quarter of schools are not functioning. In periods of crisis, parents cite education as one of their top priorities, yet last year only a fraction of children identified as needing education as part of humanitarian response plans were reached, UNICEF said. According to UNICEF, of the 34 million school-age children in conflict-hit countries in the Middle East, 40 percent are out of schools. The new fund will disburse aid at the first sign of upheaval and provide longer-term funding for protracted crises, according to UNICEF. In the poorest communities, UNICEF said a child who is out of school for more than a year is unlikely to return. Girls are 2.5 times more likely to drop out of school than boys. UNICEF said disruption to schooling also had huge implications for long-term development. "If education is not used as a lever to break the cycle, then crises will continue to be repeated." The fund will seek support from new donor countries, the commercial sector, foundations, philanthropists, Diasporas and faith-based groups, as well as traditional donors. It will be launched by UNICEF with partners including the UN education envoy, the UN refugee agency and governments.

99. MP govt to launch Nagaroday Abhiyan on lines of Gramoday Se Bharat Uday

The Madhya Pradesh government will launch Nagaroday Abhiyan on the lines of Gramoday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan in the state in July-August.

Announcing this in a function in Bhopal last evening, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the campaign will focus on welfare of the people and development of urban localities.

Mr. Chouhan said that slum dwellers will be given pucca houses and the places where poor people live will be made slum-free gradually.

100. Asian economies to account for two-thirds of global growth: IMF

The International Monetary Fund says Asia's economies are still set to underpin world economic growth, despite being dragged by a slowdown in China. IMF in its Regional Economic Outlook said, the Asia Pacific region is expected to grow at a strong 5.3 per cent this year, accounting for nearly two-thirds of global growth.

The IMF is forecasting India will remain the world's fastest-growing large economy, set to grow 7.5 per cent this year and next, as it benefits from lower oil prices. Last year, India's economy grew 7.3 per cent.

China, which is re-balancing its economy away from a dependence on manufacturing and towards consumption, is expected to see its economic growth slow to 6.5 per cent this year and 6.2 per cent in 2017, from 6.9 per cent last year.

It expects Vietnam will be among the region's fastest growing economies, while domestic demand will remain resilient in the Philippines and Malaysia.

101. Air India inks codeshare pact with Flybe

Air India today said it has inked a codeshare pact with European regional airline Flybe which will give passengers of the national carrier a seamless connectivity to the UK and rest of Europe from here and vice versa. Flybe, a member of Star Alliance along with Air India, is Europe's largest regional airline operating on 216 routes through 75 airports across 10 countries. Code-sharing allows an airline to book its passengers on its partner carriers and provide seamless connectivity to multiple destinations where it has no presence. The new partnership will allow customers of both Air India and Flybe to fly seamlessly from Europe to India and from here to destinations covered by Flybe, via Birmingham, an Air India statement said. The codeshare will enable Flybe travellers using its multi-frequency Birmingham services from Belfast City, Edinburgh and Glasgow to book seamless flights onward to Delhi. Under the unilateral agreement, Air India (AI) will place its marketing code on these Flybe flights (BE), it added. The seats for codeshare flights will be available for booking via Air India bookings portal as well as through local travel agents from May 10 for travel from June 1.

102. Facebook pays \$10,000 to 10-year-old Instagram hacker

Social media giant Facebook has paid a \$10,000 reward to a 10-year-old Finnish boy for finding a glitch in its picture sharing app Instagram. Jani, whose last name was not released for privacy reasons, is the youngest ever recipient of Facebook's bug bounty, paid to users who find bugs or weaknesses in its platforms. I wanted to see if Instagram's comment field could stand malicious code. Turns out it couldn't, Jani told Finland's Iltalehti newspaper. Facebook said the glitch was fixed in February and the reward was paid in March. Jani, who is still too young to have a Facebook or Instagram account of his own, said he learned coding from YouTube videos and found a way to delete user comments from Instagram accounts. I could have deleted anyone's comments from there. Even Justin Bieber's, he told Iltalehti. He said he was thinking about a career in data security, but for now his plans include buying a new bike and a football with his reward money.

103. Gujarat University rolls out 10 per cent quota for EBCs

The Gujarat University on Wednesday announced to implement 10 per cent quota in admission for students belonging to the economically backward classes (EBCs) with effect from the current academic year. The EBC quota is over and above the existing reservations for SCs, STs and OBCs. An ordinance to this effect was passed by the state cabinet in the last week of April and a gazette notification of it was published on May 1. The government had taken the initiative on the demand from Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) and Sardar Patel Group (SPG) agitating for reservation for Patidar community in government jobs and admissions in higher educational institutions. The EBC quota is for economically backward students from non-reserved categories, irrespective of caste and creed, if the annual income of their parents does not exceed Rs 6 lakh. With this announcement, the total percentage of reserved seats went up to 60 per cent. Speaking to media persons, vice-chancellor MN Patel said a separate merit list for EBC students would be prepared like those of other reserved categories and admissions would be given strictly on merit. With this announcement, GU became the first government institution to declare the implementation of EBC quota. When pointed out that supreme court had in a judgement ruled that reservation cannot exceed 50 per cent, Patel said there were many states where reservation was for more than 50 per cent seats.

104. Pranav Pandya nominated to Rajya Sabha

The government has nominated Pranav Pandya to the [Rajya Sabha](#) to fill a vacancy caused by the retirement of a nominated member, the home ministry said on Wednesday. Pandya, head of the All World Gayatri Pariwar and editor of Akhand Jyoti magazine, has been a proponent of Indian culture across the world. A medical practitioner with MBBS and MD qualifications, Pandya is known as an advocate of 'scientific spirituality'.

105. India received USD 48 bn in remittances in 9 months of last

[India](#) has received USD 48 billion in remittances in the first nine months of the previous fiscal, the government informed.

India, one of the top recipients of remittances globally, had received USD 66.26 billion in 2014-15 while the amount was USD 65.48 billion in 2013-14.

Replying to a question, Minister of State for External Affairs [V K Singh](#) also said, as per policy, investments made by NRIs under schedule 4 of [FEMA](#) (transfer or issue of security by persons residing outside India) Regulations is deemed to be domestic investment on par with investment made by residents.

106. What is Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)?

Economic activities are now increasingly driven by inventions and innovations. Each product is an outcome of several inventions. When we are paying for a product, a part of that payment goes to the inventor in the form of royalties. From an economy angle, it is the inventions that are deciding the progress of a country rather than traditional factors like land, capital and raw labour. Hence intellectual property matters more than it appears. What is intellectual property? According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, Intellectual property (IP) refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce. Intellectual property in a simple sense is a creation of the human intelligence or mind. As a form of property right, intellectual property can be considered as assets that can be bought, sold, mortgaged, exchanged, and licensed like physical property. Intellectual property is safeguarded only if rights (regarding its use) are given to the producers of intellectual

property. Intellectual property rights are provided by national governments with the aid of statutory provisions to inventors writers etc. What is intellectual property rights? Intellectual property rights (IPRs) are rights assigned to the creators of intellectual property (individuals or organizations) regarding its exclusive use. Intellectual property rights are in different forms. WTOs TRIPs Agreement classifies intellectual property rights into following groups. Copyright and related rights Trademarks, including service marks Geographical indications Industrial designs Patents Layout- designs (topographies) of integrated circuits Undisclosed information, including trade secrets Control of Anti-Competitive Practices in Contractual Licenses. Based on their specific nature, intellectual property is often divided into two categories: Industrial property, which includes patents (inventions), trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source; and Copyright, which includes literary and artistic works such as novels, poems and plays, films, musical works, artistic works such as drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures, and architectural designs.

107. Renewal of Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Government of India and the European Union

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the renewed Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation with European Union (EU) for another period of 5 years as effective from May 17, 2015 until 2020 reaffirming their shared commitment to research and innovation as drivers of social and economic development.

The purpose of the Agreement is to strengthen the co-operation in research and development activities in science technology fields of common interest between the research institutions of the European Union Member States and India on the basis of parity, reciprocity and co-investment of resources including funds. The cooperation activities include supporting joint research and development projects; exchange of scientists and experts, sharing of advanced research facilities, joint seminars, symposia and workshops, sharing of relevant information on science, technology and innovation policy, program and research development projects.

The Department of Science and Technology of the Government of India and the Directorate General Research and Innovation of the European Commission are the executive agencies of the cooperation activities and oversee the implementation of this Agreement through regular meeting of Joint Steering Committee on Science and Technology.

Background: The Agreement was initially signed in November, 2001 was in force till May 2015. The Agreement was renewed through exchange of diplomatic letters (Note Verbale) between Mission of India and the European Union in Brussels, Belgium and the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union in Brussels, Belgium in March, 2016.

108. Memorandum of Understanding between Reserve Bank of India and Central Bank of United Arab Emirates on co-operation concerning currency swap agreement

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in February, 2016 between Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Central Bank of United Arab Emirates (UAE) on co-operation concerning currency swap agreement.

The MoU commits that RBI and Central Bank of UAE will consider signing a bilateral Currency Swap Agreement on mutually agreed terms and conditions, after undertaking technical deliberations, subject to the concurrence of respective Governments.

The MoU will further strengthen the close economic relationship and cooperation between India and United Arab Emirates. The swap agreement is also expected to facilitate invoicing of bilateral trade in local currencies

109. Memorandum of Cooperation to be signed between Ministry of Women & Child Development and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of Memorandum of Co-operation (MoC) between Ministry of Women Child Development (MWCD) and Bill Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) for the cooperation in Information and Communication Technology enabled Real Time Monitoring (ICT-RTM) of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and other related technical matters.

The MoC would help in:

- a. Implementation of ICT-RTM of ICDS which will enable the authorities for timely intervention for ensuring proper service delivery.
- b. Putting up in place a shared national communication campaign, communications strategy and guidelines, customizing communications, products and material to local contexts alongwith developing plans for large scale dissemination.
- c. Technical support through high quality technical teams of nutrition experts.

The phase-I of ISSNIP will roll out ICT-RTM through one Lakh Anganwadi Centers (AWCs) in 162 high burden districts of eight participating States. Children of 0-6 years age, pregnant women and Lactating Mothers being the ultimate beneficiaries.

The MoC would cover 162 high malnutrition burden districts of eight States namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The Foundation would provide:

- i. Technical support at the national and state level for strengthening their capacities to deliver nutrition especially during pre-conception, pregnancy and first two years of life,
- ii. Funding to applicable organisation that meet eligibility criteria as will be mutually agreed upon by the Foundation and MWCD from time to time to provide support and technical assistance for designing, development of Common Application Software (CAS) to drive the Information and Communication Technology enabled Real Time Monitoring (ICT-RTM) of ICDS Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP) and Support System and
- iii. Support to MWCD in developing a shared national communication campaign for maternal and child nutrition for roll out among target population.

The MoC will facilitate the development of CAS for ICT-RTM, training of trainers and other technical matters. ICT-RTM and other components will be rolled out in phased manner. This also includes provisions of software support (L-3 level) for a period of five years and support for the roll-out of the CAS driver ICT-RTM of ICDS in priority districts within ISSNIP States through provision of trainers who will train MWCD trainers. The MWCD trainers will in turn be responsible for training the Angan Wadi Workers (AWWs) and local Supervisors in using and adopting the ICT solution.

There is no financial implication on the part of Ministry of Women Child Development on entering into MoC with BMGF. The Common Application Software (CAS) will be developed by the BMGF with support of their partners and would be made available to the Ministry free of cost along with its Source Code for hosting by MWCD with NIC. Similarly, there would be no financial implications on the part of MWCD for L-3 support, training of Master Trainers and for developing national level communications strategy and guidelines as well as communications and media products, which will be developed by the Foundation.

Background: MWCD is implementing International Development Association (IDA) assisted ISSNIP in 162 high burden districts of eight States in the country. Phase-I of the ISSNIP which was scheduled to be concluded on 31.12.2015, has since been restructured with modification in activities and extension of time-frame by two years, i.e. up to 30.12.2017. The Amended and Restated Financing Agreement has been signed between Department of Economic Affairs and IDA in September, 2015. Necessary approval on the restructured ISSNIP has also been obtained from Department of Expenditure. Considering the importance of ICT as an effective tool in improving the service quality of ICDS, the restructured ISSNIP includes Information and Communication Technology enabled Real Time Monitoring (ICT-RTM) as a core activity.

110. Dr. Radha Binod Barman, an Eminent Statistician Nominated as Chairperson of the National Statistical Commission

Dr. Radha Binod Barman, an eminent statistician, has taken over as the part-time Chairperson in the National Statistical Commission today. Prof. S. Mahendra Dev, Prof. Rahul Mukherjee, Dr. Rajiv Mehta and Dr. Manoj Panda are the other part-time Members in the Commission. The Chief Executive Officer, NITI Aayog is the ex-officio Member in the Commission. The Commission is an advisory body on all statistical matters, set up to enhance public trust in official statistics.

111. Parliamentary panel raps govt for slashing Delhi Police funds

A parliamentary panel has rapped the government for slashing funds allocated to the Delhi Police, saying such a move will only affect procurement of weapons and payments to outside forces deployed in the national capital's law and order duties. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs in its 197th report, submitted to Rajya Sabha, said the projected Budget Estimates (BE) for 2016-17 was Rs.7691.17 crore for Delhi Police while actual allocation to the force was Rs.5913.74 crore, which is Rs.1,777.43 crore less. According to the Home Ministry, the less allocation in BE 2016-17 under non-plan heads may affect the payments to outside forces deployed in Delhi for maintaining law and order resulting in huge arrears. "Reduction of budget in BE 2016-17 will also affect procurement of latest gadgets, weapons and equipment which are necessary to modernise the police force. Further, less allocation of budget in 'Minor Works' will hamper proper maintenance of buildings of Delhi Police which are already more than 25 years old and need routine maintenance," it said.

112. UN to join hands with Vietnam in tackling climate change

The United Nations (UN) will join hands with Vietnam in tackling climate change, said UN Deputy Secretary General Jan Eliasson on Wednesday.

Speaking at a meeting with Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang in Hanoi, the visiting UN official said he would pay a visit to Vietnam's southern Mekong Delta region to witness the impacts of drought and saline intrusion on local residents' lives.

After the trip, the UN official will report to the UN in order to bring out more measures, reported Vietnam's state-run news agency. According to Eliasson, Vietnam has been included in the list of countries that need global supports to help tackle El Nino impacts.

Vietnamese president, for his part, expressed gratitude for UN's help in emergency humanitarian aid for those suffering severe impacts of drought and saline intrusion in the country's central highlands and southern Mekong Delta regions by including Vietnam in the list. Quang said Vietnam will continue to actively participate in UN activities for a peaceful world with sustainable development.

In late April, Vietnam appealed to the international community for a 48.5-million-U.S. dollar emergency plan to address a worsening El Nino drought, which has affected 2 million people in the southern and central regions.

A recent joint rapid assessment, undertaken by the Vietnamese government, UN and non-governmental organizations in March, estimated that in the 18 most severely affected provinces in Vietnam, as many as 2 million people are without access to water and 1.1 million in need of food aid. In the first four months of 2016, drought and saline intrusion in Vietnam have cost the country nearly 6.4 trillion Vietnamese dong (some 287 million U.S. dollars), said Vietnam's General Statistics Office.

According to the UN, the current El Nino event is one of the strongest on record affecting an estimated 60 million people across Africa, Asia, Central and South America and the Pacific. In response to the crisis, a global call for support and action for 22 countries, including Vietnam, was announced.

The UN official is paying an official visit to Vietnam from Tuesday to Friday, according to Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is scheduled to visit Vietnam's southern Ben Tre province in Mekong Delta region on Thursday and will meet with Vietnam's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat on the same day. Enditem

113. New app can convert smartphone into remote-sensing device

Researchers have created an app which could convert a smartphone into a self-contained remote sensing device, and help aid humanitarian rescue work in disaster-struck regions by using geographic data to map landscapes.

The android mobile phone application uses on-board sensors already within modern smartphones including the accelerometer, Global Positioning System (GPS), compass and camera. Using these it generate ready-to-use spatial data

when the device is suspended from lightweight aerial platforms such as drones or kites.

The app gathers the data and allows the smartphone to operate autonomously, so that once airborne it can capture images according to the user's specification. Karen Anderson from University of Exeter in the UK said the app is different from many others because it can be 'live-coded' which means that it is not fixed in its functionality. The findings were published in the journal PLOS ONE.

114. Wi-Fi service at Vijayawada, Kachiguda, Raipur rail stations

Expanding the high speed Internet network facility, the [Railways](#) will launch the Google's free Wi-Fi service at Andhra Pradesh's Vijayawada, Hyderabad's Kachiguda and Chhattisgarh's Raipur stations on Thursday. Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu will launch the facility through video conferencing from Rail Bhawan in New Delhi. Last month, Wi-Fi service was launched at the Bhubaneswar station. Designed to offer passengers the best internet experience, Wi-Fi will be available to any user who has a smart phone. Under the 'Digital [India](#) initiative', the Railways is committed to provide better internet facilities to the passengers at 100 busiest stations by the end of this year.

115. Bengaluru tops the chart of online learning in India: Coursera

In a recent analysis of online learning, Coursera, the world's largest open online education provider, revealed an infographic highlighting data on online learners in India as the trend of e-learning becomes more widely adopted in India. The data reveals that an increasing interest in flexible, career-relevant online courses has resulted in a considerable spike in new registrations in India of 70 percent over the past 12 months. Out of Coursera's 18 million registered learners, 1.3 million are from India, establishing the country as the third largest market for online learning after the US and China. Bengaluru emerged as the top city in India for online learning with the highest number of registered learners, followed by Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad. The increase in India registrations over the past year alone illustrates the transformation taking place across the Indian education sector and workplace. Online courses are rapidly growing in reputation, and are being acknowledged as important and legitimate qualifications to help boost career progression. They provide accessible education across geographic boundaries and time zones, without compromising on teaching quality and credential recognition, said Rick Levin, CEO of Coursera. Fact Sheet: India is the 3rd largest online learning market with 1.3 million learners. Top 5 cities: Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad. Top Courses: Computer Science, Business and Data Science. Mobile Users: 21%. Male vs Female: 76%: 24%. Peak time for learning: 4 PM. Driven by the vast interest coming from Bengaluru, India's technology hub, nearly half of enrollments in India are in technology courses such as computer science (25%) and data science (18%). In fact, computer science and data science courses are more popular in India than in any of the other ten highest enrollment countries on Coursera.

116. World Wildlife Fund released report titled Protecting People through Nature

Report named Protecting People through Nature was released by World Wildlife Fund as main title and Natural World Heritage sites as Drivers of sustainable Development as Sub title. Released by: World Wildlife Fund Report

- i. In 96 countries, around 229 natural and mixed World heritage sites including Western Ghats facing Threats
- ii. These sites are affected due to their distinctive values, migration the livelihoods and well being of human

117. President of India attended Golden Jubilee celebrations of federation of Indian export organizations and present Niryat Shree and Niryat Bandhu awards

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee honored the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) and presented the Niryat Shree and Niryat Bandhu Awards

Venue: Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi

Niryat Shree Awards:

- i. Gold Trophy was awarded to MIOT Hospitals Limited Highest foreign Exchange earner in the country
- ii. Reliance Industries awarded with Gold Trophy Highest Foreign exchange
- iii. PC Jewellers Silver Trophy in the Gems and Jewellery Category

Niryat Bandhu Awards:

- i. Canara Bank Gold
- ii. Bank of India Silver

118. Guinness record for man with golden shirt

Maharashtras well-known businessman-politician Pankaj Parakh called The Man With The Golden Shirt by his friends has earned a place in the Guinness World Records (GWR). The GWR certificate issued on Tuesday cites Parakh, 47, as the man with the most expensive gold shirt in the world costing Rs. 98,35,099 as on August 1, 2014. This is simply unbelievable. I am a small man from a remote area in Maharashtra. I am happy that this achievement had catapulted my village name into the whole world, an emotional Parakh said on Tuesday. The school dropout, who made his fortunes from a garment fabrication business is also the Nationalist Congress Partys Deputy Mayor of Yeola town in Nashik district, around 260 km from Mumbai. The shirt, weighing 4.10 kg, is currently valued at over Rs.1.30 crore, and is supplemented by other golden paraphernalia including a gold watch, several gold chains, large gold rings, a gold mobile cover and golden-framed spectacles the total weight of this opulence being a whopping 10 kgs! I had stitched this shirt for my 45th birthday two years ago. I have been fascinated by gold since my school days and over the years it became a passion, almost an obsession, Parakh smiled. The shirt was designed by Bafna Jewellers, Nashik and meticulously executed by Shanti Jewellers at Parel in Mumbai. A team of 20 select artisans spent 3,200 hours over two months to craft the 18-22 carat pure gold strands, to the last thread and stitch it, and the deal was fully billed to keep tax sleuths at bay. The shirt is flexible and comfortable as it has a thin cloth lining to avoid chapping the body, Parakh said.

119. Former TCS CFO Mahalingam is non-executive chairman of City Union Bank

S. Mahalingam, former chief financial officer (CFO) and executive director of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), is set to become the non-executive chairman of City Union Bank. Mr. Mahalingam is currently an Independent Director on the board of the bank. He is a well-known name in the field of IT (information technology). The board of the bank, which met, has already sought the approval of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for his appointment. The boards decision comes in the wake of S. Balasubramanian vacating the office of part-time Non-Executive Chairman of the bank at the close of business hours on Tuesday upon his superannuation. The board, which met on Tuesday, has also co opted M. Narayanan as Additional Director of the Bank.

120. Ban Ki-moon Selects Patricia Espinosa as New UNFCCC Executive Secretary

United Nations [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon has started the process of consultation with the Conference of Parties through its Bureau, and has informed of his intention to appoint Patricia Espinosa Cantellano of Mexico as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Ms. Espinosa Cantellano has more than 30 years of experience at highest levels in international relations, specializing in climate change, global governance, sustainable development and protection of human rights. Since 2012, she has been serving as Ambassador of Mexico to Germany, a position she also held from 2001 to 2002. She previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico from 2006 to 2012.

121. Shri Piyush Goyal to Launch Portal for Contract Labour Payment Management System

Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal and New Renewable Energy will launch Contract Labour Payment Management System- a portal of Coal India Limited here on Wednesday. On the occasion, Shri Goyal will also felicitate employees of his Ministries, Public Sector Undertakings and organization/Statutory bodies for their path breaking work towards lighting up India in last two years. CMDs of all the PSUs, Head of the Statutory Body/organizations and senior officials from the Ministries of Power, Coal and New Renewable Energy will be attending the event. The Contract Labour Payment Management System web portal is created for monitoring compliance of labour payment and other benefits to the contract workers under the Contract Labour (Regulation Abolition) Act. 1970. It is an integrated system for all subsidiaries of CIL. The in-house developed application will maintain a comprehensive database of all contract workers engaged by different contractors in CIL and all its subsidiaries. Central Mine Planning and Development Institute (CMPDI) the Ranchi based consultancy subsidiary of Coal India Limited shall maintain the portal.

The system has in-built mechanism to validate minimum wages paid, generate wage slips and employment card etc. of contract workers as required under the Act. The portal provides access to all contract workers, through a Workers Identification Number (WIN), to view their personal details and payment status. Contract workers can also register their

grievance through this portal. The system extends facility to all citizens of the country to view a snapshot of contract works in CIL and subsidiaries, number of contract workers engaged, payment status, minimum wages paid etc. The Nodal Officer at different locations in the company will monitor the process and ensure compliance by all contractors. It has been planned to make payment to the contractors only after submitting a system generated declaration of compliance.

This will enhance proper monitoring of legal compliances under Contract Labour (Regulation Abolition) Act, especially the payment of correct wages to the contract workers and PF deductions and deposit and other statutory obligations.

122. ISRO Signs MoU with 37 countries for exploration and use of outer space

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) of Department of Space, Government of India has signed MoU/ Cooperative agreements for exploration and use of outer space with 37 countries viz. Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, The Netherlands, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates, United States of America and Venezuela. The fields to explore newer research activities addressed in these MoUs include - Joint development of advanced scientific instruments to observe earth and universe; joint realization of satellite missions; jointly carrying out calibration and validation experiments; conducting airborne campaign with advanced instruments; deep space navigation and communication support for space science missions; development of advanced technologies for building and launching of spacecrafts for earth observation and space science exploration. Application possibilities in the field of remote sensing addressed in these MoUs include - natural resource management; vegetation biomass estimation; meteorological oceanographic applications; atmospheric parameter retrieval modelling; climate monitoring and weather forecasting; disaster management support.

123. Mark Selby wins world snooker championship shortly after Leicester City wins Premier League

World number one Selby, champion in 2014, never trailed in the match as he ended Ding's hopes of becoming the first Asian player to win the biggest prize in the sport. "It is fantastic," said Selby, a Leicester City fan who won his title a mere five minutes after the Foxes won a fairytale Premier League crown. "It was very special to win it two years ago, but I felt under a lot more pressure now than I did two years ago. "It was a tough final and with the amount of pressure Ding is under, from China alone but to play like that. I can't imagine how he could do that." Ding, who lost the first six frames, fought back on Sunday to leave Selby 10-7 ahead overnight at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, England. The Chinese player started well on Monday and reduced the deficit to 11-10 but Selby rallied and went into the final session 14-11 ahead. Selby, 32, extended his advantage to 16-11 but Ding, the first Asian player to reach the final, was not finished, conjuring up breaks of 70, 73 and 103 to fight back to 16-14. The 31st frame was crucial, Selby producing superbly disciplined snooker to win it after a 51-minute tactical battle and he dominated the next to seal the title. "In the first to 18, a 6-0 lead is not a huge one, especially against someone like Ding," said Selby. "He played fantastically earlier today and I had to just hang on to him. I'm just over the moon. I saved my best performance for the final and I only had two good sessions in the tournament." Selby became the 13th player to win the world title more than once. Only three players from outside Britain and Ireland have won the crown, Australian Horace Lindrum in 1952, Canadian Cliff Thorburn in 1980 and Australian Neal Robertson in 2010.

124. Today in History - may 05

1494 - Christopher Columbus sighted Jamaica on his second trip to the Western Hemisphere. He named the island Santa Gloria.

1798 - U.S. Secretary of War William McHenry ordered that the USS Constitution be made ready for sea. The frigate was launched on October 21, 1797, but had never been put to sea.

1809 - Mary Kies was awarded the first patent to go to a woman. It was for technique for weaving straw with silk and thread.

1814 - The British attacked the American forces at Ft. Ontario, Oswego, [NY](#).

1834 - The first mainland railway line opened in Belgium.

1862 - The Battle of Puebla took place. It is celebrated as Cinco de Mayo Day.

1865 - The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, abolishing slavery in the [U.S.](#)

1891 - Music Hall was dedicated in New York City. It was later renamed Carnegie Hall.

1892 - The [U.S.](#) Congress extended the Geary Chinese Exclusion Act for 10 more years. The act required Chinese in the [U.S.](#) to be registered or face deportation.

1901 - The first Catholic mass for night workers was held at the Church of St. Andrew in New York City.

1904 - The third perfect game of the [major leagues](#) was thrown by Cy Young (Boston Red Sox) against the Philadelphia Athletics. It was the first perfect game under modern rules.

1912 - Soviet Communist Party newspaper Pravda began publishing.

1916 - [U.S.](#) Marines invaded the Dominican Republic.

1917 - Eugene Jacques Bullard becomes the first African-American aviator when he earned his flying certificate with the French Air Service.

1925 - John T. Scopes, a biology teacher in Dayton, [TN](#), was arrested for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution.

1926 - Eisenstein's film "Battleship Potemkin" was shown in Germany for the first time.

1926 - Sinclair Lewis refused a 1925 Pulitzer for "Arrowsmith."

1936 - Edward Ravenscroft received a patent for the screw-on bottle cap with a pour lip.

1945 - The Netherlands and Denmark were liberated from Nazi control.

1945 - A Japanese balloon bomb exploded on Gearhart Mountain in [Oregon](#). A pregnant woman and five children were killed.

1955 - "Damn Yankees" opened on Broadway.

1955 - The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) became a sovereign state.

1956 - Jim Bailey became the first runner to break the four-minute mile in the [U.S.](#) He was clocked at 3:58.5.

1961 - Alan Shepard became the first American in space when he made a 15 minute suborbital flight.

1966 - Willie Mays broke the [National League](#) record for home runs when he hit his 512th.

1978 - Pete Rose of the Cincinnati Reds registered his 3,000th [major league](#) hit.

1984 - The Itaipu Dam opened on the Paran River between Brazil and Paraguay.

1987 - The [U.S.](#) congressional Iran-Contra hearings opened.

1991 - In New York, Carnegie Hall marked its 100th anniversary.

1997 - Dolores Hope received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

1997 - Ivan Reitman received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

2000 - The final episode of "Boy Meets World" aired on ABC.

125. President of India paid homage to Giani Zail Singh on his 100th Birth Anniversary

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee attended the 100th birthday celebrations of Giani Zail Singh, former President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan today (May 5, 2016).

Speaking on the occasion, the President paid rich tributes to Giani Zail Singh. He described him as a true Giani (one who is full of knowledge). The President also recalled Giani Zail Singh's deep understanding of Indian history, culture and civilization. He said that Giani Zail Singh was a great soul and his rise is an evidence of the opportunities Indian democracy provides to every Indian citizen irrespective of the status he or she hails from. The great heights that Giani Zail Singh rose to, from a humble and poor background bears testimony to this great feature of Indian democracy. He remembered his services to the nation as a freedom fighter, Chief Minister of Punjab, Home Minister of the Union of India and President of India. He also recalled his role as a Parliamentarian.

A documentary on the life of Giani Zail Singh and a book Fragrant Recollections (Collection of memoirs and tributes on Giani Zail Singh) were released by the Vice President and Dr. Gurdeep Kaur, daughter of Giani Zail Singh respectively and their first copies were presented to the President on the occasion.

Among the dignitaries present on the occasion were the Vice President of India, former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh, family members of Giani Zail Singh and officials of the Giani Zail Singh Foundation.

126. Satellites under operation in Country

Currently, 34 satellites are operational in the country comprising of :-

- (i) 13 Communication Satellites namely, INSAT-3A, INSAT-3C, INSAT-4A, INSAT-4B, INSAT-4CR, GSAT-6, GSAT-7, GSAT-8, GSAT-10, GSAT-12, GSAT-14, GSAT-15 and GSAT-16.
- (ii) 12 Earth Observation Satellites namely, Resourcesat-2, RISAT-1, RISAT-2, Cartosat-1, Cartosat-2, Cartosat-2A, Cartosat-2B, Oceansat-2, SARAL, Kalpana-1, Megha-Tropiques and INSAT-3D.
- (iii) 7 Navigational Satellites namely, IRNSS-1A, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F 1G.
- (iv) 2 Space science Satellites namely Mars Orbiter Mission Astrosat.

Government is not seeking any foreign assistance/collaboration for satellite operations.

About 30 service providers are utilising Ku-band (a part of K band) transponders onboard indigenous communication satellites for various communication applications, which include Direct-To-Home Television, Digital Satellite News Gathering, telecommunication, VSAT services for banking, tele-education, business communication.

ISRO has an action plan in place for developing indigenous satellites, with the participation of Indian industries, for earth observation, communication, navigation and space science and planetary exploration.

This information was provided by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh in written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

127. Recommendations of Committee on Yoga Education in Universities

A committee was constituted by the Government on 15th January, 2016 on yoga education in universities under the

chairpersonship of Prof H.R. Nagendra, Chancellor, Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana, Samsthana, Bengaluru. The Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the committee included identification of courses and programmes in yogic art and science and the level at which it can be offered; to determine the eligibility qualifications for students for joining yoga education programme at different levels; to prescribe recommendations for qualifications for faculty of yoga etc. The Committee has submitted its report on 19th April, 2016. It has recommended seven programmes for implementation in universities viz. (i) Certificate Course in Yoga (CCY) of 6 to 12 months duration; (ii) Bachelors of Science (Yoga)-BSc.(Yoga) of 3 to 6 years; (iii) Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga (PGDY) of 1 to 2 years; (iv) Post Graduate Diploma in Yoga Therapy(PGDYT) of 1 to 2 years; (v) Masters of Science (MSc.)- Yoga of 2 years to 4 years; (vi) Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)-Yoga of 3 to 5 years; and (vii) Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated)-Yoga of 4 to 6 years. The committee has also prescribed the qualifications for faculty of yoga. The committee has made other recommendations for promotion of yoga in universities. The recommendations of the committee are being examined.

128. Rural Illiteracy Among Girls

Census 2011 reported 32.23 percent illiteracy rate, in 7 and above age group in rural areas of the country, compared to 41.26 percent in 2001 thus showing a decrease in illiteracy rate by 9.03 percentage points. Likewise, as per Census reports, the number of non-literate girls in the age group of 7-14, in rural areas of the country, has decreased by 1.22 crore from 2.53 crore reported in 2001 to 1.31 crore in 2011.

In order to improve the female literacy rate in the country, Saakshar Bharat, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme is being implemented in rural areas of 410 districts in 26 States and one UT that had adult female literacy rate of 50 per cent and below as per Census 2001, including left wing extremism affected districts, irrespective of their literacy rates, with special focus on women and other disadvantaged groups.

In order to ensure greater participation of girls in elementary education, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has targeted interventions for girls which include opening of schools in the neighborhood to make access easier for girls, appointment of additional teachers including women teachers, separate toilets for girls, teachers sensitization programme to promote girls participation, gender sensitive teaching learning materials including textbooks. In addition, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas have been opened in Educationally Backward Blocks where the female rural literacy is below the national average to provide for residential upper primary schools for girls.

Under Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) several provisions viz. construction of separate toilets for girls, construction of residential quarters for teachers, curriculum reforms, conducting self defence training for the girls, special programme for empowerment of girls, stipend for girls with disabilities, vocationalisation of secondary education, girls hostel, etc. have been made for improving girls education and effectively addressing female literacy rate.

129. Reliance Defence gets 16 new industrial licences

Reliance Defence, a wholly owned subsidiary of [Reliance Infrastructure](#) has received 16 new industrial licences for manufacture of a wide array of high technology equipment ranging from small arms, heavy weapons, armoured vehicles, ammunition, explosives, electronic warfare systems, missiles, [UAVs](#) and directed energy weapon systems, laser systems for target destruction and C4I Systems for all defence platforms.

Of the 16 new licences 11 pertain to land systems, 3 for the naval systems and remaining 2 covering niche technologies across the defence spectrum. With these new 16 licences, [Reliance Defence](#) now has got total 27 licences to address the entire spectrum of defence equipment manufacturing. Reliance Land Systems Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Defence will be the lead venture for the manufacturing of missiles, explosives heavy weapons, tanks and ICVs and Reliance SED Ltd will be the lead entity for manufacture of electronic warfare systems, directed energy weapon systems and laser systems for target destruction. The company spokesman in a release said the key programs in these segments have budgetary allocation in excess of Rs.50,000 crore The Indian [Army](#) will spend an additional Rs 50,000 crore over next 10 to 15 years on different Combat Vehicles. Reliance Defence also intends to address a large potential international market for combat Vehicles in the West Asia, Africa and South America.

130. Human embryos grown in lab for 14 days

The study shows molecular and cellular processes in human development that occur up to day 14 after fertilisation.

The breakthrough system is the first in which the process of implantation has successfully been replicated outside the uterus, researchers said.

This novel technique vastly expands the ability to answer basic questions about our own development, as well as to understand early pregnancy loss, they said.

Implantation is a crucial step in human development. Occurring shortly after fertilisation, implantation is the process by which the small, hollow ball of cells called a blastocyst attaches to the uterus, allowing an embryo to begin to take shape.

"This portion of human development was a complete black box," said Ali Brivanlou, from The Rockefeller University in US.

The researchers surrounded the blastocyst with just the right chemical environment and provided a suitable scaffolding for it to attach to.

Previous research established a similar method using mouse blastocysts, after multiple attempts to define the right combination of factors.

This prompted researchers to adapt the technique and create an attachment culture for human embryos.

"Through this international and multidisciplinary collaboration combining mouse embryology, human embryology, and physics, we were able to create a system that properly recapitulates what happens during human implantation," said Alessia Deglincerti, from The Rockefeller University.

One known difference between mouse and human development is the shape the blastocyst is in as implantation occurs - it is oblong in mice but shaped like a disk in humans.

"We actually reproduced the disk," said Deglincerti.

Once the system was in place, the researchers determined that the embryos displayed the landmarks characteristic of normal development, including the timing of key events that occur in early embryonic development up to 12 days after fertilisation.

In the near future, the ability to study implantation in culture is likely to shed light on why some early miscarriages occur and why in vitro fertilisation has a high failure rate.

Over the longer term, the work could advance the treatment of a variety of diseases with human embryonic stem cells.

The method opens the door to a wide variety of studies, never before possible, on the molecular events that occur during the very earliest stages of human development.

In accordance with internationally recognised bioethical guidelines, the group's experiments were concluded on day 14 post-fertilisation, well before even the earliest signs of nervous system development are observed.

The study was published in the journal Nature.

131. World's longest insect discovered in China

Scientists claim to have discovered the world's longest insect, measuring over 62 centimetres in length, wriggling on a mountain road in south China.

The finding breaks the record for length for all 807,625 insects discovered so far, researchers said.

The previous record holder was a stick insect found in Malaysia in 2008 which measured 56.7 cm and is currently at the Natural History Museum in London.

Zhao Li, from the Insect Museum of West China (IMWC), found the 62.4-cm-long stick insect in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in 2014.

The insect has been named *Phryganistria chinensis* Zhao.

"I was collecting insects on a 1,200-metre-tall mountain in Guangxi's Liuzhou City on the night of August 16, 2014, when a dark shadow appeared in the distance, which looked like a tree twig," Zhao was quoted as saying by the state-run Xinhua news agency.

"As I went near, I was shocked to find the huge insect's legs were as long as its body," he said.

Zhao took the insect back to the IMWC, and it laid six eggs. After hatching, Zhao found the smallest of the young insects' bodies measured at least 26 cm.

132. Argentina retain lead in rankings, India at 162

Argentina remains on top of the football rankings issued on Thursday, which saw very few changes and did not affect the top 50, with Spain still in the sixth place. Argentina heads the list with 164 points ahead of Belgium, which in turn has only 11 more than Chile. Colombia remains fourth ahead of Germany and Spain, the last two world champions, followed by Brazil, Portugal, Uruguay and England. India remained at the 162nd spot. The rankings and point scores for May are as follows:

1. Argentina 1,532 points
2. Belgium 1,364
3. Chile 1,353
4. Colombia 1,337
5. Germany 1,309
6. Spain 1,277
7. Brazil 1,261
8. Portugal 1,184
9. Uruguay 1,158
10. England 1,069.

133. Haryana hospitals to have 'senior citizen corners'

All government hospitals in [Haryana](#) will have senior citizen counters to facilitate things for elderly people coming for treatment there, a minister said here. Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij said that the state government has decided to open 'Senior Citizen Corners' in all government hospitals in the state to ensure better services to them in these institutions. "Senior citizens need not stand in queues for their registration as staff would be deployed in these corners to properly guide and help them for any kind of treatment at these institutions," Vij told mediapersons here. Vij said that the state government is utilising technology to ensure all kinds of services to improve the functioning of the health department. The health department is introducing an online system of patients in which online data of all patients visiting government hospitals would be prepared. It would be accessible in every hospital of the state. Provision is being made to give lab test reports by SMS alert to patients, he added. He said that the government has increased the budget of the health department from Rs.2,897 crore to Rs.3,916 crore for the current financial year. "With the consistent efforts, the number of patients in OPDs in hospitals has increased by 15 percent. It has been decided to set up at least one MRI and CT scan facility in all districts to ensure economical facilities in government hospitals," he said.

134. MCB Capital Markets Launches India Sovereign Bond ETF

World's first Exchange Traded Fund focused on India's sovereign bonds was launched on Thursday by the MCB Capital Markets and will be listed in Mauritius, providing global investors access to the Indian government securities.

MCB India Sovereign Bond ETF, a global open-ended scheme, will invest in the most liquid sovereign bonds with a typical maturity between 8 and 13 years.

The initial offer period of the fund will close on May 27 and the ETF will start trading on stock exchange of Mauritius on June 6.

The fund will facilitate investment into the Indian sovereign bond market, which has traditionally been difficult for foreign investors to access because of minimum investment thresholds, ceilings on foreign holdings and other regulatory processes.

It will also provide investors with regular short-term returns through the payment of half yearly dividends in US dollars and the potential for capital appreciation.

"We are pleased to partner with ZyFin on launching the MCB India Sovereign Bond ETF, the first ETF created, domiciled and listed in Mauritius," MCB India Sovereign Bond ETF Chairman Gilbert Gnany said in a statement.

"Close to 50 per cent of investments in India go through Mauritius and we plan to capitalise, through this ETF, on the special relationship between our two countries whilst providing an easy access to the Indian sovereign debt market, one of the largest and most attractive bond markets in the world," he added.

India's sovereign bond market has an outstanding issuances of more than USD 650 billion.

MCB Capital Markets, investment banking arm of Mauritius' MCB Group, is the sponsor and promoter of the ETF. It has appointed ZyFin as investment advisor.

"Backed by our expertise in asset management and structuring innovative ETFs, we are excited to work with MCBCM and offer this attractive investment solution to access the Indian sovereign bond market," ZyFin Executive Chairman Sanjay Sachdev said.

135. Ghosh best Indian in TT world rankings, Sharath slides

Rio Olympics-bound Soumyajit Ghosh upstaged his icon Achanta Sharath Kamal to become the best placed Indian in the latest world Table Tennis rankings issued today. As per the latest International Table Tennis Federation world rankings, Ghosh find himself at the 65 spot, eight places ahead of Sharath. Sharath, who had occupied 61st position only last month, has dropped down to world no. 73. Ghosh's surge in world ranking came on the back of his sterling performances at the Asian Cup in Dubai last week. Ghosh had beaten a higher ranked Korean player apart from accounting for a Chinese Taipei paddler, paving the way for the surge. Ghosh had finished seventh in the Inter Continental Cup Group of the Asian Cup event at Dubai last week. After qualifying for the main draw, he defeated Chinese Taipei's Chiang Hung-Chieh 4-3 (10-12 11-9 6-11 11-6 11-8 9-11 11-4) in a tough battle for the first time in his career.

136. Yes Bank gets Sebi's nod for custodian services

Private sector lender Yes Bank has received in-principle nod from markets regulator Sebi to act as custodian of securities. The city-headquartered bank has been given a years time to establish the business by developing the operational, tech and human capital capabilities, it said in a statement. Once it receives the final nod, it can offer custodial services to financial market participants, including foreign portfolio investors, which would help its fee-based income. The size of custodial business in India is steadily growing with increasing value of assets under custody as well as newer investor classes such as Portfolio Management Services (PMS) and Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) opting for custody services, it added. Banks Managing Director and Chief Executive Rana Kapoor said the custodian services will complement its capital market offerings and help it channelise domestic and foreign investments into the country.

137. China releases first translations of Rabindranath Tagore's collective works

[China](#) released the first ever Chinese translations of the collective works of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, a rare honour to the famed poet who enjoys iconic status among generations of Chinese people.

In all 33 volumes containing 16 million words covering his poetry, essays, novels and drama sections were released ahead of Tagore's 155th birth anniversary at the China Radio [International](#) (CRI) which broadcasts in Bengali language

besides host of Indian and intentional languages as diplomats from India and Bangladesh also attended the function.

Considering his popularity, Tagore's works have been widely translated in China mostly from English translations but this is the first time his entire works barring songs were translated into Chinese directly from Bengali.

Eighteen Bengali scholars from CRI, state-run Xinhua news agency, Chinese foreign ministry, Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) and the Central Communist Party School worked on a five-year project to complete it.

138. Nasscom partners with Facebook to launch product design initiative

To evangelise the [product design](#) ecosystem in India, [Nasscom](#) announced its partnership with [Facebook](#) to build a 'Product Design Initiative' in the country. This will be a flagship programme of the Nasscom Product Council and will aim to support over 500 product startups on product design and train over 5,000 product designers over a period of two years. R Chandrashekhar, president, Nasscom, said: "Design as a tool for innovation has developed rapidly in recent years. Design thinking, methodologies and tools enable solutions for complex and challenging issues and help re-imagine systems. With this initiative, Nasscom plans to scale up the focus on product design and engage young entrepreneurs into becoming problem solvers and solution builders." India is at an interesting inflection point there is increasing focus on building [technology](#) products and solutions that enable innovation and access. At the same time a key gap to spur innovation is the focus on design product design that is simple, yet builds a powerful product and exemplifies customer experience. This initiative stems from the need to build design skills that will propel innovative thinking and approaches to build solutions in key sectors where technology can play a transformational role, said a statement from Nasscom.

139. The Fifth KSBEA Global Leadership Awards 2016

Business Wire India The Fifth KSBEA Global Leadership Awards was held on 30th April 2016 at Crowne Plaza, Kochi. The award focused on recognizing individuals who were outstanding in the field of business with their leadership qualities, and also those who made great breakthroughs in their respective field. The event was organised and presented by Cochin Herald Alleem Business Congress, Sharjah. Mr. V George Antony, MD, UAE Exchange India bagged the award Businessman of the Year. The award was presented by H.E. Hamdan Mohamad Al Murshidi, President, Arab Business Club, and Mr. M.G. Rajamanickam, District Collector of Ernakulam. About UAE Exchange India UAE Exchange India has a wider presence of 375 locations spread across the nation, giving the company an opportunity to serve the populace with its versatile financial products like Foreign Exchange, Travel Ticketing, Money Transfer, Loans, Insurance and Online Trading, to cater the needs of customer for smarter financial life style. The company has also developed an exclusive mobile application XPay Cash Wallet which customers can download free of cost from internet and company website, www.uaexchangeindia.com.

140. HC appoints interim administrator for TELC

The Madras High [Court](#) has appointed its retired judge J Kanagraj as the Administrator of faction-ridden Tamil Evangelical Lutheran Church (TELC) which is facing prolonged litigations by its own members.

Kanagaraj would administer the church till further orders, a bench comprising Justice M Sathyanarayanan and Justice T. Raja said in an interim order on a petition filed by Rev Fr M S Arivannal.

TELC, which comprises about 120 pastorates and churches in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, [Karnataka](#) and Puducherry, owns properties and runs various educational institutions has been facing various litigations from its own rival members.

The appointment of the administrator was made as the church council's three-year tenure ended on May 2.

141. China to host yet another international conference on Yoga

An international yoga conference to be attended by Chinese and Indian practitioners will be held later this month in Kunming City in southwest China.

Local government said that the conference, lasting from May 18 to 22, will feature courses from yoga masters, introducing yoga practice to communities, and a group yoga session for 1,000 people.

Yoga has been gaining popularity in [China](#) in recent years.

The country's first yoga college, China-[India](#) Yoga College based at Yunnan Minzu (Nationalities) University, opened last November.

Over 4,000 people have participated in free yoga sessions offered by the college so far, college authorities said.

The conference is sponsored by the municipal government and jointly organised by foreign affairs and overseas Chinese affairs offices under the municipal government and the China-India Yoga College, state-run Xinhua [news](#) agency reported.

142. Under PM Narendra Modi's orders, 33 non-performing officials asked to go: Report

The Centre has ordered 33 senior officials of the revenue department to take premature retirement, apparently due to non-performance, as per a media report. As per NDTV, overlast two years, 72 officials have also been dismissed following departmental and disciplinary action. However, as per the report, this is the first time that action has been taken against such a large group. Further, the website quoted a senior personnel ministry official as saying that action against revenue officials was part of measures to change the perception of officials that poor performance would not impact their job. PM NarendraModi had reportedly been receiving complaints from various departments about officials who harassed people or were indifferent. The PM had asked all departmental secretaries in January to take stern action against non-performing officials. Later, Centre had shortlisted 122 deputy secretary level officials in various ministries and departments. Department of Personnel and Training had written to the administrative officials of 34 departments seeking inputs in order toscrutinisetheir records.

143. Former Starbucks India CEO Davda joins Godrej's gourmet business as MD

Godrej Industries has roped in former Tata [Starbucks](#)CEO [Avani Davda](#) as the managing director for its gourmet retail business, Godrej Nature's Basket. Avani will take over as the MD of Godrej Nature's Basket from Mohit Khattar, who moves into a new group level role. Davda comes with the experience of working across consumer facing sectors of the Tata Group viz. Tata Global Beverages, Taj Hotels, Infiniti Retail, Tata Housing and Tata Infrastructure Realty. Tanya Dubash, Executive Director and Chief Brand Officer, Godrej Group, said: "Godrej Nature's Basket is at exciting phase of its growth journey. Avani comes with a wealth of experience in retail, business strategy and brand building. I am positive that Avani will help scale the business to greater heights and wish her the very best in her new assignment."

Davda quit Starbucks in December 2015, three years after it opened store here.

144. Here is what you should know about the Bankruptcy Code

Moneycontrol Bureau Lok Sabha passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Bill2015 paving the way for creating a formal insolvency resolution process for businesses, either by liquidation of assets or charting out a sustainable survival mechanism. What does the Bill do? The Bill attempts to simplify the process by streamlining and consolidating differentlaws that exist pertaining to bankruptcy. Itprovides an easy way out for insolvent and ailing companies. The Code enables prompt and timely action during early-stage debt defaults, thereby maximising the recovery amount. A new regulator Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India is likely to be set up for dealing withbankruptcy proceedings. It will also create a formal insolvency resolution process (IRP). Aren't there enough laws already? Currently, there are several laws such as Companies Act and Sick Industrial Companies Act that govern bankruptcy proceedings. But such laws are complicated and at times ask for lengthy proceedings. Will there be separate tribunals? Yes. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) will adjudicate insolvency resolutions for companies. The Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) will adjudicate insolvency resolution for individuals. What docreditors stand to gain? The Bill gives a leg-up to creditors as it cuts the red tape and holds promoters directly accountable for financial lapses. Who can initiate theIRP? Any company or debtor defaultingon dues can inititate IRP, besides lenders or creditors. What is the timeframe for completion? The process is to be completed within 180 days from the initiation of IRP. If creditors agree that the case is complex, a one-time extension of up to 90 days can be granted. What happens if the case is not solved? If the

insolvency cannot be resolved, the assets of the borrowers may be sold to repay creditors. Within these 180 days, 75 percent of the creditors must agree on a revival plan. Else, the firm's assets will be liquidated. Insolvency professionals, or adjudicators, armed with greater powers can begin criminal proceedings if they find promoters of debtors liquidating assets. The Silver Lining The Code can help alleviate bad loan issues faced by public sector banks. It also allows entrepreneurs a fresh lease of life as the law underlines that ventures can fail. Employee interests are safeguarded as money due to them from provident fund, pension fund and gratuity funds won't be included in the liquidation assets of the bankrupt. The Downside Critics say the Bill promotes an easy way out for companies to give pink slips to employees. What Next? The Code now goes to the Rajya Sabha for approval. Implementation of the code before May 31 2016, will improve India's rankings on World Bank's ease of doing business index.

145. Mercury to appear as a small black dot on May 9

A [transit](#) of [Mercury](#) over the disc of the [Sun](#) will take place in the afternoon of [May 9](#). This transit phenomenon will be visible from India. This phenomenon takes place when Mercury will be seen as a small black dot travelling from one limb of the [solar disc](#) to the other. From Earth, this phenomenon is seen when the Mercury passes between the Sun and the Earth. This happens only when the Sun, the planet Mercury and the [Earth](#) are lined up in one plane. The Mercury appears as a dot on the solar disc because its angular size is very small compared to that of the Sun as seen from the Earth. The transit begins with Contact-I, the instant when the disc of the planet Mercury is externally tangent with the Sun (Ingress exterior) followed by Contact-II when the Mercury is internally tangent with the Sun (Ingress interior). The Mercury will be seen as a black spot, travelling several hours over the face of the disc, will reach the opposite limb of the Sun at Contact-III, when the disc of the planet Mercury is internally tangent with the Sun (Egress interior). Finally, the transit ends at Contact-IV when the disc of the planet Mercury is externally tangent with the Sun (Egress exterior). The phenomenon is a relatively rare one which occurs 13 or 14 times in a century. It occurs in the month of May and November. The interval between one November transit and next November transit may be 7, 13 or 33 years whereas the interval between one May transit and the next May transit may be 13 or 33 years. The transit of Mercury will be visible from most of [Asia](#) (except south eastern parts and Japan), Europe, Africa, Greenland, South America, North America, Arctic, North Atlantic Ocean and most of the Pacific Ocean. The entire transit, from beginning to end, will be visible from eastern North America, northern South America, the Arctic, Greenland, extreme north western Africa, western Europe, and the North Atlantic Ocean. In India, the beginning of the event comprising of Ingress exterior (Contact-I) and Ingress interior (Contact-II) will be visible from all places. The duration of the entire transit event will be about 7 hours and 30 minutes.

The observer in India will not see the ending of the event as the same will be in progress after sunset. Depending upon the sunset time of different places in India, the observer located in the extreme east of the country will see the event about 1 hour from the beginning and the observer located in the extreme west of the country will see the event about 2 hours and 45 minutes from the beginning. In Delhi, the event can be seen for a duration of about 2 hours 20 minutes as it will start at 4:41p.m. and sunset will take place at 7: 01 p.m. Similarly, in Kolkata the event will start 4:41p.m and it can be seen for a duration of about 1 hour 26 minutes, in Mumbai the event will start at 4:41p.m and it can be seen for a duration of about 2 hours 24 minutes, in Chennai the event will start at 4:41p.m and it can be seen for a duration of about 1 hour 45 minutes. The last transit of Mercury occurred on November 6, 2006 when just end of the event was visible from the extreme north eastern parts of India at the time of sunrise. The next transit of Mercury will take place on November 11, 2019 but the event will not be seen from India as the same will begin after the sunset time of all places in India. The transit of Mercury on November 13, 2032 will be visible again from India. The apparent diameter of Mercury will be nearly 12 arc-second which is 1/158 of Sun's apparent diameter. Thus, it will be difficult to see the Mercury at transit over the face of the Sun without optical magnification. This event can be viewed with the help of binocular or telescope attached with proper solar filter or by making projection of the Sun's image on a white board by telescope. The Sun should never be viewed with the naked eye. Safe technique to observe is by using filter like aluminized mylar, black polymer or welding glass of shade number 14

146. US bans sale of e-cigarettes, cigars to those under 18

The United States today issued a sweeping ban on sales of e-cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco and hookahs to those under 18, marking the first time these products have been federally regulated.

The ban will go into effect in 90 days, according to the US Food and Drug Administration, which described the final

rule - issued after several years of study and debate - as "historic."

"As cigarette smoking among those under 18 has fallen, the use of other nicotine products, including e-cigarettes, has taken a drastic leap," said Health and Human Services Secretary Sylvia Burwell.

"Today's announcement is an important step in the fight for a tobacco-free generation - it will help us catch up with changes in the marketplace, put into place rules that protect our kids and give adults information they need to make informed decisions."

Key aspects of the rule include barring the sale of e-cigarettes to minors online or in person, prohibiting the distribution of free samples and not allowing vending machines, unless they are located in an adult-only facility.

The rule also requires manufacturers to get marketing approval for any products that came on the market after February 15, 2007, to show that their "products meet the applicable public health standard set forth in the law."

This review process "gives the agency the ability to evaluate important factors such as ingredients, product design and health risks, as well as their appeal to youth and non-users," said the FDA in a statement.

The FDA gained the power to regulate a wider range of tobacco products in 2009, with the passage of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act.

147. Sudhir Yadav appointed as new Tihar DG

Sudhir Yadav, the 1985 batch IPS officer of the Delhi police, was appointed as the new Director General (DG) of Tihar. An order issued by the Lt Governor announced Yadav's appointment as the next DG of Tihar. Earlier, he served as Special Commissioner of the Delhi police. Yadav had earlier served as DGP of Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2013. After joining police service as an IPS officer in 1985 he went on to serve on various important posts of Delhi police. Earlier, the government had appointed JK Sharma as new DG of Tihar on April 19, but the order was nullified as the government had not sought prior approval of Lt Governor Najeeb Jung before the appointment.

148. Centre to relax PMGSY norms in Arunachal

Union Rural Development Minister Birender Singh has agreed to relax the norms in Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) to boost rural road connectivity in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Union minister gave his nod for relaxation on population norm for faster road connectivity when Chief Minister Kalikho Pul along with Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju called on him in New Delhi yesterday, an official release said here today.

The CM in his comprehensive presentation explained to the union minister for special exemption on population norms for faster connectivity in the state.

On the demand for long span bridges upto 200 metres on the rivers of Siang, Subansiri, Kameng, Lohit and Dibang, the Union Minister agreed to consider the same for which a technical team from the Ministry would visit the areas to assess the requirements and suggest appropriate technology, the release said.

The Union Minister also agreed to enhance the allocation under PMGSY during RE (Revised Estimate) stage at the request of the CM from Rs 468 crore to 1100 crore during the current year in view of the enhanced target of constructing roads 1000 kms in the state.

149. Rich tributes to Krishna Menon in U.K. on his 120th birth anniversary

The life and multi-faceted contributions of the Indian statesman V.K. Krishna Menon (1896-1974), especially the less-known phase of his life in Britain, were remembered at a meeting organised by the V.K. Krishna Menon Research Institute at the Nehru Centre in London. Speakers at the meeting included Cyriac Maprayil, Director of the Krishna Menon Institute; Virendar Paul, Deputy High Commissioner of India; Sir Peter Lloyd, former Minister of State for the

Home office; and Chaya Ray, a lawyer who offered interesting reflections on Mr. Menon who she knew as a child in London. To describe Mr. Menon was like trying to contain the Niagra in a flask, said Mr. Maprayil, quoting the former civil servant P.N. Haksar. Prodigious intellect Despite his prodigious intellect, Mr. Menon was no armchair intellectual and threw himself into local British politics and life. He an elected Councillor for Camden Town for four terms and was conferred the Freedom of the Borough for his public services. As a member of the library committee, he wanted to see as many libraries as pubs in the area, Mr. Maprayil noted. His interest in promoting reading led him to set up Penguin paperbacks in 1935 with Sir Allen Lane. For a time during the war, he even acted as an air raid warden for his area. Indian League role Better known and documented are his activities in the India League, which he founded in 1929 and which canvassed support in Britain for Indian independence. His contacts were wide and influential and included Bertrand Russell, J.B.S. Haldane, Michael Foot, Aneurin Bevan, E.M.Forster and Marie Seton. 1962 war defeat 'hard on him' Sir Peter Lloyd noted how Mr. Menon was invariably right, but at the wrong time. Indias defeat in the Indo-Chinas war was hard on him, Mr. Lloyd said, not the kind of payback he was looking for from the Chinese. But on non-alignment, his timing was right, as it made the two power blocks take note of newly independent nations, even as it gave the latter a sense of autonomy as equals rather than as players with client status.

150. IREDA may convert into green bank

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) might be converted into a green bank to enable it to access funding from overseas banks, suggests a news report. A green bank provides low-cost financing support to clean and low-carbon projects. Green banks offer lower interest charges than traditional banks and tap into international capital to finance solar and wind projects. IREDA CMD S K Popli said the agency might be converted in to a green bank without undergoing any alteration in its basic structure to enable it access funding from overseas banks that are currently not supporting the solar and wind funding, barring well-known KFW. According to him, large banks in India are perhaps reluctant to fund the solar and wind projects though no developer in these two segments have defaulted on re-payment though might have delayed the payoff schedule. A study by IREDA, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and Natural Resources Defense Council has found that India needs as much as \$ 264 billion in financing to reach its target of producing 160 gigawatts of power from solar and wind energy by 2022.

151. Reliance Power to set up plant in Bangladesh

Reliance Power, promoted by Anil Ambani, would be now venturing into Bangladesh for setting up a power plant. The Bangladesh government has granted in-principle approval for the first phase of Reliance Powers project. The 750MW gas-based power plant will be set up at Meghnaghat (Narayanganj district), around 40 km South-East of Dhaka, along with a floating storage and regasification unit (FSRU) at Moheshkhali Island in Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh, said a press statement issued by the company. The power plant land at Meghnaghat will be provided by Bangladesh Power Development Board. FSRU-based LNG terminal will supply Re-gasified LNG for the power project and additional RLNG to Petronbangla. Rising demand The first phase will be commissioned in 24 months from the zero date, in 2018-19, and can power the countrys rising demand for electricity and will provide clean and green power, contributing to Bangladeshs goal of energy security. This will be the largest foreign direct investment in Bangladesh with a potential investment of over \$1.3 billion, the statement said. Reliance Power is proposing to install the equipment procured from reputed equipment suppliers for combined cycle power project at Samalkota in Andhra Pradesh, at the proposed project in Bangladesh. This will fast-track the project, the statement added.

152. Andhra Pradesh agriculture project wins international information prize

An [Andhra Pradesh](#) project to collect very specific climate data from farms and give farmers personalised information through SMS has won the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) 2016 prize in the e-Agriculture category. International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Secretary-General Houlin Zhao announced the prize Tuesday in Geneva. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) in Hyderabad developed the project, which is having a pilot run in Anantpur district. WSIS said the organisation had an e-strategy for implementing it at the national level. "The WSIS Prizes recognize all players in the effort to improve global connectivity, from governments and global ICT (information communication technology) companies to grassroots NGOs leading innovative ICT-oriented projects at the local level." Zhao said. A total of 18 prizes were awarded in categories ranging from international cooperation to information ethics. The prize in the e-Agriculture category was the only one won by an Indian organisation. The project, Harmonized Information of Agriculture, Revenue and Irrigation for a Transformation Agenda- Precision Technology for Agriculture or HARITA-PRIYA, uses wireless sensor networks (WSN) to collect

micro-climate information from farms, according to WSIS. This data is used to create advisories and alerts on irrigation schedules and pests and plant disease. Based on them state agriculture officers send out personalised crop advisories in Telugu to farmers by SMS. The Andhra Pradesh government, the Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) station and the Acharya N G Ranga Agricultural University in Anantapur partnered in the project.

153. Thirty-Seven Indians Among LIGO Scientists to Win Special Breakthrough Prize

A Special Breakthrough Prize in fundamental physics has been awarded to a team of scientists working with the experiment called Laser Interferometer Gravitational wave Observatory (LIGO), which was responsible for the discovery of gravitational waves in September 2015. The Breakthrough Prizes have been awarded every year since 2012 for breakthroughs in mathematics, physics and the life sciences. Each prize comes with a purse of \$3 million. According to the [Breakthrough Prize website](#), the laureates will all be recognised at a ceremony in fall 2016. LIGO is maintained and operated by the international LIGO Scientific Collaboration (LSC), in all involving thousands of scientists and engineers. The special prize, however, will go to two subsets of the LSC. \$1 million will be split between the three conceivers of LIGO Kip Thorne, Ray Weiss and Ron Drever while another \$2 million will be shared by 1,012 scientists who helped discover the gravitational waves (just under Rs.1.32 lakh each). The second subset involves 37 researchers from around India, according to the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences (ICTS), Bengaluru. Seven of them belong to ICTS itself, including [Bala Iyer](#), a notable veteran of gravitational physics research. The discovery of gravitational waves, [announced by the LSC](#) on February 11 this year, came a century after Albert Einstein published the general theory of relativity that predicated them. The waves are minuscule distortions in the spacetime continuum passing through the universe at the speed of light. They were generated by the collision of two blackholes 1.3 billion lightyears away. Since LIGO picked up on the distortions on September 14, 2015, scientists of the LSC laboured to eliminate all noise and errors that had crept into the measurements and ran multiple simulations to check if their data was indeed the real thing. The Indian section of the collaboration, drawing from nine institutions, was responsible for checking if the gravitational wave signals matched with theoretical projections and for calculating the physical properties of the colliding blackholes. And on the back of their commitment, an advanced LIGO detector is due to be installed in India, and [operationalised by 2023](#).

154. Indian professor wins Commonwealth short story regional prize

A Social Science professor from [India](#) Prashar Kulkarni has won the Commonwealth Short Story Prize for 2016, for the [Asia](#) region for his "politically grounded, funny" fiction.

Kulkarni's story 'Cow and Company' about four men in search of a cow was adjudged the 'best piece of unpublished short fiction in English' from Asia and will receive 2500 pounds prize, the Commonwealth Writers organisation said.

He is set to compete with winners from other four regions- Africa, Canada and Europe, Caribbean and the Pacific - for the 5000 pounds grand prize, to be announced at the Calabash International Literary Festival in Jamaica on June 5.

Set up by Commonwealth Writers in 2012 to "inspire and connect writers and storytellers across world" the prize attracted 4,000 entries from 47 Commonwealth countries in 2016.

Besides Kulkarni three authors from India - Kritika Pandey (Dirty White Strings), Sumit Ray (Girdhar's Mansion) and Vinayak Varma (Instant Karma) were in the regional shortlist.

Commonwealth Writers has partnered with Granta magazine to give regional winners of Commonwealth Short Story Prize the opportunity to be published by Granta online.

Kulkarni, an Assistant Professor in Social Sciences at Yale NUS College Singapore who works at the intersection of religion and political economy said he was encouraged and has been trying to write for many years.

"I have been trying to write for many years now and I feel encouraged to continue. I am thankful for the opportunity to share my work with Commonwealth Writers, and with Granta. I am also looking forward to reading new and exciting voices that emerge from this initiative.

155. Fleming to become next MCC President

Former England all-rounder Matthew Fleming is all set to become the next President of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC).

The 51-year-old will take up the post on October 1 this year.

He was nominated by the current President Roger Knight at MCC's Annual General Meeting, which took place yesterday at Lord's here.

Currently the Chairman of Cricket, having been elected in October 2013, Fleming will be the youngest MCC president in 36 years, since Peter May served in 1980.

"I would like to thank Roger Knight for nominating me to succeed him as MCC President. I am very honoured and very humbled to be asked to follow in the footsteps of some of the most extraordinary people ever involved in the game," Fleming, who played 11 ODIs for England in the late 1990s, said.

In recent years Fleming has become a driving force behind the MCC Foundation's work in Afghanistan and has worked closely with charity Afghan Connection to help develop the country's cricket programme.

"Cricket around the world faces unique challenges and opportunities, and MCC has a vital part to play at a local, national and international level. I have always believed that MCC's role within cricket is to support where necessary and lead where required, and working alongside Derek Brewer and the team I look forward to combining my role as Chairman of MCC Cricket with the Presidency of this great club."

"Next year promises to be a momentous one for the Club -- when the new Warner Stand is completed, the refurbishment of the J P Morgan Media Centre is finalised and when Lord's play host to the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup Final. It will be a privilege to be involved at the Home of Cricket during this exciting time," said Fleming, who also captained Kent, making 219 first-class appearances for the county between 1989 and 2002.

Since the MCC Foundation first committed financial support to Afghan Connection in 2009, 52 pitches have been built in 22 Afghan provinces, with over 100,000 local children attending cricket training as a result.

Fleming himself travelled to Jalalabad in May 2009 to oversee the first coaching camps held under the MCC Spirit of Cricket banner.

156. US Navy tests world's largest self-driving warship

The military is launching tests on the world's largest unmanned surface vessel. Experts say the vessel has the potential to revolutionise not only the military's maritime service but also commercial shipping. It marks the first step toward sending unmanned cargo vessels between countries, according to military officials, who showed off the ship in San Diego today before it was put in the water. The Pentagon's research arm, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (Darpa) developed the ship along with Virginia-based Leidos. Darpa will test it in conjunction with the Navy over the next two years off California's coast. The tests will largely focus on its ability to react on its own to avoid collisions with seafaring traffic. During the testing phase, the ship will have human operators as a safety net, but once it proves to be reliable, the autonomous surface vessel will maneuver itself able to go out at sea for months at a time. Program manager Scott Littlefield said there will be no 'remote-controlled driving of the vessel'. Instead it will be given its mission-level commands telling it where to go and what to accomplish and then software will enable it to drive itself safely. The military initially built the diesel-powered ship to detect stealthy electric submarines. THE SEA HUNTER WARSHIP The 132ft-long (40-metre) unarmed prototype, dubbed Sea Hunter, is the naval equivalent of Google's self-driving car, designed to cruise on the ocean's surface without a crew. The ship's projected \$20 million (14.2 million) price tag and its \$15,000 (10,650) to \$20,000 (14,300) daily operating cost make it relatively inexpensive for the navy. The ship is about to undergo two years of testing, including to verify that it can safely follow international norms for operating at sea. First and foremost is ensuring that it can use radar and cameras to avoid other vessels. Powered by two diesel engines, the ship can reach speeds of 27 knots per hour.

157. Golf ace and navigation specialist Vice Admiral Sunil Lanba to be named next head of India's Navy

The government on Thursday named western naval commander Vice Admiral Sunil Lanba as the next Navy chief. Vice Admiral Lanba will assume office on May 31, the day current chief admiral RK Dhowan retires. An alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, he will be the 21st Indian to be the Navy chief. Considered to be an officer with a clear-headed approach, Sunil Lanba, popularly known in the force as Jerry, has also made his mark as an ace golfer. A second generation armed forces officer, Lanba, who hails from Palwal in Haryana, is a navigation and direction specialist. Coming in with rich operational and staff experience over a career spanning more than three decades, Lanba has served as Navigating Officer of corvette INS Sindhudurg and frigate INS Dunagiri. He has commanded four frontline warships - INS Kakinada (minesweeper), INS Himgiri (frigate) and INS Ranvijay and INS Mumbai, both destroyers. He takes over at a time when the Navy is expanding its horizons by acquiring new blue water capabilities. The force is under transition as it enters a crucial leg of modernisation, with a firm focus on indigenisation. In the last year or so Lanba has handled both the southern and the most crucial western naval commands in the run-up to his term as chief. While the Navy has made impressive strides by adding new warships and aircraft, its underwater fleet remains a constant cause of worry.

158. Rare sighting of Amur falcon near Nagpur

Birdwatchers in Maharashtra were thrilled by the sighting of an unexpected visitor - an Amur falcon - last week at the Umred Karhandla Wildlife Sanctuary near the Pench Tiger Reserve, 60 km from Nagpur. The raptor (bird of prey) the size of a pigeon - makes its home in Nagaland, flying a staggering 22,000 km from there to South Africa, then onto Mongolia and back to Nagaland. The bird has one of the longest and most fascinating migratory paths in the avian world. The falcon breeds in south-eastern Siberia and north-eastern China, where the Amur River divides the Russian Far East and China. It is an extremely unexpected sighting, and a mystifying one too. Most certainly the birds were on their way back to Mongolia, said Srinivas Reddy, field director and Chief Conservator of Forests at the Pench reserve. The sighting was recorded in the early hours of April 28 by Prafulla Sawarkar, a researcher of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS). I fortunately caught the bird perched on a tree when I noticed it. I took its picture and then it flew away, not to be seen again. This particular bird was probably a vagrant, stopping at Umred Karhandla for a rest after their spectacular, non-stop, three-and-a-half-day flight over the Arabian Sea, Mr. Sawarkar said. Amur falcons typically begin their annual journey from north-eastern Siberia and northern China, heading to north-east India and roosting in Nagaland, before leaving for Africa, where they spend their winters. The birds roosting in Nagaland made them particularly vulnerable to hunters who mass-slaughtered them for their tender meat. It was reported that in 2013, nearly 1,20,000 of these falcons were trapped and killed at just one location in Nagaland. Several green groups, along with concerned locals and the church, joined hands and launched a conservation and patrolling programme called Friends of the Amur falcon to end the killings.

159. Google doodle celebrates Sigmund Freud

The 160th birth anniversary of Sigmund Freud, father of psychoanalysis and considered an influential and often controversial 20th century thinker, is being celebrated by Google with a doodle on its homepage. Doodler Kevin Laughlin captures the image of a dreamer, perhaps Freud himself reclining on a blue iceberg with a vast hidden base that can be interpreted to be a reference to the murky depths of the unconscious mind, as a tribute to the psychologist who introduced concepts such as Id and Oedipus complex. More importantly, the design draws our eye to the horizon, reminding us how the genius of Freud's practice rests in the space between doctor and patient, reader and text, human and world, Google describes the doodle. The idea that dreams mean anything or that we have an active subconscious mind, is a concept by Freud, an Austrian neurologist, who created an entirely new approach to understanding of human personality. Born on 6 May 1856 in Freiberg, Moravia (now Pribor in the Czech Republic) to a merchant father, he was educated in Vienna where his family moved to and eventually settled. After graduating in medicine at the University of Vienna he worked at the Vienna General Hospital where he collaborated with Josef Breuer in treating hysteria by the recall of painful experiences under hypnosis.

160. China starts first home-grown Maglev train

The first Chinese Maglev rail line began operating in Changsha city today as [China](#) looks to sell the system abroad along with its bullet-train technology.

The magnetically-levitated (Maglev) train shuttles between Changsha's south railway station and the airport, with one

stop in between.

It takes 19 minutes and 30 seconds to complete the 18.5 -km journey, according to a statement from operator Hunan Maglev Transport Co. The train can carry 363 people at a maximum speed of 100 kms an hour.

The price of a one-way ticket is 20 yuan (USD 3).

Construction of the maglev trains, designed and manufactured by CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co in Hunan Province, began in May 2014 with total investment of 4.29 billion yuan.

The domestically produced moderate-speed Maglev rail costs between 150 million yuan and 250 million yuan per kilometer.

It is highly economical in terms of construction and maintenance costs, according to the statement.

161. 18% population of urban area covered under health insurance

As per the latest data there are only 18 percent of people in urban areas of the country are covered under any kind of health insurance scheme, the government . "As per latest data report of National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) on Health and Morbidity known as 'Social Consumption on Health' conducted during NSS 71st round (January - June 2014)... "...percentage of persons having covered under any health insurance scheme is 14.1 percent in rural areas and 18.1 percent in urban areas," Health Minister J P Nadda said. He said that according to information received from Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), 28.80 crore people were covered under health insurance policies provided by public sector and private sector during 2014-15 (including government sponsored schemes like RSBY) which is 24 percent of India's total population. He said that Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) is a centrally sponsored scheme to provide health insurance to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and 11 other defined categories of unorganized workers namely building and other construction workers, licensed railway porters, street vendors, MGNREGA workers (who have worked for more than fifteen days during preceding financial year) amongst others. Beneficiaries enrolled under RSBY are entitled for health insurance coverage of Rs 30,000 per annum to families (a unit of five) on floater basis in government empaneled hospitals (includes both private and public), he said. He said that under RSBY, 41258510 cards were active for financial year 2015-16 while 1596862 hospitalisations have taken place in the same year period.

162. Five lakh people die of cancer annually in India: Govt

The government plans to set up 20 cancer institutes and 50 tertiary care centres in the country. Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, Health Minister J P Nadda said cancer kills five lakh people annually.

Men usually suffer from throat and stomach cancer and women from breast, cervix and uterus cancer. He said under the scheme, 47 proposals have been received from 26 States and Union Territories. Of these, 14 proposals from 13 states have been approved and funds released.

163. Govt reviewing progress of Sarva Siksha, Madhyamik Siksha initiatives on half yearly basis

Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani has said four hundred academicians from abroad visited India to lecture in various educational institutions in 2014 and 2015.

She was replying to a discussion on the working of her ministry in the Rajya Sabha today. She said the government is reviewing the progress of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Madhyamik Siksha Abhiyan on half yearly basis instead of annual review.

Mrs Irani said from next year, Aadhaar Card based academic tracking mechanism will be introduced to assess the level of the students.

The HRD Minister said over one lakh vacancies of teachers were filled during 2013-14 and 2014-15. Mrs Irani said the government is not in favour of imposing Sanskrit in technical institutions, but it is suitable for computers and

academicians should take a call.

SWAYAM, Study Webs of Active -Learning for Young Aspiring Minds, will be dedicated to students of 9 to 12 classes free of cost in Indian languages.

The SWAYAM programme aims at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effective education at all levels and especially a transformational change in the mode, pedagogy and style of learning for students.

The Minister said it was conceptualized by the HRD Ministry in consultation with all stakeholders, including the professors from Central universities, the State universities, course takers, examination agencies Government of India.

164. WiFi in 400 Rly stations by next year: Suresh Prabhu

Work on providing WiFi at 400 railway stations across the country would be completed by next year and it will have the fastest speed among public WiFi in the world, Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu said. "We are tying up with Google for providing WiFi at 400 railways stations across the country. We have started with Mumbai Central Station. "As per Google, which is a world's top company, when this work will be completed by next year, this WiFi will have the fastest speed across the world among public WiFi's," Prabhu said, adding that this has been already proved at Visakhapatnam and Bhubaneswar stations. He added that besides Google, the Railways was providing WiFi at railway stations through other operators also. To a question on developing Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminal in Mumbai, the Minister said many issues have been resolved at a meeting with Maharashtra Chief Minister on April 21 and it has been decided to have seven buildings at the Terminal on the lines of Shivaji's Fort, with a central dome and six other buildings, besides a statue of Shivaji. "The Central dome (of 30 X 30 metres) will be retained by Railways as it is a heritage building and the model is being developed by J J School of Arts," he said. On connectivity between Churchgate and Shivaji Terminal where trains of Western and Central Railways terminate, Prabhu said "Western Railways and Central Railways are the lifeline of Mumbai. We are taking steps to connect both with an underground tunnel." He also disclosed that train passengers having e-tickets will be able to travel by Metro, BEST buses and taxis, a first of its kind initiative.

165. 8,000-year-old paddy field found in China

Chinese archaeologists said they have found a paddy field more than 8,000 years old. This could be the earliest wet rice farming site in the world. The field, covering less than 100 square metres, was discovered at the neolithic ruins of Hanjing in Jiangsu province in November 2015, Xinhua quoted a spokesman with the archaeology institute of Nanjing Museum as saying. At a seminar held in late April to discuss findings at the Hanjing ruins, 70 scholars from universities, archaeology institutes and museums in China concluded that the wet rice field was the oldest ever discovered. Researchers with the institute found that the field was divided into parts with different shapes, each covering less than 10 square metres. They also found carbonised rice that was confirmed to have grown more than 8,000 years ago based on carbon dating as well as evidence that the soil was repeatedly planted with rice. Lin Liugen, head of the institute, said Chinese people started to cultivate rice about 10,000 years ago and carbonised rice of the age has been found in the past but paddy remnants were quite rare.

166. Mickey Arthur appointed Pakistan head coach

Former South Africa and Australia coach Mickey Arthur was named head coach of the Pakistan cricket team, succeeding Waqar Younis who had resigned owing to the sides disastrous World Twenty20 campaign. Following detailed consultations on this matter at the last Board Of Governors meeting and further telephone consultations by the PCB Chairman with Board Of Governors, discussions with Mickey Arthur were initiated and he has confirmed his acceptance of the post of Head Coach of the Pakistan National Cricket team, the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement. The modalities vis-a-vis his contract are being finalised. It is expected that Mickey Arthur will be able to join the PCB toward the end of this month, it added. Arthur had been coaching the Karachi Kings team in the Pakistan Super League. The 47-year-old will take over from Waqar, who had resigned from the position claiming that none of his suggestions were being accepted by the PCB. Following Waqar's resignation, the PCB invited applications from potential candidates for the position. A panel was appointed comprising Wasim Akram, Ramiz Raja and Faisal Mirza to make recommendations to the PCB. The post was initially offered to Stuart Law, who turned it down citing his inability to immediately join the team. Englishman Peter Moores had also rejected PCB's offer. Arthur, who played 110 first class

games as a batsman in South Africa, led the Proteas to world number one ranking across all formats during his tenure as coach from 2005 to 2010. During his stint as coach, South Africa won 13 consecutive ODIs, equalling Australia's world record. After South Africa, Arthur was the coach of the Australian team from 2011 to 2013 before coaching the Dhaka Gladiators in the Bangladesh Premier League.

167. Lok Sabha passes Bankruptcy Code

The Lok Sabha has passed the much awaited resolution regime or what is known as the bankruptcy code for the corporate sector. The bill titled as the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2015, expected to go through the upper house smoothly, will facilitate speedy and healthy settling of unviable firms. India so far only fractured clauses in several Acts like bankruptcy proceedings in India are governed by multiple laws the Companies Act, SARFAESI Act, Sick Industrial Companies Act etc to settle the bankruptcy issues. Absence of right procedures means corporate are not able to wind up a sick companies operations before its financials getting worsened. Here, all concerned, the shareholders, management, creditors etc. face problems of their own. The new bankruptcy code will replace the existing bankruptcy laws and cover firms, limited liability partnerships, partnership firms and individuals. Pointing out the remarkable feature of the law, Minister of State for Finance Jayant Sinha said the law restores the balance of power between promoters and creditors. There were 12 laws, some of which were more than 100 years old, to tackle insolvency, and now there will be one law. We will be able to quickly move up the World Bank rankings. Corporate insolvency situation goes unending and without proper facilitation in India at present ending in financial disasters and governance failures at present because of the absence of proper law.

168. What is Treasury Bill (T-bill)?

When the government is going to the financial market to raise money, it can do it by issuing two types of debt instruments - treasury bills and government bonds. Treasury bills are issued when the government need money for a shorter period while bonds are issued when it need debt for more than say five years. Treasury bills; generally shortened as T-bills, have a maximum maturity of a 364 days. Hence, they are categorized as money market instruments (money market deals with funds with a maturity of less than one year). Treasury bills are presently issued in three maturities, namely, 91 day, 182 day and 364 day. Treasury bills are zero coupon securities and pay no interest. Rather, they are issued at a discount (at a reduced amount) and redeemed (given back money) at the face value at maturity. For example, a 91 day Treasury bill of Rs.100/- (face value) may be issued at say Rs. 98.20, that is, at a discount of say, Rs.1.80 and would be redeemed at the face value of Rs.100/-. This means that you can get a hundred-rupee treasury bill at a lower price and can get Rupees hundred at maturity. The return to the investors is the difference between the maturity value or the face value (that is Rs.100) and the issue price. The Reserve Bank of India conducts auctions usually every Wednesday to issue T-bills. The rationale is that since their maturity is lower, it is more convenient to avoid intra period interest payments. Treasury bills are usually held by financial institutions including banks. They have a very important role in the financial market beyond investment instruments. Banks give treasury bills to the RBI to get money under repo. Similarly, they can keep it as part of SLR.

169. Today in History - May 6

1527 - German troops began sacking Rome, bringing about the end of the Renaissance.

1529 - Babur defeated the Afghan Chiefs in the Battle of Ghagra, India.

1576 - The peace treaty of Chastenoy ended the fifth war of religion.

1682 - King Louis XIV moved his court to Versailles, France.

1835 - James Gordon Bennett published the "New York Herald" for the first time.

1840 - The first adhesive postage stamps went on sale in Great Britain.

1851 - The mechanical refrigerator was patented by Dr. John Gorrie.

1851 - Linus Yale patented the clock-type lock.

1861 - Arkansas became the ninth state to secede from the Union.

1877 - Chief Crazy Horse surrendered to [U.S.](#) troops in [Nebraska](#).

1882 - The [U.S.](#) Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. The act barred Chinese immigrants from the [U.S.](#) for 10 years.

1889 - The Universal Exposition opened in Paris, France, marking the dedication of the Eiffel Tower. Also at the exposition was the first automobile in Paris, the Mercedes-Benz.

1910 - King Edward VII of England died. He was succeeded by his second son, George V.

1915 - Babe Ruth hit his first major league home run while playing for the Boston Red Sox.

1937 - The German airship Hindenburg crashed and burned in Lakehurst, [NJ](#). Thirty-six people (of the 97 on board) were killed.

1941 - Joseph Stalin assumed the Soviet premiership.

1941 - Bob Hope gave his first USO show at California's March Field.

1942 - During World War II, the Japanese seized control of the Philippines. About 15,000 Americans and Filipinos on Corregidor surrendered to the Japanese.

1945 - Axis Sally made her final propaganda broadcast to Allied troops.

1946 - The New York Yankees became the first major league baseball team to travel by plane.

1954 - British runner Roger Banister broke the four minute mile.

1957 - [U.S.](#) Senator [John Fitzgerald Kennedy](#) was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his book "Profiles in Courage".

1959 - The Pablo Picasso painting of a Dutch girl was sold for \$154,000 in London. It was the highest price paid (at the time) for a painting by a living artist.

1960 - Britain's Princess Margaret married Anthony Armstrong Jones. They were divorced in 1978.

1960 - [U.S. President Eisenhower](#) signed the Civil Rights Act of 1960.

1962 - The first nuclear warhead was fired from the Polaris submarine.

1981 - A jury of international architects and sculptors unanimously selected Maya Ying Lin's entry for the design of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

1994 - The Channel Tunnel officially opened. The tunnel under the English Channel links England and France.

1994 - Former Arkansas state worker Paula Jones filed suit against [U.S. President Clinton](#). The case alleged that he had sexually harassed her in 1991.

1997 - Army Staff Sgt. Delmar G. Simpson was sentenced to 25 years in prison for raping six trainees at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland.

1997 - Four health-care companies agreed to a settlement of \$600 million to hemophiliacs who had contracted AIDS

from tainted blood between 1978-1985.

1999 - Britain's Labour Party won the largest number of seats in the first elections for Scotland's new Parliament and Wales' new Assembly.

1999 - A parole board in New York voted to release Amy Fisher. She had been in jail for 7 years for shooting her lover's wife, Mary Jo Buttafuoco, in the face.

2001 - Chandra Levy's parents reported her missing to police in Washington, DC. Levy's body was found on May 22, 2002 in Rock Creek Park.

2002 - "Spider-Man" became the first movie to make more than \$100 million in its first weekend.

170. DCB Bank launches Aadhaar-based ATM in Odisha

DCB Bank today launched its new ATM in Odisha that accepts a customer's Aadhaar number and fingerprint impression, in addition to the usual debit card security options. The launch coincided with the inauguration of five new branches of the private sector bank in Bijipur, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Palla and Pathar Pada. DCB Bank Managing Director and CEO Murali M Natrajan said, "We are delighted to launch Aadhaar-based ATM in Odisha. This is a unique and wonderful facility. Odisha is a very important market for us. The new ATMs and branches are a testimony to our commitment to the state." DCB Bank's branches in Odisha offer a range of products for farmers, agri-businesses, micro and small businesses and individuals. The bank provides loans for tractors, dairy, crop, land development, agri processing activities as well as high-tech farming such as greenhouses. It also offers warehouse construction loan, finance against warehouse receipts, loan against gold, foreign exchange service and cash management services, he said. DCB Bank's financial inclusion initiative focuses on micro-deposits and savings accounts for low-income groups, who did not have access to the banking system previously. Narendranath Mishra, Head Agri and Inclusive Banking, DCB Bank, said, "DCB Bank branches in Odisha have now grown to 21 branches. The bank offers courteous and customer-friendly services and we are delighted to announce the launch of DCB Car Loan for customers in Odisha.

171. IDBI first state-run bank to open branch at IFSC

IDBI Bank on May 6 became the first state-run lender to open an international banking unit (IBU) at the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Gandhinagar. Inaugurating the branch, the head of IDBI Kishor Kharat said that he is confident that the IFSC unit would significantly enhance the bank's global financing business. The branch would provide full range of corporate banking services and would meet foreign currency funding needs of its clientele. Managing Director of GIFT City Ajay Pandey said, they expect some more state-run banks to begin their operations soon. Four private sector banks have already begun operations at the IFSC. "A conservative estimate suggests that around USD 50 billion worth of international business is conducted outside the country annually in the absence of an IFSC. We are confident that at the pace at which we are progressing today, in the next few years, GIFT City will be able to retain a lot of this business which is now going out," Pandey said. So far, GIFT City has made allotments of over 15 million sq ft built up area in the SEZ and non-SEZ area for office towers, residential apartments and social facilities to be developed at an estimated total investment of over Rs 10,000 crore. Over the past six months, over USD 250 million worth of business transactions were conducted at GIFT City. Earlier this week, Kotak Mahindra Bank opened its branch at the IFSC, becoming the fourth bank to open its IFSC banking unit at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). Yes Bank, Federal Bank and ICICI Bank have been operating branches at the IFSC for several months now. An international banking unit allows a domestic bank to deliver a complete range of products to its clients with foreign currency funding requirements. The IFSC was launched in April, 2015.

172. Buddhist Vesak festival: Tradition of Sand Mandala rangoli

Vesak is the Buddhist festival that commemorates the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha in the Theravada tradition. In India, Vaishakh Purnima day is also known as Buddha Jayanti day and has been traditionally accepted as Buddha's birth day and is an official holiday. This year, the festival is going to be observed on May 21. As per the Buddhist traditions, the festival meant to reiterate the followers' determination to lead noble lives; to practice compassion and to bring peace to the mankind. Making floor decoration or rangoli as 'Sand Mandala' is a Buddhist tradition involving the creation and destruction of mandalas made from coloured sand on the floor of Buddhist temples.

Often a sand mandala is ritualistically dismantled once it has been completed. After some ceremonies and viewing time, the dismantling symbolizes the Buddhist doctrine that the material life is transitory and illusionary. Often a mandala is created with a lot of patience using the dyed sand. Before laying down the sand, the monks draw the geometric measurements associated with the mandala. The sand granules are then applied using small tubes and scrapers, called chak-pur, until the desired filled pattern is achieved. At times, the Sand Mandalas are so elaborate that they take a week to complete by a team of monks, while some simple ones take a few hour to be done up. The decoration of a mandala with sand starts from the center of the design and slowly worked towards its border.

173. Indo-Japan Collaboration in the Field of Science & Technology

India and Japan have immense potential to further strengthen their collaboration in Science Technology. There are several joint projects which are already in progress and more are in the planning process.

The Union Minister for Science Technology and Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan held a meeting with the Japanese Minister for Education, Culture, Sports, Science Technology (MEXT) Mr. Hirodie Hase in New Delhi.

The meeting was a follow up of the six-month earlier meeting held in Japan.

India and Japan are in close collaboration on several focus areas and projects like Artificial Intelligence, Energy, Ocean Sciences and Marine Instrumentation, High Skill Development, Use Analysis of Big Data, Research Development and Bio Information.

These projects include the exchange of students of both countries, training for Indian Scientists, Joint Research Programmes and Scholarships.

Both the governments attach a lot of significance on the joint collaborations in various spheres of Science Technology.

174. Haryana constitutes Backward Classes Commission

[Haryana](#) Government constituted a four-member Backward Classes Commission under the chairmanship of former [Punjab](#) and Haryana High [Court](#) Judge Som Nath Aggarwal.

The Commission shall examine requests for inclusion or exclusion of any class of citizens as a Backward Class and hear complaints of over-inclusion or under-inclusion of any Backward Class and tender such advice to the state government, as it deems appropriate, an official release here said.

The other members of the Commission are Ritambhara Sanghi, Ashok Kumar and Ramesh Chand. Director, Welfare of [Scheduled Castes](#) and Backward Classes has been nominated as ex-officio member secretary of the Commission.

175. Nepal Decides To Recall Its Envoy Deep Kumar Upadhyay From India

The Nepal government today decided to recall its ambassador to India Deep Kumar Upadhyay, appointed to the position last year in April from the Nepali Congress quota, informed sources said.

The Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on today, decided to recall Mr Upadhyay after he held a conversation with Mr Oli in the morning as President Bidhya Devi Bhandari's India visit was cancelled by Nepal unilaterally, without even informing him.

Mr Upadhyay reportedly made his displeasure known to Mr Oli.

"It does not look good at a time when Nepal-India ties are back on track and as an ambassador I was not even informed and consulted before the cancellation of the visit," Mr Upadhyay reportedly told the prime minister.

Mr Oli reportedly told Mr Upadhyay that "if you have such kind of reservation about the cancellation of the visit, you can quit".

The Nepali government also accused Ambassador Upadhyay of being active in Kathmandu and New Delhi in trying to topple the Oli-led government. Mr Upadhyay is a senior leader of the Nepali Congress which is now in the opposition.

The differences between the prime minister and the ambassador over the cancellation of the president's visit led the Cabinet to recall Mr Upadhyay.

During the Cabinet meeting, Mr Oli instructed Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Kamal Thapa to recall ambassador Mr Upadhyay immediately.

Mr Upadhyay, it was alleged, is involved and active in toppling the government, propping up the Madhes-based political parties for agitation, and was getting involved in various activities inside Nepal and India.

A top aide to Mr Oli said the prime minister was for long unhappy with Mr Upadhyay and his recall is only a manifestation of Mr Oli's perception of some of Mr Upadhyay's activities as improper for an ambassador.

176. Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny Re-Elected After 70-Day Deadlock

Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny won narrow re-election today on his fourth try, ending 70 days of deadlock and clearing the way for an exceptionally fragile minority government.

Kenny received 59 votes, with 49 against, in the 158-member parliament - by far the fewest votes ever received for a winning premier in Ireland, a nation used to coalition governments with stable majorities. Speculation mounted on how long this government, dozens of votes short of a majority, might survive.

177. Implementation of PMKSY

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) has been operationalised from 1st July, 2015 with the objective of enhancing irrigation coverage and improving the delivery system at farm level. The programme aims at end-to-end solutions in irrigation supply chain, viz. water sources, distribution network and farm level applications. All the States and Union Territories are covered under the programme. The scheme envisages decentralized state level planning and projectised execution, allowing the states to draw their irrigation development plans based on district/blocks plans with a horizon of 5 to 7 years. The scheme has four components which are as under: Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP): To focus on faster completion of ongoing Major and Medium Irrigation including National Projects. Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP): Creation of new water sources through minor irrigation (both surface and ground water); repair, restoration renovation of traditional water bodies; command area development; strengthening and creation of distribution network from sources to the farm etc. Per Drop More Crop (PDMC): Precision irrigation systems, efficient water conveyance application, micro level storage structures, topping up of input cost beyond Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) permissible limits, secondary storage, water lifting devices, extension activities, coordination management etc.. Watershed Development (WD): Ridge area treatment, drainage line treatment, soil and moisture conservation, rainwater harvesting and other watershed interventions. Major, medium and minor irrigation projects are covered under PMKSY to bring more areas under irrigation and increase agricultural production. Major and Medium irrigation projects are incorporated under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) and Minor irrigation along with Command Area Development (CAD) comes under Har Khet Ko Pani component of PMKSY both components being administered by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development Ganga rejuvenation.

178. Manohar Kumar takes over as Director (Engg) in NPCC

Shri Manohar Kumar has taken over as Director (Engineering) on the Board of National Projects Construction Corporation Limited (NPCC). A graduate from the then Delhi College of Engineering Shri Kumar later did MBA from MDU, Rohtak. He has put in more than three decades of service in Civil Engineering field. NPCC is a PSU under Ministry Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. NPCC was established in 1957 as a premier construction company to create necessary infrastructure for economic development of the country in the core sectors of irrigation and water resources, power and heavy industries.

179. India-Bangladesh review progress of passenger bus services.

Indo-Bangladesh ties gained further strength when officials from the Transport, Home and Foreign Affairs Ministries from both sides met in Shillong on the 4th of May to review the progress of the passenger bus services between the two countries. Transport Commissioners and representatives of Transport Corporations of Assam, West Bengal, Tripura and Meghalaya, and officials of Ministry of Road Transport Highways, External Affairs and BSF attended the meeting on the Indian side. The Bangladesh officials included Joint Secretary, Road Transport Ministry and officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation. The bus operators from both countries were also present in the meeting. The objective of the meeting was to take stock of the bus services plying on four routes between the two countries, and bring in improvement wherever possible to facilitate smooth and comfortable movement of passengers. The meeting discussed the need for improving visa clearance facilities so as to make the clearance faster. For this, Bangladesh proposes to strengthen its existing Consulate in Agartala. In addition to this, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has approved setting up another Bangladesh Consulate in Guwahati. The meeting also discussed issues like improving passenger amenities on both sides. A demand for adding a stoppage in Bangladesh on the Kolkata-Dhaka route and the issue of rationalizing fares were also taken up in the meeting. This review meeting was the first of its kind since the earliest protocol was signed between the two countries in 1999 to start a bus service between Kolkata and Dhaka. The next review meeting has been scheduled for the last week of June in Guwahati. Bus services are currently being operated on four routes between India and Bangladesh. These include Kolkata to Agartala via Dhaka three buses operated on round trip basis by Tripura Road Transport Corporation/ WB Surface Transport Corporation and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation. This service has helped to bring down travel distance Kolkata and Agartala from 1550 Km along the traditional Siliguri-Guwahati-Silchar route to just 640 km along the new route. ii. Dhaka to Guwahati via Shillong one bus on round trip basis by Assam State Transport Corporation and Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation. These two services were flagged off from Dhaka in June last year, by the Prime Ministers of the two countries. In addition, there are two earlier services iii. Kolkata Dhaka iv Agartala-Dhaka, These services are in operation since the year 2000. The operation of the passenger buses between the two countries is part of the ongoing efforts to enhance regional cooperation. India and Bangladesh have both signed the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement, along with Bhutan and Nepal, which aims to regulate passenger and cargo vehicular traffic between the four countries and provide seamless movement of people and goods across their borders for the benefit and integration of the region and its economic development.

180. India-Japan to sign MOU for Cooperation in Sports

A 12 member delegation from Japan led by Mr. HASE Hiroshi, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Government of Japan called on Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Youth Affairs Sports.

Both sides agreed for exchange of sportspersons, coaches, sports experts, sports administrators etc., and decided that they will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on cooperation in the field of sports.

In the wake of India hosting Under-17 FIFA World Cup in 2017, both sides agreed for promotion of football and exchange of players and coaches. It was also agreed that the two countries will also play friendly football matches.

Mr. HASE Hiroshi, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Government of Japan informed that the Government of Japan has launched SPORT FOR TOMORROW to promote sports to more than 10 million people in 100 nations between 2014 and 2020, the year when Tokyo will host the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. The goal is to spread values learned through sports and increase awareness of the Olympic and Paralympic movement to people of all generations worldwide. Mr. HASE Hiroshi, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Government of Japan offered that India may also consider taking coaches, instructors from Japan under SPORT FOR TOMORROW programme. Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Youth Affairs Sports welcomed Japan's initiative and stated that India will certainly like to avail coaches and instructors in those sports disciplines where Japan is strong.

Mr. HASE Hiroshi, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Government of Japan extended invitation to Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Youth Affairs Sports for attending World Forum on Sport and Culture to be held in October 2016 in Tokyo. Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal accepted the invitation.

181. **Justice Mehta to head panel on revision of Delhi Metro fares**

Former Judge of the Delhi High Court Justice M.L. Mehta was appointed as chairman of a three-member government panel on revision of Delhi Metro fares, which was last revised in 2009. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal for appointment of Justice Mehta, as chairman of the fourth Fare Fixation Committee in the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Limited (DMRC). The panel will submit its report within three months. The DMRC had requested the Centre to constitute a Fare Fixation Committee for recommending fares to its Metro network.

182. **Labour's Sadiq Khan becomes first Muslim mayor of London**

Sadiq Khan, the son of a bus driver, became London's first Muslim mayor, seeing off a Conservative challenger who attempted to link him to extremism and securing a much-needed victory for his opposition Labour Party. As New York mayor Bill de Blasio sent his congratulations, Khan had yet to receive official notification of his victory, which would go some way to soothing the wounds of Labour which suffered losses in Thursday's other local elections. Dealt a crushing blow in Scotland, where it came third behind the Scottish National Party and Britain's ruling Conservatives, Labour did better than expected in England, saving its left-leaning leader from an early challenge. But the big prize was the London mayor vote, which pitted Khan, 45, who grew up in public housing in inner city London, against Conservative Zac Goldsmith, 41, the son of a billionaire financier.

183. **Delhi govt forms entrepreneurship council to create more jobs**

The Delhi government has constituted an Entrepreneurship Council for the promotion of entrepreneurship and creation of jobs on a large scale in the national capital.

Addressing a press conference, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal informed that Council will consist of mainly the members from industries and businesses and it will work under the aegis of the Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi (DDC).

The mandate of the council will be to advise the Delhi Government on how to create the best environment leading to job creation in all sectors.

The council will give recommendations pertaining to creation of most suitable policy framework for all micro-entrepreneurs, Small and Medium Scale Enterprises, New-age start-ups as well as large businesses.

Its focus will be on early delivery and would suggest ideas that can be implemented quickly; however in parallel, the council will also recommend infrastructure and policy initiatives so that Delhi can be the Choice city for Entrepreneurship.

The council, to be headed by Industries Minister Satyendar Jain will submit its recommendations in three-months time.

184. **Zimbabwe to print own version of US dollar**

Zimbabwe is set to print its own version of the US dollar in order to ease a cash shortage in the country.

Central bank Governor John Mangudya said the cash, known as bond notes, will be backed by 200 million dollars support from the Africa Export-Import Bank.

The specially-designed two, five, 10 and 20 dollar notes will have the same value as their US dollar equivalents.

Zimbabwe introduced the US dollar after ditching its own currency in 2009 following sustained hyperinflation.

Since then Zimbabweans have been using the dollar as well as a number of other foreign currencies including the South African rand and the Chinese yuan.

185. **4th SAIEVAC Ministerial Meeting to be held in New Delhi**

The eight nations composing the South Asia Initiative to End Violence Against Children, SAIEVAC, are assembling in New Delhi next week for their 4th Ministerial Meeting.

An official release said, the meeting will set strategies and agree on commitments to ensure the protection and security of the children of the region. It is being hosted by the Ministry of Child and Women Development.

The Ministerial meeting on 11th of this month will be preceded by a two day technical consultation focusing on critical issues of child protection and violence in the region.

Delegates from the governments and civil society organizations of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka will assess progress and developments of the past decade of regional effort and identify priorities for SAIEVAC for the next five years.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh is expected to deliver the statement to the Ministerial Meeting. The Minister of Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, will chair the meeting.

186. ADB keen to raise lending to India to USD 3 bn: Nakao

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is keen to enhance its lending to India to 3 billion US Dollars this year to support 'robust growth' in the country.

ADB President Takehiko Nakao said at the annual meet in Frankfurt that India needs more infrastructure funding and we are very happy to do this to support more robust growth in India.

He said the bank plans to increase its lending to 3 billion US dollars this year as against about 2.2 billion dollars in 2015.

187. America's Tori Bowie runs fastest 100m of 2016 in Doha

American Tori Bowie streaked to victory in the women's 100 metres at the Doha Diamond League, equalling her personal best and smashing the meeting record with a world leading time of 10.80 seconds.

The 25-year old, who was the world's fastest woman over 100 metres in 2014, edged out her Dutch rival Dafne Schippers by 0.03 seconds.

188. Pakistan beat India at Asian Kabaddi championships

Pakistan beat India at the Asian Kabaddi championships in Islamabad, retaining the title. In the final match of the tournament, in which Iran, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal also participated, Pakistan defeated arch rivals India by 50-31.

189. Cameroon Footballer Patrick Ekeng dies after collapsing on pitch

Cameroon international footballer Patrick Ekeng has died after collapsing on the pitch playing a first division match with his Romanian side Dinamo Bucharest. The 26-year old midfielder fell to the ground without any contact with another player in the 70th minute of the game against Viitorul, just seven minutes after coming on as a substitute. Cameroon midfielder Marc-Vivien Foe also died after collapsing on the pitch, during a Confederations Cup match in 2003 against Colombia in France.

190. Modi pays homage to Tagore on 155th birth anniversary

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) on Saturday paid homage to Nobel laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore on his 155th birth anniversary. I bow to Gurudev Tagore on his birth anniversary. He was a versatile personality whose profound thoughts and writings continue to inspire, Modi tweeted. Tagore, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 was born on May 7, 1861. He died on August 7, 1941.

191. ICICI Bank signs MoU with BRICS Grouping-promoted New Development Bank

Private sector lender ICICI Bank today became the first financial institution in the country to tie up with the BRICS Grouping-promoted New Development Bank (NDB) for a partnership in bond issuances, co-financing, treasury management and human resources. As part of the pact, the two lenders -- NDBs first president is ICICI Bank veteran KV Kamath -- will look at each other as "preferred partners", ICICI Bank said in a statement. The agreement "creates a

platform for sharing knowledge and deepening network connectivity between NDB and ICICI Bank," Kamath said, after signing the MoU along with ICICI Bank chief Chanda Kochhar here. Kamath said NDB's mandate includes partnering with local development banks in member-countries and this MoU will help it leverage the deep market access and insight of ICICI Bank in the country's financial markets. Kochhar said there are synergies between the two organisations and the MoU will help harness this to benefit both the partners in the long run. The statement said the agreement will help NDB in exploring rupee-denominated bonds in the domestic and international markets and make both the lenders collaborate to fund development projects in the country. ICICI Bank and NDB will also leverage a mutually beneficial partnership in other areas such as treasury risk management, account and cash management services and human resource development. Beyond this, there will be continuous dialogue and regular exchange of information between the two banks for exploring potential partnerships in other areas as well, the statement said. Headquartered in Shanghai, the NDB began operations with an initial capital of USD 100 billion last year as a multilateral development bank promoted by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. It recently announced its first set of loans involving financial assistance of USD 811 million to support building of 2,370 mw of power capacity within the member-countries. Out of this USD 250 million has come to state-run Canara Bank for on-lending to renewable energy projects.

192. Federal Bank ties up with US based payments company for faster international remittances

Kerala based private sector lender [Federal Bank](#) has tied up with Transfast Remittance LLC for facilitating online inward remittance to India in Rupees for their NRI customers based in USA. Transfast which is an omni-channel provider of cross-border payments solutions to consumers around the world, operates its network across 120+ countries in the USA, Asia, Europe and Africa. With this tie-up, the US-based NRI customers can transfer money instantly to their NRI account in India from their US bank account even by using Debit card/ Credit card. Customers can send money to India by creating an account on <https://transfast.com/send-money-to-india> or by downloading Transfast App in iOS/android mobiles. Shri. Varghese K I, chief general manager, Kerala Network said that customers in USA can choose from two products. One is 'Fastrack', which enables credit within zero to twenty four hours at a transfer fee of just 4.99 Dollars. There is no transfer fee if the amount is one thousand dollars or more. The other option is 'VALUE+' wherein the credit will happen at higher exchange rate with no transfer fee, but with a delay of 3 to 5 business days.

193. ECB set to decide fate of 500-euro banknote

The [European Central Bank](#) is set to decide today the fate of the 500-euro banknote, which many people associate with money laundering, the [black market](#) and terrorist financing.

But its possible abolition is raising hackles in countries such as Germany.

The violet-coloured bill, the largest denomination banknote in the single currency area and physically also the bigger than the five other euro bills, is on the agenda of a meeting of the ECB's governing council, a bank spokesman told AFP.

Notwithstanding any surprises, the council is likely to vote to stop issuing them, as the bill is believed to be favoured by criminals for moving large sums of money around without the authorities knowing.

"Such notes are the preferred payment mechanism of those pursuing illicit activities, given the anonymity and lack of transaction record they offer, and the relative ease with which they can be transported and moved," according to a recent Harvard University study.

Because of its size and portability, the 500-euro note has become so prized in underground finance that it can trade at more than its face value, and has become known in some circles as a "Bin Laden", the study said.

194. Singer Angelique Kidjo Wins Award for Human Rights Work

Benin-born musician Angelique Kidjo has won a major human rights award, along with three African youth activist movements. Kidjo and the groups were honored for their work to defend freedom of expression and peaceful protest. The groups are Y'en a marre (Fed Up), le Balai Citoyen (The Citizen's Broom), and Lutte pour Changement (LUCHA). The organization [Amnesty International](#) announced the winners Wednesday. It praised Kidjo and the groups for their work in Africa and around the world. Amnesty says the award honors those who have shown exceptional courage in standing up to injustice. It says winners also influence others to act the same. The Amnesty International honor is called

the Ambassador of Conscience Award. Past winners include leaders Nelson Mandela and Aung San Suu Kyi. Artists who have been honored including U2 band leader Bono, singer Joan Baez, and Chinese dissident Ai Wei Wei.

195. Corporation Bank gets 'Excellence Award on Empowering MSMEs 2016'

Corporation Bank has been awarded the Excellence Award on Empowering MSMEs 2016 instituted by the Federation of Industry, Trade and Services [FITS]. Bank Managing Director and CEO Jai Kumar Garg received the award from Kalraj Mishra, Union Minister for MSMEs, at New Delhi on Tuesday, a release from the bank said. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector is emerging as a highly vibrant and dynamic one. The release said that MSMEs not only play a crucial role in providing large employment opportunities at comparatively lower capital cost but also helps in industrialisation of rural and backward areas. Realising the needs of this developing sector, Corporation Bank is offering a range of products and services. To promote micro units to grow bigger, the bank ensures collateral-free loans up to Rs. 1 crore under Credit Guarantee Scheme of CGTMSE and bears the cost of guarantee cover for loans up to Rs. 10 lakh. Also to encourage entrepreneurs, interest rate concession to an extent of 50 bps is offered to such guarantee covered accounts. To support the Stand Up India initiative of the Union government, Corporation Bank is offering 25 bps concessions in interest rate to women beneficiaries in addition to 50 bps concession available to guarantee covered accounts. In association with well-known and reputed non-governmental organisations, the bank is empowering women in the rural areas of the State. To make MSMEs lending environmentally sustainable, Corporation Bank has adopted Environment and Social Risk Framework (ESRF) guidelines of World Bank/SIDBI for SME borrowers.

196. Rani Mukerji, mother-in-law Pamela inaugurate Yash Chopra's statue in Switzerland

Director Yash Chopra, who shot most of his romantic dramas in the lush mountains of Switzerland, has been honoured with a special statue by the government. The bronze statue of the late filmmaker, which weighs about 250 kilos, was inaugurated on Wednesday by his wife Pamela and daughter-in-law Rani Mukerjee, said a statement from Yash Raj Films. Chopra, who opened a legacy of South Asian tourists flocking to Switzerland, loved to spend time in the country besides shooting his movies. This statue is installed at the heart of Interlaken, inside the Kursaal area, near the Congress Centre which is a prime, popular spot with tourists. Ministers and senior bureaucrats from the Swiss government attended the inauguration event that was organised by Interlaken Tourism and Jungfrau Railways. This is not the first time the filmmaker has been honoured in this way. The government of Interlaken awarded him the honorary title of Ambassador of Interlaken in 2011, and Jungfrau Railways named a train after him an honour shared only with the railways founder, Adolf Guyer. The five-star Victoria Jungfrau Grand Hotel Spa in Interlaken also named a suite after Yash Chopra.

197. Kumar Rajesh Chandra appointed aviation security wing chief

Senior IPS officer Kumar Rajesh Chandra was today appointed as chief of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), the aviation security wing of the government, over three years after the post fell vacant. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the name of Chandra, a 1985 batch IPS officer of Bihar cadre, for appointment to the post of Director General (formerly known as Commissioner of Security (Civil Aviation)) in the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training said. He has been appointed in place of IPS officer G S Malhi, who had completed his tenure as BCAS chief in November 2012. The crucial post was lying vacant since then. Chandra is currently working as Additional Director General (Modernisation), Bihar Police. The appointment was delayed due to claims from officers of both Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) to the coveted post. BCAS, which acts as regulatory authority for civil aviation security, was initially set up as a cell in the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in January 1978. It was reorganised into an independent department on April 1, 1987 under the Ministry of Civil Aviation after the Kanishka tragedy in June 1985, in which 329 people died. The main responsibility of BCAS is to lay down standards and measures in respect of security of civil flights at international and domestic airports in India.

198. Collegium recommends four SC judges

The collegium recommendations come close on the heels of Chief Justice Thakur's emotional outpouring about the impossible burden shouldered by a skeletal number of judges who work day in and day out to quell pendency. The appointments would also be a relief in a year in which the apex court would see five of its judges retiring. They are Justice F.M.I. Kalifulla in July, Justices V. Gopala Gowda and C. Nagappan in October, Justices Anil R. Dave and Shiva

Kirti Singh in November. Counsel for Jayalalithaa Mr. Rao, who would join a handful of senior legal practitioners in the countrys history to be appointed as Supreme Court judges directly from the Bar, is counsel for Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa in a disproportionate assets case pending in the Supreme Court and is spearheading the Tamil Nadu governments objections against the conduct of National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test in 2016-17. Transfer Meanwhile, Uttarakhand High Court Chief Justice K.M. Joseph has been transferred to head the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Chief Justice Josephs recent judgment quashing Presidents rule in Uttarakhand caused huge political ripples and questioned the Centres interference in the functioning and independence of Speakers of State Legislative Assemblies. Chief Justice Josephs transfer is part of a substantial shuffle in the higher judiciary. Karnataka Chief Justice S.K. Mukherjee has been recommended for transfer to head the Uttarakhand High Court. Justice N. Kumar has been recommended for appointment as Acting Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court and Justice Mohan Santhana Goudar has been recommended for transfer to the Kerala High Court.

199. SpaceX rocket launches satellite, then lands on ship at sea

An unmanned SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from Florida on Friday to put a communications satellite into orbit, then made a swift return landing on an ocean platform, a live webcast showed. It was the second successful landing at sea for entrepreneur Elon Musks Space Exploration Technologies, or SpaceX, which intends to offer cut-rate launch services by re-using its rockets. "Woohoo!!" Musk wrote on social media website Twitter after the landing. May need to increase size of rocket storage hangar. SpaceX successfully landed a rocket on a floating landing pad in April after four failed attempts. Another Falcon rocket had touched down on a ground-based landing pad at Cape Canaveral in December. Before Fridays launch SpaceX had downplayed expectations for the rockets successful return. The rocket flying on Friday was traveling twice as fast as the one that landed last month so it could deliver a hefty television broadcast satellite into an orbit more than 20,000 miles (32,200 km) beyond that of the International Space Station, which is about 250 miles (400 km) above Earth. The 23-story tall rocket lifted off from a seaside launch pad at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station at 1:21 a.m. EDT. Perched atop the booster was the JCSAT-14 satellite, owned by the Tokyo-based telecommunications company, SKY Perfect JSAT Corp, a new customer for SpaceX. About 2-1/2 minutes after launch the rockets first stage shut down, separated, flipped around and headed toward a so-called drone ship stationed more than 400 miles (650 km) off Floridas east coast in the Atlantic Ocean. The rockets second stage continued flying to deliver the 10,300-pound (4,700-kg) JCSAT-14 satellite into orbit. The satellite, built by Space Systems Loral in Palo Alto, California, a subsidiary of MacDonald Dettwiler and Associates is designed to provide television, data and mobile communications services to customers across Asia, Russia and Oceania and the Pacific Islands. Fridays launch was the fourth of more than a dozen flights planned this year by SpaceX, which has a backlog of more than \$10 billion worth of launch orders from customers including NASA. Last week SpaceX won its first contract to launch a U.S. military satellite, breaking a 10-year-old monopoly held by United Launch Alliance, a partnership of Lockheed Martin Corp and Boeing Co.

200. Offshore patrol vessel Shourya launched

The south Goa-based defence shipyard, Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL), on Thursday launched Shourya , the fifth of a series of six Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), designed in-house and being built by GSL, for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). This 105-metre new generation OPV was launched by the Governor of Goa, Mridula Sinha, in the presence of GSI and ICG officials. Inspector General GSK Goyal, DDG (MM), ICG, while complementing GSL for its timely deliveries, said that the launch of the fifth vessel would be another milestone towards their goal of having adequate number of such ships in the ICG inventory. Shekhar Mital, Chairman and Managing Director of GSL, has been successful in significantly reducing the building period of OPVs to three years due to ingenious innovations, hard work and team spirit of employees. This new generation OPV is powered by twin diesel engines and is fitted with state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment. The vessel carries four boats for boarding party operations. One 30 mm gun and two 12.7 mm guns associated with fire control system form the main weaponry package.

201. India finish fourth in junior shooting World Cup

Indian shooters ended their campaign at the International Shooting Sport Federation Junior World Cup in Suhl, [Germany](#) at a creditable fourth position, finishing with three gold, four silver and three bronze.

During the April 29-May 5 competition, a total of 585 junior athletes from 48 countries participated but only 24 nations made it to the medals table, which was topped by [Italy](#) with seven gold, four silver and one bronze.

[Russia](#) stood second with five gold, six silver and nine bronze, while Germany came third with five gold, three silver and three bronze medals.

For India, Rituraj Singh was the most successful performer with two gold medals in both the individual and team events of the men's 25m Standard Pistol.

Shivam Shukla also turned in impressive performances in pistol events, winning a gold and a silver. He also made it to the finals of the individual 25m Rapid Fire Pistol event but failed to win a medal.

Arjun Das won a yellow metal and a bronze for Team India.

Among the junior women, Yashaswini Singh Deswal was the most impressive with her two silver medals, both in the individual and team sections of the 10m Air Pistol event. She has been a consistent performer in world events over the last couple of years.

ISSF action next moves to Munich, Germany where the fourth leg of the Senior World Cup is scheduled to start on May 19.

202. Biography of Shashi Kapoor released

A biography of veteran actor Shashi Kapoor, unveiling the chapters of his personal and professional life was released on Friday. The biography titled Shashi Kapoor the Householder, the Star, has been authored by film journalist Aseem Chhabra and it attempts to delve into the nature and nurture of the 78-year-old actor. [Sanias biography Ace against Odds set to reveal her story](#) Sharing the news, filmmaker Karan Johar took to Twitter on Friday and posted: Shashi Kapoor: The Householder, The Star, written by Aseem Chhabra and forward by yours truly! Its out now. Kapoor, who was felicitated with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2015, is known for his work in films like Waqt, Deewar, Trishul and Utsav.

203. World AIDS Orphans Day – May 7

Children orphaned by AIDS are just a fraction of the problem, as millions more have been made vulnerable. Behind the statistics are millions of stories of human suffering. The AIDS crisis has a catastrophic impact on households and communities deepening poverty and exacerbating hardships. More than 95 percent of children affected by AIDS, including orphans, continue to live with their extended families. However, these families are increasingly overwhelmed by poverty and struggle to protect and raise the children in their care. Despite progress in funding, preventing and treating AIDS, the world is ignoring the basic needs of millions of vulnerable children. Few resources are reaching the families and communities that provide the front-line response, even though they provide the vast majority of care and support to orphaned and vulnerable children. A generation will be lost if we do not take urgent measures to support the basic rights of children and the families and communities that care for them. We can fight AIDS if we organize a long-term response supported by a strong political will. 10 percent of all HIV/AIDS funding should be urgently directed to support AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. Background on World Aids Orphans Day (WAOD) WAOD was initiated in 2002 by Albina du Boisrouvray, FXB founder and president emerita, to bring attention to the millions of children affected by AIDS. Every May 7, FXB organized a grassroots campaign to bring attention to the plight of children affected by AIDS and advocate on their behalf. FXB initiated a worldwide coalition of mayors who engage their constituencies to respect and lobby for the rights of the most vulnerable children. To date, over 800 mayors and elected officials from 41 countries have joined this coalition. WAOD advocates ask their home governments to direct at least 10 percent of all HIV/AIDS funding to support orphans and children made vulnerable by the pandemic.

204. Today in History - May 7

0558 - The dome of the church of St. Sophia in Constantinople collapsed. It was immediately rebuilt as ordered by Justinian.

1274 - The Second Council of Lyons opened in France to regulate the election of the pope.

1429 - The English siege of Orleans was broken by Joan of Arc.

1525 - The German peasants' revolt was crushed by the ruling class and church.

1663 - The first Theatre Royal was opened in London.

1763 - Indian chief Pontiac began all out war on the British in New York.

1789 - The first U.S. Presidential Inaugural Ball was held in New York City.

1800 - The [U.S.](#) Congress divided the Northwest Territory into two parts. The western part became the [Indiana](#) Territory and the eastern section remained the Northwest Territory.

1847 - The AMA (American Medical Association) was organized in Philadelphia, [PA](#).

1898 - The first Intercollegiate Trapshooting Association meet was held in New Haven, [CT](#).

1912 - Columbia University approved final plans for awarding the Pulitzer Prize in several categories.

1912 - The first airplane equipped with a machine gun flew over College Park, [MD](#).

1915 - The Lusitania, a civilian ship, was sunk by a German submarine. 1,201 people were killed.

1926 - A [U.S.](#) report showed that one-third of the nation's exports were motors.

1937 - The German Condor Legion arrived in Spain to assist Francos forces.

1939 - Germany and Italy announced a military and political alliance known as the Rome-Berlin Axis.

1940 - Winston Churchill became British Prime Minister.

1942 - In the Battle of the Coral Sea, Japanese and American navies attacked each other with carrier planes. It was the first time in the history of naval warfare where two enemy fleets fought without seeing each other.

1943 - The last major German strongholds in North Africa, Tunis and Bizerte, fell to Allied forces.

1945 - Baseball owner Branch Rickey announced the organization of the United States Negro Baseball League. There were 6 teams.

1945 - Germany signed unconditional surrender ending World War II. It would take effect the next day.

1946 - Tokyo Telecommunications Engineering Corp. was founded. The company was later renamed Sony.

1951 - Russia was admitted to participate in the 1952 Olympic Games by the International Olympic Committee.

1954 - French Colonial Forces surrendered to the Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu after 55 days of fighting.

1954 - The [United States](#) and the United Kingdom rejected the Soviet Union's bid to join NATO.

1958 - Howard Johnson set an aircraft altitude record in F-104.

1960 - Leonid Brezhnev became president of the Soviet Union.

1975 - [U.S. President Ford](#) declared an end to the Vietnam War.

1977 - Rookie Janet Guthrie set the fastest time on opening day of practice for the Indianapolis 500. Her time was 185.607.

1984 - A \$180 million out-of-court settlement was announced in the Agent Orange class-action suit brought by Vietnam veterans who claimed they had suffered injury from exposure to the defoliant while serving in the armed forces.

1987 - Shelly Long, as Diane Chambers, made her last appearance as a regular on the TV show "Cheers."

1992 - A 203-year-old proposed constitutional amendment barring the [U.S.](#) Congress from giving itself a midterm pay raise was ratified as the 27th Amendment.

1994 - The Edvard Munch painting "The Scream" was recovered after being stolen 3 months earlier from an Oslo Museum. This version of "The Scream", one of four different versions, was painted on paper.

1996 - The trial of Serbian police officer Dusan Tadic opened in the Netherlands. He was later convicted on murder-torture charges and was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

1997 - A report released by the [U.S.](#) government said that Switzerland provided Nazi Germany with equipment and credit during World War II. Germany exchanged for gold what had been plundered or stolen. Switzerland did not comply with postwar agreements to return the gold.

1998 - Daimler-Benz bought Chrysler Corp. for close to \$40 billion. It was the largest industrial merger on record.

1998 - Residents of London voted to elect their own mayor for the first time in history. The vote would take place in May 2000.

1998 - Leeza Gibbons received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

1999 - A jury ruled that "The Jenny Jones Show" and Warner Bros. were liable in the shooting death of Scott Amedure. He was killed by another guest on the show. The jury's award was \$25 million.

1999 - Jerry Moss received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

1999 - In Belgrade, Yugoslavia, three Chinese citizens were killed and 20 were wounded when a NATO plane mistakenly bombed the Chinese embassy.

1999 - In Guinea-Bissau, the government of President Joo Bernardo Vieira was ousted in a military coup.

2000 - Russian President Vladimir V. Putin named First Deputy Premier Mikhail Kasyanov as premier.

2003 - In Washington, DC, General Motors Corp. delivered six fuel cell vehicles to Capitol Hill for lawmakers and others to test drive during the next two years.

2003 - Roger Moore collapsed during a matinee performance of the Broadway comedy "The Play What I Wrote." He finished the show after a 10-minute break. He was fitted with a pacemaker the following day.

2013 - The Dow Jones industrial average closed at 15,056.20. It was the first time it had closed over 15,000.

205. Original Character of Yamuna will be preserved, says Uma Bharti

Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Uma Bharti today said that original character of Yamuna will be preserved while implementing the Yamuna Action Plan. Inaugurating some schemes of Yamuna Action Plan-3 in New Delhi, the Minister said, government and all sections of the society have to work together to make it a success.

Ms Bharti said, 800 crore rupees will be spent on the implementation of this phase of the plan. 85 per cent of the cost will be borne by the Centre, and the rest by Delhi Government. The Scheme includes rehabilitation and modernization of Sewage Treatment Plants - STPs at Okhla, Kondli and Rithala, construction of a new STP and Public Outreach Activities. The Minister also said, the Chhatt Ghat at the bank of Yamuna will be renovated at an estimated cost of around 2.5 crore rupees.

Ms Bharti also flagged of a Trash Skimmer machine on the Yamuna for river surface cleaning and it can remove ten tonne trash daily.

Referring to Yamuna Action Plan -1 and 2, the Minister said that despite spending over 1500 crore rupees, the desired results could not be achieved. She said, the government has taken into account the results of the earlier two phases while implementing the 3rd plan.

206. Parliamentary panel appreciates Ujjawala Scheme

Appreciating the Ujjawala Scheme which aims at prevention of trafficking of Women and Children, a Parliamentary panel observed that funds allotted for this scheme should be utilized properly so as to empower victims of trafficking. It should help them to become financially independent.

The Panel on Human Resource Development headed by Dr Satyanarayan Jatiya tabled its report recently in Parliament on demands for grants 2016-17 of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The report said this scheme is a valuable step in the direction of protecting women and children from exploitation.

Saying that the two are vulnerable sections of the society, the Committee said that the Ministry should put in place a monitoring mechanism to see that the concerned NGOs are implementing the scheme effectively so that the objectives of the scheme are realised.

The Ministry has sanctioned 27 new projects including 13 rehabilitation home under the scheme during 2015-16. At present there are 276 operational projects of which 162 are rehabilitation homes and remaining projects for prevention. The capacity of the rehabilitation homes ranges from 25 to 50 and nearly 5000 victims are receiving rehabilitation services.

207. President presents Gallantry Awards and Distinguished Service Decorations to Defence personnel

President Pranab Mukherjee today presented Gallantry Awards and Distinguished Service Decorations to Defence personnel at a ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Constable Gautam Koch of Assam Armed Branch who made supreme sacrifice fighting UPLA insurgents in Assam's Difu was awarded Kirti Chakra posthumously. Naib Subedar Rajesh Kumar Singh who made supreme sacrifice while fighting terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir was awarded Kirti Chakra posthumously.

Head constable Rajesh Atra of Special Task Force, Chhattisgarh who showed exemplary leadership fighting left wing extremist and Lieutenant Colonel Nectar Sanjenbam who showed conspicuous gallantry fighting insurgents in Manipur were also given Kirti Chakra.

Havildar Man Bahadur Chettri of Assam Rifles who made supreme sacrifice fighting PLA insurgents in Ukhrul in Manipur was awarded Shaurya Chakra posthumously. Colonel Santosh Mahadik of Parachute Regiment, Sepoy Dharma Ram of Mahar Regiment and Constable Rocky of Border Security Force were given Shaurya Chakra posthumously for their supreme sacrifice fighting militants in Jammu and Kashmir.

Major Varun Kumar Singh, Major Sandip Yadav, Major Anurag Kumar and Major Tanuj Grover who displayed exemplary leadership and courage while fighting and eliminating terrorist in Jammu and Kashmir were also given Shaurya Chakra.

Civilian Bikaramjeet and Rakesh Sharma who displayed bravery and apprehended a dreaded militant in Jammu and Kashmir were also awarded Shaurya Chakra.

Thirteen personnel were awarded Param Vishisht Seva Medal and Twenty Five Personnel were awarded Ati Vishisht Seva Medal which included Director General of NCC Lieutenant General Aniruddha Chakravarty. Two personnel were given Uttam Yudh Seva Medal and Ati Vishist Seval Medal Bar.

Vice-President Hamid Ansari, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar, Three services Chiefs were present in the ceremony.

208. Nagaland Police receives smart policing award

The SMS-based Vehicle Monitoring System of Nagaland police has bagged the National Award for Smart Policing instituted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

The award for the Best Practice in the category of Road Safety and Traffic Management was presented to Nagaland Police by Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary at a function in New Delhi, a police release said.

The SMS-based Vehicle Monitoring System was conceived by Nagaland Police Department and executed by Ben Imchen, a post-graduate from IIT Delhi. The project was launched in April last year and has resulted in substantial reduction in theft of four-wheelers across the state while several vehicles have been recovered using the application.

It provides an easy platform for policemen and citizens to report vehicle theft and alert the various field formations of police across the state by sending one SMS.

209. India women wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik grab Rio 2016 berths

Two Indian women wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik have qualified for Rio Olympics. In the Olympic world qualifying tournament at Istanbul in Turkey, Vinesh sealed her place for the Olympic berth when she defeated Avin Demirhan of Turkey 12-2 in the 48 kg category in the semi final. Vinesh will now fight for gold medal against Ivona Neena Matkovaska.

Sakshi Malik also entered the final in the 58 kg category and qualified for Rio Olympics. In the Semi-final today, Sakshi beat Len Jhang in a tough encounter. She will play against Russian Valeria Koblova Jholobova in the final.

In all, six women wrestlers were competing in this tournament, but four of them lost early. Tomorrow, male Indian free style wrestlers will fight for adding to India's quota in the Olympics scheduled in August this year.

210. What is bound rate under WTO?

The World Trade Organisation stands for the removal or reduction of trade barriers. It identifies two important trade barriers quota and tariff. Quota is a trade policy tool where a country stipulates that only a limited quantity of a particular commodity can be imported during a year. On the other hand, tariff is a tax on the import of a commodity. According to WTO, quota is more dangerous than tariff as it restricts the quantity of imports severely. Hence WTO asks members to remove quota and impose tariff up to a permissible level. This permissible maximum level is often referred as bound rate. Bound rate is the maximum rate of duty (tariff) that can be imposed by the importing country on an imported commodity. Here, each country commits itself to a ceiling on customs duties (tariff) on a certain number of products. These rates vary from country to country and commodity to commodity. But no country can raise duties above the bound rate it has committed, and the rate of customs duty actually applied may be lower than the bound rate. For a member country like India, the bound rate will be maximum for the commodities it produces less or in which India is not a prominent producer. On the other hand, the bound rate will be low if India is a major producer of a commodity. The purpose of setting such a tactic is to compel countries to reduce tariff and promote trade. For example, if India is a net importer of a commodity its bound rate will be high. But India will not impose such a high rate as it will injure the consumers. Similarly, India would like to check the import of those commodities in which it is a leading producer. But here, according to WTO, India should keep only low tax to promote trade and competition. Altogether, tariff will remain low in these two conditions. That is the objective of WTO as an institution standing for the promotion of international trade.

211. Odisha Govt signs MoU with Sulabh for hybrid toilets

The State Government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop 5,957 toilet seats across nine cities in Odisha under the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation of Urban Transformation (AMRUT), at the secretariat. The toilets will be called as ``Ama Sauchalaya. The toilets will be termed as `hybrid as they will be developed near slum clusters and can be used both by the inhabitants of the nearby slums (community) and outsiders (public) as well. While the families staying inside the slums will be allowed to use the toilets for Rs 50 per family per month, outsiders will have to pay as per individual rates payable for use of any public toilet. Capital city Bhubaneswar will have the lions share of 1,691 toilets seats and the toilet complexes will house five, seven and ten seats each. Other cities to benefit from the `hybrid toilet scheme include Cuttack, Berhampur, Puri, Rourkela, Sambalpur, Baripada, Balasore and Bhadrak. The MoU was signed between Sulabh International Social Service Organisation and the State Government and senior officials of the nine urban local bodies (ULBs) signed the documents in presence of Housing and Urban Development Minister Pushpendra Singh Deo.

212. South Indian Bank announces tie up with National Australian Bank

Thrissur-based [South Indian Bank](#) has announced a tie-up with [National Australian Bank](#) (NAB) for online inward remittances from Australia at a competitive rate. The arrangement enables faster, hassle-free remittances through internet at the best exchange rates, claimed the Bank. NAB will be South Indian Bank's main banking correspondent in Australia. "As the exchange rate is decided by South Indian Bank, NRI customers in Australia would get the best possible rates. The remitted money can be either converted into Indian Rupee or maintained in Australian Dollar." said K N Reghunathan, executive vice president (Treasury) of South Indian Bank. South Indian Bank also has tie-ups with [banks](#) and exchange houses in the USA, Europe, and Asia.

213. Indian-origin man elected to Singapore parliament

An Indian-origin man from Singapore's ruling People's Action Party (PAP) was elected member of the [parliament](#) following his victory in the by-[election](#) held at suburban Bukit Batok constituency.

Murali Pillai garnered 61.21 per cent of the votes, while [Singapore](#) Democratic Party's Chee Soon Juan got 38.79 per cent of votes.

The Elections Department said a total of 24,192 votes were cast, including 622 rejected votes, which made up 94.03 per cent of the 25,727 registered electors.

Chee, a vociferous opposition leader, had challenged the ruling party in the one-on-one contest.

President Tony Tan Keng Yam had issued the writ of election on April 20.

The Bukit Batok single seat was vacated when previous PAP MP David Ong resigned in March, following an alleged extramarital affair with a PAP activist.

PAP, led by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, has absolute majority in the house.

214. Women run 14% of Indian businesses

Richa Dubey's profession - running an online retail business that connects artisans with consumers - may not appear unusual for a modern Indian woman, but newly-released data indicate just how much women lag men. No more than 14 percent of business establishments in India are run by female entrepreneurs, according to the Sixth Economic Census by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO). There are 58.5 million businesses in India, of which 8.05 million are managed by women, employing over 13.48 million people. These enterprises range from corner shops to venture-funded startups. India ranked 29th of 31 countries in the 2015 Global Women Entrepreneurs Leader report by ACG Inc, a consultancy, above only Pakistan and Bangladesh. With 17 points of a possible 100, India fared worse than countries such as Nigeria, Uganda and Ghana. The report observed that in India and other low-ranked countries, unequal inheritance rights for women and work restrictions limited their access to startup capital and collateral. Indeed, Dubey's business is bootstrapped, or self-financed. It's been five years since Dubey launched 22.2 Accessories, which works with around 30 rural artisans and their families, selling the accessories they make for women. A native of Uttar Pradesh,

Dubey, 36, runs her business from Bengaluru, a city that has developed a startup ecosystem that offers women substantial independence to give their ideas wing. The South is particularly hospitable for female entrepreneurs, the data reveal. As many as 13.5 percent of female-run establishments (1.08 million) are based in Tamil Nadu, more than any other state, followed by Kerala (0.91 million) and Andhra Pradesh (0.56 million). I cannot imagine myself being an entrepreneur in UP, said Dubey of her home state. It is much easier to be a woman entrepreneur in southern India compared to the Hindi heartland. Her argument is buttressed by the favourable sex ratio in these states, indicating a correlation with higher female entrepreneurship. Most companies run by women are small-scale; 79 percent are self-financed. Dubey's company, with a team of six - managing administration and logistics - falls under the 83.19 percent of establishments that have at least one hired worker, indicating that most businesses run by women are small-scale. As many as 79 percent of enterprises run by women are self-financed; only 4.4 percent have borrowed money from a financial institution or received assistance from the government. Recently, YES Bank took a \$50 million (Rs.325 crore) loan from the International Finance Corporation, to exclusively finance about 100,000 female-owned businesses. Sixty percent of female entrepreneurs are from disadvantaged communities. As many as 4.81 million establishments are led by women (60 percent) from scheduled castes (SCs), scheduled tribes (STs) or other backward castes (OBCs), indicating they work because they must.

215. Lok Sabha Passes Finance Bill 2016

As per the reports received by us Finance bill 2016 is passed by Lok Sabha. Finance bill 2016 was having 128 clauses proposing amendment to Income Tax Act, 1961. [Finance bill 2016 was presented in Lok Sabha by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on 29th February 2016.](#) Bill passed by Lok Sabha has 47 Amendments in 128 clauses which is almost 36.70 %, which means govt has amended 36.70% of clauses presented by it in Lok Sabha on 29.02.2016 while getting the same passed in Lok Sabha on 05.05.2016. The bill will now go to Rajya Sabha for approval and after Rajya Sabha approves it the same will be sent to Honourable President for his Assent, on receipt of assent the same will become and act applicable from the date of its notification.

216. Projects worth Rs. 2446 Crore approved under Namami Gange Programme

Giving a major fillip to Namami Gange programme the Empowered Steering Committee (ESC) of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) has approved projects for Development of Ghats and crematoria in the stretch from Haridwar to Uttarakhand Border in Uttarakhand, Garhmukteshwar in UP, Buxar, Hajipur and Sonapur of Bihar, Sahibganj, Rajmahal and Kanchaiya Ghat of Jharkhand and Delhi and afforestation along the banks of river Ganga. The total estimated cost of the projects is Rs. 2446 crore. These projects have been carved to improve the facilities of Ghats and crematoria for reduction of pollution load into river Ganga. All the projects will be implemented under centrally sponsored scheme of Namami Gange and Government of India would bear 100% costs.

ESC also appraised the Detailed Project Report on Forestry Intervention in River Ganga. The project will focus on augmenting water flow together with abating the pollutants loads of river Ganga through appropriate forestry intervention along the banks of river Ganga. The major project components are implementation of Forestry Interventions in Five States at the banks of River Ganga; strengthening Knowledge Management and National Capacity for Forestry Interventions and conservation of Rivers and scaling up and replication of successful models of Forestry interventions and Riverscape. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 2294 crore for the duration of five years.

Appraisals of all the recommended projects was carried out by Third Party Appraisal committee constituted by Consortium of IITs and for Forestry Interventions of Ganga by the committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Director General, Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The ESC is chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and has members from the Ministries of Environment and Forests, Finance, Urban Development and Power and State Governments of the five Ganga Basin States.

It may be recalled that Union Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Sushri Uma Bharti has been reviewing the progress of Namami Gange programme on daily basis to ensure that the project moves on the mission mode as envisaged. A new Mission Director has also been appointed in NMCG recently. The post was lying vacant for the past few months.

217. Australian university to provide medical technology to India

Australian state of Victoria on Saturday announced an agreement with India in the area of medical technology to address major health challenges in India. During the government-led Neuroscience Victoria trade mission to India this week, Swinburne University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to partner with major Indian healthcare providers.

Neuroscience leaders from Swinburne signed the agreement with Medanta, one of India's largest private hospitals, on a project to improve the diagnosis of epilepsy across India.

The project will develop products and technologies that can be used to help diagnose epilepsy in villages and remote communities across the sprawling nation, using technology to help local health workers make early diagnosis and refer patients quickly for treatment in the urban centres.

218. Gangavathi to get Asia's first Rice Technology Park

The [KARNATAKA](#) State government has decided to go ahead with the establishment of Asia's first Rice Technology Park at Gangavathi in Koppal district and a Maize Technology Park at Ranebennur in Haveri district on the public-private participation model as a one-stop solution to all problems of rice and maize growers. These parks would pave the way for opening new avenues for rice and maize growers to add value to their produce and get better returns and also enhance quality of the produce. While the rice park is being established at Navali-Karatagi villages on the outskirts of Gangavathi, the maize park is to be come up in the APMC market yard at Ranebennur. Sources told that the establishment of the Rice Technology Park will convert Gangavathi into a major agri business centre in the State and help rice growers in the region to end their dependence on mills in neighbouring States for processing paddy. Although the production of paddy has more than doubled in the recent years, the processing facility has not grown to match it. According to an estimate, more than 50 per cent of the paddy produced in the region is sent elsewhere for processing. To help paddy cultivators the establishment of the Rice Technology Park will help paddy cultivators in the Tungabhadra Command Area in Ballari, Raichur and Koppal districts and also in the command areas of the Upper Krishna Project in Shahpur and Surpur taluks in Yadgir district and Vijayapura and Bagalkot districts. In the Tungabhadra Project region, the area under irrigation is 9 lakh acres and 95 per cent of it is under paddy cultivation. The farmers in the command area grow two crops of paddy in a year. The area under paddy is likely to increase with additional allotment of water in the Krishna by the Krishna River Water Disputes Tribunal. The area under irrigation in the Krishna Basin is likely to go up by another 4.61 lakh hectares. As a value addition, the technology park would have facilities for rice flour, rice rava, rice bran oil, noodles, rice-based alcohol, animal and poultry feed and paddy husk used for power generation and brick-making. With maize being the second major crop cultivated in the State with an annual production of around 4 million tonnes, there was an urgent need to strengthen maize processing units to add value to the produce and get more returns to farmers. Maize is predominantly grown in Haveri, Davangere, Ballari, Dharwad, Belagavi, Bagalkot and Chikkaballapur districts. The proposed park will at Ranebennur will have a storage capacity of 32,000 tonnes. The sources said that the maize technology park would be established at a cost of Rs. 111 crore.

219. Haryana to enact Act to accord statutory status to Sports Council

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij today said that the state government would enact State Sports Council Act to accord statutory status to the Council and further promote sports activities in the state.

Addressing the media persons in Meet the Press programme organised at Chandigarh Press Club here, Mr Vij said after the enactment of the Act, there would be a sports body at state, district and sub-division level which would coordinate and maintain all affairs of sports in the state.

220. Malaysia, Indonesia and Philippines to conduct joint water patrols to curb kidnappings

Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines will begin conducting joint coordinated maritime patrols in a crucial economic waterway after kidnappings by suspected Abu Sayyaf militants. High-ranking diplomatic and military officials from the three nations reached an agreement today in the Indonesian city of Yogyakarta. The three nations share maritime borders along the Sulu and Celebes seas, through which 55 million tons of goods and over 18 million people pass each year. The triumvirate will set up a hotline to better communicate during emergency situations, provide immediate assistance to the safety of people and ships in distress, and intensify information and intelligence sharing. The agreement comes just days after the southern Philippine-based Abu Sayyaf militant group released 10 Indonesian sailors

held captive since March.

221. Canada Wildfires Continue As State of Emergency Declared

As wildfires continue to rage in Alberta, Canada, the provincial government has declared a state of emergency as two more communities prepared to evacuate overnight Wednesday.

Just after midnight, some of the 80,000 residents who fled Fort McMurray to Anzac after a mandatory evacuation notice, were told they would have to move again urgently.

"Buses are being assembled," local authorities said in a statement, adding they were "going door-to-door," and urging people to "remain calm." Six reception centers are currently operating within the province, the Government of Alberta said at a news conference.

More than 250 firefighters, helicopters and air tankers are currently fighting the fires which have extended over more than 10,000 hectares, the Government of Alberta said and Premier Rachel Notley announced that a "Memorandum of Understanding" has been signed with the Canadian Forces for air support to assist with transportation as needed.

222. India rated 9th in FDI Confidence Index

India has secured ninth position in the 2016 Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index, a global management consulting firm today said, underlining that the country is "finally" embarking on a growth path that will see it "unlock its full potential". India jumped two places to rank number 9 in this years AT Kearney Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Confidence Index. "There is a growing belief among global business leaders that India is finally embarking on a growth path that will see it unlock its full potential," said Vikas Kaushal, Managing Director and Country Head India at AT Kearney. "Our confidence stems from the fact that the government has kick-started reforms and has undertaken various measures to boost domestic demand, employment and macroeconomic stability in the country," said Kaushal. "The results are starting to show. Despite the continued uncertainty in the global economic environment, India has seen its growth rate pick up pace," he said. "India has emerged as the fastest growing economy in the world, surpassing China as well as Brazil, Russia and South Africa, the other members of BRICS ? an acronym of five major fast-growing emerging economies," he added. The Index of a London-based consulting firm is a forward-looking analysis of how political, economic, and regulatory changes will likely affect FDI inflows into countries in the coming years. The Index is constructed using primary data from a proprietary survey administered to senior executives of the worlds leading corporations. In this years survey, 32 per cent of the respondents said they were more optimistic about Indias economic outlook over the next three years, compared to a year ago. The results of the Index also show that domestic market size, cost of labour, regulatory transparency and lack of corruption are among the top factors that executives look at when making decisions about investing in a country. The US and China hold top two positions for fourth straight year. Canada ranked at third position. Germany secured fourth position. The UK, Japan, Australia and France secured the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth position respectively. Singapore secured the tenth position.

223. Rohit Sharma unveils India's first sports expo

Cricketer Rohit Sharma on Thursday inaugurated the Pune International Sports Expo at the Agriculture College Ground. Shooter Gagan Narang was also present on the ceremony. It is the first sports expo being held in the country organised by city-based Steps Sports Entertainment Private Limited and will be open for public till May 8. It is organised to showcase various products and modern technologies for fitness and sports by Indian as well as multinational brands. Various events are slated on each day to celebrate the accomplishments of Indian sportsmen. It started with a talk show where Narang and cricketer Sharma shared their experiences and journey so far. The events will also see Zaheer Khan, Dhanraj Pillai, Sunil Chettri, Prarthana Thombe and Milkha Singh on the dais in the coming days. A special event of Bokwa Sessions has been organised by fitness expert Paul Mavi, and will have six sessions of Bokwa every day throughout the expo.

224. Railways launch Bharat Darshan Tourist train for pilgrims

Railways has launched the Bharat Darshan Tourist train for pilgrims to visit Shirdi, Tirupati, Jagannath Puri, Gangasagar, Baidyanath Dham and Jyotirlingams among others.

Comprising 10 coaches, the train begins the East Darshan today from Chandigarh to cover Jagannath Puri, Gangasagar, Baidyanath Dham, Gaya, Banaras and Ayodhya.

AIR Correspondent reports that the bookings are being done by IRCTC and a budget-friendly package for pilgrims has been devised. According to the package, a person has to pay 830 rupees per day to selected destinations in the east or south of the country or packages that cover major religious sites.

The package includes train journey, road transportation, accommodation, sightseeing at tourist locations and onboard and off-board meals. Bharat Darshan will also cover 7 Jyotirlinga package beginning on May 23 from Chandigarh.

The train also offers Dakshin Darshan with Shirdi tour package which starts on June 27 from Chandigarh through Delhi Cantt covering Shirdi, Tirupati, Kanchipuram, Rameshwaram, Madurai, Kanyakumari, Mysore and Bangalore.

225. Gujarat govt accords minority status to Jain community

Gujarat Government has accorded minority status to the Jain community. Transport Minister and BJP state unit chief Vijay Rupani said in Ahmedabad that a Government Resolution to this effect was issued on Saturday.

Mr Rupani who himself is a Jain, said that Chief Minister Anandiben Patel on Saturday decided to accord the minority status to the Jain community.

He said that the decision has nothing to do with reservations and the new status will benefit the poor among the Jain community as they can avail of various scholarships, government welfare schemes. Jain institutions will get special status like the one given to Christian and Muslim institutions, the Minister said.

The previous UPA Government at the Centre had conferred the minority status on the community at the national level in January 2014.

The decision comes within a week of the state Government awarding 10 per cent reservation to the economically backward class among the upper castes in the face of Patel (Patidar) community's agitation for OBC quota.

226. Honda to recall 20 million more Takata airbags

Honda Motor will recall an additional 20 million Takata-made airbags globally, a newspaper said Sunday, in a widening scandal that has led to the biggest auto recall in US history. Tokyo-based auto parts giant Takata is struggling to deal with a defect that can send metal and plastic shrapnel from the inflator canister hurtling toward drivers and passengers when an airbag is deployed. The defect has been blamed for grisly injuries that have in some cases proved fatal. Honda, along with other automakers, has already been ordered by US authorities to recall all units that do not contain a desiccant that keeps explosives in airbags from deteriorating.

227. Of shrinking wetlands & looming environmental disaster in Kashmir

The sprawling wetlands in Kashmir have long served as nature's first line of defence against an outbreak of violent floods the valley is so prone to. But the marshes are shrinking fast, increasing fears of a looming disaster similar to what it witnessed in 2014. The decline has also robbed millions of Central Asian, Chinese and European winged visitors of their winter homes and habitat, posing an existential threat to the Valleys fragile ecosystem. Shalbugh, on the border of Srinagar and Ganderbal districts, was 250 acres. But land sharks have already grabbed 12. Haigam in north Kashmir's Sopore was over 1,812 acres and nearly 252 have been usurped. In Pampore, towards the south of the valley, four small wetlands had a total area of over 178 acres. But official records show only 150 have remained. Similarly, Malgam wetland in north Kashmir's Bandipore district was once spread over 1,125 acres. But today it is only 775 acres now. Thirty percent of the once vast marsh has been filled. And this famed Hokarsar wetland was nearly 14 sq km. And today, it has shrunk to just 5-6 sq km only. According to the records, the depth of its waters has also substantially reduced from 12-14 feet to only a few inches now. High pollution levels and blatant encroachments have wreaked havoc with its natural vegetation, leaving thousands of farmers in the lurch. The growth of unwanted weeds, accumulation of silt, human and solid waste has drastically affected the growth of fish, water nuts and vegetables like lotus stems, officials said.

228. Mother's Day 2016

Mothers Day is observed on May 8, 2016 and this day is dedicated to all mothers and mother figures who dedicate their lives behind their family, children and society. Mothers are most important person in our life and this day appreciates a mom's hard efforts. This day is celebrated with lot of zeal and enthusiasm all over the world; and further shower love on their mothers. Mothers Day celebration goes back to the ancient era of Greek and Romans where in people used to celebrate Mothering Sunday with lot of zeal and fervor. Julia Ward Howe and Anna Jarvis were the pioneering women who took lot of hard efforts to make this event a grand success.

229. Today in History - May 08

- 1096 - Peter the Hermit and his army reached Hungary. They passed through without incident.
- 1450 - Jack Cade's Rebellion-Kentishmen revolted against King Henry VI.
- 1541 - Hernando de Soto reached the Mississippi River. He called it Rio de Espiritu Santo.
- 1794 - Antoine Lavoisier was executed by guillotine. He was the French chemist that discovered oxygen.
- 1794 - The United States Post Office was established.
- 1846 - The first major battle of the Mexican War was fought. The battle occurred in Palo Alto, [TX](#).
- 1847 - The rubber tire was patented by Robert W. Thompson.
- 1879 - George Selden applied for the first automobile patent.
- 1886 - Pharmacist Dr. John Styth Pemberton invented what would later be called "[Coca-Cola](#)."
- 1904 - [U.S.](#) Marines landed in Tangier to protect the Belgian legation.
- 1914 - The U.S. Congress passed a Joint Resolution that designated the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.
- 1915 - H.P. Whitney's Regret became the first filly to win the Kentucky Derby.
- 1919 - The first transatlantic flight took-off by a navy seaplane.
- 1921 - Sweden abolished capital punishment.
- 1933 - Gandhi began a hunger strike to protest British oppression in India.
- 1939 - Clay Puett's electric starting gate was used for the first time.
- 1943 - The Germans suppressed a revolt by Polish Jews and destroyed the Warsaw Ghetto.
- 1945 - [U.S. President Harry Truman](#) announced that World War II had ended in Europe.
- 1954 - Parry O'Brien became the first to toss a shot put over 60 feet. O'Brien achieved a distance of 60 feet 5 1/4 inches.
- 1956 - Alfred E. Neuman appeared on the cover of "Mad Magazine" for the first time.
- 1958 - [U.S. President Eisenhower](#) ordered the National Guard out of Little Rock as Ernest Green became the first black to graduate from an Arkansas public school.
- 1959 - Mike and Marian Ilitch founded "Little Caesars Pizza Treat".

- 1960 - Diplomatic relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union resumed.
- 1961 - New Yorkers selected a new name for their new [National League](#) baseball franchise. They chose the [Mets](#).
- 1970 - Construction workers broke up an anti-war protest on New York City's Wall Street.
- 1973 - Militant American Indians who had held the South Dakota hamlet of Wounded Knee for 10 weeks surrendered.
- 1984 - The Soviet Union announced that they would not participate in the 1984 Summer Olympics Games in Los Angeles.
- 1984 - Joanie (Erin Moran) and Chachi (Scott Baio) got married on ABC-TV's "Happy Days."
- 1985 - "New Coke" was released to the public on the 99th anniversary of Coca-Cola.
- 1986 - Reporters were told that 84,000 people had been evacuated from areas near the Chernobyl nuclear plant in Soviet Ukraine.
- 1997 - Larry King received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.
- 1998 - A pipe burst leaving a million residents without water in Malaysia's capital area. This added to four days of shortages that 2 million already faced.
- 1999 - The first female cadet graduated from The Citadel military college.

230. **Shri Kalraj Mishra Inaugurates Khadi Spinning and Weaving Centre in Srinagar**

The Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Shri Kalraj Mishra inaugurated the Harmukh Khadi Gram Udyog Sansthan, a spinning and weaving centre and marketing plaza for khadi goods at a function in Srinagar today.

The Minister also distributed 25 new model charkhas among local artisans at the function, which was organised Khadi and Village Industries Board Srinagar at 90 Feet Road, Soura. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Mishra said that the charkha is a symbol of resistance and can help maximum number of unemployed youth and women in far flung areas to attain economic independence.

The Minister said that the Centre is ready to provide all sorts of assistance to the state of Jammu and Kashmir in order to remove regional imbalances and urged the state to come forward and seek maximum help from New Delhi. He said that the Centre is especially interested in the progress of Jammu and Kashmir state in view of the disturbed state of affairs here.

Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Industries and Commerce, Shri Chander Parkash Ganga was also present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, he thanked the Union Minister for the ministries supportive attitude and helping approach towards JK and also requested the central ministry to increase the targets for the state so that it benefits the local artisans.

231. **Manmadurai-Rameswaram rail track to become 1st green corridor**

Stepping up efforts to make rail tracks discharge free zones, Indian Railway will convert into green corridor and zero toilet discharge section the nearly 114 km route between Rameswaram and Manmadurai in Tamil Nadu by the end of this month.

"Currently the trial is going on the route to ensure that the section becomes the first discharge free zone in railways. It will be formally declared as green corridor in the last week of May," said a senior Railway Ministry official involved in the bio-toilet project.

A zero toilet discharge section envisages all trains passing on that particular route would have bio-toilets which eliminate open discharge of waste on the tracks.

There are about 14 stations between Rameswaram and Manmadurai and about 16 passenger trains use the track in a day.

All coaches of trains passing through the Manmadurai and Rameswaram section are now equipped with bio-toilets so there will be no waste discharge on the track, said the official.

Bio-toilets eliminate open discharge of waste on the track as the waste is digested by specially developed bacteria and only small amount of clean water is discharged in the process.

In the second phase, "Kanalus-Dwarka-Okha and Porbunder-Wansjalya section in Gujarat have been identified to be made zero toilet discharge sections.

"Our aim is to make tracks free from discharge of waste from toilets by installing environment-friendly zero discharge toilet system in the coaches and we will do it in phases," he said.

According to the plan, Jammu-Katra route will also be made a zero-discharge section.

Railways have installed more than 20,000 bio-toilets in trains till now and has set a target to fit 17,000 more this fiscal.

It costs about Rs 3.5 lakh to install four Zero Discharge Toilet Systems in a coach.

232. CRPF to send over 560 women for anti-Naxal ops for the 1st time

Breaking yet another proverbial glass ceiling, countrys largest paramilitary force CRPF is set to deploy over 560 women commandos for undertaking anti-Naxal operations in select Left Wing Extremism-affected states. The ambitious plan to deploy such a large number of women personnel in most challenging combat theatres in the countrys internal security domain got moving with a batch of 567 women passing out from the forces training centre in Rajasthan's Ajmer last week. CRPF Director General K Durga Prasad told PTI that the full batch will now be deployed in phases in LWE areas in the company formation style, which means about 100 personnel at one time. Recently, border-guarding force Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) had declared that it will post its women personnel in full combat role in its units along the Sino-Indian border. The latest batch of Central Reserve Police women personnel have been trained for 44 weeks in jungle warfare, unarmed combat, smart weapons firing and other drills after which they got commissioned in the 232nd battalion of the force. This is the fourth mahila battalion of CRPF. A CRPF battalion has about 1,000 personnel. Officials had earlier said the induction of these women squads will be made in West Bengal and Jharkhand. The force had initiated a plan in this regard last year when two small teams of these women personnel were sent for familiarisation exercises and based in CRPF camps in the worst-affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh and some sensitive LWE hit areas of Jharkhand.

233. Why direct taxes are important than indirect taxes?

The structure and characteristic of a tax system can be understood from the share of direct taxes in total tax revenue. Of the two types of taxes, which one should have the highest contribution? Before examining the question, we should have the basic understanding about both direct and indirect taxes. Direct taxes are taxes on income, property, capital gains etc. On the other hand, indirect taxes are taxes on goods and services. The main direct taxes are corporate income tax, personal income tax and capital gains tax, whereas the main indirect taxes are excise duties, customs duties, service taxes and sales tax (state). In a country, if most of the tax revenues are coming from direct taxes, it means that the rich who have the ability to pay taxes have contributed more. It is the rich out of their profit (corporate) and income (personal income tax) that gives more tax revenue here. Here, as bulk of the tax revenue comes from the rich without injuring the poor, the tax system is progressive (taxes the rich more). There is a basic principle in economics called ability to pay taxation. The principle instructs that tax revenue should be collected from those who have the ability to pay it. This principle indicate equity in the tax system. In the case of a direct tax dominated tax system, there is equity in the sense that the tax contribution comes from those who have the ability to pay (rich). Now, in the case of indirect taxes, the rich and poor should pay equal tax rate while they purchase a commodity. Here, indirect taxes dont consider the income of the consumer. Often people say that indirect taxes are regressive. The meaning is that it taxes too much the poor (same

rate as on rich though the poor have low income) compared to the poor. Hence, a tax system where bulk of the tax revenue is coming from indirect tax is regressive. On the other hand, a tax system where direct taxes contribute more to the tax revenue is progressive, equitable and hence is ideal. In India, the indirect taxes have contributed to nearly 80% of the tax revenues in early 1990s. Now, since 2007, direct taxes are contributing around 54% of the central governments tax revenue. This indicate that the Indian tax system is getting more and more progressive.

234. Single emergency number 112 to be operational throughout India from Jan 1

The single emergency number 112 will be operational throughout India from January 1 to help people reach immediate services of police, ambulance and fire department.

Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has approved the provision of a single number for various emergency services that would be similar to the '911' all-in-one emergency service in the United States. The service will also be accessible even through those SIMs and landlines whose outgoing call facility has been stopped or temporarily suspended.

A person in distress will need to call only 112, which will direct the call to concerned departments immediately for help. All existing emergency numbers will be phased out within a year of rolling out 112, depending upon the awareness about this new facility.

235. RBI to make list of wilful defaulters public, says Raghuram Rajan

Reserve Bank Governor Raghuram Rajan has said that RBI is working on a new system to make public the list of wilful defaulters.

Delivering a lecture in New Delhi last night, he said, the central bank, however, is in favour of protecting privacy in cases where there is no wrongdoing. He said, a blanket edict that everybody's name should be made public on the website might not be desirable.

Dr Rajan said, RBI is also creating a structure for an out of court settlement of the disputes relating to bad debts. He said, the central bank is fine tuning this mechanism to ensure that it works. Dr Rajan said, if the banking system fails to deal with the problem of bad debt now, it will explode.

Complimenting the government for passing Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Bill, he said, till recently Indian banks did not have enough powers to persuade promoters of companies to pay loans. He said, India is proceeding with the financial reforms in a steady manner.

RBI Governor also warned against excessive banking regulation saying it may lead to activities shifting to shadow financial system. He said slowdown in branch expansion by foreign banks in India could be due to regulation among other reasons.

Dr Rajan said the central bank knows how to regulate banks but it does not know how to regulate the shadow financial system. Shadow banking system typically refers to the financial intermediaries involved in facilitating the creation of credit across the global financial system, but whose members are not subject to regulatory oversight.

236. Father-son put together 'dental' museum in Vadodara

A dentist father-son duo opened a museum exhibiting more than a thousand artifacts, including toothbrushes made of ivory. Dr Yogesh Chandarana and his son Dr Pranav Chandarana, who have put together the museum, said it was the first dental museum in the country. Inside, there is a vast array of toothbrushes, manual, electric, straight, angled, curved, made from various materials including ivory and even bones, some of them dating back centuries. Dr Chandaran said it took them five years to design and create the museum, spread over 1,200 sq feet in Haribhakti society on the Old Padra road in the city. Apart from toothbrushes, the museum also has stamps, postcards and rare literature about the dentistry, currency featuring renowned dentists or paying tribute to the dentistry, postcards from the British India announcing the visit of the country's only female dentist to check up the women in 'purdah' (veil). It also displays mythological stories on teeth from across the world on teeth. "The purpose behind creating this museum was to create awareness about oral health," said Dr Chandarana. "After opening a dental clinic in the city in 1975, I had started collecting dental stamps from various parts of country and abroad," he said. This hobby then led to collection of other

dentistry-related artifacts during his visits to various countries. "We have made this museum interactive and easy to understand so that patients can relax while waiting at the clinic," said Dr Pranav Chandarana.

237. Odisha becomes Champions in National cricket tournament for blind 2016 at Hyderabad

Odisha becomes Champions in National cricket tournament for blind 2016 at Hyderabad. Today due to heavy rain only 5 overs final match was possible to play. Gujarat won the toss and elected to bat 1st. In stipulated 5 overs Gujarat scored 53/7wkts and set the target of 54 runs in 5 overs. Chasing the target Odisha scored 54 runs in the last ball of the match. For Odisha Sukhram Majhi scored 34 runs and declared man of the final. Pankaj Bhue declared Man of the series in B2 Category. In bowling Lalprasad Soren took 2wkts, Lingraj Routra and Kalia Pradhan took 1 wicket each. In the history of blind cricket this is the 1st time for Odisha to be the champions.

238. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in Gujarat to be Launched on 15 May

After the official launch in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh on May 1 by PM Narendra Modi, [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana](#) is all set to be launched in the state of Gujarat. The PMUY free LPG connection scheme will be launched by BJP chief Amit Shah and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on 15th May in Gujarat. The launch event of the scheme will take place in tribal-dominated Dahod district in central Gujarat. The scheme is aimed to provide free LPG connections to 5 crore BPL households in the country. The 8000 crore scheme will be partly funded by the money saved in LPG subsidies through PM Modis Give-it-Up campaign. IN Gujarat alone, 4.40 Lakh people have chosen to give up the LPG subsidy after the appeal made by PM Narendra Modi. Dahod district has the lowest percentage of LPG connections across the state, hence it has been selected for the launch ceremony of the Ujjwala Yojana. Under the PMUY LPG scheme, the central government will provide a financial support of Rs. 1600/- for each LPG connection to BPL household. The cooking gas will not only help reduce the cost of cooking but also help protect health of women and children.

239. Today in History - May 9

- 1429 - Joan of Arc defeated the besieging English at Orleans.
- 1502 - Christopher Columbus left Spain for his final trip to the Western Hemisphere.
- 1671 - Thomas "Captain" Blood stole the crown jewels from the Tower of London.
- 1754 - The first newspaper cartoon in America showed a divided snake "Join or die" in "The Pennsylvania Gazette."
- 1785 - Joseph Bramah patented the beer-pump handle.
- 1825 - The Chatham Theatre opened in New York City. It was the first gas-lit theater in America.
- 1901 - In Australia, the Duke of Cornwall and York declared the First Commonwealth Parliament open.
- 1904 - The Great Western Railway Number 3440 City of Truro became the first railway locomotive to exceed 100 miles per hour.
- 1915 - German and French forces fought the Battle of Artois.
- 1926 - Americans Richard Byrd and Floyd Bennett became the first men to fly an airplane over the North Pole.
- 1930 - A starting gate was used to start a Triple Crown race for the first time.
- 1936 - Fascist Italy took Addis Abba and annexed Ethiopia.
- 1936 - The first sheet of postage stamps of more than one variety went on sale in New York City.
- 1940 - Vivien Leigh debuted in America on stage in "Romeo and Juliet" with Lawrence Olivier.

1941 - The German submarine U-110 was captured at sea by Britain's Royal navy.

1945 - U.S. officials announced that the midnight entertainment curfew was being lifted immediately.

1946 - King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy abdicated and was replaced by Umberto.

1955 - West Germany joined NATO.

1958 - Richard Burton made his network television debut in the presentation of "Wuthering Heights" on CBS-TV.

1960 - The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved for sale an oral birth-control pill for the first time.

1961 - Jim Gentile (Baltimore Orioles) set a major league baseball record when he hit a grand slam home run in two consecutive innings. The game was against the Minnesota Twins.

1962 - A laser beam was successfully bounced off Moon for the first time.

1974 - The House Judiciary Committee began formal hearings on the Nixon impeachment.

1978 - The bullet-riddled body of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro was found in an automobile in the center of Rome. The Red Brigades had abducted him.

1980 - A Liberian freighter hit the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay in Florida. 35 motorists were killed and a 1,400-foot section of the bridge collapsed.

1987 - Tom Cruise and Mimi Rogers were married.

1994 - Nelson Mandela was chosen to be South Africa's first black president.

1996 - In video testimony to a courtroom in Little Rock, AR, [U.S. President Clinton](#) insisted that he had nothing to do with a \$300,000 loan in the criminal case against his former Whitewater partners.

2002 - In Bethlehem, West Bank, a deal was reached that would end the 38-day standoff at the Church of the Nativity. Thirteen suspected militants were to be deported to several different countries. The standoff had begun on April 2, 2002.

2002 - In Kaspiisk, Russia, 39 people were killed and at least 130 were injured when a remote-controlled bomb exploded during a holiday parade.

2002 - In Bahrain, people were allowed to vote for representatives for the first time in nearly 30 years. Women were allowed to vote for the first time in the country's history.

240. Telangana govt to set up Rs 2.21 cr monkey rescue, rehab centre

In a bid to tackle simian menace, Telangana government on Saturday issued orders for setting up a 'Monkey Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre' in Nirmal area of Adilabad district with an investment of Rs 2.21 crore. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests had earlier in a report said there was serious man-animal conflict in both rural and urban areas due to increased pressure on forest habitats, coupled with increased population of monkeys. "The problem is more severe in areas adjoining the forest, where the burgeoning human population resulting into generation of more waste and agricultural lands with crops like millets, cereals, groundnuts, etc. are attracting monkeys from adjoining forest areas and causing damage to agriculture crops and heavy loss to farmers", the Forest Official had said. The religious beliefs and value attached to monkeys also desist villagers either from killing or from other measures. All these factors have contributed to the increasing conflict between the monkeys and the human beings, the official said. "After careful examination of the proposal of Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF), Telangana State government hereby

order establishment of Monkey Rescue Rehabilitation Centre at Chincholi near Nirmal in Adilabad district, as pilot project, at a cost of Rs. 221.10 lakhs," the government order said.

241. Celebrating 155th birth anniversary: Five day Tagore Festival in Egypt

The Indian embassy in Cairo and the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture are hosting a Tagore Festival here from May 8-12 to mark the 155th birth anniversary of poet laureate Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, is not unknown to Egypt. He visited Egypt as an adolescent in 1878 and later as a famous poet-philosopher in 1926 when he met King Fouad and interacted with scholars in Alexandria and Cairo. His friendship with Egyptian poet Ahmed Shawqy is well known and he wrote a moving eulogy on his friends death in 1932. Tagore was impressed by the strong literary trends and found great resonance in the intellectual movement in Egypt. He also wrote about the relationship between the Nile river and the Egyptian civilization. The Egyptian Caricature Society has curated an excellent collection of portraits from across the globe on Tagore. These will be exhibited during a painting exhibition, which will be inaugurated on May 8 and will remain open for the entire duration of the festival. Egyptian scholars have translated many of Tagores works into Arabic and have also written several books on Tagore. These books are available at the National Library of Egypt, which is collaborating with the Indian embassy in organising an exhibition of all such books to be inaugurated on May 9.

242. India ranks 9th in crony-capitalism, accounts for 3.4% of GDP: Study

India is ranked at ninth position in crony-capitalism with crony sector wealth accounting for 3.4% of the gross domestic product (GDP), according to a new study by The Economist. In India, the non-crony sector wealth amounts to 8.3% of the GDP, as per the latest crony-capitalism index. In 2014 ranking also, India stood at the ninth place. Using data from a list of the worlds billionaires and their worth published by Forbes, each individual is labelled as crony or not based on the source of their wealth. Germany is cleanest, where just a sliver of the countrys billionaires derives their wealth from crony sectors. Russia fares worst in the index, wealth from the countrys crony sectors amounts to 18% of its GDP, it said. Russia tops the list followed by Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. Thanks to tumbling energy and commodity prices politically connected tycoons have been feeling the squeeze in recent years, the study said. Among the 22 economies in the index, crony wealth has fallen by \$116 billion since 2014. But as things stand, if commodity prices rebound, crony capitalists wealth is sure to rise again, it added. The past 20 years have been a golden age for crony capitalists tycoons active in industries where chumminess with government is part of the game. Their combined fortunes have dropped 16% since 2014, according to The Economist updated crony-capitalism index. One reason is the commodity crash. Another is a backlash from the middle class, it said. Worldwide, the worth of billionaires in crony industries soared by 385% between 2004 and 2014 to \$2 trillion, it added.

243. Saraswat Bank donates Rs 1 cr relief for drought in Maharashtra

Saraswat Bank, country's largest urban co-operative bank which recently crossed a total business of Rs 50,000 crore, has announced donation of Rs 1 crore towards [drought relief](#) in Maharashtra. Caused by the two deficient years of the monsoon rainfalls, the drought has been a major problem resulting into shortage of water availability across the country including Maharashtra. Taking a serious note of the drought situation, therefore, the bank donated Rs 50,00,000 each to the Chief Minister's Drought Relief Fund, Maharashtra and to the NAAM Foundation, an NGO started by actors Nana Patekar and Makarand Anaspure, specifically aimed at alleviating the impact of drought.

Gautam E Thakur, Vice Chairman of the bank handed over the cheque of Rs 50,00,000 to Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis. Also, Kishore Rangnekar Director handed over another cheque of Rs 50,00,000 to Nana Patekar, Founder, NAAM Foundation.

244. NASA unveils first global topographic model of Mercury

The first global digitalelevation model of Mercury, showing in stunning detail the topography across the entire innermost planet of our solarsystem, has been unveiled by NASA's MESSENGER mission.

The model shows a variety of topographic features including the highest and lowest points on the planet.

The highest elevation on Mercury is at 4.48 kilometres above Mercury's average elevation, located just south of the equator in some of planet's oldest terrain.

The lowest elevation, at 5.38 kilometres below Mercury's average, is found on the floor of Rachmaninoff basin, an intriguing double-ring impact basin suspected to host some of the most recent volcanic deposits on the planet.

The model was created using more than 100,000 images acquired by the MESSENGER (MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry, and Ranging) mission - a NASA robotic spacecraft that orbited the planet Mercury between 2011 and 2015.

Images were acquired with a large range of viewing geometries and illumination conditions, which enabled the topography across Mercury's surface to be determined.

With this 15th and last major data release, the MESSENGER mission has shared more than 10 terabytes of Mercury science data, including nearly 300,000 images, millions of spectra, and numerous map products, along with interactive tools that allow the public to explore those data, NASA said.

"The wealth of these data, greatly enhanced by the extension of MESSENGER's primary one-year mission to more than four years, has already enabled and will continue to enable exciting scientific discoveries about Mercury for decades to come," said Susan Ensor, software engineer at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), in US.

The new global model complements an older product released by MESSENGER, the topography map derived from earlier measurements by the Mercury Laser Altimeter (MLA).

Due to the spacecraft's highly eccentric orbit, the MLA was able to make primary measurements only in Mercury's northern hemisphere and near-equatorial region, leaving the topography of most of the southern hemisphere largely unknown, until now.

The new map provides an unprecedented view of the region near Mercury's north pole.

"MESSENGER had previously discovered that past volcanic activity buried this portion of the planet beneath extensive lavas, more than a mile deep in some areas and covering a vast area equivalent to approximately 60 per cent of the continental US," said APL's Nancy Chabot, the Instrument Scientist for the Mercury Dual Imaging System (MDIS).

However, because this region is near Mercury's north pole, the Sun is always low on the horizon, casting many long shadows across the scene that can obscure the colour characteristics of the rocks.

Consequently, MDIS carefully captured images of this portion of the planet when the shadows were minimised through five different narrow-band colour filters. PTI MHN SARSAR

245. Flying Observatory Detects Atomic Oxygen in Martian Atmosphere

An instrument onboard the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) detected atomic oxygen in the atmosphere of Mars for the first time since the last observation 40 years ago. These atoms were found in the upper layers of the Martian atmosphere known as the mesosphere. Atomic oxygen affects how other gases escape Mars and therefore has a significant impact on the planet's atmosphere. Scientists detected only about half the amount of oxygen expected, which may be due to variations in the Martian atmosphere. Scientists will continue to use SOFIA to study these variations to help better understand the atmosphere of the Red Planet. "Atomic oxygen in the Martian atmosphere is notoriously difficult to measure," said Pamela Marcum, SOFIA project scientist. "To observe the far-infrared wavelengths needed to detect atomic oxygen, researchers must be above the majority of Earth's atmosphere and use highly sensitive instruments, in this case a spectrometer. SOFIA provides both capabilities." The Viking and Mariner missions of the 1970s made the last measurements of atomic oxygen in the Martian atmosphere. These more recent observations were possible thanks to SOFIA's airborne location, flying between 37,000-45,000 feet, above most of the infrared-blocking moisture in Earth's atmosphere. The advanced detectors on one of the observatory's instruments, the German Receiver for Astronomy at Terahertz Frequencies (GREAT), enabled astronomers to distinguish the oxygen in the Martian atmosphere from oxygen in Earth's atmosphere. Researchers presented their findings in a paper published in

the journal Astronomy and Astrophysics in 2015. SOFIA is a Boeing 747SP jetliner modified to carry a 100-inch diameter telescope. It is a joint project of NASA and the German Aerospace Center. NASA's Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California, manages the SOFIA program, science and mission operations in cooperation with the Universities Space Research Association headquartered in Columbia, Maryland, and the German SOFIA Institute (DSI) at the University of Stuttgart. The aircraft is based at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center's hangar 703 in Palmdale, California.

246. Wrestlers Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik grab Rio 2016 berths

Reigning Commonwealth Games champion Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik booked Rio 2016 berths in their respective categories at the second Olympic World qualifying tournament on Saturday. Vinesh made amends for her disqualification from the first World Olympic qualifier to book the Rio berth in women's 48kg. Vinesh, who was disqualified from the World Olympic Qualifying event for being overweight by 400 gms, also became the first woman to qualify for the Olympics, scheduled from August 5-21 in Rio de Janeiro. Vinesh ensured herself the Rio berth and a silver after winning the semi-final bout against Evin Demirhan from Turkey at the second Olympic qualifier. She will take on Poland's Iowina Nina Matkowska for the gold medal. Sakshi, who became the second Indian woman to qualify, defeated China's Lan Zhang in the semi-final to set up a summit clash against Russian Valeria Koblova in the 58kg category. With Vinesh and Sakshi's qualification, the total number of Indians to qualify has risen to six - four men and two women - eclipsing the previous tally of five for the London Olympics in 2012.

247. Anti-Hijacking bill passed in Parliament

The Anti-Hijacking Bill, 2014 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by the Minister of Civil Aviation, Mr. Ashok Gajapathi Raju on December 17, 2014. The Bill seeks to repeal The Anti-Hijacking Act, 1982, and give effect to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, 1970 and its Protocol Supplementary, signed on September 10, 2010. Definition of hijacking: The Bill defines hijacking as seizing control of an aircraft in service, unlawfully and intentionally, by technological means or by exercising force, coercion, or any other form of intimidation. An aircraft is considered to be in service from the time it is being prepared for a specific flight by the crew or ground personnel until 24 hours after any landing. Related offences: The Bill includes several acts within the definition of hijacking including: (i) attempt and abetment of hijacking; (ii) making a credible threat to commit hijacking; (iii) organising or directing others to commit hijacking; (iv) agreeing with another to commit the offence, and acting on the agreement; etc. Punishment for hijacking and related offences: The Bill provides for: (i) death penalty, where the offence results in death of hostage or security personnel; (ii) life imprisonment in all other cases; and (iii) moveable and immoveable property of the accused may be confiscated. For any acts of violence committed in connection with the hijacking, the accused shall be punished with the same punishment as provided under the laws in force. Jurisdiction: Indian courts can exercise jurisdiction on several grounds including where the offence is committed: (i) in India; (ii) against an aircraft registered in India; (iii) on board an aircraft which lands in India with the accused still on board; (iv) by or against an Indian citizen; (v) by a person who is present in India and is not extradited by the central government, etc. Previous sanction for prosecution: The Bill requires that sanction must be taken from the central government before prosecuting an accused for hijacking or related offences. Investigation, arrest, bail, etc.: The central government may confer powers of investigation, arrest and prosecution on any officer of the central government or the National Investigation Agency. An investigating officer can order seizure or attachment of property which is related to the offence, and is likely to be concealed or disposed of by the accused. Where an accused is forwarded to a Magistrate to authorise detention because investigation could not be completed within 24 hours, a Judicial Magistrate may authorise detention up to 30 days. An Executive Magistrate may authorise detention up to seven days. With regard to bail, an accused cannot be released on bail or bond unless: (i) the public prosecutor has had an opportunity to oppose the release; and (ii) if the release has been opposed, the designated court is satisfied that there is reason to believe the accused is innocent and is unlikely to commit any offence while on bail. Trial by designated courts: The accused person shall be tried by a Sessions Court which is notified to be a designated court by the concerned state government. In case the investigation is carried out by the National Investigation Agency, the designated court shall be a court set up under the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008. The designated court shall have the power to order for attachment of the accused persons properties. Presumption of guilt: The court will presume the accused to be guilty if the prosecution establishes either: (i) arms, ammunition or explosives were recovered from the accused and there is reason to believe that similar arms, etc. were used in the hijacking or (ii) there is evidence of use of intimidation against the crew or passengers in connection with the hijacking. Extradition: Hijacking and the related offences shall be extraditable.

Extraditable offences are those offences for which one country may transfer the accused to another country's legal jurisdiction. No request for extradition shall be refused on the ground that hijacking is a political offence or is connected to a political offence.

248. Mercury to be seen as dot on solar disc from various places today

A transit of Mercury over the disc of the Sun will take place in the afternoon of May 9, 2016 (19 Vaishakha, 1938 Saka Era). This transit phenomenon will be visible from India. This phenomenon takes place when the planet Mercury will be seen as a small black dot travelling from one limb of the solar disc to the other. From the Earth this phenomenon is seen when the Mercury passes between the Sun and the Earth. This happens only when the Sun, the planet Mercury and the Earth are lined up in one plane. The Mercury appears as a dot on the solar disc because its angular size is very small compared to that of the Sun as seen from the Earth. The transit begins with Contact-I, the instant when the disc of the planet Mercury is externally tangent with the Sun (Ingress exterior) followed by Contact-II when the Mercury is internally tangent with the Sun (Ingress interior). The Mercury will be seen as a black spot, traveling several hours over the face of the disc, will reach the opposite limb of the Sun at Contact-III, when the disc of the planet Mercury is internally tangent with the Sun (Egress interior). Finally, the transit ends at Contact-IV when the disc of the planet Mercury is externally tangent with the Sun (Egress exterior). The phenomenon is a relatively rare one which occurs 13 or 14 times in a century. It occurs in the month of May and November. The interval between one November transit and next November transit may be 7, 13 or 33 years whereas the interval between one May transit and the next May transit may be 13 or 33 years. The transit of Mercury will be visible from most of Asia (except south eastern parts and Japan), Europe, Africa, Greenland, South America, North America, Arctic, North Atlantic Ocean and most of the Pacific Ocean. The entire transit, from beginning to end, will be visible from eastern North America, northern South America, the Arctic, Greenland, extreme northwestern Africa, western Europe, and the North Atlantic Ocean. In India, the beginning of the event comprising of Ingress exterior (Contact-I) and Ingress interior (Contact-II) will be visible from all places. The duration of the entire transit event will be about 7 hour and 30 minutes. The observer in India will not see the ending of the event as the same will be in progress after sunset. Depending upon the sunset time of different places in India, the observer located in the extreme east of the country will see the event about 1 hour from the beginning and the observer located in the extreme west of the country will see the event about 2 hours and 45 minutes from the beginning. In Delhi, the event can be seen for a duration of about 2 hours 20 minutes as it will start at 16h 41m IST and sunset will take place at 19h 01m IST. Similarly, in Kolkata the event will start at 16h 41m IST and it can be seen for a duration of about 1 hour 26 minutes, in Mumbai the event will start at 16h 41m IST and it can be seen for a duration of about 2 hours 24 minutes, in Chennai the event will start at 16h 41m IST and it can be seen for a duration of about 1 hour 45 minutes.

249. Govt releases commemorative coin on Maharana Pratap

As a part of 475th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Maharana Pratap Union Minister for Culture and Tourism Dr. Mahesh Sharma released a Commemorative coin of Rs. 100/- and a Circulation coin of Rs. 10/- in New Delhi today.

A brave warrior, successful organizer and ingenious strategist, Maharana Pratap, fearlessly fought the Mughals and protected his people until his death. The stories of Maharana Pratap who fought fearlessly to regain the prestige for his nation and people still inspire the present generation to do brave deeds for the honour of their motherland.

Ministry of Culture has been celebrating the 475th Birth Anniversary of Maharana Pratap during 2015-16 in association with the State Government of Rajasthan. A Conference and Special Lecture on Maharana Pratap was organized by Nehru Memorial Museum Library (NMML) in the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur on March 04, 2016. This was fully financed by the Ministry of Culture. The Government of India and the State Government of Rajasthan have decided to create a multi-purpose indoor stadium at Khel Gaon, Udaipur in his memory. Ministry of Culture has agreed to give a sum of Rs. 9.50 crore to the State Government for this purpose.

250. Australian TV producer Reg Grundy dies

Pioneering Australian TV producer Reg Grundy, who helped create successful programs such as Neighbours, Prisoner, and Wheel of Fortune, has died at his home in Bermuda, aged 92.

Grundy was inducted into the Logies Hall of Fame in 1993, and was given an International Emmy Founders Award in 1996.

He was named a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2008 for his outstanding contributions to the television industry and promotion of Australia overseas.

251. Russia marks 71st anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in World War II

Russian armed forces have paraded in central Moscow today to mark the 71st anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two. Some of Russia's latest military hardware was on show, including the RS-24 Yars long-range nuclear missile.

Fighters, heavy bombers and helicopters flew over Red Square. The parade involved 10,000 military staff, 135 armoured vehicles and 71 aircraft. Victory Day is an occasion for the Kremlin to stir up patriotic feelings, as Russians remember the sacrifices made in World War Two.

252. Indian boxers fetch four medals from Asian Youth Championships

Indian boxers bagged three silver and a bronze medal, to finish third in the overall standings, in the 7th Asian Youth Championships held in Kazakhstan.

National champion Ankush Dahiya in 60 Kilograms, Ashish Kulhrya in 64 Kilograms and Reyal Puri in 81 Kilograms categories fetched silver medals for the contingent, while Manjeet Singh contributed the solitary bronze to the tally.

India were placed behind Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the medals tally. The tournament featured more than 150 boxers from 23 countries.

253. Madrid Open: Novak Djokovic beats Andy Murray in Men's Singles final

World number one Novak Djokovic has defeated defending champion Andy Murray 6-2 3-6 6-3 in the Men's Singles final of the Madrid Open Tennis.

The defeat means the 28-year-old Briton will lose his world number two ranking to Roger Federer.

With his win, Djokovic of Serbia now moves ahead of Spain's Rafael Nadal with a record 29 ATP Masters 1000 titles.

Earlier, Indo-Romanian pair of Rohan Bopanna and Florin Mergea could not defend their Men's Doubles title on Sunday.

The sixth seeded defending champions were defeated by third seeded Dutch-Romanian combination of Jean-Julien Roger and Horia Tecau in straight sets 4-6, 6-7.

254. Serena, Sania-Martina remain on top of women's rankings

American Serena Williams continued to lead the latest women's singles rankings released on Monday, while German Angelique Kerber rose to the second place. Agnieszka Radwanska fell to third spot. Garbine Muguruza of Spain came in the fourth place with 4,847 points, as Romanian Simona Halep climbed to fifth and Belarusian Victoria Azarenka fell to sixth, while Italian Roberta Vinci rose to seventh. Russian Maria Sharapova, sanctioned for failing a doping test, fell out of the top 10 after Swiss Timea Bacsinszky rose to the 10th place. In the women's doubles, top pair Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis maintained their joint position with 12045 points each. The current rankings and point scores are as follows:

1. Serena Williams (America) 8,235 points
2. Angelique Kerber (Germany) 5,740
3. Agnieszka Radwanska (Poland) 5,665
4. Garbine Muguruza (Spain) 4,847
5. Simona Halep (Romania) 4,650
6. Victoria Azarenka (Belarus) 4,530
7. Roberta Vinci (Italy) 3,505
8. Belinda Bencic (Switzerland) 3,330
9. Petra Kvitova (Czech Republic) 3,067
10. Timea Bacsinszky (Switzerland) 3,065.

255. Kim Jong-Un becomes North Korea ruling party chairman

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un was today given a new title chairman of the Workers Party at a rare top-level meeting of the ruling party. The countrys de facto head of state Kim Yong-Nam announced the post as foreign journalists briefly watched proceedings at the party congress the first for 36 years. Kim the third generation of the dynasty that has ruled the country since its founding in 1948 was previously first secretary of the party. The appointment will further bolster his authority at a congress seen as a coronation of sorts for the young leader, who came to power in December 2011 after the death of his father Kim Jong-Il. Kim Jong-Il has been designated eternal party general secretary. The current leaders grandfather and the countrys founding leader, Kim Il-Sung, remains eternal president of the nation despite having died in 1994.

256. Google launches free public Wi-Fi service at five rly stations

Google today announced the launch of its free high-speed public Wi-Fi service at Ujjain, Jaipur, Patna, Guwahati and Allahabad railway stations.

This is in continuation with its project to provide high-speed public Wi-Fi service at 100 Railway stations across India by end of the year, Google said in a release.

Minister of Railways Suresh Prabhu will formally inaugurate the service at these stations soon, it said.

Google said it has been deploying the service over the extensive fibre network of Indian Railway's arm Railtel which provides Internet services as RailWire.

With these launches, the service is now live and available to users at 15 stations across the country, it added.

Backed by the "phenomenal" response to the service in Mumbai Central, Google will also extend the project to cover key suburban Mumbai stations working with RailTel.

Google will deploy the service in Dadar, Bandra Terminus, Churchgate, Thane, Kalyan, Panvel, Vashi, Kurla, Chattrapati Shivaji Terminus, Borivali and a few others, it added.

"We're seeing incredible usage of the Wi-Fi service across the stations and over 2.5 lakhs users are using the service every week, demonstrating more than 2x growth in less than a month," Google India Head of Access Programs Gulzar Azad said.

Stating that Google is committed to working with Indian Railways and Railtel to deliver high-speed Wi-Fi network that will be available to 10 million Indians by the end of the year, covering 100 of the busiest train stations in India, it said the project will be eventually rolled out to cover 400 train stations across India.

The Railtel-Google free high-speed public Wi-Fi service is currently available at Mumbai Central, Pune, Bhubaneshwar, Bhopal, Ranchi, Raipur, Vijayawada, Kacheguda, Ernakulum Junction, Vishakhapatnam, Jaipur, Patna, Guwahati, Ujjain and Allahabad.

257. What is Crowdfunding?

Crowdfunding is a well-known startup financing mode where money is procured from large number of people usually through the internet. Besides internet mobilization of capital through other ways such as mail-order subscriptions, benefit events, and other methods are also forms of crowd funding. Under crowdfunding, the promoter presents his business to large number of interested financiers. The investors are offered with opportunity to make investment in the proposed venture. Later, they agree to support the project and got it implemented. Crowdfunding is essentially the opposite of the mainstream approach to business. It is some kind of alternative fianc. Here, its much easier for the promoter to provide the opportunity in front of more interested parties and give them more ways to invest in the business in return for equity or debt. Advantages of crowdfunding are: Reach: They have good reach with thousands of investors coming to know about the new venture. Presentation of the venture: through the crowdfunding campaign, the investor goes through the process of looking at his business from the top levelits history, potentials,

challenges, addressable market, return prospects etc. Efficiency: crowdfunding is an efficient way of mobilizing resources on low cost. Crowdfunding is getting more attentions as well as relevance in the new digital era. Several projects and investments are financed by thousands of investors through the internet; each contributing small amount of money.

258. Foundation stone laid for automated multi level car parking at Transport Bhawan

The government on Monday said the national capital-based Transport Bhawan will become the first government building to have an automated multi-level car parking facility. Minister of Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari and Minister of Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and Parliamentary Affairs M. Venkaiah Naidu jointly laid the foundation stone for the new facility. According to Gadkari, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is already working on several plans to decongest NCR (national capital region). The automated parking lot project is being undertaken by NHIDCL (National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation), the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said in a statement. The facility will comprise ground plus seven floors. Spread over an area of 314 sq metres and with a height of 22 metres, the facility will be able to house 112 cars, the statement said. The retrieving time for cars will be 120 seconds. The facility is being built by a Swiss Company. Transport Bhawan is located at Parliament Street here. It houses several central ministries like road transport and highways and shipping.

259. Uma Bharti Launches Rural Sanitation Initiatives for Ganga Rejuvenation in Jharkhand

Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Sushri Uma Bharti launched nine projects for rural sanitation initiatives under Namami Gange Programme for conservation of river Ganga in Sahibganj, Jharkhand today. Speaking on the occasion the Minister said the entire 83 Km. stretch of Ganga in Jharkhand will be covered under this programme. She said the project will focus on three significant interventions; Promotion of safe, individual hygiene practices to ensure open defecation free status of all 78 villages along the river Ganga, Promotion of cost-effective, appropriate local, low cost, easy to manage technologies using local resources to ensure improved access, sustained use and maintenance of infrastructure created for effective management of solid and liquid waste and strengthening of local institutions including panchayats, village level sanitation committees and self-help groups to effectively manage, enhance and maintain facilities established for improved sanitation in the villages and an integrated and a holistic livelihood approach.

260. Railways sets up Directorate to generate Funds via Advertisements

In yet another move, albeit an incremental one, aimed at restructuring the railways board on functional lines, the national transporter has set up a new directorate to generate funds in a big way through advertisements and find the right players for commercial exploitation of its land. This is not the first time the railways is trying to raise resources from non-tariff sources, but the setting up of the non-fare revenue directorate, which comes after a mobility directorate was formed, indicates rail minister Suresh Prabhus strategy to slowly push structural reforms in the mammoth PSU. Another directorate for environment and housekeeping is already functioning. The next step in Prabhus plan seems to be organising the national transporter on business lines by assigning functional roles to members of the board. The signal and telecom department, which was till now under the Member (Electrical), has been placed under the member (engineering), who heads the civil engineering department. The move hints at a plan to create a new post of member (fixed infrastructure), said an official, adding that the next step could be creation of the post of member (rolling stock) and member (traction) by merging electrical and mechanical departments. The minister has initiated a slew of reform measures, but the slow pace has raised a few questions. However, a few see Prabhus gradual approach as a clever strategy to steer the reforms without annoying powerful employees unions.

261. Gujarat govt to kick-start solar rooftop project for citizens

With an aim of scaling up the present solar power generation in Gujarat, the state government is now all set to launch its much awaited project of grid-connected rooftop solar power units, wherein residential property owners will be encouraged to install this new system. The Solar Rooftop project was initiated by Gujarat Energy Development Agency (GEDA), which is the state nodal agency to promote renewable energy. In the current fiscal of 2016-17, GEDA has set a target of generating 50 megawatt (MW) of electricity by installing such rooftop solar photovoltaic (SPV) units across Gujarat. According to GEDA Director J T Akhani, the rooftop solar project is for residential consumers only. There are several residents who have already installed solar power generation units on their rooftops. However, they are off-grid,

as they are not connected with the electricity meter. This project is for those residential property owners who wish to connect their power units with the electricity grid, said Akhani. This project of grid-connected units has been proposed in the Gujarat Solar Power Policy, announced by state government in August 2015.

262. HAL completes Rs.4.77 cr Kumudvathi rejuvenation project

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the state-run aerospace and defence company, said today that it has completed the Rs.4.77 crore river rejuvenation project of Kumudvathi River - near Nelamangala taluk in Bengaluru Rural district of Karnataka. According to a company release, T Suvarna Raju, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), HAL has given possession of the project to the panchayats of the beneficiary villages of Nelamangala. We are really happy for contributing to such a noble cause of rejuvenating dried natural resources of water at this crucial moment, when water has become a valuable commodity everywhere, Suvarna Raju said. We hope that our efforts will provide a new lease of life to the regions natural habitat and we will carry on our support to such projects, he added. The beneficiary villages are Budihal, Doddabele, Hasurahalli, Kalalghatta, Kodigehalli, Kuluvaiahalli, Shivgange and Thyamagondlu. In the last two years, HAL spent Rs.4.77 crore on the project, under its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiative. For the project, HAL has partnered with International Association for Human Values (IAHV), a sister concern of the Art of Living to revive Kumudvathi river, an offshoot of Arkavathi River. The river was once the source of 30 percent water needs of Bengaluru. The state-run company said that it has sponsored the work for Tavarekere in 2014-15, and mini watersheds of Thymagondlu and Mondigere in 2015-16 that involved re-charging of 202 wells, 202 boulder checks, 27 injection bore wells, 35 water-pools and planting of 15000 saplings. The expected results from the project after the three rain-cycles include the safeguarding of drinking water sources, revival of irrigation tanks and non-operational bore wells and open wells, which will lead to agricultural and horticulture development, growth in natural vegetation and ecological restoration in the region, it added.

263. Odisha Government launches DBT scheme for farmers

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today launched the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme for farmers and promised digging of at least one lakh borewells to enhance irrigation facilities in the State. Patnaik was addressing a meeting marking the celebration of the Akshya Trutiya festival at laxminarayanpur village near Pipili. The day is also observed as the Krushak Divas. Under the DBT scheme, the farmers would get the subsidy amount in their bank accounts directly.

264. Chhattisgarh relaxes labour laws, will benefit MSMEs

The micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in [Chhattisgarh](#) will get respite from the regular inspections conducted by the competent authorities in the facility. The state government has relaxed the labour law that will help [MSMEs](#) to avoid regular inspection from [labour department](#) officials. Under the new norms, routine inspection in the facility will not be conducted by the labour department inspector. Instead, the industry will file a third-party certificate to underline that industrial and labour norms are implemented in the unit. Earlier, inspectors would conduct surprise inspections in units even without the knowledge of their superiors. This resulted in serious irregularities and corruption in the system. The commerce and industry ministry has come out with the suggestion that a third-party certification should be made effective in the units instead of regular inspection by the officials.

265. UN launches multi-partner trust fund for Zika virus response

United Nations [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon announced the establishment of the UN Zika Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) to finance critical unfunded priorities in the response to the [Zika](#) outbreak. The [Fund](#), which aims to provide a rapid, flexible and accountable platform to support a coordinated response from the UN system and partners, will directly support the [Zika Strategic Response Framework](#), developed by the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) in consultation with UN agencies, partners and international epidemiological experts. Donors will contribute to a central point and an Advisory Committee will direct funds to the highest-priority activities in the affected countries. Since January 2015, 61 countries and territories have reported local transmission of Zika, which is caused by a virus transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes. The recent rise in the spread of the virus in some countries has been accompanied by an unprecedented rise in the number of children being born with unusually small heads identified as microcephaly. Several countries have also reported an increase in Guillain-Barr syndrome a neurological disorder that can lead to paralysis and death. On 1 February, WHO [announced](#) that the cluster of cases of microcephaly and other neurological disorders, in particular Guillain-Barr syndrome, constituted a public health emergency of international

concern. There is now scientific consensus that the Zika virus is linked to severe fetal malformations and serious disorders of the central nervous system and is a cause of microcephaly and Guillain-Barr syndrome. The Zika Strategic Response Framework aims to investigate and respond to the cluster of microcephaly and other neurological complications linked to Zika virus, increase preventive measures, communicate risks, and provide care and support to those affected.

266. Greece passes pension, tax reform bill

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has defended controversial new pension and tax reforms approved by parliament.

The measures are needed to unlock further international bailout money to be discussed at a meeting of Eurozone Finance Minister on Monday.

But they are deeply unpopular with Greek anti-austerity campaigners and trade unions. Trade unions say the country cannot bear another round of austerity.

Thousands of people demonstrated, mostly peacefully, in Athens and in the country's second largest city Thessaloniki.

Eurozone Finance Minister's meeting meant today would be a very important day as debt relief for Greece was on the agenda after six long years of austerity discussions, Tsipras said.

The so-called Eurogroup meeting is expected to discuss new debt relief measures, with a view to avoiding the prospect of a default in July, when Greece is due make its next major repayment to the IMF and the European Central Bank.

267. Union Government starts UBIN drive for budding entrepreneurs

The Union Government has started the process for issuance of Unique Business Identification Number (UBIN) to enable budding entrepreneurs set up their business without any delays. The drive has been launched by the Department of Industrial Policy Promotion (DIPP) under the aegis of Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The UBIN would be automatically linked to Ministry Of Corporate Affairs (MCA) portal after it is issued to the intended beneficiary. It will be subsequently sent to the CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes) which would nomenclature it as PAN for UBIN. The move is seen as a major step towards boosting ease of doing business and the start-up India initiative of the government.

268. Environment Minister launches Web-Based Application on Integrated Waste Management System

In a step towards simplifying waste management, the environment ministry launched a web-based application Integrated Waste Management System (IWMS) here on Monday to help in tracking the movement and management of hazardous and other solid wastes. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar, launching the website www.iwms.nic.in said this would help them monitor total 43,000 industries responsible for producing hazardous waste. With this we can track all the hazardous waste and other solid waste. It will also become a single window for authorization and provide state and nation-wise data on waste generation and number of waste generating and processing industrial units, Javadekar said here. The minister added that the data obtained will help the authorities to identify the problem areas of the waste management and plan accordingly. The portal will generate data on different categories of waste including hazardous, bio-medical, electronic, plastic and municipal waste. There are over 43,000 industrial units producing the hazardous waste, like the waste generated while producing nickel. Out of these, 30,000 had already been mapped using this application and other will be mapped soon, the minister said. The portal will also facilitate the people in obtaining permission for import and export of certain categories of waste, for reuse, recycling, recovery or co-processing and conserve the primary source. The ministry official stated that it also aims to track the waste producing industry using Geographic Information System (GIS) maps for effective monitoring and, if required, to inspect their waste management or processing mechanism. The upgraded version of the IWMS is expected to encompass generation of annual report from the annual return filed by the industries for various types of waste generated in the country. This version would provide customized GIS based information. The GIS maps would be generated and integrated with underlying information to provide an excellent visual outlook to the available data, a ministry statement said.

269. **Former MLA Rajeshwara Rao passes away**

Former Sircilla MLACHennamaneni Rajeswara Rao has passed away. The 93-year-old Rao is the brother of Maharashtra Governor Vidyasagar Rao. He is a freedom fighter also won as MLA for half dozen times and actively took part in Telangana armed struggle. Rao worked for the Communist Party of India for four decades since his student days and was elected as its MLA four times from Vemulawada. He was the president of the Telangana Freedom Fighters Association and the president of the farmers wing of CPI. However he quit the CPI as the chairman of its legislature party in 1999 and joined the Telugu Desam. He detached himself from politics after 2009 when his son Ramesh at a German university, was elected.

270. **India has emerged as biggest renewable energy lab in world**

US ambassador to India, Richard Verma, today said [India](#) has emerged as the biggest renewable energy lab in the world and is at the threshold of dynamic growth in the deployment of smart grid technology.

Verma, accompanied by other dignitaries, visited [Tata Power Delhi](#) Distribution's Smart Grid Lab in Rohini and Tata Power-DDL's grid connected 225 KW Solar Power Plant in the vicinity.

"Today, India has emerged as the biggest renewable energy lab in the world and is at the threshold of dynamic growth in the deployment of smart grid technology and integration of renewable energy projects.

"It's great to see how the US government, companies and Tata Power-DDL are collaborating toward the usage of smart technology for the common good," Verma said.

Praveer Sinha, CEO and MD of Tata Power-DDL, said: "I strongly believe that the Indo-US collaboration in the power sector especially related to new technology implementations can help India meet its rising energy demand."

Verma was accompanied by Kal Penn, Commissioner on the US President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Hollywood Actor; Idris Diaz, Deputy Mission Director (A), USAID, and other senior officials from the US Embassy and the USAID.

271. **Priyanka Chopra the new face of Incredible India?**

The rising stock of film star Priyanka Chopra, who figured on the Time magazine cover recently, as part of their 100 Most Influential People, appears to have caught the attention of the Centre. The Narendra Modi government, in a bid to attract international headlines and tourists, is toying with the idea of anointing Priyanka Chopra as the brand ambassador of the Incredible India campaign. Sources say that Quantico star Priyanka Chopra's PR machinery is also working overtime in the corridors of the ministry of tourism to sell the idea of the desi girl as the face of Incredible India. Many believe that the actress, who recently won the people's choice award for favourite actress in a TV series, will help change India's image into a safe travel destination for women. The government today said that as of now there is no proposal for selecting a brand ambassador for the coveted campaign. According to tourism minister Mahesh Sharma, the ministry is yet to make a move in this direction. No committee has been constituted by the ministry of tourism since at present there is no proposal for selecting a brand ambassador for Atulya Bharat Campaign, he said in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

272. **Details of Panama Papers released online by Journalists consortium**

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) has published online detailed data from the Panama Papers trove on more than 2 lakhs secret offshore companies. ICIJ said, the searchable database built on just a portion of the documents leaked from the Panama law firm Mossack Fonseca reveals more than 3 lakh 60,000 names of individuals and companies behind the anonymous shell firms.

It said, it is publishing the information in the public interest as a global movement against tax evasion and the secrecy. The consortium, however, said it was not making available raw records online, nor was it putting all the information from the records out.

Reports already published in April based on the dossier linked some of the world's most powerful leaders, including

Russian President Vladimir Putin, British Prime Minister David Cameron and others to unreported offshore companies. Nearly 500 Indians were also named in the papers.

The data forced the resignations of Iceland's Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson, and Spain's industry minister Jose Manuel Soria. Until now access to the total cache of 11.5 million documents, originally provided by a mysterious "John Doe", was restricted to the ICIJ and a select group of international media houses.

273. Rodrigo Duterte wins Philippines Presidential polls

In Philippines, maverick anti-crime candidate Rodrigo Duterte has won the Presidential elections, following the withdrawal of his opponents. Although, the official result has not yet been declared, main rival Mar Roxas admitted defeat after polls gave Mr Duterte an unassailable lead.

The 71-year-old, Duterte, has credited his success to his tough stance on law and order. His record as the crime-crushing mayor of the southern town of Davao, once notorious for its lawlessness, earned him the moniker The Punisher and resonated with voters.

274. Obama signs into law new restrictions on Syrian antiquities

The United States has stepped up efforts to stop the Islamic State terror group's trade in looted antiquities as President Barack Obama signed into law new import restrictions on Syrian cultural artifacts. The bill was passed the House and Senate last month.

The new law prevents archaeological or ethnological material removed from Syria from being imported into the United States or sold in the country. Possible exceptions apply, such as when rightful owners want to temporarily relocate cultural property to the US for protection.

UN Security Council had previously called on governments worldwide to help shut down IS' funding sources by restricting commerce in Iraqi and Syrian antiquities.

275. US actor William Schallert passes away

US actor William Schallert, who parlayed an everyman face into hundreds of television and film roles, most notably as the father in the 1960s TV situation comedy The Patty Duke Show, died.

He was 93. He appeared in shows spanning the history of television, did hundreds of voice overs and served as President of the Screen Actors Guild from 1979 to 1981. Schallert is best remembered for his role as Martin Lane, the father in The Patty Duke Show, which aired from 1963 to 1966.

276. Scientists develop second skin to reduce wrinkles, eye bags

Scientists in US claim to have developed an invisible elastic film that can be applied to the skin to reduce the appearance of wrinkles and eye bags.

Once applied, the formula dries to form a film that mimics the properties of youthful skin, Nature Materials reports after a series of small trials. At the moment it is being explored as a commercial cosmetic product. But the scientists say their second skin might eventually be used to deliver medicines and sun protection.

277. Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann resigns

Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann has resigned after losing the support of Social Democratic party colleagues. He told a news conference that Austria needed a Chancellor who had his party fully behind him.

Mr Faymann came to power in 2008 but has faced criticism within his party since the far right won the first round of presidential elections last month. Deputy Chancellor Reinhold Mitterlehner is to take over as chancellor on an interim basis.

278. There are 390,900 plants known to science: Kew report

Scientists have estimated that there are 390,900 plants known to science. The new tally is part of a report carried out by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. It is its first global assessment of the world's flora.

The study also found that 2,034 new plant species were discovered in 2015. However, the report warns that 21 per cent of plants are at risk of extinction, with threats including climate change, habitat loss, disease and invasive species.

279. Sea level rise swallows 5 pacific islands: Australian scientists

A study by a group of scientists from Australia has said, accelerated sea level rise, caused by global climate change, has swallowed five islands in the Pacific, causing its inhabitants to relocate. Recently, five reef islands in the remote Solomon Islands disappeared due to sea-level rise and coastal erosion. Six more islands have been severely eroded.

According to the study published in Environmental Research Letters, structures on the islands are consistently washed into the sea, and residents who have lived on the islands for a century have been forced to flee. This study claims to be the first scientifically proven evidence of the disappearance of islands in the world's oceans as a result of rising sea levels. Previously, such reports were considered anecdotal, as they lacked specific criteria for scientific research.

280. 1.3 lakh cognisable offences registered in Odisha in 2015

The White Paper on crimes prepared by the Home department was today tabled in the Odisha Assembly reveal that as many as 1,03,200 cognisable offences were registered in the State in 2015. According to the information contained in the White Paper, 72 incidents of Maoist violence took place in the State in 2015 in which 26 common men, four security personnel and nine Maoists lost their lives.

While 53 Marxists were arrested in 2015, 255 arms and ammunition were seized in the year. It also informed that the Naxal situation in 11 districts in the State has improved marginally in the last year. The report said 2,504 cases of torture of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled tribe people have been recorded in 2015. Besides, 10, 542 accident cases have been registered in 2015 out of which 10, 449 cases are true, the White Paper informed.

281. Ranglal Jamuda appointed Odisha food commission chairman

The Odisha government has constituted a three-member State Food Commission with Ranglal Jamuda, former Union secretary, Food Processing Industries, as its chairman. According to an official release, two other members of the Commission are former CBI Special Judge Manoj Kumar Panda and former Kendrapara MLA Sipra Mallick.

While the chairman of the Commission would be accorded the status of the chief secretary, the two members will have the status of principal secretary, the release added. The newly formed Commission will probe any matter relating to implementation of National Food Security Act (NFSA) in the state.

282. China records fall in exports and imports

China's exports and imports fell more than expected in April, customs data showed, the latest sign of weakness in the world's second largest economy. In the January to April period, exports dropped 2.1 per cent year on year; while imports went down 7.5 per cent, leading to a trade surplus of 1.11 trillion yuan.

283. Sania-Hingis continue to lead Women's Doubles rankings

In Tennis, Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis continue to lead the latest Women's Doubles rankings released yesterday. Sania and Hingis, who have won 13 titles together including 4 this year, maintained their joint position with 12,045 points each.

American Serena Williams continued to top the Singles rankings, with Angelique Kerber rising to second and Agnieszka Radwanska dropping to third. Russian Maria Sharapova, sanctioned for failing a doping test, fell out of the top-10 after Timea Bacsinszky took the 10th spot.

In Men's Singles rankings, Swiss Roger Federer replaced Andy Murray from the 2nd spot after the Briton failed to defend his Madrid Masters title on Sunday. Novak Djokovic is still at the top.

In Men's Doubles, Rohan Bopanna has fallen two spots to 13th. However, Leander Paes rose 3 positions to be 54th, and Mahesh Bhupathi leap-frogged 45 places to be ranked at 169th.

284. Michel Platini to resign as UEFA President

Suspended European Football Chief Michel Platini has announced to resign as UEFA President. The announcement came after he lost his appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport against a ban for ethics violations imposed by the sport's world body, FIFA. The arbitral panel upheld Platini's suspension but cut his sanction from six to four years.

Platini called the verdict a deep injustice and said he was left with no choice but to step down from the UEFA position he has held since 2007. Platini was handed an eight year suspension by the FIFA Ethics Committee last December before being lowered to six years in February by the FIFA's Appeal Committee.

285. Philippines transgender politician celebrates historic win

Geraldine Roman on Tuesday celebrated overcoming "bigotry, hatred and discrimination" as results showed she had become the first transgender politician to win a congressional seat in the predominantly Catholic Philippines. After her victory in Monday's election, Roman, 49, is being seen by the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community as a source of hope in a country where Church influence means divorce, abortion and same-sex marriage are banned. "The politics of bigotry, hatred and discrimination did not triumph. What triumphed was the politics of love, acceptance and respect," Roman told AFP after her victory for a seat in Congress representing the farming province of Bataan just northwest of Manila. Roman, a Catholic, said she was looking forward to becoming a lawmaker so she could respond to critics who dismissed her as a one-issue politician not to be taken seriously. "I'm elated, very, very happy. I'm also excited to work. I realise that the burden is bigger because the stereotype of people about the LGBT is we are frivolous, that we have nothing substantial to say, so I have to prove them wrong," she said. Roman will be the highest-ranking openly LGBT politician in the Philippines, where other lawmakers have refused to come out for fear of losing support from the Catholic Church and other religious groups. A political neophyte, Roman will succeed her mother as representative of Bataan, where her family has been a political force for three generations. Her mother had to stand down after serving the maximum number of three terms. Roman's father was a former congressman whose death in 2014 prompted her to consider continuing the family legacy. Political families dominate Philippine politics, from the local to the national level, and belonging to such a dynasty was widely regarded as being crucial to Roman's success.

286. Need to make Internet more accessible in India: World Bank

Despite rapid spread of digital technologies in India, nearly a billion people still need to connect to the Internet for pushing growth, creating jobs and accessing public services, says a World Bank report. It also pointed out that India has most restrictive market regulation in retail finance and banking. At least 8 in 10 individuals in India own a mobile phone and digital technologies are spreading rapidly. With nearly a billion people still not connected to the Internet, the opportunities for increasing access to digital technology for creating higher growth, more jobs, and better public services are significant for India, said the World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends, authored by Co-Directors, Deepak Mishra and Uwe Deichmann. India is currently the largest exporter of ICT services and skilled manpower in the developing world. The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry today employs more than 3.1 million workers, 30 percent of them are women. World Bank Country Director in India Onno Ruhl said the digital revolution is transforming the world, aiding information flow and creating huge opportunities for growth and poverty reduction. India's Aadhaar programme is today a model for many countries and recent initiatives like Digital India has the potential to generate greater digital dividends among all sections of its society, Ruhl said.

287. Direct Benefit Scheme launched

Akshaya Tritiya festival was celebrated in Odisha on Monday with farmers starting a new crop season by sowing rice seeds as political parties joined the celebrations to woo farmers who had been hit by drought in the recent past. As farmers in all parts of the State started the day with the sowing ritual in their fields, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the Direct Benefit Transfer scheme for them. The first beneficiary of the scheme was Ramesh Rout, a farmer from Laxminarayanpur, and the subsidy money for seeds was deposited in his bank account. Mr. Patnaik also sowed seeds and ploughed land in Laxminarayanpur gram panchayat in Pipili area near Bhubaneswar. Even though farmers have been agitating and demanding various measures, including compensation for the families of over 200 farmers who committed suicide due to drought and debt burden, Mr. Patnaik spoke about the measures his government had initiated

for their benefit. Politics over farmers issue dominated celebration of the festival as the Opposition Congress and BJP too organised Akshaya Tritiya celebrations to express their solidarity with the farmers of the State. Around the time Mr. Patnaik sowed the rice seeds, Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president also performed the ritual in a village near the Capital city. Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh and Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan did the same in a village near Cuttack to show their party's concern for farmers. On the other hand, the Chandan Yatra of Lord Jagannath and construction of the chariots of the three deities began in Puri on the occasion. The Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath is to be held in July.

288. Fasting may help fight fatty liver disease

Scientists have found that upon deprivation of food a certain protein is produced that adjusts the metabolism in the liver, assisting in warding off fatty liver disease. According to researchers, a reduced intake of calories, such as in the framework of an intermittent fasting diet, can help to whip the metabolism back into shape. The findings showed that during fasting, the stress molecule reduces the absorption of fatty acids in the liver and improves sugar metabolism. In the study, published in the open access journal EMBO Molecular Medicine, the researchers found that during fasting GADD45 beta -- protein, whose name stands for 'Growth Arrest and DNA Damage-inducible' - controls the absorption of fatty acids in the liver. Mice who lacked the corresponding gene were more likely to develop fatty liver disease. However when the protein was restored, the fat content of the liver normalised and also sugar metabolism improved. "The stress on the liver cells caused by fasting consequently appears to stimulate GADD45 beta production, which then adjusts the metabolism to the low food intake," said Stephan Herzig, professor and Director of the Institute for Diabetes and Cancer (IDC) at the Helmholtz Zentrum München in Germany. Also, in humans, a low GADD45 beta level was accompanied by increased fat accumulation in the liver and an elevated blood sugar level. "Once we understand how fasting influences our metabolism we can attempt to bring about this effect therapeutically," Herzig added. The researchers now want to use the new findings for therapeutic intervention in the fat and sugar metabolism so that the positive effects of food deprivation might be translated for treatment.

289. ISRO sets up nozzle testing labs in VSSC

In a bid to carry out better research in the area of rocket nozzle, Indian Space Research Organisation has established Nozzle Testing Laboratories at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram. The Nozzle Testing laboratories (NTL) that were inaugurated recently by ISRO Chairman, are "unique" facilities established for the first time in the country towards carrying out advanced RD in the area of rocket nozzle, ISRO said. Stating that performance improvement in propulsion systems is essential towards achieving cost effective launch vehicles, the space agency said apart from propellant energetics, the nozzle plays a vital role in improving propulsion system performance. It said by improving performance of existing nozzles and developing new nozzle concepts, which can operate at both low and high altitude regimes, it is possible to obtain significant gains in the delivered specific impulse of rockets. ISRO said the NTL has the capability to cater to a wide range of studies related to nozzles such as contour optimisation for large AR (Area Ratio) nozzles, flow separation, techniques for flow separation control, nozzle wall heat transfer, among others. The NTL consists of a Nitrogen gas generation and storage system, a graphite cored induction heater (for heating nitrogen), a test chamber, a diffuser system and heat exchanger, coolant system and power supply systems. For nozzle performance evaluation, heated nitrogen gas is allowed to expand in nozzles kept in the test chamber having simulated altitude pressure, ISRO said. Noting that gaseous nitrogen admitted to the storage heater from the top exits the heater at the required temperature, it said the facility utilises fast response pressure transducers and instrumentation to study nozzle phenomena. Nozzles up to Area Ratio (AR) 300 and more can be tested in the facility.

290. Indian students win acclaim at car design competition in US

A group of engineering students from Bangalore have won plaudits at the prestigious Formula Hybrid car design competition, coming second in the design and project management categories for their prototype model. With 28 teams participating in the competition held in New Hampshire last week, the Bangalore students stood fourth overall in the competition, and came second in the design and project management categories. The team of about 20 undergraduate students from R V College of Engineering, Bangalore participated in the Formula Hybrid, a design and engineering challenge for university students where they had to design, build and compete an open-wheel, single-seat Formula-style racecar in New Hampshire. The students are members of Ashwa Racing, a research and development project in the engineering college that designs and builds formula-style race cars. The R V College team has competed in Australia, Germany, Italy and the US. The team's prototype was designed, manufactured and assembled in Bangalore and shipped

to New Hampshire. They had showcased its first hybrid vehicle at the competition last year and had stood 7th out of 17 teams. Sohan Shetty, a member of the participating team from the college said that last year his team had designed the components and got them manufactured but didn't have time to test each component. "We documented everything and presented reports, which helped us perform better this year. We had come with the goal to clear the electrical inspection part, which has stringent requirements," he said. He said the teams aim for next year's competition is to ensure that the car performs well across acceleration and dynamics events. "We have already built the safety standards and we will be looking at the cars overall performance next year," he said adding that the team hopes to return to the competition next year with an electric and driver-less car. "Just like a cricket or football team, we have done something for the country. It feels great that at such a young age, we are able to get laurels for the country," he added. Anushree Jain, another team member, said the hybrid prototype had a series architecture with Agni 95R motor and Pulsar 220 engine. It weighed 350Kg and used a Lithium ion battery. Established in 2003, Ashwa Racing has produced 13 prototype race cars including both the combustion and hybrid, which have participated annually in events held across the globe. The Formula Hybrid event is run by the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth since 2006, the competition is part of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Collegiate Design Series and is regarded as the most complex and dynamic of the series.

291. India signs revised tax treaty with Mauritius

In a bid to prevent "abuse" of the tax avoidance treaty, India today signed with Mauritius an amendment to the pact to get rights to tax capital gains on shares of Indian company sold after April 1, 2017.

With the signing of the amendment to the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) with Mauritius, sale of shares of an Indian resident company will be taxed at 50 per cent of the applicable rate between April 1, 2017, to March 31, 2019. Full capital gains tax will apply from April 1, 2019.

A finance ministry statement said, the Protocol will tackle the long pending issues of treaty abuse and round tripping of funds attributed to the India-Mauritius treaty, curb revenue loss, prevent double non-taxation, streamline the flow of investment and stimulate the flow of exchange of information between India and Mauritius.

India had in 1983 signed a Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty with the island nation. And today an amendment to DTAC was signed in a bid to ensure that firms in Mauritius that invest in India are not just 'shell' companies who could earlier avoid paying capital gains tax in India. Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia said that the treaty amendment "brings about a certainty in taxation matters for foreign investors."

292. Parliament passes bill on potable alcohol

Parliament Tuesday passed the [Industries](#) (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015 which seeks to transfer from the Centre to states the control over industries engaged in the production of potable alcohol, with Lok Sabha approving some technical amendments.

The [bill](#) in the Lok Sabha was introduced by Commerce and Industry Minister [Nirmala Sitharaman](#) and was later approved by the House amid din.

The bill was earlier approved by the Rajya Sabha last month and certain changes were adopted by the Lower House.

The Industries (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2015 seeks to amend a schedule to exclude production of [alcohol](#) for potable purposes from the ambit of the Act.

According to the Bill, the central government would continue to be responsible for formulating [policy](#) and regulating foreign collaboration ([FDI](#) and foreign technology collaboration agreements) for all products of fermentation industries, including industrial and potable

293. Delhi's Tina Dabi first in civil services exams

A 22-year-old woman from Delhi topped the 2015 civil services examination on her first attempt and a railway

officer from Jammu and Kashmir secured the second position as the results of one of India's toughest tests was announced on Tuesday. A total of 1,078 candidates cleared the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exam -- 499 from the general category, 314 from the other backward classes, 176 from the scheduled castes and 89 from the scheduled tribes. Dabi topped the test, followed by Athar Aamir Ul Shafi Khan and Delhi's Jasmeet Singh Sandhu. Congrats to all those who cleared the Civil Services Exam. My good wishes as they commence a new exciting phase of their lives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted. 23-year-old Athar, a resident of Anantnag in south Kashmir, was undergoing training at the Indian Railways Institute of Transport and Management, Lucknow. This was his second attempt. I just could not believe it. The news took few minutes to sink in that I obtained second rank. I secured 560 rank last year. I'm very delighted and extremely satisfied that my hard work has really paid off, he said. He hoped his success would pave the way for many others like him from the militancy-torn state. Thankfully, when I was studying, the valley was relatively peaceful. Militancy was not that a major issue at that time. There were odd days when there was tension in Anantnag. But by and large it was okay, he said. Tens of thousands of students across the country prepare for years for the UPSC exams for prestigious government positions. Candidates get into the administrative services, the foreign and police services, apart from other central services.

294. Govt forms committee to prepare policy framework for taxi

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has set up a three-member committee to prepare a policy framework for taxi and other transport operators. The panel will be headed by Sanjay Mitra, Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and have the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and the Delhi Transport Commissioner as its members. A group of taxi and other transport operators had met Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday, apprising him of the situation that has emerged following the Supreme Court's order banning diesel taxis in the NCR, and the various problems they are facing as a result of the ban. The Ministry has decided to set up a committee to look into these issues and come up with appropriate policy recommendations to address the same in a time-bound manner, the statement said.

295. Rise in foreign terrorist fighters great threat to world peace: India to UN

India has called for strengthening international cooperation in fighting terrorism.

Making a statement at the UN Counter-Terrorism Centre meeting, India's Permanent Representative to the UN Syed Akbaruddin said here last evening that as a victim of terrorism for the past several decades, India was cognizant of the nature of this menace.

He pointed out to the rise in the number of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and said it posed increasing threats and challenges and needed to be effectively countered. He also said the financing of terrorism was crucial in the fight against terrorism.

He expressed appreciation of the efforts of the UNCCT in Central Asia and Central and Southern Africa through support of regional counter-terrorism strategies, border management, and the projects on youth skill development and employment facilitation in South Asia.

296. US President Obama to make historic first presidential visit to Hiroshima

US President Barack Obama is to visit Hiroshima this month - the first serving President to travel to the Japanese city, which was hit by a US nuclear attack in 1945. The visit will be part of an Asian trip that will also take in Vietnam. The Hiroshima bombing on 6 August 1945 killed 140,000 people. Along with a second bombing on Nagasaki - it is credited with ending World War Two.

Jimmy Carter has visited Hiroshima, but after the end of his Presidency. A statement from Mr Obama's press secretary read the President will make an historic visit to Hiroshima with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to highlight his continued commitment to pursuing peace and security in a world without nuclear weapons.

The President's communications adviser, Ben Rhodes, said Mr Obama would not revisit the use of the atomic bomb in World War Two but would "offer a forward-looking vision focused on the shared future. Mr Obama will also take part in the G7 summit in Japan's Ise-Shima peninsula.

297. Pak opposes India and G4 allies pitch for UNSC permanent membership

Pakistan has opposed the bid by India and its G4 allies for permanent seats in the UN Security Council, saying their demand was based on poor logic and reflected self-serving national ambitions of a few countries.

Pakistan's envoy to the UN Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi, at the informal meeting of the General Assembly on Inter-Governmental Negotiations on Security Council reform, said the objective of the Council's expansion should be to respond to the concerns and aspirations of all, not just a few.

India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin, speaking on behalf of the G4 nations -- Brazil, Germany, India and Japan -- had said at the meeting that the problem of imbalance of influence in the Council cannot be corrected if only non-permanent members are added to the powerful UN body.

298. SHRCs set up in 26 States so far: Rijiju

The government has said that State Human Rights Commissions, SHRCs have been set up so far in 26 States out of 29 States. In a written reply in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Home Affairs, Kiren Rijiju today said that Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are having a combined State Human Rights Commission.

Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland have so far not set up State Human Rights Commission. He said the National Human Rights Commission has requested these States to establish SHRCs at an early date. The Central Government has also written to the States concerned to expedite the setting up of SHRCs.

299. India to send largest ever contingent to Rio Olympics

India will send its largest ever contingent - about 90 sports persons - to Olympics being held in Rio beginning 5th of August.

The Lok Sabha was informed today about this by Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju, while replying on behalf of Sports Minister Sarbananda Sonowal during the Question Hour. He said about 90 athletes have qualified for Olympics in Rio. India will send the largest ever contingent this year.

Mr. Rijiju said 58 sports persons have qualified for individual events while 32 hockey players -- both men and women -- also qualified to participate the Olympics. The Minister said special assistance has been given to sporting talents for their training both in India and abroad.

Trinamool Congress MP and former footballer Prasun Banerjee, who had participated in Olympics in Moscow in 1980, said there was no dearth of talent in India but sports persons face problems in getting assistance and proper infrastructure.

Mr. Rijiju said government was always ready to accept suggestions and advice for improvement of sports, sporting infrastructure and promotion of athletes.

300. Shashank Manohar steps down as BCCI president

Shashank Manohar today stepped down as Board of Control for Cricket in India, BCCI, President barely seven months after being appointed.

In a letter addressed to BCCI Secretary Anurag Thakur, Mr. Manohar tendered his resignation with immediate effect from the post of President of BCCI and as the representative of BCCI on the International Cricket Council (ICC), and also from the the Asian Cricket Council. In his letter he thanked his colleagues and the staff for their support and cooperation. As per BCCI rules, a Special General Meeting has to be convened within 15 days, apprising the members of the current situation.

BCCI today accepted and confirmed Shashank Manohar's resignation from the post of President, acknowledging the contribution made by the senior cricket administrator in running the game during his tenure.

According to sources, Mr. Manohar would now contest for the post of Chairman of ICC. The ICC has set a rule that its Chairman should be of independent nature and can't act in dual role keeping his position as his country's cricketing chief. ICC's election process for its new President will begin on Saturday.

Sources also suggest that Mr. Manohar left BCCI's coveted post as he believed that recommendations made by Lodha panel are impossible to implement. He had taken over as cricket body's president after the demise of Jagmohan Dalmiya in October 2015. This was his second stint as the head of the cricketing body.

301. World Migratory Bird Day - May - 10

Stop the Illegal Killing, Taking and Trade of Migratory Birds World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) was initiated in 2006 and is an annual awareness-raising campaign highlighting the need for the conservation of migratory birds and their habitats. Each year, on the second weekend in May, people around the world take action and organize public events such as bird festivals, education programmes, exhibitions and bird-watching excursions to celebrate WMBD. However, countries or regions observing the peak of migrations at other times of the year are encouraged to celebrate WMBD when it is most appropriate for them.

302. Mahesh Babu to adopt Siddhapuram village

Superstar Mahesh Babu on Monday revealed that he will be adopting Siddhapuram village in Telangana as part of the initiative to give back to the society, inspired from the reel story of his latest Telugu blockbuster Srimanthudu. After much thought @KTRTRS garu and myself have chosen to adopt Siddhapuram village of Kottur mandal in Mahabubnagar district (sic), Mahesh posted on his Twitter page. It was at the behest of Telangana Minister for Panchayatraj, Rural Development and Information Technology K.T. Rama Rao that Mahesh Babu decided to adopt a village.

303. MP TOURISM WINS 'BEST INDIAN DESTINATION FOR WILDLIFE' AWARD

Madhya Pradesh Tourism (MPT) has received the "Best Indian Destination for Wildlife" award by the Lonely Planet Group.

The award was handed over to MPT at a function in Mumbai by actress Amy Jackson, an official release said.

On behalf of MPT Chairman, his Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Vinod Kumar Amar received the award.

Madhya Pradesh has 25 wild life sanctuaries including nine National Parks. Among them Kanha, Bandhavgarh and Pench are ideal habitat for tigers.

Madhya Pradesh has launched number of programmes for the conservation of flora and fauna because of which Kanha and Pench were regarded as the most beautiful national parks in Asia while Bandhavgarh and Pench are known world over because of tiger reserves.

304. RITU BERI TO DESIGN UNIFORM FOR RAILWAY STAFF

With the aim of giving a distinct identity with a style, railways has roped in famous fashion designer Ritu Beri to design dress for its employees including station master, loco pilot, train ticket examiner and guard.

The international fashion designer will design new uniform for all railway employees which will have direct interface with public, said Railway Board Chairman AK Mital.

Currently, railway staff including TTEs and guards have uniform which were designed long ago.

According to the plan, all staff dealing with customers such as personnel involved in ticket and parcel booking and onboard staff will have new uniform now.

Besides, she will also bring out a common uniform which can be used by all employees including senior officials of the national transporters.

Common uniform can be used for ceremonial occasion like celebration of Railway Day, said a senior official involved with the project.

Her new collection will also involve saree and T-shirts as she has been told to offer a complete package for railways.

She is expected to make her presentation in July.

However, she will not charge any fee and design the dress for free, the official said.

Earlier railways had roped in NIFT for designing interior of coaches and selecting colour scheme for new trains like Tejas, Hamsafar and Uday service.

305. Gorakhpur scientist bags SGD 3mn grant from Singapore's NRF

Dr. Manvendra K Singh, an Indian scientist from Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur city, has been awarded a grant of SGD 3mn (about Rs. 14.7 crore) by the National Research Foundation, Singapore, to research in congenital and adult cardiovascular diseases. The NRF, a department within the Prime Ministers Office, Singapore, is responsible for developing strategies, policies and plans for research, innovation and enterprise. Dr. Singh, who works as an assistant professor in the cardiovascular and metabolic disorders programme at Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore, said he is among the seven young scientists from across the world to be endowed with the Singapore NRF fellowship to carry out cutting-edge research this year. He has been awarded the fellowship to pursue research in the field of congenital and adult cardiovascular diseases. Singh said his research interest is to study congenital and adult heart diseases, which are the leading causes of mortality worldwide. In Singapore, cardiovascular disease accounted for 30 per cent of the total deaths in 2014. Our laboratory studies the molecular mechanisms that regulate cardiovascular development, homeostasis and disease. Our goal is to understand how signaling pathways and transcriptional networks regulate cardiovascular cell lineages differentiation and their interaction during heart morphogenesis. Our work aims for better understanding of congenital human diseases of the heart by establishing mouse models for these disorders and delineating the molecular changes associated with them, he said. Singh, also an adjunct assistant professor at National Heart Research Institute Singapore and Department of Cell and Developmental Biology, University of Pennsylvania, USA. He did MSc Biotechnology from Madurai Kamaraj University before joining MD/Ph.D program in Molecular Medicine at Hannover Medical School, Germany. Singh further said he has also been awarded PhD prize from Hannover Biomedical Research School, Germany for his PhD thesis, excellent performance as an international student and for his social and cultural engagement. Our long-term goal is to apply lessons learned from our developmental studies to better understand and treat cardiovascular diseases,

306. World's first holographic flexible smartphone developed

Scientists claim to have developed the world's first holographic flexible smartphone that lets users interact with 3D videos and images without any headgear or glasses. The device, dubbed HoloFlex, is capable of rendering 3D images with motion parallax and stereoscopy to multiple simultaneous users without head tracking or glasses. HoloFlex offers a completely new way of interacting with your smartphone. It allows for glasses-free interactions with 3D video and images in a way that does not encumber the user, said Roel Vertegaal, from Queens University in Canada. HoloFlex features a 1920x1080 full high-definition Flexible Organic Light Emitting Diode (FOLED) touchscreen display. Images are rendered into 12-pixel wide circular blocks rendering the full view of the 3D object from a particular viewpoint. These pixel blocks project through a 3D printed flexible microlens array consisting of over 16,000 fisheye lenses. The resulting 160x104 resolution image allows users to inspect a 3D object from any angle simply by rotating the phone. HoloFlex is also equipped with a bend sensor, which allows for the user to bend the phone as a means of moving objects along the z-axis of the display. Vertegaal envisions a number of applications for the new functionality of the HoloFlex technology. A first application is the use of bend gestures for Z-Input to facilitate the editing of 3D models, for example, when 3D printing. Using the touchscreen, a user can swipe to manipulate objects in the x and y axes, while squeezing the display to move objects along the z-axis. Due to the wide view angle, multiple users can examine a 3D model simultaneously from different points of view.

307. National Technology Day on May 11

National Technology Day is a very special day for Indian Technology since 1999. It is so significant because India

achieved a huge technological advancement on the day. The first, indigenous aircraft Hansa-3 was test flown at Bangalore on this day. Not only this, India also performed successful test firing of the Trishul missile on the same day. India also executed three successful nuclear tests, carried out at Pokhran, in Rajasthan May 11. This years theme for celebrations of the Technology Day is Technology enablers of Startup India.

308. Congress wins Uttarakhand floor test; Prez Rule revoked in the State

Congress has won the floor test in Uttarakhand Assembly. The Supreme Court today declared that Mr Harish Rawat got 33 votes out of 61 in the Assembly. The apex court said Mr Rawat will assume office as Chief Minister after President's rule is revoked.

The court said no irregularities were found in the voting. The result of the trust vote was handed over to the Supreme Court in a sealed cover early today along with video recording of the proceedings in the State Assembly.

President's Rule has been revoked in Uttarakhand. The Union Cabinet took the decision after Supreme Court declared that Congress has won the floor test in Uttarakhand Assembly.

The decision to revoke the President's rule in Uttarakhand has created an atmosphere of jubilation in state Congress camp. The Congress has stated it is a victory of democracy.

Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi has said democracy has won in Uttarakhand. In a series of tweets, Mr Gandhi said, the party did its best while BJP did their worst. He said it is a lesson for all, that people of the country and institutions built by its founding fathers will not tolerate murder of democracy.

309. Indian Navy decommissions fighter planes Sea Harriers

Indian Navy has decommissioned its fleet of iconic Sea Harriers. The Naval Air Squadron 300 - I N A S 300, popularly known as 'white tigers', today de-inducted these fighter aircrafts and replaced them with new generation Mig 29 K fighters in a touching ceremony on INS Hansa near Vasco. Wing Commander Shikhu Raj, a Sea Harrier Pilot himself and the commander of the squadron handed over the command of the squadron to Captain KHV Singh in an historic ceremony and bid adieu to the Sea Harriers. The function was presided over by the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R. K. Dhowan.

Called the glorious heritage of Indian Navy, Sea Harriers were inducted in 1983 and played a pivotal role in various operations. Designed and manufactured by British Aerospace, Sea Harrier is a naval Short-Vertical Take-Off and Landing Jet Fighter, used for both reconnaissance and strike. They operated from both INS Vikrant and INS Viraat aircraft carriers and participated in operations including Vijay and Parakram apart from many naval exercises.

The use of the ski jump take offs from a short flight deck with a heavier load was a specialty of these 33 year serving fighter jets. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral R. K. Dhowan informed that the newly inducted Mig 29ks will be operational from INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier and have already acquired long duration training. Presently 45 MIG 29k are being introduced.

Interacting with the media after the function Admiral Dhowan said the Indian naval aviation is on the threshold of transformation. Presently Navy has more than 200 aircrafts and helicopters combat ready. Replying to a question he also said that aircraft Carrier Virat is to be de-commissioned and the navy is working out the modalities with the Ministry. He also said that Navy is adequately equipped to meet challenges and envisages to acquire more capabilities in near future.

310. Indian Navy launches underwater vigil system in Visakhapatnam

Indian Navy has launched the state-of-the-art Harbour Defence Systems, viz., Integrated Underwater Harbour Defence and Surveillance System (IUHDSS) and Mine Warfare Data Centre (MWDC) which would enhance the Navys surveillance capability and response to security threats at the Naval Dockyard in Visakhapatnam yesterday. Vice Admiral HCS Bisht, AVSM Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command inaugurated the two systems.

The IUHDSS is a multi-sensor system capable of detecting, identifying, tracking and generating warnings for all types of surface and underwater threats to Visakhapatnam harbour. Post 26/11, the Indian Navy was made responsible for the security of the countrys vast coastline of 7516 km in coordination with other agencies like Indian Coast Guard, Marine Police, Fisheries, etc.

The creation of the Sagar Prahari Bal, induction of Fast Interceptor Crafts (FICs) and commissioning of the IUHDSS are some of the Navys measures to strengthen security. While the MWDC will collate, analyse and classify data collected by the Navys Mine Hunting Ships from various ports along the East coast. This state-of-the-art facility will be the nodal centre for maintaining an underwater information database of harbours along the East coast. The Harbour Defence Systems will function under the control of the Naval Officer-in-Charge (Andhra Pradesh), Commodore Sanjiv Issar.

311. Bangladesh hangs Jamaat-e-Islami chief Nizami for war crimes

Bangladesh authorities have hanged fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami chief Motiur Rahman Nizami for war crimes committed during the country's 1971 Liberation War. Police said, 73-year old Nizami was hanged at Dhaka Central Jail midnight last night. He is the senior most Islamist to be executed in Bangladesh for war crimes during the liberation war against Pakistan.

Nizami's final appeal against his death sentence was rejected by the apex court on May 5. A former minister in previous BNP-led Khaleda Zia government, Nizami was in jail since 2010, when he was arrested for war crimes.

He was given capital punishment in October 2014 by the international crimes tribunal. He was particularly found guilty of systematic killings of over 450 people alone in his own village. With his execution, Nizami becomes the fifth top perpetrator to be hanged for the war crimes against humanity since the trial process began six years ago.

312. Nasa's Kepler telescope finds largest trove of exoplanets, boosts hope for 'another Earth'

Nasa announced on Tuesday the discovery of 1,284 new planets outside our solar system, more than doubling the number of exoplanets found with the Kepler space telescope. This gives us hope that somewhere out there, around a star much like ours, we can eventually discover another Earth, said Ellen Stofan, chief scientist at Nasa headquarters in Washington. The unmanned Kepler space observatory, which launched in 2009, has been scanning 150,000 stars for signs of orbiting bodies, particularly those that might be able to support life. It works by observing a dimming in the light of a star, known as a transit, each time an orbiting planet passes in front of it. Of the nearly 5,000 total planet candidates found to date, more than 3,200 now have been verified, and 2,325 of these were discovered by Kepler, Nasa said in a statement. Of the new trove of 1,284, nearly 550 could be rocky planets like Earth, based on their size, the US space agency said. Nine of these orbit in their suns habitable zone, which is the distance from a star where orbiting planets can have surface temperatures that allow liquid water to pool. The addition of these nine means that 21 exoplanets now are known to be circling their stars in the so-called habitable zone, and may harbor life. However, Kepler is a statistical mission, Nasa scientists said, and is not designed to probe further into the environmental conditions of planets that exist in the so-called Goldilocks zone of their stars neither too hot nor too cold to sustain life. That means even the most advanced space telescopes now being built, including the James Webb Space Telescope, may not be able to shed much more light on the nature of life if it exists on another of these distant exoplanets. If you ask yourself the question, where is the nearest potentially habitable planet likely to be, you find that it is going to be within about 11 light-years, said Natalie Batalha, Kepler mission scientist at Nasas Ames Research Centre. Although she described that distance as astronomically speaking... very close, one light-year equals about 9.5 trillion km, and no spacecraft or technology exists to travel that far. However, Kepler has already opened up a great deal about the galaxy that surrounds us. Before the Kepler space telescope launched, we did not know whether exoplanets were rare or common in the galaxy. Thanks to Kepler and the research community, we now know there could be more planets than stars, said Paul Hertz, astrophysics division director at Nasa headquarters. This knowledge informs the future missions that are needed to take us ever closer to finding out whether we are alone in the universe. The latest trove of planets was confirmed by a new statistical method, instead of the time-consuming, one-by-one process previously used. This statistical analysis method can be applied to many planet candidates simultaneously, according to Timothy Morton, associate research scholar at Princeton University and lead author of a paper describing the findings in The Astrophysical Journal. Kepler survived an emergency last month, when some kind of transient event... triggered a barrage of false alarms that eventually overwhelmed the system, Nasa said. The space telescope suffered another crisis in 2013, related to a problem

with the reaction wheels that typically keep the spacecraft steady. Nasa saved it back then, and set the spacecraft on a new mission called K2, to study supernovas, star clusters and far-off galaxies. The latest failure, which Nasa described as leaving the spacecraft in a fuel-intensive coma, was discovered on April 8. Engineers on Earth were able to rescue Kepler and restored its ability to collect data on April 22.

313. 'Oldest axe' was made by early Australians

The fingernail-sized sliver of basalt is ground smooth at one end and appears to date from 44 to 49,000 years ago. This is not long after humans first settled Australia - and several thousand years earlier than previous, similar ground-stone discoveries. The findings appear [in the journal Australian Archaeology](#). Although much older "hand axes", usually made of flint, have been found across Europe and Africa - one well-known example [found on a Norfolk beach](#) is thought to be 700,000 years old - those were very different tools. Axe blades made from harder stone, painstakingly battered into blades, are known from sites in several discrete locations around the globe including northern Asia, the Americas - and Australia. Archaeologists have deduced that they were usually attached to a handle to form a tool much like a hatchet. Such implements are often associated with the development of agriculture but ancient examples from Australia vastly pre-date agriculture anywhere in the world - and this latest fragment is even a good 10,000 years older than [similar finds](#) in the far north of the continent. It suggests an adaptation to a new environment by the very first Australians, according to the research team who discovered it. "We know that they didn't have axes where they came from," said Prof Sue O'Connor from the Australian National University. "There's no axes in the islands to our north. They arrived in Australia and innovated axes."

314. Perishable Cargo Complex inaugurated at Ahmedabad airport

Gujarat Chief Minister today inaugurated the Center of Perishable Cargo complex in Ahmedabad. The center has 14,600 MT annual capacity. It has various chambers to keep vegetables, fruits and other farm produces afresh for longer time. The Chief Minister expressed faith that with the help of this facility, the farmers of Gujarat will be able to export their produce to America, England, Russia, France, Europe, Singapore, UAE and other countries. Gujarat Agro Industries Corporation has leased the Perishable Cargo complex to private party for operation and management. The facility has capacity to store 40 MT food per day. There are total four cold storage, each has capacity of 10 tonne. First cold storage will store vegetables that need zero degree temperature. The second cold storage will have temperature in range of -18 degree C to -22 degree C. It will be used for storage of frozen food. Third cold storage will store fruits and vegetables at 8 degrees C. Fourth cold storage will be used to store transit food at 15 degree C temperature. Thus this perishable cargo center has food storage facility in range of -22 degree to 15 degree temperature. The center has X-ray luggage machine facility also. Security check, custom check, X-ray screening, air flight loading all facilities will be available at single place with this facility in place. During the inauguration function Nanabhai Jebalia said this complex was operationalized in 2010, but then Congress government led by Dr Manmohan Singh had not allowed it to function. When Narendrabhai became Prime Minister, within first week he ordered file related to this center and approved it. The officials from there called us to inform about this approval. Later due to some court and tender process, the inauguration is taking place today. Jebalia said the state government has organized Mango festival in Ahmedabad like every year, but next year 2,000 farmers will be trained for best quality of Mangoes and Mango festival will be held across 10 cities including Delhi. Jebalia said liquid bio fertilizer produced by Gujarat Agro Corporation has forced other producers to reduce price. Liquid bio fertilizer gives better results compared to Urea.

315. AP govt to set up healthcare ATMs in interior areas

To provide uninterrupted medical services in tribal and interior rural areas, Andhra Pradesh government has decided to expand the reach by permitting the Health and Family Welfare department to set up healthcare ATMs in 25 primary health centres located in interior areas. The decision was taken in view of the shortage of doctors in the PHCs in the State which stands at 18 per cent as against the national average of 26 per cent. The State government had decided to open two such ATMs per district except Nellore where only the PHC at Mahimalur would have the provision of the ATM.

This forms part of the Centres scheme for PHCs having no doctors or those with workload of less than 15 patients a day. It will be implemented by using SMS-based patient vital parameter monitor, non-invasive haemoglobin meter, on-site urine sensitivity device, networked to a medical call centre attended by a qualified doctor who receives the patient details.

The doctor at the call centre evaluate the condition of the patient and speaks to him, if necessary, and decide whether he/she needs to be referred to a centre where a doctor is available or whether he could be treated locally with medication. The doctor would recommend a prescription and commands the ATM, equipped with a drug dispenser, to dispense only the drug prescribed while the person manning the ATM would explain the dosage to the patient.

316. RBI to issue Rs 1000 banknotes with inset letter R

Reserve Bank of India will shortly issue banknotes of 1000 rupees denominations with inset letter 'R' in both the number panels. In a release, RBI said that the banknotes will also have on the obverse, all the other security features, including ascending size of numerals, bleed lines and enlarged identification mark.

It added that the banknotes bearing signature of RBI Governor Raghuram G Rajan, will also have the year of printing '2016' printed on the reverse. It also added that All the banknotes in the denomination of 1000 rupees issued by RBI in the past, would continue to be legal tender.

317. Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine launched in Odisha

The Inactivated Poliovirus Vaccine (IPV) that provides children with additional protection against polio was launched today in Odisha by Sri Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak, the Honble Minister, HFW and IPR, Govt. of Odisha in presence of dignitaries from government and development partners. The IPV vaccine (injectable), protects children against all three forms of poliovirus and when used in combination with Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV), serves the dual purpose of quickly boosting the child's immunity to polio, thus boosting overall population immunity and helps in preventing any possible polio outbreak in the country. In line with India's commitment to the Polio Endgame Strategic Plan (2013-2018), two fractional doses of IPV are being introduced into the routine immunization programme in eight states - Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Maharashtra and Puducherry. The dose will be administered to children at 6 and 14 weeks along with the first and third dose of OPV and Pentavalent Vaccine. In cases where immunization is delayed, the child can be given IPV up to one year of age. In Odisha, around 853,000 children between 0-1 years will be targeted annually through immunization sessions held in all health facilities and government hospitals every month, across the state. The introduction of IPV in the state is part of a series of new initiatives to improve child mortality, jointly introduced by the Ministry of Health Family Welfare, Govt. of India and Department of Health Family Welfare, Government of Odisha. New effective vaccines are already introduced in phased manner in the Universal Routine Immunization program state-wide, such as the Pentavalent Vaccine in October 2015 followed by Rotavirus Vaccine in March 2016 and Bivalent Oral Polio vaccine in April 25, 2016.

318. President of India to present National Florence Nightingale Awards

President Pranab Mukherjee today presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards to thirty-five nursing personnel at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of International Nurses Day.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Mukherjee said, nursing professionals are the backbone of the healthcare system and nurses play a vital role in all aspects of healthcare, be it national health campaigns like polio eradication, mid-wife services and community education.

He said, their level of commitment and care are much valued in both urban and rural areas, including remote areas of the country. Mr Mukherjee said, their contribution is critical in the achievement of the nation's healthcare goals.

The President said, their inputs into health sector policies are equally important for they help in creating the necessary supportive work environment for their practice.

Mr Mukherjee said, emerging global threats such as microbial resistance, new pandemics, infections, and natural disasters have added to the pressure and demands on healthcare services and the services of nurses are crucial for a response system that a government creates to meet these challenges.

He said, nursing personnel in the country are increasingly better educated and well-trained and they are now more adept at communicating with patients, and connecting with citizens, communities and policy makers.

He said, in the next fifteen years or so, the nature of their services will undergo significant change and training and capacity building in this field will require new levels of innovation and leadership. He said, the premium all communities in the world place on the sensitivity, empathy and humanity of Indian nurses.

The National Florence Nightingale Awards are given by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare as a mark of recognition for the meritorious services rendered by the nurses and nursing professionals in the country.

The Award carries a cash award of 50 thousand rupees, a certificate, a citation and a medal. The International Nurses Day is celebrated all over the world on 12th May every year to commemorate Florence Nightingale's birthday.

319. India Mauritius DTAA- what is new in the modification?

India and Mauritius have made a historical modification to their popular Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement. The modification is that the right to tax capital gains made in India by Mauritius based investors will be with India. So from 2019-20 onwards, companies based in Mauritius who sell shares in India should pay capital gains tax in India. Till now, the right to tax capital gains was with Mauritius as a resident country (because, residence based taxation was followed by both countries regarding capital gains tax). The capital gains tax modification will be applicable on share transactions only. Capital gains in shares means a higher price while selling shares compared to the purchased price. The tax will be on the gain or increased value. Why the modification? Mauritius- a country with just 3 crore people was the largest source of foreign investment into India over the last fifteen years. This is only because of the DTAA between the two countries. Two important group of investors investors from other countries and domestic investors from India have channelized their investment through Mauritius to avoid taxes. The first phenomenon (investment by foreigners) is known as treaty shopping and the second one (investment by Indians) is known as round tripping. The most important reason from the present modification is to fight black money. Large amount of money is kept by Indians in other countries and it is coming back into the country as foreign investment. Mauritius route provides black money holders an opportunity to bring back their illegal money in the form of foreign investment and avoid further taxes. All fight against black money will fail unless overseas stored black income is allowed to make a legal come back. What is the future? There are many international efforts by governments to fight black money. Countries are trying to stop double nonpayment of taxes. Double nonpayment means an income is not taxed in both countries- in the resident country (e.g. Mauritius) and in the resident country (e.g. India). So India will correct similar tax treaties also like the Singapore DTAA to impose capital gains tax on shares. From the angle of checking black money and imposing an appropriate tax on profits, the modification brought by the government is a good move.

320. India and Mauritius modifies the DTAA; Capital gains tax becomes source based

In a major agreement that may redirect capital flows into India, the government has modified Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Mauritius. Both countries have made the amendment thirty-three years into the running of the DTAA which was signed in 1983. As per the modification, capital gains made by a Mauritius registered company on share selling in India will be taxed in India. The tax becomes source based (tax should be paid at the source of tax (e.g. India) rather than residence based (e.g. Mauritius) of the entity that makes the income). This change will help India to reduce the DTAA misuses of round tripping and treaty shopping. Majority of the FDI coming from Mauritius are investment made by Indian origin entities or persons. The White Paper on Black Money has pointed out round tripping as a major opportunity for black income generators. The source basing of capital gains tax implies that if a Mauritius company makes profit while selling shares, it will be taxed in accordance with the tax rate in India. Now, the major implication is that both FPIs and FDIs who exit India that comes from Mauritius should pay tax in India for the profit of selling shares at a higher price. An interesting development of the treaty is that Mauritius will become less attractive compared to Singapore. Already, FDI from Singapore is rising and that from Mauritius is slowing down ever since India has modified the DTAA with Singapore and supported it with other bilateral agreements. As per the Singapore-India tax treaty, the sale of shares in an Indian company by a Singapore entity should generally be taxed in Singapore. The limitation of benefit clause stipulates that if some conditions (easy) are met, the Singapore company who is making capital gains in India should pay tax in Singapore. There is no capital gains tax in Singapore. At the same time, the tax regime in Singapore is robust and superior compared to Mauritius.

321. Parliament passes Appropriation, Finance Bills 2016; Also clears Insolvency and Bankruptcy Bill

Parliament today passed Appropriation and Finance Bills with Rajya Sabha returning them to the Lok Sabha after a

four-hour debate. It also cleared the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

Replying to the debate on Appropriation and Finance Bills, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley asked the Congress to reconsider the decision on Goods and Services Tax.

Conceding that the GST was originally initiated by the Congress, Mr. Jaitley said he will again be discussing the issue with leaders of the main opposition party.

Responding to Congress demand for a cap of 18 per cent tax in GST, the Finance Minister said it cannot be made the upper limit in the Constitution.

He argued that in case of drought in the future, the Constitution cannot be changed again and again. On Congress demand that dispute between centre and states on GST should be settled by a committee of Judges of the Supreme Court. Mr. Jaitley said this is a political issue and should not be surrendered to the judiciary.

Parliament also passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 with Rajya Sabha approving it today. The Lok Sabha had passed it last week.

The Code seeks to consolidate and amend the laws relating to reorganization and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time bound manner.

The bill provides for setting up of a Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India to regulate professionals, agencies and information utilities engaged in resolution of insolvencies of companies.

As per the code, in case of insolvency, interest of the workers should be fully protected and they should be given dues for 24 months.

The code provides for establishment of National Companies Law Tribunal and Debt Recovery Tribunals as adjudicating authorities for resolution of insolvency, liquidation and bankruptcy.

It is expected that the legislation will give a push to the ease of doing business in the country.

The bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 21st of December last year and was referred to the Joint Committee of both the Houses. The Committee submitted its report on 28th of last month.

322. TRAI regulation on call drops is arbitrary, unreasonable: SC

The Supreme Court today struck down the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, TRAI, regulation making it mandatory for telecom companies to compensate subscribers for call drops. The court held the regulation as arbitrary, unreasonable and non-transparent.

The apex court passed the judgement on the appeals filed by a body of Unified Telecom Service Providers of India and 21 telecom operators, including Vodafone, Bharti Airtel and Reliance. TRAI had earlier told the Supreme Court that it will take action against the Telcom companies for call drops to protect the interests of consumers as the service providers are not willing to compensate them.

323. Parliament passes bill to upgrade RAU into central varsity

A bill to upgrade the Rajendra Agricultural University in [Bihar](#) into a central university was today passed by both Rajya Sabha and the [Lok Sabha](#) on the same day, possibly a rare development. [The bill](#) seeks further development of agriculture and advancement of learning and research in agriculture and allied science. The bill was first passed by the Rajya Sabha and hours later, the Lok Sabha approved it without any discussion. Agriculture Minister Radha [Mohan Singh](#) said the institute was set up by British government in 1904 and was shifted to Delhi-based Pusa after the earthquake in Bihar. The Bill declares the existing Rajendra Agricultural University in Pusa, Bihar which was incorporated under the Bihar Agricultural University Act, 1987 as an institute of national importance. The university

will impart education in different branches of agriculture. The headquarters of the university will be Pusa in Bihar and it will have powers to establish campuses at such other places within its jurisdiction as it may deem fit provided that the university should integrate the existing campus and other associated facilities of the RAU and the effective date of take-over will be specified in the gazette notification. The Rajendra Central Agricultural University Bill, which was introduced on December 23, 2015 in the Upper House, was passed with certain amendments. Among key amendments include changing the name of university as 'Dr [Rajendra Prasad](#) Central Agricultural University' from 'Rajendra Agriculture University (RAU)'. Total expenditure for the establishment of the central agriculture university would be Rs 295 crore during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 fiscals. The expenditure will be met by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). It may be noted that though a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed by the Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh and the then Bihar chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi in January, the matter had got stuck in political logjam.

324. Govt doubles SDRF fund to Rs 61,000 core for 2015-20

The government today it has doubled the allocation to Rs 61,000 core for the State Disaster Response Fund for 2015 to 2020.

Replying to a debate on drought and water crisis in the country, Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh told the Lok Sabha that the Congress had earmarked only Rs 33,580 crore for 2010 to 2014.

He said, the work done by the NDA government in the last two years is beyond comparison with that of Congress during 60 years of rule.

He also informed the House that Food Security Act has been currently implemented in 33 states Union Territories adding that additional foodgrains has been provided to Karnataka and Maharashtra.

He also said, Mid Day Meal scheme will continue in summer vacations also. He said, the criteria for compensation in case of damage to crops was relaxed from 50 per cent to 33 per cent.

The Agriculture Minister said that the compensation in case of death from natural calamities has also been hiked from Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs 4 lakh. Mr Singh said, the government has expedited the work on Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.

325. President Mukherjee to attend centenary year celebrations of BHU

President Pranab Mukherjee will visit Varanasi on Thursday, where he will deliver a special lecture on centenary year of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU). According to a BHU press release, he will deliver his speech at the Swatantrata Bhawan at 6 p.m. Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik will be the Guest of Honour and Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University Karan Singh will preside the function. The President will also attend Ganga Saptami at the Dshaswamedh Ghat of Varanasi in the early morning hours. However, district information officer said that the President may visit Kashi Vishwanath temple also, before leaving for Delhi. Elaborate security arrangements have been made in the temple town in view his two days visit.

326. Rwanda hosts 26th World Economic Forum on Africa

Rwanda will host the 26th annual World Economic Forum on Africa starting Wednesday. More than 1,500 delegates from global and regional corporations are expected to attend this summit. The theme of this years summit is: Connecting Africas Resources Through Digital Transformation. The digital transformation gives us the possibility of rapid progress. For example, in trade in Africa, taking into account the energy deficit, taking into account respect of agriculture. I will focus on these three. To this you can add the e-commerce. Just in 2013, I said that there would be \$8 billion at stake and it is estimated that if we can accelerate the pace of 2020, 2025 this could rise to 50 billion, said Elsie Kanza, Director of the World Economic Forum for Africa. The overall theme for the forum whose main meeting is held in Davos, Switzerland every January is, The Fourth Industrial Revolution. The theme seeks to open up discussions on how African economies can use digital technologies to facilitate development. Claver Gatete, Rwandas Finance Minister said: How we grow, what are the challenges that we have on the African continent, how we think and act about it? We will not only think as what the government can do, but also what can the business do. How we can work together to ensure

sustainable development. How we are going to face the challenges of economic growth and how to include everyone in this growth. About 10 heads of state and governments have confirmed attendance as well as numerous business leaders representing corporations from across the world.

327. Nine Sherpas become first climbers to scale Everest after two years of deadly disasters

Nine Nepalese Sherpas today conquered Mount Everest, becoming the first climbers to scale the mountain in two years after a series of deadly disasters forced a shutdown of expeditions to the world's highest peak. A team of nine Sherpas, from different expeditions who were fixing ropes from Everest South Col up to the Summit, have reached the 8,848-metre peak, said Ang Tshering Sherpa, president of Nepal Mountaineering Association. This was the first successful expedition to Everest since the deadly avalanche killed in 2014 that killed 16 Sherpa mountain guides. No climber had reached the top of the mountain in 2014 and 2015 owing to different avalanches, including the one triggered by the magnitude-7.6 earthquake on April 25, 2015. Many climbers abandoned the mountain last year after an earthquake-triggered avalanche killed 18 people at Everest base camp. The Nepalese Sherpa guides are hired by expeditions to carry equipment and fix ropes on the icy and rocky slopes for the use of the foreign climbers. Nearly 300 foreign climbers and their guides are attempting to reach the summit this year. A climbing route up to South Col (7,906 m) was opened on Friday. Earlier, 10 mountain guides were selected from different expedition teams.

328. Nagaland, NSE launches financial literacy course to educate students

The National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) and the Nagaland Board of Secondary Education (NBSE) today launched a Financial Literacy course for students of Class IX in Nagaland from the current academic year. Over 60 schools under the NBSE will offer the course, which is mandatory for all students of class IX. As of now, 5,150 students have registered for the course. The NSE had conducted a teacher training programme for the schools taking up this course at the NBSE in Kohima on February 5 and 6. The curriculum will cover income and expenditure, importance of savings, elementary knowledge about banking system, basics of financial planning, money management, setting financial goals, etc. Students will have to complete the course within a maximum time of 25 hours. The objective of this initiative is to help the students inculcate the habit of savings from young age and to develop financial and investment capabilities. This initiative is unique because it helps build a necessary life skill in the young minds and prepare them for the future even before they begin their professional career. Nagaland Minister of School Education and SCERT Yitachu said, We need to take such programmes to rural areas so that the urban-rural divide is bridged faster. He said this while meeting with NSE officials before the launch of the programme. Addressing the programme, Chitra Ramkrishna, MD CEO, NSE, said, Such programmes are helping students develop a life skill.

329. Nagaland govt mulls on introducing biometric system in education, health centers

Nagaland Minister of PHED, Tokheho Yepthomi has reiterated the need for introduction of biometric attendance systems in various institutions, especially in education and health centers to check the attendance, where absence of teachers and presence of proxy employees were rampant.

Inaugurating the newly constructed Government Middle School building at Bamunpukhuri B village in Dimapur, the Minister said the shortage of science and mathematics teachers is being felt as most Naga students are disinclined to study the subjects while qualified science and mathematics teachers from outside the state do not want to come to Nagaland.

Tokheho further highlighted the predicament in education by citing appointment of hundreds of Hindi teachers during 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, but most of who possessed false certificates. He said if such was the condition of the education system, students cannot be expected to progress.

He also pointed out that salary of Government teachers in primary schools was much higher than that of teachers in private schools, yet the qualitative output of the latter was much better.

330. Art of Living to initiate health, education projects in Nagaland

Governor of Nagaland and Assam P.B. Acharya, visited the Art of Living Centre, Mumbai, to meet the founder of the Art of Living, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. The meeting focused on service projects for betterment in the Health Education sector in Nagaland, particularly in the Indo-Myanmar border covering Mon, Tuensang and Kiphire districts of Nagaland.

The Art of Living will set up a health centre to provide medical facilities for common ailments, basic emergency services as well as promote indigenous medical systems. It will also be used as a staging area for periodic medical camps in remote locations.

Governor Acharya also felt the need to set up an orphanage and schools in the border districts to promote holistic value based education. These projects will be executed via people to people programme with the Art of Living and Indian National Fellowship Centre (INFC), Mumbai and any NGO to work with the grassroots community leaders.

Thousands of Nagas living in Indo-Myanmar border are lacking in education and health. The Governor was of the opinion that if the Art of Living Trust takes initiative, there is a scope for Public Private Partnership (PPP) Hospital, School, Nursing College, Medical College, Orphanage, Health Centre at the border area.

331. Panama commits to automatic exchange of tax data for with other countries

Panama, has committed to the internationally accepted norm of automatic sharing of financial and tax data with other countries, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said.

The Paris based organisation in a statement said Bahrain, Lebanon, Nauru and Vanuatu are also signing up to the agreement which around 100 countries have now joined. It added that exchanges in accordance with the Common Reporting Standard developed by the OECD and G-20 countries are expected to start in September 2018.

The OECD had last month called a meeting of tax investigators from across the globe to discuss the fallout and way forward after the Panama Papers disclosures were made by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ).

While India is a not a full member of the OECD, it is compliant to its norms and protocols to deal with tax evasion and money laundering crimes being probed by it with regard to global ramifications.

332. Today in History - May 11

0330 - Constantinople, previously the town of Byzantium, was founded.

1573 - Henry of Anjou became the first elected king of Poland.

1647 - Peter Stuyvesant arrived in New Amsterdam to become governor.

1689 - French and English naval battle takes place at Bantry Bay.

1745 - French forces defeat an Anglo-Dutch-Hanoverian army at Fontenoy.

1792 - The Columbia River was discovered by Captain Robert Gray.

1812 - British prime Minister Spencer Perceval was shot by a bankrupt banker in the lobby of the House of Commons.

1816 - The American Bible Society was formed in New York City.

1857 - Indian mutineers seized Delhi from the British.

1858 - [Minnesota](#) was admitted as the 32nd [U.S.](#) state.

1860 - Giuseppe Garibaldi landed at Marsala, Sicily.

1889 - Major Joseph Washington Wham takes charge of \$28,000 in gold and silver to pay troops at various points in the [Arizona](#) Territory. The money was stolen in a train robbery.

1894 - Workers at the Pullman Palace Car Company in [Illinois](#) went on strike.

1910 - Glacier National Park in [Montana](#) was established.

1927 - The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences was founded.

1934 - A severe two-day dust storm stripped the topsoil from the great plains of the U.S. and created a "Dust Bowl." The storm was one of many.

1944 - A major offensive was launched by the allied forces in central Italy.

1947 - The creation of the tubeless tire was announced by the B.F. Goodrich Company.

1949 - Siam changed its name to Thailand.

1960 - Israeli soldiers captured Adolf Eichmann in Buenos Aires.

1967 - The siege of Khe Sanh ended.

1985 - More than 50 people died when a flash fire swept a soccer stadium in Bradford, England.

1995 - The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty was extended indefinitely. The treaty limited the spread of nuclear material for military purposes.

1996 - An Atlanta-bound ValuJet DC-9 caught fire shortly after takeoff from Miami and crashed into the [Florida](#) Everglades. All 110 people on board were killed.

1997 - Garry Kasparov, world chess champion, lost his first ever multi-game match. He lost to IBM's chess computer Deep Blue. It was the first time a computer had beaten a world-champion player.

1998 - India conducted its first underground nuclear tests, three of them, in 24 years. The tests were in violation of a global ban on nuclear testing.

1998 - A French mint produced the first coins of Europe's single currency. The coin is known as the euro.

2001 - U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft announced his decision to approve a 30-day delay of the execution of convicted Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. McVeigh had been scheduled to be executed on May 16, 2001. The delay was because the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had failed to disclose thousands of documents to McVeigh's defense team. ([Oklahoma](#))

333. Today in History - May 12

1588 - King Henry III fled Paris after Henry of Guise triumphantly entered the city.

1780 - Charleston, South Carolina fell to British forces.

1847 - William Clayton invented the odometer.

1870 - Manitoba entered the Confederation as a Canadian province.

1881 - Tunisia, in North Africa became a French protectorate.

1885 - In the Battle of Batoche, French Canadians rebelled against the Canadian government.

1888 - Charles Sherrill of the Yale track team became the first runner to use the crouching start for a fast break in a foot race.

1926 - The airship Norge became the first vessel to fly over the North Pole.

1926 - In Britain, a general strike by trade unions ended. The strike began on May 3, 1926.

1937 - Britain's King George VI was crowned at Westminster Abbey.

1940 - The Nazi conquest of France began with the German army crossing Muese River.

1942 - The Soviet Army launched its first major offensive of World War II and took Kharkov in the eastern Ukraine from the German army.

1943 - The Axis forces in North Africa surrendered during World War II.

1949 - The Soviet Union announced an end to the Berlin Blockade.

1950 - The American Bowling Congress abolished its white males-only membership restriction after 34 years.

1957 - A.J. Foyt won his first auto racing victory in Kansas City, [MO](#).

1965 - West Germany and Israel exchanged letters establishing diplomatic relations.

1970 - Ernie Banks, of the Chicago Cubs, hit his 500th home run.

1975 - [U.S.](#) merchant ship Mayaguez was seized by Cambodian forces in international waters.

1978 - The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced that they would no longer exclusively name hurricanes after women.

1982 - South Africa unveiled a plan that would give voting rights to citizens of Asian and mixed-race descent, but not to blacks.

1984 - South African prisoner Nelson Mandela saw his wife for the first time in 22 years.

1999 - Russian President Boris Yeltsin dismissed Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov and named Interior Minister Sergei Stepashin as his successor.

2002 - Former [U.S. President Carter](#) arrived in Cuba for a visit with Fidel Castro. It was the first time a U.S. head of state, in or out of office, had gone to the island since Castro's 1959 revolution.

2003 - In Texas, fifty-nine Democratic lawmakers went into hiding over a dispute with Republican's over a congressional redistricting plan.

2008 - In the U.S., the price for a one-ounce First-Class stamp increased from 41 to 42 cents.

2015 - It was announced that Verizon would be acquiring AOL.

334. NALCO inks R&D agreement with BARC

State-run NALCO said it has signed an MoU with Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Mumbai, for research and development cooperation in the fields of mutual interest. Under the MoU, RD projects like Extraction of Gallium from Bayer liquor, Extraction of rare earth elements from Red Mud and Development of Reference Standards would be

taken up, a company release said here. Extraction of Gallium from Bayer Liquor will be NALCO's first RD project with BARC with an objective to develop indigenous technology for this strategic metal, for our country, Nalco CMD Tapan Kumar Chand said. The pact was signed by BK Satpathy, Executive Director (Business Development), NALCO and Jagtap, Director (Chemistry Group), BARC in presence of NALCO CMD, Dr Chand and Principal Scientific Advisor to Union Government and Chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Cabinet, Dr Rajagopal Chidambaram.

335. Goa AG Atmaram Nadkarni made Additional Solicitor General

Senior counsel Atmaram Nadkarni, Goas Advocate General since 2012, has been appointed Additional Solicitor General in the Supreme Court of India. In an [earlier interview](#) with Bar Bench, Nadkarni had said as Advocate General, he had not faced any pressure from the State government. He also said that his role as AG was to inform the state government when it was crossing the line. After the NDA government came to power at the Centre in 2014, Nadkarni has regularly been seen at the Supreme Court. Completing his masters in law from Bombay, Nadkarni started off working in the chambers of a retired High Court judge, before moving back to Goa in 1996. It is not clear as to who will replace Nadkarni as Goas Advocate General.

336. Mukesh Ambani-owned Reliance Jio Infocomm launches digital wallet

Mumbai based Reliance Jio has launched digital wallet service called JioMoney for common people. With this users can do mobile and DTH recharges, send/receive money, make bill payments, pay insurance and other premiums et al. JioMoney is powered by 4G small cell technology.

This JioMoney is like already existing digital payment platforms such as PayTm, FreeCharge that will allow people to make cashless transactions at various outlets including both online shopping platforms and offline stores.

Reliance has partnered with over 50000 merchants to enable transactions through JioMoney on their respective platforms.

Reliance Industries has 95% stake in Infotel Broadband Services Limited (IBSL) of Rs 4,800 crore, IBBL was the only firm to win broadband spectrum in all 22 zones in India in the 4G auction.

337. India vs Pakistan: Why Can't we just be Friends by Husain Haqqani

A forthcoming book titled India vs Pakistan: Why Can't we just be Friends? was in the news in the second week of May 2016. The book is authored by former Pakistani Ambassador to the U.S. Husain Haqqani. The book on India-Pakistan relations stirred a controversy because it exposed Pakistan's role in the 26/11 terror attacks. The book recounts the visit by ex-ISI chief General Pasha to Washington on 24 and 25 December 2008, where he made the startling admission. During the visit, General Pasha had admitted to the author that the planners of the 26/11 attacks were our people but it was not our operation. Who is Husain Haqqani? Husain Haqqani is a Pakistani leading South Asia expert, journalist, academic, political activist and former ambassador of Pakistan to Sri Lanka and the United States. He has written two books on Pakistan. These books are Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military, and Magnificent Delusions: Pakistan, the United States, and an Epic History of Misunderstanding. He is currently a Senior Fellow and Director for South and Central Asia at the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C. He worked as a journalist from 1980 to 1988, and then as political adviser for Nawaz Sharif and spokesperson for Benazir Bhutto. From 1992 to 1993, he was ambassador to Sri Lanka. In 1999, he was exiled following criticisms against the government of then-President Pervez Musharraf. He was appointed as Pakistan's ambassador in April 2008, but his tenure ended after the Memogate incident, when the claim was made that he had been insufficiently protective of Pakistan's interests. A judicial commission was set up by the Supreme Court of Pakistan to probe the allegations against him. According to commission's report, which was issued in June 2012, he was declared guilty of authoring a memo, which called for direct US intervention into Pakistan. However, Pakistan's Supreme Court noted that the commission was only expressing an opinion.

338. International Nurses Day - May 12

International Nurses Day is celebrated around the world every May 12, the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's birth. The International Council of Nurses commemorates this important day each year with the production and distribution of the International Nurses' Day (IND) Kit. The IND Kit 2016 contains educational and public information materials, for use by nurses everywhere. The IND theme for 2016 is : Nurses: A Force for Change: Improving health systems' resilience. The content of this year's kit, including the poster image are posted here as downloadable documents for use by individual nurses, associations, health ministries and health institutions. Though mainly planned around May 12 each year, IND activities continue for much of the year by nurses and others. We encourage nurses everywhere to

make extended use of the Nurses: A Force for Change: Improving health systems' resilience kit throughout the year, through individual action and group activities.

339. 4 out of top 5 world's most polluted cities in India, Delhi ranks 9th

World Health Organization has said that India is home to four of the five cities in the world with the worst air pollution.

But while WHO experts acknowledge India faces a huge challenge, many countries are so bad that they have no monitoring system and cannot be included in its ranking.

The dirtiest air was recorded at Zabol in Iran, which suffers from months of dust storms in the summer. The next four are all Indian cities - Gwalior, Allahabad, Patna and Raipur. India's capital New Delhi is the ninth worst city, measured by the amount of particulate matter under 2.5 micrograms found in every cubic metre of air.

Maria Neira, head of public health, environmental and social determinants of health at the WHO, praised India's government for developing a national plan to deal with the problem when others have been unable to.

340. Prez appoints CJs of MP, Allahabad & Kerala HCs as SC judges

President Pranab Mukherjee today appointed Chief Justices of the Madhya Pradesh High Court, the Allahabad High court and that of the Kerala High court as judges of the Supreme Court.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, the President also appointed senior advocate Lavu Nageswara Rao, as SC judge.

Chief Justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar, Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court Dr Justice Dhananjaya Yashwant Chandrachud, and Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court Justice Ashok Bhushan to be a Judge of the Supreme Court of India with effect from the date they assume charge of his office.

341. US activates \$800m missile shield base in Romania

The US has activated a land-based missile defence station in Romania, which will form part of a larger and controversial European shield. Senior US and Nato officials attended the ceremony in Deveselu, southern Romania. The US says the Aegis system is a shield to protect Nato countries from short and medium-range missiles, particularly from the Middle East. But Russia sees it as a security threat - a claim denied by Nato. Relations between the West and Russia have deteriorated since Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's southern Crimea peninsula in 2014. Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and other senior officials from the military alliance attended the opening ceremony at [an old Romanian air base in Deveselu](#), 180km (110 miles) south-west of Bucharest. The site hosts radar and SM-2 missile interceptors, and will be integrated into Nato's missile shield when the bloc meets this summer. Both Nato and US officials have attempted to reassure Russia that the shield in Romania, and a similar one in Poland, does not undermine Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent. "The interceptors are too few and located too far south or too close to Russia to be able to intercept Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles," Mr Stoltenberg said. He said the interceptors were designed "instead to tackle the potential threat posed by short and medium-range attacks from outside the Euro-Atlantic area". But Russia says installing such shields in countries on its doorstep is a threat to its security. "Who will this system be against?" President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, questioned. "To begin with the explanation we were given was a potential rocket attack from Iran... Now we know the situation has changed dramatically." How does the missile shield work? The defence system allows on-shore sites and warships to shoot down enemy ballistic missiles while they are still in space. The interceptor missiles are fired to hit missiles before they re-enter the atmosphere, stopping them well before there is any danger of causing any damage. The US is believed to have spent \$800m (554m) on the site in Romania, where work began in 2013. On Friday, another phase of the project will be launched in Poland with a groundbreaking ceremony at [Redzikowo, near the Baltic Sea](#). Aegis missiles are to become operational there in 2018.

342. PM Nawaz, Central Asian leaders launch CASA-1000 project in Tajikistan

Leaders of four Asian countries broke ground on a \$1 billion Western-backed project to send surplus electricity from

ex-Soviet Central Asia to alleviate Pakistans chronic energy shortages. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif joined Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon, Kyrgyz Prime Minister Sooronbay Jeenbekov and Afghan Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah in Tajikistans city of Tursunzoda to launch construction of the electricity link backed by Washington and the World Bank. The 1,200 kilometre (746-mile), 1300 megawatt electricity link called CASA-1000 is set to connect the four countries by 2018. US Deputy Assistant Secretary for Central Asia Daniel Rosenblum said at the ceremony that Washington has allocated \$15 million to the project. This project connects the markets of Central and South Asia, the US official said in comments translated into Russian. [PM Nawaz, Tajik president agree to boost energy ties](#) All the participating countries win from this project: both the suppliers and consumers of electricity, he said. The successful completion of this project will open doors for the completion of other projects in the region, Rosenblum added. Tajikistan, a mountainous country that generates almost all its electricity from hydroelectric power and has an energy surplus in summer, is expected to supply more than 75 per cent of the electricity. Neighbouring Kyrgyzstan will supply the remainder for the electricity line that will end in Peshwar in energy-starved countrys north. [Tajikistan looks to promote trade in Pakistan](#) The overall supply potential of the shared grid has been cast under doubt as ex-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan battle growing energy deficits, however. Both countries have failed to attract investment to build two mega-dams that would revamp their ageing national grids and increase the supply potential of CASA-1000. Pakistan has long suffered chronic energy shortages, while the population of much of Afghanistan lives without stable electricity despite billions of aid dollars spent on energy infrastructure. But Afghanistan said on Wednesday it would only play a transit role in CASA-1000 as it seeks to develop its own hydroelectric power potential. Britain, the European Investment Bank and Islamic Development Bank are also financing the CASA-1000 project.

343. **Haryana govt to send proposal to obtain wildlife clearances for Gurgaon-Farrukhnagar road**

Haryana Government has decided to send a proposal to the National Board for Wildlife to obtain wildlife clearances for four-laning of Gurgaon-Farrukhnagar road passing along the eco-sensitive zone of Sultanpur National Park. A decision to this effect was taken in the third meeting of the State Wildlife Board held under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister Mr Manohar Lal at Chandigarh today.

The State Wildlife Board today approved this proposal to be sent to National Board for Wildlife with some mitigation measures including plantation of trees, construction of speed-brakers, no extraction of ground water within the limit of eco-sensitive zone, no construction plant such as hot mix plant to be set up within the limit of eco-sensitive zone, no construction activity to be carried out after 6 pm upto one kilometer from the boundary of the park and fixing noise limit of all the construction equipment as per defined standards.

The widening of road is required for smooth movement of vehicular traffic and to reduce accidents. Stressing the need for water conservation, Chief Minister directed the officers to carry out a survey for developing lakes in the state. He also emphasized the need to explore possibilities for bringing water to the Badkhal Lake.

344. **More than 2,400 pigs die due to PRRS in Mizoram**

In Mizoram, with 17 pigs already dead recently, more than 2,400 pigs are reported dead due to Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome(PRRS) in Champhai District.

According to State AH Vety Department, it has been confirmed that PRRS has spread to Lunglei and Lawngtlai districts as well.

Proper arrangement for treatment for cases of pigs with PRRS disease have been made by the state AH Vety department and medicines have been sent to these districts for treatment.

District authorities has given an alert warning to the people against consuming pork and disposal of the corpse. The state Govt. has also prohibited import of pigs from neighbouring Myanmar which is suspected to be the main carrier of the PRRS virus.

345. **Industrial output growth down to 0.1% in March**

Growth in the country's industrial production slowed to 0.1 per cent in March this year, due to poor performance of the manufacturing and mining sectors, and a sharp fall in capital goods output.

Factory output measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production, IIP, had expanded 2.5 per cent in March last year. According to data released by the Central Statistics Office, manufacturing sector output, which accounts for over 75 percent of the index, contracted 1.2 per cent in March, and mining sector output shrank 0.1 per cent during the month.

But electricity generation surged 11.3 per cent in March. Capital goods output, which is a barometer of investment, contracted 15.4 per cent in March. And the consumer goods sector recorded a small growth of 0.4 per cent in March.

346. Retail inflation jumps to 5.39% in Apr on high food prices

Retail inflation climbed to 5.39 per cent in April this year, on the back of higher food prices. Inflation based on the consumer price index had stood at a six-month low of 4.83 percent in March this year, and at 4.87 percent in April last year.

According to data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, food inflation rose to 6.32 per cent in April, from 5.21 in March.

Retail inflation in vegetables increased to 4.82 percent, while in cereals and products it remained unchanged at 2.43 percent in April. But retail inflation in the fuel and light segment softened to 3.03 per cent during the month.

347. Wrestling: Sushil out; Narsingh to compete at Rio

Taking a final call, Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) president Brijbhushan Singh today clearly stated that Narsingh Yadav will head for the Rio games as he earned the nation an Olympic quota in the 74-kg category.

Putting a final stop on raging controversy between Sushil Kumar and Yadav, he said, the decision has been made, the one who has qualified will make to the Rio, adding that it has been the tradition of the country.

Notably, Sushil was left out of the probables list sent to the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) today. The WFI President also clarified that they had not made any statement regarding the trials between the grapplers and said that the whole issue was sensationalised by the media.

348. Ritu Rani, Raghunath & Dharamvir recommended for Arjuna Award

Hockey India has recommended women's team captain Ritu Rani, VR Raghunath and Dharamvir Singh for the Arjuna Award. Hockey India said in a statement that the players have been

recommended as they have done India proud by earning several accolades internationally. It said, they deserve every recognition and appreciation for their efforts in making the nation shine in various tournaments.

Hockey India has also recommended Sylvanus Dung Dung for the Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award. Veteran Coach CR Kumar has been recommended for the Dronacharya Award.

349. Legendary West Indies commentator Tony Cozier passes away

Legendary West Indies commentator Tony Cozier has died in his native Barbados aged 75 yesterday. A familiar and respected voice around the world, the Barbadian will be remembered for a career in TV, radio and journalism spanning 58 years.

Born in Bridgetown in 1940, he made his BBC Test Match Special debut in 1966 and also wrote several books. The International Cricket Council contributed to a flood of tributes from around the cricket world.

350. Shashank Manohar elected unopposed as chairman of ICC

Former BCCI President Shashank Manohar has been elected unopposed as the first independent Chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC). After the election, crickets global body said, Mr Manohar took the charge with immediate effect for a tenure of two years. Following the reforms initiated by the ICC, the new Chairman must be an independent candidate with no formal links to any other cricket body. An administrator with a clean image, Mr Manohar

resigned as President of BCCI on Tuesday.

Commenting on his election, Mr Manohar said it is an honour to be elected as the Chairman of the International Cricket Council and for that he is thankful to all the ICC directors who have put their faith and trust in his abilities.

351. What is double non-payment of taxes in relation to DTAA?

Imagine that a foreign investor from Singapore comes to India, buy shares and makes profit (in the form of a capital gains). That income or profit is to be taxed in accordance with the DTAA signed between India and Singapore. As per the India Singapore DTAA, a Singapore entity can pay taxes for the capital gains income he crated in India in Singapore. Now if the tax rate in Singapore for capital gains is zero, the Singapore entity need not pay any taxes. In effect, the investor from Singapore not pays taxes in India as well as in Singapore. This is called double nonpayment of taxes. Double non-payment of taxes in relation to DTAA implies an entity is not paying taxes in both countries- in the resident county as well as in the source country. For a multinational company or an investor, it will have a resident country which is the country where it has registered. The foreign country where it operates and generated the concerned income is the source country. The ideal principle in international taxation is to avoid double taxation a bad situation where an entity pays tax in both countries in the resident country and in the source country. To avoid double taxation, Double taxation agreements are signed by countries. But many low tax countries and tax havens doesnt impose taxes. This allows an income and company to escape from tax payment. The new attempt is thus to avoid double non-payment of taxation. The India Mauritius treaty has been amended to eliminated this trend. A company should pay taxes at least in one place- either in the source country or in the resident country. As per the renewed treaty, Mauritius investor investing in India and creating capital gains should pay taxes in India. Why double nonpayment has current importance? At present several attempts are made at different forums to minimize tax avoidance by companies. The OECD has introduced the concept of Base Erosion and Profit Shifting to check extreme tax avoidance by MNCs.

352. RBI's on tap bank licensing policy will give the NBFCs a chance to convert into banks

The Reserve Bank of India has published draft guidelines for giving continuous licenses for private sector banks. The policy which was adopted couple of years back and announced in the budget is known as on tap bank licensing where eligible candidates will be provided license regularly. As per the guidelines, entities and individuals can apply for bank licenses. Such a license will enable them to start full-fledged universal banks. Several conditions regarding eligibility of the applicant- separate for individuals and NBFCs, promoters shareholding norms, fit and proper criteria etc are elaborated by the RBI. Regarding capital, the minimum capital required is Rs 5 billion as in the case of existing stipulations. Promoters can hold less than 10 per cent stake. Individual applicants should have a minimum experience of ten years. There are several NBFCs that applied for license in 2014 when Bandhan and IDFC were given bank license. Now, many NBFCs may think twice before application as there is strict shareholding limitations as well as additional capital requirements under Basel III. The RBI has stated that the present guidelines are designed in the context of the recent bank licensing initiatives and the differentiated bank license policy experiences. Based on the experience of licensing two universal banks in 2014 and that of granting in-principle approvals for Small Finance Banks and Payments Banks, the Reserve Bank has now worked out a new framework for granting licences for universal banks on a continuous basis. the draft has added about the guidelines.

353. ECB to set up cyber attack warning system for banks

The European Central Bank will set up a database to register incidents of cyber crime at commercial banks, aiming to create an early warning and analysis system for big lenders, it told a German newspaper on Thursday. Attackers earlier this year stole \$81 million from a Bangladesh central bank account at the New York Fed in one of the biggest-ever cyber heists, heightening global concerns over cyber security. The ECB has been running a pilot project since February with 18 larger euro zone banks and plans to roll out the system after a year to all ECB-supervised banks, Handelsblatt said in a report confirmed by the ECB. The aim is to collect information on major cyber incidents that present serious security dangers, allowing the ECB to spot patterns and warn other banks of emerging threats, Francois-Louis Michaud, deputy director general of the central bank's Micro-Prudential Supervision division, told the paper. The ECB supervises 129 of the biggest banking groups in the euro zone, which hold over 80 percent of all the banking assets in the currency union.

354. WHO approves new, faster treatment for drug-resistant TB

The World Health Organization approved a new treatment for multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), a crucial step towards replacing an old, costly therapy that is brutal on patients and only 50-percent effective. An estimated 480,000 people contract MDR-TB each year, accounting for roughly five per cent of the 9.6 million TB cases recorded annually worldwide. Unlike simple tuberculosis, MDR-TB has proved extremely difficult to treat, requiring patients to take painful injections and thousands of pills over a period of 18-24 months, often with devastating side effects, including deafness in some cases. The old MDR-TB treatment regimen "is pretty much a tragedy," said Mario Raviglione, the head of WHO's TB programme, noting the 50 percent success rate. The new regimen, which WHO will now encourage all its member-states to adopt, lasts up to nine months, easing the burden on patients and possibly curing more than 80 percent of cases. But it does not include newly-discovered drugs. Instead, it is made up of a cocktail of existing medication, including one repurposed drug originally used to treat leprosy. The treatment process is also cheaper, possibly costing as little as USD 400 (350 euros) per patient, compared to the USD 1,500-USD 3,000 under the old regimen, Raviglione told reporters. "This is a critical step forward," he said. Roughly 30 per cent of MDR-TB patients infected with an especially complicated form of the disease will not be able to benefit from the new treatment regimen, because of added drug resistance. To identify a patient's eligibility for the shorter therapy, the UN's health agency also approved the use of a new diagnostic test which identifies the precise nature of a TB infection within 48 hours. Previous testing took up to three months. TB is a bacterial disease that mostly infects the lungs and kills an estimated 1.5 million people per year, mostly in low and middle income countries. An estimated 190,000 people die from MDR-TB every year. Despite the threat, there has been little investment and research aimed at improving treatment, said I.D. Rusen, vice president of the Union against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, which helped develop the new regimen. "TB hasn't received the attention and profile it deserves," he said, noting that two billion people -- roughly a third of the world's population -- have a latent form of TB in their system.

355. A R Rahman joins Olympic Goodwill Ambassadorsâ€™ list

Oscar winning music composer A R Rahman agreed to be the Goodwill Ambassador of the Indian Olympic contingent, joining cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, ace shooter Abhinav Bindra and Bollywood star [Salman Khan](#). Tendulkar, Salman and Olympic gold medallist Bindra had earlier accepted the role offered by the Indian Olympic Association.

356. Gujarat: MSU girl gets â€™Google Summer of codeâ€™ project

A final year student at the Department of Computer Science Engineering at Faculty of Technology and Engineering, MSU, has bagged [Google](#) backing for her mobile app, also recognized by Digital India. Bhavita Lalwani has also been selected for the Google Summer of code project, under which she will develop a regional language keypad (Indic Language input tool) for smart phones. This project will develop intelligent layouts, which will be scalable to majority of Indian languages. It will also have next word predictions and auto correct and will be developed in ILIT. said Bhavita. The Aadhaar Authenticator app, which verifies an individuals real Aadhaar data via a one time password and biometrics and fingerprints, and her Aadhaar Wallet app have also been considered by the Digital India Research.

357. RBI issues norms for prior approval of branch offices by foreign entities in India

The Reserve Bank of India has said that entities from Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and four other regions including Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iran and Hong Kong or Macau will require its prior approval to establish branch office or project office in India.

RBI has released new guidelines for foreign entities to open a branch office (BO) or a liaison office (LO) or a project office (PO) in India.

It has said that Permission of RBI will also be required for opening a BO/LO/PO in Jammu and Kashmir, North East region and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The apex bank said that its approval would also be required if the applicant is a Non-Government Organization (NGO), a Non-Profit Organization, or a Body/ Agency/ Department of a foreign government.

It further said that approval would also be needed if the principal business of the applicant falls in the four sectors viz, defence, telecom, private security and information and broadcasting.

However, the RBI has clarified that in the case of proposal for opening a PO relating to defence sector, no separate reference or approval of Government of India shall be required if the said non-resident applicant has been awarded a contract by/ entered into an agreement with Ministry of Defence or Service Headquarters or Defence Public Sector Undertakings.

358. Govt approves Rs 1,984-cr Delhi-Meerut Expressway stretch

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for development of 8 and 6 laning of Delhi-Meerut Expressway - Package-II on NH-24 in Uttar Pradesh. The cost is estimated to be around Rs 1984 crore including cost of land acquisition, resettlement and rehabilitation and other pre-construction activities. The total length of the road will be nearly 19 kilometers. This work will be under the National Highways Development Project Phase-VI. An official release said, the project will help in expediting the improvement of infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh and reducing the time and cost of travel for traffic, particularly heavy traffic, plying between Delhi-Meerut on National Highway-24. It will also increase employment potential for local labourers for project activities.

359. India, China, four others sign pact on tax info sharing

India has signed a multilateral pact for automatic exchange of information on tax issues and developing new tools to tackle the tax evasion. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in a release yesterday said; India, Canada, Iceland, Israel, New Zealand and China signed the Multilateral Competent Authority agreement in efforts to boost transparency by multinational enterprises. The signing ceremony took place in Beijing yesterday.

Other countries which have already signed the pact include Australia, France, Germany, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Italy and the UK.

The pact allows all signatories to bilaterally and automatically exchange Country-by-Country Reports with each other. The OECD release added, it will help ensure that the tax administrations obtain a complete understanding of how the multinational enterprises structure their operations, while also ensuring that the confidentiality of such information is safeguarded.

360. India, Bangladesh hold security talks in Dhaka

India and Bangladesh began a five-day dialogue in Dhaka yesterday over a host of security issues, including drug trafficking and cattle smuggling across the border between the two neighbours. A 21-member delegation led by Border Security Force BSF Chief K K Sharma yesterday reached Dhaka to hold the talks with their counterpart Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The Indian team also includes officials from the Union Home Ministry. It will brief the BGB delegation about measures put in place to completely stop instances of cattle smuggling and other illegal substances across the boundary. Sources said, some new measures to enhance the operational efficiency and effective border domination between the two sides will also be discussed during the dialogue.

A joint record of discussions will be signed between the two sides at the end of the Dhaka talks.

361. Air Pollution could cause over 5 lakh premature deaths in India

Air pollution could lead to 570,000 premature deaths in India, according to a new report. For the new study, researchers at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology and the US National Center for Atmospheric Research created computer simulations using 2011 data and found that air pollution could kill more than 570,000 people prematurely. Furthermore, the researchers say, the problem would likely cost the Indian economy hundreds of billions of dollars annually.

Air pollution has been a public health concern in India for years. In February, a report by Greenpeace said it surpassed China in the quantity of fine particulate matter in the air. It found there were 128 micrograms of fine particulate matter in New Delhi's air. By comparison, Washington, DC, had 12. The World Health Organization recommends no more than 10 micrograms. The report said the Indo-Gangetic region, the north of the country, had the most pollution.

362. French government survives no-confidence vote over labour reform

In France, embattled Socialist government survived a vote of no-confidence over its decision to force a controversial labour reform bill through parliament. The motion brought by the centre-right opposition Les Republicains party won 246 votes in the National Assembly, falling short of the 288 required to bring down the government. The draft law will now be debated in the Senate. Unions and student groups marched yesterday in Paris and other cities including Marseille, Nantes and Toulouse, as they have done regularly since the government put forward the reform two months

ago.

363. **Barack Obama Appoints Indian-American To Key Administration Post**

US President Barack Obama has appointed an Indian-American engineer to a key administration post, the White House said.

Manjit Singh, co-founder of the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund has been appointed as the member of President's Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

The announcement came along with several other appointments made by the US President.

"These fine public servants bring a depth of experience and tremendous dedication to their important roles. I look forward to working with them," President Obama said in a statement. President of Agilious, a software technology consulting firm he founded in 2013, Mr Singh is also the co-founder and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, a national Sikh American media, policy and education organization.

He served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Guru Gobind Singh Foundation and also as a Member-at-Large of The Board of the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan in Washington.

Mr Singh received a Master of Science degree from the State University of New York at Albany and a Bachelor of Engineering from the University of Bombay in India.

364. **Singapore terms join Oxford English Dictionary**

Several Singaporean and Hong Kong English terms, including "wah", "shiok" and "yum cha", are now officially recognised as acceptable English. The Oxford English Dictionary added 19 Singaporean terms and 13 Hong Kong terms in its latest update. Wah is an expression of delight or surprise, shiok means cool, and yum cha is a type of Chinese brunch. Additions also include blur, which means confused or ignorant, and sabo, which means to harm or play a prank on. The dictionary included formations of English that are mostly used in Singapore or Hong Kong. The OED records the meaning and development of the English language.

365. **Maharashtra declares drought in 29,000 villages**

Maharashtra government has declared drought in over 29,000 villages of the state, most of them in parched Marathwada and Vidarbha regions. The government through a corrigendum issued from Mumbai clarified that wherever reference is made to a 'drought-like situation' in the state manual, it would be read as drought. The reference is made in accordance with an assurance it gave to the Bombay High Court recently. The state government has also told the Bombay High Court that it has been strictly implementing various schemes and taking measures to mitigate the water scarcity in drought-hit areas, and more particularly in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has also clarified that the villages that have now been declared as affected by drought were already receiving benefits from the government and that the Drought Manual provided only for the word drought-like.

Meanwhile, the opposition Congress and the NCP, however criticized the government stating that the Fadnavis Government is not serious in addressing the situation and the belated move was only meant to avoid judicial action.

366. **Maharashtra CM calls for investments in agriculture to make state drought-proof**

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said that Agriculture should be made drought proof by shifting the paradigm from relief work to investment in agriculture. Speaking at an event in Mumbai yesterday, Mr. Fadnavis said that with an aim to make the state drought free in next five years, the state government plans to create water structures and micro irrigation in 5000 villages across the state. He also stated that Jalyukta Shival Abhyaan would create distributive water structure by water conservation. He asserted that linkages between agriculture sector with secondary and tertiary sectors needed to be developed to create value addition for agriculture products. The Chief Minister gave example of Textile parks in Vidarbha, which aims to help the sector to gain commercial benefits. He also added that besides Agriculture sector, the state government has a clear vision for the development of Mumbai and other big cities in the state. He listed out various infrastructure schemes For Mumbai and Navi Mumbai which are on the top agenda of the Government.

367. Six industries log out of Odisha, Posco plant plan on hold

At least six of 96 major MoU-signed companies with Odisha government have withdrawn their project proposals totalling worth 72,283 crore rupees from the State by now. In response to a question by Congress MLA Kailash Chandra Kulesika, Industries Minister Debi Prasad Mishra informed this in the Assembly yesterday. Of the rest 86 large companies, 46 have already started their projects either partially or fully by investing a total of 2,53,789.03 crore rupees, the Minister said.

About Posco project, the Minister informed that the South Korean steel company has not withdrawn its proposed integrated steel project but has put the project on hold for a temporary period. Posco last month had informed the National Green Tribunal that its steel project in Odisha cannot proceed any further at this stage due to regulatory hurdles. The steel maker told the green panel that it is yet to receive land and forest clearance for setting up the plant. The project is billed as the largest FDI in India.

368. Uttar Pradesh State Government approved 'bicycle highway' between Taj and lion safari

An over 197-km long 'bicycle highway' will be developed from [Taj Mahal](#) in Agra to the lion safari in Etawah to encourage eco-tourism in the vicinity of historical and tourist places.

A meeting of the [Uttar Pradesh](#) Cabinet, presided over by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, yesterday approved the 'bicycle highway' which will not only run along the Agra-Etawah main road but will also cover various historical and tourism centres, an official spokesman said.

Starting from the eastern gate of Taj Mahal, it will cover areas such as Raja Bhoj ki Haveli, Bateshwarnath Temple, Mela Kothi Jarar, Naugava ka Quila and rural areas to reach the lion safari in Etawah, he said.

The state Cabinet also approved the construction cost for an international cricket stadium in Saifai, the native town of SP leader [Mulayam Singh](#) Yadav.

The Cabinet also gave its nod to the implementation of Prime Minister Crop [Insurance](#) scheme from the Kharif season 2016.

369. Government inks MoU with NDTV Ethnic Retail Ltd. to popularize India Handloom products

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between [The Development Commissioner \(Handlooms\), Ministry of Textiles](#), Government of India and NDTV Ethnic Retail Ltd. for popularizing [India Handloom](#) textiles as a fashionable product for youth. The three-year MoU was signed on 10th May, 2016 at Udyog Bhawan. The joint endeavour will endorse and launch a project, Indianroots Fashion Accelerator (IFA), a project by NDTV to support fresh talent and to support new and innovative ventures in fashion industry. Government will support the project with incubation and production support. India Handloom Brand will also provide an interface where fashion professionals will be able to access facilities such as Weavers Service Centres and handloom clusters. The initiative will connect fashion designers with Handloom sector in an organized manner. About India Handloom Brand: The India Handloom Brand was launched by Honble Prime Minister on 7th August, 2015, the first National Handloom Day, to endorse the quality of handloom products in terms of raw material, processing, embellishment, weaving, design and other parameters, besides social and environment compliance. The main objective is to promote the production of quality products with new designs for winning the trust and confidence of customers by giving particular attention to defect free, hand woven, authentic niche products with zero defect and zero impact on environment. The registration under the brand is given after stringent testing of samples in Govt. of India laboratories. As on 1st April, 2016, 170 handloom producing agencies/enterprises have been given registration under the brand, in 41 product categories. Several e-commerce platforms and leading retail stores have been engaged for marketing of India Handloom branded products.

370. Rajya Sabha passes The Indian Trusts (Amendment) Bill

The Indian Trusts (Amendment) Bill, 2015 was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Arun Jaitley, on August 13, 2015. The Bill seeks to amend the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 (Principal Act). The Principal Act regulates the functioning of private trusts and trustees. It also outlines the manner in which surplus funds of the trust may be invested for future use of the trust. The Act lists seven categories of securities in which trust money can be invested. These include some pre-Independence references such as securities issued by the United Kingdom, by

municipalities of Presidency towns, Rangoon, port trust of Karachi etc. In addition, the Act allows investment in any security expressly authorised by the instrument of trust or by the central government by notification, provided that consent is taken of any person who is competent to contract and entitled to receive the trust income for his life. The Bill amends the Principal Act to retain only the last item, and deletes all the other investment avenues specified in the Act.

371. 3-day international Vichaar Mahakumbh inaugurated in MP

RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat inaugurated the three day International conference- Vichaar Mahakumbh during Simhashta fair at Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the valedictory session of the conference on Saturday. AIR correspondent reports that people from all walks of life and society will participate in the Vichar Mahakumbh. It is an effort to discover the solutions to various national and global problems from the perspective of traditional values of life. Participants from all over the world will exchange the views on different aspects, concerns and challenges of sustainable development. In his inaugural address RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat said, the genesis of Kumbh dates back to Vedic times and is associated with the legend Sagar Manthan means Churning of the Ocean. Praising the efforts of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Madhya Pradesh government for recognizing the need to continue this great tradition Mr Bhagwat said the Universal Message of Simhashta will pave the way for betterment of human kind. Conference will hold discourses on various aspects of human welfare like Values, Religion, Spirituality, Environment, Science and Womens Empowerment.

372. BHU completes its 100 years of glorious existence

This globally reputed temple of learning was established by Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya in 1916.

BHU was able to establish its identity brick by brick and its reputation spread throughout the country and across the continents.

BHU was built and nourished by Mahamanna out of contributions from beggars to kings.

Perhaps this was the reason why, among many titles bestowed upon him, Mahamanna was also called a "Prince of Beggars".

Malaviya's vision was to generate national spirit through the power of education and righteousness, achieving the economic development of the country.

The University has two campuses. University's main campus spread over 1,300 acres in Varanasi. Main campus is organised into 5 institutes and 14 faculties and more than 124 departments.

While the second campus South campus, spread over 2,700 acres, hosts the Krishi Vigyan Kendra and is located in Barkachha in Mirzapur district, about 60 km from Banaras.

The University started functioning from 1st October, 1917 with the Central Hindu College as its first constituent College.

The Engineering College was the first to start functioning in the University campus.

Following that, the building of the Arts College, the Physical Laboratory, the Power House, and several workshops of the Engineering College and some residential quarters were ready by 1921.

The Department of Industrial Chemistry was started in July, 1921.

The College which was made to run at Kamachha was shifted in 1921 to a new building known as "Faculty of Arts" inside the University.

The formal opening ceremony of the new buildings was performed on the 13th December, 1921, by Prince of Wales. BHU is one of the largest residential universities in Asia.

Madan Mohan Malaviya indeed occupies a unique position among the freedom fighters and social reformers of our country.

The BHU has produced many great freedom fighters and Nation builders. It has immensely contributed to the progress of the nation.

373. US activates missile defence system in Romania

The US has activated a missile defence system at Deveselu in Romania yesterday. The Deveselu station is equipped with radar and SM-2 missile interceptors, which will attempt to destroy in-coming missile in space. The missile defence system was originally conceived by President George Bush. President Obama reviewed and started implementation in a Phased Adaptive Approach to deploy missile defence in Europe. The new approach is based on the Aegis missile defence system and is being deployed in three main phases from 2011 to 2018. The first phase of European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), American multi-mission Aegis ships were based in Spain. The Aegis Ashore missile defence site in Romania is now activated in Romania in the second phase. Third phase of EPAA will start in Poland and is expected to be completed by 2018. NATO considers the missile defence system as an important measure in protection against medium and short-range missile attacks. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg noted that the fact is that many countries are developing ballistic missile programmes. And NATO, as a defensive alliance, cannot ignore that threat. Missile defence is an important tool for NATO's core task of collective defence, he said. The activation of missile defence system would have geo-strategic implications for the region. NATO claims that the system is defensive and considers that it would enhance the security architecture of Europe. The missile defence system is intended to protect from missile attacks from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Kremlin has voiced concern over the establishment of the missile defence system in Europe. Moscow considers that it is an attempt to destroy the strategic balance in Europe. Russia also alleged that it is a violation of Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, which was signed in 1987. Washington maintains that missile defence system is not intended towards Russia. US Assistant Secretary of State Frank Rose said, Both the US and NATO have made it clear that the system is not designed for or capable of undermining Russia's strategic deterrence capability. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg also argued that geography and physics make it impossible for this missile defence system to undermine the strategic deterrence of Russia. Nevertheless, Russia is sceptical of US and NATO arguments. Russian President Putin has said the US is trying to neutralize Russia's nuclear potential. He further has observed that references to Iran and North Korea nuclear threats are just a cover for the true purpose. Russia believes that the missile defence system poses threat to Russian national security. Russia believes that the Romanian site has the potential to be utilized for other purpose as well. It may be a crucial factor in smallscale conflicts. It is argued that long-range radar, which is part of the AEGIS anti-missile system, might be used for spying on missile tests and aircrafts in Russian airspace. It may provide the US with added intelligence. Russia is also worried that Deveselu could easily and secretly be converted into a cruise missile base, which can attack targets on Russian territory. The activation of the missile defence system would further complicate the geopolitics of Europe. Russia's relations with the West have been deteriorating in recent times. Annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine have created political tension between NATO and Russia. European countries have imposed economic sanctions on Russia. NATO has also planned to enhance its military presence in Eastern Europe. Escalation of NATO military presence in Eastern Europe has been opposed by Russia. It is considered to be an antagonistic move of the US and its NATO allies against Kremlin. Such moves would further deplete mutual trust between the NATO and Russia and may fuel further political tension in the region. Broadly speaking, after almost three decades since the end of the Cold War, the fundamental objective of perpetual peace has yet to be achieved in Europe. Political and security architecture evolved after the end of Cold War did not include Russia. Thus, security measures, such as missile defence system, may create an environment of competition and rivalry in the entire European region.

374. Kenya Is Planning to Close the 'World's Largest Refugee Camp'

Kenya will [close](#) Dadaab refugee camp and is drawing up a timetable to send hundreds of thousands of refugees home or to other countries, the Kenyan Ministry of Interior announced Wednesday in a plan decried by aid agencies and the U.N. As a country we have been glad to help our neighbors and all those in need sometimes at the expense of our security, the ministry said in a [statement](#). But there comes a time when we must think primarily about the security of our people. Ladies and Gentlemen, that time is now. The government cited reasons of pressing national security for the decision to shut Dadaab, which has been called the [world's largest refugee camp](#) and is home to [330,000](#) mostly Somali refugees. It says the sprawling camp has become safe haven for terrorist organizations like al-Shabaab a Somali-based

Islamist group. Although [al-Shabaab](#)'s bloody campaign is focused mainly in Somalia, the al-Qaeda linked militants are responsible for violent raids into Kenya, including the 2013 assault on Nairobi's [Westgate](#) shopping mall, which left 67 dead, and the 2015 massacre at [Garissa University](#), which killed at least 147. Kenya [suggested](#) closing the Dadaab after that attack. The camp was [established](#) in 1991 to receive Somalis fleeing civil war and then received a second influx in 2011 when Somalia was beset by famine and drought, according to the U.N. refugee agency (UNHCR). Its population swelled to nearly half a million before the Kenyan government signed a repatriation [agreement](#) with Somalia and the UNHCR in 2013. After years of stagnation, the Kenyan government has now [earmarked](#) \$10 million and created a task force to expedite the closure. But the UNHCR has [asked](#) Kenya to reconsider shutting Dadaab. It warned of devastating consequences and said the actions may violate Nairobi's international obligations to people in need of sanctuary. International aid agencies echoed this concern. [Human Rights Watch](#) said deportations would punish innocent people and may violate international and Kenyan law. And a group of [non-governmental organizations](#) signed a joint statement warning of far reaching implications for the thousands of refugees.

375. Bison named national mammal of the US

The US has adopted the bison as its national mammal, with President Barack Obama making it official by signing a law. The bald eagle will continue to enjoy the position of the national animal of the US. The law, which regards the bison as a symbol for America's heritage as a whole, stated that the animal's history is "integrally linked with the economic and spiritual lives of many Indian tribes through trade and sacred ceremonies". The first national mammal status for the bison was achieved after a four-year push led by the Wildlife Conservation Society, which is a group associated with the Bronx Zoo in New York. In 1907, the zoo reportedly sent 15 captive-bred, native bison to the first US wildlife refuge in Oklahoma for preservation. Millions of the four-legged beast once roamed across North America, particularly the Great Plains, but unregulated hunting pushed these mammals towards extinction. Their number had come down to mere hundreds by the late 19th century, [the news source stated](#). Less than 50 bison that survived were preserved in Yellowstone National Park under the care of the US Cavalry. Today, the national park houses about [4,900 of these mammals](#). The national park stretches across Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, where the mammal represents the largest band of wild, pure-bred bison. Bison, also known as buffalo, are reportedly among the largest mammals found in North America, with males of the shaggy, hump-shouldered species weighing up to 2,000 pounds and about 6 feet tall. The bison has graced the back of the US nickel for around 25 years and has also found a place on the US Interior Department seal since 1912. However, the government's policy of killing hundreds of these buffaloes every year when their numbers exceed a population target of 3,000 at Yellowstone has been mired by controversy. The policymakers claimed the killings were part of a precautionary measure against the spread of brucellosis disease.

376. ICICI launches country's 1st contactless credit card for SMEs

Private sector lender ICICI Bank today launched the country's first contactless business credit card in association with Jet Airways for small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) and their employees. ICICI Bank is the first bank globally to offer a dual advantage reward programme on the expenses and repayments of the credit card. This card is powered by the VISA payWave contactless technology that enables the cardholder to make payments by simply tapping the card at contactless enabled terminals in more than 48 countries including India, the bank said in a statement. The card can also be used by dipping or swiping at non-contactless merchants. Speaking about the launch, Rajiv Sabharwal, Executive Director, ICICI Bank said, We are delighted to partner with Jet Airways and Visa to introduce the country's first contactless business credit card. This collaboration further underscores our commitment to provide SMBs with solutions that will help them to scale up swiftly. He also said that the co-branded card is yet another compelling proposition that offers upfront savings on business spends, along with a first of its kind benefit of offering rewards on both spends and repayments on a large list of business expense categories. Additionally, the card also gives a complimentary access to Visa's expense management tool allowing entrepreneurs to keep track of all business related spends. Keeping in view the host of benefits on offer, we believe that this card will empower smaller businesses to maximize their business potential and propel them to expand to newer horizons, he said. Gaurang Shetty, Whole-time Director, Jet Airways, said, The new Jet Airways ICICI Bank Business Advantage Card is yet another step by Jet Airways towards creating a world class guest experience by offering a product that appeals to the needs of the SME segment. We are delighted to bring to our guests these unique co-brand card propositions.

377. FPL ties up with Nokero

Chennai-based FPL has partnered with Nokero, to launch off-grid solar products and soon plans to manufacture

these products in India. FPL makes engineering plastics that goes into different kinds of industrial applications and Nokero makes solar lights, phone chargers and is a specialist in solar energy-related products. Nokero Chief Marketing Officer, Nathan South, said that the company is keen to look at street lighting in the country as a business opportunity, due to abundant availability of sunlight in the country. "Our solar street lights with built in batteries, are maintenance free and it pays for itself which can leave a surplus for municipalities, panchayats and other local bodies," he added. The company believes that solar is the way to go in rural parts of India, where infrastructure such as power lines are often not working or have not been laid.

378. Obama Honours Indian-American Teacher Revathi Balakrishnan

An Indian-American woman elementary teacher from Texas has been honored by US President Barack Obama at the White House for her excellent work in the field of education.

Revathi Balakrishnan, a gifted teacher at Patsy Sommer Elementary School, was also named 2016 'Texas Elementary Teacher of the Year'.

"It is not work for me. It is actually a passion," said 53-year-old Austin-based Ms Balakrishnan who has taught in the district's talented and gifted programmes for nine years.

Currently teaching math classes in third through fifth grade at Sommer, Ms Balakrishnan, who was honoured last week, will now represent Texas in the 'National Teacher of the Year' competition.

"I'm an Indian-American, so I think the Indian community is feeling a lot of pride and joy," Ms Balakrishnan said, adding that about 30 per cent of the students at 'Sommer Elementary' are Asian or Indian.

"I feel proud to represent those and I can convince a lot of younger generation Indian kids to turn to teaching for a career. So I feel I can actually have some impact on that," she said.

Ms Balakrishnan has taught at 'Sommer Elementary' for six years before teaching at Forest North Elementary for three years.

Originally from Chennai, Ms Balakrishnan was a systems analyst with Liberty Mutual, managing databases and programming for about 12 years before becoming a teacher.

Terming her style of teaching as "no nonsense", Ms Balakrishnan, who earned her economics degree from University of Madras, attributes her success in the field of education to her love of teaching.

She said the excitement of teaching, learning with students and the opportunity to shape students who are the "leaders of tomorrow" drives her.

"Not one day is the same, which is what I like. I don't like structure. I just go with the flow and I love what happens," Ms Balakrishnan said.

The 'National Teacher of the Year Programme' identifies exceptional teachers in the country, recognises their effective work in the classroom, engages them in a year of professional learning, amplifies their voices and empowers them to participate in policy discussions at the state and national levels

379. Priyanka Chopra bags a slot in 10 Millennial Leaders Around the Globe list

After taking over the West with a storm, Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra has got another feather to add in her hat. She has been recently named in the list of 10 Millennial Leaders Around the Globe. Expressing her happiness over the same, the 33-year-old actress took to her Twitter handle and wrote, So nice to be included in such August company. Thank u @usnews. Other celebrities who have been listed are Malala Yousafzai, Kim Jong Un, Mark Zuckerberg, Prince William, Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen, Rafael Nadal, Sonita Alizadeh and Mhairi Black. On the work front, Priyanka is presently shooting for her Hollywood debut Baywatch.

380. New Chief Justices in Tripura, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan

Justice Tinlianhang Vaiphei of the Guwahati High Court will be the new acting Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court. He will replace Chief Justice Deepak Kumar Gupta, who has been transferred as the Chief Justice of the Chhattisgarh High Court, an official said here on Wednesday. An official release of Union Law Ministry said that Justice Navin Sinha, Chief Justice of the Chhattisgarh High Court has been moved as the Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court. An official of the Tripura law department said that Justice Vaiphei, 60, would assume office on May 16. Separate High Courts were set up in Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya in 2013. Earlier the states were under the jurisdiction of the Guwahati High Court which was the common high court for all the northeastern states. Separate high courts are likely to be set up in Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh after the constructions of the necessary infrastructure, a ministry statement said. The statement said that Justice Ved Prakash Vaish of the Delhi High Court has been transferred to Meghalaya, while Justice Satish Kumar Agnihotri of the Madras High Court has been shifted to Sikkim. The president has directed all the chief justices and judges to assume charge on or before May 23.

381. Ravinder Khatri, Babita Kumari Among Eight Indians to Bag Rio Berths

Wrestlers Ravinder Khatri and Babita Kumari have secured spots at the upcoming [Rio Olympics](#) after their rivals failed a dope test, taking the total number of quota places from India to eight. Khatri was awarded the berth in the Greco-Roman 85 kg after Kenzheev Zhanarbek of Kyrgyzstan tested positive at the Asian [Olympic qualifier](#). Babita gets a shot at competing in Rio with Mongolian wrestler Sumiya Erdenechimeg failing the dope test in 53 kg freestyle, also at the Asian qualifier. Last week, Vinesh Phogat clinched a gold as she and Sakshi Malik secured Rio berths in 48 and 58kg respectively at the second [World Olympic Qualifying tournament](#) in a historic feat of two Indian women wrestlers qualifying for Olympics for the first time. While Vinesh won a gold in 48kg category, Sakshi bagged a silver in 58kg class as they booked a Rio Games quota place each for the country. This is the first time two women wrestlers from India have qualified for the Olympics. At 2012 London Games, Geeta Phogat was the lone Indian female grappler in the fray. In fact, this is the first time that India will be represented in all three formats - men's freestyle, female wrestling and Greco-Roman - at the Olympics.

382. Stephen Curry wins MVP for second straight season

[Golden State Warriors](#) guard [Stephen Curry](#) became the NBA's first unanimous Most Valuable Player on Tuesday, winning the award for a second straight season. Curry, 28, swept all 131 first-place votes, including 130 from a panel of sportswriters and broadcasters and one from the Kia MVP fan vote. [San Antonio Spurs](#) forward [Kawhi Leonard](#) was second in the voting, followed by [Cleveland Cavaliers](#) forward [LeBron James](#). Curry had been an overwhelming favorite to repeat as league MVP since the Warriors' record-setting 24-0 start to the season, which broke the previous record for best start to a season by nine wins. He also led the Warriors to a 73-9 mark, eclipsing the 1995-96 [Chicago Bulls'](#) 72-10 record as the winningest regular season in NBA history. Curry is the first player in league history at any position to average 30 points per game in less than 35 minutes per game over a full season. He is the first two-time MVP in franchise history, and [Wilt Chamberlain](#) (1959-60) is the only other Warriors winner. Curry is the 11th player to win back-to-back MVP awards in the NBA's 70-season existence. James was the last to achieve that feat, with the [Miami Heat](#) in 2012 and 2013.

383. Today in History - May 13

On May 13, 1916, one of Yiddish literature's most famous authors, Sholem Aleichem, died in New York at age 57. In 1607, English colonists arrived by ship at the site of what became the Jamestown settlement in Virginia (the colonists went ashore the next day). In 1846, the United States declared that a state of war already existed with Mexico. In 1918, the first U.S. airmail stamps, featuring a picture of a Curtiss JN-4 biplane, were issued to the public. (On a few of the stamps, the biplane was inadvertently printed upside-down, making them collector's items.) In 1935, T.E. Lawrence was critically injured in a motorcycle accident in Dorset, England; he died six days later. In 1940, in his first speech as British prime minister, Winston Churchill told Parliament, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat." In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Act. The musical play "The Pajama Game" opened on Broadway. In 1958, Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife, Pat, were spat upon and their limousine battered by rocks thrown by anti-U.S. demonstrators in Caracas, Venezuela. In 1968, a one-day general strike took place in France in support of student protesters. In 1973, in tennis' first so-called "Battle of the Sexes," [Bobby Riggs](#) defeated Margaret Court 6-2, 6-1 in Ramona, California. (Billie Jean King soundly defeated Riggs at the Houston Astrodome in September.) In 1981, Pope John Paul II was shot and seriously wounded in St. Peter's Square by Turkish

assailant Mehmet Ali Agca (MEH'-met AH'-lee AH'-juh). In 1985, a confrontation between Philadelphia authorities and the radical group MOVE ended as police dropped a bomb onto the group's row house; 11 people died in the resulting fire that destroyed 61 homes. In 1996, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *44 Liquormart v. Rhode Island*, unanimously struck down Rhode Island's ban on ads that listed or referred to liquor prices, saying the law violated free-speech rights. Ten years ago: Former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton helped Tulane University in New Orleans celebrate its "miracle" commencement, nine months after Hurricane Katrina put two-thirds of the campus under water and scattered students to more than 600 schools nationwide. Five years ago: Two suicide bombers attacked paramilitary police recruits heading home after months of training in northwest Pakistan, killing 87 people in what the Pakistan Taliban called revenge for the U.S. slaying of [Osama bin Laden](#). Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi taunted NATO in an audio broadcast, saying he was alive despite a series of airstrikes and "in a place where you can't get to and kill me." Sen. George Mitchell announced his resignation as the Obama administration's special envoy to the Mideast. One year ago: The House voted 338-88 to end the National Security Agency's bulk collection of Americans' phone records and replace it with a system to search the data held by telephone companies on a case-by-case basis. (The measure was passed by the Senate, and signed into law by President Barack Obama.) Prosecutors and defense attorneys made their final appeals to the jury that would decide the fate of Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE-ehv) as jurors began deliberating whether the Boston Marathon bomber should get life in prison or the death penalty. (The jury voted unanimously for death.) Today's Birthdays: Actor Buck Taylor is 78. Actor [Harvey Keitel](#) is 77. Author Charles Baxter is 69. Actress Zoe Wanamaker is 68. Actor Franklyn Ajaye is 67. Singer Stevie Wonder is 66. Actress Leslie Winston is 60. Producer-writer Alan Ball is 59. Basketball Hall of Famer Dennis Rodman is 55. "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert (kohl-BEHR') is 52. Rock musician John Richardson (The Gin Blossoms) is 52. Actor Tom Verica is 52. Country singer Lari White is 51. Singer Darius Rucker (Hootie and the Blowfish) is 50. Actress Susan Floyd is 48. Contemporary Christian musician Andy Williams (Casting Crowns) is 44. Actress Samantha Morton is 39. Rock musician Mickey Madden (Maroon 5) is 37. Actor Iwan Rheon is 31. Actress-writer-director Lena Dunham is 30. Actor Robert Pattinson is 30. Actress Candice Accola King is 29. Actor Hunter Parrish is 29. Folk-rock musician Wylie Gelber (Dawes) is 28. Actress Debby Ryan is 23.

384. **Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI)**

Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), popularly known as Pusa Institute is located in a sprawling complex spread over 500 hectares in New Delhi. IARI has developed a large number of varieties and hybrids of 14 mandated crops, covering cereals, nutri-millet, pulses, oilseeds and horticultural crops with enhanced productivity, quality and adaptability to different agro-ecosystems coupled with inbuilt resistance to biotic and tolerance to abiotic stresses. It has contributed to the growth of Indian seed industry by making available quality seeds of nearly 200 varieties of field and vegetable crops. The interviews with eminent agriculture scientists and script is done by Ratnadeep Banerji.

385. **National Gallery of Modern Arts**

National Gallery of Modern Arts, NGMA is a repository of the oeuvres of modern artists and sculptors since the end of 19th century that include the likes of Thomas Daniell, Raja Ravi Verma, Abanindranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Gaganendranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Jamini Roy, Amrita Shergill among other vanguards of art movements. Many of these artists impressed art connoisseurs across countries that evoke high of Indian contribution. This feature by Ratnadeep Banerji exemplifies the role played by NGMA Delhi with inputs of its present director, Dr Rajeev Lochan.

386. **National Brain Research Institute**

National Brain Research Institute is an autonomous institute and also a deemed university funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India. Prof Emeritus P N Tandon, considered the father of Indian neuroscience is the driving force behind the institution that is doing commendable research in neuroscience and its education. The interview based programme is scripted and conducted by Ratnadeep Banerjee.

387. **Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana Himachal Pradesh**

Government of Himachal Pradesh has launched a new scheme for development of roads to connect villages across the state. The government has announced the new scheme named as Mukhya Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana in the financial budget 2016-17. Under the Mukhya Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, the state government will develop road connectivity between villages/habitations and cities. The state government received grievances regarding partial connectivity due to non-construction of end roads penetrating into the heart of habitations. The state government has launched the new

scheme in order to provide better and easy facility to the villages and reduce the lifestyle and economic development gap between cities and villages. The state government has set aside Rs. 50 Crore for the Mukhya Mantri Sadak Yojana for the financial year 2016-17. The state government has also approved the second phase of the Himachal Pradesh Road Project worth Rs. 3220 Crore.

388. Provide mid-day meal in schools throughout summer in drought-hit areas: SC

The Supreme Court has directed the state governments to appoint food commissioners to oversee effective implementation of Public Distribution System.

The apex court said that mid-day meal in schools should be given throughout summer season in drought-affected areas. It also directed Centre to release outstanding funds for MNREGA.

The top court directed the Union government to set up Central Employment Guarantee Council as provided in the statute. It however refused to appoint Court Commissioners to implement its directions.

389. Govt unveils new Intellectual Property Rights Policy

The Union Cabinet has approved National Intellectual Property Rights Policy (IPR).

Briefing media in New Delhi this afternoon, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the IPR policy will foster creativity and innovation, promote entrepreneurship and enhance socio-economic and cultural development. He said, its objective is to create awareness about economic, social and cultural benefits of IPRs among all sections of society.

The Minister said, the IPR policy will also focus on enhancing access to healthcare, food security and environmental protection. The Minister said Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion will be the nodal department to coordinate, guide and oversee implementation and future development of IPRs in India.

The policy is aimed at creating and exploiting synergies between all forms of intellectual property (IP), concerned statutes and agencies.

The Finance Minister said, IPR will lay future roadmap for intellectual property and it recognises abundance of creative and innovative energies that flow in India.

Each person must sell his or her product under his/her own name and identity under IPR. The Minister said, there is need for capacity building to implement IPR policy effectively. National IPR policy endeavors for a Creative India and Innovative India. The Policy lays down the following seven objectives: IPR Awareness: Outreach and Promotion - To create public awareness about the economic, social and cultural benefits of IPRs among all sections of society. Generation of IPRs - To stimulate the generation of IPRs. iii. Legal and Legislative Framework - To have strong and effective IPR laws, which balance the interests of rights owners with larger public interest. Administration and Management - To modernize and strengthen service-oriented IPR administration. Commercialization of IPRs - Get value for IPRs through commercialization. Enforcement and Adjudication - To strengthen the enforcement and adjudicatory mechanisms for combating IPR infringements. vii. Human Capital Development - To strengthen and expand human resources, institutions and capacities for teaching, training, research and skill building in IPRs.

390. Nirankari Spiritual leader Baba Hardev Singh dies in Canada road accident

Spiritual leader and Nirankari Mission chief Hardev Singh was killed in a road accident in Montreal, Canada today. He was 62. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed grief over the passing away of Spiritual leader Baba Hardev Singh.

In a tweet, Mr Modi said, Baba Hardev Singhs demise is tragic and a great loss to the spiritual world. The Prime Minister said, his thoughts are with the countless followers of Baba Hardev Singh in this sad time.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh has also expressed grief over the passing away of Spiritual leader. In a tweet, Mr. Singh said he was a not only a spiritual leader but also a social reformer.

Home Minister said, Baba Hardev's demise is a huge loss to the Nirankari Mission. May God give his followers the strength to bear the pain of this tragedy.

391. **President to receive first copies of Tagore's books**

President Pranab Mukherjee will receive the first copies of books, Tagore's Vision of the Contemporary World and Tagore and Russia, on Monday at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. Both books are being published by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

They contain papers presented at international conferences organized by ICCR in New Delhi and Moscow in 2011 as part of the 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore.

392. **Allow transgender students to use toilets of their choice: Obama**

In the US, the Obama administration has told schools to allow transgender pupils to use the toilets that match their chosen gender identity.

Attorney General Loretta Lynch said, it would protect transgender pupils from discrimination and peer harassment.

She said, schools may face lawsuits or lose federal aid if they do not comply. The federal government is fighting the state of North Carolina in court over a law requiring people to use toilets according to their gender at birth.

However, the Obama administration education and justice departments say, public schools must respect transgender pupils' gender identity even if their education records or identity documents indicate a different sex.

Chad Griffin from Human Rights Campaign said, this is a truly significant moment not only for transgender young people but for all young people, sending a message that every student deserves to be treated fairly and supported by their teachers and schools.

393. **World's oldest person dies in New York at age 116**

The oldest known person in the world has died in New York aged 116. Born on an Alabama farm in July 1899, Susannah Mushatt Jones was also the last living American born in the 19th Century. She lived in three centuries, through two world wars and 20 US presidencies.

As one of the last few remaining human links with the 19th Century, Ms Jones has lived through more history than anyone else in the world. An Italian woman, Emma Morano, now takes on the title of oldest person in the world, and is thought to be the last living person to have been born in the 1890s.

394. **Haryana Backward Classes Act 2016 notified**

In Haryana, the state government has notified the Haryana Backward Classes (Reservation in Services and Admission in Educational Institutions) Act 2016.

The act enacted to provide reservation to Jats and four other castes in services and admission in educational institutions in the state.

The Act provides 10 per cent reservation in service for Class III and IV posts and six per cent reservation in Class I and II posts to the Jat, Jat Sikhs, Ror, Bishnoi, Tyagi, Mulla Jat or Muslim Jat in Schedule III.

It will also give 10 per cent reservation for admissions to educational institutions to people belonging to these castes.

As per the notification, 16 per cent reservation has also been provided for Class III and IV posts and 11 per cent in Class I and II posts in schedule I to the people belonging to Backward Classes of A category. These people would also get 16 per cent reservation in admissions in educational institutions.

The Act would also provide 11 per cent reservation for Class III and IV posts and six per cent in Class I and II posts in

Schedule II to the people belonging to Backward Classes of B category.

Those belonging to BC-B category would also be entitled for 11 per cent reservation for admission in educational institutions. A total of 71 castes fall in the list of BC-A category of Schedule, whereas six castes have been included in the list of BC-B category in Schedule II.

395. Parkash Singh panel submits report on Jat quota stir

In Haryana, Parkash Singh committee, headed by former DGP of Uttar Pradesh retired IPS Officer Parkash Singh today submitted its report on Jat Quota agitation to Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal.

The committee was constituted to inquire into the omission and commission on part of all officers and officials of police and civil administration during Jat Quota agitation.

After receiving the report, Chief Minister said that government would examine the report and would take appropriate action accordingly.

The panel submitted its report in two volumes which run into about 450 pages. There is a mention of about 90 officers who have been found guilty. Interacting with media in Chandigarh today, Chairman of the committee Mr. Prakash Singh told that officers who were derelict in performing the duty or showed soft corner for the agitators have been identified and their names have been mentioned in the report. He said that they have even reported the names of those officers who acted responsibly during the Jat quota agitation.

Mr Singh said the committee visited 8 affected districts of the state, inspected the crime scene, gave patient hearing to the aggrieved and listened those who wanted to appear before the committee. He said that some people even handed over video footage of the incident of arson to the committee.

396. SEBI to tighten KYC, transfer norms for P-Notes

Acting upon recommendations of the Special Investigation Team on black money, market watchdog Securities and Exchange Board of India - Sebi plans to tighten due diligence requirements for issuance and transfer of controversy-ridden P-Notes and put the onus on investors to ensure compliance with anti-money laundering law.

These include mandating the issuers of P-Notes to file Suspicious Transaction Reports with the Financial Intelligence Unit. On the KYC norms, they would need to be followed by issuer entities for carrying out customer due diligence of the subscribers.

The Supreme Court appointed SIT on black money last year had suggested that Sebi should strengthen its norms to keep a tab on beneficial ownership of P-Notes as they were widely used by foreign investors and could be prone to misuse.

397. Anil Kumble retained ICC Cricket Committee head, Rahul Dravid made member

Former India captain Anil Kumble has been re-appointed ICC Cricket Committee chairman for a second term of three years while his one-time team-mate Rahul Dravid was named member of the top panel. Kumble, the all-time highest wicket-taker for India, was appointed as the chairman for his first term in 2012 and will now continue to head the panel until 2018.

Another former India captain Dravid and ex-Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene have been appointed to the ICC Cricket Committee, adding even more cricketing experience to the list of eminent people already on the panel. The two have played 1,161 international matches between them from 1996 to 2015, and each has been appointed for a three-year term.

Former Australia off-spinner has been elected as current player representative, replacing Laxman Sivaramakrishnan, who has completed his three-year term. Richard Kettleborough, three-time ICC Umpire of the Year, has been appointed as umpires' representative in the committee.

The ICC Cricket Committee is representative of all stakeholders in the game, including players and umpires. It is empowered to make recommendations on cricket playing issues.

398. What is negative interest rate policy? How it works?

Interest rate is traditionally assumed to be positive. But in recent times, several advanced country central banks are adopting negative interest rate policy. The US Fed also hinted that it will adopt negative interest rate policy if needed. European Central Bank and Japan have already launched negative interest rate policy. When the central bank adopts a negative interest rate policy, it charges an interest rate if commercial banks lends money through its liquidity facility (in India, it is known as reverse repo). What is negative interest rate policy? A negative interest rate means the central bank charges negative interest on deposits made by commercial banks with the central bank. Here, instead of receiving money on deposits, commercial banks must pay to interest to the central bank. The banks will transfer this negative interest rate to their loan and deposit activities. But it is not necessary that banks will be charging negative interest rate, rather they may charge a small reduced interest rate after the central bank policy. When negative interest rate policy is adopted? How it works? The policy is adopted to escape from deflation. During adverse economic conditions households and business people waits for long to see the economy recovering. But this withholding of spending itself will make things worse. Lack of spending will reduce investment and jobs, leading to steep deflation and recession. Here, the best strategy is to incentivize people to spend. For this, more loans should be given. An extremely low interest rate near to negative interest rate will encourage people to borrow and spend. But the working of negative interest rate is unique. Negative interest rate policy adopted by central bank doesn't necessarily mean that negative interest rate for loan takers from commercial banks. Rather they will charge a low and much reduced rate of interest. If the banks are parking their money with the central bank there is negative interest rate. Hence, they will try give it to public. To do this, banks will lower the interest rate further to negligible levels.

399. WHO, PAHO ask pregnant women not to travel to Rio during Olympics

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) have asked pregnant women not to travel to [Rio de Janeiro](#) or to other parts of [Brazil](#) where the Zika virus is present as part of their recommendations for the Olympic Games in August. In a joint communique, the two affiliated organizations on Thursday acknowledged that athletes and the personnel working at the Games need more information about the risks posed by Zika -- which has been linked to microcephaly in newborns -- and the ways to prevent infection, reports Efe. Men who are going to be fathers should practice "safer sex" (i.e. correct use of condoms) or abstain from sex altogether during their partner's pregnancy after they return to their countries from Brazilian zones where Zika is prevalent. All those who visit Rio and other areas where the virus is present should also practice safe sex and not have sexual relations during their stay in Brazil or for at least four weeks after their return, in particular if they show symptoms of the disease, including rash, light fever, conjunctivitis and muscle aches. In addition, they should avoid visiting "impoverished and crowded zones in (Brazilian) cities and towns without potable water and with deficient sanitation, where the risk of being bitten (by a mosquito carrying the virus) is higher." Those attending the Games should also follow the general regulations for using insect repellent and wear light clothing covering most of their bodies, and they should consult a doctor before they depart for Brazil. WHO and PAHO say, however, that the Games are being held during the Brazilian winter when there are fewer active mosquitoes and the risk of being bitten is lower. The WHO/PAHO advisory is also aimed at reducing the concentration of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes which transmit Chikungunya, dengue, yellow fever and Zika. The Olympics and the Paralympic Games will be held in Brazil between August 5 and September 18. The South American giant is one of the nations most affected by the Zika virus, with 1,271 confirmed cases between October 2015 and April 2016, WHO said.

400. International award for eminent Indian space scientist Rao

The International Astronautical Federation (IAF) will honour eminent Indian space scientist U.R. Rao with its 2016 'Hall of Fame' award for his outstanding contribution to astronautics, the Indian space agency said. "The [IAF](#) award is intended to reward personalities for their contributions to the progress of astronautics and the federation," state-run Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a statement here. Rao, 84, will receive the award and a certificate at the closing ceremony of the 67th International Astronautical Congress on September 30 at Guadalajara (Mexico). "It is a true honour for IAF to attribute this award to Rao, who have been for many years an active participant to the success of space and of the federation," IAF president Kiyoshi Higuchi said in a letter to him. The IAF Hall of Fame consists of a permanent gallery of famous personalities, including a citation, biographical information and a picture in a special part

of the IAF web presence. Udupi Ramachandra Rao was ISRO chairman and space secretary from 1985 to 1993. During his eight-year tenure, he accelerated the rocket technology development and guided his team of scientists to build rockets for launching two-tonne class of satellites into the polar orbit. The Bengaluru-based Rao also initiated the development of the geostationary launch vehicle and cryogenic technology in 1991. He is presently chairman of the governing council of the space agency's Physical Research Laboratory at Ahmedabad and chancellor of the Indian Institute of Science and Technology at Thiruvananthapuram. The Paris-based IAF is an international space advocacy body set up in 1951 to initiate a dialogue among scientists the world over for space cooperation. It has 300 members from 66 countries.

401. Today in History - May 14

- 1264 - King Henry III was captured by his brother in law Simon deMontfort at the Battle of Lewes in France.
- 1509 - In the Battle of Agnadello, French defeated Venitians in Northern Italy.
- 1607 - An expedition led by Captain Christopher Newport went ashore at Jamestown, Virginia. The group had arrived at the location the day before. This became the first permanent English colony in America.
- 1610 - French King Henri IV (Henri de Navarre) was assassinated by a fanatical monk, Franois Ravillac.
- 1643 - Louis XIV became King of France at age 4 upon the death of his father, Louis XIII.
- 1727 - Thomas Gainsborough was born. He was an English painter.
- 1787 - Delegates began gathering in Philadelphia for a convention to draw up the [U.S.](#) Constitution.
- 1796 - The first smallpox vaccination was given by Edward Jenner.
- 1804 - William Clark set off the famous expedition from Camp Dubois. A few days later, in St. Louis, Meriwether Lewis joined the group. The group was known as the "Corps of Discovery."
- 1811 - Paraguay gained independence from Spain.
- 1853 - Gail Borden applied for a patent for condensed milk.
- 1862 - The chronograph was patented by Adolphe Nicole.
- 1874 - McGill University and Harvard met at Cambridge, [MA](#), for the first college football game to charge admission.
- 1878 - The name Vaseline was registered by Robert A. Chesebrough.
- 1879 - Thomas Edison incorporated the Edison Telephone Company of Europe.
- 1897 - "The Stars and Stripes Forever" by John Phillip Sousa was performed for the first time. It was at a ceremony where a statue of George Washington was unveiled.
- 1897 - Guglielmo Marconi made the first communication by wireless telegraph.
- 1904 - In St. Louis, the Olympic games were held. It was the first time for the games to be played in the [U.S.](#)
- 1913 - The Rockefeller Foundation was created by John D. Rockefeller with a gift of \$100,000,000.
- 1935 - The Philippines ratified an independence agreement.

1940 - The Netherlands surrendered to Nazi Germany.

1942 - The Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) was established by an act of the [U.S.](#) Congress.

1942 - "Lincoln Portrait" by Aaron Copland was performed for the first time by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

1942 - The British, while retreating from Burma, reached India.

1948 - Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the independent State of Israel as British rule in Palestine came to an end.

1955 - The Warsaw Pact, a Eastern European mutual-defense treaty, was signed in Poland by eight communist bloc countries including the Soviet Union.

1961 - A bus carrying Freedom Riders was bombed and burned in [Alabama](#).

1969 - Jacqueline Susann's second novel, "The Love Machine," was published by Simon and Schuster.

1973 - Skylab One was launched into orbit around Earth as the first [U.S.](#) manned space station.

1975 - [U.S.](#) forces raided the Cambodian island of Koh Tang and recaptured the American merchant ship Mayaguez. All 40 crew members were released safely by Cambodia. About 40 [U.S.](#) servicemen were killed in the military operation.

1980 - [U.S. President Carter](#) inaugurated the Department of Health and Human Services.

1985 - The first McDonald's restaurant became the first fast-food business museum. It is located in Des Plaines, [Illinois](#).

1988 - In the Andean village of Cayara, Peru's military was involved in a massacre of at least 26 peasants.

1992 - Former Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev addressed members of the [U.S.](#) Congress, appealing to them to pass a bill to aid the people of the former Soviet Union.

1996 - A tornado hit 80 villages in northern Bangladesh. More than 440 people were killed.

1998 - The Associated Press marked its 150th anniversary.

1998 - The final episode of the TV series "Seinfeld" aired after nine years on NBC.

1999 - North Korea returned the remains of six [U.S.](#) soldiers that had been killed during the Korean War.

1999 - Jess Marlow received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

2005 - The art exhibit "Gumby and Friends: The First 50 Years" opened at the Lynn House Gallery in Antioch, [CA](#).

402. Five-year Plans out, 15-year vision soon

The National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has decided to get rid of the Nehruvian five-year plans, and replace them with 15-year vision documents.

These will be framed keeping in mind the country's social goals and the sustainable development agenda. According to a senior official, the issue was discussed at length and a decision was taken at the highest level.

The NITI Aayog has been directed to prepare a vision document at the earliest.

The current 12th Five-Year Plan will be terminated in the current financial year, 2016-17.

The first 15-year vision document will start from 2017-18, along with a seven-year National Development Agenda which will lay down the schemes, programmes and strategies to achieve the long-term vision.

Since the Narendra Modi government took over, there has been speculation over the fate of the planning process, more so after the Planning Commission was replaced with the NITI Aayog.

The mid-term appraisal of the 12th Plan was also not done, though it was due after the completion of two-and-a-half years. Officials said the National Development Agenda will be reviewed after a gap of every three years to ensure that it was aligned with financial needs and requirements.

For the first Development Agenda, the review would be done in 2019-20, in line with the termination year of the 14th Finance Commission.

"The National Development Agenda will also deal with issues related to internal security, defence and external affairs," the official said.

The Planning Commission of India seldom dealt directly with issues related to defence and internal security.

In addition to all the three documents, officials said the PMO has also instructed NITI Aayog to undertake outcome-based monitoring of all government programmes and ministries on a yearly basis, which would help in keeping a tab on the progress made and work done.

The Five-Year Plans first started in 1951 under the country's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

In July 1951, the Planning Commission presented a draft outline of a plan of development for the period of five years, starting from April 1951.

Since then, India regularly had Five-Year Plans till the 12th one, which ends this year, except 1966-69, when the five-year Plans were replaced with annual Plans. Thereafter, there were no Five-Year Plans in 1979-80 and 1990 to 1992.

Nehru was the first chairman of the Planning Commission, while Gulzarilal Nanda was the minister for planning. The commission had been graced by people like former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President of India Pranab Mukherjee as deputy chairmen.

"This shows that we are back to a plan. The approach paper to a five-year Plan was like a vision statement which gave a broad outline, while the five-year Plans were more detailed about the schemes and programmes to achieve that objective, which was then reviewed through a mid-term appraisal done after completion of two-and-a-half years of a plan," Pronab Sen, the country director of International Growth Centre's India Central Programme and former chief statistician of India, told Business Standard.

Sen said that instead of having a 15-5-2.5 years perspective, the new document tries to do it in 15-7-3 years perspective.

"But, nonetheless, I am happy that the government is at least thinking of a plan document as without that states are not able to align their priorities with the larger national goals," he added.

403. Cabinet approves pact between Sebi, FSRA Abu Dhabi

The Union Cabinet today approved signing of a pact between markets regulator [Sebi](#) and Financial Services Regulatory Authority, [Abu Dhabi](#) for mutual co-operation and technical assistance.

The Sebi's pact with its Abu Dhabi counterpart will promote further development of economic links and cooperation

between the two signatories and will help create conditions for development of securities markets in the two countries.

It would also contribute towards strengthening the information sharing framework between the two regulators.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) has given its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Sebi and Financial Services Regulatory Authority, Abu Dhabi, for mutual co-operation and technical assistance between the two regulators, an official statement said.

Apart from Abu Dhabi, the Securities and Exchange Board of [India](#) (Sebi) has signed bilateral pacts with a number of countries. Besides, it is a signatory to global market regulators' grouping IOSCO's MoU (Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding).

In order to encourage the exchange of information and assistance, Sebi has been signing pacts with the jurisdictions who are yet to become a signatory to the multilateral MoU of International Organisation of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

404. SC slaps Rs 10 lakh on Spicejet for offloading disabled flyer

REGRETTING THAT the mindset of able persons adversely impact the human rights of the differently-abled, the Supreme Court Thursday ordered SpiceJet airlines to pay Rs 10 lakh as damages to a flyer, suffering from cerebral palsy, who was forcibly offloaded in 2012. A bench of Justices A K Sikri and R K Agrawal said that despite all regulations, there are hardly any meaningful attempts to assimilate the disabled in the mainstream of the nation's life and that the apathy towards their problems is so pervasive that even the number of disabled persons existing in the country is not well documented. The bench noted that differently-abled flyer Jeeja Ghosh was not given appropriate, fair and caring treatment, which she required with due sensitivity and the decision to de-board her was uncalled for and violation of human dignity. Ghosh, an eminent activist involved in disability rights, was offloaded from a SpiceJet flight in February 2012 from Kolkata when she was going to attend a conference in Goa hosted by NGO ADAPT (Able Disable All People Together). The top court held that the decision to offload Ghosh was taken by the airlines in a callous manner, without any medical advice or consideration and her condition was not such that it required any assistive devices or aids. No doctor was summoned to examine her condition. Abruptly and without any justification, a decision was taken to deboard her without ascertaining as to whether her condition was such which prevented her from flying, said the bench, adding it was also in violation of civil aviation rules. The court also underlined that differently-abled persons are unable to lead a full life due to barriers and discrimination faced by them in employment, access to public spaces and transportation.

405. UIDAI launches special enrolment drive in 4 states, UTs

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) today launched a special drive to make sure that no one has been left out of Aadhaar enrolment in Haryana, Goa, Chandigarh and Puducherry. Although these states have recorded over 100 per cent enrolment "statistically speaking", authorities said it may be on account of migrant population. "This exercise has been initiated to ensure that no one is left without an Aadhaar number in these four States and UTs which has more than 100 per cent Aadhaar saturation, statistically speaking. "It is part of our overall effort to ensure complete Aadhaar coverage across the country," UIDAI Director General Mission Director Ajay Bhushan Pandey said in a statement. Over 101.26 crore Aadhaar numbers have been generated across the country as on May 12, 2016, the statement said. The pilot exercise in the four States/UTs will be conducted between May 13 - June 15, 2016. "Based on the experience of this pilot, the special drive will be extended to other states too," the statement said.

406. India's first solar train set for trial run in Jodhpur

In a bid to harness solar energy, Indian Railways is all set to conduct trials of its first solar panel-powered train in northwestern Jodhpur city. Though the train would be pulled by conventional diesel-run engines, the solar energy will be used for internal electricity gadgets.

Solar panels have been installed on top of the coaches in the train and the energy, which will provide the energy to be used for the functioning of lights and fans inside the coaches in the train.

The Indian Railways has been focusing on alternate source of fuels with trials already on to use CNG, biodiesel and natural gas among others.

According to studies, a train using solar power can reduce diesel consumption by up to 90,000 litres per year and also bring down carbon dioxide emissions by over 200 tonnes.

The CNG is being used in local trains on Rohtak-Rewari section of Delhi division. The dual fuel concept of using CNG and diesel has also helped in saving fuel and money.

407. Antonov An-225 Mriya, World's Largest Plane, Lands In Hyderabad

The world's largest cargo aircraft, Antonov AN -225 Mriya -- or the Dream, made its first landing in India today at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad, the Ukraine company's collaborators in Mumbai said on Wednesday.

The wide body aircraft is powered by six turbofan engines and is the longest and heaviest airplane ever built, with a maximum takeoff weight of 640 tonnes, a statement said.

It also has the largest wingspan of any aircraft in operational service, the statement added "Specially built to undertake transcontinental route airlifting load between 180-230 tonnes, the aircraft will be coming in to Hyderabad from Turkmenistan."

The development comes close on the heels of Anil Ambani led Reliance Defence signing a strategic pact last month with ANtonic Company of Ukraine for the assembly, manufacture, and maintenance and repair of its platforms in India, both for the commercial and the military market. Reliance Defence together with Antonov will jointly address various requirements including 50-80 seat passenger aircraft programme of the HAL, in its basic configuration and in all its variants such as transport, maritime patrol and other military roles.

India is said to require over 200 medium lift turbofan aircraft valued at Rs. 35,000 crore, which is the backbone of all tactical transport support of the air force, army and para-military forces.

408. PM Modi, Sri Lanka President to visit Simhashta Mahakumbh in Ujjain

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena will today visit the Simhashta Mahakumbh in Ujjain. Modi told Sirisena that his visit for the Simhashta Kumbh was very significant as it showed the deep civilisational ties between the two countries. As part of month-long Simhashta festival, which began on April 22, being held in Ujjain, a three-day spiritual Kumbh will be conducted between May 12 and 14 during which leaders of various faiths and from across the world will deliberate on various measures of people's welfare, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan informed. Simhashta, a bathing festival celebrated once in twelve years, is being held in Ujjain from April 22. It will conclude on May 21. Lakhs of people are expected to take bath in Kshipra river in Ujjain during this month-long religious event.

409. Uday Kotak Sole Indian Financier In Forbes' Most Powerful List

Kotak Mahindra Bank Chief Uday Kotak, who has a net worth of about USD 7.1 billion, is the sole Indian in Forbes' list of 40 of the most powerful people in the financial world who control the flow of trillions of dollars around the global economy.

57-year-old Uday Kotak is ranked 33rd in the Forbes list of 'Money Masters: The Most Powerful People In The Financial World' topped by Blackstone Group's CEO Stephen Schwarzman, who has a net worth of USD 10.2 billion and oversees assets worth USD 344 billion.

It said the 40 financiers on the list dominate the world of money, from banking to buyouts, trading to takeovers.

"The hedge fund managers, private equity moguls and lenders who control the flow of trillions of dollars around the global economy impact just about all of us one way or another," Forbes added. With the Kotak bank overseeing USD

34.6 billion in assets, Forbes said the Indian billionaire, who has a net worth of about USD 7.1 billion, has made his fortune lending to the sprawling masses between Mumbai and Delhi and has also taken a stand on behalf of savers.

"His bank is continuing to offer 6 per cent on savings accounts, even as falling rates make it harder to do so. Kotak is gung ho on his native country and believes investing in India is like a Bollywood movie - long, but with a happy ending," it said.

"Even after a run-up in asset prices, the chief of the world's biggest private equity firm is finding ways to put money to work, including recent real estate deals in India, where Blackstone Group now owns 30 million square feet of office space in major cities," Forbes said.

The list also includes JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon on the third spot, Berkshire Hathaway head Warren Buffet on fourth, Goldman Sachs Chairman Lloyd Blankfein on ninth and Soros Fund Management chief George Soros placed on the tenth position.

410. Electronics Maintenance Management System for Indian Air Force inaugurated

The Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha PVSM AVSM VM ADC on Thursday (12 May 16) inaugurated the Electronics Maintenance Management System (e-MMS) at Air Force Station Pune. Project e-MMS was conceptualised to address the need of automating maintenance management process in the IAF. Post implementation, the system would transform the manner in which the maintenance activities are executed and managed by the IAF. The day marks an important milestone in the history of the IAF. The scope of e-MMS implementation in the IAF extends to all echelons in the maintenance hierarchy and functioning. The application will seamlessly connect Squadrons, Wings, Commands and Air HQ. According to the IAF, post implementation of the project, maintenance work environment is expected to become more efficient and operational availability of all fleets/systems can be monitored in real time at various hierarchical levels. Software support tools of the system would help to act proactively, reduce down times, achieve increased operational preparedness and enhance maintenance safety aspects. The project has introduced some of the latest technologies like mobility devices and RFID technology to aid maintenance activities in the IAF. The project is one of the largest Maintain Repair Overhaul (MRO) IT implementation in the world, which would help IAF to transform from paper based legacy maintenance system to an online system. Complimenting the IAF for achieving such a historic milestone, Chief of the Air Staff brought out that, with this project, IAF has once again showcased its ability to use and adapt technologies to meet its functional requirements. Air Officer Commanding in Chief South Western Air Command Air Marshal RK Dhir AVSM VM ADC, Air Officer-in Charge Maintenance Air Marshal PP Khandekar, CEO Wipro T K Kurien and other senior officials from IAF and Wipro were present on the occasion.

411. PM Modi and Sri Lankan Prez Maithripala Sirisena release 'Simhashta Declaration' in Ujjain

The Prime Minister along with Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena released 'Simhashta Declaration' at Ninora village in Ujjain. Both leaders addressed the concluding session of the 3 day International Vichar Mahakumbh during the month-long Simhashta mela. 51 sacred points have been included in this declaration for betterment of mankind. Mr Modi said, these points of this Simhasht declaration will start new discourse not only in India but around the world.

In his address on the occasion, Prime Minister also called on everybody to look within and see how all can grow themselves. A 'holier than thou' attitude is taking some people towards conflicts, he said. Referring to the time when crossing the seas was considered unholy, he said, that has changed. Likewise, some traditions can also change with time, he said.

PM also said, Knowledge is immortal and is relevant in every era. Mr. Modi also appealed saints to hold Vichar Kumbh every year with devotees and discuss issues like the need to plant trees or educate the girl child. Calling the Kumbh as the biggest example of excellent management, he advised academic institutions to adopt Kumbh as a case study. He also used the occasion to praise the Election Commission for organising elections in a nation as big as India with many voters. The Sri Lankan President spoke about the long standing relations between India and Sri Lanka on the occasion.

AIR correspondent reports that, Saints and seers, scholars and subject experts from the country and abroad discussed on various issues in the sessions of 'Vichar Mahakumbh'. Sessions on sanitation, sustainable development and climate

change, values of life, peace, agriculture and cottage industry were organised.

412. India is ready for NSG membership: US

The US has said that India meets missile technology control regime requirements and is ready for entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). State Department Spokesman John Kirby said in Washington last night that US President Barack Obama, during his visit to India in 2015, had said that India meets missile technology control regime requirements and is ready for NSG membership.

Mr Kirby's remarks came in response to a question on reports that China and Pakistan have joined hands to oppose India becoming a member of the NSG.

Defending its move to block India's entry into the NSG, China yesterday claimed that several members of the 48-nation bloc shared its view that signing of the NPT is an important standard for the NSG's expansion.

413. Indian artist wins award at UN poster contest on N-disarmament

A 22-year-old Indian artist has won award at UN poster contest on creating awareness about nuclear disarmament. Anjali Chandrashekar, a New York-based designer was appreciated from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for the poster depicts a peace dove slicing through a nuclear weapon.

414. Railway Minister to inaugurate number of amenities through remote control from Dadar East station

Railway minister Suresh Prabhu will today inaugurate a number of amenities through remote control from Dadar East station this afternoon. Railway has recently completed construction of new platform, Foot Over Bridge, Escalator, Booking office and Toilet block at Kanjur Marg station on Central Suburban Railway. Piyush Goyal, minister of state for power and coal and cricketer Sachin Tendulkar and other state ministers and dignitaries will grace the occasion.

Railway Minister will also attend the informal gathering of Station masters Association in Mumbai. He is likely to address the function.

415. Railways' fourth packaged water facility to be launched

Indian Railways' fourth state-of-the-art packaged drinking water facility, set up at Ambarnath in Thane district, will get operational from Wednesday. Railways manufactures and supplies packaged drinking water to its passengers under the brand name 'Rail Neer' through its subsidiary Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC). Railway Minister DV Sadananda Gowda is expected to inaugurate the new facility through remote control from New Delhi this evening. IRCTC said. Built on a 20,000 sq meter plot area at an investment of Rs 23.50 crore, the new facility will churn out two lakh water bottles per day and will cater to stations such as Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, Mumbai Central, Kurla, Dadar, Thane, Kalyan, Pune among others, the corporation said. IRCTC had first set up such a plant in Delhi in 2003 and later at Danapur in Patna and Palur in Chennai. The Railway Board had given its approval to set up the Ambarnath plant in 2007, but the construction work could commence only in October 2012.

416. Solar Impulse lands in Oklahoma

Solar Impulse has landed in Tulsa, Oklahoma, ending stage 11 in its round the world journey. Pilot Bertrand Piccard brought the plane in from Phoenix, Arizona, in a flight that lasted just over 18 hours. The zero-fuel aircraft has now reached halfway across America, with its immediate goal of getting to New York firmly in sight. The Swiss team wants to be on the East Coast at the start of June to begin planning the big Atlantic crossing.

417. US House passes comprehensive bill on painkiller addiction

In US, House of Representatives has passed a comprehensive bill on opioid abuse, a group of 18 measures designed to combat the nation's epidemic of addiction to painkillers. The legislation takes steps to set up federal grants and a task force designed to examine pain management methods and the prescribing of pain medication. The vote to pass the measures was an overwhelming 400 to 5. Public awareness of the crisis has been heightened in the past few weeks, after the sudden death of pop star Prince, who died April 21st at age 57 after reportedly seeking treatment for painkiller addiction.

418. Pfizer Inc takes steps to block its drugs from use in lethal injections

In US, a largest drug maker Pfizer Inc has taken steps to ensure that none of its products are used in lethal injections. Pfizer strongly objects to the use of its products as lethal injections for capital punishment.

The move shuts off the last remaining open market source of drugs used in executions, following similar actions by more than 20 US and European drugmakers, according to a report in the New York Times yesterday. Pfizer said it offers the products because they save or improve lives, and markets them solely for use as indicated in the product labeling.

419. UN backs summit to fight Boko Haram across Africa

UN Security Council has given its support to a regional security summit among four sub-Saharan nations of Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon this weekend to strengthen the fight against the Islamist group Boko Haram. In a statement yesterday, Security Council unanimously condemns all terrorist attacks, abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin region.

The Security Council welcomes the crucial initiative of Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, to convene the Second Regional Security Summit on May 14th in Abuja, to evaluate the regional response to the threat posed by Boko Haram. The Security Council also expresses alarm at Boko Haram's connections with the Islamic State.

In 2015 Boko Haram expanded its attacks from Nigeria to neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Chad, prompting those countries to establish a multi-national joint task force.

420. Widespread protests set to call on World govts to ban fossil fuels

An effort is underway led by a grassroots movement called Break Free demanding that international leaders take more radical steps to combat the threat of global climate change. An organization called Break Free will host six large scale demonstrations throughout the United States today and tomorrow, calling for a halt to all new fossil fuel projects and a phase out of all existing uses of fossil fuels, in an effort to contain the potential for global devastation due to climate change. The group is organizing protests during a two week global wave of action, targeting dozens of high profile fossil fuel infrastructure projects and calling on world governments to leave fossil fuels in the ground.

The Paris Climate Agreement calls for preventing the average global temperature from increasing more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, or no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius from current levels by 2050. Break Free believes that even this purportedly modest temperature increase will lead to widespread loss of life and livelihood by expanding the reach of vector-borne diseases and extreme weather events.

421. Buddhist monk hacked to death in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, a Buddhist monk has been hacked to death by unidentified miscreants inside the monastery, a week after a Muslim Sufi preacher was murdered in a similar attack.

75 year old Mawng Shoi Wu, chief of the monastery located in Chittagong Hill Tracts district of Bandarban's Naikhyongchari Upazila, was found dead this morning. No group has claimed responsibility until now.

There have been systematic assaults in Bangladesh in recent weeks especially targeting minorities, secular bloggers, intellectuals and foreigners. More than 20 people have been killed by suspected Islamists in the last three years. The so-called Islamic State (IS) group and a Bangladeshi militant group affiliated to al-Qaeda have said they carried out some of the killings.

422. Justice Naveen Sinha sworn-in as CJ of Rajasthan HC

Justice Naveen Sinha is new Chief Justice of Rajasthan. He was sworn in as the Chief Justice of Rajasthan High Court. Governor Kalyan Singh administered the oath to Shri Sinha as 31th chief justice of the high court. Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, members of the council of ministers, judges of the High Court and others dignitaries were present on the occasion.

423. Dial-100 emergency service set to be launched in UP on Oct 2

The Uttar Pradesh Government is ready to introduce statewide police emergency facility number dial 100 on 2nd October of this year. It was informed by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav on Friday while he reviewed progress made

until now in the project. The chief minister said that he would start the service in Lucknow, Agra, Kanpur, Jhansi and Ghaziabad districts.

Chief Minister said that Dial 100 should be developed as the fastest, biggest, cheapest and effective service. He also instructed to authorities to ensure that dial 100 services should be like 108 and 102 ambulance services currently being functional in the state. Underlining the importance of time efficiency for success of the emergency service Mr. Yadav said that sufficient number of women police personnel would be posted in the control room call centre. The response time under dial 100 has been fixed as ten minutes for two-wheelers in urban areas and 15 minutes for four wheelers. While in rural areas the response time for four wheelers has been mandated as 20 minutes

Under this project, in case of emergency, a person can communicate with the Dial 100 call centre through phone, texts or any other communication method and in turn will be provided immediate relief and help.

424. : Tribal Health Care Research Project begins in Lahaul-Spiti

In Himachal Pradesh, Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Science under the Union Ministry of AYUSH, have begun the Tribal Health Care Research Project in Lahaul-Spiti District. Under the project, different aspect of life and diseases as well as food habits of the people would be studied in this tribal district. The head of Council SK Sharma discussed about the project with other members in a meeting held at Keylong yesterday. The objective of the project is to provide health facilities to the tribal population.

AIR correspondent reports that six member team of the Research Institute would cover tribal population under this project. The dietetic habits, socio-demographic profile, frequency of prevalent diseases and collection of information related to their health would be studied. During this six months project the team would not only aware tribal people on their different health aspects but the availability of medicinal plants in the district will also found. The team has appealed people to co-operate in data collection for the project.

425. Easier to file tax returns in India, than in US: RBI Governor

RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan has said that he finds it easier to file his tax returns in India, as compared to the US. During a discussion at the Chicago Booth School of Business in London, Dr Rajan asserted that developed nations must do their part in tackling the problem of corruption as money taken out illegally from developing countries often find its way to places like London.

Replying to a question on whether corruption in India remained a big issue, he said, it is an important tax on the system which impedes good decision making and impedes economic growth.

Stating that it has come down significantly in India, Dr Rajan gave examples of railway ticketing and the tax department. He said, there is a very strong upsurge against corruption in India.

Indicating his interest in a second term as RBI Governor, Rajan said, he has enjoyed every moment of the job but there is more to do. Dr Rajan's current three-year term as RBI Governor will end in September. The RBI Governor is currently on a visit to the UK for a series of lectures.

426. Fatma Samoura named first female secretary general of FIFA

FIFA named a Senegalese UN diplomat as its first ever female Secretary General, a historic move announced at a congress that sought to relegate world football's corruption crisis to the past. FIFA President Gianni Infantino made the surprise announcement in Mexico City yesterday that he had chosen 54-year old Fatma Samoura, an outsider unknown to the football world, to be his deputy at the male dominated organisation. Samoura, who has worked on humanitarian crises with the United Nations for 21 years, is currently based in Nigeria for the UN Development Programme. Samoura will take her post by mid-June after undergoing an eligibility check administered by an independent review committee.

427. Vijender Singh registers his 6th successive victory in Super Middleweight contest

Indian boxing star Vijender Singh registered his sixth successive knockout victory by out-punching Andrzej Soldra of Poland in a Super Middleweight contest at Boltan in UK yesterday. Fighting the first eight-round contest of his

fledgling pro career, Vijender completed yet another dominating win barely a minute into the third round at the Macron Stadium. The 30-year-old Indian will now contest for the World Boxing Organisation's (WBO) Asia title in front of his home crowd in New Delhi on June 11.

Soldra is the most experienced opponent Vijender has faced so far with 12 wins out of the 17 bouts he has fought so far. Five of those wins have come by knockout.

The Haryana lad had previously won all his five fights by technical knockouts in only 14 rounds of action.

428. **Baghdad bombings and its implications for Iraq**

Baghdad, once again witnessed a deadly attack on Wednesday targeted particularly at its Shiite dominated areas. The car bombings have killed more than 94 people and wounded around 165. The primary affected areas are Sadr city (eastern Baghdad) and Kadhimiya city in the north along with Rabie and Baqubah. The Islamic State or Daesh has claimed responsibility for these attacks. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi came out with a statement saying these were the deadliest attacks this year. The attacks, he said, have undermined the internal front that supports the armed force in the liberation of Iraqi territories. According to casualty figures recorded by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, at least 741 Iraqis have been killed and another 1,374 have been injured in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict in Iraq last month alone! The increasing violence and sectarian attacks by the IS have come at a time when Iraq is facing serious political turmoil, thus making it even more difficult for Prime Minister al-Abadi to firm up his government to fight the IS and at the same time address the countrys long standing social economic and political problems. Amidst widespread protests inside Iraq in 2015, Prime Minister al-Abadi announced the certain changes in the Iraqi political spectrum. The proposals submitted by al-Abadi and the delay in implementing proposed reforms have led to a socio-economic-political impasse there. The Shiite Cleric turned politician Moqtada al Sadr is wary of the situation. When persistent ultimatums to Prime Minister Abadi to go ahead with the reforms did not fructify, al-Sadr asked his supporters to escalate protests and sit-ins in the Green Zone. It has been argued that al-Sadrs moves in the form of protests and warnings to al-Abadi has led pitting the two Shiite parties against each other the Dawa Party of Prime Minister al- Abadi and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq. Al-Sadrs move, has also invited criticism from former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki . The security situation inside Iraq has deteriorated considerably and the Iraqi armed forces were called for controlling the situation. The Iraqi armed forces otherwise were engaged infighting the Daesh to secure the Green Zone. The demonstrations and storming of the Green Zone has evoked sharp criticism from both Tehran and Washington since they are allies in al-Abadis fight against IS. On Sunday last, US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Baghdad and urged Iraqis to resolve the political crisis and form a unity government and to evict the ISIS forces from Iraq. Iraq Foreign Ministry spokesman Hossein Jaber Ansari called for a resolution of the crisis through dialogue and political understanding. UN Secretary Generals Special Representative to Iraq, Jan Kubis s report stated that Iraq was undergoing a profound political crisis that will also dampen the US led war against IS. Kubis also mentioned that despite consistent efforts made to dismantle IS forces, they have managed to out- manoeuvre the Iraqi armed forces by their tactics. The recent attacks raise several concerns. It comes at a time when Iraq is struggling with political turmoil inside its parliament also. There have been repeated warnings that the political situation in Iraq might hamper its fight against the IS. The attacks also appear to be a tactical move by IS forces to demonstrate their control and strength which otherwise appeared to be waning after the re-capture of areas and killing of IS leaders by the Iraqi forces. Concomitantly, these attacks were strategically placed. The bombing of Shiite dominated areas means to weaken the growing Shiite dominance and accelerated protests by al-Sadrs supporters. This situation makes it even more difficult for present Iraqi government to create any democratic system and also battle the increasing violent activities in Iraq. Lastly, the attacks have also proved that the war against IS is far from over. Concerted efforts by all the stakeholders are required to contain the Daesh. However, the political unrest in Iraq can impede the efforts and the situation may go out of hand.

429. **What is Traditional Knowledge Digital Library?**

India is a land of rich traditional knowledge. Several types of traditional medicine approaches of the country like Ayurveda, Unani, Sidha, Yoga etc contains large number of treatments and medicines. But sophisticated MNCs from the West can exploit such age old knowledge by taking patent on them. To block such commercial exploitation, India is preparing a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) which collects and furnishes information about various traditional knowledge medicines. Once collected, the information with the TKDL will be provided to patent examiners

in other countries so that they can verify whether an applicant uses traditional knowledge of India. If any traditional knowledge is used, the Patent application can be rejected. TKDL provides information on traditional knowledge existing in the country, in languages and format understandable by patent examiners at International Patent Offices (IPOs). This will check granting of patents on India's traditional knowledge. One real problem is that most of the traditional knowledge is preserved in classical or local languages like Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil etc. Hence this should be collected and converted into foreign languages. Under TKDL, documentation about traditional knowledge available in the form of existing literature related to Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Yoga, is done in digitized format. Then it will be translated into five international languages -English, German, French, Japanese and Spanish. TKDL is a collaborative project between Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Ministry of Science and Technology and Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The project is implemented at CSIR. For the project, an inter-disciplinary team comprising of Traditional Medicine (Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Yoga) experts, patent examiners, IT persons, scientists and technical officers are participating for the creation of TKDL.

430. India and WHO sign a landmark agreement for Global promotion of Traditional Systems of Medicine

Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India and the World Health Organization (WHO) have signed an historic Project Collaboration Agreement (PCA) for cooperation on promoting the quality, safety and effectiveness of service provision in traditional and complementary medicine. The PCA was signed by Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH, Shri Ajit M Sharan and Assistant Director General, Health Systems and Innovations, WHO, Dr. Marie Kieny, in Geneva on 13th May, 2016.

Minister of State (Independent Charge) of AYUSH Mr. Shripad Yesso Naik and the Director-General, World Health Organization, Dr. Margaret Chan witnessed the signing of this landmark agreement at the WHO headquarters.

The PCA is titled as Co-operation on promoting the quality, safety and effectiveness of service provision in traditional and complementary medicine between WHO and AYUSH, India, 2016-2020. It aims to support WHO in the development and implementation of the WHO Traditional and Complementary Medicine Strategy: 2014-2023 and will contribute to the global promotion of traditional Indian Systems of Medicine.

The PCA for the period 2016-2020 will deliver for the first time WHO benchmark document for training in Yoga, and WHO benchmarks for practice in Ayurveda, Unani and Panchakarma. These will contribute significantly to the strengthening of national capacities in ensuring the quality, safety and effectiveness of traditional medicine including in establishing regulatory frameworks for traditional medicine products and practice and promote their integration in national healthcare systems.

Speaking at a Reception hosted by India on this occasion, the AYUSH Minister recalled the long history and rich heritage of traditional medicine in India and its growing relevance in providing holistic and comprehensive health care. He reiterated the high priority attached by the Government of India for the promotion of traditional medicine both in India and abroad and highlighted the numerous initiatives undertaken to functionally integrate AYUSH in India's national health programmes and for achieving Universal Health Coverage.

The Minister also mentioned that the initiatives and activities undertaken by India within the country align with the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014-2023. He added that India, in fact, sets a unique example for adopting a pluralistic health care delivery system that allows every recognized medical system to develop and be practiced with a view to provide integrated and holistic healthcare services.

The PCA with WHO is a further recognition of India's rich experience in the development and governance of traditional medicine. It will pave the way for India's long-term collaboration with the WHO in fostering the global promotion and integration of AYUSH systems of medicine including through the inclusion of Ayurveda and Unani in the International Classification of diseases and the International Classification of Health interventions.

431. The Income Declaration Scheme 2016 to open from 1st June 2016.

The Income Declaration Scheme, 2016 incorporated as Chapter IX of the Finance Act 2016 provides an opportunity to all persons who have not declared income correctly in earlier years to come forward and declare such undisclosed

income(s). Under the Scheme, such income as declared by the eligible persons, would be taxed at the rate of 30% plus a Krishi Kalyan Cess of 25% on the taxes payable and a penalty at the rate of 25% of the taxes payable, thereby totalling to 45% of the income declared under the scheme. The scheme shall remain in force for a period of 4 months from 1st June, 2016 to 30th September, 2016 for filing of declarations and payments towards taxes, surcharge penalty must be made latest by 30th November, 2016. Declarations can be filed online or with the jurisdictional Pr. Commissioners of Income-tax across the country. The scheme shall apply to undisclosed income whether in the form of investment in assets or otherwise, pertaining to Financial Year 2015-16 or earlier. Where the declaration is in the form of investment in assets, the Fair Market Value of such asset as on 1st June 2016 shall be deemed to be the undisclosed income under the Scheme. However, foreign assets or income to which the Black Money Act 2015 applies are not eligible for declaration under this scheme. Assets specified in the declaration shall be exempt from Wealth tax. No Scrutiny and enquiry under the Income-tax Act or the Wealth tax Act shall be undertaken in respect of such declarations. Immunity from prosecution under the Income-tax Act and Wealth Tax Act is also provided along with immunity from the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 subject to transfer of asset to actual owner within the period specified in the Rules. Non-payment of total taxes, surcharge penalty in time or declaration by misrepresentation or suppression of facts shall render the declaration void. The circumstances in which the Scheme shall not apply or where a person is held to be ineligible are specified in section 196 (Chapter IX) of the Finance Act, 2016. Non declaration of undisclosed income under the Scheme, will render such undisclosed income liable to tax in the previous year in which it is detected by the Income tax Department. Other penal consequences will also follow accordingly.

432. International Day of Families -15 May

The International Day of Families is observed on the 15th of May every year. The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 with resolution [A/RES/47/237](#) and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families. The International Day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families.

The International Day of Families has inspired a series of awareness-raising events, including national family days. In many countries, that day provides an opportunity to highlight different areas of interest and importance to families. Activities include workshops and conferences, radio and television programmes, newspaper articles and cultural programmes highlighting relevant themes. The central goals of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) focus on ending poverty, promoting shared economic prosperity, social development and peoples well-being while protecting the environment. Families remain at the centre of social life ensuring the well-being of their members, educating and socializing children and youth and caring for young and old. In particular, family-oriented policies can contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 1 to 5 relating to doing away with poverty and hunger; ensuring healthy lives and promoting of well-being for all ages; ensuring educational opportunities throughout the lifespan and achieving gender equality.

433. Today in History - May 15

1602 - Cape Cod was discovered by Bartholomew Gosnold.

1614 - An aristocratic uprising in France ended with the treaty of St.Menehould.

1618 - Johannes Kepler discovered his harmonics law.

1702 - The War of Spanish Succession began.

1768 - Under the Treaty of Versailles, France purchased Corsica from Genoa.

1795 - Napoleon entered the Lombardian capital of Milan.

1849 - Neapolitan troops entered Palermo, and were in possession of Sicily.

1856 - Lyman Frank Baum, author of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," was born.

1862 - The [U.S.](#) Congress created the [U.S.](#) Department of Agriculture.

1911 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ordered the dissolution of Standard Oil Company, ruling it was in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act.

1916 - [U.S.](#) Marines landed in Santo Domingo to quell civil disorder.

1918 - Regular airmail service between New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, [DC](#), began under the direction of the Post Office Department, which later became the [U.S.](#) Postal Service.

1926 - Roald Amundsen and Lincoln Ellsworth were forced down in [Alaska](#) after a four-day flight over an icecap. Ice had begun to form on the dirigible Norge.

1926 - The New York Rangers were officially granted a franchise in the [NHL](#). The [NHL](#) also announced that Chicago and Detroit would be joining the league in November.

1930 - Ellen Church became the first female flight attendant.

1940 - Nylon stockings went on sale for the first time in the [U.S.](#)

1941 - Joe DiMaggio began his historic [major league baseball](#) hitting streak of 56 games.

1942 - Gasoline rationing began in the [U.S.](#) The limit was 3 gallons a week for nonessential vehicles.

1948 - Israel was attacked by Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon only hours after declaring its independence.

1951 - ATT became the first corporation to have one million stockholders.

1957 - Britain dropped its first hydrogen bomb on Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean.

1958 - Sputnik III, the first space laboratory, was launched in the Soviet Union.

1963 - The last Project Mercury space flight was launched.

1964 - The Smothers Brothers, Dick and Tom, gave their first concert in Carnegie Hall in New York City.

1970 - [U.S. President Nixon](#) appointed America's first two female generals.

1970 - Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green, two black students at Jackson State University in Mississippi, were killed when police opened fire during student protests.

1972 - Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace was shot by Arthur Bremer in Laurel, [MD](#) while campaigning for the U.S. presidency. Wallace was paralyzed by the shot.

1975 - The merchant ship [U.S.](#) Mayaguez was recaptured from Cambodia's Khmer Rouge.

1980 - The first transcontinental balloon crossing of the [United States](#) took place.

1983 - In Boston, MA, the Madison Hotel was destroyed by implosion.

1988 - The Soviet Union began their withdrawal of its 115,000 troops from Afghanistan. Soviet forces had been there for more than eight years.

1990 - Vincent Van Gogh's "Portrait of Doctor Gachet" was sold for \$82.5 million. The sale set a new world record.

1997 - The Space shuttle Atlantis blasted off on a mission to deliver urgently needed repair equipment and a fresh American astronaut to Russia's orbiting Mir station.

1999 - The Russian parliament was unable to attain enough votes to impeach President Boris Yeltsin.

2014 - The National September 11 Memorial Museum was dedicated in New York City.

434. Supreme Court upholds validity of criminal defamation law

Court gives eight weeks to Rahul Gandhi, Arvind Kejriwal and Subramanian Swamy to challenge pending criminal defamation cases in High Courts or face trial. The Supreme Court on Friday upheld the validity of the criminal defamation law. The court pronounced its verdict on a batch of petitions including the ones by Congress vice-president [Rahul Gandhi](#), Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BJP leader Subramanian Swamy challenging the constitutional validity of sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code providing for criminal defamation. As it happened: The apex court gave eight weeks to petitioners Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Swamy to challenge pending criminal defamation cases in High Courts or face trial. The law has no chilling effect on free speech, the apex court said. "Right to free speech is not absolute. It does not mean freedom to hurt another's reputation which is protected under Article 21 of the Constitution". The petitioners had argued that the criminal defamation under these sections of the IPC travelled beyond constitution's article 19(2) that imposes reasonable restriction on the freedom of speech and expression. The central government had defended their retention on the grounds that while in other countries, defamation cases are decided very fast, in India it takes years even decades before they reach conclusion. Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi told the bench in the course of the hearing on July 8, 2015, that unlike in Britain where such cases are decided very fast, in India, it takes 10 to 20 years to decide them. The verdict was reserved on August 13, 2015, after the bench of Justice Dipak Misra and Justice Prafulla C. Pant heard the matter spread over a month. Mr. Rohatgi had said that there were sufficient safeguards in article 19(2) which imposed reasonable restrictions of the right to free expression and speech guaranteed under article 19. The position was supported by amicus curiae T.R. Andhyarujina.

435. Railways withdraw Rs 4 crore bill sent to Latur for water train

Anxious to prevent escalation of the Jaldoot (water trains) controversy, the Indian Railways withdrew on Friday the Rs 4 crore water bill sent to the Latur district administration on account of the cost of transporting water. Facing flak for pitching a bill to transport water to the parched district in the Marathwada region, the state-owned transporter went in for a damage-control move, saying that the settlement of operational costs for transporting water in was irrelevant at this time. What is of critical importance is that the water trains continue their uninterrupted run to the affected regions, an official statement said. Officials said an unnecessary controversy has been raised, as the operational costs had been indicated to the district administration at their request. At railways minister Suresh Prabhu's instructions, the estimate of expenditure sent to the Latur administration has been withdrawn and will be dealt with separately, they added.

436. Indian e-commerce sector triples in five years: Report

[The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry \(ASSOCHAM\)](#) had predicted that the e-tail sector in India would grow 78 percent in 2016, reaching \$38 billion in value. As impressive as it may be, the e-commerce sector apparently grew 209 percent over the last five years. [IANS](#) reported that the sector grew from \$4.4 billion (Rs. 20,020 crore) in 2010 to \$13.6 billion (Rs. 83,096 crore) in 2014, citing a reply submitted in the Lok Sabha in March. Citing a report by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Deloitte, the report added that the online retail sector in India is expected to be valued at \$1 trillion (Rs. 6.6 lakh crore) by 2020. What makes this figure more impressive is that this number was achieved despite internet penetration being relatively low in the country. While India may currently have the second-largest internet user base, things were quite different back in 2014. According to the report, only 18 percent of the country had access to the internet in 2014. In addition, [internet speeds are also among the slowest in the world](#), with content delivery network services provider Akamai announcing that India has an average connection speed of 2.8 Mbps, well below the global average of 5.6 Mbps. That said, the IANS report says the increasing number of smartphone users and increased spending on 3G and 4G services are helping fuel the growth of the e-commerce sector in the country. The government allowing 100 percent foreign direct investment (FDI) in the online retail space has caught the eye of major global players like Alibaba and Rakuten, who have already begun setting up operations in the country.

Once more players enter the industry, it wouldn't be surprising if the sector exceeds predictions.

437. Kerala Wins 'Best Family Destination' 2016 Award

Kerala has once again been named as the best family destination in the country at the Lonely Planet Magazine India (LPMI) Travel Awards 2016. Kerala Tourism Director U V Jose received the award at a function in Mumbai. The annual awards showcase the best travel experiences available to Indians and anoint the best service providers, the preferred places to stay and the destinations Indians most love to visit, it said. Nominations for the awards are shortlisted by a panel of travel experts and professionals, following which readers vote both online and in the magazine. Besides being judged the best place to take the family along for a holiday, Kerala was also nominated in the best destination for 'culture' and 'to relax' categories. Kerala Tourism had earlier won the Ulysses Prize of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation for its contribution as a global leader to sustainable tourism, the release added.

438. Ashok Chawla is NSE's new chairman

Former chairman of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), Ashok Chawla, is the new chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE). Chawla's appointment was confirmed after obtaining a clearance from the market regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India, an NSE spokesperson said. Chawla retired as CCI chairman in January after being at the helm for nearly five years. He has also served as finance secretary and civil aviation secretary. He will take the place of S.B. Mathur, who retired as NSE chairman earlier this year. Chawla's appointment comes at a time when NSE is preparing to go public and provide its shareholders an exit opportunity. NSE in February formed a listing committee, comprising board members, shareholders and management representatives to accelerate the process of listing. The committee would be required to engage with NSE shareholders on the issue of proposed restructuring of the bourse and for self-listing. NSE shareholders include Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), State Bank of India (SBI), Goldman Sachs, Tiger Global Holdings and Citigroup Strategic Holdings Mauritius.

439. Hindupur Pradeep Rao appointed as Deputy CAG

Senior audit service officer Hindupur Pradeep Rao was today appointed as Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

Rao, a 1981 batch officer of Indian Audit and Account Service, is presently working as Additional CAG.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Rao as Deputy CAG with effect from July 1, 2016, an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training said.

The Comptroller and Auditor General is country's top auditing body.

In another order, the [ACC](#) has appointed A K Mittal as Member (Engineering) in Railway Board here.

Mittal, who belong to Indian Railway Service of Engineers, is presently General Manager of East Central Railway.

He has been appointed to the new post with effect from June 1, 2016.

440. Michel Temer takes over as interim Brazil president

Brazil's interim president Michel Temer kicks off his new administration on Friday, seeking to resuscitate the economy and steer clear of the corruption scandal that helped bring down his predecessor. The former vice president installed a business-friendly cabinet on Thursday, just hours after senators voted to suspend his boss-turned-nemesis, Dilma Rousseff, and [open an impeachment trial](#) against her. The tumultuous transfer of power ended 13 years of rule by the leftist Workers' Party, which helped lift tens of millions of people from poverty with progressive social programs but became mired in corruption scandals, recession and political paralysis. Mr Temer was due to meet with his cabinet on Friday morning, followed by a news conference by new Finance Minister Henrique Meirelles, the man in charge of rebooting Latin America's largest economy.

441. Rwanda captain bats 51 hours straight, creates new Guinness record

In a display of immense patience and stunning endurance, Eric Dusingizimana, the Rwandan national captain, has

set a new Guinness world record by batting out a straight 51 hours, the longest individual net session, beating the record set last year by India's Virag Mane, who had batted a straight 50 hours. Pakistan's Hanif Mohammad, who batted over a period of three days during his epic match saving knock of 337 against West Indies in 1958, is currently the record holder for batting the longest period of time in a cricket match. He had spent a total of 16 hours and 10 minutes at the crease. Dusingizimana's act came during a charity session in aid of the Rwandan Cricket Stadium Foundation (RCSF) and the proceeds will be utilized to raise money to build an international stadium in Rwanda. He faced throw downs from celebrity guests which included Tony Blair, former Britain Prime Minister, Miss Rwanda and many more.

442. Indo-US Brain Trust formed to deepen scientific collaboration

The partnership between the Indian and American scientific community, researchers, academicians, businesses and entrepreneurs is a "win-win" for not only the two countries, but also the entire world, said Indian Ambassador to the US Arun K Singh.

"We find now a strategic convergence in our interest and we are working together in different areas," he said in his address at the inaugural dinner of the Indo-US Brain Trust here on Thursday.

A partnership for research and development and scientific collaboration is essential to take this relationship to the next level, he said. "There is a huge potential there," he added.

"Several major US companies have developed products in India, which their CEOs have said to me they could not have developed in the US because researchers and scientists here approach the problem from different perspective with different resource availability, they are targeting with different objective," Singh said.

"Whereas in India the aim very often is to minimize the use of resources, keep the cost down, maximize the number of people that can be reached through the product and there by you end up with something that is different and has relevance in a different context," he said.

Applauding Indias success, former World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz said India has now emerged as a model for other developing countries.

"The idea is to create a platform which partners scientific minds from both countries to explore and create timely solutions to pressing global challenges," said Ron Somers founder and CEO of India First Group welcoming the guests at the inaugural dinner.

"The Indo-US Brain Trust must strive to create a shared platform for the US and Indian scientific communities to exchange, synergize, and deepen collaboration," he added. Dr Krishna K Banaudha, an Indian-American scientist and the brain behind the project, said Indo-US Brain Trust intends to assemble some of the finest minds and friends who - by their very actions and livelihoods - support a deepening of US-India collaboration in science, research, academia, entrepreneurship and innovation.

"This group collectively represents the extraordinary partnership underway between the United States and India which is shaping a very bright future," he said.

443. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana

Central Government has updated the guidelines of [Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana](#). The government has made several changes for those willing to invest in the scheme this financial year. The changes in the scheme will ensure procedural efficiency and financial security of the girl child. There have been many investor friendly changes in the scheme which were affected by the finance ministry's move to introduce market-linked interest rates in small savings schemes. Last year, the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana fetched 9.1% return to the investors. The government has planned to amend the interest rates on quarterly basis. The interest rate for April to June 2016 quarter would be 8.6%. Following are some of the major changes made in the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana. Now, a SSY account can be opened in the name of Adopted girl child. Only a girl child residing in India can be a beneficiary. In case of medical emergency, premature closure of the account has been made easy. Deposits can be made till a girl turns 15. Interest rates would change every quarter

Payment for the account can also be made through electronic mode SSY can now be transferred from a bank to post office and vice versa in case of relocation. Even if you are not relocating, account can be transferred by paying a fee of Rs 100 to the post or to the bank to which the transfer is being made. Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana is a small saving account under which the parents can open an account in the name of Girl child and save money for her future. An investment of up to Rs. 1.5 Lakh per year can be made under the SSY. [Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana](#) was launched by the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on 21st January 2015; under the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Campaign.

444. Gogoi's autobiography released in Delhi

Turnaround Leading Assam from the Front, an autobiography of Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi was released by MP Dr Karan Singh at a function in Delhi on Saturday evening, a government release said. Published by Harper Collins India, the autobiography traces the story of how Gogoi's innovative and grounded style of governance helped bring about the change from dark days towards dawn vis-a-vis towards the path of development, the release said. As a record of Assam politics (2001- 2016) at its transformative best, the book documents a trailblazing career and a state abuzz with the excitement of a makeover, it said. Releasing the book, Singh said it has been an astounding achievement for Tarun Gogoi to be at the helm of affairs for three consecutive terms and for steering the state through difficult times. For being the Chief Minister during the most difficult times with insurgency and various forces at work and for bring about a turnaround in the situation, his place in the history is assured, he said. Terming Gogoi as a great son of the Brahmaputra, Singh said the manner in which the Chief Minister handled a state like Assam confronted with so much difficulties and complexities similar to that of Jammu and Kashmir, was quite extraordinary. The Chief Minister during an interview said when he took over the reins of power in May 2001, Assam was passing through difficult times. Insurgency was at its peak with militants calling the shots. Development came to a standstill. With empty coffers, government employees were not paid salaries. But things have changed since then. The number of killings by militants has come down as several outfits were brought to the negotiating table. Economic growth accompanied the new stability. And the rest is history. Gogoi further said the biggest achievement of his government has been changing the mindset of the youth. Today the youth of Assam are shining outside the state. They are feeling confident like never before. Assam's future is bright and the state is well poised to become one of the leading states of the country. When history of Assam is penned, my three terms will show up both positives as well as negatives. But, I will leave history to judge these years. I, as a son of the soil, am only content and grateful that I could take centre stage in the turnaround story, he said.

445. Polling Deferred In Tamil Nadu's Aravakurichi After Cash For Votes Charge

Voting in Tamil Nadu's Aravakurichi Assembly constituency will now be held on May 23, instead of Monday when the rest of the state goes to vote, the Election Commission has said amid charges that candidates and political parties had bribed voters.

The electoral process has been "seriously vitiated" due to the unlawful activities of candidates and political parties, the Commission said. The order added FIRs or police complaints have been lodged and Income Tax raids carried out at the residences and other premises of various political leaders show that unaccounted money and gift items have been distributed to voters to vitiate the electoral process.

"...the irresistible conclusion is that all the above seized monies and gift items were meant for distribution to electors as illegal inducement to them," the Election Commission said.

Yesterday political workers in Tamil Nadu's Panruti assembly constituency [were purportedly caught on video bribing voters](#) with as much as Rs 1,000 per vote.

Tamil Nadu, along with Kerala and Puducherry, is going for a single phase assembly election on May 16 with the results due on May 19.

The ruling AIADMK led by Chief Minister Jayalalithaa will seek to retain power in Tamil Nadu as the DMK, in alliance with the Congress tries to make a comeback led by 93-year-old M Karunanidhi.

446. Swiss min campaigners set Guinness record with poster

Campaigners for a minimum income in Switzerland set a Guinness Record for the world's largest poster on Saturday, as they sought support for the controversial proposal ahead of a referendum next month. The record-breaking 8,115 square-metre (87,350 square-feet) poster consisted of a series of massive black plastic sheets, with the words "What would you do if your income was taken care of" in gold lettering. It was set up in a large diamond-shaped open space in central Geneva called La Plaine de Plainpalais. The group behind the installation, Basic Income Switzerland, wants all adults in the wealthy alpine federation to receive an income of at least 2,500 Swiss francs (USD 2,500, 2,265 euros) per month. The minimum income proposal will be put to popular vote on June 5, one of a series of measures up for approval during the country's three-monthly referenda. In October, campaigners submitted more than the 100,000 signatures needed to call a referendum. A minimum income is different from a minimum wage, and supporters say it would provide a safety net that severs the link between income and work. The measure seeks to legally ensure that no adult in Switzerland has to live on less than 2,500 Swiss francs a month, including those who do not qualify for unemployment insurance and those who do not want to apply for it. Experts say implementation would almost certainly require a tax hike and some fear it will encourage people to stop working.

447. Albania to host NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Albania is set to host the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Parliamentary Assembly later this month in capital Tirana. Pandeli Majko, chairman of the Albanian delegation to the interparliamentary organ of NATO, on Saturday said the three-day meeting, scheduled to start from May 27, will bring together about 700 participants from [NATO](#) member states, partner countries and observer states, Xinhua news agency reported. "Albania as a NATO member country has the honour to host the Parliamentary Assembly, which will discuss the toughest challenges that our Alliance has to cope with in the near and distant future," said Majko. NATO Parliamentary Assembly, founded in 1955, consists of 257 delegates from the 28 NATO member countries. Albania became a full-fledged NATO member on April 4, 2009.

448. Centre approves Odisha's proposal to set up Kalinganagar National Investment and Manufacturing Zone

The Centre has approved the Odisha Government's proposal to set up Kalinganagar National Investment and Manufacturing Zone in Jajpur district.

The Zone will be a mega industrial zone having a world-class township to cater to the needs of the investors. This is the third Investment and Manufacturing Zone of India involving a massive area of 163 square kilometer.

Official sources said the project is expected to invite 1 lakh crore rupees investment and generate 1 lakh 50 thousand direct jobs.

The Odisha government had earlier said it plan to establish the zone on over 40 thousand acre of land by spending more than 10 thousand crore rupees at Kalinga Nagar.

Notably, the State Government had envisaged the major project as part of Ease of Doing Business. It had committed to providing 24 X 7 power, dedicated industrial feeder and quality physical infrastructure and common facilities for the project.

449. ISRO set to undertake maiden launch of its own version of 'space shuttle'

For the very first time in its history, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is actually growing wings as it embarks this month on a never before space flight that will make history. The Indian space agency is all set to undertake the maiden launch of its very own indigenous version of a space shuttle, a fully made-in-India effort. A sleek winged body almost the weight and size of a sports utility vehicle is being given final touches on Sunday at Sriharikota, awaiting the final countdown. Yes, the big powers abandoned the idea of a winged reusable launch vehicle but Indias frugal engineers believe the solution to reducing cost of launching satellites into orbit is to recycle the rocket or make it reusable. Scientists at ISRO believe that they could reduce the cost of launching stuff into space by as much as 10 times if reusable technology succeeds, bringing it down to USD 2,000 per kg. Very soon and if all goes well, possibly before the monsoon sets in, Indias space port at Sriharikota on the coast of the Bay of Bengal in Andhra Pradesh will witness the launch of the indigenously made Reusable Launch Vehicle -Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD). This will be the first time ISRO will launch a space craft, which actually has delta wings and after launch it will be glided back onto a

virtual runway in the Bay of Bengal. The RLV-TD is unlikely to be recovered from sea during this experiment as it is expected that the vehicle will disintegrate on impact with water since it is not designed to float. The purpose of the experiment is not to see it float but to glide and navigate from a velocity five times higher than the speed of sound onto a designated virtual runway in the Bay of Bengal some 500 km from the coast. Very similar in its looks to the American space shuttle, the RLV-TD being experimented is a scale model which is almost 6 times smaller than the final version. K Sivan, director of the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram, says, These are just the first baby steps towards the big Hanuman leap. The final version will take at least 10-15 years to get ready since designing a human rated reusable rocket is no kid stuff.

450. Union Health Minister Nadda lays foundation stone of medical college in Rajouri

In Jammu and Kashmir, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda today laid the foundation stone of medical college in the border district of Rajouri of Jammu region.

This medical college is one of the five medical colleges recently sanctioned by the Centre for Jammu and Kashmir. Each of these colleges is to be set up at a cost of around 189 crore rupees. Minister of State PMO and local MP Dr. Jitendra Singh, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mebooba Mufti and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

Mr Nadda is also scheduled to lay the foundations of other two medical colleges in Anantnag and Baramula districts of Kashmir Valley later in the day.

451. Amit Shah inaugurates 2nd phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in Gujarat

BJP National president Amit Shah today inaugurated the second phase of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana at Dahod in Gujarat.

Speaking on this occasion, he said, Centre has planned to provide 1 lakh free LPG connections to each parliamentary constituency of the country.

He congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan for this unique scheme. He said, from today, the hardships of the women in BPL families will end following the implementation of this scheme. Mr Pradhan along with the Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh were also present on this occasion.

In the second phase of the scheme, free LPG connections will be given to BPL families in tribal district of Dahod. The second phase will also cover the Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh along with Gujarat.

Free Symbolic LPG connections were also given to the women of BPL families from Gujarat, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh by Mr Dharmendra Pradhan today.

AIR correspondent reports that the scheme aims to provide free LPG connections to about five crore families living below poverty line across the country. The first phase of the scheme was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ballia in Uttar Pradesh on 1st May.

452. China reclaims over 3,200 acres of land in South China Sea

China has reclaimed more than 3,200 acres of land in the South China Sea in the last two years.

A new US Defence department report says, the Asian giant is expected to add substantial military infrastructure, including surveillance systems, to the artificial islands in the Sea, this year.

It also says, China will be able to use its reclaimed features as persistent civil-military bases to enhance its presence in the South China Sea significantly.

The report comes at a time of heightened tension over maritime territories claimed by China and disputed by several Asian nations.

Washington has accused Beijing of militarizing the South China Sea while Beijing, in turn, has criticized increased U.S. naval patrols and exercises in Asia.

453. Venezuelan President orders seizure of non-functional factories

The Venezuelan President, Nicolas Maduro, has ordered the seizure of factories that have stopped production and the jailing of their owners. In a speech to supporters in the capital Caracas, he said the country has to recover the means of production, to counter its deep economic crisis.

On Friday, he introduced a new, nationwide state of emergency. Opposition protesters have been rallying in Caracas to push for a recall vote to eject him from power.

Mr Maduro said the state of emergency was needed to combat foreign aggression, which he blamed for Venezuela's problems. And he said military exercises would take place next weekend to counter foreign threats.

Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves but its economy has been severely hit by falling global oil prices.

454. China launches a remote sensing satellite to carry out land surveys

China today successfully launched a remote sensing satellite to carry out land surveys and disaster relief. The satellite named Yaogan-30 was launched from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwestern China's Gobi Desert. The satellite will be used for experiments, land surveys, crop yield estimates and disaster relief, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Yaogan-30 was carried by a Long March-2D rocket, the 227th mission for the Long March rocket family. China launched the first "Yaogan" series satellite, Yaogan-1, in 2006.

455. African and Western powers hold summit in Nigerian capital Abuja

African and Western powers held a summit in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, yesterday, urging to do more to stop the threat from Boko Haram. The move comes as the UN voiced concern about the militant groups' ties to the Islamic State and threat to African security.

Nigeria invited leaders of its neighbours Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger to Abuja, whose troops will be deployed as part of a much-delayed 8,500-member regional force to combat the extremists.

Delegates including French President Francois Hollande were told that despite major gains since the last security summit two years ago in Paris, more needed to be done to eradicate Boko Haram. The final communique said a global approach was required, comprising hard and soft power, to end the threat.

456. FIFA's auditing Head Scala resigns in protest against reforms

Domenico Scala, Fifa's head of auditing and compliance, has resigned in protest at reforms at the governing body of world football.

Scala is angry as the new Fifa council will have the ability to appoint and sack those in charge of its committees, including auditing, ethics and finance.

The council replaced the Fifa executive committee in the aftermath of a corruption scandal at the organisation. Scala said Committees had been "deprived of their independence.

" He added that this is a wake-up call to those persons who genuinely advocated for implementing reforms.

Fifa, which accepted Scala's resignation and installed his deputy Sindi Mabaso Koyana as acting chairman, insists the Swiss has misinterpreted the purpose of the decision taken by its Congress.

457. The week in Indian parliament

The concluding week of the Budget session of Indian Parliament saw transaction of important legislative business. Both the houses have now passed the Bankruptcy Code Bill, which is being called as a legislation that would have far

reaching consequence on the way commercial activities in India. Once the President signs the legislation, India will have a new bankruptcy law that will ensure time-bound settlement of insolvency, enable faster turnaround of businesses and create a database of serial defaulters. But implementation will remain the key, analysts point out, as the new code is presaged on the creation of a complementary eco-system including insolvency professionals, information utilities and a bankruptcy regulator. Along with the proposed changes in India's two debt recovery and enforcement laws, it will be critical in resolving India's bad debt problem, which has crippled bank lending. The new code will replace existing bankruptcy laws and cover individuals, companies, limited liability partnerships and partnership firms. It will amend laws including the Companies Act to become the overarching legislation to deal with corporate insolvency. It will also help creditors recover loans faster. Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu informed the Lok Sabha that 100 smart cities will be developed in five years. Smart Cities are not only for rich areas, but are spread across the country. He said that his ministry has received proposals from States, on the basis of which 21 cities have been selected for infrastructure development under the scheme. The upper house, Rajya Sabha saw as many as 53 members retiring on Friday, the last day of the session. The number was one of the highest in recent memory. Of the 53 retiring Members, 16 were from the main opposition Congress - the party had a total of 65 members in the upper house. It is unlikely the Congress will be able to send the same number of MPs back to the Rajya Sabha. From the ruling BJP, five union ministers - M Venkaiah Naidu, Piyush Goyal, Nirmala Sitharaman, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and YS Choudhry also retired. However, all of them are likely to be re-elected as Rajya Sabha MPs. Further, the party is all set to increase its numbers in the upper house but will still not be able to secure majority. The massive majority in Rajasthan will help the BJP boost its numbers in the Rajya Sabha. The Augusta Westland issue rocked the proceedings in the Upper House. The Congress members decided to move a Privilege Motion against nominated MP Dr. Subramanyam Swamy. In a record of sorts, the eighth session of the 16th Lok Sabha which ended on Wednesday created history of sorts as business in the lower house, the Lok Sabha, was carried out without any adjournment due to interruptions. In the recent past, such smooth functioning of the Lok Sabha proceedings was witnessed only in 1990 and 1992, a senior Lok Sabha official said. History is being made here, he said. During the eighth session that began on April 25, the Lok Sabha clocked 120 per cent work during its 13 sittings spread over 92 hours and 21 minutes. The official recalled that in 1992, during the third session of the 10th Lok Sabha, when Shivraj Patil was the Speaker, the lower house had 49 sittings, during which too there, was no adjournment due to interruption. The government could not move forward on the GST bill. This means that the government has now stopped talking to smaller parties to try and make up the numbers it needs to pass the bill in the Rajya Sabha, where it does not have the numbers. The bill was passed last year by the Lok Sabha, where the government has a big majority. The government wanted to implement the Goods and Services Tax, which aims to bring the country under a unified tax regime, by April 1, 2016. Since the GST bill seeks to make a change in the Constitution, it must be passed by a two-thirds majority in each house and that makes the support of the 60 Congress lawmakers in the Rajya Sabha crucial. Both the houses were adjourned sine die by the Presiding officers and will now convene again during the monsoon session.

458. India successfully test fires indigenously developed Advanced Air Defence interceptor missile

India today successfully test fired an indigenously developed Advanced Air Defence interceptor missile, capable of destroying any incoming hostile ballistic missile from the launch complex of Abdul Kalam Island in Bhadrak district of Odisha.

The advanced version of low altitude supersonic ballistic interceptor missile was fired from the Integrated Test Range off the Odisha coast at a ballistic missile, a modified version of Prithvi weapon system.

Quoting Defence Research Development Organisation sources our correspondent reports that the test was conducted at 11.18 a.m. from launch pad number-3 of the Integrated Test Range to validate various parameters of the interceptor in flight mode.

India is the fourth country to have successfully developed this anti-ballistic missile system, after United States, Russia and Israel. This development now strengthens India's position in the very exclusive Ballistic Missile Defence club of the three countries. Today's success is likely to pave the way for the supersonic interceptor missiles induction in the armed forces. The test was the twelfth test of interceptor missiles fired from a warship in the Bay of Bengal near Paradip. Of the 11 tests held earlier, nine have been successful.

The interceptor missile is a 7.5-meter long single stage solid rocket propelled guided missile equipped with a navigation system, a hi-tech computer and an electro-mechanical activator. It weighs around 1.2 tonnes and has a diameter of less than 0.5 meter.

459. New Bankruptcy Law will fast-track recovery of dues from defaulters: Sinha

The new Bankruptcy Law will fast-track recovery of dues from defaulters and employees will be first in line to get their share from liquidation of assets if a company goes belly-up, says Minister of State for Finance Jayant Sinha. He also said that besides, it would also bring down drastically the time taken to wind up a sick company while making the entire process much easier. The minister added that employees' rights and creditors' rights had been dramatically strengthened and as a result, if indeed there were a default event, employees are first in line to be able to secure their rights.

460. Indian short film "Beti" at Seattle International Film Festival

"Beti", a four minute documentary film on girl child education, has been invited for special screening at the 42nd Seattle International Film Festival (SIFF), Washington DC. Young student filmmakers of Chandigarh has made the film. Beti is the only short film from India to be featured amongst 421 films representing 85 countries and will be screened on May 30, which is Seattle Memorial Day at the SIFF. The movie is directed by Shivain Arora. The short film promotes girl child by narrating the real life story of three girls from a government school and their dream for the future.

461. ASI core committee chairman resigns from his post

Archeological Survey of India technical core committee chairman G C Mitra, who is looking after the repair work of Jagamohan, the chamber facing the sanctum sanctorum of Sri Jagannath Temple in Puri has resigned from his post.

Quoting reliable source, our correspondent reports that Mitra has sent his resignation letter to ASI DG and the superintendent yesterday.

Though the exact reason behind Mitras resignation is unknown, it is believed he might have taken the decision after ASI rejected the estimation and the repair plan of Jagamohana at Srimandir prepared by the core committee.

Notably, a high level meeting of ASI held on May 5 in Delhi had disapproved the core committees estimation for an expenditure of 2.5 crore rupees towards purchase of stainless steel to be used in the repair work.

462. Justice Mukul Mudgal appointed as deputy chairman of FIFA governance committee

In a major development for Indian football and judiciary, world governing body FIFA has appointed Justice Mukul Mudgal as deputy chairman of its governance committee.

The former Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana, who headed the IPL spot-fixing probe, said that he is aware of his appointment. Mudgal told PTI that he has seen it on the website though he was yet to receive an official confirmation from FIFA. He said he feels honoured as it is a big thing for Indian judiciary.

Mudgal, who is also involved in overseeing the conduct of international cricket matches and IPL games at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in Delhi, hinted that he would take up the offer.

Portuguese Luis Miguel Maduro, who is a former European Court of Justice Advocate General, will head FIFA's governance committee. Mudgal and Maduro will also head FIFA's International Review Committee, which will assess all major decisions.

Mexico City hosted the 66th FIFA Congress where newly elected president Gianni Infantino moved a slew of resolutions and promised massive reforms.

463. Ukraine's Jamala wins Eurovision Song Contest

Ukraine's Jamala has won this year's Eurovision Song Contest, held in Stockholm, Sweden. The country scored 534

points with its song 1944, about the deportation of Crimean Tatars under Josef Stalin. Australia finished second with 511 points, while Russia was third with 491 points. Jamala is the first Crimean Tatar to perform at the contest and her song caused controversy because of alleged political overtones. It references the year when Stalin deported almost all of the Tatar ethnic group from its native region of Crimea in what was then the Soviet Union.

464. Foreign investors sell Rs. 178 cr shares in 2 weeks

Foreign investors dumped shares worth 178 crore rupees in the first two weeks of May, as worries over global economy and amended Indo-Mauritius tax treaty hurt the sentiment, reversing the last two months' bullish trend. However, Foreign Portfolio Investors have invested 595 crore rupees in the debt markets during the period under review.

In March-April, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) had pumped in a net Rs 29,558 crore into equity markets. So far this year, FPIs have invested 12,733 crore rupees in equities while withdrawing 345 crore rupees from the debt market, resulting in a net inflow of 12,388 crore rupees.

465. Sania Mirza-Martina Hingis clinch Rome Masters Title

Sania Mirza and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis have won the Rome Masters Women's Doubles Title.

In Rome today, they defeated 7th seeded Russians Ekaterina Makarova and Elena Vesnina in the final 6-1, 6-7, 10-3.

466. Indian women win silver medal in Asian Team squash Championships

Indian women's squash team have won the Silver medal in the Asian Team squash Championships. In the final played at Taipei in Chinese Taipei today, they lost to Malaysia by a 0-2 margin. India's performance was better than their bronze-medal finish in the earlier edition of the championship.

Sachika Ingale lost in straight games 7-11, 6-11, 10-12 to Sivasangari Subramaniam in the first match. Later, Delia Arnold prevailed over India's top player Joshna Chinappa 9-11, 13-11, 11-8, 11-9.

Dipika Pallikal was not required to play the third match which could have been decisive had Joshna won her encounter.

467. Max Verstappen wins Spanish GP to become youngest F1 winner

Dutch teenager Max Verstappen made Formula One history as the youngest race winner on Sunday in a sensational Spanish Grand Prix that saw dominant Mercedes drivers Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg collide and crash out on the opening lap. Verstappen, only 18 and making his debut for the former world champions after being promoted from junior team Toro Rosso a week earlier, beat Ferraris Kimi Raikkonen at 36 twice his age by 0.616 seconds. Verstappen was also the youngest driver to stand on the podium and the first Dutch race winner since the championship started in 1950. His proud father Jos, who was twice on the podium with Benetton as Michael Schumachers team mate in 1994 and raced against Raikkonen later in his career, declared it the best day of his life. This is really something unbelievably special, he told reporters while others acclaimed an exceptional talent. Four-times world champion Sebastian Vettel, the previous youngest race winner thanks to his astonishing 2008 Italian Grand Prix victory for Toro Rosso at the age of 21, was third for Ferrari. Rosberg had his lead trimmed to 39 points, with Raikkonen moving up to second ahead of Hamilton.

468. ICC appoints Claire Furlong to steer its strategic communications

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday appointed Claire Furlong as the global cricket governing body's general manager for strategic communications. Furlong will take up her position on July 17. She is currently head of sport at Hannover Sport with clients including England and Wales Cricket Board, NFL and Asian Football Confederation.

Prior to Hannover, she ran her own consultancy for a number of years with a range of clients that included team England for whom she led the media operation at Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Commenting on her appointment, Furlong said, "I am delighted to be joining the ICC at an exciting time with a strategic review underway that is focused on improving both governance and cricket structures." "I am looking forward to working with cricketing colleagues at both the ICC and around the world as we collectively look forward to taking on the exciting challenges that lie ahead," she said. ICC chief executive David Richardson said: "Claire Furlong brings with her a wealth of experience, which she

has earned following successful stints with some of the leading sport organisations." "Effective communications, internal and external, is a critical aspect of any organisation and we look forward to welcoming her to the ICC headquarters and benefiting from her expertise and experience."

469. Gangjee best Indian at 7th in Mauritius

Rahil Gangjee emerged as the best Indian in tied seventh place even as new Korean star Wang Jeunghun pipped Bangladesh's Siddikur Rahman with a 72nd hole birdie by one shot in a dramatic finish at the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open here today.

Wang, three behind with three to play, benefited from a double bogey and a bogey from Siddikur on 16 and 17 and then himself birdied the 18th, as Siddikur's shot from the grassy area to the right of the green hit the flag and rolled past.

He missed the return putt for birdie, while Wang came out of the bunker perfectly and rolled in his five-foot birdie putt.

Wang collected his second European Tour win on the trot following his success at the Trophée Hassan last week, while Gangjee earned his third Top-10 of the season. Wang also had four other Top-10s this year.

Gangjee was done in by a late double bogey on 16th and that cost him a chance of a Top-5 finish. At one point Gangjee was three-under through 15 holes for the day and had the best round of the day.

But on 16th, where the players hit into the breeze, his drive landed on a thick rough from where he managed only to hit the ball high and into the bushes and trees on the left, forcing him to take a 'lost ball'. He ended with a double bogey and finished the day at one-under 71, the joint second best round of the day, and a total of three-over 291.

Gangjee was the best Indian while Jyoti Randhawa (73) at tied 12th and Arjun Atwal (72) and Rashid Khan (75) were tied 27th. Chiragh Kumar (76) and Daniel Chopra (76) were tied 50th, Jeev Milkha Singh (74) was tied 62nd and Himmat Rai (77) was tied 67th.

470. India 3rd in attractiveness index of renewable energy: Report

India is placed at the third position after the United States and China in the Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index, according to an EY report. This is primarily due to strong focus of the Indian government on renewable energy coupled with the actual timely implementation of renewable energy projects, EY said in a statement. The US, China and India featured in the top three countries in the index with the size and scale of renewables activity surpassing others. The so-called emerging markets now represent half of the countries in the 40-strong index, including four African markets featuring in the top 30, it said. Just a decade ago only China and India were attractive enough to compete with more developed markets for renewable energy investment. Chile, Brazil and Mexico also climbed higher in the index top 10, while Germany and France fell in the latest ranking, it added. The report also demonstrates that low solar bids (which appear unviable) are not a phenomenon that is restricted to India, but other countries such as Mexico, Dubai etc have also been reporting very low solar bids, Kuljit Singh, Partner, Infrastructure practice, EY said. As is the case with India, wind continues to be at a pricing premium to solar in rest of the world but both these technologies are racing towards grid parity which may lead to not so desirable consequences for traditional utility business models, Singh said.

471. Youngest ancient foetus found in miniature Egyptian coffin

An ancient miniature coffin measuring just 44 centimetres in length has been found to contain the youngest ever example of a human foetus to be embalmed and buried in Egyptian society. This discovery is the only academically verified specimen to exist at only sixteen to eighteen weeks of gestation. This landmark discovery from the Fitzwilliam Museum in UK, is remarkable evidence of the importance that was placed on official burial rituals in ancient Egypt, even for those lives that were lost so early on in their existence. The tiny coffin was excavated at Giza in 1907 by the British School of Archaeology and came into the collection at the Fitzwilliam Museum the same year. It is a perfect miniature a wooden coffin of the ancient Egyptian Late Period and may date to around 664-525 BC. The lid and box are both made from cedar wood. Although the coffin is deteriorated, it is clear that the wood was carefully carved on a painstakingly small scale and decorated. The diminutive wrapped package inside was carefully bound in bandages, over

which molten black resin had been poured before the coffin was closed. For many years it was thought that the contents were the mummified remains of internal organs that were routinely removed during the embalming of bodies. Examination using x-ray imaging at the Fitzwilliam Museum was inconclusive, but suggested that it may contain a small skeleton. It was therefore decided to micro CT (computed tomography) scan the tiny bundle at Cambridge University. The cross-sectional images this produced gave the first pictures of the remains of a tiny human body held within the wrappings, which remain undisturbed. Five digits on both hands and feet and the long bones of the legs and arms were all clearly visible.

472. Educational level may be determined by genes: study

The educational level a person obtains could be due, in part, to the genes carried by them, according to a new study. Genes that are correlated with educational attainment are expressed in the brain during prenatal development. Some of the genes also predict risk for Alzheimers disease, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, researchers said. An international group of scientists conducted one of the largest genetic studies to date and identified 74 genetic variants that are associated with the years of formal education that an individual completes. This study builds on our earlier work in which we had studied 100,000 individuals and found three genetic variants linked to educational attainment, said Daniel Benjamin from University of Southern California in the US. This time, because of our much larger sample almost 300,000 individuals we were able to identify far more genetic variants that are associated with educational attainment, said Benjamin. He said that genetic and environmental factors both account for variation in how much schooling a person receives. Genes only partially influence cognitive abilities and personality traits, such as persistence, that in turn affect the number of years one spends in school, researchers said. Educational attainment is jointly influenced by genes and environment. The genetic variants that we found account for a small fraction of the differences across individuals in education, he said. Scientists combined results from 64 datasets comprising subjects in 15 different countries. They identified the genetic variants associated with an individuals total years of education.

473. Geremew is first athlete to win back-to-back World 10K titles

Beating very hot and humid conditions, Mosinet Geremew and Peres Jepchirchir powered to impressive victories at the 9th [TCS](#) World 10K here today.

Taking control of the 8km-run, Geremew held on to win in 28.36 to become the first athlete to secure back-to-back titles.

Trailed by Kenyan John Langat and Bonsa Dida until the final lap on the track, Geremew pipped them by one second to earn a winner's cheque of USD 23,000.

"It was different this year because it was very hot," said Geremew, who like Jepchirchir arrived in [Bengaluru](#) after winning the Yangzhou Half Marathon.

"But at 9K I was sure that I would win."

Despite the heat, he added with a smile, "I think I will come back next year."

Jepchirchir, the reigning world half marathon champion, broke from the field in the seventh kilometer to win in 32.15, 13 seconds clear of her Kenyan compatriot Helah Kiprop.

474. Massive Crowd Sees Off World's Largest Cruise Ship In France

Tens of thousands of people turned out on Sunday in France to see off the world's biggest-ever cruise ship, the 120,000-tonne Harmony of the Seas, as it set sail for the first time.

At 66 metres (217 feet), it is the widest cruise ship ever built, while its 362-metre length makes it 50 metres longer than the height of the Eiffel Tower.

As the massive boat pulled away from a shipyard in Saint-Nazaire, where it was built on France's Atlantic shore, some 70,000 people watched from along the coast, local authorities said. The crowd waved, cheered and clapped as the boat --

built for the US-based Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd (RCCL) -- eased away from France.

"It's gone," said Christine, who did not give her full name. "We watched it develop and grow over three years. It's like a child leaving home."

The floating town, which cost close to one billion euros (dollars), has 16 decks and will be able to carry 6,360 passengers and 2,100 crew members.

The ship is headed for Southampton in southern England and is to embark on its official maiden voyage on May 22 to its new home port of Barcelona.

475. Indian eves thrash Australia 5-0 in Uber Cup

Indian eves made a remarkable start to their campaign at the Uber Cup badminton tournament by thrashing Australia 5-Nil at Kunshan in China today.

The Indian eves, who had created history by clinching the bronze medal in the last edition at New Delhi, won all the three singles and both the doubles to grab maximum points.

World No. 8 Saina Nehwal started the proceedings for India beating World No. 74 Hsuan-Yu Wendy Chen. Two-time bronze medallist at World Championship, P V Sindhu then brushed aside Joy Lai to make it 2-0. Celebrated women's doubles pair of Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa dished out a clinical performance to get across Hsuan-Yu Wendy and Gronya Somerville.

South Asian Games gold-medallist, Ruthvika Shivani Gadde then hammered Tiffany Ho in the third singles, while Sikki Reddy N and Sindhu dismantled Leanne Choo and Joy Lai to complete the 5-nil drubbing of Australia. India will take on Germany tomorrow in their next Group D match.

476. Andy Murray beats Novak Djokovic to win first Italian Open title

Andy Murray defeated Novak Djokovic on clay for the first time to win the Italian Open Men's Singles Tennis title. The third-ranked Murray defeated the top-ranked Djokovic 6-3, 6-3 yesterday. It's Murray's first title in Rome and it comes exactly a week before the French Open begins. During the trophy ceremony, Murray was presented with a birthday cake as it was his 29th birthday. The only other British man to win the tournament was Pat Hughes in 1931.

Earlier, Serena Williams ended a nine-month title drought with a 7-6, 6-3 win over Madison Keys in an all American women's Singles final.

Sania Mirza and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis yesterday won the Women's Doubles Title. In the final, the World Number One pair defeated the 7th seeded Russians Ekaterina Makarova and Elena Vesnina 6-1, 6-7, 10-3.

477. India Post goes high-tech, geo-tags post offices on mobile app called BHUVAN

The postal department of India, India Post is going high tech by geo tagging the post office on Bhuvan and has begun monitoring timely clearance of the letter boxes through a mobile app. The portal is developed by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and will help to provide visualization services and earth observation data to users in public domain. The initiative is the part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's drive to use space technology by various departments of the government. Under this initiative, the Geo-tagging will help people to find the nearest post office, their services and timings. Presently, India Post has geo-tagged more than 1.5 lakh post offices on a geo-portal Bhuvan. Bhuvan is a software application which allows users to explore a 2D/3D representation of the surface of the earth and started in 2009 with simple display of satellite data and basic GIS functionality, now has more than 6,000 map services which are being used under various applications.

478. MoS I and B meets Global Film Industry stakeholders at Cannes Film Festival

Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore met Minister of State for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, UK, Ed Vaizey and other key stakeholders in the international film industry at Cannes Film Festival-2016. The purpose of the meetings was to apprise them about the new initiatives taken by the

Government of India in the films sector and the myriad opportunities available for the global film industry in India.

During the interaction the Ministers also discussed about the participation of United Kingdom in the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) held every year in Goa.

Rathore also met Jerome Paillard, Executive Director, Marche Du Film, Cannes Film Festival and Cameron Bailey, Artistic Director, Toronto International Film Festival.

During a brief half an hour interaction, the Minister apprised them about the International Film Festival of India and seek their engagement and involvement to take IFFI to greater heights in the near future and in league with the other International Film Festivals.

During his meeting with Carole Brabant, CEO, Telefilm Canada Rathore discussed and explored the strategies to promote co-production between India and Canada. India has a co-production agreement with Telefilm Canada which promotes co-production in Canada.

Later in the day, the Minister met Kevin Clark, Executive Director, and Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI).

During the interaction, Col. Rathore discussed the inclusion of recently established Film Facilitation Office in India in the AFCI network for the betterment of Indian Film Industry. AFSI is a non-profit educational organization constituting worldwide network of more than 300 commissions spread across six continents.

479. PM chairs high level meeting on drought , water scarcity

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday chaired a high level meeting on the drought and water scarcity situation in parts of Jharkhand. Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das, was present in the meeting. Senior officials from the Government of India, and the State of Jharkhand, were also present in the meeting. "Rs 273 crore was released to the State as central share of State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for 2015-16. A further amount of Rs. 143.25 crore has been released as first instalment of SDRF for 2016-17," read a government statement. The State has disbursed Rs. 376 crore to 12 lakh farmers under SDRF, through DBT. Insurance claims of Rs. 53 crore were also settled through DBT. Jharkhand plans to double its irrigated area from 19 per cent to 40 per cent in the next two years. One lakh farm ponds are planned to be built under the State Plan, and an additional five lakh farm ponds will be built under MNREGA. The State is promoting fishery in the water bodies. The Prime Minister called for a mass movement to be generated for water conservation and rainwater harvesting in a comprehensive manner, and said youth organizations including NCC, NSS, NYKS, and Scouts and Guides should be involved in creation of water storage structures. The Chief Minister informed that tenders for the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana have been finalized in the State. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of regular monitoring of the progress towards implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The Prime Minister also called for generating a mass movement for soil health cards. He said mobilization, momentum and mechanism are all required to make the soil health card programme a success. He said soil testing should be developed as a skill, and loans can be given for setting up labs through MUDRA. Emphasizing the use of technology, the Prime Minister called for reporting of assets created by MNREGA, through geo-tagging and uploading of photographs with hand-held devices. He also called for all water bodies to be identified through unique numbers and geo-tagging. The meeting ended with a resolve on the part of the Centre and State to work together.

480. Indo-Bangla Power Ties With 21st-Century Nuclear Deal

India has concluded a nuclear agreement with Bangladesh in a sign that the bilateral neighbourhood relationship is becoming special. The core of the new engagement is all 21st century energy, connectivity, security. We are politically aligned, security sensitive and economic partners, said a top source in India. The nuclear agreement is a three-document package that has been negotiated between the MEA and the Bangladesh department of science and technology over the past few months. But this is only a part of the bigger play the two countries are engaged in. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina inaugurated a 100MW power transmission line from Palatana to Bangladesh, India is preparing to upgrade it to 500MW. Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who visited Dhaka recently, has promised to send diesel to Bangladesh from West Bengal. India wants to transport LPG and LNG to

the northeastern states through Bangladesh. New Delhi has offered Dhaka a stake in this, letting them share LPG and LNG according to their needs, even as they allow transit of energy to Tripura. In the next stage, India has told Bangladesh, they want to generate power in the northeast and have it pass through Bangladesh, offering them an offtake, that is allowing them to take power for own use from the transmission line. Four Indian companies BHEL, Reliance, Shapoorji-Pallonji and Adani have bid to build power plants in Bangladesh. The Indian nuclear deal will equip and train Bangladesh to import their first nuclear power plant from Russia. Its a very big deal for Bangladesh and almost unique for India. Basically, once all these projects kick in, Bangladesh could be well on its way to becoming a middle-income country in a decade.

481. UN agricultural arm IFAD to grant \$150 million to India in next 3 years

United Nation's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) will provide grants worth \$150 million (about Rs 1,001 crore) to India in the next three years to aid the farm sector, a top official said.

"IFAD will invest \$150 million in the next three years for the agriculture sector in India," Oscar Garcia, Director, Independent Office of Evaluation (IOE), IFAD told PTI.

The Rome-based agency has been working in India since 1978. It has provided \$17.7 billion in grants and low-interest loans to projects reaching about 45.9 crore people in rural areas to reduce poverty.

"We see that the projects take longer time to run, around 16 months on an average. That affects the performance of the overall project. We understand the reasons why this happens, because we are working in remote areas where sometimes the state capacity is not that strong," he said

482. India and U.S. fly ~Red Flag~™ high

The Air Forces of India and the U.S. concluded their four-week Red Flag aerial combat exercises at Alaska in the U.S. on Saturday. The two forces simulated realistic aerial combat scenarios in a networked environment. The Indian Air Force (IAF) flew 10 aircraft: four Su-30MKIs, four Jaguars and two IL-78 aerial refuelling tankers. A team of over 170 personnel was part of the exercises held from April 28 to May 13. The objective of this inter-continental deployment was not only to showcase the IAF's capability in undertaking integrated air ops but also to imbibe operational lessons from the exercise engagements, which will help us add more teeth to our overall war waging capabilities, the team leader, Group Captain H. Assudani, said on the objective of the exercise. The exercise is played under the multiple simulated scenario designed to provide realistic settings with a Red Force, defending their airspace and assets, and a Blue Force acting as the offensive side. The IAF officials said that the Red Force was largely constituted by U.S. F-16 fighters, while the IAF planes, along with other USAF aircraft such as F-15, F-16 and F-22 and the U.S. Navy F-18, constituted the Blue Force. The teams had to endure sub-zero temperatures during most of the exercise, which posed a challenge to the maintenance team despite which they managed to maintain 100 per cent serviceability of all platforms. Col. William Culver from the U.S. side said, This was one of the best Red Flags I has seen. I compliment the exceptional standards displayed by the IAF and am amazed to see all the 10 aircraft IAF had brought maintaining 100 per cent serviceability for the entire four weeks and their aircraft flying on all days as per plan. Expensive exercise However, the exercises are an expensive endeavour and hence, the IAF had decided to participate once in five years. This edition is believed to have cost over Rs. 100 crore. The IAF fighters have always flown with their radars switched off during exercises with the U.S. so as not to reveal the radar signatures. The Indian side had received accolades during the last edition for their tactics and professionalism. The contingent is likely to return to India in the last week of May. The Su-30s will additionally participate in the exercise Desert Eagle II with the UAE Air Force on their way back, officials said.

483. US mission in India wins annual greening diplomacy award

In a statement, the State Department said the one particular category of the GDI Award chosen by employee vote, went for include Mission India for an innovative whole-of-country approach to greening.

"One of its consulates, Consulate General Kolkata, even reduced water use by 45 per cent through waste water recycling," the State Department said.

Indian-American Richard Verma is the current US Ambassador to India. Each Earth Day, GDI Awards recognise innovative leadership within the Department of State in energy and environmental diplomacy.

Since 2009, GDI has been the Department's effort to support environmental policy priorities and catalyze climate action in host countries through leveraging the United States embassies and consulates.

Consulate General Ciudad Juarez was named the 2016 GDI Award winner, while the US Embassy Lusaka was named the runner-up.

Employees also chose US Embassy Amman to win an accolade for working to save energy and water in a dry climate, avoiding substantial costs.

Tri-Mission Rome was an honorable mention for obtaining the Departments first LEED Certification for Existing Buildings for a facility that is nearly 100 years old.

484. NDA govt allots Rs 500 crore to raise strictly desi cows, set up 'gaushalas'

Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said the Center has spent more than Rs 500 crore on saving desi cows in country. Addressing a national conference on Gaushalas in New Delhi today, Mr. Singh said the present government started National Gokul Mission. He said first time after independence Gokul village has been established in the country.

On the occasion, Minister of Environment Prakash Javadekar said he has ordered Animal Welfare Board to check and report how cruelty can be stopped against cows during transportation.

485. Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurates Purbashree stall at Dilli Haat

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated Purbashree stall at Dilli Haat, INA here today. The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation Ltd (NEHHDC) has set up the Purbashree stall to give further boost to the development and promotion of North East handicrafts and handlooms products.

While inaugurating the stall, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that for the first time, the stall has been set up on permanent basis which is devoted exclusively to North east. The stalls showcasing northeast were earlier put up on temporary basis, he added. He said that these stalls will not only showcase the North Eastern culture and ethnicity, but will also help in generating the revenue. The Minister said that the permanent stalls in Dilli Haat is a significant milestone.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that the current Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gives special focus to Northeast. The setting up of North east stalls will help showcase the talent of north east and will help in the promotion of start-ups, he added. The Minister also said that most of the delayed projects in Northeast have been put on the fast track. The connectivity in the Northeast is the top most priority of the Government, he added.

486. Govt launches 15-day special Swachh Office Drive

A 15-day special Swachh Office Drive for ensuring cleanliness at all Government offices across the country has been launched today as a intensive thematic campaign under Swachh Bharat Mission. Launching the drive here today, Minister of Urban Development Shri M.Venkiah Naidu planted a Neem sapling at Nirman Bhawan and inspected the building for about an hour for an on the spot assessment of sanitation.

The Minister visited different corridors of the building, individual rooms, toilets, storage places, water tanks and solar panels on the terrace of the building etc., and verified maintenance registers.

In a meeting with senior officials later, Shri Naidu has noted that there has been considerable improvement towards ensuring cleanliness and there is still scope for improvement. He has directed senior officials of the Ministry and CPWD to ensure regular inspection by senior officials to ensure total sanitation.

The Minister directed action to be taken for dumping waste material in one of the Electricity Distribution Boards.

Ahead of today's launch of Swachh Office Drive, the Ministry of Urban Development issued a Swachh Office Manual suggesting Standard Office Procedures to all the central ministries and State Governments to ensure sanitation. Norms suggested therein include ensuring water supply @ 45 litres per head per day, one toilet for every 25 persons, urinals to be provided based on employee strength, removal of stains every week, checking electrical fittings twice a week, acid cleaning and scrubbing of toilets daily, schedule of inspections etc.

The Manual enables self-assessment framework for improving Swachh Office Ratings, identification of gaps in sanitation infrastructure for correctional interventions.

487. Wholesale inflation turns positive after 17 months; 0.34% in April

Wholesale price-based inflation rose to 0.34 percent in April this year, from minus 0.85 percent in March, amid a rise in prices of vegetables and pulses. Government data showed that food inflation climbed to 4.23 per cent in April, from 3.73 per cent in March. Wholesale inflation has now turned positive after a period of 17 months.

Inflation in vegetables increased to 2.21 percent, and in pulses it rose to 36.36 percent. But inflation in onions fell to minus 18.18 per cent and in fruits to minus 2.38 percent in April. Last week, official data had showed a rise in retail inflation to 5.39 percent in April.

488. What is Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)?

Financial sector regulation is a vital service for bringing healthy and efficient financial system in the economy. There are different regulators for various segments of financial sectors, like the RBI for commercial banks and NBFCs, SEBI for capital market etc. At the same time, there should be coordination among these financial sector regulators to ensure better efficiency as well as for avoiding overlapping of functions. For this, the Government has formed the Financial Stability and Development Council in December 2010, with the Finance Minister as the Chairman. The immediate impulse for the establishment of the FSDC was the tussle between SEBI and IRDA on the regulation of ULIPs. The FSDC was envisaged for performing two sets of core functions. First is to perform as an apex level forum to strengthen and institutionalize the mechanism for maintaining financial stability. Second is for enhancing inter-regulatory coordination and promoting financial sector development in the country. Composition of FSDC The Chairman of the Council is the Finance Minister and its members include the heads of financial sector Regulators (RBI, SEBI, PFRDA, IRDA FMC {now with SEBI}) Finance Secretary and/or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Secretary, Department of Financial Services, and Chief Economic Adviser. The Council can invite experts to its meeting if required. The FSDC Secretariat is in the Department of Economic Affairs. The council will act as a co-ordination agency between the various financial sector regulators- the RBI, SEBI, IRDA and the PFRDA. This Council would monitor macro-prudential supervision of the economy, including the functioning of large financial conglomerates, and address inter-regulatory coordination issues. Function of the FSDC: 1. It will focus on financial literacy and financial inclusion. 2. It aims strengthening and institutionalizing the mechanism of financial stability and development. 3. It will monitor macro-prudential supervision of the economy. It will assess the functioning of the large financial conglomerates. 4. It will address intra regulatory coordination issues. The FSDC Sub Committee Chaired by the Governor of the RBI An important wing of the FSDC, in terms of functional responsibility is the Sub committee chaired by the Governor of the RBI. It meets more often than the full Council. All the members of the FSDC are also the members of the Sub-committee. Additionally, all four Deputy Governors of the RBI and Additional Secretary, DEA, in charge of FSDC, are also members of the Sub Committee. Other wings within the FSDC There are few other regulatory wings within the FSDC created for specific purposes: the Inter regulatory technical group, Technical Group on financial inclusion and financial literacy, Inter regulatory forum for monitoring financial conglomerates (IRF-FC), Early Warning Group, Working Group on resolution regime for financial institutions and the Macro Financial and Monitoring Group.

489. How to Donate to Swachh Bharat Kosh

Swachh Bharat Kosh, an effort to fund the Swachh Bharat Campaign invites donations from individuals and corporates. Any individual or corporate can make donation of any desired amount into the Swachh Bharat Kosh. The government urges Indian citizens and companies to donate generously to achieve the objective of clean India. Corporates can discharge their statutory CSR liabilities under the Companies Act 2013, by simply contributing to

Swachh Bharat Kosh. Donations to the Swachh Bharat Kosh, other than the sums spent for Corporate Social Responsibility are eligible for 100% deduction under section 80G of the Income-tax Act. Objectives of Swachh Bharat Kosh Construction of Community/individual toilets in rural areas, urban areas, in government schools Aanganwadis Renovation and repair of dysfunctional community/individual toilets in government schools, Aanganwadis, Construction activity for water supply to the constructed toilet Training and skill development to facilitate maintenance of constructed toilets and to ensure its inter- linkages with education on hygiene Other initiatives of improving sanitation and cleanliness in rural and urban areas including solid and liquid waste management Any other activity to improve sanitation in the country

490. DBS Bank to set up offshore tech hub in Hyderabad

Singaporean lender DBS Bank is creating its biggest technology hub outside of headquarters in [Hyderabad](#) where the company plans to have over 1,500 headcount.

"The new facility will be our largest tech hub outside our home market of Singapore. [India](#) was a choice market for this investment given its enabling ecosystem for technology innovation and access to a wide global talent pool," DBS Group Chief Executive Piyush Gupta said.

The foreign bank, which was among the first ones to apply to operate as a wholly-owned subsidiary in the country after drawing expansion plans, will steadily take the total number of those employed at the Hyderabad facility to over 1,500 in two years.

The hub will help in strengthening the lender's technological capabilities across [Asia](#) as well as its digital [banking](#) strategy, it said in a statement.

It has created a wholly-owned subsidiary -- DBS Asia Hub 2 -- for this purpose and according to a filing with the exchanges, the initial and paid-up capital for the same stands at Rs 70.5 crore.

The exact investment details for the facility were not immediately available.

491. World Telecommunication and Information Society Day - 17 May 2016,

In 2016, World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD-2016) will focus on the theme: ICT entrepreneurship for social impact, in accordance with Resolution 68 and as endorsed by ITU Council 2015.

ICT entrepreneurs and start-ups and small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have a particularly relevant role in ensuring economic growth in a sustainable and inclusive manner. They are involved in the development of innovative ICT-enabled solutions with a unique potential to make a long-lasting impact in global, regional and national economies and as an important source of new jobs, especially for youth, in the current knowledge economy.

The theme for WTISD-16 is in line with ITUs work in unlocking the potential of ICTs for young innovators and entrepreneurs, innovative SMEs, start-ups and technology hubs as drivers of innovative and practical solutions for catalysing progress in achieving international sustainable development goals, with a focus on SMEs from developing countries.

492. In a first, Rajasthan govt to issue ads to select V-Cs for universities

Rajasthan will become Indias first state to issue newspaper advertisements to select vice-chancellors for state universities. Governor Kalyan Singh issued guidelines on Saturday saying advertisements seeking applications for vice-chancellor positions in state universities will be published in two national newspapers. The move is aimed at ensuring better-qualified candidates apply for the job and greater transparency in the process. The ads will also appear on the website of the concerned institute and the governor, who is the chancellor of the states 15 state universities. This new process of selection will not only attract a large pool of candidates, it will also ensure transparency in the recruitment process and universities will be provided vice chancellor in due time, said Singh. While applying to the advertisements, applicants must mention general personal information, educational qualification, subject of expertise, details of work at administrative posts and academic publications. Applicants will also have to mention the number of

students who have completed Ph.D and M.Phil degrees under them. The governor said the recruitment process will be done under stipulated time and female applicants will be encouraged. We want that the young generation studies more and more. This process will improve the education quality in state and set new benchmarks, said Singh.

493. Delhi to host global conference on women empowerment

A six-day global conference themed on economic [empowerment](#) of [women](#) to foster leadership and entrepreneurship among them will be held here on May 16.

The [Women Economic Forum](#) is being hosted by All Ladies League with a theme 'Women: Uplifting and Uniting The World'.

"Women from various countries and all walks of life will meet to discuss social empowerment, leadership, economic, business and social issues. Cabinet Minister from [Fiji](#) with a delegation of seven women from the rural areas, senators from Egypt and Jordan and ambassadors from various countries will be among those attending the event," a statement said.

"The issues which will be covered during the conference include innovation, start-ups, leadership, entrepreneurship, business and globalisation, diplomacy, sustainable development, peace and spirituality, social empowerment, environment and art," it added.

All Ladies League is a [global congregation](#) of women and has over 30,000 members.

494. Meet ROSS, World's First Robot Lawyer Hired By US Firm

The world's first artificial intelligence lawyer has been employed by a law firm in the US, which will use the robot to assist its various teams in legal research.

The robot called 'ROSS' is built upon Watson, IBM's cognitive computer. With the support of Watson's cognitive computing and natural language processing capabilities, lawyers can ask ROSS their research question and the robot reads through the law, gathers evidence, draws inferences and returns highly relevant, evidence-based answers.

ROSS also monitors the law around the clock to notify users of new court decisions that can affect a case.

The programme continually learns from the lawyers who use it to bring back better results each time.

BakerHostetler, a US-based law firm, will license ROSS for use in its Bankruptcy, Restructuring and Creditors' Rights team.

"At BakerHostetler, we believe that emerging technologies like cognitive computing and other forms of machine learning can help enhance the services we deliver to our clients," said Bob Craig, Chief Information Officer.

ROSS Intelligence, the company that built ROSS, began out of research at the University of Toronto in 2014 with the goal of building an artificial intelligence legal research assistant to allow lawyers to enhance and scale their abilities.

Just ten months after they began teaching ROSS bankruptcy law, the company has been commercialising its first offering.

495. BHEL wins Rs 1,600 crore order from NTPC & SAIL JV

State-run engineering firm [BHEL](#) has bagged a Rs 1,600 crore order from a joint-venture company of [NTPC](#) and SAIL to set up a coal-based thermal power project in Odisha. "The 1x250 Mw coal-based thermal unit will be set up at [Rourkela Power Project](#) on engineering, procurement construction basis," BHEL said in a press release. According to the statement, the Rs 1,600 crore order for Stage-III of brownfield power project, located in Rourkela district of Odisha, has been placed on BHEL by NTPC-SAIL Power Company. The key equipment for the contract will be manufactured at BHEL's Trichy, Haridwar, Bhopal, Ranipet, Hyderabad, Jhansi, Thirumayam and Bengaluru plants while the company's

power sector division shall be responsible for civil works and erection cum commissioning of the equipment.

496. Mphasis partners ToneTag for digital banking solutions

IT firm Mphasis and sound-based proximity communication provider ToneTag on May 16 announced a strategic partnership to provide a range of digital banking solutions for the banking and retail industries. As part of the agreement, Mphasis will collaborate to build solutions and be an integration partner for ToneTag's sound-based technology globally to enable contact-less proximity communication, location based services and customer engagement services among other solutions. With this, Mphasis will be providing omni-channel customer engagement and frictionless checkout solutions to benefit physical outlets, dealerships, bank branches as well as experience stores, Mphasis said in a statement here. Through the partnership, ToneTag and Mphasis aim to enrich the retail experience in the offline establishments of both banking as well as commerce industries. "The rise of mobile smartphone usage, Internet penetration and e-commerce means that consumers are now used to a seamless online shopping experience. "ToneTag provides us with the technology to make such an experience available to the broadest possible audience, without the restrictions of proprietary payment technologies," Georg Lehmann, Senior VP and Head - Banking Capital Markets, Retail and Logistics Client Delivery at Mphasis said.

497. Capgemini launches digital literacy centre in Navi Mumbai

IT consulting firm Capgemini said that it has launched a digital literacy centre at the Helen Keller Institute of Deaf and Deaf-blind at Navi Mumbai. Capgemini said it is starting the centre in association with Nasscom.

The Helen Keller Institute is dedicated to training individuals in digital literacy in Panvel and surrounding areas of Navi Mumbai.

The initiative is aimed at bridging the digital divide and creating a digitally literate and empowered generation.

Beneficiaries, the company said, will be enabled to use the computer and mobile phones to correspond through emails, engage on social media, make ecommerce transactions, use the internet for information and avail of internet-led services like online bill payments, use maps, check weather forecast and avail various private and government services offered online such as registering for aadhar cards, ration cards, PAN cards, and others.

"This is the ninth Capgemini Digital Literacy Centre launched as part of the National Digital Literacy Mission initiative that will facilitate training infrastructure and trainers at the centre with the help of Helen Keller Institute of Deaf and Deafblind, the project implementation partner. The centre will be training over 1200 Persons with Disabilities from the institute," the company said in a statement.

The Capgemini Digital Literacy Centre was inaugurated by Kiran Cavale, Senior Vice President, Capgemini, T P Deo, Vice President HR, Capgemini and Shrikant Sinha, CEO Nasscom Foundation.

498. Posthumous U.N. honour for four Indian peacekeepers, civilian

Four Indian peacekeepers and a civilian, who laid down their lives while serving in the U.N. peacekeeping operations last year, will be honoured along with other 124 personnel with a prestigious U.N. medal awarded posthumously for their courage and sacrifice. The fallen Indian peacekeepers who will be honoured with the Dag Hammarskjold Medal on the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers are Head Constable Shubhkaran Yadav, Rifleman Manish Malik, Havildar Amal Deka, Naik Rakesh Kumar and Gagan Punjabi. Supreme sacrifice Yadav, serving in the U.N. Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) made the supreme sacrifice in April last year and Malik, also serving in the same mission, died in August. Deka, serving in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) died in June last year and Kumar serving in the U.N. Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) died in January 2015. Punjabi was serving in MONUSCO in a civilian capacity under the U.N. Volunteers programme and died in an incident in January last year. The International Day of U.N. Peacekeepers, observed annually on May 29, will be commemorated this year on May 19. Wreath to fallen peacekeepers U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon will begin the commemoration by laying a wreath to honour all fallen peacekeepers. Later, he will preside over a ceremony at which the medals will be awarded posthumously to 129 military, police and civilian personnel who lost their lives while serving in peacekeeping operations during 2015. Permanent Representatives

and Ambassadors to the U.N. will collect the medals on behalf of the fallen peacekeepers from their countries. They inspire us In his message for the day, Under Secretary-General for Field Support Atul Khare said the sacrifices of the brave men and women of peacekeeping inspire us to serve with courage and dignity and to pursue continuous improvement and innovation in our work. We owe this not just to our departed colleagues, but also to the millions of civilians that we have been entrusted to protect. We must continue to work together to enable complex operations to succeed with rapid, effective, efficient and responsible support, he said. Last year Lance Naik Nand Ram, who served with MONUSCO and Raju Joseph, who had served in a civilian capacity with UNMISS, were posthumously awarded the medal. India among largest contributors India is among the largest contributors to U.N. peacekeeping operations, with its military and police personnel having been deployed in U.N. missions including in Cote d'Ivoire, Cyprus, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Lebanon and South Sudan. So far, India has contributed nearly 1,80,000 troops who have served in over 44 of the 69 peacekeeping operations, including the 103-strong Indian female police unit in the U.N. mission in Liberia. Currently more than 1,05,000 uniformed personnel from 124 troop and police-contributing countries serve under the U.N. flag, along with 18,000 international and national civilian staff and U.N. Volunteers. Last year, 129 peacekeepers from 46 countries lost their lives in the line of duty. Tribute to peaceniks and brave-hearts The International Day of U.N. Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002, in tribute to all men and women serving in peacekeeping operations for their high level of professionalism, dedication and courage, and to honour the memory of those who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The General Assembly had designated May 29 as the commemoration day because it was on that date in 1948 when the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO), the world bodys first peacekeeping mission, began operations in Palestine. Since the first U.N. peacekeeping mission in 1948 until April 2016, 3,400 military, police and civilian personnel have lost their lives in the service of peace as a result of acts of violence, accidents and disease. Commemorative activities will be held at the world bodys headquarters here and at peacekeeping operations and offices around the world. After Dag Hammarskjold The Dag Hammarskjold Medal was established in December 2000 and is awarded posthumously to members of peacekeeping operations who lost their lives during service with a peacekeeping operation under the operational control and authority of the U.N. The medal is named after the second U.N. Secretary-General, who had died in a mysterious 1961 plane crash. He was posthumously awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in the year he died.

499. IIT KGP Scholar bags Young Scientist Award by European Materials Research Society

Nandini Bhandaru, a PhD student at IIT Kharagpur has been recently conferred with European Materials Research Societys Young Scientist Award at EMRS 2016 Spring Meeting Lille France. Nandini, who is working at Instability and Soft Patterning laboratory has won the award based on her outstanding contribution to material science and nano technology, particularly nano patterning of soft films and surfaces. Nandinis area of doctoral research is on nanofabrication including soft-Lithography, thin film dewetting, polymer blend films and self-assembly. Topographically patterned polymer films and surfaces find wide application in various areas such as organic electronics organic light-emitting diodes (OLEDs), optoelectronic devices, thin film transistors (TFTs), plastic solar cells, biological sensors microfluidics, smart and super adhesives, data storage media, lab-on-a-chip devices, surfaces for nano-biotechnology applications such as patterned substrates for probing of cell behavior, including stem cell scaffolds for tissue engineering, DNA stretching, and so on. For most of the above applications and many other bulk nano applications rapid prototyping of surfaces with the pattern extending over large areas (~cm²) is necessary. Many of these applications have revolutionized various aspects of our life, leaving their imprint in from engineering applications to biotechnological applications and health care.

500. Shri Nitin Gadkari Launched INFRACON, ePACE and up-Scaled INAM PRO

Union Minister of Road Transport Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari on 16 May 2016 launched three initiatives for best practices in road transport sector. These three innovative IT initiatives are: INFRACON, ePACE and up-Scaled INAM PRO. These initiatives are aimed at making the road building procedure faster, more transparent and more efficient. These innovative IT initiatives are developed in house by National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL). Key points of these initiatives ePACE: It stands for Projects Appraisal Continuing Enhancements and it is an online integrated Management Information System. It brings projects from all wings of the Ministry under a common platform, ensuring their effective and real time tracking. More than 2000 projects being executed by multiple agencies are currently listed on the portal. The portal can be freely accessed by anybody, and information regarding projects in any particular state can be found at the click of a button. The portal also allows for validation checks to prevent wrongful entries, making it difficult to fudge figures. It has provision to obtain reports in

multiple formats with graphical interface for round the clock monitoring. It has also been provided with GIS interface to enable easy geo-tracking of the projects. The architecture of the application is scalable and customizable. ePACE as a platform is amenable to be used for monitoring projects pertaining to any ministry in the country and can improve governance of such projects. INFRACON: It is the National Portal for Infrastructure Consultancy Firms and Key Personnel. It acts as a kind of bridge between consultancy firms working in the road engineering and construction sector and domain experts and key personnel. It has linkages to Aadhar and Digi-locker for data validation and purity. 474 consultancy firms and 2387 key personnel under various categories are already registered with the portal. It will lead to a significant reduction of paper work during bid submissions and also brings in a lot of transparency and speed since the evaluation of technical bids can be done at the click of a button. INAM PRO: It has been developed as a web-based application (www.inampro.nic.in) for Infrastructure and Material Providers. It is a kind of a web based market place that brings together the material providers and the prospective buyers on a common platform. It was launched in March 2015 to facilitate contractors and cement buyers engaged in executing projects in road transport sector to place cement orders online with the registered cement companies. With the help of INAM Pro, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is able to track and monitor the activities of buyers and suppliers, and remove impediments of both the parties. Given the success of INAM-PRO, other materials like steel and steel slag have also been brought on this platform so as to make this as a comprehensive e-market place for infrastructure providers. Besides, these Nitin Gadkari also released the IT Task Force Report, which has suggested many innovative ways in which IT can be used to make the working of the transport sector more efficient and transparent.

501. World-first scanning helium microscope looks at spider fangs and butterfly wings

Australian researchers say they have built a world-first prototype of a new microscope that will "open scientific doors". Associate Professor Paul Dastoor from the University of Newcastle has been working on the scanning helium microscope (SHeM) for 20 years. He said it will enable scientists to study human, animal and plant samples, as well as computer chips and pharmaceutical drugs, without damaging or changing them. Traditional microscopes use light to penetrate samples and this can damage them. But Professor Dastoor said the scanning helium microscope means the samples will be analysed in their true state for the first time ever. He said every time a new microscope was developed there had been enormous scientific advances. "We wouldn't know anything about bacteria without the development of the optical microscope," he said. "We wouldn't know anything about nanotechnology, without the development of the electron microscope."

502. South Korean author Han Kang wins Man Booker International Prize

South Korean author, Han Kang, has won the 2016 Man Booker International Prize for her novel 'The Vegetarian'. It tells a story of a wife who decides to become a vegetarian. The decision provokes cruelty from her husband, and from her father, and obsession from her sisters husband, as the woman, Yeong-hye, dreams obsessively about becoming a tree.

Han is the first South Korean to win the prize. The writer and her British translator will share the 72,000 Dollar prize money. The book was translated by Deborah Smith.

At the prize ceremony, held at the Victoria Albert Museum in London last night, Han said, she felt extremely honoured with the prize and this book has bought many things to her.

The novel was picked unanimously by the panel of five judges, beating six other novels including "The Story of the Lost Child" by Italian sensation Elena Ferrante and "A Strangeness in My Mind" by Turkey's Orhan Pamuk. Judging panel chairman Boyd Tonkin said Han Kang's work was unforgettably powerful and original.

Survey commissioned by the Man Booker International prize last week found that translated literary fiction is selling better on average in the UK than literary fiction originally written in English.

503. Canadian PM announces legislation to protect transgender people

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has announced legislation to protect transgender people from hate speech and discrimination. He said in Montreal yesterday that despite removal of all the obstacles, trans genders are still witnessing some cases of injustices.

The transgender bill is to be officially unveiled today by Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould. It will add gender identity" alongside race, religion, age, sex and sexual orientation as prohibited grounds for discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

The Canadian parliament's previous attempts to pass similar legislation failed. But this time, due to a Liberal majority in the House, the measures are expected to pass easily.

504. Nasa launches near-space monitoring super pressure balloon from NZ

Nasa successfully launched a super pressure balloon from New Zealand's South Island Wanaka Airport on Tuesday to conduct near-space scientific investigations. The launch marks the fifth attempt to get the massive balloon airborne, with previous bids thwarted by bad weather, Nasa said in a release. Long-duration balloon flights at constant altitudes play an important role in providing inexpensive access to the near-space environment for science and technology. The 532,000 cubic metres (18.8 million cubic feet) balloon is expected to circumnavigate the globe about the southern hemispheres mid-latitudes once every one to three weeks, depending on wind speeds in the stratosphere, Nasa said. The aim is for it remain airborne for more than 100 days. According to Nasa the balloons operational float altitude is 33.5 km and it will be visible from the ground, particularly at sunrise and sunset, in the southern hemispheres mid-latitudes, such as Argentina and South Africa. Nasa's balloon experts at its Columbia Scientific Balloon Facility and Nasa's Wallops Flight Facility, Virginia, will control balloon flight operations throughout the mission. The current record for a Nasa super pressure balloon flight is 54 days. Tuesday's launch was the second super pressure balloon mission from Wanaka. The first launch occurred March 27, 2015, flying 32 days, 5 hours, and 51 minutes.

505. Paris Peace Summit to Proceed Despite Israeli Concerns

The French foreign minister met with Israeli and Palestinian leaders on Sunday and said an upcoming Paris summit aimed at restarting peace talks will proceed, despite Israeli objections that direct negotiations are the only way forward. Paris is to host an international meeting in May of 20 countries, including [Egypt](#), [Saudi Arabia](#) and Jordan, to discuss the peace process. [Israel](#) and the Palestinians have not been invited. French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas during his one-day visit Sunday. "We must demonstrate that the path that we are proposing will be the one that will allow for an exit out of the extremely serious situation, the impasse which we find ourselves in. I explained to him (Netanyahu) what that means," Ayrault said. "I will not ask him to come to the meeting on May 30, he wasn't invited, only at a second date. So I understand his disagreements but it only convinces me of the need to do something to move this impasse," he said, adding that he spoke "frankly" with the Israeli prime minister. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that direct negotiations, without preconditions, are the best way to reach a final agreement and that "any other attempt only makes peace more remote and gives the Palestinians an escape hatch to avoid confronting the root of the conflict." "They simply avoid negotiating with us as part of their desire to avoid resolving the root of the conflict, which is recognizing the national state of the Jewish People, i.e. the State of Israel," he said. The Palestinians, who have welcomed the French proposal, also said it will be held as planned. Nabil Abu Rdeineh, an adviser to the Palestinian president said: "The French and Arab efforts are ongoing and are quickly on the right track to hold the international peace conference." The last round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, mediated by the U.S., collapsed in 2014.

506. US, Cuba aim to reach new agreements on cooperation in law enforcement, health & agriculture: Cuban official

A senior Cuban official said, Cuba and the United States aim to reach new agreements on cooperation in law enforcement, health and agriculture.

The Communist-ruled island and its northern neighbour re-established diplomatic relations a year ago after decades of hostility.

They have since signed deals on the environment, postal services and direct flights. A bilateral commission met yesterday in Havana to establish a roadmap for talks over the rest of this year.

In March, Barack Obama became the first sitting U.S. President in 88 years to visit Cuba.

507. House of Republicans unveil \$622M measure to combat Zika virus

House of Republicans have unveiled a 622 million dollars measure to battle the Zika virus, offering President Barack Obama just one-third of the money he requested almost three months ago.

The legislation provides funding for developing a vaccine, controlling the mosquitoes that spread Zika, tests to detect the virus, and international mosquito control. Zika can cause severe birth defects.

The bill is financed by cuts to unspent funding passed in 2014 to battle Ebola as well as leftover funding at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Senate is scheduled to vote on several competing Zika proposals on Tuesday, with a USD 1.1 billion bipartisan plan likely to get a green light in a procedural vote.

508. New UN climate talks aim at fleshing out Paris deal

Five months after ushering in a landmark Paris climate deal, diplomats kicked off a new round of talks in Bonn to convert a political blueprint into a workable plan. At the start of a 10-day session in Bonn, UN's outgoing climate chief, Christiana Figueres, told the 196-nation UN climate body yesterday that the whole world is united in its commitment to the global goals embodied in the Paris Agreement. She said, now we must design the details of the path to the safe, prosperous and climate-neutral future to which we all aspire.

The new goal is capping global warming at well below two degree Celsius. It will also require mobilising trillions of dollars to help poor countries green their economies and brace for climate impacts. Most of the details on how this will happen have yet to be worked out.

509. Military tourism initiative 'Veer Yatra' launched in Pune

The Maharashtra Ex-Servicemen's Corporation recently launched Veer Yatra, a military tourism initiative in Pune. The government of Maharashtra undertaking will organize guided tours to the choicest locations of military importance with retired veterans from the services. AIR correspondent reports that

Veer Yatra initiative of Maharashtra Ex-Servicemen's Corporation has gone live with nine locations, including Nathu-La Pass, Goa-Karwar and Jangra Fort. It will incorporate more places of interest in future.

Currently MESCO is focusing on areas of historic importance. They are going to organize fort tours with designated ex-servicemen, who will narrate the historical battles that were fought at the locations. Plans also include setting up camp fire sites on certain tours where war veterans will narrate their experiences from the battle field.

The organisation is also planning to introduce visits to important establishments, such as Pune-based Arm Sports Institute, which is the training ground for over half the Olympians representing the country at the global quadrennial event.

The idea is to encourage the youth to take up services as a career option and be responsible citizens of the country in whatever field they are. The initiative also aims to provide employment to 1,000 ex-servicemen and war widows over the next year.

510. Maharashtra govt to soon set up 100 Janaushadhi centers

Maharashtra Government will soon set up 100 Janaushadhi centers across the state for providing affordable medicine to the poor and underprivileged. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis made this announcement after meeting Union Chemicals Minister, Ananth Kumar and MoS Hansraj Ahir in Mumbai on Monday.

Mr. Fadnavis also announced that a new Fertilizer Plant of Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers Limited will be set up at Thal, in Raigad district. He further said that a Plastic Park will be set up at Jalgaon with an investment of 1000 crore rupees adding that the project will generate employment opportunities for around 1 lakh people.

Other issues discussed in this meeting included setting up of National Institute of Pharma Educational Research at Nagpur, management of city compost, plastic waste and revival of Hindustan Antibiotics limited.

511. Panvel Municipal Council upgraded to Municipal Corporation

The Panvel Municipal Council has been upgraded to Municipal Corporation, thus becoming the first corporation in the Raigad district of Maharashtra.

The announcement to the effect was made by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis late Monday night. The newly formed Panvel Municipal Corporation will include 68 revenue villages including Taloja, Kharghar, Kamothé and Kalamboli besides CIDCO areas and several gram panchayats.

The corporation would come into existence after one month. The state government has invited objections and recommendations against the inclusion of villages in the corporation, and final decision regarding the same would be taken after a month from the notification.

The State Government had formed a committee led by Konkan Divisional Commissioner to study the viability of the corporation. Following which, the Urban Development Department accepted the recommendations of the committee.

512. EPFO disburses over Rs 47,600 crore as member benefits in 2015-16

Employees Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO disbursed approximately 47,630 crore rupees as member benefits and 8,200 crore rupees as monthly pensions in 2015-16. To monitor the status of enrollment of contractual employees especially in municipalities, EPFO has taken steps towards putting in place a system.

Principal employers including government bodies who enroll workers directly or through contractors can view details of contractors including the amount paid towards PF dues on real time basis. With this EPFO will be in a position to compare the PF dues reimbursed to contractors and the PF dues actually remitted by contractors.

An official release issued in New Delhi said, a facility already exists in public domain wherein all principal employers can check the amounts remitted by contractors establishments. EPFO is also in the process of digitizing compliance reporting system and it is expected that reporting in Compliance area shall be online and real time by the second quarter of this fiscal.

The process of seeding EPS pensioners data with Aadhaar is underway in EPFO. It is also seen that a number of online transfer applications by members are pending with the employers for attestation and verification of member details by the employers. Field offices of EPFO have been directed to take up the matter with employers to clear this on priority.

513. RBI authorises 29 agency banks to accept payments of I-T dues

RBI has authorised 29 agency banks to accept payments of Income Tax dues. In a press release issued from Mumbai on Monday, RBI has appealed tax payers to remit their income tax dues sufficiently in advance of the due date. In order to minimize the hassle, tax payers can also use the facility of online payment or use alternate channels like the authorized agency banks.

Some of the agency banks authorized by RBI to collect tax include Allahabad Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Canara Bank, State Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Dena Bank, HDFC Bank Ltd, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Axis Bank Ltd and Punjab National Bank.

RBI has taken this measure as the rush for remitting Income Tax dues becomes far too heavy towards the end of June every year making it difficult for the Reserve Bank to cope with the pressure.

514. Archers Deepika, Bombayla, Laxmirani named for Rio Olympics

A three-member Indian women's archery team comprising Deepika Kumari, Bombayla Devi and Laxmirani Majhi was named for the Rio Olympics after a series of selection trials in the last three months. The women's trio will compete in the individual events as well as team event at the Rio Games in August.

India's women archers earned three individual berths and a team quota by virtue of the team's performance at the World Championships in Copenhagen last year. Archery Association of India, AAI, also announced a three-member men's team consisting Jayanta Talukdar, Atanu Das, Mangal Singh Champia for the third stage World Cup in Antalya, Turkey, next month in order to have a shot at Olympic berths. India has earned one individual spot for the Olympics in men's archery during the World Championships last year.

515. Today in History - May 17

- 1540 - Afghan chief Sher Khan defeated Mongul Emperor Humayun at Kanauj.
- 1630 - Italian Jesuit Niccolo Zucchi saw the belts on Jupiter's surface.
- 1681 - Louis XIV sent an expedition to aid James II in Ireland. As a result, England declares war on France.
- 1756 - Britain declared war on France, beginning the French and Indian War.
- 1792 - The New York Stock Exchange was founded at 70 Wall Street by 24 brokers.
- 1814 - Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden. Norway's constitution, which provided a limited monarchy, was signed.
- 1875 - The first Kentucky Derby was run at Louisville, [KY](#).
- 1877 - The first telephone switchboard burglar alarm was installed by Edwin T. Holmes.
- 1881 - Frederick Douglass was appointed recorder of deeds for Washington, [DC](#).
- 1926 - The [U.S.](#) Embassy in Buenos Aires was damaged by bombs that were believed set by sympathizers of Sacco and Vanzetti.
- 1932 - The [U.S.](#) Congress changed the name "Porto Rico" to "Puerto Rico."
- 1939 - The first fashion to be shown on television was broadcast in New York from the Ritz-Carleton Hotel.
- 1940 - Germany occupied Brussels, Belgium and began the invasion of France.
- 1946 - [U.S. President Truman](#) seized control of the nation's railroads, delaying a threatened strike by engineers and trainmen.
- 1948 - The Soviet Union recognized the new state of Israel.
- 1954 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court unanimously ruled for school integration in Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka. The ruling declared that racially segregated schools were inherently unequal.
- 1956 - The first synthetic mica (synthamica) was offered for sale in Caldwell Township, [NJ](#).
- 1973 - The [U.S.](#) Senate Watergate Committee began its hearings.
- 1975 - NBC TV bought the rights to show "Gone With the Wind." The one time rights cost NBC \$5,000,000.
- 1980 - Rioting erupted in Miami's Liberty City neighborhood after an all-white jury in Tampa acquitted four former Miami police officers of fatally beating black insurance executive Arthur McDuffie. Eight people were killed in the rioting.
- 1985 - Bobby Ewing died on the season finale of "Dallas" on CBS-TV. He returned the following season.

1987 - Eric Sleepy Floyd of the Golden State Warriors set a playoff record for points in a single quarter with 29.

1987 - An Iraqi warplane attacked the [U.S.](#) Navy frigate Stark in the Persian Gulf, killing 37 American sailors. Iraq and the [United States](#) called the attack a mistake.

1990 - Kelsey Grammer was sentenced to 30 days in jail for DWI.

1996 - [U.S. President Clinton](#) signed a measure requiring neighborhood notification when sex offenders move in. Megan's Law was named for 7-year-old Megan Kanka, who was raped and killed in 1994.

1997 - Rebel leader Kabila declared himself president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire.

1997 - Sylvester Stallone and Jennifer Flavin were married in London.

1998 - New York Yankees pitcher David Wells became the 13th player in modern [major league baseball](#) history to throw a perfect game.

1999 - Eric Ford, a tabloid photographer, was sentenced to 6 months at a halfway house, 3 years probation and 150 hours of community service. The sentence stemmed from a charge that Ford had eavesdropped on a call between Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman and then sold a recording of the conversation.

1999 - Alex Trebek received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

2000 - Thomas E. Blanton Jr. and David Luker surrendered to police in Birmingham, [AL](#). The two former Ku Klux Klan members were arrested on charges from the bombing of a church in 1963 that killed four young black girls.

2000 - Austria, the [U.S.](#) and six other countries agreed on the broad outline of a plan that would compensate Nazi-Era forced labor.

2000 - It was announced that Terra Networks SA and Lycos would be merging with the new name to be Terra Lycos. Terra made the deal happen with the purchase of \$12.5 billion in stock.

2001 - The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp based on Charles M. Schulz's "Peanuts" comic strip.

2002 - Legoland Deutschland opened in Gnzburg, Germany.

2006 - The U.S. aircraft carrier Oriskany was sunk about 24 miles off Pensacola Beach. It was the first vessel sunk under a Navy program to dispose of old warships by turning them into diving attractions. It was the largest man-made reef at the time of the sinking.

2007 - Trains crossed the border dividing North and South Korea for the first time since 1953.

516. Crude returns to \$50 mark supported by short term supply disruptions

Crude is making a steady comeback, supported by supply disruptions. The Brent variety of crude has recorded \$ 49.47, recording a six month high. Growing political instability in Nigeria in the context of militant threats is the new development that brought up price in the international market. Developments in Nigeria and the increasingly tense situation in Venezuelamake a breach of the \$50 this week a strong possibility, the Financial Times has quoted market expert David Hufton. Not just demand, rising energy consumption by the lone performer in the world economy India is also attributed to the recovery of crude. In early May, energy forecaster -International Energy Agency observed that crude price may rise than declining, pushed by high demand. The Agency pointed out surging demand from India as the major reason for price rise. In another report, Crudes most sophisticated tracker- Goldman and Sachs Damien Courvalin commented that. We believe the market has likely shifted into deficit in May. Many agencies are agreeing that low prices near to \$20-25s that was witnessed early, are almost over.

517. What is Ontap bank licensing policy?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in May second week has issued draft guidelines for the new on-tap bank license policy. An 'on-tap' facility would mean the RBI will accept applications and grant license for banks throughout the year. The policy allows aspirants to apply for universal bank license at any time, subject to the fulfillment of the set conditions. It is for the first time in post nationalization phase that there comes such an open bank license policy. There are several conditions for applying for new bank licenses set for individual applicants and entities like NBFCs. Stipulation of shareholding, fit and proper criteria for promoters etc. are some of them. As per the policy, industrial houses can't apply for banks. With the present policy, the previous practice of periodic invitation of bank license application will come to an end. So far, the RBI has invited applications and permitted new private sector banks in 1993, 2004 and in 2014. Last time, Bandhan and IDFC got bank licenses. The new license policy is designed for universal banks. Banks that can perform the whole set of allowed services and products under universal bank license. At present, most of the public sector banks, private sector banks and foreign banks have universal bank license. Similarly, the RBI has sanctioned permission to payment banks and small finance banks in 2014. These banks have got a differentiated bank license where they can provide only selected services.

518. British visa application centre opens in Lucknow

The British High Commission on Tuesday started here a visa application centre which will serve the needs of people of Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring states. The centre will be open on the third Tuesday of every month from 9 am to 5 pm to receive applications for a UK visa, said an official. "People in Uttar Pradesh seeking a UK visa will be saved a visit to New Delhi. People in Uttarakhand and Bihar will also have a more convenient place to apply for UK visas," said the official. The British High Commission runs 15 such centres in other parts of the country. A person seeking the visa would have to submit at the centre the application along with passport, biometric data, and other documents, the official said. Upon processing, the centre would send the documents back to the applicant through courier. The visa fee per applicant is Rs.8,499.

519. Five things to know about the Singapore Treaty

The changes to India-[Mauritius](#) Double taxation avoidance convention (DTAC) last week have put the focus on a similar treaty between India and Singapore. For the nine month period between April and December 2015, Singapore accounted for Rs 71,195 crore in foreign direct investments against Rs 39,506 crore through Mauritius. While there were expectations that similar changes would be made to the Singapore treaty, finance minister Arun Jaitley has hinted that this might not be an automatic process. The minister said on Monday that Singapore "is a separate sovereign state, it (Mauritius treaty) does not ipso facto automatically extend. The principles will have to be applied, but applied through a process of renegotiation". He also recalled how renegotiations of the Mauritius treaty took nearly two decades. In a note released after the Mauritius announcement, law firm [BMR Advisors](#) addressed key issues on the Singapore Treaty. Here are a few highlights: Would the capital gains exemption under the [Singapore Tax Treaty](#) fall away, from when? Article 6 of the Protocol, dated July 18, 2005, to the Singapore Tax Treaty provides that the benefits qua capital gains exemption under the Singapore Tax Treaty would remain in force only till the time Mauritius Tax Treaty provides for capital gains exemption on alienation of shares. Accordingly, the benefits accorded under the Singapore Tax Treaty in this regard would fall away, unless amended. Given that the Mauritius Tax Treaty benefits on alienation of shares would be available until March 31, 2017, even the Singapore Tax Treaty benefits for similar transfers should be available until March 31, 2017, but a clarification in this regard will help. Whether the grandfathering provisions (in respect of capital gain on sale of shares acquired prior to April 1, 2017) will also be available under the Singapore Tax Treaty? In our view, the Government of India should come up with a level playing field for investments from Mauritius and Singapore and avoid any arbitrage between jurisdictions. Accordingly, the grandfathering provisions should also be built in the Singapore Tax Treaty. However, one will have to wait and watch the diplomatic discussions between India and Singapore in this regard. Whether the transition provisions (in respect of capital gain on sale of shares acquired on or after April 1, 2017, and exited on or before March 31, 2019) and the corresponding lower rates of taxation during this period also be available under the Singapore Tax Treaty? In our view, the same should be made available subject to explicit agreement between India and Singapore in this regard. What about Instruments other than shares? Paragraph 4 of Article 13 of the Singapore Tax Treaty replaced the earlier paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 of Article 13. Accordingly, it is likely that the erstwhile paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 will now be re-instated for paragraph 4 of the Singapore Tax Treaty. In such case, only capital gains arising from alienation of shares, which derive value from immovable properties situated in India or shares of an Indian company, would be taxable in India; capital gains arising on other securities, such as

convertible debentures, futures and options etc, should not be subjected to income-tax in India. Will an agreement with the Singapore Government be required to give effect to above changes? Any tax treaty is a bilateral agreement and hence, an amended agreement will need to be reached with the Singapore Government. This said, the Singapore Government should be open to accede to requests from the Indian Government given that the existing Singapore Tax Treaty in its current form may not be attractive from an investor standpoint.

520. Modi to lay foundation for India-Bangladesh rail project

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to lay the foundation stone for a new India-Bangladesh railway project on May 27, a top railway official said on Tuesday. A top official of Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) said that Modi on May 27 would also flag off a regular passenger train service from Agartala to Sealdah, Agartala to Silchar and passenger train services to Manipur (52 km) and Mizoram (84 km) on the newly-laid broad gauge line. "Prime minister would attend the plenary session of North Eastern Council (NEC) in Shillong. From Shillong through remote control, the prime minister would lay the foundation stone of the Agartala (India)-Akhaura (Bangladesh) railway project," a top official of NFR told IANS. "Modi would also flag off regular passenger train service from Agartala to Sealdah, Agartala to Silchar and passenger train services to Manipur and Mizoram on the newly laid broad gauge line," the official added. An official of the Tripura planning and coordination department said the prime minister would inaugurate the two-day (May 27-28) plenary session of NEC, a regional planning body, in Meghalaya capital Shillong. "He would hold interactions with the chief ministers and governors of all the eight northeastern states during the plenary session," the official added. The Rs.968 crore Agartala-Akhaura railway project was finalised in January 2010 when Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met then prime minister Manmohan Singh during her visit to New Delhi. "Following the Tripura government's persistent persuasion and Prime Minister's Office (PMO) intervention, the DoNER (Development of North Eastern Region) ministry has agreed to provide Rs.580 crore for the new railway project," Tripura Transport Minister Manik Dey told reporters. "If the DoNER ministry releases the funds, the necessary work for acquisition of required 67 acres land would start immediately," he said. During his recent visit to Tripura, Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha said the PMO has been supervising the new India-Bangladesh railway project with Tripura. He said the 15 km (5 km on Indian side and 10 km on Bangladesh) long Agartala-Akhaura railway project would provide a major boost to development and economy of the northeastern region of India and eastern Bangladesh. "The project would give a boost to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Act East' policy," Sinha added. Modi discussed the railway project with Hasina during his visit to Dhaka in June last year. "India's external affairs ministry would provide necessary funds for the Bangladesh portion of the Agartala-Akhaura rail project. The DoNER ministry's funds would be spent for the Indian portion of the project," Tripura minister said. The 1,650-km distance between Agartala and Kolkata would be reduced to only 550 km once the new rail track is linked through Bangladesh. Currently, India and Bangladesh have four rail links with West Bengal. The railway line from Guwahati passes through Lumding in Nagaon district (in central Assam) and southern Assam connecting land-locked Tripura's capital Agartala and parts of Manipur and Mizoram with the rest of India. The Guwahati-Silchar railway line is the lifeline for southern Assam comprising four districts - Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi, Dima Hasao district, known as Barak Valley, and the mountainous states of Tripura, Manipur and Mizoram. These states are heavily dependent on this railway line for supply of foodgrain, fertilisers, petroleum products, construction materials and other commodities besides ferrying passengers. The 437-km Lumding-Silchar and Badarpur-Agartala gauge conversion work was sanctioned in 1996. It was declared a national project in 2004, thereby ensuring uninterrupted funding from the central government's general budget. The project was hit by insurgency from 2006 to 2009 and work could only gain speed after that turbulent period. In the first phase, the 210-km Lumding-Silchar gauge conversion project was completed last year. In the second phase, the 227-km Badarpur-Agartala gauge conversion was scheduled to be completed in March but was completed three months earlier. The Silchar-Jiribam (52 km) in Manipur and Silchar-Bhairabi (84 km) in Mizoram gauge conversion project are part of the Lumding-Silchar line along with other projects. With the completion of gauge conversion work right up to Agartala, the Tripura capital was connected with the country's broad gauge railway network through Guwahati at a distance of about 600 km this month. After India's independence, Agartala is the first state capital of the country to come up on the rail map (meter gauge line) in October 2008.

521. IIT-K & Curtin University sign MoU on Dual Doctoral Degree Programme

Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) has signed an MoU with Curtin University, Australia in an effort to enable students to pursue dual doctoral degree programme (DDDP). According to the MoU, students who are pursuing doctoral degree at IIT-Kharagpur are also eligible to apply for DDDP only if they meet the academic

requirements of both IIT Kharagpur and Curtin University. If a student is offered admission by Curtin University, he/she is expected to stay for an year at the Curtin University. During their stay, the students will be provided with required financial support from IIT-Kharagpur which also includes international travel and local expenses. Likewise, doctoral students from Curtin University can take up similar programme at IIT-K as an exchange programme. Though the programme will be offered in all areas of work, initially the emphasis is given to the following areas: sustainability, future of cities, smart cities, engineering asset management and mining, earth and energy.

522. Government should repay bank loans of farmers in drought hit areas: Assocham

The government should make bank loan repayments on behalf of rural borrowers in drought hit areas as a measure to provide them succour, an industry body said. "As part of an immediate relief to the farmers and rural population suffering an oppressive drought, the government should take the load of their bank loan repayments upon itself, besides making foodgrains available in the affected areas at subsidized rates," Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) President Sunil Kanoria said in a statement. Assocham said that in view of the banks going through unprecedented challenging times in terms of non-performing assets, they cannot be expected to take the load of loan waiver. Kanoria said as estimated by Assocham, the economy has taken a Rs.6.50 lakh crore hit because of drought in 265 districts in 11 states. "No meaningful gains can be accrued from over seven per cent GDP growth, if a large part of our population is pushed to live on the margins of distress and poverty. We believe in holistic economic development," he said. Assocham said it was hopeful that the situation would improve with the regular onset of monsoon. "Hopefully, some relief would be forthcoming from the rain gods in the next few weeks, helping the agriculture and allied sectors like milk production, meat and livestock," he said. Kanoria said that while the overall economy has managed to withstand the pressure of two successive droughts, specific sectors have come under severe stress requiring effective intervention. "Centre and the states should form joint teams for implementation of the relief measures," he said. For long-term solutions, the industry body said that the government needs to increase the spending on rural infrastructure like village and semi urban roads, water sheds and small irrigation projects.

523. Two years of Modi govt: Swachh Bharat, Jan Dhan most visible

Only a few, including Jan Dhan and Swachh Bharat, have caught "imagination" of the country in the first two years of the Modi government while most of its other schemes have escaped notice, a CMS study finds out. In all, there are about 40 schemes being implemented since Modi took power in May 2014, including those from earlier governments. Nearly Rs 1,000 crore has been spent over the last two years by the NDA government to publicise these programmes. According to the study, hardly 3 percent of respondents are aware of some 25 schemes out of the 40 being implemented. It was only 6 or 7 schemes in all that are acknowledged as being implemented by about a quarter of respondents, which include Jan Dhan Yojana, Swachh Bharat, Atal Pension Scheme and Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak. Swachh Bharat and Jan Dhan grabbed more eyeballs across clusters, regardless of party in power across states. In terms of visibility, of the five idea-based schemes, Digital India and Make in India fared better than Smart City or Startup India or even Bullet Train. "Those schemes which involved local civil society, engaged individuals across age groups and the ones which are visible on the ground have caught attention of people across the country," the study said, adding that schemes which have employment and game-changing potential also made the cut. As per the study, there are others that made little headway, including the finance scheme to minorities, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, the pension scheme to the physically challenged, Marubhumi Vikas Yojana, Soil Health Card, Baal Vikas Yojana and Namami Gange, among others. The other interesting finding was that some of the Yojanas failed to go the distance despite the Pradhan Mantri title prefixed to them. Eight out of about 40 schemes are with the nomenclature starting Pradhan Mantri, but except Gramin Sadak and Rozgar Yojana, most others go barely acknowledged.

524. SBI eyes merger with 5 associate banks soon

The boards of all five State Bank of India associates are meeting today and the Bank Board Bureau may decide on the merger of these associate banks, according to sources. The five associate banks are State Bank of Travancore, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur and State Bank of Patiala. Sources have told CNBC Awaaz that the five banks have agreed to the merger and official announcement of the same may be done soon.

525. IAF chief flies Tejas fighter trainer in Bengaluru

The [IAF](#) chief, Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha, on Tuesday flew a trainer version of the indigenous Tejas Light

Combat Aircraft (LCA) over the city under a cloudy sky, an official said. "Air Chief Marshal Raha flew in the twin-seater Tejas trainer (Pilot Version-6) for 30 minutes to check its capabilities and landed safely at the HAL airport along with IAF Group Captain M. Rangachari," IAF spokesman Wing Commander Anupam Banerjee told IANS here. Air Chief Marshal Raha became the first IAF chief to fly the home-grown fighter, designed and developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) of the state-run Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and built by defence behemoth Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) here. "It's a good aircraft to fly and fit to be inducted into our fleet," Air Chief Marshal Raha told air warriors at the IAF's Aircraft Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE) at the defence airport. HAL spokesman Gopal Sutar told IANS that Air Chief Marshal Raha piloted the aircraft during the 30-minute sortie and conducted aerial manoeuvres to check its versatility. The deputy IAF chief, Air Marshal S.B.P. Sinha flew Tejas in September 2014. As an experienced fighter pilot, Air Chief Marshal Raha, 61, is a qualified flying instructor and a fighter combat leader with 3,400 years of flying experience. He also took salute at the graduation ceremony of the 38th flight test course of ASTE, where the IAF conducts flight testing of aircraft and integrates weapons and systems into its fleet. The test pilots school is one of the six of its kind in the world, where test pilots and flight test engineers are trained for the IAF. Indigenous fighter aircraft like LCA and Advanced light Helicopter (ALH) of HAL and Airborne Early Warning and Communication (AEWC) aircraft of the DRDO's Centre for Airborne Systems (CAS) are test flown by pilots trained at the ASTE school. Air Chief Marshal Raha also opened the LCA paint hangar and visited the aircraft's production facility in the state-run complex. The IAF, which plans to induct 120 Tejas fighters, including 100 of modified versions in its frontline fleet, will initially receive four from HAL to raise its first LCA squadron this year. The IAF wants to induct Tejas into its fleet to replace its ageing Soviet-era MiG-21 fleet. As a fourth generation aircraft, Tejas can fly at 1,350 km per hour and is comparable to the world's best fighters, including French Mirage 2000, American F-16 and Swedish Gripen. As a single engined, multi-role supersonic fighter, Tejas weighs 8.5 tonnes and can carry three tonnes of weapons, including air-to-air missiles, laser guided bombs, guns, conventional/retarded bombs and beyond visual range missiles.

526. Odisha to launch Green Passage Scheme for orphan students

The [Odisha](#) government decided to launch Green Passage scheme for orphan students to ensure that they get free of cost higher education in the state.

A proposal of the higher education department in this regard, was approved by Chief Minister [Naveen Patnaik](#) here. As per the scheme, orphan students pursuing higher education from Plus-II level to post-graduation level, will no longer have to bear the education expenses.

As many as 16,382 orphan students lodged in 272 institutions across the state, will be exempted of admission fee, tuition fees and laboratory fees for higher studies. "Even they will be provided free hostel facilities and food," said a senior official quoting provisions of the Green Passage Scheme.

Patnaik has directed all government, private, government aided colleges and universities to ensure that the orphan students are not charged in any form, an official release said.

The state government will bear all cost of the orphan students.

527. Celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor may prepare menu of Navodaya schools: Smriti Irani

Union Human Resources Development Minister Smriti Irani has said, her ministry has decided to rope in celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor to prepare menu of food to be served at all Navodaya Vidyalayas of the country. She said, staff and cooks of these residential schools would also be trained by celebrity chef Kapoor. Mrs. Irani was addressing the stone-laying ceremony of Jawahar Navodaya Vodyalay and hostel complex at Hathijan village near Ahmedabad last evening. She said, the decision was taken to provide best facilities to the students of Navodaya schools run by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

The Minister said, the Navodaya Vidyalayas will also have smart classrooms, which will reflect Prime Minister Narendra Modis Digital India vision. Mrs. Irani also announced to set up two more Navodaya Vidyalayas in Valsad and Dahod districts in Gujarat in near future. AIR correspondent reports that the work of Navodaya Vidyalay and student Hostel at Hathijan village will be completed at the cost of 25 crore rupees by 2019. Navodaya Vidyalayas affiliated to

the CBSE syllabus offer free education to meritorious students of class VI to XII, mainly from rural areas.

528. International Museum Day

The worldwide community of museums will celebrate [International Museum Day](#) on and around 18 May 2016. The theme of 2016 International Museum Day will be Museums and Cultural Landscapes, which is also the theme of the General Conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), to be held in Milan, Italy from 3 to 9 July 2016. The objective of International Museum Day is to raise awareness of the fact that, Museums are an important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures and development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among peoples. Organised on and around 18 May each year, the events and activities planned to celebrate International Museum Day can last a day, a weekend or a whole week. Participation in International Museum Day is growing among museums all over the world. In 2015, more than 35,000 museums participated in the event in some 145 countries.

529. Today in History

1302 - The weaver Peter de Coningk led a massacre of the Flemish oligarchs.

1642 - Montreal, Canada, was founded.

1643 - Queen Anne, the widow of Louis XIII, was granted sole and absolute power as regent by the Paris parliament, overriding the late king's will.

1652 - In Rhode Island, a law was passed that made slavery illegal in North America. It was the first law of its kind.

1792 - Russian troops invaded Poland.

1798 - The first Secretary of the [U.S.](#) Navy was appointed. He was Benjamin Stoddert.

1802 - Great Britain declared war on Napoleon's France.

1804 - Napoleon Bonaparte was proclaimed emperor by the French Senate.

1828 - Battle of Las Piedras ended the conflict between Uruguay and Brazil.

1896 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme court upheld the "separate but equal" policy in the Plessy vs. Ferguson decision. The ruling was overturned 58 years later with Brown vs. Board of Education.

1897 - A public reading of Bram Stoker's new novel, "Dracula, or, The Un-dead," was performed in London.

1904 - Brigand Raizuli kidnapped American Ion H. Perdicaris in Morocco.

1917 - The [U.S.](#) Congress passed the Selective Service act, which called up soldiers to fight in World War I.

1926 - Evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson vanished while visiting a beach in Venice, [CA](#). She reappeared a month later with the claim that she had been kidnapped.

1931 - Japanese pilot Seiji Yoshihara crashed his plane in the Pacific Ocean while trying to be the first to cross the ocean nonstop. He was picked up seven hours later by a passing ship.

1933 - The [Tennessee](#) Valley Authority was created.

1934 - The [U.S.](#) Congress approved an act, known as the "Lindberg Act," that called for the death penalty in interstate kidnapping cases.

1942 - New York ended night baseball games for the duration of World War II.

1944 - Monte Cassino, Europe's oldest Monastic house, was finally captured by the Allies in Italy.

1949 - Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America was incorporated

1951 - The United Nations moved its headquarters to New York City.

1953 - The first woman to fly faster than the speed of sound, Jacqueline Cochran, piloted an F-86 Sabrejet over [California](#) at an average speed of 652.337 miles-per-hour.

1974 - India became the sixth nation to explode an atomic bomb.

1980 - Mt. Saint Helens erupted in [Washington](#) state. 57 people were killed and 3 billion in damage was done.

1983 - The U.S. Senate revised immigration laws and gave millions of illegal aliens legal status under an amnesty program.

1994 - Israel's three decades of occupation in the Gaza Strip ended as Israeli troops completed their withdrawal and Palestinian authorities took over.

1998 - The [U.S.](#) federal government and 20 states filed a sweeping antitrust case against Microsoft Corp., saying the computer software company had a "choke hold" on competitors which denied consumer choices by controlling 90% of the software market.

1998 - [U.S.](#) federal officials arrested more than 130 people and seized \$35 million. This was the end to an investigation of money laundering being done by a dozen Mexican banks and two drug-smuggling cartels.

2012 - Facebook Inc. 2012 - Facebook held its initial public offering and began trading on the NASDAQ. The company was valued at \$104 billion making it the largest valuation to date for a newly listed public company.

2014 - Russian President Putin signed a bill to absorb Crimea into the Russian Federation.

530. **India, US hold first Maritime Security Dialogue and made defence cooperation with one another**

Towards deepening the evolving partnership in the maritime domain, India and the U.S. held the first round of discussions under the recently-constituted maritime security dialogue between officials of Defence and External Affairs ministries and their U.S. counterparts. Among the issues discussed were Asia-Pacific maritime challenges, naval cooperation, and multilateral engagement, the U.S. Embassy said in a statement on Monday. The dialogue was one of the several new initiatives agreed between Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and his U.S. counterpart Ashton Carter during the latter's visit to India last month as part of the maritime security objectives under the India-US Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region. Exploring opportunities They also agreed to launch a bilateral Maritime Security Dialogue, co-chaired by officials at the Joint Secretary/Assistant Secretary-level of the Indian Ministries of Defence and External Affairs and the U.S. Departments of Defence and State, the joint statement issued at the end of the visit had stated. U.S. Ambassador to India, Richard Verma, who participated in the discussions, noted that the creation of this dialogue is a further sign of the growing relations between our two countries. The other initiatives agreed include the conclusion of a white shipping technical arrangement to improve data sharing on commercial shipping traffic and Navy-to-Navy discussions on submarine safety and anti-submarine warfare.

531. **Sec 144 imposed, Chandigarh turns into a fortress to handle AAP protest**

UT Police is gearing up to stop Aam Adami Party(AAP) workers who have announced that they would enter Chandigarh to gherao Punjab chief ministers official residence in Sector 2, Chandigarh, on Monday. They have deployed over 4,500 personnel, many at the SAS Nagar- Chandigarh barrier near the YPS. The posse of cops will include DSPs, inspectors, sub-inspectors and other police officials. A senior cop said that Section 144 of CrPC had already been deployed in Chandigarh. Protesters will not be allowed to enter. If they want to hold a rally, it would be allowed at the Sector 25 rally ground, the official said, adding that they would deploy maximum force near YPS Chowk

of SAS Nagar. Security will also be beefed up around the residences of chief ministers of Punjab and Haryana. The UT police is coordinating with the SAS Nagar police. The AAP protest is against the alleged Rs 12,000-crore missing food grain scam in Punjab, rampant corruption and failure of the Punjab government to curb the drugs racket. Parkash Singh Badal has cancelled all his official engagements for Monday to receive AAP leaders who wish to protest outside his official residence.

532. National Conference on Gaushalas Inaugurated

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying Fisheries organized a day-long national conference on Gaushalas (cowsheds) here today. Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar, said that villages were traditionally planned in such a manner that there were facilities for human beings and fodder for animals. He invited suggestions from the participants for the kind of policy-based decisions that can be taken to improve the situation. The Minister said that the draft of a policy is being prepared, which will include a provision to provide protein-rich fodder free of cost to the people living in villages adjoining the jungles. The Environment Minister also emphasized the need to protect pasture lands. He also suggested that if there is 500 acres of land, 25 acres be set aside for growing good quality grass and fodder. Shri Javadekar said that the technical sessions will discuss three issues (i) how to increase the milk productivity of Indian cows; (ii) Making provision for feed, fodder and ancillary requirements for Indian cows and (iii) Management of cows in the post-productive phase. Addressing the gathering, Union Minister of Agriculture, Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that livestock are the backbone of the rural economy. He said that livestock forms the basis of occupation of 60 million people. The Minister also pointed out that the distribution of livestock is much more balanced than distribution of land in rural economy. The Agriculture Minister said that there are 19 crore livestock in the country, which is about 14% of the world's livestock and out of this, 15 crore are indigenous livestock. He also emphasized that the government has granted funds to establish National Breeding Centres for the promotion and protection of indigenous livestock. He said that the government has granted Rs 582 crore in the last two years for the promotion and protection of indigenous livestock. Shri Singh also referred to the average annual increase in milk production over 10 years was 4.62% in India, while it was 2.2% in the world. He stated that the annual increase in milk production for 2014-15 2015-16 is 9.59%. While the availability of milk the world over is 296 grams, in India it is 340 grams, Shri Singh added. Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Ajay Narayan Jha made the welcome remarks. A Power Point presentation on Special characteristics of indigenous cattle strategies to improve their productivity was also made on the occasion.

533. Italy Approves Same-Sex Civil Unions

After decades of struggle by gay rights groups, and months of contested political negotiations, the Italian Parliament on Wednesday evening gave final approval to a law recognizing civil unions of same-sex couples. The vote 372 to 51, with 99 abstentions was followed by long applause in the Chamber of Deputies, the lower house of Parliament. At the Trevi Fountain in Rome, people with rainbow flags gathered to celebrate. It was a historic occasion for a nation that is still dominated by the [Roman Catholic Church](#), which opposed the measure, and where traditional family norms are still strong. It was also a victory for Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, who supported the bill. Nearly every Western country has legalized [same-sex marriage](#) or some form of civil union for gays and lesbians. [Italy](#) was perhaps the most prominent exception, and the issue has generated [considerable controversy](#). Proponents of same-sex unions have complained that the law falls short of granting full equality to same-sex couples. In particular, it does not recognize [same-sex marriages](#). It will not allow someone in a same-sex civil union to legally adopt his or her partners biological child. A so-called stepchild adoption provision was opposed by center-right parties and by the church and was ultimately dropped from the legislation. The Senate [approved the bill](#) in February, but a final vote in the lower house was required for the legislation to take effect. Earlier on Wednesday, the government won a vote of confidence, 369 to 193, that it had called on Tuesday, tying its fate to the legislation.

534. RBI authorises 29 agency banks to accept payments of I-T dues

The Reserve Bank of India has appealed to income tax assesseees to remit their income tax dues sufficiently in advance of the due date. It has also stated that assesseees can use alternate channels like select branches of agency banks or the facility of online payment of taxes offered by these banks. These will obviate the inconvenience involved in standing in long queues at the Reserve Bank offices. It is observed that the rush for remitting Income Tax dues through the Reserve Bank of India has been far too heavy towards the end of June every year and it becomes difficult for the

Reserve Bank to cope with the pressure of issuing receipts although additional counters to the maximum extent possible are provided for the purpose. Twenty-nine agency banks are authorised to accept payments of Income Tax dues. These are: 1. Allahabad Bank 16. Syndicate Bank 2. Andhra Bank 17. UCO Bank 3. Bank of Baroda 18. Union Bank of India 4. Bank of India 19. United Bank of India 5. Bank of Maharashtra 20. Vijaya Bank 6. Canara Bank 21. State Bank of India 7. Central Bank of India 22. State Bank of Bikaner Jaipur 8. Corporation Bank 23. State Bank of Hyderabad 9. Dena Bank 24. State Bank of Travancore 10. IDBI Bank 25. State Bank of Mysore 11. Indian Bank 26. State Bank of Patiala 12. Indian Overseas Bank 27. HDFC Bank Ltd. 13. Oriental Bank of Commerce 28. Axis Bank Ltd. 14. Punjab Sindh Bank 29. ICICI Bank Ltd. 15. Punjab National Bank

535. Indian-American to receive National Medal of Science award from Obama

A 65-year-old Indian American scientist will receive the National Medal of Science award from US President Barack Obama this week, the White House said. Rakesh K Jain, professor of tumor biology at Massachusetts General Hospital at the Harvard Medical School and 16 others will receive the National Medals of Science and National Medals of Technology and Innovation award from Obama on May 19. The award function was initially scheduled for January 22 but was postponed due to a major snow storm. Awarded annually, the Medal of Science recognises individuals who have made outstanding contributions to science, engineering and mathematics. The National Medal of Technology and Innovation recognises those who have made lasting contributions to America's competitiveness and quality of life and helped strengthen the nation's technological workforce. Jain, an IIT-Kanpur alumnus, has received numerous awards for his work on tumor biology, particularly research on the link between tumor blood vessels and improving the effects of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. He received his B Tech degree from the IIT-Kanpur in Chemical Engineering in 1972. The National Medal of Science was created by statute in 1959 and is administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation.

536. Indian-American Teen Syamantak Payra Wins Intel Young Scientist Award

A 15-year-old Indian-American boy has won the prestigious 'Intel Foundation Young Scientist Award' for developing a low-cost electronically-aided knee brace that allows a person with a weakened leg to walk more naturally.

Syamantak Payra, a Texas resident, won the USD 50,000 award along with 17-year-old Kathy Liu. The award was given by Intel Corporation and the Society for Science and the Public (SSP) at the 2016 'Intel International Science and Engineering Fair' in Arizona last week.

"Our top winners this year - Syamantak and Kathy - clearly demonstrate that age has no bearing on your ability to conduct research and come up with solutions to important problems," said Maya Ajmera, SSP president and chief executive. "We congratulate them not only for their success, but on their dedication and hard work. They and the rest of the Intel ISEF finalists are the rising stars of STEM and we look forward to watching them pursue their passions and in turn make the world a better place for future generations," Ms Ajmera said.

When Mr Payra tested his prototype with two individuals partially disabled by polio, it almost immediately restored a more natural gait and increased mobility, according to a statement.

"Intel congratulates this year's winners and hopes that their work will inspire other young innovators to apply their curiosity and ingenuity to today's global challenges," Intel Foundation president and Intel Corporation vice president of human resources and director of corporate affairs Rosalind Hudnell said in a statement.

This year's Intel International Science and Engineering Fair featured more than 1,700 young scientists selected from 419 affiliate fairs held in 77 countries.

A team of students from India also attended the event. Five Indian Americans also figured in the 22 "Best of Category" winners and each received a USD 5,000 prize.

These winners included Rajeev Jha (Hawaii) in the Behavioral and Social Sciences category, Marissa Sumathipala (Virginia) in the Cellular and Molecular Biology, Swetha Revanur (California) in Computational Biology and Bioinformatics, Tiasha Joardar (Texas) in the Energy: Physical category and Prashant Godishala (Minnesota) in the

Under the Intel and Indo-US Science Technology Forum, three students won the award for a visit to India.

537. JK Rowling receives highest French civilian honour

Harry Potter author JK Rowling has been made a honorary Knight in the French Legion Of Honour, France's highest civilian award. The 50-year-old best selling writer, whose great-grandfather was French, was given the honorary title by President Nicolas Sarkozy at a ceremony in Paris, reported Digital Spy. The title was created by Napoleon Bonaparte in the early 19th century and constitutes the country's elite national merit society. Foreigners cannot be officially inducted, but are routinely made honorary recipients. Other foreign celebrity knights include Jerry Lewis, Steven Spielberg and Barbara Streisand.

538. Lady Singham Manzil Saini becomes first woman SSP of UP capital Lucknow

UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav's office on Tuesday clarified that Etawah SSP Manzil Saini would be posted in Lucknow thus making her the first-ever woman district police chief in the state capital. Earlier, reports emerged that the transfer of Saini from the home district of Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Mulayam Singh Yadav to Lucknow was put on hold by the state government. The CM's office confirmed in a tweet that her repositioning would take place as decided. Since her entrance into the police force, the 2005 batch IPS officer has hit headlines. She is popularly known as Lady Singham. The upright police officer was earlier posted in Badayun, Muzaffarnagar and Mathura. During her tenure as an SSP in Etawah, Saini she launched a crackdown against unauthorized usage of party flags by Samajwadi Party workers in four-wheelers and also penalizing them for bearing tinted windows. While taking a review of security arrangements in Etawah, she found ten constables of the quick response team in Etawah napping inside the police van. These cops were punished by the SSP and made to jog inside a playground. Within months of her first posting as SP Moradabad in 2008, she cracked open the notorious Amit Kumar kidney racket. The Lady Singham has studied physics at St. Stephens College before taking up Delhi School of Economics where she was a gold medalist.

539. IT dept launches e-portal to fast track taxpayers grievances

The Income Tax department has launched a special electronic grievance redressal system called 'e-nivaran' in order to fast track taxpayer grievances and ensure early resolution of their complaints.

A separate and dedicated window for grievance redressal has been launched recently in the Income Tax Business Application (ITBA), the new smart electronic platform for the regular operations of the department.

The facility is called 'e-nivaran' (electronic solution) and acts to integrate all online and physical complaints gathered by the department at this platform which will be monitored by the Assessing Officer of the case upto the supervisory officers in a paperless environment.

540. How the RBI governor is appointed?

The Reserve Bank's affairs are governed by a Central Board of Directors (CBD). Members of the board are appointed by the Government of India in accordance with Section 8 of the Reserve Bank of India Act. The CBD as the administrative apex body of the RBI, contains two sets of directors. First is the official directors and second, non-official directors. The official directors comprised of the Governor and not more than four Deputy Governors who are appointed/nominated by the Central Government under the RBI Act. RBI Governor is thus appointed by the Government. Besides the official directors, there can be fourteen non-official directors as well in the CBD. Government can nominate two government officials into the CBD. The Governor: appointment and term in office The Governor and Deputy Governors hold office for periods not exceeding five years. The term of the governor may be fixed by the government at the time of his appointment. (Raghuram Rajan was appointed for three years; though a governor can get five-year tenure). Governor (and also Deputy Governors) is eligible for reappointment or extension. In absence of the Governor, a Deputy Governor nominated by him functions as the Chairman of the Central Board. Salaries and allowances of the Governor and Deputy Governors may be determined by the Central Board, with the approval of the Central Government. The governor can be removed by the government.

541. For women safety a panic button in every cell phone from 1st January next year: Maneka Gandhi

Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi has said for women safety there will be a panic button in every cell phone from 1st of January next year. In an exclusive interview to AIR, Ms. Gandhi said there are 20 to 30 crore cell phone users in the country and of them 37 per cent are in rural areas. She said if a woman is being chased or is hurt she can just put her finger on that button keep pressing and the police will then react.

On Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme, the Minister said that the scheme was successful in improving child sex ratio in the targeted areas particularly in Haryana. She said, sex ratio for girl has risen from 830 to 907 per thousand male child in the state.

Ms. Gandhi said in the last two years Women and Child Development ministry has done many things for womens nourishment, their safety and advancement. She said her ministry has started a programme called Step to give money to train 200 women at a time and to get them jobs, whether at home or outside. Ms. Gandhi said first time the government has started -Mahila site where women can sell their products online.

542. India successfully test fires its indigenously developed Prithvi-II missile

India successfully test fired its indigenously developed Prithvi-II missile from the Chandipur, off Odisha coast. The medium range missile is capable of carrying 500 kg to 1000 kg of warheads and is thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines. As part of a user trial, the 4,600 kilogram missile with a strike range of 350 kilometer, the surface-to-surface Prithvi-II test was carried out from a mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range at around 09:40 hrs.

the battlefield missile has flight duration of 483 seconds and a peak altitude of 43.5 kilometer. The launch activities were carried out by the Strategic Force Command and monitored by the DRDO scientists. The first missile to be developed by DRDO under India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Program, Prithvi-II was inducted into India's armed forces in 2003. The last user trial of Prithvi-II was successfully conducted on February 16, 2016 from the same test range in Odisha.

543. Home Secy Mehrishi asks states to strengthen their SDRFs

Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi has asked states to strengthen their disaster response forces, SDRFs to save lives and property in times of disaster. Inaugurating the annual conference of state relief commissioners in New Delhi today, Mr Mehrishi also asked the states establish SDRFs where there is no such forces. He said, disasters are increasing in number and there is a need for better preparedness and putting comprehensive and improved risk reduction measures in place. He said, in the year 2015-16 twenty-one states and one union territory was severely affected by disasters in which 1500 people lost their lives and 16.5 lakh people lost their homes. He said, capacity building is also an important aspect for mitigating disasters.

Mr Mehrishi also asked the central agencies to give advance warnings through latest technologies at shortest possible time to mitigate disasters. He said, agencies must keep improving.

544. Cabinet gives its approval for leasing out of Airports Authority of India land

The Cabinet gave its approval for leasing out of Airports Authority of India land measuring 1500 square metre to M/s. M.P. Warehousing Logistics Corporation for establishing the Centre for Perishable Cargo at Indore airport as per the resolution made by AAI Board. It will provide a world class facility under one roof to cater to all requirements of the traders and maintain the quality of produce. This will be under PPP mode.

The Cabinet was apprised of the decision taken by the Empowered Apex Steering Committee that Princess Park Complex will be the suitable site for construction of the National War Museum. As regards the National War Memorial the same would be constructed at C Hexagon of India Gate as approved by the Cabinet in its meeting held in October last year.

The Cabinet was also apprised of the joint issue of UN Women HeForShe postage stamp. A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Department of Posts and United Nations Postal Administration in February this year for this purpose.

In this Joint issue, the stamps were printed in the form of sheetlet of 20 se-tenants and Miniature Sheet of two stamps on the occasion of International Womens Day.

545. Popular Indian car models fail crash tests conducted by NCAP

Popular Indian car models including Maruti Celerio, Maruti Eeco, Renault Kwid, Mahindra Scorpio and Hyundai Eon failed crash tests by vehicle safety group Global New Car Assessment Programmes (NCAP). The UK-based group tested five models and found that the vehicles showed low levels of adult occupant protection. In a release yesterday, Global NCAP said, the latest Indian crash test results rated all five models as zero star. Industry experts however raised question about the test as the Global NCAP tested vehicles at a speed of 64kmph. The most advanced safety standards in Europe and US has guideline for the crash test at a speed of 56 kmph. India is also adopting 56 kmph in its regulations from 2017.

546. CCEA approves improved VRS package for Hindustan Vegetable Oils Corpn

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a proposal for offering an improved voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) package to the employees of Hindustan Vegetable Oils Corporation. The improved package is based on the 2007 notional pay scales of the employees and government assistance will be in the form of a non-plan grant of ₹127.56 crore to the company. The Cabinet was also apprised of the joint issue of UN Women HeForShe postage stamps. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the Department of Posts and the United Nations Postal Administration in February 2016 for the purpose. In another decision, the Cabinet approved leasing of 1,500 sq m of Airports Authority of India land at Indore Airport to M.P. Warehousing Logistics Corporation for establishing a Centre for Perishable Cargo. This centre will provide a world-class facility under one roof to cater to the requirements of traders and maintain the quality of produce. The facility is to be created by M.P. Warehousing Logistics Corporation under the public-private-partnership mode, an official statement said. Further, the Cabinet was also apprised of the decision taken by the Empowered Apex Steering Committee that Princess Park Complex in New Delhi would be suitable for construction of the National War Museum. As regards the National War Memorial, the same would be constructed at the C Hexagon of India Gate as approved by the Cabinet in October 2015, a statement said.

547. BJP appoints new chief for Jharkhand unit

The BJP has appointed Tala Marandi as President of its Jharkhand unit. State party spokesman Pradip Sinha said in Ranchi that Mr Marandi replaces Ravindra Kumar Ray, who is also a Lok Sabha MP. Mr Marandi's appointment is aimed at striking a balance in the tribal state by making a member of the community as its party chief after it had made a non-tribal, Raghubar Das as Chief Minister. BJP has reached out to the Scheduled Tribes by appointing Mr Marandi as its state chief. Mr Marandi is a two-time MLA from Borio constituency.

548. Govt revising scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labour, increasing quantum of financial assistance

Labour and Employment Minister Bandaru Dattatreya has said the Government is revising the scheme for rehabilitation of bonded labour and increasing the quantum of financial assistance. Speaking about the proposed scheme in New Delhi yesterday, the Minister said, the government will increase the annual budgetary provision of 5 crore rupees to nearly 47 crore rupees. He said, the scheme aims at addressing new forms of bondage such as organised begging rings, forced prostitution and child labour.

He said, the most deprived and marginalised like the disabled, female and children rescued from trafficking, sexual exploitation and transgender will now get 3 lakhs rupees under the scheme. Females and minors who fall in special category will get 2 lakh rupees and normal adult male bonded labour will get an assistance of one lakh rupees. The Minister said, the rehabilitation work has been made simple for the District Magistrates.

He said, a permanent and renewable district level rehabilitation fund of 10 Lakh rupees will be available with the District Magistrate which will be used as a stop-gap arrangement before reimbursement by Central Government through the Direct Benefits Transfer system. An official release said, after revising the scheme, the rules will be amended for effective implementation. The Government will ensure that Bonded Labour cases are tried and judgment pronounced on the same day like other summary trial cases.

549. China plans to build more than 500 airports by 2020

China plans to build more than 500 airports by 2020 to create a market worth over 153 billion US dollars for its general aviation industry. According to a guideline issued by China's cabinet, the country will have more than 500

general aviation airports in a number of places, including major agricultural and forest regions and over 50 per cent of five scenic tourist spots by 2020.

It also plans to increase the number of general aircraft, including helicopters and private jets, to more than 5,000 by 2020. According to the latest data released at the end of 2015, China had more than 300 airports, 281 enterprises and 1,874 aircraft.

550. India projected to add 300 million new urban residents by 2050: UN report

India is projected to add 300 million new urban residents by 2050 and it will need to build climate-friendly cities to address the challenge of accommodating the needs of the growing population, a UN report has said. The first 'World Cities Report 2016 - Urbanisation and Development: Emerging Futures' report by UN Habitat said in India, urban areas already contribute more than 60 per cent of the GDP, and the new urban residents' projection has led to a call by the Indian government to build 100 new cities over the period.

The report said that central to this challenge are the twin bottlenecks of municipal finance and infrastructure finance for transport, electricity, communications, water supply and sanitation in support of production. Large South-Asian countries like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan feature massive, expanding urban populations in mega-cities such as Dhaka, Mumbai, Delhi, Karachi and Lahore as well as in growing number of secondary cities, it said.

551. Magic mushrooms 'promising' in depression

A hallucinogenic chemical in magic mushrooms shows promise for people with untreatable depression, a short study at Imperial College London on just 12 people hints. Eight patients were no longer depressed after the mystical and spiritual experience induced by the drug. The findings, in the Lancet Psychiatry showed five of the patients were still depression free after three months. Experts cautiously welcomed the findings as promising, but not completely compelling.

552. WHO calls emergency meeting on yellow fever outbreak

The World Health Organization will hold an emergency meeting Thursday on the yellow fever outbreak that has hit hardest in Angola but risks spreading further if vaccinations are not ramped up. Such meetings from the UN agency are often held before the declaration of an international health emergency, as happened amid the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and the current surge in neurological disorders linked to the spread of Zika virus in the Americas. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told AFP the meeting had been called to underscore the severity of the yellow fever outbreak and to re-emphasise the need for mass vaccination against the viral disease. As of May 12, Angola had reported 2,267 suspected yellow fever cases and 293 deaths in an outbreak that began in December and is most heavily concentrated in the capital Luanda. The Democratic Republic of Congo has registered 44 suspected cases, both from a local outbreak and from patients who carried the virus from neighbouring Angola. Eleven people have tested positive for yellow fever in China after returning from Angola, highlighting the risk of international spread through non-immunised travellers, WHO has said. Several cases have also been reported in Uganda. The percentage of people immunised against yellow fever remains low in many parts of Africa, even though the vaccine is nearly 100 percent effective and relatively cheap. WHO has sent 11.7 million doses to Angola and there are plans to vaccinate 2.2 million people in DR Congo. WHO has pledged to beef up its emergency response systems after widespread criticism following the Ebola outbreak, with many experts saying it took the UN body far too long to sound a global alarm.

553. US Senate approves 1.1 billion dollars to combat Zika virus

US Senate approved 1.1 billion dollars to combat the Zika virus, significantly less than the Obama administrations 1.9 billion dollars request, but almost double the funding being considered in the House of Representatives. Yesterdays 68-29 vote came after the Republican-led Senate voted down the White Houses full request, which was made in February as US health officials warned that Zika could spread through large swaths of the nation. The mosquito-borne virus can cause devastating birth defects and has been linked to a debilitating neurological disorder.

554. Rajasthan government announces changes in Biomass Energy policy

In Rajasthan, state government has announced changes in Biomass Energy policy.

This decision was taken in Cabinet meeting held in Jaipur yesterday. Briefing media about the cabinet decision Parliamentary affairs Minister Rajendra Rathore said that new policy will focus on clean energy. He said that cabinet also decided to increase the allowances of Special Task Force employees.

In another decision, cabinet partially change the scheme of distributing Ghee to the women belong to BPL after delivery. Now 3 kg ghee will be given during pregnancy while 2 kg will be given after delivery.

555. 5 Member Committee to give recommendations on Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management

The Centre has constituted a five Member Committee to comprehensively review and give recommendations on the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management, FRBM, roadmap for the future. The Committee will be headed by former Revenue and Expenditure Secretary N.K. Singh. Other members of the Committee are Sumit Bose, former Finance and Revenue Secretary, Dr. Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Adviser, Urjit Patel, Deputy Governor, RBI and Rathin Roy, Director, National Institute Public Finance and Policy, NIPFP.

The Committee will examine the need and feasibility of having a fiscal deficit range as the target in place of the existing fixed percentage of GDP and make specific recommendations. It will also examine the need and feasibility of aligning the fiscal expansion or contraction with credit contraction or expansion respectively in the economy and submit its report by 31st of October this year. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had made an announcement to set up the Committee in his Budget speech for 2016-17.

556. TRAI to start pre-consultation on net neutrality within 2-3 days

Telecom Regulatory Authority of India will start pre-consultation on net neutrality within two to three days. TRAI Chairman R S Sharma told reporters today that the telecom regulator has already resolved differential tariff issue, which is a major part of net neutrality. However, the subject did not cover other parts of net neutrality like framework for internet-based calls, messaging, throttling of internet speed on the basis of content or paid preferences.

557. Rio Games: IOC to ban 31 athletes from competing after their sample from Beijing Olympics found tainted

Olympic chief Thomas Bach has announced that up to 31 athletes from six sporting event could be banned from competing at the Rio Games. The announcement comes after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) retested 454 selected samples from the 2008 Beijing Olympics, in which 31 athletes samples have been caught in doping. The IOC said the retests were conducted using the latest scientific analysis methods. Mr. Bach also said, IOC is awaiting the results of 250 retests from the 2012 London Olympics as well. The IOC said these retests were focused on athletes who could potentially take part in Rio. It added 12 affected national Olympic associations would be informed in the coming days.

558. Delhi govt places draft statehood bill in public domain

Acting on one of its poll promises, the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government on Wednesday sought suggestions from the public on a draft bill seeking full statehood for Delhi. Addressing a press meet at which the draft bill was released, Delhi chief minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal said, There has been a demand for a long time to get full statehood for Delhi. All political parties and the people of the party have been demanding this. To act on this the Delhi government has prepared a draft bill. We are putting this on the website today and will take suggestions till 30 June after which a final bill will be prepared. The maximum struggle to get Delhi full statehood was by the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). All parties agree that this step must be taken. BJP and Congress have worked hard to get statehood for Delhi and I hope no politics will be created around this, he added.

559. New model shows how Earth got atmospheric oxygen

The rise of oxygen in the Earth's air was a consequence of the formation of continents in the presence of life and plate tectonics, suggest scientists, offering a new answer to the long-standing question of how our planet acquired its oxygenated atmosphere.

The explanations are based on a new model that suggests how atmospheric oxygen was added to Earth's atmosphere at two key times: one about 2 billion years ago and another about 600 million years ago.

Today, some 20 per cent of Earth's atmosphere is free molecular oxygen (O₂). Free oxygen is not bound to another

element, as are the oxygen atoms in other atmospheric gases like carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide.

For much of Earth's 4.5-billion-year history, free oxygen was all but nonexistent in the atmosphere.

"Oxygen is actually one of the most abundant elements on rocky planets like Mars, Venus and Earth. However, it is one of the most chemically reactive elements," said Cin-Ty Lee, professor at Rice University in US.

"It forms strong chemical bonds with many other elements, and as a result, it tends to remain locked away in oxides that are forever entombed in the bowels of the planet - in the form of rocks," he said.

Researchers showed that about 2.5 billion years ago, the composition of Earth's continental crust changed fundamentally.

The period, which coincided with the first rise in atmospheric oxygen, was also marked by the appearance of abundant mineral grains known as zircons.

"Zircons crystallise out of molten rocks with special compositions, and their appearance signifies a profound change from silica-poor to silica-rich volcanism," Lee said.

"The relevance to atmospheric composition is that silica-rich rocks have far less iron and sulphur than silica-poor rocks, and iron and sulphur react with oxygen and form a sink for oxygen," he said.

"Based on this, we believe the first rise in oxygen may have been due to a substantial reduction in the efficiency of the oxygen sink," Lee said.

The study suggests that the second rise in atmospheric oxygen was related to a change in production.

The model showed that Earth's carbon cycle has never been at a steady state because carbon slowly leaks out as carbon dioxide from Earth's deep interior to the surface through volcanic activity.

It showed that volcanic activity and other geologic inputs of carbon into the atmosphere may have increased with time, and because oxygen production is tied to carbon production, oxygen production also must increase.

Exactly what caused the composition of the crust to change during the first oxygenation event remains a mystery, but Lee said it may have been related to the onset of plate tectonics, where the Earth's surface, for the first time, became mobile enough to sink back down into Earth's deep interior.

560. **Ola cabs signs MoU with govt, to benefit ~Safai Karamcharis~™**

[Mobile app](#) for transportation Ola today signed an MoU with National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC) established under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to focus on building a sustainable framework by supporting entrepreneurship, skill development training and self-defence courses for Safai Karamcharis and Scavengers. The OlaNSKFDC partnership has the potential to generate synergies that will result in a better future for driver entrepreneurs by creating sustainable careers and livelihoods for them. The MoU was signed in the presence of Thaawarchand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment. Aimed at socio-economic development of Safai Karamcharis/ Scavengers, the MoU will aim at benefitting these people and their dependents by enabling livelihood opportunities, especially for women beneficiaries identified by NSKFDC. We are confident that our partnership with Ola will help us in meeting our objective of social and economic empowerment of women by creating job/self-employment for these women, belonging to the families of Safai Karamcharis, said Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Thaawarchand Gehlot. The self defence training taught during the training will instill self-confidence not only among these women drivers, but will also give a sense of security to the riders, particularly those who are traveling at odd hours. This initiative of NSKFDC, serves the twin purpose of security for women and their economic empowerment, which is the top most priority of the government, added Thaawarchand Gehlot. Ola, as a technology platform will help create opportunities for these trained drivers by giving them access to

infrastructure, financing and continuous revenue. Ola aims to add 10,000 driver-partners on its platform over the next five years by mobilizing, training and engaging with aspirants through such partnerships.

561. Himachal to get India's first solar wind power plant

State-run [Himachal Pradesh](#) Electricity Board Ltd (HPEBL) and Solar Energy Corp of [India](#) (SECI) on Wednesday signed a pact to set up India's first solar wind hybrid power plant in the hill state. The agreement was signed by Managing Directors P.C. Negi of HPEBL and Ashwani Kumar of SECI in the presence of Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh here. Under the agreement, joint venture Himachal Pradesh Solar Power Corp Ltd has been set up to commission a pilot solar wind hybrid power project of 2.5 MW at Rangrik in Kaza in Lahaul-Spiti district. It will be commissioned by October 2017, a government statement said. On completion, it would benefit 12,000 habitants of Rangrik, Kaza, Tabo, Losar and Pin valley. Its estimated cost would be Rs.30.72 crore. The entire Lahaul-Spiti district, where the solar wind hybrid plant will come up, is populated mainly by tribals. The climate in the district is harsh as much of the land forms part of a cold desert where the mercury drops below minus 20 degrees Celsius during winter.

562. Kajol meets Modi over hand washing campaign

Actress Kajol [met](#) Prime Minister [Narendra](#) Modi here on Wednesday regarding Help A Child Reach 5 campaign, which spreads the importance of good hand washing habits around the world. Kajol has been actively advocating the cause on various platforms in India as well as globally. She has been engaging with various policymakers to make a difference, by promoting behaviour change by hand washing with soap through Hindustan Unilever's Swachh Aadat, Swachh Bharat initiative. To discuss more about it, she met Modi and later shared that the meeting went off really well. "I told him how we have been doing this for the last four years. We have the statistics and we knew it worked. It wasn't just in theory. We talked about how hand wash should be mandatory in schools. It is necessary to put in not only toilet, but wash basins as well," she told IANS. "So that facility should be available, then only the habit will be available. It went off really well. One of the main things he (Modi) came up with... he said 'It's not habit that you are changing but it's their thought process...telling them this is good and this is bad'." Has he shown any support to the cause? "Officially, no. I can't say that we have tied up. But I think the way we are going, what we are talking about, it coincides well with his own campaign (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan). We are definitely on the same page," said the "Dilwale" star.

563. Google, Tata Trusts expand digital literacy for rural women in India

Google [India](#) and Tata Trusts on Wednesday announced to expand their joint programme "Internet Saathi" that brings digital literacy to the doorsteps of women in four more states in the country. The programme will now be available in West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Tripura. Launched in 2015, it already covers nine states in India, including villages in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. "Internet usage by women in rural areas continues to remain a challenge. Only one in 10 internet users in rural India is a woman. With this programme, we are creating an enabling environment that empowers them while also bridging the technology gender divide," said Sapna Chadha, head of marketing, Google India, in a statement. Under the programme, Google provides devices and training material to the "Saathis" who then impart training to the rural community in their own and neighbouring villages. The final roll out of the programme and the training of master trainers is overseen and facilitated by Tata Trusts through its field partners on the ground. "Of India's 350 million internet users, nearly 100 million dwell in the rural parts of the country. Of these, only 10 million are women. We are delighted that under the 'Internet Saathi' initiative, we have reached a milestone of training 100,000 women in less than a year," added Ganesh Neelam, head-innovation, at Tata Trusts. The initiative aims to empower rural women and communities to facilitate digitally literacy by making them aware of the benefits of internet and the services they can use for their various needs, the statement said.

564. Ruskin Bond to celebrate birthday with two new books

As India's much loved author Ruskin Bond turns 82 on Thursday, his fans will be treated to two new books -- "My Favourite Nature Stories" and "The World Outside My Window" -- themed on nature, the writer's first love. In the first (both are published by Rupa), Bond talks about his various encounters with the natural world. From the chorus of cicadas to the song of the whistling thrush, from his love for sea shells to his favourite place on earth, Bond details the reasons for his abiding love for nature. "When I came to live in Mussoorie just over 50 years ago, I lived in Maplewood Lodge, a cottage below Wynberg-Allen School. Its windows opened on to a well-forested hillside. So naturally, I wrote about the trees, wild flowers and birds and other creatures that lived among them," he says.

565. Missionaries of Charity's Sister Prema conferred German honour

Sister Mary Prema, superior general of the Kolkata-headquartered Missionaries of Charity (MoC), was on Wednesday conferred the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit by German Ambassador to [India](#) Martin Ney. "On behalf of the German Federal President Joachim Gauck, Ney handed over the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit to Sister Prema," said a statement by the German embassy on its official Twitter handle. The 63-year-old Germany-born nun has been a member of MoC, the religious institute founded by the Mother Teresa of Calcutta, since 1980 and was also a close confidante of the Nobel laureate. "With this honour, Germany acknowledges Sister Prema's personal commitment and the outstanding contribution towards humanity and the Indo-German relations over the past decades."

566. Justice(Retd) Mihir Kr Jha and K C Saha take oath as Lokayukta

Justice (Retd) Mihir Kumar Jha and former bureaucrat K C Saha today took oath as members of the three-member [Bihar](#) Lokayukta.

Governor Ram Nath Kovind administered the oath to Jha and Saha as judicial member and member respectively.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, incumbent Lokayukta C M Prasad and other dignitaries attended the swearing-in ceremony of the new members of Bihar Lokayukta, a release from the Raj Bhawan said.

567. Today in History

1535 - French explorer Jacques Cartier set sail for North America.

1536 - Anne Boleyn, the second wife of England's King Henry VIII, was beheaded after she was convicted of adultery.

1568 - After being defeated by the Protestants, Mary the Queen of Scots, fled to England where she was imprisoned by Queen Elizabeth.

1588 - The Spanish Armada set sail from Lisbon, bound for England.

1608 - The Protestant states formed the Evangelical Union of Lutherans and Calvinists.

1643 - Delegates from four New England colonies met in Boston to form a confederation.

1643 - The French army defeated a Spanish army at Rocroi, France.

1796 - The first [U.S.](#) game law was approved. The measure called for penalties for hunting or destroying game within Indian territory.

1847 - The first English-style railroad coach was placed in service on the Fall River Line in Massachusetts.

1856 - [U.S.](#) Senator Charles Sumner spoke out against slavery.

1857 - The electric fire alarm system was patented by William F. Channing and Moses G. Farmer.

1858 - A pro-slavery band led by Charles Hameton executed unarmed Free State men near Marais des Cygnes on the Kansas-Missouri border.

1864 - The Union and Confederate armies launched their last attacks against each other at Spotsylvania in Virginia.

1906 - The Federated Boys' Clubs, forerunner of the Boys' Clubs of America, were organized.

1911 - The first American criminal conviction that was based on fingerprint evidence occurred in New York City.

1912 - The Associated Advertising Clubs of America held its first convention in Dallas, [TX](#).

1921 - The [U.S.](#) Congress passed the Emergency Quota Act, which established national quotas for immigrants.

1926 - Thomas Edison spoke on the radio for the first time.

1926 - Benito Mussolini announced that democracy was deceased. Rome became a fascist state.

1926 - In Damascus, Syria, French shells killed 600 people.

1928 - The first frog-jumping jubilee held in Calaveras County, [CA](#).

1935 - T.E. Lawrence "Lawrence of Arabia" died from injuries in a motorcycle crash in England.

1935 - The [National Football League \(NFL\)](#) adopted an annual college draft to begin in 1936.

1943 - Winston Churchill told the [U.S.](#) Congress that his country was pledging their full support in the war against Japan.

1958 - Canada and the [U.S.](#) formally established the North American Air Defense Command.

1962 - Marilyn Monroe performed a sultry rendition of "Happy Birthday" for [U.S. President John F. Kennedy](#). The event was a fund-raiser at New York's Madison Square Garden.

1964 - The [U.S.](#) State Department reported that diplomats had found about 40 microphones planted in the [U.S.](#) Embassy in Moscow.

1967 - The Soviet Union ratified a treaty with the [United States](#) and Britain that banned nuclear weapons from outer space.

1974 - Erno Rubik invented the puzzle what would later become known as the Rubik's Cube.

1967 - [U.S.](#) planes bombed Hanoi for the first time.

1981 - The Empire State Building was designated a New York City Landmark.

1988 - In Jacksonville, FL, Carlos Lehder Rivas was convicted of smuggling more than three tons of cocaine into the United States. Rivas was the co-founder of Colombia's Medellin drug cartel.

1989 - The Dow Jones Industrial Average passed 2,500 for the first time. The close for the day was 2,501.1.

1992 - [U.S.](#) Vice President Dan Quayle criticized the CBS sitcom "Murphy Brown" for having its title character decide to bear a child out of wedlock.

1992 - In Massapequa, [NY](#), Mary Jo Buttafuoco was shot and seriously wounded by Amy Fisher. Fisher was her husband Joey's teen-age lover.

1992 - The 27th Amendment to the [U.S.](#) Constitution went into effect. The amendment prohibits Congress from giving itself midterm pay raises.

1993 - The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed about 3,500 (3,500.03) for the first time.

1998 - In Russia, strikes broke out over unpaid wages.

1998 - Bandits stole three of Rome's most important paintings from the National Gallery of Modern Art.

1999 - "Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace" was released in the [U.S.](#) It set a new record for opening day sales at 28.5 million.

[Today in Star Wars History](#)

1999 - Rosie O'Donnell and Tom Selleck got into an uncomfortable verbal issue concerning gun control on O'Donnell's talk show.

2000 - The bones of the most complete and best-preserved Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton went on display in Chicago.

2000 - Disney released the movie "Dinosaur."

[Disney movies, music and books](#)

2003 - It was announced that Worldcom Inc. would pay investors \$500 million to settle civil fraud charges over its \$11 billion accounting scandal.

2003 - Hundreds of Albert Einstein's scientific papers, personal letters and humanist essays were made available on the Internet. Einstein had given the papers to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in his will.

2005 - "Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge of the Sith" brought in 50.0 million in its opening day.

2013 - The Yahoo board approved the \$1.1 billion purchase of the blogging site Tumblr.

568. Women and Child Development Minister framed the New policy for women

Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi drafted the New Policy for Women to deal the issues against the Women. OBJECTIVES i) Creating a conducive socio-cultural, economic and political environment to enable women enjoy de jure and de facto fundamental rights and realize their full potential. ii) Mainstreaming gender in all-round development processes /programmes/projects/ actions. iii) A holistic and life-cycle approach to women's health for appropriate, affordable and quality health care. iv) Improving and incentivizing access of women/ girls to universal and quality education. v) Increasing and incentivising work force participation of women in the economy. vi) Equal participation in the social, political and economic spheres including the institutions of governance and decision making. vii) Transforming discriminatory societal attitudes, mindsets with community involvement and engagement of men and boys. viii) Developing a gender sensitive legal-judicial system. ix) Elimination of all forms of violence against women through strengthening of policies, legislations, programmes, institutions and community engagement. x) Development and empowerment of women belonging to the vulnerable and marginalized groups. xi) Building and strengthening stakeholder participation and partnerships for women empowerment. xii) Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, audit and data systems to bridge gender gaps.

569. World's largest single rooftop solar plant opened at Beas dera

Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal on Tuesday inaugurated a solar power plant spread over 42 acres on the Dera Baba Jaimal Singh (Radha Soami sect) premises here, which the government claimed was the world's largest single rooftop facility. The plant has the capacity to produce 11.5MW electricity. With this, the Rs 139-crore solar energy plant here has become the country's largest, with solar panels spread over 82 acres on eight rooftops of sheds and a capacity to generate 19.5 MW. The project will generate 27 million units of electricity per annum, enough to cater to the electricity needs of approximately 8,000 households. Badal was accompanied by new and renewable energy resource minister Bikram Majithia. A power purchase agreement (PPA) has been signed between the Dera and the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) for 25 years. The first phase (7.5 MW) of this project was allotted in September 2013 and synchronised with the grid in April 2014. Later, the second phase (12 MW) was allotted in February 2015 and synchronised in December 2015. In a statement after the inauguration, Badal lauded the Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) for ushering in a solar-power revolution in the state. Badal said the state-of-the-art project set up by the Radha Soami Satsang Beas Educational and Environmental Society (RSSBEES) in technical collaboration with PEDA will go a long way in motivating the other states to replicate such projects to generate clean and green energy. Elaborating the environmental-friendly benefits, Majithia said the project will mean abating 4-lakh tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the next 25 years. Majithia said the Centre has set a target of generating 40,000 MW of renewable

energy by 2022. Punjab was producing only 9MW of renewable energy till February 2012, which has now gone up to 470MW and is expected to touch 1,080MW by year-end, he said.

570. Trial run of Delhi Metro's new driver-less train begins

The country's first driverless metro train was put on track on Tuesday for trial run in Delhi's Mukundpur. Equipped to run on Unattended Train Operations (UTO) mode, the high-tech train will increase the Delhi metros frequency to 90 seconds instead of the current average of two minutes. Ferried to India from South Korea, the train boasts wi-fi, USB ports, charging points, LED and LCD screens and backrest near the wheel-chair area. The first such train to be sent for trial run was flagged off by Union Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation's new Mukundpur depot. Odd-even Stating that the Delhi government's odd-even drive was a temporary measure, Mr. Naidu said in his speech that it cannot be a permanent solution. The Urban Development Ministry, the Delhi government and the DMRC will sit together to draft a report on where the Delhi Metro stands internationally. The report will include an analysis of everything from passenger comfort to frequency of trains and expenditure in building the MRTS [Mass Rapid Transit System], Mr Naidu added. Terming the DMRC as a unique example of cooperative federalism, Mr. Kejriwal said: As we kept on saying during the odd-even scheme, till the time we don't improve our public transport system, one that inspires car owners to opt for public transport, pollution or congestion will not come down. Next year onwards However, DMRC officials maintained that trains will be run on UTO mode only by next year. Driverless operations on UTO mode will be possible only after rigorous trial runs on the new signalling technology Communication Based Train Control, said a Metro official. The trains will run on the upcoming 58-km Mukundpur-Shiv Vihar and the 34-km Janakpuri (West)-Botanical Garden corridors under its phase-III network. Trial run of trains, that were unveiled last month, will take place between Mukundpur depot and Majlis Park station, one of the terminal stations on the upcoming pink line for the next few days. Gradually, the distance covered by them will be increased, a metro official added.

571. Cabinet apprised of the joint issue of UN Women HeForShe postage stamp

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between Department of Posts and United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) in February, 2016 for this purpose.

In this Joint issue, the stamps were printed in the form of sheetlet of 20 se-tenants and Miniature Sheet of two stamps on the occasion of International Womens Day.

UN Women HeForShe campaign is a solidarity movement for gender equality that brings together one half of humanity in support of the other half of humanity for the benefit of all in social terms. This Joint issue is dedicated for the empowerment of women around the world.

This would promote great cause of gender equality which the Indian government has been championing in the recent times. Thus, Department of Posts and UNPA have arrived an agreement to celebrate and to commemorate International Womens day on 8th of March, 2016 by releasing a joint stamp, read a government statement.

572. Govt opens Tatkal window for faster patents to startups

In a bid to encourage start-ups to patent their [technologies](#), the [government](#) has slashed the fee by up to 80% and opened a special ([Tatkal](#)) window to expedite clearances for them as well as entities that route their global patent applications via the Indian [Patents](#) Office. Applying to the special window will attract up to three times of This is the first time the [government](#) has opened a window for faster patents along with efforts to speed up application clearing process. Currently, it takes five-to-seven years to clear a patent application and the government is now looking to reduce this to around two-and-a-half years, which would be even lower in case of those taking the Tatkal route. Under the faster clearance route, application fees for individuals and [start-ups](#) have been kept at Rs 8,000, while for companies, it could be as much as Rs 60,000. Under normal circumstances, initial patent filing cost ranges between Rs 1,600 and Rs 8,800. To clear the backlog of patent [applications](#), the revised rules provide for refund of fees in case of withdrawal of an application. "The move is aimed at popularising India as a patent filing hub so that more companies file applications in India," Rajiv Aggarwal, joint secretary in the department of industrial policy and promotion, told reporters, adding that the benefits of modified rules will be available only to new applicants.

573. UNICEF and EU launch #EmergencyLessons campaign on education in crisis zones

The United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) and the European Union (EU) today announced the launch of a new social media-driven public awareness campaign aimed at reaching 20 million Europeans and highlighting the importance of education for children affected by emergencies. The #EmergencyLessons campaign specifically targets people 25 years old and younger in Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Slovakia and the United Kingdom to inspire them to raise their voices on behalf of millions of children and adolescents whose education has been interrupted by emergencies, UNICEF said in a [press release](#). Young people understand better than anyone how important education is to their lives today and to their futures, said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. Who knows better than they that their tomorrows depend on what they learn today? Who, better than today's youth, can demand that the world provides them with the skills they will need to build a better world? Their future, and ours, depends on it, he added. The campaign draws on the real-life experiences of children living through emergencies in countries such as Guinea, Iraq, Nepal and Ukraine. Throughout the next seven months, their stories will be shared on social media through #EmergencyLessons. Nearly one in four of the world's school-age children 462 million now live in 35 countries affected by crises, including an estimated 75 million children who are in desperate need of educational support, UNICEF stressed.

574. Google launches Spaces group-sharing app on Android, iOS, and desktop

Google is today lifting the lid on a brand-new app called [Spaces](#), which the Internet giant calls a tool for group sharing. The app has been in private beta [for a few months](#) already, but today its shedding those beta tags and will start rolling out on Android, iOS, the desktop, and the mobile Web for Gmail accounts. Users create what are known (unsurprisingly) as spaces for a specific topic or purpose, and then invite anyone to join. When new content is added, each member of the space is alerted. You can also search for previously shared content through the search box.

575. Joe Root bags top three England cricket awards

Joe Root bagged a hat-trick of awards as he was named England's Test player of the year, limited-overs player of the year and Fan's player of the year at the team's annual awards dinner ahead of the first Test against Sri Lanka. Root, who has been in an outstanding form in the last 12 months, said that his performance is far from perfect and that he has to work more and better. Im extremely proud. You cant win these personal awards without great people and great team players around you.

576. Andre Brahic, discoverer of Neptune's rings, passes away at 73

French astrophysicist Andre Brahic, the pioneer in the discovery of planet Neptune's rings, is no more. He passed away at 73 years old on Sunday in Paris. Brahic was a specialist in the solar system and dispatched a project in 1984, alongside US space expert William Hubbard, which prompted the leap forward. French President Francois Hollande grieved Brahic's death through an announcement which hailed him as an extraordinary mind "who knew how to make simple the mysteries of the sky". Hollande likewise portrayed him as an incredible teacher "whose books and comments allowed us to voyage through space". Brahic was born at the time of the second world war - in a modest family in Nazi-occupied Paris in 1942; Evry Schatzman initiated Brahic into astrophysics; he was considered as the father of the discipline in France. In the 1980s, Brahic turned into a master in exploring our solar system with the assistance of the NASA Voyager and later US-Europe Cassini unmanned missions, which proceed right up until today. He was an astrophysicist at the Commission for Atomic Energy and Alternative Energies (CEA) and an educator at the University of Paris. It was his enthusiasm for Saturn and its rings which drove him to dispatch his Neptune research. Neptune is the eighth and the farthest known planet from the Sun in our solar system. It was discovered on September 23, 1846, by a group of scientists at the Berlin Observatory. Neptune's furthest ring is partitioned into three circular segments to which Brahic gave the names Liberte, Fraternite and Egalite. In 1990, an asteroid, number 3488, was named Brahic in his honor. Enthusiastic about bringing astrophysics to a more extensive open, Brahic wrote a few books. His last book "Universes Elsewhere; Are We Alone" was distributed a year ago. His publisher, Odile Jacob, broke the news of his death.

577. Cyclone Roanu: Deep depression over Bay of Bengal intensifies, heavy rainfall likely over coastal AP

The deep depression over west central and adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal moved further northwards and intensified into a cyclonic storm ROANU. The system lay centred over westcentral Bay of Bengal at about 125km south-southeast of Machilipatnam, about 350km southwest of Visakhapatnam and 225 km southwest of Kakinada.

It is likely to move north-northeastwards along and off Andhra Pradesh coast during next 24 hours and intensify further into a severe cyclonic storm. It is likely to move northeastwards along and off north Andhra Pradesh and Odisha during next 48 hours.

Under the influence of the cyclonic storm rainfall at most places with heavy to very heavy falls at a few places and isolated extremely heavy falls likely over coastal Andhra Pradesh during next 48 hours. Rainfall at many places with heavy to very heavy falls at a few places would occur over coastal Odisha during the same period.

Wind speed reaching 90-100 gusting to 110 kmph is very likely to prevail along and off North Andhra Pradesh coasts during next 12 hours and speed reaching 100-110 gusting to 120 kmph during 36 hours. Fishermen are advised not to venture into sea along and off Andhra Pradesh coast during next 48 hours, along and off North Tamil Nadu coast during next 24 hours and along and off Odisha coast from tonight.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu today held a teleconference and took stock of the situation with all the coastal district collectors on the preparedness for the impending cyclone and heavy rains. The Chief Minister instructed them to be prepared to face any eventuality taking all measures to mobilise people from the low lying and vulnerable areas by arranging vehicles into shelters providing them food, milk and water besides setting up medical camps. The officials are taking all possible measures that normal life does not get affected. NDRF teams have been deployed in low lying areas and boats kept ready to rescue people in the event of flooding.

578. 92 children poisoned by weed-killer in Peru: reports

In Peru, ninety-two children and three teachers were poisoned when a plane fumigating nearby fields sprayed a weed-killer too close to their school on Tuesday. A health official in the municipality of Nepena told a local media that the herbicide, believed to be glyphosate, left school children vomiting and fainting. Glyphosate the active ingredient in US biotech giant Monsanto's Roundup weed-killer has often caused controversy and confusion.

Critics have called for it to be banned, and the World Health Organisation's International agency for Research on Cancer said last year that it "probably" causes cancer. The spraying was carried out Tuesday morning, apparently without a municipal permit.

579. Odisha govt constructs 10 lakh pucca houses in two years

The Odisha government has constructed 10 lakh pucca houses under various rural housing schemes in past two years. Formally dedicating the houses at a function in Bhubaneswar yesterday, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik described the project as an unique achievement in the entire country and said the government will construct 16 lakh more houses in the next three years.

Stating that converting one million kutcha houses to pucca houses, chief minister Naveen said cyclone Phailin in 2013 and super cyclone in 1999 had prompted him to launch this project aimed at providing safe and secure houses to 50 lakh people of the state.

During the 2015-16 fiscal, the share of Odisha was 32 per cent in the houses completed in the entire country under the Indira Awas Yojana. Claiming the Odisha has become a role model for other states for its excellence in rural housing sector, the government claims a special focus was given on destitute, widows, minorities and vulnerable tribal groups.

580. Odisha govt to establish 100 more model schools

The Odisha government will establish 100 more model schools in addition to the existing similar number of schools functioning in the State. As per the State governments decision, each of the 314 blocks of the State would have a Model School to impart quality education in rural areas.

The new schools will be established in backward areas on a priority basis during 2016-17 fiscal. The Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan is entrusted the job of establishing Model Schools with an estimation amount of over 536 crore rupees during 2016-17.

581. Veteran Gujarati folk singer Diwaliben Bhil passes away

Veteran Gujarati folk singer and Padma award winner Diwaliben Bhil passed away today in Junagadh. She was 80. Diwaliben Bhil had given her voice to various Gujarati film songs, folk songs and Garba. She also performed on All India Radio and Doordarshan. She came to Junagadh at the age of 20 after her marriage. The government of India honoured her with Padma Shri award in 1991. Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel has expressed her grief and sorrow over death of the singer.

582. Egypt Air flight MS804 went down into Mediterranean sea

Egypt Air Flight MS804 that went off radar screens early today while en route from Paris to Cairo went down into the Mediterranean Sea, the Al Mayadeen TV channel reports citing airline sources. According to Egypt Air, flight MS804, en route from Paris to Cairo, went off radar screens at 00:45 GMT today. Egypt Air said via Twitter that the plane was 10 miles into the Egyptian airspace and at an altitude of 37,000 feet when radar contact with it was lost. According to Sky News Arabia, the aircrafts last appearance was above Greece.

Egypt Air says it received a distress signal before the plane disappeared from radar. According to the airline, there were a total of 66 people on board the plane, including 56 passengers. The passengers included 30 Egyptians, 15 French citizens, one Briton, two Iraqis, as well as people from Canada, Belgium, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Sudan, Chad and Portugal including three children. Egypt Air is following the situation closely with the competent authorities through the integrated operations centre. Egypt Air said, special teams from the Egyptian Armed Forces were at site located for inspection and rescue.

The Greek authorities have also joined Egyptian armed forces in the search operation. The company also established a hotline for passengers' relatives. Egyptian Prime Minister Sherif Ismail has reached at the airport in Cairo, along with the families of those on board. Egypt Air Flight MS 804 departed from the Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris at 23:09 GMT. The plane was headed for Cairo International Airport.

583. Why SBI merges its associates? What are the benefits?

The banking sector of the country is having full of developments in recent years. Latest one is the news that boards of SBI and its associated banks have decided to merge together to make the SBI bigger. This is a step that the government is long waiting to do under the programme of bank consolidation. The five associate banks - State Bank of Bikaner and Jaipur, State Bank of Travancore, State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Mysore and State Bank of Hyderabad and the new kid of the banking industry Bharatiya Mahila Bank will merge into SBI. Ever since nationalization, SBI is the largest bank in the country. with the merger, SBI's asset size is expected to be increased by 25%. The merger will improve SBI's standing in the global banking industry as well. The combined entity will be ranked at 45 in the world from the current SBI standing of 52 with a capital size of 37 lakh crore assets. But still, SBI, being the largest bank in India is not big globally. In the Global Systemically Important Banks, which are 30 in number, there are four Chinese banks and three Japanese banks, but there is no Indian bank. The new consolidation between SBI and its associates is the easiest way for the government to reduce the number of PSBs to 10 from the current 27. With this step, there will not be any associate banks for SBI. What are the benefits of the present consolidation? There are some expected benefits from the present move. It will benefit the government and banks in the current environment where there is the need for larger capital and cost cutting. Firstly, government believe that the consolidation or merger driven big size or what we call economies of scale. This will help banks to attract more capital. Similarly, cost will be reduced if the five banks are merged with SBI. As per the Basel III norms, PSBs need nearly Rs 1.8 lakh crore capital to meet the standards. The present consolidation is a continuation of the different policy measures launched by the government under Indradhanush programme. For the time being, the newly created Bank Board Bureau will look after PSBs and their operational aspects. In the future, a Bank Investment Company will be formed and it will manage the affairs of PSBs.

584. Apple announces software development center in Bengaluru to push up its India marketing campaign

Apples visiting CEO, Tim Cook has announced a software development center in Bengaluru as India has emerged as the fastest growing market for the US based company. Through opening of some development facilities in India, Apple expect some policy leverage in its favor from the government for the companys Indian plans. Cook has reached India after a Chinese visit where the California based company has announced \$1bn investment in car hail app firm Didi.

Being a high priced brand, Apple is facing a big hurdle in the Indian market because of competition from rookie smart phone manufactures. Already, other players from Korea and China are occupying the smart phone market because of the low price benefit. Earlier, Apples plan for selling refurbished iPhones in India was opposed by the government. Last year, Apples contract manufacturer, Foxconn Technology has made plans to open facilities for the manufacture Apple's iPhone in India, Foxconn has mentioned that it is aiming to develop 10-12 facilities in India, including factories and data centers by 2020. For Apple, India is big destination because of the volume prospects. At the same time, it cant push further without contributing something in terms of jobs. The just declared software development center and a digital map design center at Hyderabad may help it. But what matters is how it can overcome its high price tag in a price sensitive market like India. The company has registered first decline in sales and profit this quarter since 2003. But its Indian sales have grown by 56% amidst falling income from saturated market like US and Europe.

585. Indian elected deputy mayor of Loughton in UK

An Indian journalist has been unanimously elected the Deputy Mayor of Loughton town in the UK, it was announced today.

"Councillor Philip Abraham has been elected unanimously as the Deputy Mayor of Loughton," the announcement said.

Councillor Carol Davis, the newly-elected mayor presented the Deputy Mayor's Badge to Philip Abraham.

The deputy mayor normally goes on to become the mayor for the following year.

Abraham, a journalist from Kerala, had in 2012 won the [election](#) to the Loughton Town Council. Loughton is a vibrant town in the Epping forest district of Essex.

586. International Buddhist conference begins in Nepal

A two-day international Buddhist conference to mark the 2,560th birth anniversary of Lord [Buddha](#) began here today with Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, advocating Buddhism as a means to avoid extremism in all forms.

Over 1,200 delegates and observers from 28 countries around the world will attend the conference from May 19-20, themed "Lumbini, Nepal: the birth place of Lord Buddha and the fountain of Buddhism and world peace".

Inaugurating the conference today, Oli said, the concept of middle path is the core teaching of Lord Buddha which is equally relevant today as it was during the era of Buddha more than twenty five hundred years ago.

"Buddha teaches us to adopt middle path in life by avoiding extremism in all forms," he said.

"The four noble truths and eight fold path propounded by Buddha is a way for life that helps attain ultimate happiness in life," he added.

"Harmony, tolerance and peace are the major components of the teachings of Budha. Buddha is not only the light of Asia, but also the light of the world," the Prime minister said.

"India's emperor Ashoka and great Indian scholar BR Ambedakar have played great role in spreading the message of Lord Buddha in various countries in the world," Rahul Bodhi Mahathero, a Buddhist monk from India who attended the conference said.

The Than manuscript of China has mentioned that Lumbini is the birth place of Lord Buddha, said Yin Shun, vice-president of Buddhist Association of China.

The main objective of organising the event is to highlight Lumbini as birth place of Lord Buddha and the fountain of Buddhism, in the international arena, to establish Lumbini as the centre for interfaith and peace dialogue as well as developing [Nepal](#) as the fountain for world peace.

During the conference, around two dozen Buddhist scholars and renowned monks will be presenting working papers on various topics such as, "Good governance and Buddhism," Buddhism its beginning and continuity," and "Three fold body of Buddha."

A special programme will be held on the 2,560th anniversary of Lord Buddha in Lumbini coinciding with Buddha Jayanti on Saturday.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari will be the chief guest on the occasion. Around 10,000 people are expected to arrive in Lumbini to mark the occasion.

During the event, the president will announce the winner of 'Lord Buddha Peace Prize' worth USD 50,000.

Delegates from various countries including from Bhutan, Thailand, Korea, Sri Lanka and Malaysia will attend the conference.

The conference will come up with a declaration based on presentations from national and international Buddhist scholars at Lumbini on Saturday.

587. **Today in History**

0325 - The Ecumenical council was inaugurated by Emperor Constantine in Nicea, Asia Minor.

1303 - A peace treaty was signed between England and France over the town of Gascony.

1347 - Cola di Rienzo took the title of tribune in Rome.

1506 - In Spain, Christopher Columbus died in poverty.

1520 - Hernando Cortez defeated Spanish troops that had been sent to punish him in Mexico.

1690 - England passed the Act of Grace, forgiving followers of James II.

1674 - John Sobieski became Polands first King.

1774 - Britain's Parliament passed the Coercive Acts to punish the American colonists for their increasingly anti-British behavior

1775 - [North Carolina](#) became the first colony to declare its independence. This is the date that is on the George state flag even though the date of this event has been questioned.

1784 - The Peace of Versailles ended a war between France, England, and Holland.

1830 - The fountain pen was patented by H.D. Hyde.

1861 - [North Carolina](#) became the eleventh state to secede from the Union.

1861 - During the American Civil War, the capital of the Confederacy was moved from Montgomery, [AL](#), to Richmond, [VA](#).

1873 - Levi Strauss began marketing [blue jeans](#) with copper rivets.

1875 - The International Bureau of Weights and Measures was established.

1899 - Jacob German of New York City became the first driver to be arrested for speeding. The posted speed limit was

12 miles per hour.

1902 - The [U.S.](#) military occupation of Cuba ended.

1902 - Cuba gained its independence from Spain.

1916 - Norman Rockwells first cover on "[The Saturday Evening Post](#)" appeared.

1926 - The U.S. Congress passed the Air Commerce Act. The act gave the Department of Commerce the right to license pilots and planes.

1927 - Charles Lindbergh took off from New York to cross the Atlantic for Paris aboard his airplane the "Spirit of St. Louis." The trip took 33 1/2 hours.

1930 - The first airplane was catapulted from a dirigible.

1932 - [Amelia Earhart](#) took off to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She became the first woman to achieve the feat.

1933 - "Charlie Chan" was heard for the final time on the NBC Blue radio network, after only six months on the air.

1939 - The first telecast over telephone wires was sent from Madison Square Garden to the NBC-TV studios at 30 Rockefeller Center in Manhattan. The event was a bicycle race.

1939 - The first regular air-passenger service across the Atlantic Ocean began with the take-off of the "Yankee Clipper" from Port Washington, New York.

1941 - Germany invaded Crete by air.

1942 - Japan completed the conquest of Burma.

1961 - A white mob attacked the Freedom Riders in Montgomery, [AL](#). The event prompted the federal government to send [U.S.](#) marshals.

1969 - [U.S.](#) and South Vietnamese forces captured Apbia Mountain, which was referred to as Hamburger Hill.

1970 - 100,000 people marched in New York supporting [U.S.](#) policies in Vietnam.

1978 - Mavis Hutchinson, at age 53, became the first woman to run across America. It took Hutchinson 69 days to run the 3,000 miles.

1980 - The submarine Nautilus was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

1982 - TVs "Barney Miller" was seen for the last time on ABC-TV.

1985 - The Dow Jones industrial average broke the 1300 mark for the first time. The Dow closed at 1304.88.

1985 - The FBI arrested U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer John Walker. Walker had begun spying for the Soviet Union in 1968.

1985 - Radio Marti was launched.

1990 - The Hubble Space Telescope sent back its first photographs.

1993 - The final episode of "Cheers" was aired on NBC-TV.

1996 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court struck down a Colorado measure banning laws that would protect homosexuals from discrimination.

1999 - At Heritage High School in Conyers, GA, a 15-year-old student shot and injured six students. He then surrendered to an assistant principal at the school.

2010 - Scientists announced that they had created a functional synthetic genome.

2010 - Five paintings worth 100 million Euro were stolen from the Muse d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

588. Day of Vesak - 20 May 2016

"Vesak", the Day of the Full Moon in the month of May, is the most sacred day to millions of Buddhists around the world. It was on the Day of Vesak two and a half millennia ago, in the year 623 B.C., that the Buddha was born. It was also on the Day of Vesak that the Buddha attained enlightenment, and it was on the Day of Vesak that the Buddha in his eightieth year passed away. The General Assembly, by its [resolution 54/115](#) of 1999, recognized internationally the Day of Vesak to acknowledge the contribution that Buddhism, one of the oldest religions in the world, has made for over two and a half millennia and continues to make to the spirituality of humanity. This day is commemorated annually at the UN Headquarters and other UN offices, in consultation with the relevant UN offices and with permanent missions, which also wish to be consulted.

589. Assembly Elections 2016 Results: 5 states

Assam

Bharatiya Janata Party gains the position for the First Time

Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi conceded defeat and appreciated BJP chief ministerial candidate Sarbananda Sonowal

No of Constituencies won: 87 out of 126 Kerala

Left Parts wins the Election

CPI (M)-led LDF regained power in Kerala by majority and succeed over ruling Congress-headed UDF

LDF won 91 of the 140 assembly seats Tamilnadu

AIADMK retains the position

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa headed AIADMK to a second five-year term

No of Constituencies won by AIADMK: 134 out of 232 West Bengal

Mamta banerjee retains the position

Mamata Banerjee-led TMC is heading for a continuous victory in the Assembly elections

TMC Won 211 out of 294 Puducherry

Congress and DMK alliance succeed over N.R Congress

Congress alliance made 17 successes out of 30 seats

590. President of India inaugurated IOC in Rashtrapati Bhavan

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee will inaugurate an Intelligent Operations Centre (IOC) in Rashtrapati Bhavan and launch a Mobile App Monitor for transformation of Presidents Estate into a smart township at a function to be held at Rashtrapati Bhavan tomorrow (May 19, 2016).

The IOC is a software solution designed by IBM which helps collect and make sense of the rich data streaming in from several sources within the Estate to provide intelligent insights. It offers integrated data visualization, near real-time collaboration and deep analytics that will help agencies prepare for problems, coordinate and manage response efforts and enhance efficiency of services.

The Monitor mobile application is a Residents collaboration tool of the Intelligent Operation Center. This will help residents and domain (Energy, Water, Horticulture, Waste and Security) supervisors to collaborate in a smarter way for their observations. It will enable residents to report issues such as broken street lights, electricity failure, water wastage etc and check resolution status using their mobile devices. This mobile application will allow residents to report these

issues using their mobile devices in the Estate on a real time basis. These reported observations can be used to provide enough details such as location coordinates, address etc to concerned departments. This will help the residents of the Estate become more socially responsible, aware and collaborative.

591. India and Slovenia have signed Protocol amending the India-Slovenia Double Taxation Avoidance Convention.

India and Slovenia have signed a Protocol amending the existing Convention and Protocol between the two countries for avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income on 17th May, 2016 in Ljubljana. The Protocol was signed by Mr. Sarvajit Chakravarti, Ambassador of India to Slovenia on behalf of India and Mr. Dusan Mramor, the Slovenian Minister of Finance on behalf of Slovenia.

The Protocol will broaden the scope of the existing framework of exchange of tax related information which will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance between the two countries and will also enable mutual assistance in collection of taxes.

592. Golden Temple ranked 3rd on country's tourist attraction list

The Golden Temple (Harmandir Sahib) in Amritsar has been ranked number 3 in the country on the travellers choice landmarks list of a leading travel planning and booking site TripAdvisor. Surrounded by a holy sarovar, its construction was completed in 1604 and presently runs one of the largest free kitchens in the world, which serves an average of 1,00,000 people daily.

593. TAJ MAHAL AT FIFTH SPOT GLOBALLY

According to TripAdvisor, the iconic wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal, has been voted among the top five tourist attractions in the world, second in Asia and led the popularity list in India. The iconic monument of love is ranked number 5 in the global list of the recently released TripAdvisor's Travellers Choice Landmarks Awards, which put Machu Picchu in Peru and the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Centre in Abu Dhabi as the top two destinations for travellers. Award winners were determined using an algorithm that took into account the quantity and quality of reviews and ratings for landmarks worldwide, gathered over a 12-month period. India has a rich cultural history which is often reflected in the architectural landmarks that we've built and any recognition on the world stage is truly well deserved, Nikhil Ganju, country manager, TripAdvisor India, said. The Taj Mahal was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 for being the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage.

594. JAIPUR'S AMBER FORT RANKED 8TH

The Amber Fort in Jaipur also figures on the 8th list of in the Travellers Choice Landmarks in Asia. Known for its combination of Mughal and Rajput architecture, Amber fort is one of the major tourist attractions in Jaipur. The most fascinating state room inside the fort is the Sheesh Mahal, also known as the mirror palace, adorned with thousands of mirror tiles which supposedly can be fully lit just by a single candle. This fort, along with Jaigarh Fort, is located immediately above on the Chel ka Teela (Hill of Eagles) and connected by a subterranean passage. This passage was meant as an escape route in times of war to enable the royal family members to shift to Jaigarh Fort. The Bandra-Worli Sea Link that connects Bandra, located in the western suburbs of Mumbai to Worli in South Mumbai is another popular tourist attraction in the country. The 5.6km structure across the Arabian Sea is an architectural marvel and considered to be one of the biggest cable-stayed bridges in the world. The fifth most popular in the list from India is the Swaminarayan Akshardham is an architectural wonder that stands on a sprawling 100 acre campus built on the banks of the Yamuna. The temple showcases architectural styles from all over India. It has been awarded the Worlds Largest Comprehensive Hindu Temple by the Guinness World Records. The Agra Fort in Agra, the Qutub Minar, Siddhivinayak Temple in Mumbai and the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur figure in the top 10 list of popular destinations among travellers in the country.

595. Beijing-New Delhi Yoga Conference opens in China

Over 1,000 Chinese yoga practitioners gathered for a group performance in Kunming city on Wednesday to open the China-India Yoga Conference. The conference from May 18 to 22 will feature activities including courses from Indian yoga masters and yoga introductions for communities, Xinhua news agency reported. It is jointly organised by the

foreign affairs and overseas Chinese affairs offices and the China-India Yoga College in Kunming.

596. Nepal SBI Bank launches payment gateway

[Nepal SBI](#) Bank, one of the largest overseas subsidiaries of SBI, has launched payment gateway to facilitate online trade and non-trade transactions between the Himalayan nation and India.

With the launch of above services, the customer of Nepal SBI Bank can utilise various features of mobile [banking](#) and other value added services along with the platform of the payment gateway, the bank said in a statement.

The Payment Gateway was inaugurated by SBI Managing Director B Sriram, and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Ranjit Rae.

Nepal SBI Bank is providing banking services from its 70 Offices including 59 branches and 3 Regional Offices.

Besides, Sriram also handed over a cheque for Rs 5.21 crore to Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli for PM Natural Disaster Relief Fund.

As a part of social responsibility initiatives of Nepal SBI, Sriram also inaugurated construction of main entrance gate of Pashupati area development trust on the theme of UNESCO World Heritage Design.

597. PNB's Rs 5,370 crore net loss is the biggest ever in Indian banking history

The Indian multinational banking and financial services company Punjab National Bank (PNB) has reported a net loss of Rs 5,370 crore in the March quarter, the biggest ever quarterly loss in India's bank history. In the corresponding quarter last year, it had reported a net profit of Rs 307 crore.

As per the bank, its gross non-performing assets (NPAs) surged to 12.9% in the fourth quarter, as against 8.47% in the December quarter. Talking in figures, the gross NPAs for the quarter stood at Rs 55,818 crore, as against Rs 34,338 crore in the December quarter.

"PNB has come out with numbers much lower than our and street's expectations. Asset quality deteriorated substantially during the quarter with a 62.6 per cent rise QoQ. In absolute term GNPA's went up by Rs 21,480 cr QoQ. This is by far the highest ever increasing in NPA by any bank which has reported numbers so far. The point of worry is that the bank believes the cleaning up exercise of balance sheet is not over. We believe pain to continue in FY17 also, with regards to asset quality. We have a neutral rating on the stock," said Angel Broking in a note.

The bad assets provisions stood at Rs 10,490 crore in the fourth quarter, as compared to Rs 3,448 crore in last year's corresponding quarter.

598. Apple announces opening of its map development centre in Hyderabad

Apple announced the opening of a new office in Hyderabad that will focus on development of Maps for Apple products, including iPhone, iPad, Mac and Apple Watch. This investment will accelerate Maps development and create up to 4,000 jobs.

Apple is focused on making the best products and services in the world and we are thrilled to open this new office in Hyderabad which will focus on Maps development, said Tim Cook, Apples CEO. The talent here in the local area is incredible and we are looking forward to expanding our relationships and introducing more universities and partners to our platforms as we scale our operations.

Apple has been continually updating and adding new features to Maps, including 3D views, the Flyover feature and tools to help customers find convenient places to shop, eat and explore nearby areas. With iOS 9 Apple added Transit, offering a combination of trains, subways, buses and walking, which is already available for more than 300 cities around the world.

The new facility, located on the Waverock campus, will provide a world-class, LEED-certified home for the expanding Maps team.

We are honored Apple chose Hyderabad as a home for its Maps development office, said Telangana Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao. This will create thousands of jobs here and is a testament to our proactive approach, quality infrastructure and the excellent talent base we have in the region.

Apple is one of the most innovative companies in the world and we are very proud they chose us to partner with for this important project, said Anup Jindal, RMSI's CEO. We are experts in geospatial data and we will be hiring thousands of people from the local area to support this effort.

Across India, Apple supports over 640,000 iOS app developer jobs and other positions related to the iOS ecosystem.

Apple revolutionized personal technology with the introduction of the Macintosh in 1978. Today, Apple leads the world in innovation with iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple Watch and Apple TV. Apples four software platforms iOS, OS X, watchOS and tvOS provide seamless experiences across all Apple devices and empower people with breakthrough services including the App Store, Apple Music, Apple Pay and iCloud. Apples 100,000 employees are dedicated to making the best products on earth, and to leaving the world better than we found it.

599. UN head Ban Ki Moon appoints Mexican diplomat to head UN climate change office

United Nations [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon appointed Patricia Espinosa Cantellano of Mexico as Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)). In a statement released by his spokesperson, Mr. Ban said the appointment of Ms. Espinosa Cantellano who will succeed Christiana Figueres of Costa Rica was made after consultation with the Conference of Parties to the Convention through its Bureau. Since 2013, Ms. Espinosa Cantellano has been serving as Ambassador of Mexico to Germany, a position she also held from 2001 to 2002. She previously served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico from 2006 to 2012, and has more than 30 years of experience at highest levels in international relations, specializing in climate change, global governance, sustainable development, gender equality and protection of human rights. As Mexico's representative on multilateral bodies and international organizations in Vienna, Geneva and New York, Ms. Espinosa Cantellano has been engaged as a leader in the global challenge to address climate change and its consequences, notably as Chair of the 16th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC leading to the adoption of the [Cancun Agreements](#). Named by the UN Secretary-General to the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, she is a tireless supporter of multilateralism as a way to improve conditions for development in all regions of the world, understanding the inextricable link between the aims of the [Paris Climate Agreement](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals](#), the statement said.

600. Israel successfully tests missile defence system at sea: Army

Israel has successfully tested a maritime missile interception system dubbed the Iron Dome of the Sea, the military announced. The system, which the military said can shoot down short-range rockets similar to those fired from Gaza, successfully destroyed "several" missiles, Ariel Shir, head of operational systems in the navy, said. He said the test, which took place two weeks ago, "proved the Israeli navy's ability to protect Israel's strategic assets at sea against short-range strategic rockets". During the 2014 war between Israel and Hamas and other Palestinian militant groups in the Gaza Strip, Israel deployed its Iron Dome system on land to shoot down rockets fired across the border. A similar system has been in development for several years and was revealed to the public on Wednesday. A video provided by the army showed a rocket launcher installed on a ship firing at targets in the sky and later intercepting a missile. Israel has a number of assets at sea, including a major offshore gas rig around 16 nautical miles from Gaza. Hamas has previously targeted the installation unsuccessfully. Any damage to the rig could be potentially hugely damaging to the Israeli economy, since it provides large amounts of the country's energy needs.

601. World's first Zika virus clone developed

In a world-first, scientists have genetically engineered a clone of the Zika virus strain, an advance that may aid the development of vaccine and therapies against the infection which has been linked to serious birth defects. Cloning the virus unlocks scientists ability to more quickly develop countermeasures and explore whether or how the

Zika virus has evolved to spread more quickly and cause more severe diseases in people. For 60 years, the Zika virus remained obscure, with few identified cases in people and mild disease symptoms.

However, since 2007, the virus has sparked frequent epidemics associated with serious diseases such as microcephaly and Guillain-Barre syndrome. The researchers from The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) first constructed the Zika virus clone. Five fragments spanning the complete viral genome were individually cloned and assembled into the full-length clone of the Zika virus. The infectious complementary DNA (cDNA) clone allows researchers to make Zika virus from test tube and cells on petri dishes.

602. New species of horned dinosaurs discovered in US

Scientists have identified a new species of 77-million-year-old horned dinosaurs in the United States which sported iconic parrot-like beaks, distinctive facial horns and spiked neck shields.

Although many fossils of this group have been discovered in North America, particularly from the northern portion of the Cretaceous landmass Laramidia (Alaska, Alberta, Montana, and Saskatchewan), relatively few have been recovered from the southern portion (Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico) of this ancient continent.

The new species of centrosaurine, a member of the large-bodied ceratopsians (horned dinosaurs), is named *Machairoceratops cronusi*.

The researchers from Ohio University and the Natural History Museum of Utah (NHMU) unearthed the characteristic horncores and other skull elements in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah.

Comparisons with other horned dinosaurs unveiled unique features, indicating the animal was different from other horned dinosaurs - including those from elsewhere in Utah.

603. Sevilla won the Europa League for the third consecutive time

Sevilla came from behind to beat Liverpool 3-1 in the Europa League final at the St. Jakob-Park in Basel on Wednesday night. Daniel Sturridge had given the Reds the lead in the first half before Sevilla stormed back in the second half to score thrice and defend their title. The win sees Sevilla qualify for the Champions League group stages yet again. Meanwhile, Liverpool will not be in Europe next season after finishing eighth in the Premier League this season.

604. Army Mountaineering team scales Mt. Everest

An army team, led by Lt Colonel Ranveer Jamwal from Jammu and Kashmir, has scaled the Mount Everest. Army spokesman in Udhampur said that the Indian Army mountaineering team scaled the mountain yesterday morning despite unfavourable weather conditions.

He said that the expedition to scale the world's highest peak at 8,848 metres was launched after a hiatus of two years following the Nepal earthquake. The team included one junior commissioned officer (JCO) and personnel of five other ranks. Chief of the Army staff General Dalbir Singh has congratulated the team for its achievement.

605. Culture Minister inaugurates exhibition to mark 125th birth anniversary of Frontier Gandhi

Culture Minister Dr Mahesh Sharma today inaugurated the exhibition Frontier Gandhi and the Indian Freedom Movement to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan in New Delhi today. Mr Sharma said that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's 125th birth anniversary calls for a special exploration of his life of sacrifice, commitment and achievement. On the occasion, the Minister also honoured the descendants of the freedom fighter.

Talking about Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who was also known as Frontier Gandhi, Mr Sharma said he was devoted to attaining freedom and fostering unity among different communities. He said, Frontier Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi were complementary to each other and their memories would remain alive for the decades to come. He said Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was a staunch nationalist and a pluralist to the core, who never accepted the two-nation theory and strongly opposed the partition of India.

Dr Sharma added that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's life and message are an inspiration for India and humanity at large. He said the freedom fighter stood for the finest in the Pathan character as seen in his intense passion for freedom, implicit faith in God, indomitable courage, boldness and fearlessness.

606. Govt takes measures to set up science cities, centres: Minister

Union Science and Technology Minister Y S Chowdary has said that the government will soon launch a hub and spoke model to set up science cities and science centres across the country. Speaking at a function in New Delhi yesterday, he said the initiative was aimed at encouraging science and technology incubators in the country. He noted that the country can be divided into five zones so that each zone can have a science city and a number of science centres which can be easily accessed by rural population and youngsters.

Mr. Chowdary said his ministry is working on a system called five year rolling plan to measure the plans and their implementation for both politicians and bureaucrats. He added that for the past 18 months planning is being done but there is no proper tool to measure whether the goals have been achieved or not.

607. New Taiwan president omits one-China principle in speech

Tsai Ing-wen was sworn in as the new President of Taiwan today, becoming the country's first female leader. Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party won parliamentary and presidential elections by a landslide in January. Her party, which has traditionally favoured independence from China, takes over after eight years under China-friendly Nationalist Ma Ying-jeou.

Tsai, 59, in her speech made no explicit mention of the concept that Taiwan is a part of China, which Beijing says is crucial to the entire relationship. China and Taiwan split in 1949 after the Kuomintang nationalist forces lost a civil war to the Communists. But Beijing has always seen the island as a renegade province awaiting reunification, by force if necessary.

Beijing has warned Tsai against seeking independence, saying peace would be impossible, if the new government attempted to move away from the mainland.

608. Indo-UAE Investment Summit to push ties with GCC countries

The Indo-UAE Global Investment Summit is going to be held in Dubai next week aimed at boosting trade between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The day-long summit on May 24 will explore prospects for expansion and diversification of trade opportunities in sectors such as infrastructure, construction, renewable energy and oil and gas. The GCC comprises six Middle Eastern countries - Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.

The Government in March cleared an MoU between India and the UAE to explore opportunities for mobilisation of up to 75 billion US dollar long-term investment in the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF). In December 2015, the government had set up the Rs 40,000 crore NIIF, which is an investment vehicle for funding commercially viable greenfield, brownfield and stalled projects.

609. CBS News journalist Morley Safer passes away

Morley Safer, who retired from CBS News just days ago, has died at age 84 after a 61-year career in journalism. CBS News, which announced his retirement last week, confirmed his death on yesterday. The Canadian-American was a correspondent on the programme 60 Minutes for 46 years, joining in 1970. During his career, he reported on a broad range of topics, including war, cyberspace, social injustices and art.

610. UN honours over 100 peacekeepers who lost lives while serving

The United Nations has honoured peacekeepers, who lost their lives while serving under the UN flag around the globe. A wreath-laying ceremony in honour of all men and women who lost their lives in peacekeeping operations worldwide was held at UN headquarters in New York. UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, presiding over the ceremony said, Peacekeeping remains the flagship of the United Nations enterprise. He urged to work together to enable complex operations to succeed with rapid, effective, efficient and responsible support. More than 3,400 United Nations

peacekeepers have died since 1948.

611. CPI(M) leadership picks Pinarayi Vijayan as next Kerala CM

In Kerala, the CPI(M) leadership has picked party Poliburo member Pinarayi Vijayan as Chief Minister. The CPI(M) State Secretariat, which met in Thiruvananthapuram today in the presence of national leaders Sitaram Yechuri and Prakash Karat, took a formal decision in this regard.

Announcing the party's decision to name Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan as Chief Minister, CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechuri told media persons that Mr. Vijayan will also act as CPI(M)'s parliamentary party leader.

Meanwhile sources said, a meeting of the LDF will be held on Sunday to further discuss the formation of the Ministry.

612. Goa Govt approves land acquisition policy

Goa cabinet today approved a policy of purchase of land under the right to fair compensation and transparency in Land Acquisition Act 2013 for public purpose projects. The policy envisages giving double the circle rate price of land decided by the government and additional one percent to the landowners in the rural areas and also giving interest money until the procedure of purchase of land is over. In the urban areas, however, the land price will be determined only by the prevailing circle rates. In both cases additional benefits will accrue to the landowners if the land has trees, shelters or houses on it.

Giving details in the presence of Chief Minister, State Chief Secretary R K Srivastava said the policy was envisaged as many public projects in the state have been stuck due to unwillingness of the landowners to part with the land. He clarified that the policy was only for the projects of the government and not for projects to be taken up on the mode of Public Private Partnership.

The land requiring government department will approach the District Collector who in turn will form a committee under a Deputy Collector to visit the land and explain to the land owners the benefits under the new policy and higher remuneration for his land. A deal will then be signed between the government and the landowner.

613. Himachal CM launches PEHAL programme

In Himachal Pradesh, the Shimla District Administration has introduced PEHAL programme in the district. The Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh launched the programme from the historic Ridge Maidan yesterday. Deputy Commissioner Rohan Chand Thakur said that the aim of the programme is to identify certain thrust areas which have a direct bearing on the lives of the people at grassroots.

The five areas identified under PEHAL are Primary Education, Forest Rights, Health and Sanitation, Campaign against drugs and skill development and Women Empowerment. The district authorities have already begun works on all these areas with a distinct strategy. It is also an attempt to integrate the various stakeholders in the development story of the district. Shimla is the first district in the state to launch such different programme to work as a team with the people.

614. G-7 summit 2016: Finance ministers discuss Chinese economy, oil prices

G7 Finance Ministers and central bank governors have held discussions on the world economy, ahead of next week's G7 summit to be held in Ise-Shima, central Japan. The first day of the 2-day meeting ended in the northern Japanese city of Sendai today. The participants are said to have exchanged views on what their governments can do to put the global economy back on track and achieve sustainable growth. Among world economic issues that they have discussed are the slowing Chinese economy and lower crude oil prices. They also discussed ways of dealing with tax evasion and questionable tax avoidance in reaction to disclosures in the Panama Papers.

615. What is Lender of Last Resort (LoLR)?

In the initial period of central banking, the central bank in every country performed two basic functions which strategically positioned it at the centre of the financial system. The first function was that of note issue. Second one is the lender of last resort (LoLR) facility extended by central banks to commercial banks. Under LoLR, the central bank provides emergency money or liquidity to the bank when the latter faces financial stringency. When the central bank

extends financial help, the bank can escape from the liquidity crisis. Thus, LoLR is a financial safety net provided by the central bank to commercial banks. LoLR was the kingpin part of central banking, though it was used in rare circumstances when the bank concerned was on the verge of failure. The LoLR has inarguably strengthened the position of central bank as the bankers bank. Providing financial help during the crisis time can be also viewed as a reciprocal measure offered by the central bank. This is because, banks in general holds a certain percentage of their deposits as cash reserves with the central bank. LoLR and the reserve holding have empowered central banks to administer regulatory and supervisory measures on the banking system. Lender of last resort (LoLR) thus, is an exclusive function of a central bank, whereby it lends money to support financial institution facing temporary liquidity stress after exhausting recourse to the market and whose failure is likely to have systemic implications. Though LoLR is last source of funds, whether or not LoLR should be extended to a crisis ridden bank is left to the central bank itself. In 2007, when British bank Northern Rock faced failure, the Bank of England, which is the central bank there, has not provided the LoLR. As a result, the bank failed. Many in the central banking field believe that unlimited extension of LoLR will make banks to take too much risk, expecting that the central bank will comes to the rescue of a risk taking and failing bank.

616. Government to regulate GM seed technology contracts

The Indian government has capped royalty fees payable to Monsanto Co. and other providers of genetically modified (GM) seed technology and barred them from denying a licence to any local company. According to a notification issued on 18 May, for any GM trait commercialized in India, the technology provider cannot charge a royalty that exceeds 10% of the maximum sale price of the seeds, which is fixed by the government every year. The cap of 10% will apply for the first five years. From the sixth year on, the royalty will decrease by 10% a year. And the technology provider cannot refuse a licence to any eligible Indian seed company. If delayed by more than a month, the licence will be deemed to have been obtained. The order, which relates to future GM traits and advances on existing GM seed technology, follows a dispute with Monsanto over the royalty and price payable for GM cotton seeds developed by the US-based company. In March, the government cut the price of genetically modified Bollgard II cotton seeds to Rs.800 (per 450 gram packet) from Rs.830-1,000 earlier and slashed royalty fees by 74%. The latest notification said agreements between technology providers and seed companies will be based on principles of Fair, Reasonable and Non-discriminatory (FRAND) licensing guidelines. Technology companies cannot charge any royalties on GM traits that have lost their efficacy. They cannot charge any upfront fees from domestic seed companies that had paid these fees in the past. From now on, the upfront fees will be limited to Rs.25 lakh for new licensing agreements, the notification said.

617. WiFi at three more rail stations launched

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on Friday launched free Wi-Fi service at three more railway stations across India via videoconferencing here. These stations are at Patna in Bihar, Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh rpt Andhra Pradesh and Ranchi in Jharkhand. So far, Mumbai Central, Bhubaneswar, Kachiguda, Vijayawada, Raipur, Bhopal and Jaipur have got Wi-Fi facility. The minister said the government planned to introduce the service at all major railway stations in the country in three years. "By this year-end, free Wi-Fi facility will be in place at 100 major railway stations. We will achieve our target of 400 stations in three years. Once in place, it will be the largest public Wi-Fi system in the world," Prabhu told reporters here. The service was commissioned by RailTel, a mini-Ratna public sector undertaking, in association with Google for providing high-speed internet to rail commuters at these places. The services will be provided under 'Railwire', the retail broadband distribution model of Railtel. Mumbai Central was the first railway station in the country with free Wi-Fi facility. Last year, Google India and Indian Railways joined hands to introduce high-speed Wi-Fi network at 400 stations in the country.

618. Goa govt clears universal health insurance scheme

In a historic move, Goa Government today approved Deendayal Swasthya Seva Yojana, universal health insurance scheme, for the entire population of the state. The list of health insurance include all major ailments and life style disorders. Addressing a press conference after the Cabinet meeting today, Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar said the new insurance scheme would be launched on Goa statehood day on 30th May and the patients will start getting the insurance cover from the next Independence day.

A public sector Insurance company has been awarded the insurance of about three and a half lakh families in the state for 447 medical ailments at a cost of about Rs 100 crore annual premium expenditure to the exchequer for the next five

years. The state government expects returns of about Rs 50 crore from the government hospital bills paid by the insurance company.

A panel of government and private hospitals in the state and renowned speciality hospitals in the public and private sector outside the state like Tata Memorial, AIMS, CMC Nellore will be available to all those who reside in the state for last five years. The medical insurance cover will of Rs 2.5 lakh for a family of 3 members and Rs 4 lakh to the family of 4 or more persons annually. However, all Government employees will be excluded in the scheme as they are covered by the respective governments.

Mr Parsekar said that out of a total procedures of about 950 ailments 447 will be listed for Insurance and of them 226 ailments will be looked after by the state run hospitals. The government hospitals will continue to serve people for the remaining 500 other ailments free of charge and the health insurance scheme will be later negotiated with the neighbouring states also.

619. Sarnath in Varanasi to hold Buddha Mahotsava on Vesak

At Sarnath, near Varanasi, Buddha Purnima is going to be celebrated as Buddha Mahotsava that will attract followers of Buddhism from India and abroad. The festival at Sarnath is of great significance since Gautama Buddha gave his first sermon there and taught the Dharma that led to formation of the Buddhist Sangha. On the evening of Buddha Purnima, decoration of the whole area at Sarnath with the lighted earthen lamps will take place as a spectacular sight. Lord Buddha had urged his followers saying 'Appo Deppo Bhava - Be your own lamp'. He had been of the view that seekers had to take up self-responsibility for their own enlightenment. It is believed that Buddha went from Bodhgaya to Sarnath about five weeks after his enlightenment under Bodhi tree. The sermon Lord Buddha gave to the five monks is called the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta. Over the years, Sarnath has been developed as a place of Buddhist pilgrimage. Here, the festival of Buddha Purnima celebrates the birth enlightenment and death of Gautam Buddha in 563 BC as a spiritual teacher and the founder of Buddhism. In Sarnath, the festival will be observed by lighting oil lamps before the image of the Buddha, by reciting prayers or reading from the Buddhist scriptures and worshipping the statue of Buddha. Meditation and offerings of flowers, silk scarves, incense and fruit will also be part of the worship rituals. The Buddhist sermons and reading of the scriptures will be the other activities carried out by the devotees at Sarnath. They will offer fruits, flowers, candles, etc in front of the statues of the Lord Buddha according to their beliefs and customs.

620. Today in History - May 21

0996 - Sixteen year old Otto III was crowned the Roman Emperor.

1471 - King Henry VI was killed in the tower of London. Edward IV took the throne.

1536 - The Reformation was officially adopted in Geneva, Switzerland.

1542 - Hernando de Soto died along the Mississippi River while searching for gold.

1602 - Martha's Vineyard was first sighted by Captain Bartholomew Gosnold.

1688 - The English poet Alexander Pope was born.

1790 - Paris was divided into 48 zones.

1819 - Bicycles were first seen in the [U.S.](#) in New York City. They were originally known as "swift walkers."

1832 - In the [U.S.](#), the Democratic Party held its first national convention.

1840 - New Zealand was declared a British colony.

1856 - Lawrence, Kansas was captured by pro-slavery forces.

1863 - The siege of the Confederate Port Hudson, LA, began.

1881 - The American branch of the Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton.

1881 - The United States Lawn Tennis Association was formed in New York City.

1891 - Peter Jackson and Jim Corbett fought for 61 rounds only to end in a draw.

1904 - Fdration Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) was founded.

1906 - Louis H. Perlman received his patent for the demountable tire-carrying rim.

1922 - The cartoon, "On the Road to Moscow," by Rollin Kirby won a Pulitzer Prize. It was the first cartoon awarded the Pulitzer.

1924 - Fourteen-year-old Bobby Franks was murdered in a "thrill killing" committed by Nathan Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb. The killers were students at the University of Chicago.

1927 - Charles A. Lindberg completed the first solo nonstop airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean. The trip began May 20.

1929 - The first automatic electric stock quotation board was used by Sutro and Company of New York City.

1929 - William Henry Storey registered the trademark for the board game [Sorry!](#) in the U.K. (U.K. number 502898)

1934 - Oskaloosa, IA, became the first city in the [U.S.](#) to fingerprint all of its citizens.

1947 - Joe DiMaggio and five of his New York Yankee teammates were fined \$100 because they had not fulfilled contract requirements to do promotional duties for the team.

1956 - The [U.S.](#) exploded the first airborne hydrogen bomb in the Pacific Ocean over Bikini Atoll.

1961 - Governor Patterson declared martial law in Montgomery, [AL](#).

1968 - The nuclear-powered [U.S.](#) submarine Scorpion, with 99 men aboard, was last heard from. The remains of the sub were later found on the ocean floor 400 miles southwest of the Azores.

1970 - The National Guard was mobilized to quell disturbances at Ohio State University.

1980 - The movie "The Empire Strikes Back" was released.

1982 - The British landed in the Falkland Islands and fighting began.

1991 - In Madras, India, the former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi was killed by a bouquet of flowers that contained a bomb.

1998 - An expelled student, Kipland Kinkel, in Springfield, [OR](#), killed 2 people and wounded 25 others with a semi-automatic rifle. Police also discovered that the boy had killed his parents before the rampage.

1998 - Microsoft and Sega announced that they are collaborating on a home video game system.

1998 - In Miami, [FL](#), five abortion clinics were hit by an butyric acid-attacker.

621. Anti Terrorism Day

Martyrdom of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, also known as Anti Terrorism Day is observed across India on 21 May. The date so chosen is to commemorate the death anniversary of one of the most eminent Prime Ministers of India, Shri Rajiv Gandhi (20 August 1944–21 May 1991). He had been victimized of this menace and to honor and respect his contributions, the day is celebrated on annual basis. This day is also observed to make people aware of the ongoing terrorist activities and the precautions to be taken by the commoners to prevent these acts of terrorism. Promoting unity, peace and harmony across the nation has been one of the major motives behind celebrating this day. Every year, a two minutes silence is observed in whole India to mourn for the loss of Shri Rajiv Gandhi and many other innocent people who have been victimized by the terrorism. Anti Terrorism or Anti Violence Pledge is taken in all the government offices and public sector undertakings which is as follows: We, the people of India, having abiding faith in our country's tradition of non-violence and tolerance, hereby solemnly affirm to oppose with our strength, all forms of terrorism and violence. We pledge to uphold and promote peace, social harmony, and understand among all fellow human beings and fight the forces of disruption threatening human lives and values. Several other activities take place on the Anti-Terrorism Day, including seminars promoting anti-terrorism, floral wreath is laid on the Rajiv Gandhi statue, anti integrity oath is taken and marches are carried out by the Congressmen all across the nation. The main aim of this Day is to reduce the terrorism to the maximum possible extent.

Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv Ratna Gandhi (20 August 1944–21 May 1991) was the sixth Prime Minister of India, serving from 1984 to 1989. He took office after the 1984 assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, his mother, to become the youngest Indian premier.

He increased government support for science and technology and associated industries, and reduced import quotas, taxes and tariffs on technology-based industries, especially computers, airlines, defence and telecommunications. In 1986, he announced a National Policy on Education to modernise and expand higher education programs across India. He founded the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya System in 1986 which is a Central government based institution that concentrates on the upliftment of the rural section of the society providing them free residential education from 6th till 12 grade.

He improved bilateral relations with the United States long strained owing to Indira's socialism and friendship with the USSR and expanded economic and scientific cooperation.

Rajiv authorised an extensive police and army campaign to contain terrorism in Punjab. A state of martial law existed in the Punjab state, and civil liberties, commerce and tourism were greatly disrupted. There are many accusations of human rights violations by police officials as well as by the militants during this period. It is alleged that even as the situation in Punjab came under control, the Indian government was offering arms and training to the LTTE rebels fighting the government of Sri Lanka.

622. India lauded for Red Line Campaign on antibiotics

India's idea of putting a red line on antibiotic packages to curb their over-the-counter sale is now being cited as a model that can be used globally to counter the rising threat of superbugs. In its final report on tackling drug resistant infection released on May 19, the global Review on Antimicrobial Resistance commissioned by UK Prime Minister David Cameron in 2014 and chaired by economist Jim O'Neill says India has led the way so far with its idea of a Red Line Campaign for antibiotics packaging, launched earlier this year and should be considered as a starting point. It recommends that the labelling and symbols used can be improved if needed and then expanded globally. Common labelling standards of this type could become a condition of sale of antibiotics around the world, the report notes, while stressing that convincing people to stop using antibiotics would not be effective unless they recognise antibiotics. Labelling of antimicrobials, especially antibiotics, is crucial. We call on governments and international health organisations to agree on global labelling standards, it adds. Launched in February India's Red Line campaign, launched in February this year, began marking prescription-only antibiotics with a red line to curb their irrational use and create awareness on the dangers of taking antibiotics without being prescribed. The report says laws prevent sale of antibiotics and other antimicrobials over-the-counter, but these may be weakly enforced in some countries and non-existent in many. It says 20-30 per cent of antibiotics are consumed without prescription in south and east Europe, and up to 100 per cent in parts of Africa. It is still early in India to map the impact of the Red Line initiative, but experts see better awareness. The government has backed it up with a communication campaign that says a Red Line medicine should not be taken without prescription, Dr. Kamini Walia, who heads the Indian Council of Medical Research's (ICMR) antibiotic stewardship programme and antimicrobials, said. She added the campaign must continue and have hard-hitting messages

like those used for tobacco, and side-effects of over-prescribing should also be highlighted.

623. **Indian-American, Pakistani-American honoured by Obama**

U.S. President Barack Obama has felicitated an Indian-American scientist and a Pakistani-American doctor with the nations top honours on the field of science, technology and innovation respectively. 65-year-old Rakesh K Jain of Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital was presented with the National Medal of Science for his role in developing novel strategies for manipulating tumours and translating those strategies into improved cancer detection, prevention, and treatment in humans. 53-year-old Humayun, who is a grandson of personal physician of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, received the National Medal of Technology and Innovation for invention, development, and application of bioelectronics in medicine, including a retinal prosthesis for restoring vision to the blind, thereby significantly improving patients quality of life. Mr. Humayuns family migrated from Jalandhar to Pakistan after partition. His grandfather Colonel Ilahi Bakhsh was the personal physician of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. Humayuns family moved to the U.S. in 1972 when he was nine years old. Co-inventor of Argus Series retina implants that are intended to restore sight to the blind, Mr. Humayun is the only ophthalmologist ever to be elected a member of both US National Academies of Medicine and Engineering. At a White House function, Mr. Obama said that Mr. Humayuns invention was inspired by the illness of his grandmother. When his diabetic grandmother lost her vision, he began studying to become an ophthalmologist, hoping he could save the sight of others. Mark helped create the Argus II, a bionic eye that has restored vision to patients whove been blind for up to 50 years, Mr. Obama said.

624. **Turkey names new Prime Minister Binali Yildirim as President Recep Erdogan seeks to tighten grip**

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) appointed Transport Minister Binali Yildirim as its chairman, meaning he will automatically become the Prime Minister. Mr Yildirim is poised to replace Ahmet Davutoglu, who [stepped down after a power struggle](#) with Mr Erdogan. "We will work in total harmony with all our party comrades at all levels, beginning with our founding president and leader," Mr Yildirim said, referring to Mr Erdogan, after being named party head. Mr Yildirim, 60, has been seen as one of Mr Erdogan's closest longtime confidants and has served an almost unbroken stint from 2002 to 2013 as transport minister and then again from 2015.

625. **Superjet Technology Nears Reality After Australia Test**

A two-hour flight from Sydney to London is a step closer to reality after the latest successful test Wednesday of hypersonic technology in the Australian desert.

A joint US-Australian military research team is running a series of 10 trials at the world's largest land testing range, Woomera in South Australia, and at Norway's Andoya Rocket Range.

"It is a game-changing technology... and could revolutionise global air travel, providing cost-effective access to space," Australia's chief scientist Alex Zelinsky said in a statement.

Scientists have said hypersonic technology could cut travelling time from Sydney to London to as little as two hours for the 17,000-kilometre (19,540-mile) flight. Hypersonic flight involves travelling at more than five times the speed of sound (Mach 5).

Scientists involved in the programme -- called Hypersonic International Flight Research Experimentation (HIFiRE) -- are developing an engine that can fly at Mach 7, Michael Smart of the University of Queensland told AFP.

"It's an exciting time... we want to be able to fly with a hypersonic engine at Mach 7," said Smart, a hypersonics expert involved in the programme which also includes US aerospace giant Boeing and German space agency DLR.

He added that the scramjet was a supersonic combustion engine that uses oxygen from the atmosphere for fuel, making it lighter and faster than fuel-carrying rockets.

"The practical application of that is you could fly long distances over the Earth very, very quickly but also that it's very useful as an alternative to a rocket for putting satellites into space," Smart said.

The experimental rocket in the trial on Wednesday reached an altitude of 278 kilometres and a target speed of Mach 7.5, Australia's defence department said.

Each test builds on previous ones, with the latest used to measure heat on the outside of a vehicle in hypersonic flight, Smart said.

The next test, scheduled for 2017, would involve the scramjet engine separating from the rocket booster and flying on its own, he added.

The first test was conducted in 2009 with the project expected to be completed in 2018.

626. Six central universities likely to start department of yoga

Six central universities, one each in the north, south, east, west, central and northeast are likely to start department of yoga from the forthcoming academic session.

According to a report submitted by a HRD appointed panel on setting up yoga departments in universities, the government should in the first phase begin from six varsities.

These are Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University in Uttarakhand, Visva Bharati in Shantiniketan, Central University of Kerala, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University in Amarkantak, Manipur University in Imphal and, either the Central University of Rajasthan in Ajmer or Central University of Gujarat in Gandhinagar.

The panel, headed by H R Nagendra had recommended six kind of courses ranging from certificate courses to Bachelor's, Masters and PhDs.

627. Buddha Purnima being celebrated

Buddha Purnima is being celebrated today. It was on this day that Gautam Buddha was born, achieved enlightenment and died.

Central government is organising a grand event at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium in the national capital to mark the occasion.

The function will be attended by cabinet ministers, including Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Tourism, Culture and Civil Aviation, Mahesh Sharma and Minister of State for Human Resource Development Upendra Kushwaha.

President, Vice President and Prime Minister have greeted the people on the occasion.

628. UN appoints Mary Robinson, Macharia Kamau as special envoys for El Nino, climate

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has appointed former Irish President Mary Robinson and Kenyan diplomat Macharia Kamau as special envoys for El Nino and climate.

The El Nino weather phenomenon, which occurs every two to seven years, affects rainfall patterns and causes both drought and flooding.

The UN said in a statement that the phenomenon has created massive needs in various places of the world, particularly in eastern Africa, southern Africa, Central America and the Pacific.

Ms. Robinson had previously worked as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and as Ban's special envoy for climate change.

Mr. Kamau is Kenya's ambassador to the United Nations and former president of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Board.

He was co-chair of the UN General Assembly working group on sustainable development goals.

629. Hubble takes image of Mars making close approach to Earth

Earth and Mars get closest to each other than at any other time in the previous ten years during May this year.

The NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope had a new image of the red neighbour, showing some of its famous surface features.

This image supplements previous Hubble observations of Mars and allows astronomers to study large-scale changes on its surface.

On May 22, Mars will come into opposition, the point at which the planet is located directly opposite the Sun in the sky.

This means that the Sun, Earth and Mars line up, with Earth sitting in between the Sun and Mars.

630. Emmy award winning actor Alan Young dies aged 96

Emmy award-winning English-born actor Alan Young, who rode to enduring TV fame alongside a talking horse on the popular 1960s sitcom "Mister Ed" and co-starred in the classic sci-fi film "The Time Machine," has died at age 96.

Young, who also provided the voice of cartoon characters including Disney's Scrooge McDuck, died from natural causes at the Motion Picture Television Country House and Hospital, Los Angeles.

631. G-7 pledges to clamp down on financial support for terrorist network

The G7 today pledged to clamp down on financial support for terrorist networks, with a plan to step up intelligence-sharing, freeze assets and tighten reporting rules on international transfers.

After two days of talks in northern Japan, they said, countering violent extremism and bringing perpetrators to justice remain top priorities for the whole international community.

An action plan said, the G7 is committed to work together to strengthen the global fight against terrorist financing. The action plan will be adopted by the G-7 leaders who will meet in Japan next week .

French Finance Minister Michel Sapin, whose country suffered devastating attacks in January and November last year, said the Group of Seven was now in the operational phase of its efforts. He said, another key tool is to counter the cover provided by prepaid but anonymous phone cards, movements of cash that allow anonymous access to finances.

The G7 action plan identified targeted financial sanctions as critical to hindering terrorist support networks. It also said it would provide continued strong leadership to the Financial Action Task Force, which sets international standards to combat money laundering and terrorism finance.

The G7 consists of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

632. Sukanya Samridhi Scheme becomes popular in Tamil Nadu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Sukanya Samridhi Scheme for the benefit of girl child on January 22 last year.

This scheme has become quite popular in Tamil Nadu and till now, 14 lakh accounts have been started according to Chennai region Post master General Mervin Alexander.

AIR correspondent reports, Sukanya Samridhi Selva Makal Semippu thittam has caught the imagination of people in Tamil Nadu where a lady Chief Minister is going to be sworn in again.

The scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has indeed given a financial security and self-respect to the girl

child.

The rate of interest for this fiscal is 8.6 per cent. The minimum deposit of Rs 1000 and maximum deposit of Rs one and a half lakh in a fiscal makes it affordable to all sections of society.

The savings attain maturity when the girl child reaches 21 years of age.

There is also an option of withdrawing 50 per cent of the deposit when the girl attains the age of 18.

In the Tiruchirapalli central postal region more than three lakh 26,634 Sukanya samridhi accounts have been started with deposits worth Rs 189 crore 62 lakh 21 thousand 800 has been collected .

Mahalakshmi a young mother fighting her way forward in life says that Selva Makal scheme is attractive but interest rates should not be reduced.

It is said that we can save even small amounts of Rs 100 or Rs 200 daily which is affordable for us.

The interest rates should not be reduced for this scheme to make it more attractive) Sahaya Rani a government employee and mother of two children, says that the Selva Makal scheme is a very attractive scheme for girl child by the central government.

The Sukanya Samridhi scheme has now a premature closure option on extreme compassionate grounds medical support for life-threatening disease or death of guardian. The scheme has indeed secured the future of girl child in the country by ensuring financial security.

633. Government to auction 2,000 megahertz of spectrum

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that the government will auction 2,000 megahertz of spectrum in the next 2 to 3 months. Speaking at an ASSOCHAM event in New Delhi yesterday evening, he said the government will go for one of the highest ever auction of 2,000 megahertz so that industry players have ample spectrum available.

Mr Prasad said, at base price recommended by Trai, the auction has potential to fetch bids worth 5.36 lakh crore rupees.

The auction conducted in 2015 fetched bids worth 1.1 lakh crore rupees the highest ever received in any spectrum auction held in India.

634. SEBI tightens P-Note norms to check money laundering

Market regulator SEBI has made it mandatory for Participatory note (P note) users to follow Indian anti-money laundering law and report any suspicious transactions immediately. Acting upon recommendations of the Supreme Court- appointed SIT on black money, Sebi also tightened the due-diligence requirements for issuance and transfer of these instruments and put the onus on the original issuer for compliance to Anti-Money Laundering Regulations.

The issuers would have to conduct periodic review and report the complete transfer trail of P-Notes to Sebi on a monthly basis in addition to the present requirement of reporting details of their holders. P-Notes are typically instruments issued by registered foreign institutional investors to overseas investors, who wish to invest in Indian markets without registering themselves directly in India to save on time. But, they still need to go through a proper due diligence process.

635. Brother of Brussels bomber wins European Taekwondo title

Belgian Mourad Laachraoui, the younger brother of one of the Brussels airport bombers, has won gold in the European Taekwondo Championships. He will compete in this summer's Rio Olympics. Mourad Laachraoui, brother of Najim Laachraoui, beat Spaniard Jesus Tortosa 6-3 in the -54kg final in Montreux, Switzerland last night. A silver medallist at the Summer Universiades in 2015, the 21-year-old has qualified for the Rio Games in August.

Najim Laachraoui, 24, was one of the two suicide bombers who struck Brussels airport on March 22, while a third attacker blew himself up at on a metro train, with the two attacks killing 32 people. Two days after the Brussels attacks, Mourad Laachraoui said he had been "devastated" by what had happened. He said he not had contact with his older brother since the latter left for Syria in February 2013.

636. PM Ujjwala Yojana Eligible BPL List Doesn't Contain Actual BPL Households

Recently launched [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana](#) is receiving good response from the BPL community across the country. The scheme for distribution of free LPG connections to women from BPL households was started on 1st May. The scheme is for the BPL households, however there are people from BPL households saying that their name is not in the list provided by the ministry. Many people are also complaining that the eligible BPL list contains the name of people who no longer belongs to BPL or are earning enough to afford a LPG connection on their own. For example, MADAN MOHAN UPADHYAY from Maharajganj said I have BPL card but there is no name in list which is provided to gram pradhan of mundera Kala, post bauliya raja, distribution Maharajganj. So pradhan said that he cant do anything for it. Please tell me what to do to get advantage of this yojana. Several other citizens are also complaining such things that their name is not in the BPL list despite of owing the BPL Ration Card. The one reason that we understand could be the old data. The Oil Marketing Companies are using SECC 2011 (Socio Economic Caste Census) data which is about 5 years old and may not contain the name of BPL households formed in between. Many people are also saying that the distributors are asking for money for issuing LPG connection under the Ujjwala Yojana. Arun Kumar from district Kadipur said that Sir, mai ye kahna chahta hu ki hamare tehsil-kadipur me dalal 500-500 rupay sab SE le rahe hai, sir Zara in baton par dyan dain. However, many are praising a lot our Prime Minister Narendra Modi for launching Ujjwala Yojana for the poor in India.

637. Atal Adarsh Gram Vikas Yojana in Goa to be Revived

The derailed Atal Adarsh Gram Vikas Yojana is all set to be back on track soon as per the announcement made by the Chief minister Laxmikant Parsekar. Under the scheme Netravali village in remote Sanguem was selected to be developed into a model village. The chief minister was inaugurating the Netravali Mahotsav recently when he made announcement for successful implementation of the Atal Adarsh Gram Vikas Yojana. After successful completion of the project in Netravali village, the scheme will be implemented in other villages by turn. The scheme execution was neglected leading to its derailment but CM assured that the scheme will soon be revived. The state government will now take on board all villagers and stakeholders to ensure that the project achieves the desired level of success. Several other ministers were also present at the event. At the concluding ceremony of the 3-day festival, South Goa MP Narendra Sawaikar, urged the villagers to cooperate with the authorities in making Netravali a model village. Netravali village was selected by the government for developing it into a model self-sufficient village with a focus on community participation under the central governments Atal Adarsh Gram Yojana. Launched with much fanfare in 2013 and touted as the pet project of then chief minister Manohar Parrikar, it got grounded after facing some teething problems.

638. Namotel Achhe Din - Online Booking Starts for Rs. 99 Smartphone

Namotel Achhe Din claimed to be the cheapest smartphone has started online bookings. The smartphone will be available for just Rs. 99, as claimed by the promoters. The online bookings for the Namotel smartphone will remain open between May 17th to 25th May, 2016. The phone is actually priced at 2999 which has been reduced to just Rs. 99. The smartphone will be available on Cash on Delivery Basis. Delivery charges would be extra. However, companys website namotel.in is not working, may be due to the traffic overload. The companys website says Pictures shown in the website is for illustration purposes only, casting some doubt on the credibility of the company and product. Promoter Madhava Reddy displayed the Worlds cheapest smart phone Namotel Acche Din priced at Rs 99, during a press conference in Bengaluru on Tuesday. The phone will be available in 3 different looks and shapes. Reddy claimed that Namotel is the worlds cheapest phone with 4 inch display and it runs on Android 5.1 Lollipop and is powered by 1.3GHz quadcore processor along with 1 GB RAM.

639. Foodgrain Under Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) may Soon be Available for Free

The central government may soon launch a new scheme under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) where free foodgrain would be provided to as many as 2.5 crore poorest of the poor households. At present, Central Government is providing 35 kg foodgrain per household per month to AAY families and others covered under the National food security Act get 5 kg foodgrain per person per head at the rate of Rs 3, Rs 2 and Rs 1 per kg for rice, wheat and coarse

grain, respectively. Name of the new scheme however is not finalized yet, the free foodgrain to AAY family will strengthen the pro-poor image of the government. Recently, food minister Ram Vilas Paswan said in Parliament state governments of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have contributed nothing to implement the National Food Security Act and yet try to claim credit for the scheme. The government is spending heavily on subsidising not only procurement and storage of foodgrain but also on the transportation of foodgrain to the states as per requirement, Paswan said. Under the Targeted Public Distribution System, AAY was introduced in 2000 by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government. In the Budget, Rs 1.34 lakh crore had been allocated for FY17 while as per revised estimate for the last fiscal, the government had incurred a food subsidy of Rs 1.39 lakh crore.

640. India appreciates Trudeau's apology on Komagata Maru incident

India today "deeply appreciated" Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's formal apology in the House of Commons for the Komagata Maru incident, saying it reflects Canada's commitment to the values of pluralism which India fully shares.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson said, "We welcome and deeply appreciate the gesture of Prime Minister of Canada to deliver a formal apology in the House of Commons for the Komagata Maru incident."

The Indian diaspora in Canada has contributed immensely to Canada's growth and development and acts as a bond between our two nations, the Spokesperson said.

"Prime Minister Trudeau's gesture constitutes an acknowledgement of the positive role of the Indian diaspora. It also reflects Canada's commitment to the values of pluralism and multiculturalism, which India fully shares," he added.

On May 23, 1914, a Japanese steamship, Komagata Maru, carrying 376 passengers - majority of whom were of Sikh, Muslim and Hindu origin- was denied entry into Canada after an immigration dispute, only for some to be killed in protests on their return to India.

Earlier this week, the Canadian Prime Minister delivered a formal statement of apology in the House of Commons and said, "More than a century ago a great injustice took place."

641. Odisha to implement Odia in official transaction: Naveen Patnaik

Claiming to have effectively addressed some of the key promises made to the people, Odisha government on Saturday said it will implement Odia language in transaction of official business for which rules are in advanced stage of formulation. My government is committed to promote Odia language and the rich cultural heritage of Odisha, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said in his address to the Council of Ministers on completion of two years of his government in 4th term. Stating that Odisha Official Languages Rules are in advanced stage of formulation for better implementation of Odia in transaction of official business, Patnaik said Odisha Official Languages Act, 1954, is being suitably amended for the purpose. I am hopeful that by August 15 this shall be implemented, Patnaik said. The chief minister also announced that University of Odia Language and Literature would be established with an aim of teaching and research in Odia language and literature at post graduate, doctoral and post doctoral levels. Odia Virtual Academy which has been announced in this years budget will soon be a reality, he said, adding as a first step, a five-member advisory committee has been formed. Through this academy rich literary corpus of Odia language would be digitised and made available through web portal.

642. International Day for Biological Diversity 22 May

2016 Theme: Mainstreaming Biodiversity; Sustaining People and their Livelihoods Biodiversity is the foundation for life and for the essential services provided by ecosystems. It therefore underpins peoples livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity, including economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism, among others. By halting biodiversity loss, we are investing in people, their lives and their well-being. The thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 13) to be held in Cancun, Mexico from 4 to 17 December 2016 will focus on the mainstreaming of biodiversity within and across sectors, which is closely linked to this years IDB theme. The United Nations General Assembly, by its [resolution 55/201](#) of 20 December 2000, proclaimed 22 May as The International Day for Biological Diversity, to increase understanding and awareness of

biodiversity issues. The date designated for the day was chosen to commemorate the adoption of the text of the Convention on 22 May 1992 by the Nairobi Final Act of the Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The day was first created by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly in late 1993, and the UN General Assembly, by its [resolution 49/119](#) of 19 December 1994, designated December 29th (the date of entry into force of the Convention on Biological Diversity) the International Day for Biological Diversity. However, it was difficult for many countries to plan and carry out suitable celebrations for the date of 29 December, given the number of holidays that coincide around that time of year.

643. **Today in History**

- 1246 - Henry Raspe was elected anti-king by the Rhenish prelates in France.
- 1455 - King Henry VI was taken prisoner by the Yorkists at the Battle of St. Albans, during the War of the Roses.
- 1570 - Abraham Ortelius published the first modern atlas in Belgium.
- 1761 - In Philadelphia, the first life insurance policy was issued in the [U.S.](#)
- 1819 - The steamship Savannah became the first to cross the Atlantic Ocean.
- 1841 - Henry Kennedy received a patent for the first reclining chair.
- 1849 - [Abraham Lincoln](#) received a patent for the floating dry dock.
- 1859 - The creator of "Sherlock Holmes," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was born.
- 1868 - Near Marshfield, IN, The "Great Train Robbery" took place. The robbery was worth \$96,000 in cash, gold and bonds to the seven members of the Reno gang.
- 1872 - The Amnesty Act restored civil rights to Southerners.
- 1882 - The [U.S.](#) formally recognized Korea.
- 1891 - The first public motion picture was given in Thomas Edison's lab.
- 1892 - Dr. Washington Sheffield invented the toothpaste tube.
- 1900 - The Associated Press was incorporated as a non-profit news cooperative in New York.
- 1900 - A. DeVilbiss, Jr. patented his pendulum-type computing scale.
- 1900 - Edwin S. Votey received a patent for the pianola (a pneumatic piano player). It could be attached to any piano.
- 1906 - The Wright brothers received a patent their flying machine.
- 1939 - Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini signed a military alliance between Germany and Italy known as the "Pact of Steel."
- 1947 - The Truman Doctrine was enacted by the U.S. Congress to appropriate military and economic aid Turkey and Greece.
- 1955 - A scheduled dance to be headlined by Fats Domino was canceled by police in Bridgeport, Connecticut because "rock and roll dances might be featured."

1955 - Jack Benny did his last live network radio broadcast after a run of 23 years. He devoted his time fully to TV.

1967 - "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" premiered on PBS.

1967 - The final "To Tell the Truth" program was seen on CBS-TV.

1969 - A lunar module of Apollo 10 flew within nine miles of the moon's surface. The event was a rehearsal for the first lunar landing.

1972 - [U.S. President Nixon](#) became the first [U.S.](#) president to visit Russia. He met with Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev.

1972 - The island Ceylon adopted a new constitution and became the republic of Sri Lanka.

1977 - Janet Guthrie set the fastest time of the second weekend of qualifying, becoming the first woman to earn a starting spot in the Indianapolis 500 since its inception in 1911.

1985 - Pete Rose passed Hank Aaron as National League run scoring leader with 2,108.

1986 - Sylvester Stallone agreed to a 10-picture, six-year deal with United Artists. He signed for a reported \$15 million for each film.

1990 - In the Middle East, North and South Yemen merged to become a single state known as the Republic of Yemen.

1990 - Microsoft released Windows 3.0.

1992 - Johnny Carson hosted NBC's "Tonight Show" for the last time. He had been host for 30 years.

1997 - Kelly Flinn, the [U.S.](#) Air Force's first female bomber pilot certified for combat, accepted a general discharge. She thereby avoided court-martial on charges of adultery, lying and disobeying an order.

1998 - Bolivia was hit with a series of powerful earthquakes. At least 18 were killed. The quakes ranged in magnitude from 5.9 to 6.8.

1998 - New information came to light about the June 1996 bombing that killed 19 American airmen. The information indicated that Saudi citizens had been responsible and not Iranians as once believed.

1998 - A federal judge said that Secret Service agents could be compelled to testify before a grand jury in Monica Lewinsky investigation concerning [U.S. President Clinton](#).

1998 - Voters in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland turned out to cast ballots giving approval to a Northern Ireland peace accord.

2002 - Chandra Levy's remains were found in Washington, DC's Rock Creek Park. She was last seen on April 30, 2001. California Congressman Gary Condit was questioned in the case due to his relationship with Levy.

2002 - In Birmingham, AL, a jury convicted former Ku Klux Klansman Bobby Frank Cherry of murder in the 1963 church bombing that killed four girls.

2002 - Barry Bonds (San Francisco Giants) hit his 583rd career home run. He tied Mark McGwire for fifth on the all-time list.

2003 - At the Colonial in Fort Worth, TX, Annika Sorenstam became the first woman to play on the PGA tour in 58 years. She ended the day at 1-over par.

2012 - In Japan, the Tokyo Skytree tower opened.

644. What is White Revolution or Operation Flood?

Amul- the Anand based milk brand has already become an iconic brand in South Asia today; in a market dominated by food MNCs. It is managed by Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF). The GCMMF is owned by 3.1 mn dairy farmers of Gujarat. Amul has a scintillating story- that tells the history of milk or white revolution in India. It started when Dr. Verghese Kurien, a technologist landed in Anand in 1949. He launched the GCMMF and given brand value to Amul (Anand Milk Union Limited) with the help of several other local leaders and thousands of dairy farmers. GCMMF and Amul were beginning points of today's milk revolution as former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri encouraged Dr Kurien to launch Operation Flood a nationwide programme to raise milk production. Dr Kurien became the Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and Operation Flood was officially launched in 1970. The programme was supported by European Economic Community and the World Bank. Operation Flood had followed the Anand model where the rural farmers cooperatives were organized at the village level and connected to the urban consumers in the form of a Milk Grid. The backbone of the programme were the dairy farmers who organized in the form of milk cooperative societies. It ensured that the producer gets a major share of the price consumers pay, by eliminating intermediaries. The operation flood has produced amazing results in India's development history. First was the energy, inventiveness and momentum it created in India's agriculture sector. At the beginning of Operation Flood, India was a net importer of milk products. The programme has transformed India as the largest producer of milk and a net exporter within few decades with a total production of 138 million tonnes in 2013-14. Per capita availability of milk increased from 130 gm/day in 1950-51 to 300gm/day in 2013-14. India became the leading milk producing country with 17% of the global production. The World Bank has hailed operation flood as one of the biggest successful rural development programmes it supported. Secondly, Dr Kurien has developed cooperative movement a tool for rural development. He is regarded as one of the greatest proponents of the cooperative movement in the world. Operation Flood is considered as one of the world's largest rural development programmes. Amul is the story of the first community owned enterprise in the country. Thirdly, Dr Kurien, though did not drink milk, became known as the Father of White Revolution and he has shown the miraculous quality of social entrepreneurship to bring up the wellbeing of rural people. Dr Kurien created a model for future generation social entrepreneurs.

645. RGI releases Census 2011 data on Households by religion, Sex of head of household and household size.

The Indian Census is the most credible source of information on Demography (Population characteristics), Economic Activity, Literacy and Education, Housing Household Amenities, Urbanisation, Fertility and Mortality, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Language, Religion, Migration, Disability and many other socio-cultural and demographic data since 1872. Census 2011 will be the 15th National Census of the Country. This is the only source of primary data in the village, town and ward level. It provides valuable information for planning and formulation policies for Central and the State Governments and is widely used by National and International Agencies, Scholars, business people, industrialists, and many more. The Delimitation/reservation of Constituencies- Parliamentary/Assembly/Panchayats and other Local Bodies is also done on the basis of the demographic data thrown up by the Census. Census is the basis for reviewing the country's progress in the past decade, monitoring the on going Schemes of the Government and most importantly, plan for the future. That is why the Slogan is " Our Census - Our Future". Table HH-7 on Households by religion, sex of head of household and household size reveals the percentage of households to total households in main six religious communities as follows:-

Religious Communities	Total no. of households (in million)	Percentage to Total households
Hindu	202.4	81.3
Muslim	31.2	12.5
Christian	6.3	2.5
Sikh	4.1	1.7
Buddhist	1.9	0.7
Jain	0.9	0.4

The highest percentage of female headed households is noticed in Christian Community (17.4%) followed by Buddhist (15.9%). The lowest percentage of female headed households is in Jain community (11.5%).

646. GOVERNMENT SETS UP PANEL TO RELOOK DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

The NDA government has appointed a committee of experts to recommend measures to enhance the combat capabilities of the over 13-lakh strong armed forces and "Re-balance" the overall defence expenditure in view of the escalating salary and pension bills. The 11-member committee led by Lt Gen D B Shekatkar (retd), which includes several other top military officers as well as civilian experts, has been given three months to chalk out an action plan. "The overall aim is to ensure India's combat capabilities and potential are enhanced, with a better teeth-to-tail combat ratio, within budgetary constraints. The committee will hold its first meeting with defence minister Manohar Parrikar

once he returns from his May 20-23 trip to Oman and UAE," said a source. This comes a year after Parrikar first underlined the need to slash the non-operational "flab" of the Army, Navy and IAF after a detailed review to ensure leaner, meaner and cost-effective fighting forces, as was then reported by TOI. Parrikar feels there is no option but to "downsize in areas which are not of operational importance", both in terms of manpower and infrastructure, due to budgetary limitations. PM Narendra Modi, too, has told top military commanders that instead of constantly trying to expand the size of their forces, they should focus on forces that are "agile, mobile and driven by technology". While Parrikar stresses there will be no cuts in combat forces, he has repeatedly attacked the previous UPA regime for the "arbitrary way" in which it approved the raising of the Army's new 17 Mountain Strike Corps without any budgetary planning. As reported by TOI earlier, the Army is being forced to dip into its critical war wastage reserves to raise the 17 Corps with 90,274 additional soldiers, which is meant for acquiring some land combat deterrence against China. As it is, the revenue component (day-to-day costs/salaries) in the defence budget by far outstrips the capital outlay every year, leaving very little for new modernisation projects for the armed forces. Interestingly, the 1.18-million strong Army has also ordered a study, headed by a senior Lt-General, to determine ways to optimise manpower. "The Army has followed a policy of 'save and raise' since the 1999 Kargil conflict to improve combat capabilities without manpower increases. With modernisation and induction of cutting-edge technologies, some more scope for manpower optimisation can be created," said an officer.

647. Union Health Minister J P Nadda Launches 'Kayakalp Fortnight'

Union Health Minister J P Nadda today launched 'Kayakalp Fortnight' to ensure upkeep of high level of cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene within and outside the premises of central government hospitals in the country.

"The 'Kayakalp Fortnight' will be observed throughout the country in various central government hospitals between May 20 and June 3 with a view to intensify the 'Kayakalp' initiatives under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan launched by Prime Minister," Mr Nadda said after the launch at AIIMS.

He said as part of the various activities to be taken up during the fortnight, senior ministry officers will inspect various central hospitals in the country to take stock of the existing status and to intensify the Swachhta drive. "The states have been requested to take up similar campaigns," Mr Nadda said.

During his visit, the minister reviewed the practices followed for maintaining cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene within and outside the premises of AIIMS and inspected various wards including the OTs, ICUs, emergency and private.

He held a meeting with the AIIMS Director, senior officers and doctors of various facilities/wards to get their inputs on the protocols being followed and also sought their suggestions.

The Health Ministry launched the Kayakalp initiative last year to set protocols for upkeep of hygiene and sanitation at government health facilities.

Committees and sub-committees are formed to periodically review and monitor the progress made in these areas.

648. After liquor, Bihar bans gutka and pan masala

After liquor, the Bihar government has cracked down on gutka and pan masala, banning the sale, distribution, storage and publicity of such tobacco products. The government issued an order on Friday, authorising officials to conduct raids and inspections and take action against those flouting the guidelines. The ban, which will remain effective for the next one year, on edible items having tobacco content, both packaged and unpackaged, aims at preventing the deterioration of public health, officials said. But, the order will hit the business interests of a large number of small businessmen and vendors. The Bihar government had banned sale and consumption of country and spiced liquor in rural areas from April 1 this year, but had allowed sale of Indian Made Foreign Liquor in towns and cities. The decision, announced by chief minister Nitish Kumar after a cabinet meeting, made it clear that no alcohol can be legally consumed in all of Bihar, including bars and restaurants. Alcohol prohibition in India is in force in the states of Gujarat, Nagaland and parts of Manipur; as well as in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep. Kerala has been implementing prohibition in a phased manner since 2014. Kumar has repeatedly talked about the positive social impact the ban would have, especially on women - his vote bank, to justify it.

649. First metro line to the sea opens in Los Angeles

The long-awaited first metro line linking [Los Angeles](#) to the sea opened amid much fanfare today, providing passengers a reprieve from the gridlock the city is famous for.

The USD 1.5 billion, 6.6-mile Expo Line extension from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica marks the return of commuter train service to the sea following a six-decade gap in rail operations.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti was among hundreds on hand for a ribbon-cutting ceremony in Santa Monica, arriving on the train platform with a surfboard.

Metro officials said the ride from downtown Los Angeles to Santa Monica will take about 50 minutes.

The new line marks the first time since the 1950s -- when the city's electric streetcars stopped operating -- that Santa Monica has been accessible by rail.

"We have a very dense population and this will help us traffic-wise," said Los Angeles resident Nanette Sanchez, who attended the inaugural ceremonies.

"Our freeways are just too packed and people are spending too much time in their cars."

Fellow resident Lori Sanchez said the line will offer a welcome reprieve from the city's gridlocked streets and highways, among the world's most congested.

"It's going to be very convenient and very cost efficient," she said. "And as far as the environment is concerned, it's going to be great for everyone to jump on the train and leave their car at home."

Garcetti has said he expects the line to be one of the metro system's most popular, far exceeding the expected passenger count of 30,000 a day.

"My prediction is it will go well over 50,000," he said earlier this month.

"We're running every 12 minutes to begin with, but if we need to run it every 10 minutes or every eight minutes, we can build that capacity as the ridership surges so that you're never going to be in a crowded car, but you'll be able to get in there and get where you need to go."

According to the data company Inrix, Los Angeles has the worst traffic in the country, with drivers wasting an average 81 hours idling in their cars in 2015.

650. First world conference on tourism for development held in Beijing

The First World Conference on Tourism for Development was held in Beijing, China from 18-21 May 2016 with a specific view to advancing the contribution of tourism to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The event was jointly organized by the Government of the Peoples Republic of China and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The conference, which coincided with the China Tourism Day, was addressed by the Head of Government of China and brought together leaders in the areas of tourism and development to spur dialogue and create a better understanding of tourism's contribution to development, including poverty alleviation and peace. On this occasion, China, as chair of the G20, also hosted the 7th G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting under the theme Sustainable Tourism An Effective Tool for Inclusive Development. Several heads of state and government as well as tourism ministers and senior officials from over 100 countries participated in this significant gathering of the international tourism community in 2016.

651. Mukesh Ambani awarded Othmer Gold Medal for Entrepreneurial Leadership

Mukesh Ambani, Chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited, was conferred the prestigious Othmer Gold Medal for his entrepreneurial leadership that has resulted in the expansion of India's petroleum refining industry, creation of the Jamnagar Refinery in Gujarat the largest grassroots petroleum refinery in the world, and

path-breaking initiatives in oil and gas exploration.

The award was handed over to Mr. Ambani on May 16, the Heritage Day of The Chemical Heritage Foundation (CHF), by Mr. Carsten Reinhardt, President CEO of CHF, and Mr. Raj Gupta, Chairman of Delphi Automotive (formerly Chairman, President CEO of Rohm and Hass).

Following the award ceremony at Philadelphia on Monday evening, Mr. Ambani was feted at a glittering dinner by Mr. Tom Ridge, Pennsylvania Governor and former Secretary of Homeland Security.

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Ambani dedicated the award to the indomitable spirit of his father, Dhirubhai Ambani, who went on to become a legend in his lifetime, and to each and every member of the great Reliance Family. It was Dhirubhai who encouraged Mr. Ambani to pursue chemical engineering at a time when Reliance only dealt in textiles.

Talking about the interests of the people of India and the US, Mr. Ambani said he was confident that the two pluralist societies will be at the heart of a new world of shared prosperity and peace. As I see the world in the 21st century, there will be two very fiercely fought wars one is a war for prosperity and a better life, and the other is a war for talent and security. We can win both these wars with a comprehensive India-US partnership.

652. Connecticut woman breaks record to climb Everest a 7th time

A convenience store worker from Connecticut scaled Mount Everest on Friday for a seventh time, breaking her own record as the most successful female climber of the world's highest peak, expedition organizers said. Lhakpa Sherpa was among 18 climbers who reached the peak on Friday morning from the northern side in Tibet, said Rajeeb Shrestha of the 7 Summits Adventure agency based in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu. She climbed Everest six times between 2000 and 2006 before moving to the United States where she is a permanent resident. Sherpa, 42, was born in Nepal and took up mountaineering as a profession like most members of her ethnic group in the region. Her brother Mingma Gelu has already climbed Everest eight times and sister Ming Kipa was once the youngest female Everest climber. She has a son and two daughters. Two Sherpa men have scaled Everest 21 times to hold the record for most climbs of Everest.

653. Ex-finance Secretary, Ratan P Watal, appointed as Niti Aayogs Principal Adviser

Former Finance Secretary, [Ratan P Watal](#) has been appointed as the Principle Adviser for social sector in Niti Aayog.

He has been appointed to the post for three years, an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training said.

The new appointment for Watal comes a fortnight after his two-month extended tenure ended in April. He was to retire in February. However, Watal later got a two-month extension as the Finance Secretary.

Watal, a retired IAS officer of [Andhra Pradesh](#) cadre, had been [Finance Secretary](#) between August last year and April this year.

654. China beats South Korea to win Uber Cup 2016 badminton final

" Top-seeded China beat South Korea 3-1 on Saturday to win the Uber Cup badminton final. Tang Yuanting and Chen Qingchen beat Chang Ye-na and Lee So-hee 21-14, 21-16 in doubles to give the hosts an insurmountable 3-1 lead. Saturday's final was the third time in the last four years the two countries have met in the final of the Uber Cup. Olympic champion Li Xuerui won her opening singles match before South Korea pulled even with a doubles win by Jang Kyung-eun and Shin Seung-chan. Wang Shixian restored China's lead with a 21-13, 21-12 win over Kim Hyo-min. Denmark will face Indonesia in the men's Thomas Cup final on Sunday.

655. Mary Kom, Sarita Devi fail to qualify for Rio

Fivetime world champion M C Mary Kom and Asian Games bronzemedallist L Sarita Devi failed to qualify for the Olympics after they went down in their respective second round bouts of the AIBA Womens World Boxing Championships here today. Mary Kom (51kg), who was a bronzemedallist at the 2012 London Olympics, lost 02 to Germanys Azize Nimani, while Sarita (60kg) was beaten 03 by Victoria Torres in the second round of an event from

where only the semifinalists in the three Olympic categories would make the cut for the upcoming Rio Games. The only Olympic hope left for India in the event is Pooja Rani (75kg), who is in the prequarterfinals after winning her opening bout yesterday.

656. Anurag Thakur unanimously elected BCCI president

Anurag Thakur was today unanimously elected BCCI President while Ajay Shirke was chosen as Secretary in the Board's Special General Meeting, SGM in Mumbai.

He replaced Shashank Manohar who stepped down from the position to take up the ICC chief's job. He will hold office till rest of the original term of Mr Manohar which started from 2014 and end in 2017.

Mr Thakur, who is a BJP MP in Lok Sabha, is the youngest BCCI chief. He had filed his nomination for the post after resigning as BCCI Secretary.

657. New smartphone app can detect earthquakes

Scientists have developed an app that crowdsources ground-shaking information from smartphones to detect earthquakes and eventually warns users of impending jolts from nearby quakes.

The app called MyShake, developed by researchers at University of California, Berkeley, runs in the background and draws little power, so that a phone's onboard accelerometers can record local shaking any time of the day or night.

For now, the app only collects information from the accelerometers, analyses it and, if it fits the vibrational profile of a quake, relays it and the phone's Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates to the Berkeley Seismological Laboratory in California for analysis.

Since it was first released in English in February this year, more than 170,000 people have downloaded the app from around the world.

658. Gujarat CM launches 'Smart Village' program

Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel has launched Smart Village program on the occasion of completion of two years of her Government. Addressing the launching function at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar this morning, Mrs. Patel said, 300 villages will be selected for Smart Village program. These villages will get 80 lakh to 2 crore rupees cash assistance from the state government to improve public facilities in the villages. On this occasion, the Sarpanchs of villages having 100 percent completion of toilet targets have been felicitated.

Our correspondent reports that the second anniversary of Anandiben Patel Government in Gujarat will also be celebrated by State BJP from 22nd to 26th May. Vikas Parva Yatra have been organised in all districts and cities under the leadership of Ministers and local Members of Parliament and Members of Legislative Assembly.

During the five days celebrations, the works and welfare programs of State and Central Government will be publicized in the common people.

659. Norwester wreaks havoc in Odisha

One person was killed and properties were damaged as a Norwester wreaked havoc in some parts of Odisha this evening. The Norwester this evening caused extensive damage to public properties in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Keonjhar, Kamakhyanagar, Deogarh and Sambalpur. In Cuttack, a youth was killed when a branch of a tree fell on him in Bidanasi area. People in the capital city were panicked by the sudden Norwester. Reports said several trees were uprooted resulting in vehicular congestion in busy thoroughfares. Besides, power went out in some parts of the city due to snapping of power lines. In Sambalpur city, normal life was disrupted as a sand storm accompanied by heavy rains lashed the city late in the afternoon.

660. World's oldest Olympic champion dies at 102

The oldest living Olympic champion Sandor Tarics, who was a member of Hungary's gold-medal winning waterpolo

team at the 1936 Games, has died aged 102. A statement by the Hungarian Olympic Committee said, Tarics, who was born in 1913 in Budapest, passed away at his home in San Francisco.

A keen mathematician from an early age and an engineer by profession, Tarics left Hungary after the Communist Party takeover in 1948 and settled in San Francisco where he worked as a university professor.

He later achieved fame for his work in earthquake research, and in particular his design of earthquake-proof building technologies.

A recipient of official honours in both US and Hungary, Tarics also served for a period as the United Nation's earthquake advisor.

After the death in 2011 of Italian cyclist Attilio Pavesi, who won two Gold medals at the 1932 Games in Los Angeles, Tarics became the oldest living Olympic champion.

661. Mohun Bagan beats Aizawl FC 5-0 to lift 14th Fed Cup title

In Football, Mohun Bagan has clinched the Federation Cup title for the 14th time.

In the Final played at the Indira Gandhi Athletic Stadium in Guwahati last evening, they defeated Aizawl FC, 5-0 to win the tournament after a gap of 8 years.

The first half of the match was goalless, with Mohun Bagan displaying their experience and expertise in the second half. Mizo striker Jeje Lalpekhlua netted two goals while Haitian Sony Norde, Dhanachandra Singh and Bikramjit Singh scored one each.

Aizawl FC had defeated I-League champions Bengaluru FC in the quarterfinals before getting the better of Sporting Clube de Goa to book a place in the Final for the first time.

662. Czech graphic artist Adolf Born dies aged 85

Czech painter, illustrator and caricaturist Adolf Born, the author of several animated films for children, died aged 85 today, Czech media said.

Exhibiting his works worldwide, Born earned a number of international awards and became the Chevalier (Knight) of the Order of Arts and Letters in France in 2003.

Born was the author of the "Mach and Sebestova" series, which is about two schoolchildren who find a magic phone receiver, and of the animated film "Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, a Sailor from York" (1982).

He illustrated more than 250 books, including a collection of fables by French author Jean de La Fontaine that was published in France in 2000.

663. 78 people awarded under 'Bill Banvao Inam Pao' scheme

78 people won prizes in April under the [Delhi](#) government's 'Bill Banvao Inam Pao' scheme - an initiative to ensure that VAT paid reaches the authorities.

"Over 10,000 bills were received by the AAP government in April and 78 people were chosen for the award. While four of them will receive the maximum prize money of Rs 50,000, the remaining will get five times their purchase value," a senior government official said.

Under the scheme, customers are encouraged to upload their bills on 'DVATBILL' mobile app. If the bill issued to a customer is not reflected on the online server of the VAT department, it would mean that the outlet is evading tax.

It was launched by the Delhi government's Department of Trade and Taxes in January to improve tax filing compliance

among traders.

664. India to get new indigenously-built supercomputer next year

India will get an indigenously- built supercomputer next year as part of the governments Rs 4,500-crore programme aimed at taking India into an elite league of nations who have made advancements in the field. The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing that built Indias first supercomputer, Param, is handling the project, said Ashutosh Sharma, Secretary in the Ministry of Science and Technology. The government had in March last year approved the plan of the National Supercomputing Mission, under which 80 supercomputers will be built in the next seven years. Some of them will be imported and the rest will be built be indigenously. The first one will come up by August 2017, he said. We are working on how to control heat. The cost of power to run these supercomputers alone will be around Rs 1,000 crore, Sharma said. The new supercomputers will be kept in different institutes across the country. A supercomputer can be used for various purposes like climate modeling, weather forecast, discoveries of drugs among others, Sharma said. Currently, countries like the US Japan, China and the European Union account for a major share of the top supercomputing machines in the world.

665. Charlie Sheen feeling amazing due to new HIV drug trial

Seems like Charlie Sheen is on the mend now as he has revealed that he feels amazing since taking an experimental HIV drug. The 50-year-old star, who went public with his condition last November during a live TV appearance, admitting he had known his situation for around four years, claimed that he is feeling better than ever after embarking on a new treatment called PRO 140, Channel 24 reported. In an interview, he said, oIm actually involved in a FDA [Food and Drug Administration] trial where its going to change the immediate landscape of HIV treatment. Its a company called CytoDyne and a treatment called PRO 140. And instead of taking the pills every day, its one shot every week. o The Two and a Half Men star, who is in my third week of the treatment, added, oSo I go to my doctor and he administers that. I already feel amazing, because taking those pills every day, its a bit toxic you know. This is quite the opposite, so were really excited about the prospect of that. o He added, And you know, if I just accept it as this is part of my life, then its a lot easier to deal with. Earlier, Sheen had embarked on a controversial treatment in Mexico with Dr. Sam Chachoua, who told him that arthritic goats milk could cure the disease and the actor says it was a omistakeo as it owas kind of a mess.

666. Kiran Bedi appointed new Lt Governor of Puducherry

A Rashtrapati Bhawan communique said "the President has been pleased to appoint Ms Kiran Bedi, to be the Lt. Governor of Puducherry with effect from the date she assumes charges of her office." "I look forward to giving every bit of myself to the responsibility. I am there for the benefit of the country. I am here to give my best every day, each day. I am grateful for the government's decision. They trusted me," said 66-year-old Bedi, who is the country's first woman IPS officer and who had led the BJP campaign for the 2015 Delhi Assembly polls without any success. The appointment came three days after the Congress-DMK alliance won 17 seats in the 30-member state Assembly. AIADMK, which contested the elections on its own, won four seats while BJP could not get even a single seat. The LG post in the Union territory had been lying vacant after the Narendra Modi Government had sacked UPA nominee Virendra Kataria on July 12 barely a year after he had been appointed. Lt Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Island Lt Gen Ajay Singh had been given additional charge of Puducherry. Born on June 9, 1949, Bedi had led the BJP campaign in the 2015 Delhi Assembly elections but had to face the worst defeat in her maiden political innings with Arvind Kejriwal- led AAP winning 67 of the 70 seats. An IPS officer of 1972 batch, Bedi had sought voluntary retirement from the service in 2007. She was then posted as Director General, Bureau of Police Research and Development. A sports lover and an author, Bedi is a recipient of Ramon Magsaysay Award as well as UN Medal for outstanding service. She was one of the pioneers of anti-corruption crusade in 2011 along with Anna Hazare and Kejriwal against the then UPA government. She also earned a law degree at Delhi University in 1988 and a PhD from IIT Delhi's Department of Social Sciences in 1993.

667. With Solar Power, A Gujarat Village Is Irrigating Its Fields For Free

Ramabhai Sagar, a 46-year-old farmer in Gujarat's Dhundi village, is experiencing first hand a solar revolution of sorts.

Around seven months ago, about a dozen farmers in Ramabhai's village about 90 km from Ahmedabad came together to

form a solar cooperative and set up solar panels in the fields to generate electricity.

"We used to spend 500 rupees on diesel for pumping sets for drawing water for irrigation. But now we do it with solar energy," Rambhai said. "We also make money by selling solar power when we not irrigating our fields. We can sell excess electricity to the power board for Rs. 4.63 per unit," he added.

While the farmers shelled out 10 per cent of the Rs. 60 lakh that it cost for the project, the rest was funded by non-profit organisation International Water Management Institute or IWMI. We convinced the farmers about the benefits of solar energy - that we could irrigate our fields free of cost with it," said Secretary of the Dhuni Solar Cooperative, Pravin Parmar.

The cooperative also signed an agreement with a government-run power distribution company to sell excess electricity. Even while the project develops, farmers can earn up to Rs.4,500 per month by selling solar power.

Neha Durga, a consultant at IWMI said, "The system also incentivises farmers to increase the productivity of water and use less of it - so that they can sell the extra power - thus conserving ground water."

The villagers now say they want to see the experiment replicated in other parts of the state.

668. New form of light discovered

In a breakthrough, scientists have discovered a new form of light, which will impact our understanding of the fundamental nature of light.

One of the measurable characteristics of a beam of light is known as angular momentum. Until now, it was thought that in all forms of light the angular momentum would be a multiple of Planck's constant - the physical constant that sets the scale of quantum effects.

Now, researchers from Trinity College Dublin's School of Physics and CRANN Institute have demonstrated a new form of light where the angular momentum of each photon (a particle of visible light) takes only half of this value.

This difference though small is profound, researchers said.

"We're interested in finding out how we can change the way light behaves, and how that could be useful. What I think is so exciting about this result is that even this fundamental property of light, that physicists have always thought was fixed, can be changed," said Assistant Professor Paul Eastham.

"Our discovery will have real impacts for the study of light waves in areas such as secure optical communications," Professor John Donegan said.

"This discovery is a breakthrough for the world of physics and science alike," said Professor Stefano Sanvito, Director of CRANN.

In the 1830s, mathematician William Rowan Hamilton and physicist Humphrey Lloyd found that, upon passing through certain crystals, a ray of light became a hollow cylinder.

The team used this phenomenon to generate beams of light with a screw-like structure.

Analysing these beams within the theory of quantum mechanics they predicted that the angular momentum of the photon would be half-integer, and devised an experiment to test their prediction.

Using a specially constructed device they were able to measure the flow of angular momentum in a beam of light. They were also able, for the first time, to measure the variations in this flow caused by quantum effects.

The experiments showed a tiny shift, one-half of Planck's constant, in the angular momentum of each photon.

Theoretical physicists since the 1980s have speculated how quantum mechanics works for particles that are free to move in only two of the three dimensions of space.

They discovered that this would enable strange new possibilities, including particles whose quantum numbers were fractions of those expected. This work shows, for the first time, that these speculations can be realised with light.

669. India Post payments bank will be functional by March 2017

India Post's [payments bank](#) will start functioning from March 2017 and serve as a wider platform to implement financial inclusion programmes, IT Communications Minister [Ravi Shankar Prasad](#) said.

"We are going to start the postal payments bank by March 2017. Very soon we will go to the Cabinet and postal payments bank will become operational from March 2017," said Prasad.

He said the proposed [India Post](#) payments bank will have immense potential to sell third party product and services. About 50 companies, including some from abroad, are keen to partner with postal department for the payments bank, like World Bank, Citi from America, Barclay's from England, he said.

670. Amitabh Bachchan reaches 21 million fan following on Twitter

Megastar [Amitabh Bachchan](#) has become the first [Bollywood](#) celebrity to have 21 million followers on popular micro-blogging site Twitter.

The 73-year-old megastar beaten his contemporaries [Shah Rukh Khan](#) (19.6 million), [Salman Khan](#) (17.8 million), [Aamir Khan](#) (17.6 million) and Priyanka Chopra (14 million) with his new milestone.

Bachchan's Twitter account became live in May, 2010 and ever since has been a one stop destination for his fans to connect, interact and engage with the actor.

671. New method can generate electricity from seawater

Scientists have used sunlight to efficiently turn seawater into hydrogen peroxide, which can then be used in fuel cells to generate electricity.

It is the first photocatalytic method of hydrogen peroxide (H₂O₂) production that achieves a high enough efficiency so that the H₂O₂ can be used in a fuel cell, researchers said.

"The most earth-abundant resource, seawater, is utilised to produce a solar fuel that is H₂O₂," said Shunichi Fukuzumi from Osaka University in Japan, who led the research.

Researchers developed a new photoelectrochemical cell, which is basically a solar cell that produces H₂O₂.

When sunlight illuminates the photocatalyst, it absorbs photons and uses the energy to initiate chemical reactions - seawater oxidation and the reduction of O₂ - in a way that ultimately produces H₂O₂.

After illuminating the cell for 24 hours, the concentration of H₂O₂ in the seawater reached about 48 Millimolar (mM), which greatly exceeds previous reported values of about 2 mM in pure water, 'Phys.Org' reported.

Researchers found that the negatively charged chlorine in seawater is mainly responsible for enhancing the photocatalytic activity and yielding the higher concentration.

Overall, the system has a total solar-to-electricity efficiency of 0.28 per cent.

Although the total efficiency compares favourably to that of some other solar-to-electricity sources, such as switchgrass

(0.2 per cent), it is still much lower than the efficiency of conventional solar cells.

The researchers expect that the efficiency can be improved in the future by using better materials in the photoelectrochemical cell, and they also plan to find methods to reduce the cost of production.

672. Stanislas Wawrinka clinches Geneva Open title

Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka gave himself a much-needed boost as he prepares to defend his French Open tennis title, defeating Croatia's Marin Cilic 6-4, 7-6 (13-11) to win the Geneva Open. The top seed and World No.4 bounced back from early-round defeats in World Tour Masters 1000 clay-court events in Madrid and Rome to claim victory on his home turf, where he appeared to find his groove on the slower surface in the nick of time. After winning hard-court events in Chennai and Dubai earlier this year, Wawrinka's dip in form was clearly evident in the lead up to the French Open, which gets under way on Sunday. With his victory in Saturday's final, the 31-year-old Wawrinka recorded his 10th win in 12 matches against the 2014 US Open champion -- who had defeated Spain's David Ferrer in the semi-finals -- and won the 14th title of his career. The Swiss had to struggle to close out the contest, saving five set points in the tiebreaker, three of them on his opponent's serve. Wawrinka beat Novak Djokovic in last year's French Open final, handing the Serbian World No. 1 his only defeat in a Grand Slam match in 2015.

673. Modi to attend International Yoga Day at Chandigarh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that he would attend the second International Yoga Day programme at Chandigarh. "On June 21, International Day of Yoga, I will join a programme in Chandigarh to practice yoga with them," he said in his radio address 'Mann Ki Baat'. He stressed that prevention was better than cure and "Yoga Day is not merely an event, it inspires to include it in our daily routine for 20-30 minutes." "Poor families have to spend too much for health issues. But there is no cost involved in being healthy," Modi added. The International Yoga Day was declared to be internationally recognised by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on December 11, 2014. Prime Minister suggested the date, June 21, in his address to the UN General Assembly.

674. R Ashwin retains No.2 spot in Test bowlers ranking, Kohli not among top 10 batsmen

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has managed to retain his second spot in the latest ICC Player Rankings for Test Bowlers issued today (May 22), while no Indian features in the top 10 batsmen list. Ashwin (871) trails England's Stuart Broad (872) by just a point while another Englishman James Anderson has returned to the top three following his 10-wicket haul at Headingley against Sri Lanka to leapfrog Yasir Shah of Pakistan and South Africa's Dale Steyn.

Anderson earned 49 points for his performance, which has put him on a career-high 854 points. The ICC Player Rankings for Test Batsmen was being headed by Australia captain Steven Smith (925), followed by England's Joe Root (876), New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson (868), South Africa's Hashim Amla (860) and veteran Pakistan batsman Younus Khan (826). Besides, Ashwin continues to head the Test all-rounders' ranking with 406 points. Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan is second ahead of England's Broad.

675. Madhesi protests back in Nepal

Nepal is once again in the grip of protests. United Democratic Madhesi Front, an umbrella outfit of more than 20 terai-based parties has re-launched the protests in the Himalayan country. With this, once again tension has started rising even as both the police and protesters are currently maintaining restraint in their behaviour. But the development speaks volumes about the disconnect between the government of Nepal and the citizens. While Nepalese of the terai region known as Madhesi want re-writing of the Constitution, the Nepal government headed by K P Sharma Oli is opposed to it. The argument being that the Constituent Assembly that drafted the country's statute has been transformed into Parliament and the Parliament has no mandate to re-write the Constitution. This has resulted in a logjam, as both sides are not willing to budge from their respective positions. In this tug of war, both sides have forgotten that Nepal has already suffered heavily due to protests. The first phase of agitation which lasted from September 2015 to February 2016 was aggressive as well as deadly. Around 50 people were killed in police firing while blockade of supplies had hit the poor country's economy besides, causing untold miseries to its people. The Protesters demand include re-demarcation of the seven-province model of federal structure, proportionate representation for Madhesi in all the state bodies and rights

related to language and citizenship.

For this to happen, Madhesi want re-writing of the Constitution. The Nepal government, however, wants to address these problems through amendments to the existing Constitution and by engaging in talks with the aggrieved people. Madhesi are stridently opposed to this. Their stand is that concept of secularism, identity-based proportional representation and federal democratic republic status to Nepal could be ensured only after re-drafting of the country's Constitution. Even the international community members like European Union and the United States have urged the Nepal government to address the demands of Madhesi. Being an immediate neighbour and host of five millions Nepalese, India has also pushed for accommodation of Madhesi demand through dialogue and consensus. To this effect, creation of a conducive atmosphere is the need of the hour. The Nepal government must adopt a non-partisan attitude as the protest is supported by all sections of Madhesi community including all the marginalized groups. It should avoid thinking that the problem will blow over on its own. Instead, the delay in addressing the concerns of the Madhesi, more it will push the country down the precipice. But unfortunately, there is no move from the Nepal government that could indicate that it is serious in averting the crisis. Instead of taking any corrective measures, Nepal is feeding to anti-India sentiments on its soil. This has reached to grotesque proportions recently.

In this backdrop, sanity demands that Madhesi should desist from overusing their agitation. They should better seek moral support to their movement from larger section of the country's civil society including Kathmandu's residents to put consistent pressure on their government. Nonetheless, Nepal's streets are once again filled with noise of protestors and this is happening at a time when the country is deep in an economic mess, with the youth leaving the nation in the search of jobs to other lands. According to a report, over 1000 Nepalese leave the Himalayan country everyday in search of jobs in India, the Gulf and Malaysia alone. This is a dark reality of Nepal's economic situation. It should be remembered that any investment will pour in or economy will grow when there is peace and political stability. The raging protests and consequent unrest have shown that the Himalayan nation is once again heading towards big trouble.

676. Today in History

1430 - Joan of Arc was captured by Burgundians. She was then sold to the English.

1533 - Henry VIII's marriage to Catherine of Aragon was declared null and void.

1618 - The Thirty Years War began when three opponents of the Reformation were thrown through a window.

1701 - In London, Captain William Kidd was hanged after being convicted of murder and piracy.

1785 - Benjamin Franklin wrote in a letter that he had invented bifocals.

1788 - South Carolina became the eighth state to ratify [U.S.](#) Constitution.

1827 - The first nursery school in the [U.S.](#) was established in New York City.

1846 - Arabella Mansfield (Belle Aurelia Babb) was born. She was the first woman in the [U.S.](#) to pass the bar exam, though she never used her law degree.

1873 - Canada's North West Mounted Police force was established. The organization's name was changed to Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1920.

1876 - Boston's Joe Borden pitched the very first no-hitter in the history of the National League.

1879 - The first [U.S.](#) veterinary school was established by Iowa State University.

1895 - The New York Public Library was created with an agreement that combined the city's existing Astor and Lenox libraries.

1900 - Civil War hero Sgt. William H. Carney became the first African American to receive the Medal of Honor, 37 years after the Battle of Fort Wagner.

1901 - American forces captured Filipino rebel leader Emilio Aguinaldo.

1908 - Part of the Great White Fleet arrived in Puget Sound, WA.

1915 - During World War I, Italy joined the Allies as they declared war on Austria-Hungary.

1922 - The play "Abie's Irish Rose" opened in New York City.

1922 - "Daylight Saving Time" was debated in the first debate ever to be heard on radio in Washington, DC.

1926 - The French captured the Moroccan Rif capital.

1934 - In Bienville Parish, LA, Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow were ambushed and killed by Texas Rangers. The bank robbers were riding in a stolen Ford Deluxe.

1937 - Industrialist John D. Rockefeller died.

1938 - "LIFE" magazine's cover pictured Errol Flynn as a glamour boy.

1945 - In Luneburg Germany, Heinrich Himmler, the head of the Nazi Gestapo, committed suicide while imprisoned by the Allied forces.

1949 - The Republic of West Germany was established.

1960 - Israel announced the capture of Nazi Adolf Eichmann in Argentina.

1962 - The National Basketball Association (NBA) agreed to transfer the Philadelphia Warriors to San Francisco, CA. The team became the San Francisco Warriors (and later the Golden State Warriors).

1962 - Joe Pepitone of the New York Yankees set a major league baseball record by hitting two home runs in one inning.

1981 - In Barcelona, Spain, gunmen seized control of the Central Bank and took 200 hostages.

1985 - Thomas Patrick Cavanagh was sentenced to life in prison for trying to sell Stealth bomber secrets to the Soviet Union.

1992 - In Lisbon, Portugal, the [U.S.](#) and four former Soviet republics signed an agreement to implement the START missile reduction treaty that had been agreed to by the Soviet Union before it was dissolved.

1994 - "Pulp Fiction" won the "Golden Palm" for best film at the 47th Cannes Film Festival.

1995 - The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City was demolished.

1998 - British Protestants and Irish Catholics of Northern Ireland approved a peace accord.

1999 - In Kansas City, [MO](#), Owen Hart (Blue Blazer) died when he fell 90 feet while being lowered into a WWF wrestling ring. He was 33 years old.

1999 - Gerry Bloch, at age 81, became the oldest climber to scale El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. He broke his own record that he set in 1986 when he was 68 years old.

2013 - Google acquired Makani Power for use for its Project Wing.

677. International Day to End Obstetric Fistula 23 May

Obstetric fistula is one of the most serious and tragic injuries that can occur during childbirth. It is a hole between the birth canal and the bladder or rectum caused by prolonged, obstructed labour without treatment. The condition typically leaves women incontinent, and as a result they are often shunned by their communities. Sufferers often endure depression, social isolation and deepening poverty. Many women live with the condition for years or even decades because they cannot afford to obtain treatment. An estimated 2 million women in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Arab region, and Latin America and the Caribbean are living with this injury, and some 50,000 to 100,000 new cases develop each year. Yet fistula is almost entirely preventable. Its persistence is a sign that health systems are failing to meet women's essential needs. In its resolution [A/RES/67/147](#), the General Assembly calls on the international community to use the International Day to significantly raise awareness and intensify actions towards ending obstetric fistula.

678. What is Capital Output Ratio? What is its significance in macroeconomic management?

A frequently used tool that explains the relationship between the level of investment made in the economy and the consequent increase in GDP is capital output ratio. The concept of capital output ratio expresses the relationship between the value of capital invested and the value of output. Capital output ratio is the amount of capital needed to produce one unit of output. For example, suppose that investment in an economy, investment is 32% (of GDP), and the economic growth corresponding to this level of investment is 8%. Here, a Rs 32 investment produces an output of Rs 8. Capital output ratio is $32/8$ or 4. In other words, to produce one unit of output, 4 units of capital are needed. But don't forget that the Rs 32 invested in the form of machineries will remain there for around ten or twelve years. Such a machinery will be giving Rs 1 output in every year. What is the relevance of capital output ratio in economic planning? Capital output ratio has very good use in economic planning. Suppose the government targets an economic growth of 9% for next year. Planners know that the capital output ratio in India is 4. Here, to realize 9% growth, investment should be increased to 36% (9×4). Capital output ratio thus explains the relationship between level of investment and the corresponding economic growth. There is a simple equation in economics that shows the relationship between investment, capital output ratio and economic growth. $G = S/V$ Here, G is economic growth, S is saving as a percentage of GDP and V is capital output ratio. What is Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR)? Another variant of capital output ratio is Incremental Capital Output Ratio (ICOR). The ICOR indicates additional unit of capital or investment needed to produce an additional unit of output. The utility of ICOR is that with more and more investment, the capital output ratio itself may change and hence the usual capital output ratio will not be useful. Lower capital output ratio shows productivity of capital and technological progress. A lower capital output ratio shows that only a low level of investment is needed to produce a given growth rate in the economy. This is considered as a desirable situation. Lower capital output ratio shows that capital is very productive or efficient. How efficiency of capital can be achieved? It is possible mainly through technological progress. When there is superior technology, capital will be efficient to produce more output and capital output ratio will be lower.

679. Himachal Pradesh launches artificial propagation programme of mahseer fish for conservation

The population of the golden mahseer, hunted for sport and food, is declining in rivers of Himachal Pradesh, prompting the fisheries department to begin an artificial propagation programme for its rehabilitation and conservation.

A hatchery with an outlay of Rs 6 crore (\$900,000) has been set up at Machhial near Jogindernagar town in Mandi district to rear the mahseer, also known as the tiger of Indian rivers, to breed the fish and release its fingerlings into the wild.

"The first breeding is likely to come up in July and August this year and it will be a major breakthrough in evolving the breeding technology of the golden mahseer," fisheries director Gurcharan Singh told IANS.

He said hatchery-reared juveniles would be released into the rivers and reservoirs.

The brooder fish reared in the hatchery was collected from the local rivers and streams.

Fish biologist SN Ogale is assisting the department in developing methods of the mahseer's artificial propagation and hatchery management.

Being a game fish, the mahseer is also an angler's delight.

Studies conducted by the fisheries department say the population of the golden mahseer is declining in the state due to various reasons, including construction of dams, barrages, pollution, indiscriminate fishing of brood and juvenile fish, introduction of exotic species and habitat deterioration.

It has been declared endangered by the Washington-based International Union of Conservation of Natural Resources.

The mahseer, the longest-living freshwater fish, is native to mountain and sub-mountain regions. It belongs to the genus Tor.

The Pong Dam reservoir, around 250km from state capital Shimla and 190km from Chandigarh, supports an ample population of the golden mahseer.

It migrates upstream for spawning during the southwest floods. After spawning, it returns to the original feeding grounds. It is available at altitudes of up to 2,000 metres above sea level and is purely carnivorous.

680. Govt constitutes IEPF Authority

Government has constituted the Investor Education and Protection Fund (IEPF) Authority, moving ahead with efforts to further strengthen the framework for safeguarding the interest of investors.

This is a step closer to setting up the IEPF -- under the Companies Act, 2013 -- which would be utilised for multiple purposes, including to distribute disgorged amount to eligible depositors who have suffered losses due to wrongful acts by other entities.

In recent times, there have been rising instances of people getting duped by illegal fund raising schemes and having a fund is expected to help in disbursement of money to the affected entities in a timely manner.

A senior official said the IEPF Authority has been constituted and it would take some time before putting in place the IEPF itself.

The authority would have the responsibility of administering the fund as well as maintain separate accounts and other records as prescribed by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), among others.

Recently, the government has constituted a six-member IEPF Authority under the chairmanship of Corporate Affairs Secretary Tapan Ray, according to a recent notification.

Sebi Executive Director Gyan Bhushan and RBI Executive Director U S Paliwal are also members. All the three memberships are ex-officio or till they continue in their respective posts.

Three others are independent members.

Besides, Amardeep Singh Bhatia has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer to the Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority. This would be an additional charge for a period of six months from the date of his assumption of charge or till further orders, the Ministry said in a separate notification.

Currently, Bhatia is a Joint Secretary in the Ministry.

Various sections of the Companies Act, 2013 are yet to be notified. Most provisions of this law, which replaces the nearly six-decade Act regulating corporates, came into effect from April 1, 2014.

681. 6,000 Gujarat villages become open defecation free, says government

Gujarat Government today said as many as 6,000 villages in the state have become Open Defecation Free (ODF).

State Panchayat and Rural Development Minister Jayanti Kavadia claimed at a function here, all 18,000 villages in the state would become ODF much before 2019, a target set by Centre government under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. "In the last two years, we have built more than 12.50 lakh toilets across Gujarat. As a result, 6,000 villages are now Open Defecation Free. As of now, 30 talukas in the state now have 100 per cent toilet facility," the minister said. "Centre government wants each state to achieve 100 per cent target by 2019, the year when the nation will celebrate 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. At this pace, I strongly believe that Gujarat would achieve that target much before 2019," asserted Kavadia. Chief Minister Anandiben Patel criticised the Congress-led government in the state for not doing enough to address the issue while in power between 1960 and 1995. "Congress was in power for almost 40 years in Gujarat. However, they did not pay any attention to this problem. Our government is providing a financial aid of Rs 12,000 to build one toilet. I am confident that we will achieve 100 per cent target before 2019," she said. Patel also launched the Smart Village initiative of the state government under which, 300 villages will be selected in the first phase. Under the scheme, village panchayats need to submit an application along with a vision document having road map of converting their village into a smart village. "A high level committee would select 300 villages from all the applications. After providing them grants for three years, smart village award will be conferred after detailed evaluation, as the village needs to meet several benchmarks, such as 100 per cent ODF, 100 per cent vaccination, wi-fi facility, zero per cent drop out ratio, door-to-door waste collection, etc," the chief minister said. At the programme, nearly 3,000 sarpanchs of the 6,000 villages were felicitated. PTI PJT ARS UZM SRE

682. WOMEN ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF) – 16-21 MAY 2016 – NEW DELHI – INDIA

About Women Economic Forum (WEF) 2016: WEF is a mega marquee global event hosted by ALL Ladies League (ALL) the worlds largest league of women. Its an all-inclusive global community with over 20,000 members, 450 global chapters, spanning 75 countries. Our overarching objective is to exponentially enhance womens economic progression and leadership skills and to become active change agents in all spheres of self and society. ALL Ladies League, or ALL, is the largest league of women and their endeavors globally and the first and only such global network in the world to have free membership for women from ALL parts of the world. The only requirement is for each woman to bring in abundant positive energy. Membership is by referral only. ALL has over 450+ chapters across the world where women collaborate in diverse ways. To use an analogy, we are creating safe and smooth fast-track highways for women so that women can move and connect easily to support groups across the world for ALL kinds of collaborations. The impact is in terms of more confidence, many more connections, and multiple possibilities of collaboration for women in their life and work. The theme for WEF 16 is Women : Uplifting Uniting The World through 28 tracks like business, technology, entrepreneurship, industry, health, travel, spirituality, peace, diplomacy, security, conflict resolution, personal leadership, innovation, research etc. The leading sessions are on entrepreneurship, start-ups, innovation, and personal leadership in many spheres constituting more than 30% of the sessions.

683. India-Pak student exchange program gets innovation award

For some years now, school students from India and Pakistan have been connecting with each other through handwritten letters besides a few audio and visual recordings that are reflective of a shared history of the two neighbours before Partition.

The 'Student Exchange Program', a year-long dialogue comprising a sustained exchange of written, visual and oral histories connecting school children aged between 10-14 years across the cities of India and Pakistan was initiated by city-based NGO 'Routes 2 Roots'.

The NGO has recently been awarded the "The Inter-cultural Innovation Award 2016' from United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in Baku, Azerbaijan for this programme.

In its first year in 2010 the program attracted between 2400 children from 10 schools across four cities of India and Pakistan.

Students hailing from diverse socio-economic backgrounds from selected schools participate in the five-phased program that is aimed at improving ties between the two countries and the exchange of letters, postcards, pictures, artwork and videos encourage children to form their own opinions and have a clearer understanding of history, culture and lifestyle through cross cultural communications.

"The endeavour enables students to familiarise with each other with the history, culture and lifestyle of their neighbouring country," says Rakesh Gupta, founder, Routes2Roots.

The first phase 'Letters Writing' engage students in writing letters, where they share their thoughts, values, hobbies and interests.

In the next 'Postcard Series,' students click pictures of their favourite monument, family, pet etc and write about the picture and subsequently the postcards are then sent to schools across the border and shared among the children.

In the third phase, students are given four themes namely school life, food, festivals and marriages and historical monuments under the "Collage Series".

Students can make decorative collages on any of the given themes which are shared with schools across the borders thus creating a bond between the two countries.

The 4th phase is the 'Oral History' series which adds an audio-based dimension to the project. Students interviewed their grandparents, collecting historical narratives about various cities across Pakistan and India as well as their recollections of the early years. .

684. Making It Big: The Inspiring Story of Nepal's First Billionaire in His Own Words

Mr Chaudhary's story offers lessons on turning dreams into reality, and is a must-read for all upcoming entrepreneurs Bidhya Devi Bhandari, President of Nepal The man behind the immensely popular Wai Wai noodles (Wai Wai has sold more than a billion packets in India alone), Binod Chaudhary is one of Asia's most prominent businessmen. President of the Chaudhary Group which deals in banking, insurance, finance and housing, he has invested in hotels and real estate, and collaborates among others with India's Taj Group. In 2013, he became the first Nepali entrepreneur to be listed as a dollar billionaire by Forbes. His passion for growing his business, in the face of stiff challenges, is legendary. This memoir, already a massive bestseller in Nepal, tells Binod Chaudhary's inspiring success story in his own words.

685. India, Iran sign 12 bilateral agreements in various areas

India and Iran today signed 12 Memoranda of Understanding and agreements in various areas including building and operating the Chabahar port by India. It followed the delegation level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

The other agreements include cooperation in culture, science and technology, library sciences, and cooperation between the exim banks of both the countries. Signing of Chabahar port agreement will further improve trade relations especially between India and Afghanistan After the port would be completely functional, India can directly send its goods to Afghanistan.

After signing of the agreements, Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his press statement, termed the agreement on developing first phase of Chabahar port as a milestone on bilateral economic ties. Mr Modi said, the port will develop better connectivity among India, Iran and Afghanistan. He said, the port will help in faster economic growth in the region. Mr Modi said, India is committed for the early implementation of the signed agreements today by the two countries.

Noting that peace and stability is crucial in the region, the Prime Minister said India and Iran share the commitment to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the region. He said both the countries are committed to fight the menace of growing terrorism and extremism.

Mr Modi said the two countries agreed to consult closely and regularly on combating threats of terrorism, radicalism, drug trafficking and cyber crime. Mr Modi said he and President Rouhani also shared concerns at the spread of forces of instability and terror in the region. He also extended an invitation to Mr Rouhani to visit India.

Earlier, in a joint statement with Prime Minister Modi, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said the Chabahar port is a symbol of synergy between both the nations. He said the port can serve as a point of connectivity to different countries.

He said, economic relations between Delhi and Tehran can further be expanded through the project. Dr Rouhani also touched upon commonalities between the two nations and said promotion of Hindi and Persian in both the countries were also discussed.

Mr Rouhani said, both the nations discussed about sharing of intelligence to check the menace of terrorism, as its tentacles are spreading over Syria, Yemen and many other areas in the region. He stressed upon both the nations to work together to bring peace and stability in the region.

Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was accorded ceremonial welcome on the forecourts of the Saadabad Palace in Tehran. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to meet Supreme Leader of Iran Ayatollah Ali Khamenei this evening.

686. India's first reusable space shuttle, RLV-TD launched from Sriharikota

India successfully launched its maiden indigenous winged Reusable Launch Vehicle, RLV from Sriharikota spaceport in Andhra Pradesh at 7 am today. Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO said, the mission has been accomplished successfully. The Re-Usable Launch Vehicle - Technology Demonstrator, RLV-TD, that is ultimately aimed at putting satellites into orbit around earth and then re-enter atmosphere, was carried up on a solid rocket motor.

The nine-metre long rocket weighs 11 tonnes. Very similar in its looks to the US space shuttle, the double delta-winged RLV-TD being experimented is a scale model which is almost 6 times smaller than the final version. The 6.5 meter long RLV-TD has aeroplane like structure which weighs about 1.75 tons. The cost of this project is 95 crore rupees.

After launch from the Sriharikota spaceport, it glided back onto a virtual runway in the Bay of Bengal. The vehicle re-entered the atmosphere after reaching a height of over 70 km. The mission, known as the hypersonic flight experiment, lasted about 10 minutes. Earlier, explaining the importance of the experimental RLV, ISRO Chairman Kiran Kumar said, it is essentially an attempt by India to bring down the cost of making infrastructure in space.

President Pranab Mukherjee, Vice President Hamid Ansari and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have congratulated the Indian Space Research Organization, ISRO for the successful test of the RLV-TD. In his message, the President conveyed his congratulations to space scientists at ISRO for their achievement.

In a tweet, Mr Modi said, launch of India's first indigenous space shuttle RLV-TD is the result of the industrious efforts of the scientists of ISRO. He said, the dynamism and dedication with which the scientists and ISRO have worked over the years is exceptional and very inspiring.

687. AIADMK chief Jayalalithaa sworn-in as Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

AIADMK Supremo Ms. Jayalalithaa has been sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu today. Governor Dr.K. Rosaiah administered the oath of office and secrecy for her at a grand ceremony held at the Centenary Auditorium, Madras University at 12 noon. State Governor Dr.Rosaiah administered the pledge for the 28 ministers also. The University was decked up neatly in white and green for the occasion. The Ministers were administered swearing in pledge in batches.

This is Jayalalithaa's second consecutive term as chief minister, and sixth overall. Her first term was between 1991-96, During her second year term in 2001 she was out of office for six months after she was unseated by Supreme Court vis-a-vis electoral disqualification in the TANSI case and was sworn in again.

She completed a successful five year term in 2001 to 2006. In 2011 to 2016 she was out of office from September 29,2014 to May 22, 2015 after being disqualified as a legislator and consequently lost chief ministership following her conviction in a graft case by a trial court in Bengaluru which was later set aside by Karnataka High Court.

The main opposition party, DMK's treasurer M.K.Stalin attended the swearing in ceremony along with 14 MLAs elected from Chennai. Union Ministers Venkaiah Naidu and Pon Radhakrishnan attended the meeting and extended greetings on behalf of the Prime Minister. Amidst loud cheers a smiling Ms. Jayalalithaa began her oath as the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu.

After the swearing in she went to the Secretariat and signed in five important files including cancellation of loans to micro small and medium farmers who acquired loan through cooperative units, closing down of State owned liquor outlets in phases beginning with closing down of 500 shops,giving 100 units of electricity for free of charge, increase from four to eight grams of gold for wedlock for brides who have completed degree and diplomas in addition to financial assistance.

688. Indian Navy commissions fast attack craft INS Tarmugli

The Indian Navy has officially commissioned the recently delivered fast attack craft INS Tarmugli at a formal ceremony held at Naval Dockyard, Visakhapatnam. Built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE), INS Tarmugli is the first follow-on water jet fast attack craft (WJFAC); an improved version of WJFAC, earlier constructed by GRSE. INS Tarmugli is being based in Visakhapatnam under the Naval Officer-in-Charge (Andhra Pradesh) and would be deployed for coastal patrol and surveillance operations along the East Coast of India. The ships armament consists of a 30 mm CRN 91 gun manufactured by ordnance factory Medak. An electronic day-night fire control system namely Stabilised Optronic Pedestal (SOP) manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) controls the gun. The ship is also equipped with two 12.7 mm heavy machine guns (HMG) and multiple medium machine guns, besides shoulder-launched Igla surface-to-air missiles to combat aerial threats. Measuring 48 meters in length, the 320-tonne vessel can achieve speeds in excess of 30 knots. The ship is manned by a team comprising four officers and 41 sailors.

689. AIR launches app for Persian service in Iran

The Persian service of All India Radios External Services Division (ESD) is launching a multimedia website and mobile app to coincide with Prime Minister Narendra Modis visit to Iran, which begins on Sunday. AIR is also starting a WhatsApp-based listeners response forum for its Persian service where listeners from Iran can directly interact. AIR has been broadcasting to Iran in Persian language since 1941 and it is one of the oldest services in which external broadcast is done. The Persian service, of late, has been facing competition from other broadcasters like BBC, China Radio International, and Radio Pakistan, which have started Internet and mobile-based services for Iran as the younger generation prefer listening to radio broadcast on Internet and mobile apps, an official statement said. Launching of Internet live streaming and mobile apps of Persian service through a world class multimedia web platform airworldservice.org/Persian during the prime ministers visit to Tehran will go a long way not only in meeting the challenges from other broadcasters but also broaden AIRs listeners base, it added. At present, Persian language broadcast of AIR is done for 1 hour 45 minutes in two transmissions of 45 minutes and 1 hour, respectively, in the morning and in the evening. The broadcast is available on Shortwave (SW). Programme menu of the Persian service is reflective of the centuries-old bond that India shares with Iran (Persia) in the fields of art, architecture, culture, literature, music and also contemporary partnership in the fields like trade, commerce, technology, medicine, research oil exploration, etc, the statement said. Indian and Persian music of various genres also form a major part of the content, it added. The service is immensely popular among the listeners and receives close to 1,000 letters per month besides many emails.

690. US lifts embargo on sales of lethal weapons to Vietnam

US President Barack Obama has today announced that the US is fully lifting its embargo on sales of lethal weapons to Vietnam. Speaking during a visit to communist Vietnam, Mr Obama said, the move removed a lingering vestige of the Cold War.

He said both sides had developed a level of trust and co-operation. Mr Obama's visit comes amid warming ties, as the US seeks to build its relationship with its Pacific allies. Vietnam had been arguing for an end to the arms embargo. Though partially lifted in 2014, arms embargo has been in place for decades.

US engagement with Vietnam was stepped up rapidly during 2014. Experts say it was a calibrated move by the United

States to seize on deteriorating ties between Vietnam and communist neighbour China over South China Sea claims.

China claims almost all of the energy-rich South China Sea, through which more than 5 trillion dollars of maritime trade passes each year. The Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia and Taiwan have overlapping claims. Obama will later fly to Japan for a G7 summit. He will also become the first US president to visit Hiroshima.

691. Ken Loach's film I, Daniel Blake wins Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival

British director Ken Loach's film I, Daniel Blake has won the Palme d'Or at Cannes Film Festival. It was the 79-year old's second award for best picture at the festival after 2006's The Wind That Shakes the Barley. Loach attacked the dangerous project of austerity as he accepted the award for his film about a middle-aged widower and the UK welfare system. Kent-born director Andrea Arnold won the competition's Jury Prize for her road movie American Honey.

692. Eiffel tower to be turned into rental apartment

In France, visitors to the Eiffel tower now have a chance to stay for a night in the iconic landmark, something that was never available since its opening in 1889. Rental company HomeAway said it was taking over part of the first floor of the 300-meter latticework for the duration of the UEFA Euro 2016 football tournament slated for June 10th in Paris, and transforming it into Hausmannian style living quarters.

The competition opened on Thursday for the chance to stay in the famous structure. For lucky winners, each with up to five guests, will be able to spend a night on the first level, about 52 meters above the ground. Prospective tower tourists can register by giving personal information and suggesting what would you do if the Eiffel Tower Apartment was all yours for the night. The Eiffel tower has attracted more than 250 million visitors so far.

693. Erdogan Ally Set to Become New Turkish PM

In Turkey, a close ally of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has been selected leader of the countrys ruling party, becoming the presumptive prime minister. The move is seen as the latest step by the president to consolidate his grip on power and his bid to turn Turkey into an executive presidency. Thousands of members of Turkeys ruling AKP Party crammed into a congress hall in Ankara to elect unopposed Binali Yildirim as its new leader and the countrys presumptive prime minister. Yildirim, the transport minister, is one Erdogan's closest and longest serving allies. Yildirim pledged to carry out his president's ambitions. He said the most important job the government needs to do is to adopt a new constitution, and change the constitution to a presidential system. Erdogan has declared his desire to push through constitutional reform to change the country from a parliamentary democracy to an executive presidency, with few checks and balances. Critics say that will be a tantamount to an elected dictatorship. Observers say outgoing Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, who formally resigned his post Sunday, is believed to have balked at such changes and was subsequently ousted by the president, even though he was once a close ally. Sundays party congress was eager to present a strong message of unity and there were no visible signs of dissent. Behind the scenes, supporters of the ousted prime minister are reportedly being purged from their positions in the party. Ankaras NATO allies who see Turkey as a key member in the war against Islamic State are increasingly voicing concern that Erdogan is turning more authoritarian. That concern is likely to grow with the ousting of Davutoglu who was seen as having a moderating effect on the president.

694. Greek parliament passes new budget cuts to unblock bailout funds

Greek parliament has passed new budget cuts and tax rises two days before a eurozone meeting expected to unblock much needed bailout funds. The government led by the leftist Syriza coalition passed the widely unpopular bill by 153 votes to 145. Greece agreed to a third bailout worth 86 billion euros last year.

Demonstrators gathered outside parliament yesterday to protest against the new legislation. Eurozone Finance Ministers will meet in Brussels on Tuesday. The bill also creates a state privatisation fund requested by its eurozone Finance Ministers. Earlier this month, parliament approved reforms of the pension and income tax system.

695. More than two crore LPG consumers join PAHAL scheme in Assam

In Assam, more than two crore LPG consumers have joined the ambitious PAHAL scheme. The scheme was

introduced in the state from January 1 last year. The unique PaHaL Yojna or Direct Benefit Transfer Scheme for LPG subsidy launched by centre covers around 80 per cent LPG consumers in the Assam. Under the scheme, consumer sold LPG cylinders on market rate and get subsidy in their bank accounts. Around two crore 90 thousand consumers of Assam have enrolled in the PAHAL scheme till date.

696. Dr Jitendra Singh lays foundation stone of Ujh bridge in J&K

Union Minister of State in PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh yesterday laid the foundation stone of Ujh bridge at Pandori village in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. The 44 crore rupees 1020 metre span bridge to be constructed over river Ujh will be completed in two years by Border Roads Organization.

Addressing a public rally on the occasion after laying the foundation stone of the bridge, Dr Singh said, this will be now the third important bridge in Kathua district after Atal Sethu in Basohli and Kerriyan Gandyal bridge on river Ravi on which work is going to start shortly. He said, various development projects which are going to change the fate of the people in the entire region have been started while others are in pipeline.

He said, three more bridges will be constructed on different rivers in Hiranagar area and their foundation will be laid soon. He said bridge on Ujh will benefit over three lakh people. Dr Singh also announced two crore rupees for construction of ponds in the district under PMs nationwide programme of constructing five lakh ponds all over the country.

697. Neeraj wins silver, misses Rio Olympics mark at Warsaw

India's javelin sensation Neeraj Chopra has clinched the silver medal at the Zygmunt Selesta Memorial in Poland. 19-year old Chopra's effort of 79.73 metres earned him the medal at Warsaw last night, but still missed the Olympic qualification mark of 83 metres. Local boy Grzeszczuk, who threw 83.50 metres, won the Gold. The other Indian men thrower in the fray, Vipin Kasana, finished seventh.

In the women's section, 2014 Asian Games bronze medalist Annu Rani also won the silver medal, but her throw of 56.76 metres was almost six metres behind the Olympic Games qualification mark.

The other Indian women in the reckoning, Suman Dev finished in fourth place with a best effort of 56.27 metres.

Polish ladies, Andreczyk was the leader with a thumping margin, with a best throw of 64.08 metres while her compatriot Kakol finished in third place with an effort of 56.64 metres.

698. NGT bans light, heavy diesel vehicles over 10 years in six Kerala cities

In a landmark judgement, the National Green Tribunal Bench in Kerala today banned light and heavy diesel vehicles, which are more than 10 years old, in six major cities. These are state capital Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi, Kollam, Thrissur, Kozhikode and Kannur.

In its first sitting, the bench, comprising NGT chairperson also directed the state government not to register any diesel vehicle in the capacity of 2000 CC and more, except public transport and local authority vehicles. The bench issued the order while hearing a petition seeking action against highly polluting diesel vehicles such as trucks and buses.

699. UGC asks varsities to give degrees to students on time or face action

The University Grants Commission, UGC, has asked universities to follow the norms in awarding degrees to students without delay or face punitive action. The move comes after the UGC received many complaints about the delay on the part of the varsities in awarding degrees.

In a letter to Vice Chancellors, UGC secretary Jaspal S Sandhu said as per the regulations, the degree award date shall be within 180 days from the day of the date by which the students are expected to qualify and become eligible for them. He said a span of 180 days from the day the results are out are more than sufficient to perform the task which constitutes perhaps one of the most fundamental and primary duties of a university.

700. **Pankaj Advani creates history by winning Asian 6-Red Snooker title**

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani has created history in Abu Dhabi by clinching the Asian 6-Red Snooker title. Advani thus became the first in the world to hold both world and continental titles in 6-red snooker at the same time.

The double International Billiards Snooker Federation (IBSF) World Six-Red Snooker Champion stamped his authority again in the short format of the game, defeating top seeded Malaysian Keen Hoh Moh 7-5 last night. Advani will now spearhead the Indian challenge in the team event with Aditya Mehta, Manan Chandra and Kamal Chawla.

701. **What is Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices?**

The Minimum Support Prices in India are recommended by a statutory body known as Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). It gives recommendations to the government on MSP for Kharif and Rabi seasons. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), determines the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of various agricultural commodities based on the recommendations of the CACP keeping in view factors like increase in the cost of production, demand and supply situation, inter-crop parity, and trend of domestic and international market prices etc. Currently, 25 agricultural commodities are covered under the function given to the CACP for advising the government in respect fixing MSP. The Commission is required to convey its recommendations to the Government well before the sowing season of the crop. The objective of the price policy underlying MSP is to bring a balanced and integrated price structure for agricultural commodities. The prices should be in accordance with the overall needs of the economy and protecting the interests of the producer and the consumer. Several price and non-price factors are considered while estimating the MSP. The CACP, while formulating the recommendations on Price Policy, considers a number of important factors including cost of production, changes in input price, trends in market prices, demand and supply situation etc. The cost of cultivation/production takes into account all paid out costs, such as, on hired labour, bullock labor and machine labor (both hired and owned) expenses on use of material inputs like seeds, fertilizers, manures, irrigation charges including cost of diesel or electricity for operation of pump sets, etc. Besides, cost of production includes imputed values of wages of family labour and rent for owned land. The cost also covers depreciation for farm machinery, building, transportation and insurance charges. State wise and crop wise cost estimation is made for recommending MSPs.

702. **India and Iran finalizes the historical Chabahar port deal**

Civilizational giants -India and Iran agreed to build the much anticipated gateway to central Asia- Chabahar port. On the finance side of the port development, PM Modi declared that India will open \$500 mn line of credit. Iran's reentry into mainstream world after the US ban removal has facilitated the deal. Already, India has expanded import of crude from Iran. The port is situated just little away from the Pakistan border and is expected to fuel India's effort to get a transit route into Central Asia. Connecting the port, a corridor will be completed through Afghanistan. It is expected that the two sides will complete the detailed financial side of the project soon. Chabahar Port is a major land access plan for India to Central Asia when the region is witnessing several connectivity projects induced by China's Belt and Road initiatives. The port will give significant strategic space to India when Pakistan and China are working on Central Asian connectivity through Pakistan using the Chinese constructed Gwadar Port in Pakistan. This is the first time in fifteen years that an Indian PM is visiting Iran.

703. **Renowned scientist S K Sharma appointed NPCIL's CMD**

Eminent scientist [S K Sharma](#) was today appointed as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Nuclear Power Corporation of [India](#) Limited (NPCIL), responsible for design, construction, commissioning and operation of nuclear power reactors.

He is presently working as Distinguished Scientist and Director (Operations) in NPCIL.

Sharma has been appointed to the new post for a period of five years, an order issued by Department of Personnel and Training said.

704. **Today in History - May 24**

1610 - Sir Thomas Gates institutes "laws divine moral and marshal," a harsh civil code for Jamestown.

1624 - After years of unprofitable operation Virginias charter was revoked and it became a royal colony.

1689 - The English Parliament passed Act of Toleration, protecting Protestants. Roman Catholics were specifically excluded from exemption.

1738 - The Methodist Church was established.

1764 - Bostonian lawyer James Otis denounced "taxation without representation" and called for the colonies to unite in demonstrating their opposition to Britains new tax measures.

1798 - Believing that a French invasion of Ireland was imminent, Irish nationalists rose up against the British occupation.

1816 - Emanuel Leutze was born in Germany. He was most famous for his paintings "Washington Crossing the Delaware" and "Columbus Before the Queen".

1822 - At the Battle of Pichincha, Bolivar secured independence of the Quito.

1830 - The first passenger railroad service in the [U.S.](#) began service

1844 - Samuel F.B. Morse formally opened America's first telegraph line. The first message was sent from Washington, [DC](#), to Baltimore, MD. The message was "What hath God wrought?"

1859 - Charles Gounod's "Ave Maria" was performed by Madame Caroline Miolan-Carvalho for the first time in public.

1863 - Bushwackers led by Captain William Marchbanks attacked a [U.S.](#) Federal militia party in Nevada, Missouri.

1878 - The first American bicycle race was held in Boston.

1881 - About 200 people died when the Canadian ferry Princess Victoria sank near London, Ontario.

1883 - After 14 years of construction the Brooklyn Bridge was opened to traffic.

1899 - The first public garage was opened by W.T. McCullough.

1913 - The [U.S.](#) Department of Labor entered into its first strike mediation. The dispute was between the Railroad Clerks of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad.

1930 - Amy Johnson became the first woman to fly from England to Australia.

1931 - BO Railroad began service with the first passenger train to have air conditioning throughout. The run was between New York City and Washington, DC.

1935 - The Cincinnati Reds played the Philadelphia Phillies in the first major league baseball game at night. The switch for the floodlights was thrown by [U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt](#).

1941 - The HMS Hood was sunk by the German battleship Bismarck in the North Atlantic. Only three people survived.

1950 - Sweetwater (Nat) Cliftons contract was purchased by the New York Knicks. Sweetwater played for the Harlem Globetrotters.

1954 - The first moving sidewalk in a railroad station was opened in Jersey City, NJ.

1958 - United Press International was formed through a merger of the United Press and the International News Service.

1961 - The Freedom Riders were arrested in Jackson, Mississippi.

1962 - The officials of the National Football League ruled that halftime of regular season games would be cut to 15 minutes.

1967 - [California](#) Governor [Ronald Reagan](#) greeted Charles M. Schulz at the state capitol in observance of the legislature-proclaimed "Charles Schulz Day."

1974 - The last "Dean Martin Show" was seen on NBC. The show had been aired for 9 years.

1976 - Britain and France opened trans-Atlantic Concorde service to Washington.

1980 - The International Court of Justice issued a final decision calling for the release of the hostages taken at the U.S. embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979.

1983 - The Brooklyn Bridge's 100th birthday was celebrated.

1983 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ruled that the federal government had the right to deny tax breaks to schools that racially discriminate.

1986 - Montreal won its 23rd National Hockey League (NHL) Stanley Cup championship.

1990 - The Edmonton Oilers won their fifth National Hockey League (NHL) Stanley Cup.

1993 - Roman Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesus Posada Ocampo and six other people were killed at the Guadalajara, Mexico, airport in a shootout that involved drug gangs.

1993 - The Ethiopian province of Eritrea declared itself an independent nation.

1994 - The four men convicted of bombing the New York's World Trade Center were each sentenced to 240 years in prison.

1999 - 39 miners were killed in an underground gas explosion in the Ukraine.

2000 - Five people were killed and two others wounded when two gunmen entered a Wendy's restaurant in Flushing, Queens, New York. The gunmen tied up the victims in the basement and then shot them.

2000 - The [U.S.](#) House of Representatives approved permanent normal trade relations with China. China was not happy about some of the human rights conditions that had been attached by the [U.S.](#) lawmakers.

2000 - A Democratic Party event for Al Gore in Washington brought in \$26.5 million. The amount set a new record, which had just been set the previous month by Republicans for Texas Gov. [George W. Bush](#).

2001 - Temba Tsheri, 15, became the youngest person to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

2011 - NASA announced the development of the Orion Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle (MPCV) spacecraft. It is intended to facilitate exploration of the Moon, asteroids and Mars.

705. International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories May 25-31

The UN General Assembly, by its [resolution 60/119](#) of 8 December 2005, requested the annual observance of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories. In the [UN Charter](#), a Non-Self-Governing

Territory is defined as a Territory whose people have not yet attained a full measure of self-government. In 1946, several UN Member States identified a number of Territories under their administration that were not self-governing and placed them on a UN list. Countries administering Non-Self-Governing Territories are called administering Powers. As a result of the decolonization process over the years, most of the Territories were removed from the list. It urged the administering Powers concerned to take effective measures to safeguard and guarantee the inalienable rights of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to their natural resources, including land, and to establish and maintain control over the future development of those resources, and requests the Administering Powers to take all necessary steps to protect the property rights of the peoples of those Territories. It also urged all States, directly and through their action in the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, to provide moral and material assistance to the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

706. Mukhya Mantri Gruh Yojana – Housing Scheme in Gujarat

Mukhya Mantri GRUH Yojana where GRUH stands for Gujarat Rural Urban Housing is an affordable housing scheme especially designed for home seekers belonging to EWS and LIG category of the society. Mukhya Mantri (Gujarat Rural Urban Housing) GRUH Yojana was announced during 12th Five-year plan in consideration of growing need for affordable houses in urban areas. Objective of Mukhya Mantri GRUH Yojana The main objective of the scheme is to rehabilitate slums in urban areas of the State by the year 2018. The government is committed to provide affordable housing to EWS (Economically Weaker Section) and LIG (Lower Income Group) across the state. Mukhya Mantri GRUH Yojana for EWS Category Under the Mukhya Mantri GRUH Yojana, the Gujarat government will provide pucca house to every slum dwelling family and family belonging to economically weaker sections. The minimum carpet area of houses for economically weaker sections will be 25 sq. meters and maximum will be up to 30 sq. meters which will include two rooms, kitchen, bathroom and toilet. Existing slums in metropolitan, municipal and development authority areas will be rehabilitated by constructing houses in the same place (in situ). Slums which cannot be rehabilitated in the same place will be relocated on government/ULC/ULB/GHB land.

707. Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar Visits Oman

The Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar paid an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman from 20 to 22 May 2016 at the invitation of H.E. Bader Bin Saud Bin Harib Al Busaidi, Minister Responsible for Defense Affairs of Oman.

During his visit, the Defence Minister met Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Minister of Royal Office HE Lt Gen. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Nuamani and held bilateral talks with Minister Responsible for Defense Affairs H.E. Bader Bin Saud Bin Harib Al Busaidi. During the meetings all aspects of bilateral defence cooperation including enhanced military to military exchanges were discussed. Both sides also exchanged views on regional developments of mutual interest.

Shri Parrikar reiterated the high importance that India attaches to its strategic partnership with Oman. He conveyed his appreciation at the continued support rendered by Oman for the Operational Turnaround (OTR) of Indian Navy ships for anti-piracy patrols as well as technical support for landing and over flight of Indian Air Force aircraft.

The Minister visited the Military Technology College and the Sultans Armed Forces Museum in Muscat. He also attended a reception at Sultan Qaboos Port to mark the goodwill visit to Oman of INS Delhi, INS Deepak and INS Tarkash.

Four Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs)/agreements were signed during the visit. These are:

MOU on Defence Cooperation between the Ministry of Defense of Sultanate of Oman and Ministry of Defence of Republic of India;

MOU between the Royal Oman Police (Coast Guard) and the Indian Coast Guard in the field of Marine Crime Prevention at Sea;

MOU between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of India on Maritime Issues; and

Protocol between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman represented by Royal Air Force of Oman and the Government of India represented by the Indian Air Force on Flight Safety information Exchange.

Both sides noted that defence cooperation is a key facet of their bilateral strategic partnership, which is based on historical ties as well as mutual trust and shared interests. It was agreed that the two sides would further expand and consolidate their ongoing bilateral defence cooperation.

The Defence Minister was accompanied by a high-level official delegation comprising Secretary (Defence Production) Shri Ashok Gupta, Secretary (RD) DG, DRDO Dr S. Christopher, Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen MMS Rai, FOC-in-C Western Naval Command Vice Admiral Sunil Lanba, Vice Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal BS Dhanoa and other senior defence ministry officials. A defence industry delegation comprising Additional DG, Ordnance Factory Board Shri SC Bajpai and CMD, Bharat Electronics Limited Shri S.K. Sharma also accompanied the Defence Minister.

708. Pune Tops India's Value Five Star Hotel Destinations List: Survey

Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra, has emerged as the best five star hotels destination where Indian travellers paid the least last year, according to a survey.

Pune, also the second largest city in the state, made way as a new entrant that offered Indian travellers the best deal on five star accommodations with an average price of Rs 7,602 per night in 2015, according to the latest Hotel Price Index (HPI) report by Hotels.com.

The HPI is a regular report on hotel prices in major destinations across the world, tracking the movement in prices that people actually pay for their accommodation.

The data for this report was drawn from bookings made in hotels on the Hotels.com websites worldwide.

Pune was followed by Jaipur in Rajasthan at the second place with an average tariff of Rs 7,844 per night, it said.

Kuala Lumpur, the capital of Malaysia, ranked third on the list to offer best deals for five star accommodations with a tariff of Rs 8,114 per night last year.

The report said Chennai in Tamil Nadu took the fourth position in the list, followed by Hyderabad in Telangana - priced at Rs 8,686 and Rs 8,701, respectively - for a night's hotel stay.

Eight cities from India featured as prominent destinations that offer best value five star accommodations, including metro cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Kolkata.

Ho Chi Minh City, the largest city in Vietnam, was ranked ninth in the list, where Indians paid Rs 9,700 for a night.

The HPI report also revealed the top ten cities where Indian travellers paid the most while booking five star hotel accommodations in 2015.

Leading the list of cities with the highest priced five star accommodations was Florence in Italy (Rs

33,734 per night), followed by Tokyo in Japan (Rs 32,102).

With an accommodation price of Rs 31,750 per night, London - which had topped the chart in 2014 - stood at the third position this year.

European cities, including Venice (Rs 26,698), Milan (Rs 24,311) and Rome (Rs 23,754) in Italy, and Paris (Rs 21,997) in France took the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth positions respectively on the list where Indians paid most for five star hotel rooms.

Hong Kong stood ninth in the list with a five star hotel tariff of Rs 21,916, followed by Barcelona (Rs 20,263) in Spain.

Hotels.com LP operates Hotels.com, an accommodation booking website with properties ranging from international chains and all-inclusive resorts to local favourites and bed-and-breakfasts.

709. India, Thailand, Myanmar to be Connected by 1400-km Long Road

India, Thailand and Myanmar are working on a 1,400-kilometre long highway that will link India with Southeast Asia by land for the first time in decades. Indian Ambassador to Thailand Bhagwant Singh Bishnoi said 73 bridges in Myanmar, built more than seven decades ago during World War II, were being renovated with funding from India, to allow vehicles to cross the highway safely. The repair work will be completed in 18 months, he said. The planned highway starts in the eastern region of India from Moreh to Myanmar's Tamu city.

710. Nepal confers literary award on Sikkim CM Pawan Chamling

Sikkim chief minister Pawan Chamling was conferred the Yug Kavi Siddhicharan Award by Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Sunday for his commendable contributions in promoting Nepali literature in India. Siddhicharan Shrestha Academy organised an event in Kathmandu on the occasion of 105th birth anniversary of the late poet Shrestha. The award carries a certificate of appreciation and a sum of NRs 100,000. Chamling, 65, was not present to receive the award. He has been awarded twice by the Sikkim Sahitya Parishad - Chintan Puraskar in 1987 for the best poem and Bhanu Puraskar in 2010. Chamling's other works in Nepali include Prarambhik Kavita (poems, 1978), Antyaheen Sapana: Mero Bipana (poems, 1985), Ma Ko Hoon! (poems, 1992), and Sikkim ra Nariko Maryada. An author of many books in Nepali, English and Hindi, he is also a publisher.

711. Lt General Saini Appointed New Commandant of IMA

Lt General S K Saini has taken over as the new commandant of prestigious Indian Military Academy (IMA) here.

Lt General Saini assumed the office of commandant on May 21. Earlier, he was a senior directing staff in National Defence College (NDC), New Delhi, according to press release issued by IMA.

Lt General Saini is an alumni of National Defence Academy (NDA) and IMA. In 1981, he was commissioned to seventh battalion of Jat regiment.

In his career of 36 years, he has held many important posts.

712. Badminton: Denmark beat Indonesia to win first Thomas Cup title

Denmark beat Indonesia 3-2 in the Thomas Cup final Sunday (May 22), securing the nation's first world badminton team championship after racking up eight second-place finishes over the decades. Hans-Kristian Vittinghus led the Danes to victory in the fifth and final match of the tie on the back of strong singles performances from fourth-ranked Viktor Axelsen and world number five Jan O. Jorgensen. Denmark is the first European nation to win the Thomas Cup. "Ever since we came here, since last week, I've been dreaming about being the deciding factor in a final," said Vittinghus. "I really appreciate that my teammates put me in this position where I had a chance to win the cup for Denmark." In the opening match, European champ Axelsen kicked off the final by controlling the net as he exploited his height with smashing overheads and diving saves to take the first game. World number eight Tommy Sugiarto grabbed the early lead in the second, but the Dane proved too strong, clinching the match 21-17, 21-18. Following the win, Axelsen sprinted to the sidelines, tossing his shirt and racket into the roaring audience -- a scene that would be repeated by his teammates with each successive win. "I was really nervous during the game, but I managed to stay calm in the end and that's why I won," said Axelsen. Second-ranked doubles team Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan evened the score and halted Denmark's momentum with a 21-18, 21-13 over Mads Conrad-Petersen and Mads Pieler Kolding. In the third match of the afternoon 19-year-old Anthony Ginting unleashed explosive energy to maintain Indonesia's momentum, but fifth-ranked Jorgensen remained measured and patient to deliver a 21-17, 21-12 victory executed with finesse.

713. Sarbanand Sonowal takes oath as first BJP CM of Assam

Sarbanand Sonowal was sworn in as the first BJP Chief Minister of Assam. Governor P.B. Acharya administered the

oath of office to Mr. Sonowal and 10 of his ministerial colleagues at a grand ceremony in Guwahati. With this, the BJP has formed its first government in North-east. Those who took the oath included Hemanta Biswas Sarma. Several Union Ministers and 14 Chief Ministers of NDA ruled states besides BJP President Amit Shah were present on the occasion. A former fire brand student leader Sonowal had led an alliance of BJP and two regional partners Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland People's Front to end a 15-year long Congress rule in the state.

714. Prez signs ordinance keeping state boards out of NEET this year

President Pranab Mukherjee signed the ordinance to keep state boards out of the common entrance test (NEET) for MBBS and dental courses for this year. Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi was at the President's Secretariat early this morning along with top Health Ministry officials to respond to clarifications sought by the President on the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET).

The ordinance on NEET is aimed at partially overturning a Supreme Court order that had taken into account the multiple medical entrance tests by states and private colleges as well as allegations of corruption.

Health Minister J P Nadda today said, government was clear from the very beginning and has always been in favour of NEET. Briefing media in New Delhi, Mr Nadda said NEET has been given a firm statutory basis following the signing of the Ordinance.

715. Awards presented to ships of flotilla excelling in operations in Vishakhapatnam

The Annual Flotilla Awards Ceremony for the year 2015-16 was held at Naval Dockyard, Vishakhapatnam today. Commodore Sanjeev Issar , Naval Officer-in-Charge, Andhra Pradesh was the chief guest for the impressive traditional naval ceremony, an event held every year to present awards to the ships of the flotilla excelling in different facets of operations. The event was conducted to recognise overall excellence and valuable contribution of the ships and gallant men who have maintained constant vigil off the coast of Visakhapatnam.

During the year gone by, local flotilla was deployed in various operations and also played an important role in the recently conducted mega event - International Fleet Review.

INS Konkan bagged the Most Spirited Ship trophy and INS Cuddalore was adjudged as the Best Ship.

Commodore Sanjeev Issar congratulated all the award winners and highlighted the importance of keeping the ships in highest operational state at all times. He also stressed upon the dynamic security situation prevailing in the region and the need for maintaining strict vigil.

716. EGoM suggests heavy penalty for minor drivers

An Empowered Group of Ministers (EGoM), constituted by the Centre to curb road mishaps, has recommended heavy penalty for minor drivers and making more stringent the provisions for violation of traffic rules. Talking to news reporters in Jaipur yesterday, GoM head and Rajasthan Transport Minister Yunus Khan said that the group has recommended various measures to check traffic violations.

The measures include setting up of a dedicated force for traffic management on national highways, 10 per cent share from Central Road Fund (CRF) for road safety, provisions in the statute and traffic rules for pedestrians and non-mechanised vehicles. Heavy penalty for minor drivers and cancellation of driving licence for two years for violation of rules or crimes of serious nature after three times have also been recommended, he added.

717. Centre to provide Unique Identity Cards to specially abled persons

Centre will soon provide Unique Identity Cards to the specially abled persons which can be used anywhere in the country. This information was given by Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawar Chand Gehlot in a Awareness workshop on Accessible India Campaign at Jaipur today.

He said that his ministry is also planning to extend the categories of specially abled people from 7 to 19. After this every person even with minor disability will be covered. He added his ministry has decided to establish five national sports

centers for specially abled persons in India at different places. Apart from this district level centers will also be opened throughout the country.

718. President embarks on 4-day visit to China to strengthen bilateral ties

President Pranab Mukherjee has left on a four day visit to China this morning, where he is expected to exchange views on all aspects of India's ties with Chinese leadership. He is likely to raise the issue of China blocking India's bid to get a UN ban on Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Masood Azhar and its insistence on India signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to get membership of the elite Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Mr. Mukherjee will also discuss the issue of terrorism with the Chinese leadership.

Ahead of his state visit to China, Mr. Mukherjee had told the Chinese state-run television that India seeks a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement of the boundary question which will help in achieving full potential of Sino-India relationship.

Before embarking on his visit, he had asked China to join hands with India in the fight against terrorism. AIR correspondent covering the visit reports that in the first leg of his State visit, Mr. Mukherjee will go to Guangzhou which is one of the most important Industrial Provinces of China. He is expected to participate in an Indian community event this evening.

In his second and last leg of his visit, the President will reach Beijing tomorrow where he will have talks with the top leaders of China including with his counterpart Xi Jinping on bilateral, regional and international issues. The President is accompanied by a delegation of top Indians academicians including Vice Chancellors of Central Universities and Directors of IITs. They will sign a MoU with top Chinese research and educational Institution.

719. China wants to extend its Nepal rail link to India

Having already expanded its influence in Nepal with road and rail network through Tibet, China is now looking to stretch its railway link to Bihar to improve connectivity with India and South Asia, state-run Chinese media reported today.

A cross-border railroad link to the Rasuwagadhi area in Nepal has already been discussed between the two countries.

China's railroad is expected to reach Nepal border by 2020, an article in the state-run Global Times said.

This rail line makes it possible to connect China to India as from Rasuwagadhi to Birgunj, which borders Bihar is only 240 km, the article said.

For Bihar, trade with China through the rail link will be easier along this route than through Kolkata, saving time, cost and distance, it said.

"The railroad connection to China not only is important for Nepal and Nepalese people's future development, but also has the capacity to build connectivity with the whole of South Asia. The government of Nepal has the chance to make history," the article said.

It also criticised attempts to block major projects in Nepal.

"Challenge is both internal and external stakeholders' sensitivity about mega infrastructure projects. Unfortunately due to oversensitivity, some major projects were aborted before even a brick was laid. So the Nepali government must play a key role in bringing all the stakeholders into a sufficient consensus," it said.

720. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna brings new ray of hope for MP farmers

The Madhya Pradesh government has implemented Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna from 1 st April this year. The state government has set a target of covering one crore farmers under the scheme during 2016-17. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna has brought a new ray of hope for farmers of the state. The state government claims that the Madhya

Pradesh is the first state to implement the scheme. Principal Secretary of the Agriculture Department Rajesh Rajora said, preparations have been made and all the five tenders have been completed.

Farmers can pay premium from 1 st April to 16th August for Kharif season. 25 lakh farmers were covered under the previous crop insurance scheme in Madhya Pradesh but the state government has planned to give coverage to one crore farmers in Rabi and Kharif seasons during 2016-17 . There is no doubt that this scheme will provide a more efficient insurance support to the farmers.

721. Clean India initiative: Mumbai civic body sets up incinerators to dispose of sanitary napkins

The idea of a Clean Mumbai has received a new energy from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. With the message to keep the city clean being spread by icons like Sachin Tendulkar, Kapil Sharma, the famous Dabbawallas and the Railways. Mumbai's civic body is continuously working to make Mumbai a clean and open defecation free city. A recent step in that direction has been the introduction of incinerators to process used sanitary napkins in community toilets on pilot basis.

Incidentally, about 6-7 percent of the total waste generated in Mumbai consists of sanitary napkins and diapers.

Though it is heartening to know that women across Mumbai's slums have started to use sanitary napkins instead of cloth during their menstrual period, the problem of its safe disposal has gathered ground. Women have been found to flush these pads which results in choking of drains across community toilets. To overcome this problem, the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai had installed 2 incinerators in Mankhurd and Bhandup area on pilot basis.

It is mail-box sized wall-mounted device, costing Rs 25,000 and capable of burning about 20 sanitary napkins or diapers in half an hour. This initiative, under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is actually helping women to maintain a clean and hygienic lifestyle.

722. Much-awaited broad gauge train service begins on Hanumangarh-Sadulpur track

In Rajasthan, long awaited broad gauge train service between the newly constructed Hanumangarh-Sadulpur broad gauge railway tracks has been started today. Union Minister of state for Railway Manoj Sinha has given green signal the special train at the Hanumangarh Junction. Thousands of Passengers from Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh and Churu districts will be benefited by this train.

723. PMJDY- universal access to banking facilities for every household

Prime Minister's Jan Dhan Yojana is with the objective of universal access to banking facilities for every household in the country.

Launched by the Prime Minister in August 2014, the scheme was an instant success.

Over 21 crore bank accounts are opened under the scheme nation wide and the total deposits in these accounts is about Rs. 37616 crore.

The Union Territory of Puducherry has been in the forefront in implementing the scheme.

Puducherry is among the states which has promoted the Prime Minister's Jan Dhan Yojana in its letter and spirit.

The Union Territory has achieved almost 100% coverage for this innovative scheme that aims at financial inclusion.

As all the 3.3 lakh households in Puducherry has a bank account the Territorial Administration has opted Direct Benefit Transfer for its welfare schemes and pensions. Majority of these accounts are linked to Aadhar making the benefit delivery system efficient and timely.

More than 1,16,000 accounts are opened under Jan Dhan Yojana in Puducherry. These accounts together have a deposit corpus of Rs.25 crores.

State Level Bankers Committee Convenor D Devaraj is very enthusiastic about the scheme.

724. FIFA Secretary General Markus Kattner sacked over bonus payments

FIFA acting Secretary General Markus Kattner has been sacked after being accused of paying himself bonuses worth millions of pounds. World governing body FIFA said an investigation uncovered breaches of fiduciary responsibilities. The 45-year old German took over as acting General Secretary after Jerome Valcke was sacked for irregularities.

The dismissal is not connected to the payment made to Michel Platini by former President Sepp Blatter in 2011. Kattner joined FIFA in 2003 as Director of Finance, becoming Deputy Secretary General in 2007. His salary and bonuses were part of a contract that was unseen by relevant FIFA committees.

725. Rio medal winners to be considered for Khel Ratna, Arjuna

In a bid to ensure that Olympic medallists get immediate recognition, the Sports Ministry today said medal winners from the upcoming Rio Games will be considered for this year's Khel Ratna and Arjuna Awards. The ministry said the decision has been taken so that athletes need not wait for one full year after their medal-winning performances at the Olympic Games. The medal winners in individual events who have already not been conferred with Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in the past will be considered for the highest sporting honour.

Medal winners in team events, who have played stellar roles in the medal won by the team for the country in Rio Olympics 2016 such as number of goals scored, number of goals saved etc., and who have already not been conferred with Arjuna Award in the past will be considered for Arjuna Awards, the Ministry said.

As per the existing provisions of the schemes of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna and Arjuna Awards, sports achievements of the sportspersons for the last four years preceding the year of award, i.e., sports achievements during the period 2011 to 2015 are to be considered.

726. Amitabh Bachchan To Host Modi Government's 2-Year Anniversary Event At India Gate

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and most of his ministers are expected to attend an event at India Gate to be hosted by mega star Amitabh Bachchan on May 28 to mark the second anniversary of the government.

The government is organising the event -- 'Zara Muskura Do' (Smile Please) -- which will have several performances and programmes highlighting its "achievements". The show will be telecast across the country on Doordarshan.

Various schemes and programmes, particularly Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Digital India and Rural Electrification, will be highlighted during the show. Programmes to mark the completion of Modi government's second year in office will also be held in various other cities.

The government had formed a panel of ministers, headed by Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu and comprising union ministers Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal and Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, to supervise preparations for the show.

The panel has had extensive discussions regarding the government schemes which need to be highlighted.

Last year, the Modi government had celebrated its first year in office with a tagline 'Saal Ek, Shuruaat Anek'.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry had asked various ministries to provide details of their achievements.

The BJP has also planned to hold over 200 events across the country between May 26 and June 10 to highlight the government's "successes" and PM Modi is likely to address rallies in different places, starting with an address in Saharanpur on May 26.

727. Stalin appointed as the leader of opposition in Tamil Nadu

M.K. Stalin, treasurer of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and son of party patriarch K. Karunanidhi, was on

Tuesday elected leader of the DMK legislative party, a day after AIADMK supremo J. Jayalalithaa assumed office as chief minister of Tamil Nadu. Stalin will also be the leader of the opposition as the DMK is the single largest opposition party with 89 members, including Stalin and Karunanidhi, in the 234-member house. The AIADMK won 134 seats in the 16 May assembly election. The 15th Tamil Nadu legislative assembly session will begin on Wednesday.

728. Today in History - May 25

585 BC - The first known prediction of a solar eclipse was made in Greece.

1085 - Alfonso VI took Toledo, Spain from the Moslems.

1787 - The Constitutional convention opened in Philadelphia with George Washington presiding.

1810 - Argentina declared independence from Napoleonic Spain.

1844 - The gasoline engine was patented by Stuart Perry.

1844 - The first telegraphed news dispatch, sent from Washington, [DC](#) to Baltimore, [MD](#), appeared in the Baltimore "Patriot."

1895 - Oscar Wilde, a playwright, poet and novelist, was convicted of a morals charge and sentenced to prison in London.

1895 - James P. Lee first published "Gold in America -- A Practical Manual."

1911 - President of Mexico, Porfolio Diaz, resigned his office.

1925 - John Scopes was indicted for teaching the Darwinian theory in school.

1927 - Ford Motor Company announced that the Model A would replace the Model T.

1927 - The "Movietone News" was shown for the first time at the Sam Harris Theatre in New York City.

1935 - Babe Ruth hit his final homerun, his 714th, and set a record that would stand for 39 years.

1935 - Jesse Owens tied the world record for the 100-yard dash. He ran it in 9.4 seconds. He also broke three other world track records.

1946 - Jordan gained independence from Britain.

1953 - In Nevada, the first atomic cannon was fired.

1961 - America was asked by [U.S. President Kennedy](#) to work toward putting a man on the moon before the end of the decade.

1963 - The Organization of African Unity was founded, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1968 - The Gateway Arch, part of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, [MO](#), was dedicated.

1970 - Boeing Computer Services was founded.

1977 - "Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope" opened and became the largest grossing film to date.

[Today in Star Wars History](#)

1977 - An opinion piece by Vietnam veteran Jan Scruggs appeared in "The Washington Post." The article called for a national memorial to "remind an ungrateful nation of what it has done to its sons" that had served in the Vietnam War.

1979 - An American Airlines DC-10 crashed during takeoff at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. 275 people were killed.

1981 - Daredevil Daniel Goodwin scaled Chicago's Sears Tower, while wearing a "Spiderman" costume, in 7 1/2 hours.

1983 - "The Return of the Jedi" opened nationwide. It set a new record in opening day box office sales. The gross was \$6,219,629.

1985 - Bangladesh was hit with a hurricane and tidal wave that killed more than 11,000 people.

1986 - Approximately 7 million Americans participated in "Hands Across America."

1989 - The Calgary Flames won their first [NHL](#) Stanley Cup by defeating the Montreal Canadiens.

1992 - Jay Leno debuted as the new permanent host of NBC's "Tonight Show."

1996 - In Nîmes, France, Christina Sanchez became the first woman to achieve the rank of matadore in Europe.

1997 - In Sierra Leone a military coup overthrew the popularly elected President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. He was replaced with Major Johnny Paul Koromah.

1997 - [U.S.](#) Senator Strom Thurmond became the longest-serving senator in [U.S.](#) history (41 years and 10 months).

1997 - Poland adopted a constitution that removed all traces of communism.

1999 - A report by the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China concluded that China had "stolen design information on the U.S. most-advanced thermonuclear weapons" and that China's penetration of U.S. weapons laboratories "spans at least the past several decades and almost certainly continues today."

2000 - The Walt [Disney](#) Co. and Time Warner Inc. signed a long-term deal that ended a dispute over the airing policies of Time Warner. Time Warner had blacked out Disney programs for a 39 hour period the previous month due to the lack of an agreement.

2001 - Erik Weihenmayer, 32, of Golder, [CO](#), became the first blind climber to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

2001 - Sherman Bull, 64, of New Canaan, [CT](#), became the oldest climber to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

2006 - In Houston, former Enron Corp. chiefs Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling were convicted of conspiracy and fraud for the downfall of Enron.

2008 - NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander landed in the arctic plains of Mars.

2009 - North Korea announced that it had conducted a second successful nuclear test in the province of North Hamgyong. The United Nations Security Council condemned the reported test.

729. International Missing Childrens Day: 25 May

In 1983, U.S. President Ronald Reagan proclaimed May 25th National Missing Childrens Day. The proclamation followed the 1979 disappearance of a six-year-old boy, Etan Patz, on his way to school in New York City. The case generated widespread indignation, and concern for missing children rose across the nation. Since the United States

began remembering missing children in this way, other countries around the world have adopted similar commemorations. 25 May is now widely known as Missing Childrens Day, with the forget-me-not flower as its emblem. In 2001, 25 May was first formally recognized as International Missing Childrens Day (IMCD), thanks to a joint effort on the part of ICMEC, [Missing Children Europe](#) and the European Commission. Since 2009, we have been promoting IMCD by disseminating a unified global message. The movement continues to grow. Every year, more countries commemorate IMCD, acknowledging the need for a harmonized response to protect vulnerable children.

730. Lucknow, Warangal among 13 smart cities announced by govt.

The Union government on Tuesday announced the names of 13 more cities that will be developed under the Centres Smart City Mission. Lucknow in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh tops the list, followed by Warangal in Telangana and Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh. These cities were chosen from the 23 that failed to get representation in the first round of a competition held in January, and participated in the fast-track competition. The results were announced by Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday. Other cities on the list are Chandigarh, Raipur (Chhattisgarh), New Town Kolkata, Bhagalpur (Bihar), Panaji (Goa), Port Blair (Andaman and Nicobar Islands), Imphal (Manipur), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Faridabad (Haryana). The 13 cities selected in the competition have proposed a total investment of Rs. 30,229 crore. With this, the investment proposed by 33 cities [20 cities made the cut in January] under the smart city plans is now Rs. 80,789 crore, Mr. Naidu told the media. Next round Seven cities Patna (Bihar), Shimla (Himachal Pradesh), Naya Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh), Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh), Bengaluru (Karnataka) and Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) that were not among the 100 shortlisted for the competition will be able to participate in the next round, the Minister added. Of the 13 cities that qualified for the project, four are from BJP-ruled States (Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand and Haryana) while two are from Congress-governed States (Himachal Pradesh and Manipur). Lucknow is in Samajwadi Party-ruled Uttar Pradesh, while Bhagalpur is in Bihar, where the JD(U), the RJD and the Congress are ruling coalition partners. Warangal is in Telangana, which is ruled by the Telangana Rashtra Samithi. Apart from these, The Union Territories of Chandigarh and Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands were also among the winners of this round. Ten cities that failed to make the cut are: Pasighat (Arunachal Pradesh), Shillong (Meghalaya), Namchi (Sikkim), Diu (Daman Diu), Oulgaret (Puducherry), Silvassa (Dadra and Nagar Haveli), Kohima (Nagaland), Aizawl (Mizoram), Kavaratti (Lakshadweep) and Dehradun (Uttarakhand). They will be able to participate in the next round with other cities. Highlights of project Assured water and power supply, sanitation and solid waste management systems, efficient urban mobility and public transportation, IT connectivity, e-governance and citizen participation are some of the highlights of the smart city project. It aims to transform 100 cities by 2019-20, with the Union government providing financial support of Rs. 48,000 crore over five years. Central assistance Each city will receive Central assistance of Rs. 200 crore in the first year and Rs. 100. crore over the three subsequent financial years. State governments and respective urban local bodies will also match the Centres contribution. While 20 cities were selected in 2015-16 as per the Missions guidelines, another 40 (including the 13) will be selected this year. The remaining will be chosen in the next financial year. What are smart cities? A 'smart city' is an urban region that is highly advanced in terms of overall infrastructure, sustainable real estate, communications and market viability. It is a city where information technology is the principal infrastructure and the basis for providing essential services to residents. There are many technological platforms involved, including but not limited to automated sensor networks and data centres. According to the documents released on the Smart Cities website, the core infrastructure in a smart city would include: Adequate water supply Assured electricity supply Sanitation, including solid waste management Efficient urban mobility and public transport Affordable housing, especially for the poor Robust IT connectivity and digitalisation Good governance, especially e-Governance and citizen participation Sustainable environment Safety and security of citizens, particularly women, children and the elderly Health and education

731. 40 million Indians at risk from rising sea levels: UN report

Nearly 40 million Indians will be at risk from rising sea levels by 2050, with people in Mumbai and Kolkata having the maximum exposure to coastal flooding in future due to rapid urbanisation and economic growth, according to a UN environment report. The Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6): Regional Assessments said the worst impacts of climate change are projected to occur in the Pacific and South and South-East Asia. It said focussing on the population at risk from sea-level rise by 2050, seven of the 10 most vulnerable countries worldwide are in the Asia Pacific region. India tops chart

India tops the chart with nearly 40 million people in the country projected to be at risk from rising sea levels, followed by more than 25 million in Bangladesh, over 20 million in China and nearly 15 million in the Philippines. It said changes in settlement patterns, urbanisation and socio-economic status in Asia have influenced observed trends in vulnerability and exposure to climate extremes. The report said in many coastal areas, growing urban settlements have also affected the ability of natural coastal systems to respond effectively to extreme climate events, rendering them more vulnerable. Some countries, such as China, India and Thailand, are projected to face increased future exposure to extremes, especially in highly urbanised areas, as a result of rapid urbanisation and economic growth, it said. It listed Mumbai and Kolkata in India, Guangzhou and Shanghai in China, Dhaka in Bangladesh, Yangon in Myanmar, Bangkok in Thailand, and Ho Chi Minh City and Hai Phong in Vietnam as projected to have the largest population exposure to coastal flooding in 2070. Many of these cities are already exposed to coastal flooding, but have limited capacity to adapt due to their fixed location, it said. The report, published ahead of the UN Environment Assembly taking place in Nairobi next week, said the worst impacts of climate change are projected to occur in the Pacific and South and Southeast Asia. In 2011, six of the ten countries most vulnerable to climate change worldwide were in Asia and the Pacific. The report said livelihoods can be impacted negatively by natural disasters, economic crises and climate change. On coastal areas highly exposed to cyclones and typhoons, the poor tend to be more exposed to natural disasters because they live on land open to hazards. Combined impact

Evidence suggests that climate change and climate variability and sea-level rise will exacerbate multi-dimensional poverty in most developing countries. By 2050, areas of storm surge zones are expected for Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, with a combined total of over 58 million people at risk. The UN report further said global urban populations are projected to increase by 2.5 billion by 2050, with nearly 90 per cent of the increase in Asia and Africa.

732. India signs loan agreement with World Bank for IBRD loan of US\$ 100 million for Karnataka Urban Water Supply Modernization project

The Loan and Project Agreements for World Bank (IBRD) assistance of US\$ 100 million for the Karnataka Urban Water Supply Modernization project were signed between Government of India/Government of Karnataka and the World Bank here today.

The Loan Agreement was signed by Shri Raj Kumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Michael Haney, Acting Country Director, World Bank (India) on behalf of the World Bank. The Project Agreement was signed by Shri V. Ponnuraj, Managing Director, Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (KUIDFC) on behalf of the Government of Karnataka. Mr. Michael Haney signed the Project Agreement on behalf of the World Bank.

The objective of the project is to provide city-wide access to a continuous piped water supply in the eligible cities in the State of Karnataka and to strengthen the service delivery arrangements at the city level. KUIDFC is the implementing agency for the project. The project would have four broad components: (i) Capital Investment Program; (ii) Institution Building; (iii) Technical Assistance for Sector Development; and (iv) Project Management.

The project will be implemented over a period of six years, initially in the twin cities of Hubballi-Dharwad, with provision for other eligible cities to join the project at a later date. Under the project, the Hubballi Dharwad Municipal Corporation has hired a professional water supply operating company for improving the water supply system, as also to manage the refurbished system through a 12-year contract in accordance with strict performance criteria. The municipality will retain ownership of the water supply assets and control of the service delivery set up. The project will help the Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation set up a city-level water utility that will take over water supply operations from the professional operating company at the end of its contract period. The project will benefit about one million residents of the Hubballi- Dharwad, including estimated 160,000 slum dwellers.

733. Getting in rhythm: Over 31,000 in China set dance record

China's dancing grannies have taken their moves to the record books. Guinness World Records says more than 31,000 Chinese participants have set a record for mass plaza dancing in multiple locations. Some 31,697 people in Beijing, Shanghai and four other cities set the new mark on Saturday by performing choreographed dance moves

together for more than five minutes, Guinness said on its website. Participants in Beijing posed with Guinness representatives in front of the city's iconic Bird's Nest stadium. Generally middle-aged and elderly women, such dancers are a common site in parks, plazas and other public spaces in Chinese cities. While considered a healthy way to exercise and socialize, the performances have sometimes drawn criticism from those living nearby over the loud music accompanying the moves. Copyright 2016 The [Associated Press](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

734. F45 India appoints ex-cricketer Brett Lee as brand ambassador

F45 India, the master franchise for Australia-based functional training system for fitness F45, today announced the appointment of former Australian cricketer Brett Lee as brand ambassador for the country. Pradeep Palli, Director of F45 India, said the company is also planning to open as many as 300 outlets under the franchise model. Fitness chains in India have sprung by dozen, but many of them lack the steam to carry on or transform into successful business models. F45 is here to lay all that to rest. The chain of health transformer is innovative, cost effective and incredibly systemised in their training facility, Brett Lee said in a press conference.

735. Scientists detect faintest galaxy ever

An international team of scientists has detected and confirmed the faintest early-universe galaxy ever -- a finding that can help explain how the "cosmic dark ages" ended.

Using the WM Keck Observatory on the summit on Mauna Kea in Hawaii, the researchers detected the galaxy as it was 13 billion years ago.

According to Tommaso Treu, professor of physics and astronomy at University of California-Los Angeles, the discovery could be a step toward unraveling one of the biggest mysteries in astronomy -- how a period known as the "cosmic dark ages" ended.

According to the Big Bang theory, the universe cooled as it expanded. As that happened, Treu said, protons captured electrons to form hydrogen atoms, which in turn made the universe opaque to radiation -- giving rise to the cosmic dark ages. "At some point, a few hundred million years later, the first stars formed and they started to produce ultraviolet light capable of ionizing hydrogen," Treu said.

"Eventually, when there were enough stars, they might have been able to ionize all of the intergalactic hydrogen and create the universe as we see it now," he added.

That process, called cosmic reionization, happened about 13 billion years ago but scientists have so far been unable to determine whether there were enough stars to do it or whether more exotic sources, like gas falling onto supermassive black holes, might have been responsible.

"Currently, the most likely suspect is stars within faint galaxies that are too faint to see with our telescopes without gravitational lensing magnification," Treu said.

The new study, published in the *Astrophysical Journal Letters*, exploits gravitational lensing to demonstrate that such galaxies exist, and is thus an important step toward solving this mystery.

Gravitational lensing was first predicted by famous theoretical physicist Albert Einstein.

The effect is similar to that of an image behind a glass lens appearing distorted because of how the lens bends light.

736. Smart Cities List 2016 – 33 Cities Selected so Far

Central Government has selected 13 more cities under the Smart Cities Mission taking the total to 33. The new list of 13 more Smart Cities has been released which is topped by the City of Nawabs Lucknow. The first list of 20 cities to be developed as smart cities was announced in January 2016. The government has shortlisted 100 cities across the country out of which 33 have been finalized. Government aims to develop 100 smart cities across the country with sustainable urban infrastructure and facilities. rest of the cities will be selected in the coming years. Complete list of selected 33

smart cities Bhubaneswar, Odisha Pune, Maharashtra Jaipur, Rajasthan Surat, Gujarat Kochi, Kerala Ahmedabad, Gujarat Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh Sholapur, Maharashtra Davangere, Karnataka Indore, Madhya Pradesh New Delhi, New Delhi Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh Belagavi, Karnataka Udaipur, Rajasthan Guwahati, Assam Chennai, Tamil Nadu Ludhiana, Punjab Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Bhagalpur, Bihar New Town Kolkata, West Bengal Faridabad, Haryana Chandigarh, Chandigarh Raipur, Chhattisgarh Ranchi, Jharkhand Dharamashala, Himachal Pradesh Warangal, Telangana Panaji, Goa Agartala, Tripura Imphal, Manipur Port Blair, Andaman Nicobar

737. President invites Chinese businessmen to invest in India

President Pranab Mukherjee says India and China are in very interesting phase of economic cooperation. Speaking at India-China Business Forum at Guangzhou, Mr Pranab Mukherjee invited Chinese investors to invest in India. He said, Digital India, Make in India and liberalised foreign exchange regime offer great opportunity and asked China to promote Indian products in their market to make mutual trade sustainable.

He noted that Chinese overseas investment has crossed a hundred billion dollars and hoped more of it will flow to India. Earlier, speaking on the occasion, Chairman of the China Council for Promotion of International Trade said that they expect the two way trade to touch 200 billion dollars by 2019.

738. Pinarayi Vijayan to be sworn-in as Kerala CM

In Kerala, CPI(M) leader Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan and his 18 ministerial colleagues will sworn-in today evening. Chief Minister designate Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan submitted the list of ministers to Mr. Justice P. Sathasivam, Governor of Kerala today morning.

Governor will administer oath of secrecy to the 12th Chief Minister of Kerala and other ministers during the colourful ceremony scheduled to take place at Central Stadium, very near to the Secretariat in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram.

Chief Secretary Mr. S.M. Vijayanand informed that all the arrangements for the swearing-in ceremony are completed. Along with the Chief Minister, 11 MLAs from CPI(M), 4 from CPI and one each from Congress (S), NCP and Janata Dal (S) will sworn in as the cabinet members of the State of Kerala.

739. UGC approves new norms for deemed universities

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has brought out a new set of regulatory norms for deemed universities in order to reduce subjectivity and government interference and focus more on quality. According to the UGC Regulations, 2016, which were approved by the Commission at a meeting last week, an institution will be eligible to become a deemed university if it has undergraduate and 5 post-graduate programmes with research in existence for 3 years.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, Higher Education Secretary V S Oberoi said, the previous regulations had subjective terms which could be interpreted in different ways. He said, as per the new regulations, a deemed university should have a minimum 40 per cent open space of the total built up area. Mr Oberoi, however, emphasised that the new regulations would be required to go through the scrutiny of HRD Ministry after which they would be notified.

Additionally, to ensure quality, institutions vying for the deemed university tag will have to either get the highest NAAC or NBA accreditation rating for three cycles consecutively or an A grade at the time of application and a position among the top 20 institutions under the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF). Deemed universities will be able to open off-campus centres only after five years of their existence. Several educational institutions have in the past sought changes in the existing deemed university regulations.

740. Centre to issue notification on panic buttons in buses

The Centre will on June 2 issue notification making it mandatory for public transport buses to have panic buttons, CCTV cameras, and GPS-enabled vehicle tracking devices, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said on Wednesday. The minister said the step will ensure the safety of women passengers travelling in public buses. After launching a pilot project under which Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation will run 10 luxury and 10 ordinary

roadways buses fitted with emergency buttons and CCTV cameras, Gadkari said that a notification to have such devices in all public transport buses across the country will be issued on June 2.

"We are looking at installation of panic buttons, CCTV cameras and other devices at the manufacturing stage itself," he said on the sidelines of the event. Bulk purchase of such items will bring down the cost of the devices, he added. The ministry had issued these draft rules earlier this month under the Motor Vehicles Act and had sought comments from stakeholders including vehicle manufacturers. Under the proposed notification, transport vehicles with a seating capacity of over 23 passengers will mandatorily have CCTV cameras that will be connected to the global positioning system and will be monitored by the local police control room. Gadkari said that in case of any untoward event a woman passenger would be able to press the emergency button which in turn will transfer the information to the nearest local police station via the GPS. Once the emergency signal is triggered, the CCTV cameras will start displaying live footage of the bus at the central control room. Besides, if a vehicle deviates from its prescribed route (monitored through the GPS devices), the system will start sending signals tracking its movement to the control room.

741. Govt releases draft model rules for implementation of Juvenile Justice Act

Union Minister of [Women and Child Development](#) (WCD), [Maneka Gandhi](#) released draft model rules to repeal the existing rules for effective implementation of Juvenile Justice Act. The draft rules take care of the development needs of children and child friendly procedures are incorporated in it. In addition to draft rules, extensive forms have also been drafted to standardise and simplify prescribed procedures. The rules provide for rehabilitations and reintegration of children through children's home, open shelter and observation and special homes. The rules were framed by a multi-disciplinary committee headed by a senior judge and comprised senior advocates, members of juvenile justice board and child welfare committees and mental and health experts.

742. Govt renames disability dept; 'divyang' replaces 'viklang'

The development comes nearly five months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his radio address 'Mann Ki Baat' on December 27, last year, had said physically challenged people have a "divine ability" and the term "divyang" should be used in place of "viklang" for them.

The Centre had proposed the change in name of the department by amending the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961.

Now, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities ('Viklangjan' Sashaktikaran Vibhag) will be Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities ('Divyangjan' Sashaktikaran Vibhag), according to an order issued by Cabinet Secretariat.

President Pranab Mukherjee has given approval to the new nomenclature, it said.

The department, which works under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, facilitates empowerment of persons with disabilities.

As per the 2011 census, the differently abled constitute 2.21 per cent of the total population of the country.

743. Rail Humsafar Saptaah to be launched to celebrate achievements

Railway will launch Rail Humsafar Saptaah from 26th of this month to 1st June - a week long celebration to highlight Railway achievements during the last two years. Each day of the week will focus on a particular theme and will be observed as Swachhta Diwas, Satkar Diwas, Sewa Diwas, Satarkata Diwas, Saamanjasya Diwas, Sanyojan Diwas and Sanchaar Diwas.

Minister of Railways Suresh Prabhu has directed that all the General Managers should personally supervise various activities to be undertaken during the week. During the last two years a number of initiatives have been launched and significant achievements made by Indian Railways in all spheres, especially in its responsiveness, accessibility and improvement of passenger amenities.

744. **Pink Panther star, Burt Kwouk passes away**

Burt Kwouk, who was best known for playing Inspector Clouseau's manservant Cato in the Pink Panther films, has died at the age 85. He appeared in seven Pink Panther films opposite Peter Sellers as Clouseau's servant who regularly attacked his employer to keep him alert. He also starred in BBC sitcom Last of the Summer Wine from 2002 to 2010. The actor, who was born in Warrington but raised in Shanghai, was awarded an Order of British Empire in the 2011 New Year Honours List.

745. **US engineer Frances Arnold wins Millennium Technology Prize**

US engineer Frances Arnold has won the Millennium Technology Prize for pioneering directed evolution. By driving a sped-up version of natural selection in the lab, the method has created new enzymes for industrial catalysts, household detergents, and even to make rocket fuel from sugar.

The 1 million euro prize is awarded biennially and Prof Arnold is the first female winner in its 12-year history. It recognises developments that change people's lives for the better. The Technology Academy Finland, which presents the prize, said the deliberations began in November 2015 but that there was only one outstanding candidate.

746. **231 newly-elected MLAs take oath as members of 15th TN Assembly**

All the 231 newly-elected MLAs, including AIADMK Supremo and Chief Minister J Jayalithaa, DMK President M Karunanidhi, his son and leader of the main Opposition M K Stalin today took oath as members of the 15th Tamil Nadu Assembly. Protem Speaker S Semmalai administered the oath to the members on the first day of the first session of the new Assembly.

Of the total 232 MLAs who were elected in the May 16 Assembly elections, 231 members took oath. AIADMK MLA SM Seenivel, who was elected from Tiruparankundram in Madurai, died this morning after a brief illness. The House has a strength of 234 members and elections to Aravakurichi and Thanajvur was not held as scheduled on May 16 and was deferred to June 13 by the Election Commission.

747. **Laptops for students securing above 95% in grade 10: Haryana Minister**

Haryana Education Minister, Ram Bilas Sharma said that laptops would be provided to the top 500 students securing 95 per cent or above marks in Matric examinations conducted by Haryana Board of School Education. A provision of two crore rupees has been made for it in the current budget.

Mr Sharma said the State Government is promoting quality education in Haryana. It is a dream of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi that the future generations get such education which would make them employable and they also infuse in themselves moral values.

He said that in order to further improve the quality of education in Haryana, an ambitious initiative known as Learning Enhancement Programme (LEP) has been implemented in 3,222 primary schools. Under this programme, 18,000 teachers have been imparted training. He said that monthly tests programme has been initiated for Class I to Class XII to improve the education level of students.

748. **IT dept to name and shame crorepati defaulters this fiscal**

The Income Tax department has decided to name and shame' all category of taxpayers who have a default of one crore rupees and above. The department has begun publishing the names of tax defaulters in leading national dailies since last year and has named 67 such defaulters from across the country till now with their vital details like addresses, contacts, PAN card number and shareholders in case of companies.

The earlier exercise was restricted to people with huge defaults to the tune of about 20-30 crore rupees. The official said the aim of the exercise is to inform the public at large about such tax evaders whom the taxman has not been able to lay their hands on despite using various investigative and enforcement tools.

749. **RBI says one-third of ATMS non-functional, warns of penal action**

RBI Deputy Governor S S Mundra has raised concerns over one-third of ATMs being non-functional and warned the

banks of penal action if the compliance levels are not met. Mr Mundra quoted a survey of 4,000 ATMs conducted by a Reserve Bank team recently wherein it has found that almost one-third of these machines are not in working conditions.

Speaking at a banking event in Mumbai yesterday, Mr Mundra said the ATMs surveyed were situated in various parts of the country and were of various banks. He said the survey results are not comforting in any way.

The Deputy Governor further said that the RBI survey has also found many violations of various regulatory instructions such as on display material, facilities for differently abled, etc. He added that the RBI will be taking necessary supervisory action in this regard.

Mr Mundra said the government and the RBI have taken financial inclusion as one of the top agendas and ATMs are one of the ways to attain that objective. He said despite that banks are being found not adhering to the compliance levels prescribed by the regulators.

750. Govt revises norms of Performance in Credit Rating Scheme

Government yesterday approved the revision in guidelines of the Performance in Credit Rating Scheme, aiming to increase its credibility and effectiveness for both borrowers and banks. Under the revised guidelines, the fee to be paid to the rating agencies shall be based on the turnover of the micro and small enterprises which has been categorized into three slabs.

For turnover up to 50 lakh rupees, the fee to be reimbursed by the MSME Ministry will constitute 75 per cent of the fee charged by the rating agency subject to a ceiling 15,000 rupees. For turnover between 50 lakh and 2 crore rupees, the fee to be reimbursed will be 75 per cent of the fee charged by the rating agency subject to a ceiling of 30,000 rupees.

Similarly, for micro and small enterprises having turnover above 2 crore rupees, the fee to be reimbursed will be 75 per cent of the fee charged by the rating agency subject to a ceiling of 40,000 rupees. Besides, only rating agencies registered by SEBI and empanelled as External Credit Assessment Institution (ECAI) by RBI would be eligible to carry out rating of MSEs under the Scheme.

The MSME Ministry said, eligible rating agency should apply to receive subsidy under the PCR Scheme on the portal of NSIC. Approval for eligible rating agencies should be given within one month. Government in March had sought comments from stakeholders on the recommendations of the Committee set up by MSME Ministry for revision in the guidelines of Performance in Credit Rating Scheme.

751. Stung by loss of secrecy at home, Swiss banks run into trouble in Asia

Regulators' closure of the Swiss BSI bank's Asian outpost for failing in its duty to prevent money-laundering has highlighted the risks of hunting wealthy clients farther afield as Swiss banks' traditional line in hiding money from foreign tax men is choked off. The Swiss banking watchdog FINMA has already opened enforcement proceedings against no fewer than six other unnamed Swiss banks in relation to either the Malaysian fund that tripped up BSI or a separate scandal involving Brazil's state-controlled oil producer, Petrobras.

The head of Singapore's central bank accused BSI of the worst case of control lapses and gross misconduct ever seen in the city-state's financial sector for its dealings with the scandal hit Malaysian government fund 1 Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB). In recent years, Swiss banks have paid billions of dollars in fines as global prosecutors, led by the United States, chipped away at the secrecy that for decades enabled the world's wealthy to keep their cash in Switzerland, out of sight of the tax man.

752. New website of Ministry of AYUSH and web portal for IDY launched by shri Shripad Yesso Naik

Minister of state (Independent Charge) for AYUSH Shri Shripad Yesso Naik launched the new website of the Ministry of AYUSH and web portal for International Day of Yoga (IDY) in New Delhi today. The website <http://ayush.gov.in> has been developed as part of digital India programme, using content management framework (CMF) approach. The website is compliant to Government of India guidelines for Websites (GIGW) and it is developed on open source platform by NIC. This website is mobile friendly and CMF approach would adapt to all screen sizes across all

platforms viz. Android, IOS and Windows. The new portal for IDY has a provision for news to provide all the updated and relevant information relating to International Day of Yoga-2016. It has a social wall where all the social media interactive platform shall be available for the visitors to keep track on the discussions and participate in them. The portal will also have linkages of all the important web pages of the Government of India such as Swachh Bharat, Make in India etc. On this occasion Joint Secretary Ministry of AYUSH Shri Anil Kumar Ganeriwala gave a presentation to the media persons regarding International Day of Yoga which will be celebrated on 21st June 2016.

753. MoU between Indian Space Research Organisation and the United Arab Emirates Space Agency

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the United Arab Emirates Space Agency (UAESA) for cooperation in the exploration and user of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The MoU would result in setting up a Joint Working Group with members from ISRO and UAESA, which will further work out the plan of action including the time-frame and the means of implementing this MoU.

Background:

Promoting space cooperation between India and UAE was highlighted during the visit of Prime Minister of India to UAE in August 2015 and also at the 11th meeting of India-UAE Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation held at New Delhi in September 2015. Subsequently, a delegation from UAESA visited ISRO technical facilities on September 16, 2015 and discussed on the avenues of building space cooperation including signing of a MoU. Accordingly, ISRO and UAESA, considering their mutual interest in expanding the applications of space technology for peaceful purposes signed a MoU in New Delhi on February 11, 2016.

754. Cabinet gives ex-post facto approval to the MOU between India and Maldives for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today granted ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the Ministry of Tourism, Government of Maldives for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism.

The Memorandum of Understanding with Maldives will be instrumental in increasing arrival from this important source market. In recent years, Maldives has emerged as an important tourism generating market for India.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding, are:

- a) To expand bilateral cooperation in the tourism sector
- b) To exchange information and data related to tourism
- c) To encourage cooperation between tourism stakeholders, including hotels and tour operators
- d) To establish exchange programme for cooperation in Human Resources Development
- e) To invest in the Tourism and Hospitality sectors
- f) To exchange visits of Tour Operators/Media/Opinion Makers for promotion of two-way tourism
- g) To exchange experiences in the areas of promotion, marketing, destination development and management
- h) To participate in travel fairs/exhibitions in each others country and

i) To promote safe honourable and sustainable tourism

755. National Capital Goods Policy

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for National Capital Goods Policy. This is first ever policy for Capital Goods sector with a clear objective of increasing production of capital goods from Rs.2,30,000 crore in 2014-15 to Rs.7,50,000 crore in 2025 and raising direct and indirect employment from the current 8.4 million to 30 million.

The policy envisages increasing exports from the current 27 percent to 40 percent of production. It will increase the share of domestic production in India's demand from 60 percent to 80 percent thus making India a net exporter of capital goods. The policy also aims to facilitate improvement in technology depth across sub-sectors, increase skill availability, ensure mandatory standards and promote growth and capacity building of MSMEs.

The Policy will help in realising the vision of Building India as the World class hub for Capital Goods. It will also play a pivotal role in overall manufacturing as the pillar of strength to the vision of Make in India.

The objectives of the policy will be met by the Department of Heavy Industry in a time bound manner through obtaining approval for schemes as per the roadmap of policy interventions.

Background:

The idea of a National Capital Goods Policy was first presented by the Deptt. of Heavy Industry to the Prime Minister in the Make in India workshop held in December, 2014. The policy has been finalized after extensive stakeholder consultations with industry, academia, different ministries etc. The key recommendations and elements of the policy have been formulated to support and boost development of this crucial sector. The aim of the policy is create game changing strategies for the capital goods sector. Some of the key issues addressed include availability of finance, raw material, innovation and technology, productivity, quality and environment friendly manufacturing practices, promoting exports and creating domestic demand.

756. India's first start-up hostel opens doors in Bengaluru

At the newly opened Construkt Startup Hostel, a young lady sprawled on a sofa that looks suspiciously like a bathtub, peers intently at her laptop. We pulled that out of one of the bathrooms and remodelled it, laughs Shashikiran Rao, the co-founder and head of business development at Construkt. It is a bit of a take-off from the Archimedes story: we wanted a spot where people can jump up and say Eureka. Located in one of Bengaluru's biggest start-up hubs Indiranagar, the three-storied building that houses the hostel is painted a cheery orange and white. Because these are the construkt colours, says Rao, adding that the hostel is an extension of its core philosophy: to forge connections and celebrate the spirit of entrepreneurship. Construkt has been in the start-up community space for the last four years now. We started off with a festival which is recognized as one of the largest festivals and have been experimenting with counter-culture experiences, says Rao, who started Construkt Media in 2012 along with Karan Bahadur.

757. Union Bank launches e-SBTR facility for Maha govt

State-run lender [Union Bank of India](#) today launched electronic secured bank treasury receipt (e-SBTR) facility for the [Maharashtra](#) government.

"The e-SBTR system enhances ease of operation and convenience for citizens by providing single window payment facility of both stamp duty and registration fee," Bank's executive director Vinod Kathuria told reporters here today.

The new facility will be available at all its 500 branches of the bank in the state as well through internet banking, he said.

The facility allows payments without any ceiling and is available 24X7 through the year through internet banking.

758. AIADMK announces four candidates for Rajya Sabha polls

AIADMK general secretary and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J.Jayalithaa on Wednesday announced the party's candidates for the June 11 Rajya Sabha polls. In a statement issued here, Jayalalithaa named R.Vaithalingam, A.Navaneethakrishnan, A.Vijayakumar and former union minister S.R.Balasubramanian will be the official candidates. The six year Rajya Sabha terms for K.P.Ramalingam, S.Thangavelu (both from DMK), A.Vavaneethakrishnan, Paul Manoj Pandian and A.Wiliam Rabi Bernard (AIADMK) and Congress leader E.M.Sudarsana Natchiappan will expire in June.

759. China to adopt world's strictest vehicle emission standards

Chinese capital Beijing will implement the world's new strictest vehicle emission standards by next year to reduce hazardous hydrocarbon emissions by five per cent, authorities said today. Beijing took the lead in China in using unleaded gasoline 2007 and worked out Beijing II gasoline standard in 2014. Later in 2005, 2008 and 2012, Beijing issued and implemented Beijing III, Beijing IV and Beijing V gasoline standards, the city's Environmental Protection Bureau said. Gasoline standards in Beijing are always one or two stages ahead of other Chinese cities. The newest standard Beijing VI will reduce vehicle hydrocarbon emissions by five per cent, state-run Peoples Daily reported. Beijing is expected to implement the new standard in December next year. The new, strictest standard will lower emissions by 40 to 50 per cent. It is predicted that by 2022, overall vehicle emissions pollution in Beijing will be reduced by 20 to 30 per cent.

760. Andhra Pradesh to introduce e-Office system in all districts

Andhra Pradesh, a pioneering state in implementing e-Governance initiatives, is set to take another giant step by introducing e-Office system in all districts. e-Office will be introduced on a pilot basis in all 13 districts in June followed by a full-scale launch in July, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu announced at the two-day conference of district collectors in Vijayawada on Wednesday. Already 2,23,582 files with 1,72,40,119 pages have been scanned and kept ready while another 2,02,193 files would also be digitised soon. Incidentally, a first-of-its-kind e-Cabinet system is already in place, enabling paperless meetings of the state Cabinet, with the Chief Minister and his colleagues using iPads for transacting the agenda. The Chief Minister directed officials to constitute a Cyber Security wing to ensure safety of the electronic files. A three-member committee would also be constituted to prepare the e-file protocol.

761. What is Chabahar port deal? Why it is important for India?

India, Iran and Afghanistan have signed a historic trilateral contract for the establishment of a transport and transit corridor among the three countries. The deal was signed at the visit of Prime Minister Modi where he met Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. The central point of the deal is the construction of the Chabahar port by India in two phases. Two firms India's India Ports Global Private Limited (IPGPL) and Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) have signed the agreement for the construction of the port. The IPGPL will develop two terminals and five multi-cargo berths in Phase-1 of the Chabahar project with an initial investment of \$500 million by India. Chabahar is located in the Gulf of Oman on the border with Pakistan and is just less than hundred kilometers from the Pakistani border city of Gwadar where China is developing a port to groom Pakistan as the gateway to Central Asia. Chabahar is Iran's closest access point to the Indian Ocean. Why Chabahar is important for India? The Chabahar as a transit point will be the center of a regional trade, investment and transportation hub with links from the Indian Ocean to Central Asia. For the first time, India will get access to the region through friendly nations. (1) Chabahar and its road connectivity to Central Asia From Chabahar port, the existing Iranian road network can link up to Zaranj in Afghanistan, about 883 km from the port. The Zaranj-Delaram road constructed by India in 2009 can give access to Afghanistan's Garland highway, setting up road access to four major Afghan cities --Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif. Mazar e Sharif is near to Uzbekistan. (2) Afghanistan will get a politically sustainable connectivity with India The Chabahar-Zahedan-Zaranj corridor is a potential game-changer for regional connectivity, as it gives an alternative access for Afghanistan to India via the sea. This connectivity will enhance the development nature of economic engagement between the two countries. (3) No need to depend on China sponsored Road and Belt projects to connect with Central Asia At present, central Asia is getting lot of connectivity projects sponsored under the China sponsored Road and Belt Policy. India is not a part of the endeavor and in this context, an own initiative will help India to avoid dependence on China sponsored Central Asian connectivity. As the West imposed ban on Iran has ended, there will be more expansion of Iran bound trade. India has increased its crude purchase from Iran ever since the end of the ban. With reducing remittance attraction and reciprocal commitment with Arab countries, Iran may get a higher role in India's economic

engagement. Hence, in future, there is higher scope and benefit for mutual trade between the two countries and the new port deal is very important as a trade facilitator.

762. Why the new Capital Goods Policy is important for India?

If we have to excel as an economy, we have to excel in the manufacturing sector; specifically, in capital goods sector. Capital goods are goods that are used in the production of other goods. More accurately, capital goods are machineries used for the production of other goods. According to the draft capital goods policy, Capital goods consist of plant machinery, equipment and accessories required, either directly or indirectly, for manufacture or production of goods or for rendering services, including those required for replacement, modernization, technological upgradation and expansion of manufacturing facilities. Production of good machineries need technological skill of par excellence. Countries like USA, Germany and now China dominate the world economy because they are producers of quality capital goods and are exporting these to other countries to earn foreign currency. The fast development of China was highly contributed by the development of its capital goods industry. Why capital goods sector is important for India? If India is to get the next big step towards progress, its industrial sector should reach around 40% of GDP, making more exports of machineries. Similarly, this will reduce dependence on imported machineries and will save foreign exchange. More than anything else, if India develops its own capital goods industry, this will be possible only through technological upgradation and own manpower expansion. Without this industrial sector and capital goods sector India can never become a US or a China. Now at present Indias capital goods sector is in poor state. We import large quantity of machineries from foreign countries especially China. India's share in global exports of capital goods is very low at 0.8%; compared to its overall goods export share of 1.7%. Capital goods is the second largest import item for India after crude oil. Around Rs. 122,000 Cr worth of capital goods were imported in to India during 2014- 15. To reverse this, India has to improve its technology, invention and intellectual property culture. It is for this purpose that the government has brought a capital goods policy for the first time. A major reason for the underdeveloped capital goods sector is low technological depth and RD, according to the draft policy. According to the draft policy, India's current level of technology depth ranges from basic to intermediate, indicating limited ability in fundamental research. Indias rank is 30th in the world on research intensity, with 0.9% of GDP spent in RD. This is low compared to advanced countries like South Korea (3.6%), Japan (3.4%) and China (3%). Low technology led to poor manufacturing competitiveness for India. This is reflected in inferior supply base (quantity, quality) and value chain capabilities as an industrial country. What the capital goods policy says? The capital goods policy ratified by the Cabinet aims to reduce reliance on imported machineries and to create millions of jobs. The policy targets to meet domestic requirements from 60% to 80% and thus to become a net exporter. Production of capital goods will be increased to Rs 7.5 lakh crore by 2025 from the present Rs 2.3 lakh crores. Cabinets initial framework about the policy also targets for the restructuring especially financial restructuring of the major PSES and establishment of new IITs.

763. Government frames new capital goods policy

The Cabinet has approved a capital goods policy, with a vision to reduce reliance on imported machineries and to create millions of jobs. The policy targets to meet domestic requirements from 60% to 80% and thus to become a net exporter. Production of capital goods will be increased to Rs 7.5 lakh crore by 2025 from the present Rs 2.3 lakh crores. Cabinets initial framework about the policy also targets for the restructuring especially financial restructuring of the major PSES and establishment of new IITs. India heavily depends on imports to meet it domestic capital goods demand. For many years, capital goods are the second largest import item after crude oil. Most of the capital goods are imported from China. Sectors like telecom, energy and other basic infrastructure are making heavy imports from China. Development of the capital goods sector is a prerequisite for the industrialization of the country as well. China is leading the front with rapid pace in industrial sector especially in the machinery sector. Chinas share in world capital goods exports is around 12%. On the other hand, Indias share is less than 0.5% compared to its export share of 1.7% for the whole goods.

764. Today in History

0017 - Germanicus of Rome celebrated his victory over the Germans.

1328 - William of Ockham was forced to flee from Avignon by Pope John XXII.

1521 - Martin Luther was banned by the Edict of Worms because of his religious beliefs and writings.

1647 - A new law banned Catholic priests from the colony of [Massachusetts](#). The penalty was banishment or death for a second offense.

1660 - King Charles II of England landed at Dover after being exiled for nine years.

1670 - A treaty was signed in secret in Dover, England, between Charles II and Louis XIV ending the hostilities between them.

1691 - Jacob Leiser, leader of the popular uprising in support of William and Marys accession to the English throne, was executed for treason.

1736 - The British and Chickasaw Indians defeated the French at the Battle of Ackia.

1791 - The French Assembly forced King Louis XVI to hand over the crown and state assets.

1805 - Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned King of Italy in Milan Cathedral.

1831 - Russians defeated the Poles at battle of Ostrolenska.

1835 - A resolution was passed in the [U.S.](#) Congress stating that Congress has no authority over state slavery laws.

1836 - The [U.S.](#) House of Representatives adopted what has been called the Gag Rule.

1864 - The Territory of [Montana](#) was organized.

1865 - Arrangements were made in New Orleans for the surrender of Confederate forces west of the [Mississippi](#).

1868 - [U.S. President Andrew Johnson](#) was acquitted, by one vote, of all charges in his impeachment trial.

1896 - The Dow Jones Industrial Average appeared for the first time in the "Wall Street Journal."

1896 - The last czar of Russia, Nicholas II, was crowned.

1908 - In Persia, the first oil strike was made in the Middle East.

1913 - Actors Equity Association was organized in New York City.

1926 - In Morocco, rebel leader Abd el Krim surrendered.

1938 - The House Committee on Un-American Activities began its work of searching for subversives in the [United States](#).

1940 - The evacuation of Allied troops from Dunkirk, France, began during World War II.

1946 - A patent was filed in the United States for an H-bomb.

1946 - British Prime Minister Winston Churchill signed a military pact with Russian leader Joseph Stalin. Stalin promised a "close collaboration after the war."

1948 - The [U.S.](#) Congress passed Public Law 557 which permanently established the Civil Air Patrol as the Auxiliary of the new [U.S.](#) Air Force.

1956 - The first trailer bank opened for business in Locust Grove, Long Island, [NY](#). The 46-foot-long trailer took in

\$100,000 in deposits its first day.

1958 - Union Square, San Francisco became a state historical landmark.

1959 - The word "Frisbee" became a registered trademark of Wham-O.

1961 - Civil rights activist group Freedom Ride Coordinating Committee was established in Atlanta, [GA](#).

1961 - A [U.S.](#) Air Force bomber flew across the Atlantic in a record time of just over three hours.

1969 - The Apollo 10 astronauts returned to Earth after a successful eight-day dress rehearsal for the first manned moon landing.

1972 - The Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) was signed by the [U.S.](#) and USSR. The short-term agreement put a freeze on the testing and deployment of intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles for a 5-year period.

1973 - Kathy Schmidt set an American womens javelin record with a throw of 207 feet, 10 inches.

1975 - American stuntman Evel Knievel suffered severe spinal injuries in Britain when he crashed while attempting to jump 13 buses in his car.

1977 - George H. Willig was arrested after he scaled the South Tower of New York's World Trade Center. It took him 3 1/2 hours.

1978 - The first legal casino in the Eastern [U.S.](#) opened in Atlantic City, [NJ](#).

1987 - Sri Lanka launched Operation Liberation. It was an offensive against the Tamil rebellion in Jaffra.

1988 - The Edmonton Oilers won their fourth NHL Stanley Cup in five seasons. They swept the series 4 games to 0 against the Boston Bruins.

1994 - [U.S. President Clinton](#) renewed trade privileges for China, and announced that his administration would no longer link China's trade status with its human rights record.

1998 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ruled that Ellis Island was mainly in [New Jersey](#), not [New York](#).

1998 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ruled that police officers in high-speed chases are liable for bystander injuries only if their "actions shock the conscience."

1998 - The Grand Princess cruise ship made its inaugural cruise. The ship measured 109,000 tons and cost approximately \$450 million, making it the largest and most expensive cruise ship ever built.

1998 - The United States Senate approved legislation that allowed the U.S. Mint flexibility on how the mandatory inscriptions on the Washington quarter could be placed. H.R. 3301 allowed the mandatory inscriptions to be moved to the front of the quarter for the 50 States Circulating Commemorative Coin Program.

765. World's first 3D-printed office opens in Dubai

The world's first 3D-printed office building [opened this week in Dubai](#), Reuters reports. The 2,700-square-foot, single-story building was built in just 17 days using a gigantic, 20-foot tall 3D printer and a special mix of concrete, fiber reinforced plastic and glass fiber reinforced gypsum. Although the "printer" was massive at about two stories tall, 120 feet long and 40 feet wide, it only needed one staffer to make sure it was functioning properly. The rest of the 18-person construction crew consisted of installers, electricians and mechanical engineers who completed the job for a mere \$140,000 in construction and labor costs or about [half the price](#) of a comparable structure built with conventional

methods. Of course, the building is more than just another gold star in the UAE's [ultramodern playland](#) it will also serve, appropriately enough, as the temporary headquarters for the Dubai Future Foundation. Next year, the structure is scheduled to become the home of Dubai's [Museum of the Future](#). "This is the first 3D-printed building in the world, and it's not just a building, it has fully functional offices and staff," the UAE Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Mohamed Al Gergawi said. According to Gergawi, Dubai plans to have 25 percent of the buildings in the emirate built via 3D printing by the year 2030.

766. 'Encyclopedia' of languages of Gujarat published

The city-based Bhasha Research and Publication Centre today announced publication of the Gujarat, Diu Daman and Dadra Nagar Haveli Volume of the People's Linguistic Survey of [India](#) Series (PLSI).

The volume, edited by Kanjibhai Patel and published by Orient Blackswan, would be released by the [Gujarat](#) Governor O P Kohli tomorrow.

The volume documents 49 languages or dialects spoken in the state, including the languages of coastal, tribal and nomadic communities.

Ganesh N Devy, a renowned literary critic and activist and the founder of the Bhasha Research and Publication Centre, said, "I had launched a nationwide survey of the living languages of India in 2010. The survey findings and documentation are now being published as a linguistic encyclopedia of 70 volumes. 20 volumes have already been published.

767. PM says his govt is for poor and has provided corruption free governance in last two years

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is currently addressing a rally in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh on completion of two years of the NDA government at the Centre.

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister thanked the people of the country and people for reposing faith in his government. He said his government is trying to fulfill peoples' aspirations.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said the NDA government is for the poor of the country and in its two year rule it has provided transparent and accountable governance.

Addressing a mega rally in Saharanpur on the second anniversary of NDA government, Mr. Modi said he has gone there to give a report card of his government's performance. He said the country has seen NDA government work in the last two years.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the retirement age for government doctors will be increased from the current retirement age to 65 years.

Addressing a rally in Saharanpur to launch the celebrations for the second anniversary for the NDA government, Mr. Modi said the country is facing a huge shortage of doctors.

Since it was impossible to create a doctor in two years, the government was going for another option. Prime Minister said, that the retirement age for government doctors, which is 60 or 62 in some places, will be made 65 all over the country.

Union Ministers Rajanath Singh and Sanjiv Balyan besides senior BJP leaders are attending the rally. Earlier, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh addressed a rally in Saharanpur, highlighting two years of NDA Government at Centre.

Rajnath Singh in his opening remarks said that this Government is accountable and this is why they have come in public with their report card.

Mr. Singh also said that Prime Minister feels for the farmers and that is why he has introduced a lot of benefit schemes

for the farmers.

Rajnath Singh also poured scathing remarks on Congress saying it has now been limited to North Hilly regions of the country only.

768. President discusses issues including border, terrorism, nuclear & economic expansion with China

President Pranab Mukherjee had meeting with the top Chinese leader including his counter part Mr. Xi Jinping and the Prime Minister LI keqiang on bilateral, multilateral and global issues in Beijing this evening.

Briefing media the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Jaishankar said the leaders from the both countries discussed expansion of finance and trade, flagship programmes, border issues, terrorism and nuclear issues.

Replying to a media question that if the Masood Azhar issue came up in the meeting, the secretary said that India made it clear that there is a global fight against terrorism and there in nothing like good terrorist and bad terrorist.

The two country resolved to cooperate in UN on this issue. On border disputes both sides acknowledged that as neighbours, it is natural to have some differences but we must find convergences to move ahead.

In reply to another question on nuclear issue, he said that India's consistent stand has been that we need clean energy for our people.

AIR correspondent reports that Chinese leaders appreciated top level exchanges between the two countries. The President will return home tomorrow after completing four day state visit.

India and China today signed eleven MOUs on academic co-operation in presence of the visiting Indian President Mr. Pranab Mukherjee in Beijing.

From Indian side, they included Nalanda university, IIT Delhi, IIM Calcutta, Central University of Gujrat, Visvesvarya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur and IIT, Bhubaneshwar with Peking University, Chang'an University, East china university of Political science and Law, Beijing Foreign University, Jinan university from China side.

The area covered under the agreement include Science , engineering, research, academic exchange, computer science and engineering, urban planning and climate change.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Mukherjee said that India is taking up several steps to raise the quality of research as allocating more resources and with foreign collaboration.

Steps are also taken to improve research eco-system. Mr. President recounted that India has consistently backed China in International fora.

Be it early recognition and establishment of diplomatic relations with China and also inclusion of Peking in United Nations and restitution of China as permanent member in UN security Council.

769. HC stays reservation for Jats, five other communities

Punjab and Haryana High Court today granted interim stay on reservation given to Jats and five other castes in Haryana. The reservation was challenged in the court by a petitioner on the grounds that it is in violation of Supreme Court orders. The court has fixed July 21 next date of hearing, the government will file its reply on this date.

The government of Haryana had earlier approved the Haryana Backward Classes (Reservation in Services and Admission in Educational Institutions) Bill. The bill enlists the Jats, Bishnois, Tyagis, and Rors in the recently sculpted Backward Classes (C) category, making them eligible for 10 per cent reservation in class 3 and 4 posts, and 6 per cent reservation in class 1 and 2 jobs.

770. Govt conducts comprehensive research to identify earthquake prone areas: Minister

Government is conducting comprehensive research across the country to identify the earthquake prone areas to prevent major disasters resulting from the quakes.

In an exclusive interview to All India Radio, Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said, the government has fixed sensors at Koyana in Maharashtra to know the reasons of frequent tremors in the area. He said, if the research becomes successful, India would be able to deal with earthquake effectively.

The Minister said, a similar project is underway at Shillong which witnesses frequent quakes. Mr. Harsh Vardhan also said the Centre has taken several initiatives in the fields of weather forecasting, formulation of new vaccines, biotechnology and energy research in the last two years.

The Minister said, India's weather forecasting has become world class and its Tsunami warning system is constantly being tested and will have the maximum possible warning period in case of another strike.

771. Decision to allow 100% FDI in food processing was path-breaking: Harsimrat Kaur Badal

Minister for Food processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal has said that Government's decision to allow 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment in food processing sector was one the path-breaking decision of her Ministry.

In an exclusive interview to AIR, Ms Badal said, the decision will generate a lots of jobs, give good remuneration to farmers and reduce wastage of food and perishable items.

She said, during the last two years, her Ministry has sanctioned 30 new cold chains and 78 has been operationalized. She said, job creation for youth and skill development is also major focus of her Ministry.

772. Govt releases booklet to highlight efforts of Defence Production

Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar released a booklet in New Delhi highlighting the efforts made by Department of Defence Production in the last two years. The booklet is a compilation of the achievements in the field of indigenous production of weapon systems and policy initiatives undertaken during the period.

Under the Make in India programme, the emphasis has been given to improve the business environment, encourage participation of Indian public and private sector in defence production and promote innovation and indigenous development of equipment and weapon platforms.

The booklet also talks about a number of policy initiatives including relaxation in FDI Policy, liberalising licensing policy and streamlining defence offset guidelines. The booklet also reveals that during the last two years, exports have almost doubled and 119 industrial licences have been issued.

It also mentions that all Naval ships and submarines on order are being constructed in Indian shipyards. The expenditure on capital procurement from foreign vendors in the last two years has come down from about 35 thousand crore rupees to nearly 22 thousand 400 crore rupees.

773. Centre approves over Rs 5500 cr for infrastructure in six States

The Centre has approved an investment of over 5500 crore rupees in basic urban infrastructure in six states under Atal Mission. The States are Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Odisha, Jharkhand and Meghalaya. An official release said, the investment will be made for providing household water taps, improving water supply, sewerage networks, urban transport and provision of open and green spaces in one hundred eleven Atal Mission cities of these states.

The decision was taken by the Apex committee of Urban Development Ministry under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, AMRUT in New Delhi. With this now, the total investment approved so far under Atal Mission has gone up to over 26 thousand crore rupees involving a central assistance of over 12 thousand crore rupees.

The Apex Committee also approved the release of central assistance of 520 crore rupees for the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, JNNURM scheme. AIR correspondent reports, under AMRUT, 497 cities and towns with a population of over one lakh and all state capitals and cities and towns of tourism and economic importance and hill stations have been included. The mission was launched in June last year.

774. Coast Guard Ship 'ARUSH' commissioned at Kochi

The indigenously built Coast Guard Ship 'ARUSH' was commissioned at Kochi by Additional Director General Coast Guard Mr Surinder Pal Basra. The fifty meter Fast Patrol Vehicle has a displacement 421 tonnes and can achieve maximum speed of 33 knots. It is equipped with state of art weaponry and advanced communication and navigational equipment.

It is built and designed by Cochin Shipyard Ltd. Post commissioning, the ship will be based at Porbandar, under the administrative and operational control of the Commander, Coast Guard Region (North West).

775. AIM to establish 500 Atal Tinkering Laboratories in schools

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) will establish 500 Atal Tinkering Laboratories in schools to foster creativity and scientific temper in students.

NITI Aayog has invited applications from eligible schools and individuals to apply for the three major schemes under Atal Innovation Mission.

These are establishing tinkering laboratories in schools, new incubation centres and scaling-up established incubation centres.

An official release said, young children will get a chance to work with tools and equipment to understand the concepts of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The Mission will spend 20 lakhs per Atal Tinkering Laboratory in each selected school.

The Atal Incubation Centres will provide pre-incubation facilities, common infrastructure and services such as technology development assistance, networking and mentoring. AIMs objective is to setup 100 Atal Incubation Centres during current financial year.

776. World leaders kick off G7 talks with economy in focus

In Japan, world leaders kick off two days of G7 talks today with the creaky global economy, terrorism, refugees, China's controversial maritime claims, and a possible Brexit headlining their packed agenda.

Heads of state and government from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada and host Japan are meeting in Ise Shima, a mountainous, sparsely populated area about 300 kilometres southwest of Tokyo.

China, the world's second largest economy, will not be present, but it looks set to loom large over discussions. Japan and the US are keen to corral support for a growing pushback against Beijing's territorial assertiveness in the South China Sea.

The G7 will also discuss the refugee crisis and Islamist terrorism, with France's Hollande keen to address the issue after a brutal year that saw France hit twice by jihadists.

Following the talks, Obama will move on to Hiroshima, becoming the first sitting US leader to travel to the city, the site of the world's first nuclear attack, on August, 6th, 1945.

777. Global economic crisis may have caused 5 lakh cancer deaths

A new study says the global economic crisis of 2008 may have caused 5 lakhs cancer deaths.

The study in the medical journal Lancet says a loss of jobs and cuts in health care shut out people seeking help for such easily diagnosed and treatable cancers as prostate cancer for men, breast cancer for women and colon cancer for both

genders.

The authors of the study reached their conclusions by calculating the rise in cancer deaths for every 1 percent rise in the unemployment rate combined with the drop in health care spending.

The study concludes that the association between the rise in cancer deaths and unemployment disappears when universal health care is available.

778. Gujarat CM launches Ujala scheme from Vadodara

Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel has launched Ujala scheme in Vadodara today to distribute LED bulbs to the people. Under this central scheme, the state government will distribute more than one crore LED bulbs at subsidized rates of Rs 80 to 85 per piece. The bulb will have 3-year replacement warranty. It will be of 7 to 8 watts capacity with luminosity of 900 lumens.

Each household will get maximum ten bulbs in the first phase. The amount will be charged through electricity bill in ten equal installments. Bulbs will be available at the offices of power distribution companies, bill cash counters and Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) kiosks. The state government will purchase the bulbs from EESL for distribution among the public.

779. Gujarat's Maghrol village declared first Sansad Adarsh Gram

Adarsh Gram Yojana is a rural development programme broadly focusing upon the development in the villages. The program also aimed to spread motivation among the people on social mobilization of the village community apart from social and cultural development.

The programme was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 11th October 2014, the birth anniversary of late Shri Jayaprakash Narayan.

The key objectives of the program is to development the model village, called Adarsh Grams through the implementation of existing schemes and certain new initiatives in the local context.

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana was initiated to bring the member of parliament of all the political parties under the one umbrella while taking the responsibility of developing physical and institutional infrastructure in the villages.

Under this scheme, each Member of Parliament needs to choose one village from their constituency except their own village and make it a model village. AIR correspondent report that Maghrol village of Anand district of Gujarat has been declared first Sansad Adarsh Gram following completion of all development projects.

780. SEBI bans wilful defaulters from markets, holding board positions

Capital market regulator, SEBI has notified amended norms barring wilful defaulters from making a public issue of shares, debt securities, or non-convertible redeemable preference shares. But wilful defaulters can be allowed to tap existing shareholders by way of rights issue, private placement, or preferential allotment. SEBI has also restrained wilful defaulters from setting up market intermediaries like mutual funds and brokerage firms.

Also, a company or its promoters and directors categorised as wilful defaulters are barred from taking control of any other listed company. The new rules, effective from yesterday, apply to entities declared wilful defaulter as per RBI norms. An individual or a company is declared a 'wilful defaulter' for deliberate non-payment of dues despite adequate cash flow and good net worth, and for siphoning off funds to the detriment of the defaulting unit.

781. Shala Asmita Yojana (SAY) to be Launched Next Month by HRD Ministry

The HRD (Human Resource Development) ministry is all set to launch probably the worlds largest student tracking system next month. Named as Shala Asmita Yojana (SAY), the scheme is basically a tracking system for over 25 Crore students from class 1st to 12th. The tracking system will keep records of academic journey of every students studying in about 15 lakh private and Government schools in India. Asmita stands for All School Monitoring, Individual Tracing

Analysis. The tracking system, in other words the online database will be a single platform which will carry all the information about every student such as student attendance and enrollment, mid-day meal service, learning outcomes and infrastructural facilities, among other things. The tracking of students will be done on the basis of Aadhar numbers. About 65% of the students between the age of 5 to 18 years have Aadhar numbers, according to estimates. The students without Aadhar numbers will be provided unique identity number for tracking. According to the ministry officials, a presentation about the Shala Asmita Yojana (SAY) is to be made at the Prime Ministers office on Monday. The scheme will be launched by mid June 2016. The data of the students will be manually entered into the online tracking system by the local authorities of each state. According to the sources, all the states are on board. The tracking system is also expected to track leakage and corruption in mid-day meals.

782. Panel to submit report on status of women and children

V S Ugrappa, chairperson of the Legislature Committee on Women and Child Safety, said his committee would report on the status of women and children and the atrocities committed against them.

The report, to be given by June end, would cover all 30 districts of the state, he said at a district-level meeting on Thursday.

Ugrappa said he had toured 22 districts and reviewed complaints of atrocities committed against women and children. In nearly 95% of the cases, there have been no convictions. The committee, set up around 18 months ago, will try to find the reasons for this, he promised, and added, The low rate of conviction is due to the failure of police and prosecution. Witnesses who turn hostile are major offenders. The Police Department is accountable for such atrocities.

Ugrappa said, A society can be called civilised only when it has no case of atrocities on women and children. The nations capital New Delhi ranks high in the list of places with cases of violence on women. As per the data on cases of violence against women, the main cause of such acts is psychological distress and mens desire to prove they are potent.

He added that he has recommended that the powers given to the Legal Services Authority should be transferred to the committee which will be headed by the deputy commissioner, superintendent of police, zilla panchayat CEO and others for early disposal of the cases.

Lambasting DHO Dr Rohini for not providing reasons for decreasing gender ratio, Ugrappa said that officials concerned had failed to find the reasons.

Deputy Commissioner Dr Vishal R said that there are 1,094 females for every 1,000 males, but the count had reduced from 1,130 in the past two to three decades. The main reasons are migration and single-child norm adopted by the parents. Also, 99% of the total deliveries are institutional. The Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act has been strictly imposed in the district, the officer explained.

The DHO said that the district had 104 radiology centres. Expressing his displeasure over committees not being set up in the departments as per the Vishaka guidelines after the Supreme Court reprimanded the government, Ugrappa said the officials were ignorant about the guidelines. He said the funds released to empower SC/STs, dalits, women and children had not been utilised properly by the departments concerned.

The DC informed that Rs 20,000 each has been given to 12 transgender and 12 sex workers. SP Annamalai said women staff crunch has been bothering the Police Department in the district. There is mere 10.1% as against the 33% recommended by the government. A district-level committee has been set up under Vishaka guidelines and a PSI-ranking female officer is heading the committee, he added.

783. Today in History - May 27

1647 - Alse Young (Achsah Young or Alice Young), a resident of Windsor, [CT](#), was executed for being a "witch." It was the first recorded American execution of a "witch."

1668 - Three colonists were expelled from [Massachusetts](#) for being Baptists.

1813 - Americans captured Fort George, Canada.

1896 - 255 people were killed in St. Louis, [MO](#), when a tornado struck.

1901 - The Edison Storage Battery Company was organized.

1907 - The Bubonic Plague broke out in San Francisco.

1919 - A [U.S.](#) Navy seaplane completed the first transatlantic flight.

1926 - Bronze figures of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer were erected in Hannibal, [MO](#).

1929 - Colonel Charles Lindbergh and Anne Spencer Murrow were married.

1931 - Piccard and Knipfer made the first flight into the stratosphere, by balloon.

1933 - Walt Disney's "Three Little Pigs" was first released.

[Disney movies, music and books](#)

1933 - In the [U.S.](#), the Federal Securities Act was signed. The act required the registration of securities with the Federal Trade Commission.

1935 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court declared that President Franklin Roosevelt's National Industrial Recovery Act was unconstitutional.

1937 - In [California](#), the Golden Gate Bridge was opened to pedestrian traffic. The bridge connected San Francisco and Marin County.

1941 - [U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt](#) proclaimed an "unlimited national emergency" amid rising world tensions.

1941 - The German battleship Bismarck was sunk by British naval and air forces. 2,300 people were killed.

1942 - German General Erwin Rommel began a major offensive in Libya with his Afrika Korps.

1944 - [U.S.](#) General MacArthur landed on Biak Island in New Guinea.

1960 - A military coup overthrew the democratic government of Turkey.

1964 - Indian Prime Minister Jawaharla Nehru died.

1968 - After 48 years as coach of the Chicago Bears, George Halas retired.

1969 - Construction of Walt Disney World began in [Florida](#).

1977 - George H. Willig was fined for scaling the World Trade Center in New York on May 26. He was fined \$1.10.

1982 - Japan announced the elimination of tariffs on 96 industrial goods.

1985 - In Beijing, representatives of Britain and China exchanged instruments of ratification on the pact returning Hong Kong to the Chinese in 1997.

1986 - Mel Fisher recovered a jar that contained 2,300 emeralds from the Spanish ship Atocha. The ship sank in the 17th century.

1988 - The U.S. Senate ratified the INF treaty. The INF pact was the first arms-control agreement since the 1972 Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) to receive Senate approval.

1994 - Nobel Prize-winning author Alexander Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia. He had been in exile for two decades.

1995 - In Charlottesville, VA, Christopher Reeve was paralyzed after being thrown from his horse during a jumping event.

1996 - Russian President Boris Yeltsin negotiated a cease-fire to the war in Chechnya in his first meeting with the leader of the rebels.

1997 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ruled that the sexual harassment suit filed by Paula Jones could continue while President Clinton was in office.

1998 - Charlie Sheen was admitted to a hospital in Los Angeles for a drug overdose.

1998 - Michael Fortier was sentenced to 12 years in prison for not warning anyone about the plot to bomb an Oklahoma City federal building.

1999 - In The Hague, Netherlands, a war crimes tribunal indicted Slobodan Milosevic and four others for atrocities in Kosovo. It was the first time that a sitting head of state had been charged with such a crime.

2010 - Universal Studios reopened its backlot. The area had been destroyed by a fire two years before.

784. Railway launches week-long drive to showcase achievements

Ministry of [Railways](#) will launch a week-long celebration kicking off tomorrow to highlight its achievements in the last two years under the BJP-led [NDA](#) government.

During the "Rail Hamsafar Saptah" every day of the week will be marked with a particular theme, [Central Railway](#) said in a statement issued here today.

"While the first day (of the Saptah) tomorrow would be celebrated as 'Swachhta Diwas', May 27 as 'Satkar Diwas', May 28 as 'Sewa Diwas', May 29 as 'Satarkata Diwas', May 30 as 'Saamanjasya Diwas', May 31 as 'Sanyojan Diwas' and the concluding day June 1 as 'Sanchaar Diwas'," it stated.

On 'Swachhta Diwas' cleanliness drive will be arranged at various stations and on various trains, while on 'Satkar Diwas' officers would be deputed to inspect catering establishments and drinking water facilities at various stations and in trains to ensure that trains having pantry cars are inspected and catering units at stations are checked.

"On 'Sewa Diwas' each train would be monitored by an officer between 10 AM to 4 PM and nominated officers would travel by these trains and interact with passengers in all classes. On 'Satarkata Diwas', punctuality and ticket checking drive would be undertaken," according to the release.

It further stated that a day-long exercise would be undertaken on 'Saamanjasya Diwas' wherein teams of concerned officers would inspect railway staff colonies along with representatives of recognised unions to undertake cleanliness drive in the colonies and also for their upkeep and maintenance.

As per Central Railways, meetings and seminars with major freight traffic customers will be held on 'Sanyojan Diwas' to advise them about the various reforms and policy initiatives, while the review of various activities would be taken to disseminate various achievements of railways on the concluding day 'Sanchaar Diwas'.

785. India's first ever Passenger Satisfaction Survey at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport

In a first of its kind survey, CBEC engaged a reputed Management School, L.N.Welingkar Institute of Management,

Mumbai (WE School) to conduct a survey of Passenger Satisfaction levels of customs clearance process at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai, one of the largest Airport in terms of international passenger traffic in India. The findings of the Survey were released by the Research Team of WE School at a meeting held at Mumbai Customs House on 21st May 2016, in the presence of Chairman, CBEC, Shri Najib Shah. The scope of the Survey was to assess Passenger Satisfaction levels with the Customs Clearance Process, focusing on three aspects, i.e. Information, Behaviour and Process. A Research Team comprising of Faculty members and Research Associates of WE School conducted the survey over a week from 20th to 26th May on 24x7 basis. The sample size of survey was 731 passengers being the, duly representative of demographics, nationalities, profession, etc.

786. Gadkari launches safety feature-rich Nirbhaya buses

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Wednesday launches 20 Nirbhaya buses of Rajasthan State Transport Corporation with multiple safety measures to better protect women passengers. "Certain unfortunate incidents in the recent past have forced the ministry to take this step, so that women travelling in buses are more safe," Gadkari said in a statement here. Nirbhaya bus security measures include Vehicle Tracking System (VTS), CCTV and panic buttons on every seat. "The VTS and the panic buttons will enable the police to know the exact location of the bus and provide prompt assistance," he said. Gadkari said directions in this regard will be given to other states in due course of time, adding that buses in the future should be manufactured with such safety features to contain anti-social elements. After June 2, the ministry will issue a notification mandating public vehicles with a seating capacity of more than 23 seats to fix closed-circuit television, VTS and panic buttons while vehicles below 23 seats will be asked to install VTS and emergency buttons, the statement added.

787. HRD Minister launches Bharatavani Portal, India's largest online repository of dictionaries at Lucknow

The Union HRD Minister, Smt Smriti Zubin Jani launched the multilingual knowledge portal www.bharatvani.in at Lucknow. While launching the app the Minister said that under the Prime Minister Shri Modi's Digital India Mission, Bharatavani App will perform the task of bringing about digital revolution in the country. The Government's mission is to showcase the Indian culture and heritage to the world through the medium of technology. This project is in line with the HRD Ministry's efforts to not only ensure universalization of education but also towards creation of a knowledge society in the digital age. The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru is implementing this ambitious project of MHRD. One Point language resource : Bharatavani is the first knowledge portal of its kind in India which focuses on becoming a single point source for multiple language learning, content and technology. Given India's diversity, Bharatavani is an attempt to bring the people of India under one portal, its goal being to bridge the Digital and language divide, with the idea to publish as well as involve people in the Open Knowledge movement. Window to language diversity: Government of India with the launch of this multilingual portal reiterates its commitment to the protection, preservation and inclusion of all Indian languages through technological development without discrimination. India's diversity includes a treasure trove of knowledge and indigenous culture and the Government will take all measures required to develop the spread of Indian languages across communities and cultures.

788. India fifth largest producer of e-waste: study

India, which has emerged as the world's second largest mobile market, is also the fifth largest producer of e-waste, discarding roughly 18.5 lakh tonnes of electronic waste each year, a study says. Telecom equipment alone accounts for 12 per cent of the e-waste, a joint study by ASSOCHAM-KPMG said. Matter of concern The rising levels of e-waste generation in India have been a matter of concern in recent years. With more than 100 crore mobile phones in circulation, nearly 25 per cent end up in e-waste annually, it said. India has surely emerged as the second largest mobile market with 1.03 billion subscribers, but also the fifth largest producer of e-waste in the world, discarding roughly 18.5 lakh metric tonnes of electronic waste each year, with telecom equipment alone accounting for 12 per cent of the e-waste, the study said. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified e-waste management rules, 2016, in which producers are for the first time covered under extended producers responsibility (EPR). Waste collection target

The rules prescribe a waste collection target of 30 per cent waste generated under EPR for the first two years, progressively going up to 70 per cent in the seventh year of the rule. The rules prescribe stringent financial penalties for non-compliance. However, the study said the unorganised sector in India is estimated to handle around 95 per cent of the e-waste produced in the country. Given the huge user base and vast reach of telecom in India, it is practically difficult

and expensive for the handset manufacturers to achieve the targets prescribed in the rules from first year, the study added. Phased manner

It is suggested that electronic waste collection targets are implemented in a phased manner with lower and practically achievable target limits. Also, detailed implementation procedures for collection of electronic waste from the market need to be followed, the study said.

789. Islamic Development Bank to open its first branch at Ahmedabad

Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is set to start its India operations from Gujarat. The international financial institution from Saudi Arabia has chosen Gujarat to set up its first branch in India. The state will also get 30 medical vans as part of IDB's social sector initiatives.

IDB's main objective is to foster the economic development and social progress of member countries as well as the Muslim community in accordance with principles of Shariah (Islamic law). The bank has 56 Islamic countries as its members.

During prime minister Narendra Modi's visit to UAE in April this year, India's EXIM Bank had signed a memorandum of understanding with IDB for a \$100 million line-of-credit to facilitate exports to IDB's member countries.

IDB had also signed a \$55-million pact with Rashtriya Institute of Skill and Education (RISE) to provide medical care to rural poor in India. IDB will provide 350 fully-equipped medical vans (mobile clinics) to India, 30 of which will be received for the tribal areas of Chhota Udepur, Narmada and Bharuch in Gujarat, in the first phase.

"IDB and its private sector arm, the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD), have already met with top officials of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), EXIM Bank and other nationalized banks. They are likely to start their India operations from Gujarat with a branch in Ahmedabad," said Zafar Sareshwala, chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU), who had accompanied the PM in Saudi Arabia,.

790. FSSAI bans potassium bromate, cancer-causing chemical found in bread.

A [new report](#) published by the Centre of Environment and Science (CSE) has given us cause for concern. CSE's Pollution Monitoring Laboratory conducted few tests between May and June last year with bread samples collected from companies like Harvest Gold, Britannia, Le Marche, [KFC](#), [Pizza Hut](#), Domino's, [McDonald's](#), Slice of Italy and Subway in Delhi. They tested different varieties of white bread, [whole wheat](#), [sandwich](#) breads, pizza breads, burger buns and pavas and their results have brought two chemical additives under scrutiny. The big reveal was difficult to swallow and we decided to dig deeper and seek expert advice.

Potassium Bromate (appears as E number E924 on the label) and Potassium Iodate act as flour improvers. These chemical additives are mostly used in flours, bread and bakery products. They help hold the [bread](#) dough together and make it rise and fluffy. They are also used as bleaching agents to give bread its white look. When used under the right conditions, they may get completely used up but if added excessively or the bread is not baked long enough or at a high enough temperature, they may sneak their way as residues in the final product.

Should we be alarmed? Potassium Bromate is being used by the industry since a long time. It was during the 1980s when health organisations and particularly WHO (World Health Organisation) recognised that it may have the potential to cause [cancer](#). Thereafter, many studies were conducted which strengthened these claims and countries like UK, Australia, Canada, Brazil and China banned its use. As far as Potassium Iodate is concerned, it is a known fact that excess Iodine in the body can affect the functions of the thyroid gland, shares Dr. Ritika Samaddar, Regional Head-Dietetics, Max Healthcare, New Delhi.

791. EPFO doubles insurance for subscribers to Rs 6 lakh

Government has enforced the decision of retirement fund body EPFO to almost double the maximum sum assured under its insurance scheme from 3.6 lakh to 6 lakh rupees. It will benefit around four crore subscribers.

Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya told reporters in New Delhi, that the notification to enhance amount has been issued. In September, Employee Provident Fund Organization's apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees had decided to increase benefits under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance (EDLI) scheme to six lakh rupees

792. Sunil Mittal receives this years Harvard Alumni award

Bharti Enterprises founder and Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal has received this year's Harvard Business School Alumni Achievement Award.

The award, presented annually since 1968, is the highest honour the Harvard Business School confers on its alumni who have contributed significantly to their companies and communities while upholding the highest standards and values. On receiving the award, Mittal credited the Harvard Business School's management programme with helping him create Bharti Airtel.

793. World economy is an 'urgent priority': G7 leaders

The Group of Seven leaders has said that pumping up the world economy is an urgent priority.

But wrapping up a two-day summit, in Ise-Shima, Japan, the G-7 left the door open for a go-your-own-way approach. The final communique also noted that growth remains moderate and below potential.

The summit reiterated the members' commitments to using all policy tools, individually and collectively, to strengthen global demand and address supply constraints.

The G7 is an informal bloc of industrialized economies comprising the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

794. Maruti recalls over 77k Balenos, DZires to fix airbag, filter

Auto major, Maruti Suzuki India is recalling 75,419 units of its premium hatchback, Baleno to fix a faulty airbag component and fuel filter. It is also calling back 1,961 units of its compact sedan, DZires with auto gear shift technology to replace the fuel filter. The vehicles to be recalled were manufactured between August 2015 and May 2016.

Since auto industry body, SIAM started voluntary vehicle recalls for safety-related issues in July 2012, over 18 lakh vehicles have been recalled by various automobile manufacturers in the country.

795. Para athlete Saroha wins gold in record breaking performance

Indian para athlete Amit Kumar Saroha from Haryana won the gold medal in men's club throw (F-51) at the recently concluded 2016 French Open Athletics Championship in Paris. The event was held on May 23rd and 24th.

Arjuna Awardee Amit's effort of 26.58 meter broke the Asian record which he had himself set at last year's World Championships in Doha on way to winning a silver.

Amit has already qualified for the 2016 Rio Paralympics scheduled to be held this September.

The French Open Athletics Championship was part of his preparation for Rio 2016, for which he is one of India's biggest medal prospects.

796. Mamata Banerjee takes oath for second successive term as West Bengal CM

Trinamool Congress chairperson Mamata Banerjee was today sworn-in as the chief minister of West Bengal for second successive five-year term. The party swept the electoral mandate bagging 211 seats of the 294-seat Assembly.

The oath taking ceremony, held at the iconic Red Road, was administered by Governor Keshri Nath Tripathi.

Sixty-one-year-old Ms Banerjee took oath in Bengali. The 42-member ministry, of them 18 are new faces, has seven ministers from the minority community. Ms Banerjee is among the four women representatives in the ministry.

Among the dignitaries present were Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitely, his ministerial colleague Babu Supriyo, Bihar Chief Minister Nithish Kumar, his UP counterpart Akhilesh Yadav, former chief ministers Lalu Prasad Yadav and Faruque Abdullah.

Prime Minister of Bhutan Tshering Tobgay, Bangladesh Industry Minister Amir Hossain Amu and the Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata were present on the occasion.

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly and many former cricket and football players were also present on the occasion.

The prominent Cabinet ministers who took oath were Amit Mitra, Partha Chatterjee, Subrata Mukherjee, Sobhan Deb Chattopadhyay, Abani Joardar, Firhad Hakim, Arup Roy, Gautam Deb, Sovan Chatterjee, Javed Khan, Abdur Rezzak Mollah, Suvendu Adhikari, Jyotipriya Mullick, Purnendu Bose, Rabindra Nath Ghosh, Bratya Basu, Santiram Mahato, Ashis Banerjee AND Arup Biswas.

The ministers of state who were sworn in, included cricketer Lakshmi Ratan Shukla and singer Indranil Sen.

797. SC refuses to entertain plea against Centre's Ordinance on NEET

Supreme Court today refused to entertain during vacation a petition against Centre's Ordinance allowing States to continue with exam for admissions in MBBS and BDS courses. The Apex Court asked for listing of the petition on opening of courts after summer vacations. The court added that there should be certainty for students about holding of exams.

The petition challenged the validity of the ordinance allowing states to conduct their own medical entrance examinations this year. It alleged that the ordinance frustrated the order of the Supreme Court directing implementation of NEET from the current academic year and pleaded for immediate stay on the executive order.

798. Obama becomes first US president to visit Hiroshima bomb site

US President Barack Obama today laid wreath at Hiroshima nuclear memorial. Mr Obama made history as he travelled to Hiroshima becoming the first sitting US leader to visit the site.

The trip comes more than seven decades after an American plane, dropped its payload, dubbed Little Boy over the western Japanese city. The bombing claimed lives of about 140,000 people and affected many from radiation-related illnesses. The US dropped a second bomb on the city of Nagasaki three days later.

The visit also marks seven years since Obama used his trademark soaring rhetoric to call for the elimination of atomic arms in a landmark speech in Prague that helped him win the Nobel Peace Prize.

799. Guinea Bissau President names Baciro Dja as Prime Minister

Guinea Bissau President Jose Mario Vaz named Baciro Dja as Prime Minister, according to a presidential decree, sparking protests from political opponents who said the appointment was unconstitutional.

Dja succeeds Carlos Correia, who was sacked earlier this month in a move that threatened to deepen political turmoil in the tiny West African nation. The ruling party said it would not support Dja, who held the same post briefly last year but was forced to resign when the supreme court ruled that the appointment was made without consulting all political parties and was therefore unconstitutional.

800. Indian-American students sweep National Geographic Bee contest

Two Indian-American children have won the world's prestigious spelling bee contest, with one of them also becoming its youngest winner, as the community's complete dominance in the annual competition continued.

Jairam Jagadeesh Hathwar, 13, and Nihar Saireddy Janga, 11, were declared co-champions of the Scripps National Spelling Bee today after a tense final with seven of the last 10 finalists being Indian-Americans. Fifth grader Nihar is from Texas, while seventh grader Jairam is from New York. Nihar has also become the youngest winner of the bee on

record.

Eighth grader Snehaa Ganesh Kumar from California, who had tied for fourth place last year, came third. The other four Indian-Americans among the finalists were Rutvik Gandhasri, Sreeniketh Vogoti, Jashun Paluru and Smirithi Upadhyayula.

In the penultimate 24th round, Nihar spelled the word 'gesellschaft' correctly, while Jairam spelled the word 'Feldenkrais' correctly.

801. Google cleared of infringement in Oracle lawsuit over Java

Google has won a major US court battle with software firm Oracle after a jury ruled it did not unfairly appropriate parts of the Java programming language. Oracle had argued that Google had infringed its copyright and had sought nearly 9 billion dollars in damages.

The outcome was eagerly awaited by software developers who feared that a victory for Oracle might encourage more such legal actions. The company says it will appeal against the decision. Google uses Java in its Android smartphone operating system which powers about 80 per cent of the world's mobile devices.

802. Centre approves Rs 4241 cr NIMZ in Odisha

The Centre has approved establishment of a National Investment and Manufacturing Zone (NIMZ) in Odisha. Informing this to media, Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said that the Union ministry of commerce and industry has approved the Rs 4,241 crore project to come up at Kalinganagar industrial area in Jajpur district of Odisha.

Disclosing the information, after a meeting with commerce and industry minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Mr Pradhan said the first phase of the project with an estimated cost of Rs 3,816 crore will be completed by 2020.

The project will create job opportunities for around 1.5 lakh people and will help Odisha grow as a manufacturing hub and help Paradip port's growth, the oil minister said. Sources said this is the third Investment and Manufacturing Zone of India involving a massive area of 163 square kilometers.

803. Indore flourishing after being included in Smart City Mission

Indore has been shortlisted by the Union Urban Development Ministry as one of the 100 cities under Smart City Mission of Central government. Smart City Mission emphasizes the development of the Smart City Proposal as a co-creation process, resulting in the evolution of a Plan which reflects Citizens consensus and support for the vision and goals enshrined in the plan.

Smart City Indore will lead to a clean and healthy development of Indore. Indore Municipal Corporation-IMC presents a platform to its residents to actively participate in making Indore a Smart City. IMC is seeking citizens engagement with a focus on seeking their responses on innovative solution for improved livability and governance to meet our aspirations. Mayor Malini Goud said, along with the heritage of Indore, IMC is committed to the cohesive development of the city.

Each city must convey its own unique vision that reflects local context, its resources, and the priorities and aspirations of its citizens. Since the Rajwada area is the most preferred area for development under the smart city, underground electrification, smart traffic management system, solid waste management and incubation centers are planned for the start-ups.

804. Odisha govt to ink MoUs for new railway line projects soon

The Odisha government will ink memorandum of understanding (MoUs) with the Ministry of Railways for the construction of new railway lines between Jeypore-Nabarangpur and Jeypore-Malkangiri within a week or two.

Informing this to media, Commerce and Transport Minister Ramesh Majhi said in Bhubaneswar yesterday that for the Jeypore-Nabarangpur railway line, Odisha government will provide 50 per cent of the total project cost apart from providing land free of cost.

Similarly, for the Jeypore-Malkangiri railway line project, the state government will provide 25 percent of the total project cost. Currently 6 districts in Odisha are not connected with rail network.

805. Swachh Bharat Mission: Odisha govt to build 26 lakh toilets in 2016-17

The Odisha government has set a target to build 26 lakh toilets with a cost of Rs 598 crore during 2016-17 fiscal. Stating that the toilets were being set up under Swachh Bharat Mission, State rural development secretary Mudhu Sudan Padhi said in Bhubaneswar that the projects would be implemented with Central and state funds with a ratio of 60:40.

Notably, a total number of more than 13 lakh 29 thousand toilets were constructed during the 2015-16 financial year in all the districts against the target of 12 lakh there by marking an achievement of around 111 per cent.

806. Kerala's Unnikulam gears up for 2nd phase under SAGY scheme

In Kerala, the Unnikulam grama panchayat adopted under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) scheme has begun the preparation for the second phase of the project.

The first phase was completed earlier with the preparation of a comprehensive village development plan through an elaborate participatory planning exercise involving over thirty thousand residents of the panchayat.

The first phase of the scheme included a baseline survey covering all the sectors in the Panchayat.

807. Telangana household survey enters Limca book of records

Telangana state Government has entered the prestigious Limca Book of Records for its Intensive Household Survey conducted two years ago. The State Government has conducted the Survey in 2014 to compile all kinds of information about each household in the state with an aim to prepare a data-bank for its social welfare and development programmes.

As per the government statistics, the massive exercise had involved about 4 lakh government employees who covered over 1.09 crore households in a single day, between 7 AM and 8 PM.

The survey gathered information on households, educational qualifications of their members, their post office savings, bank account details, mobile phone numbers, Aadhaar card numbers and gas connection details immediately after state formation in 2014.

Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao had announced that the data would be used to identify the real beneficiaries of the government welfare schemes. The Limca Book of Record has issued the certificate stating it was a national record.

808. BSNL earns profit of Rs 1,72,000 crore: Ravi Shankar Prasad

Union telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad today said in Mumbai that BSNL has earned a profit of 1,72,000 crore rupees. He also said that MTNL has also made a profit of 25 crore rupees .

The union minister, who is in Mumbai to celebrate the successful completion of two years of the BJP government, was speaking at a press conference.

Regarding the postal service, he said that the postal service has made a huge profit by selling spectrum worth 1,10,000 crore rupees . He stated that spectrum would be only sold through auction according to the Supreme Court guidelines.

The minister also said that there are plans to introduce money transfer facility through the postal department in the near future.

He also said that 85 lakh accounts have been opened under the Sukanya Samruddhi scheme. The minister said that national agricultural e-market has also been started.

809. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Sadak Yojana â€“ Making Roads Safer

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Sadak Yojana is all set to be launched by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The scheme is basically an initiative to make the roads safer by eliminating the dangerous spots on highways. Under the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Sadak Yojana, the central government will eliminate dangerous sites where accidents occur more frequently by using the better design and road engineering. Government will also set up railings on hill roads running along deep gorges. The ministry has sought details from the states about the dangerous roads and sites to setup the railings and prepare reflectors. The ministry will take help from IIT to prepare special reflectors for hill roads and redesign them to fix sharp curves. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has already approved the scheme and the corpus would be created from the available central road fund. According to WHO, more than 231,000 people are killed in India in road accidents every year. The government aims of halving this number by the year 2020. The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Sadak Yojana is also a part of this initiative.

810. IAF Participation in Ex Desert Eagle II at UAE

A bilateral Air Force exercise between India and United Arab Emirates (UAE) is underway at Al-Dhafra Air Base in UAE from 24 May 16 to 03 Jun 16. Ex-Desert Eagle-I with UAE Air Force was held at the same location in Sep 08. Su-30 MkI of the Indian Air Force and Mirage 2000-9, F-16 of UAE Air Force are participating in the exercise. The exercise will be played under multiple simulated scenarios. Exchange sorties for aircrew of both the Air Forces have also been planned. Participation in such exercises enables Indian Air Force to fly against multiple types of platforms. These air combat exercises provide exposure towards mission planning and execution in a simulated high threat combat environment besides building up crew confidence and bonhomie with friendly Air Forces of India and United Arab Emirates.

811. Dr. P. K. Mishra inaugurates 2nd National Symposium on Excellence in Training

Dr. P. K. Mishra, Additional Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister inaugurated the 2nd National Symposium on Excellence in Training (NSET) here today. Addressing the two day National Symposium, Dr. P. K. Mishra said that the Regional Symposiums held prior to this National Symposium will help to achieve a meaningful and better outcome. He said that the focus of the technical sessions is more on Citizen Centric Governance.

Dr. P. K. Mishra said the Department of Personnel Training (DoPT) with the assistance of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had been the national facilitators in the areas of ethics, leadership, urban development and gender issues. He said that, in the last two years, Government of India has taken path breaking initiatives like Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan, ease of doing business and Jan Dhan Yojana among others.

Dr. P. K. Mishra said that the ideas evolve over generation and how effectively an idea is applied to a particular situation, makes the difference. He said that the transparency, speed and effective implementation are the three important factors for the success of any scheme and he also highlighted the importance of technology for new schemes like Digital India and Smart City. He said that all these factors pose a great challenge at the grass root level and training is needed to them, who interact directly with the people. He also highlighted on two aspects, demand driven training institutes and impact of training.

812. Lakshadweep signs 24x7 Power for All document

Lakshadweep became first Union Territory (UT) to sign 24x7 Power for All document. Representative of Government of India and the Administration of Lakshadweep signed the document in presence of Shri P.K. Pujari, Secretary, Ministry of Power here today. The document chalks out a plan to increase solar capacity of the region from 2.15 MW to 8.45 MW. At present, 10 inhabited islands of Lakshadweep are being fed by diesel mostly. The plan also envisions reduction of AT C losses from current level of 21% to 6.7% till 2019 by increasing the collection efficiency up to 99 %. As a part of energy efficiency measures, 1 lakh LED bulbs will be distributed by UT administration through Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and Incandescent lamps/CFL bulbs will be replaced with LED bulbs under UJALA programme. Additionally, replacement of 3000 conventional street lights with LED street lights is also being taken up.

813. Portal launched to promote Net Zero Energy Buildings

Ministry of Power and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) today launched India's first integrated web portal designed to promote and mainstream Net Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) in India. The portal(

www.nzeb.in) was launched by Shri Pradeep Kumar Pujari, Secretary, Ministry of Power, and Ambassador Mr Jonathan Addleton, USAID Mission Director to India. A first of its kind, the portal provides complete information about Net Zero Energy Buildings those that generate as much energy as they use as well as how to achieve near-zero energy status through the use of efficient lighting and equipment, integration of renewable energy technologies, and best practice design strategies. In addition, the portal hosts the NZEB Alliance, an industry-wide body setup to drive the Indian markets toward highly energy-efficient buildings.

814. "Mission 11 Million" to engage more than 11 million children in activities relating to Football to be launched in October, 2016

The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has urged the states and Union Territories to take necessary steps to popularize and promote the sport of Football in their territory in order to make the FIFA U-17 World Cup a huge success, by including Football in various programmes of the State Governments. In a letter sent to all Chief Secretaries of states and Union Territories, the Secretary, Department of Sports Shri Rajiv Yadav has said that FIFA U-17 World Cup is going to be held in India in October, 2017 and it is the first time that this prestigious tournament will be held in India.

Referring to Prime Ministers 'Mann ki Baat' programme on 27th March, 2016, the letter said that the Prime Minister has called for building an atmosphere and fervor of Football in the country as a run up to the FIFA U-17 World Cup. He wants Football to be played in every nook and corner of the country.

The communication further said that following the call of the Prime Minister, the Department of Sports has initiated a series of steps to popularize Football throughout the country. Several rounds of discussion have been held with FIFA, AIFF, KVS, CBSE, Subroto Mukerjee Sports Education Society and other stake-holders to firm up appropriate programmes. As a result, Mission 11 Million programme has been formulated and will be launched in coordination with FIFA in about 30 cities across the country. The letter said, the primary objective of the programme is to engage more than 11 million children in activities relating to Football. It said, the programme is likely to be launched in October, 2016.

815. Interesting facts about Mamata 'Didi' Banerjee

Mamata Banerjee was born in Kolkata in a lower middle class Bengali family to Promileswar Banerjee and Gayetri Devi. She suffered hardships during her early life. Mamata lost her father at an age of 17 due to lack of medical treatment. She has completed history honours degree and has a Masters degree in Islamic History. She also has a degree in law. In 1970, Mamata Banerjee joined politics when she was in her teens. She joined Congress party and quickly rose through ranks to become the general secretary of the State Mahila Congress. In 1997, she established All India Trinamool Congress leaving Congress. The fiery woman has controversially held a Samajwadi Party MP, Daroga Prasad Saroj, by the collar and dragged him out of the Lok Sabha to prevent him from protesting against the Women's Reservation Bill. She joined NDA government in 1999 and was allocated the Railway Ministry. However, she left in 2000 to protest against petroleum price hike. She later, rejoined in 2004 only to leave again. In 2009 she joined UPA led by Congress. She was made Railway Minister again but in 2012 she left UPA to protest government's decision to allow FDI in retail markets. She has protested against the West Bengal government and Tata Company in 2006 to oppose setting up of Nano car production factory in Singur and also the Nandigram violence where government tried to acquire land for a chemical hub forcefully. In 2011, she pulled off a landslide victory for the TMC Congress alliance in West Bengal by defeating the 34-year-old Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Front government, the world's longest-serving democratically-elected communist government. She is the first female Chief Minister of West Bengal. She wears only one kind of sari - a simple traditional Bengali cotton sari with cotton bag slung on her shoulder. She leads a very simple life and has never married. She is a self-taught painter and a poet. Her paintings are mostly women-centric. In 2016, she was sworn in as West Bengal chief minister for the second time. She is a great patron of history, art and culture. She had named several stations of the Kolkata Metro after freedom fighters, religious leaders, poets and singers. Rabindranath Tagore is her favourite, so much so that one of her moves as Chief Minister has been to arrange for the playing of Rabindra Sangeet at traffic signals in Kolkata.

816. BrahMos missile test-fired, hits target

India today successfully test fired the over 290-km range BrahMos land-attack supersonic cruise missile. The system

was put to check by the Indian Air Force, which has acquired a squadron of it consisting of over 50 missiles, at about 1200 hrs in the Pokharan firing range.

The unique BrahMos weapon system on numerous occasions has established its supremacy in the world of supersonic cruise missile, a statement by the BrahMos Aerospace, a joint venture of India and Russia, said.

The flight conducted today has met its mission parameters in a copybook manner, it said, adding, that the missile met all flight parameters the formidable weapon successfully hit and annihilated the designated target.

"I congratulate the IAF for successfully accomplishing such a complex mission. BrahMos has proved its mettle once again as the best supersonic cruise missile system in the world," Sudhir Mishra, CEO MD of BrahMos Aerospace, said.

DRDO chief SChristopher also congratulated the IAF, BrahMos team and DRDO scientists involved in the successful mission.

The accuracy in mountain warfare mode was recently re-established in a campaign conducted by the Indian Army in the eastern sector last year and repeated last month.

This formidable missile system has empowered all three wings of the armed forces with impeccable anti-ship and land attack capability.

Defence sources said the IAF has acquired the missile system last year to take out targets like radars, communication systems near the borders so that their planes are not targeted by the enemy.

817. Arunachal tiger reserve bags biodiversity award

Pakke Tiger Reserve in East Kameng district of [Arunachal Pradesh](#) has received the 'India Biodiversity Award 2016' in one of its four categories, officials said.

The Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme of the Pakke Tiger Reserve in East Kameng district was awarded the prize under the category, "conservation of threatened species".

A joint initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National Biodiversity Authority and United Nations Development programme, India Biodiversity Awards recognise the contribution of a range of stakeholders towards the conservation of biodiversity.

The Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme has been a major step towards conservation of four hornbill species that are found in the adjoining areas of Pakke Tiger Reserve, Range Forest officer Kime Rambia said.

The Programme is a collaboration of Ghora-Aabhe Society, Nature Conservation Foundation and the Forest Department, Rambia said.

"Conservation can only happen with the support of local communities," said Tana Tapi, Divisional Forest Officer of Pakke Tiger Reserve.

Under this programme, urban citizens contribute money to protect hornbill nests around Pakke Tiger Reserve.

The Ghora-Aabhe Society members have been conducting awareness meetings and various other activities towards safeguarding the hornbill species and its habitat.

The Society's chairperson, Takam Nabam, said, "Our team faces stiff challenges on the ground and sometimes it can be tiring, but recognition like this gives us renewed energy."

The award was given away at a ceremony in Mumbai on May 22.

818. Today in History - May 28

585 BC - Thales Miletus predicted a solar eclipse.

585BC - The Persian-Lyidian battle ended.

1533 - England's Archbishop declared the marriage of King Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn valid.

1805 - Napoleon was crowned in Milan, Italy.

1863 - The first black regiment left Boston to fight in the [U.S. Civil War](#).

1892 - The Sierra club was organized in San Francisco, [CA](#).

1900 - Britain annexed the Orange Free State.

1918 - Azerbaijan declared independence.

1928 - Chrysler Corporation merged with Dodge Brothers, Inc.

1929 - Warner Brothers debuted "On With The Show" in New York City. It was the first all-color-talking picture.

1934 - The Dionne quintuplets were born near Callender, Ontario, to Olivia and Elzire Dionne. The babies were the first quintuplets to survive infancy.

1937 - [U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt](#) pushed a button in Washington, [DC](#), signaling that vehicular traffic could cross the newly opened Golden Gate Bridge in California.

1940 - During World War II, Belgium surrendered to Germany.

1953 - The Walt Disney film "Melody" premiered in the Paramount Theatre in Hollywood. The picture was the first 3-D cartoon.

[Disney movies, music and books](#)

1957 - National League club owners voted to allow the Brooklyn Dodgers to move to Los Angeles and that the New York Giants could move to San Francisco.

1961 - Amnesty International, a human rights organization, was founded.

1976 - The Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaty was signed, limiting any nuclear explosion - regardless of its purpose - to a yield of 150 kilotons.

1977 - Fire raged through the Beverly Hills Supper Club in Southgate, [KY](#). 165 people were killed.

1985 - David Jacobsen, director of the American University Hospital in Beirut, Lebanon, was abducted by pro-Iranian kidnappers. He was freed 17 months later.

1987 - Mathias Rust, a 19-year-old West German pilot, landed a private plane in Moscow's Red Square after evading Soviet air defenses. He was released August 3, 1988.

1995 - An earthquake in the Russian town Neftegorsk killed at least 2000 people. It had a magnitude of 7.5.

1996 - [U.S. President Clinton](#)'s former business partners in the Whitewater land deal were convicted of fraud.

1998 - Pakistan matched India with five nuclear test blasts. The [U.S.](#), Japan and other nations imposed economic sanctions. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif said "Today, we have settled the score with India."

1998 - Dr. Susan Terebey discovered a planet outside of our solar system with the use of photos taken by the Hubble Space Telescope.

1999 - In Milan, Italy, Leonardo de Vinci's "The Last Supper" was put back on display after more than 20 years of restoration work.

2002 - Russia became a limited partner in NATO with the creation of the NATO-Russia Council.

2015 - The Observatory at One World Trade Center officially opened.

819. May 28 International Day of Action for Women's Health

In 1987, during a reunion of members of WGNRR in Costa Rica, May 28 was declared as [International Day of Action for Women's Health](#). Since then, May 28 has been internationally renowned and activities are held worldwide by women's and health groups. In 1999, it was officially recognised by the government of South Africa. May 28 is a special day on which the women's health takes a center stage. It is therefore an occasion to celebrate the gains for women's health as well as remind to the Ministries of Health, ruling presidents, governors, parliamentarians, as well as international agencies and for-profit companies of their commitments to women's health and rights. Also it has been the platform for campaigning for advocating and advancing for the recognition of the concepts of sexuality, sexual rights and reproductive rights and health frameworks at national, regional and international level. Examples of the successful of thousands of voices been sound together during this day are the recognition of the International Day by different governments, agencies and civil society around the world. Each year, WGNRR collaborates with its members and partners on a call for action around a pressing SRHR issue. They are disseminated to all members and partners, some of whom then translate the materials into their working or local languages. These materials are used to raise awareness and to complement campaign activities. The campaign culminates on the commemoration of the International Day of Action for Women's Health.

820. Union Information & Broadcasting Ministry framed Policy guidelines for Online Central Government advertisements

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has framed new guidelines and criteria to empanel suitable agencies and fix rates for advertisements on websites, it was announced here on Thursday. According to the new guidelines, only websites owned and operated by companies incorporated in India will be considered for empanelment by the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP). Websites owned by foreign companies can also be empanelled, if such companies have registered branch offices operating in India for at least one year, an official statement said. The eligibility criteria for websites to get empanelled with the DAVP includes unique users (UU) per month data, which shall be "cross-checked and verified by internationally accepted and credible third party tool" that monitors website traffic in India, the Information and Broadcasting Ministry statement said. "The guidelines aim to ensure that government visibility increases online by strategically placing advertisements on websites with higher unique users per month," the statement said. The guidelines categorise the unique user per month data of the websites into three categories. While the top category consists of websites with five million or more unique users per month, websites with 2-5 million traffic lie in the second slot. Finally, websites with 0.25 million to two million unique users have been kept in the last slot. The DAVP shall be the nodal agency for all central ministries/departments for advertising. However, autonomous bodies/public sector undertakings can directly release advertisements at DAVP rates and only to agencies empanelled with the DAVP, according to the new guidelines.

821. Committee for Evolution of a National Education Policy submits report to Ministry of HRD

The Committee for the evolution of a National Education Policy has submitted the report containing its recommendations to the Ministry of HRD. The Union Minister for Human Resource Development thanked the Chairman and all members of the Committee for their commitment and efforts. The Committee has examined the large body of outcome documents, recommendations and suggestions received from the various consultations. The Committee also had several meetings with various stakeholders and held regional consultations as well as undertaken field visits to

educational institutions. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India had undertaken a consultation process for framing a New Education Policy (NEP). The process included online, grassroots and national level thematic deliberations on 33 themes. The online consultations on www.MyGov.in portal were held from 26th January, 2015 to 31st October, 2015 and over 29,000 suggestions were received. The bottom-up consultative process across nearly all Gram Panchayats, Blocks, Urban Local Bodies and districts of all 36 States/Union Territories was undertaken between May to October, 2015. Thematic consultations were conducted both by the Ministry and also by the institutions like University Grants Commission, All India Council for Technical Education, National Council for Teacher Education, National Council for Educational Research and Training and several centrally funded universities and institutions, autonomous bodies, attached offices. Also, all relevant stakeholders including experts, academics, industry representatives, civil society etc. were invited for deliberations on the individual themes during July-October, 2015. Six zonal meetings were held by the Minister of Human Resource Development in Eastern, Central, North-Eastern, Western, Southern and Northern Zones covering all States and UTs in September-October 2015. The Government of India had constituted a Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy, which comprised Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, former Cabinet Secretary as the Chairman and Smt. Shailaja Chandra, former Chief Secretary, NCT of Delhi, Shri Sevaram Sharma, former Home Secretary, NCT of Delhi, Shri Sudhir Mankad, former Chief Secretary, Gujarat Prof. J.S. Rajput, former Director, NCERT as members of the Committee.

822. Sea ice cover around Antarctica is rising: NASA-led study

The US space agency, which is one of the world's leading campaigners to highlight the threat of global warming, now spends a chunk of its annual budget using satellite data to investigate changes in our climate. NASA experts set out to find out why the sea ice around the Antarctic was increasing in the face of global temperature increases, while ocean ice around the North Pole is retreating each year. And the study found that despite mean temperature rises in the Southern Ocean, topping those elsewhere across the globe, the Antarctic appears to have been proofed against global warming.

823. Bihar Govt, UNICEF and MDM Join Hand to Curb Malnourishment

The Bihar government, UNICEF and the Rajendra Agriculture University, Pusa today entered into an agreement to reduce malnourishment among women and children in the state. As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the three, an Agriculture Nutrition Cell would be set up in the Rajendra Agriculture University, Pusa. UNICEF head of Bihar Yamin Mazumdar, Vice Chancellor of Rajendra Agriculture University R C Shrivastava and Director of Mid-Day Meal Harihar Prasad were present on the occasion. Addressing the function, VC R C Shrivastava said the Nutrition cell would assess the nutritional value of foodgrains available at local level in different areas of Bihar. MDM Director said that the nutritional quality assessment of food would help help quality of food served to students in 7,000 schools of Bihar. He stressed on establishing Food Laboratory to measure quality of food and urged Rajendra Agriculture University to take initiative in this direction. UNICEF head of Bihar Yamin Mazumdar said malnourishment was not only an health problem but also concerned with social, economic and cultural affairs. He emphasised on coordination among different departments like health, agriculture, social welfare and education among others to improve standard of nutrition among women and children in Bihar. Nutritional expert of UNICEF Ravi Narayan Padhi emphasised on improving nutritional value in food among children to overcome problem of short height in proportion to their age.

824. HDFC among world's top 10 Consumers Financial Services Firms

Mortgage lender HDFC Ltd has been ranked among the world's ten biggest and most powerful companies in the consumer financial services sector on a Forbes list. American Express tops the list.

Ranked 7th, HDFC is the only Indian company in top ten in this category, which has got global giants like Capital One, Visa and MasterCard.

In the overall list of the world's 2,000 largest and most powerful public companies compiled by Forbes, HDFC is ranked 404th while it is at tenth position among Indian firms.

There are total 56 Indian companies on the list, with Reliance Industries ranked highest among them. It is at 121 globally.

For the oil and gas sector, RIL is ranked 9th while the top ranked firm is [ExxonMobil](#) of the US.

ONGC ranked 220th in the global list and Indian Oil (371) are the other two Indian firms which got featured in the top 20 global companies in the Oil and Gas sector.

State Bank of India was ranked among the top 20 in the regional banks category. With a market capitalisation of \$23.3 billion, [SBI](#) was ranked 149th in the global list.

Meanwhile, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank were named among the top 30 in the regional bank category. On the overall list, ICICI Bank is ranked 266th and HDFC Bank is at 275th.

The data for the Global 2000 list was compiled using data from FactSet Research systems to screen for the biggest public companies in four metric: sales, profits, assets and market value.

The market value calculation was as of April 22, 2016 closing prices and includes all common shares outstanding. All together 56 Indian companies have been named in the global list, out of which 22 public sector lenders have been named in the regional banks category led by State Bank of India which was ranked 149 on the list. Other than the public sector lender, the regional bank category has got ICICI Bank at 266th, HDFC Bank at 275th, [Axis Bank](#) (484), Bank of Baroda (801), Punjab National Bank (866), Kotak Mahindra Bank (899) and Canara Bank (946). Other Indian lenders which made the cut in the regional bank category include , Bank of India (1050), Union Bank of India (1276), IndusInd Bank (1375), IDBI Bank (1446), Central Bank of India (1559), Syndicate Bank (1652), Indian Overseas Bank (1704), Yes Bank (1732), UCO Bank (1816), Allahabad Bank (1834), Corporation Bank (1846), Oriental Bank of Commerce (1863), Indian Bank (1931) and Andhra Bank (1947).

Meanwhile, Chinese banks remain the largest corporations on earth. Three Chinese lenders, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, China Construction Bank and Agricultural Bank of China, held onto their rank as the world's most powerful companies in 2015, topping the Forbes Global 2000

825. Missing Indian climber Paresh Nath's body found on Everest

A 58-year-old Indian mountaineer, Paresh Chandra Nath, who went missing on Mount Everest nearly a week ago, was found dead on Friday.

Attempts were being made to locate another Indian climber whose body was reportedly lying above 8,000 metres on the world's highest mountain.

According to Wangchu Sherpa, the managing director at Trekking Camp Nepal that managed the expedition, a team of six Sherpas retrieved the body, above the camp IV. Sherpa added that Nath's body is being brought to the camp II.

However, due to high wind, they could not move ahead from the higher camp to locate another missing climber Goutam Ghosh, whose body was also reportedly lying above 8,000 metres on the high mountain.

Nath and Ghosh were near the summit of the 8,848-metre peak last Saturday when they lost contact with the rest of the four-member team, all of whom were Indians.

826. NE states will be brought on par with developed States: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said his government has been pro-actively pursuing the 'Act-East Policy' and working to improve infrastructure in the North East region. Addressing a public meeting in Shillong yesterday after flagging off three new trains, he said his government intends to connect all north eastern states by rail network and upgrade infrastructure in road, telecom, power and waterways to bring them on par with the developed states.

The Prime Minister said 30,000 crore rupees have been earmarked in the current budget for the North east region.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the tourism potential of the region, and stressed need for developing tourist circuits through improved road connectivity, hotels and cleanliness. He said a new scheme 'Swadesh Darshan', has been

launched aimed at developing tourist circuits in the country and one such circuit is proposed for the North East.

827. Argentina court sentences ex junta leader to 20 yrs in prison

In Argentina, former junta leader Reynaldo Bignone has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for crimes committed under Operation Condor, a conspiracy between South America's dictators.

Bignone and 14 other military officers were found guilty by a court in Argentina after a three year trial.

Many left-wing activists were kidnapped and killed in Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Bolivia. Operation Condor was secretly launched in the 1970s.

Judges at the court in Buenos Aires announced the sentencing of Bignone, Argentina's last dictator on Friday.

828. DNA 'tape recorder' invented to trace cell history

Researchers in UK have invented a DNA tape recorder that can trace the family history of every cell in an organism.

The technique is being hailed as a breakthrough in understanding how the trillions of complex cells in a body are descended from a single egg.

It has the potential to provide profound insights into how normal, diseased or damaged tissues are constructed and maintained.

The human body has around 40 trillion cells, each with a highly specialised function.

Yet each can trace its history back to the same starting point, a fertilised egg. The work appears in Science journal.

829. Air pollution may increase risk of developing heart disease

A new study in the US has warned that long-term exposure to air pollution may increase the risk of developing heart disease.

The study has found people living in areas with more outdoor pollution accumulate deposits in the arteries that supply the heart faster than to people living in less polluted areas.

10-year epidemiological study shows air pollution - even at levels below regulatory standards - accelerates the progression of atherosclerosis.

The condition, also called hardening of the arteries, can cause heart attacks.

Researchers also developed and applied computational models that included local information on land use, roadway and traffic volumes, weather conditions, and local sources of air pollution.

830. AP govt mulls to provide reservation to poor among upper castes

Planning to provide reservations to the poor among upper castes, Andhra Pradesh government would soon take up a survey based on which it will decide on the benefits that should extend to the economically backward among the upper castes.

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, delivering the inaugural address at the Telugu Desam Party's three-day annual conclave Mahanadu in Tirupati on Friday said backward classes have been the backbone of the TDP since its inception and hence the government had drafted a special sub-plan for BC welfare with a budgetary allocation of Rs 8,600 crore this year.

The TDP national president also announced of providing benefits worth Rs 1,000 crore to the Kapu community.

He said that a commission has been constituted to get Kapus included in the backward classes list and extend reservation benefit.

For Brahmins too, Mr. Naidu said that the government is providing financial assistance for education and self-employment, mentioning that there are poor among other upper castes as well for which a survey would be conducted to determine their economic status.

He accused the Opposition parties of stalling development in the State for their vested interests and repeatedly exhorted the party activists to improve their capability to repulse the opposition attack.

Listing out the achievements of his government the Telugu Desam Supremo said his government has done more than it promised during elections.

Pointing to the statistics of per capita income of the southern States, Mr. Naidu said Andhra Pradesh with the lowest per capita income deserves special category status and added that there is no question of turning back till the State becomes number one in the country.

He observed that Centres help so far was much less than the required to enable the State to wriggle out of difficulties due to the bifurcation.

He paid rich tributes to party founder N T Rama Rao, saying that the TDP was born to protect the self respect of Telugus and also their rich tradition, culture and language which is unifying force of Telugus all over the globe.

831. Sex ratio improves in Haryana for 1st time in 10 years

In Haryana, the sex ratio has shown improvement for the first time in 10 years after launch of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' programme from Panipat on January 22, 2015 by Prime minister Narendra Modi.

A government spokesman told AIR that in December 2015, the sex ratio crossed 900 mark with 903 girls per 1,000 boys.

He said, while 12 districts have recorded sex ratio above the 900 mark in December, Sirsa topped the list where the number of girls stood at 999 per 1,000 boys.

He said initially the programme was launched in 12 districts of the state and now it has been extended to 8 more districts.

A number of measures taken by the government to save the girl child helped improve the sex ratio in the state. More from our correspondent:

Infamous for skewed sex ratio, Haryana has seen improvement in it with the number of girls crossing 900 mark, a development which has happened for the first time in 10 years. The state's multi-pronged strategy implemented under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign has helped in achieving this success.

We talked to Mr Gian Chand from Sirsa, where the number of girls now stood at 999 per 1,000 boys

Of course government has taken tough measures. Around 18 cases for sale of sex selection drugs and more than 50 FIRs were registered for illegal sale of MTP kits.

The registration of pregnant women have been initiated.

Haryana has now sought help of neighbouring Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh to curb sex determination tests and making cross border raids successful.

832. Centre to establish 100 bed ESI hospital for labours in Varanasi

Union Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya has announced that government will establish a hundred bed ESI hospital for labours in Varanasi.

Addressing a Youth Conference at Naria in Varanasi, he said that the hospital will provide all necessary medical facilities to labour force working in this area.

He called upon youths to establish contacts with labour class to understand their problems and work extensively with unorganized labours for their welfare.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Health Minister JP Nadda highlighted the NDA governments initiatives and schemes and said changes are taking place in the country because of government's constant efforts.

He said, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has changed the face of politics and there is no place for corruption and scams in the government now.

Mr Nadda said, Mr Modi's leadership has enhanced the countrys respectability and status among the foreign nations.

833. Odisha govt to set up model degree colleges in eight districts

The Odisha government has announced to set up model degree colleges in eight educationally-undeveloped districts.

To ensure quality education for the students, higher education minister Pradeep Panigrahy said after a review meeting by chief minister Naveen Patnaik that the colleges would be opened in Boudh, Deogarh, Malkangiri, Sonapur, Rayagada, Nabarangapur, Nayagarh and Nuapada districts.

Panigrahy said the state government would soon facilitate plus-II courses in Nandahandi block in Nabarangapur district, Bandhuguan in Koraput district and Chandrapur in Rayagada district.

The meeting also decided to provide education in Shantali language in colleges of Mayurbhanj district of the State.

In a separate meeting last evening, the chief minister directed the rural development officials to provide tube wells to 27 thousand partially covered villages by the coming year.

Patnaik was told that potable drinking water facility had been provided to 1.28 lakh out of 1.56 lakh habitations and pipe water has been supplied to more than 44 villages.

834. Kaushal Vikash Yojana in Odisha to be ORMAS

The Kaushal Vikash Yojana in Odisha is being implemented by Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS).

According to its Executive Director B.K.Das 39,000 youth have been trained under the scheme.

AIR Correspondent reports, under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Vikash Yojna we have trained 39,000 rural youth against the target 50,000 given by Government.

We have 63 PIA and 129 centers in different parts of the state. They are imparting training and the youths are placed outside the state - Seventy percent going out side the state and thirty percent are employed inside the state.

Mostly in garment making, sewing machine operation, plumbing, construction activity and hospitality sector and this year we have taken a target of thirty thousand rural youth to be trained where atleast 25,000 will be placed in a better job and their career growth is also being taken care of.

A beneficiary Harihara Sahu says I am Harihara Sahu.Under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushal Yojna. I was

getting training at Panikoili. Then I got placement. I have now joined in Eureka Forbes and working as a salesman. My salary is fifteen to Eighteen thousand per month now.

Appreciating a placement linked skill development training initiative of ORMAS, the Ministry of Rural Deveopment has advised all other states to adopt the Odisha Model.

835. Election Commission cancels polls to two Tamil Nadu assembly seats

In a first in Indias electoral history, the Election Commission on Saturday decided to rescind the notification and conduct polls afresh in due course of time to two Tamil Nadu assembly seats following evidence of money being used to influence voters. Earlier, the Election Commission had on two occasions postponed polls to the Aravkurichi and Tanjavur constituencies following reports of large scale distribution of money and gifts to voters by candidates and political parties. Initially, the polls were postponed from 16 May to 23 May. On 21 May, the Election Commission decided to once again postpone the polls to 13 June. Tamil Nadu went to assembly polls on 16 May, in which the AIADMK returned to power for a second consecutive term.

836. Today in History - May 29

- 1453 - Constantinople fell to Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II, ending the Byzantine Empire.
- 1660 - Charles II was restored to the English throne after the Puritan Commonwealth.
- 1721 - [South Carolina](#) was formally incorporated as a royal colony.
- 1765 - Patrick Henry denounced the Stamp Act before [Virginia](#)'s House of Burgesses.
- 1790 - Rhode Island became the last of the original thirteen colonies to ratify the [U.S.](#) Constitution.
- 1827 - The first nautical school opened in Nantucket, [MA](#), under the name Admiral Sir Isaac Coffins Lancasterian School.
- 1848 - [Wisconsin](#) became the 30th state to join the United States.
- 1849 - A patent for lifting vessels was granted to [Abraham Lincoln](#).
- 1910 - An airplane raced a train from Albany, [NY](#), to New York City. The airplane pilot Glenn Curtiss won the \$10,000 prize.
- 1912 - Fifteen women were dismissed from their jobs at the Curtis Publishing Company in Philadelphia, [PA](#), for dancing the Turkey Trot while on the job.
- 1916 - The official flag of the president of the [United States](#) was adopted.
- 1916 - [U.S.](#) forces invaded Dominican Republic and remained until 1924.
- 1922 - Ecuador became independent.
- 1922 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ruled that organized baseball was a sport, not subject to antitrust laws.
- 1932 - World War I veterans began arriving in Washington, [DC](#), to demand cash bonuses they were not scheduled to receive for another 13 years.
- 1951 - C.F. Blair became the first man to fly over the North Pole in single engine plane.
- 1953 - Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became first men to reach the top of Mount Everest.

1962 - Buck (John) O'Neil became the first black coach in [major league baseball](#) when he accepted the job with the Chicago Cubs.

1965 - Ralph Boston set a world record in the broad jump at 27-feet, 4-3/4 inches, at a meet held in Modesto, [CA](#).

1973 - Tom Bradley was elected the first black mayor of Los Angeles.

1974 - [U.S. President Nixon](#) agreed to turn over 1,200 pages of edited Watergate transcripts.

1978 - In the [U.S.](#), postage stamps were raised from 13 cents to 15 cents.

1981 - The U.S. performed a nuclear test at the Nevada Test Site.

1985 - Thirty-nine people were killed and 400 were injured in a riot at a European Cup soccer match in Brussels, Belgium.

1986 - Colonel Oliver North told National Security Advisor William McFarlane that profits from weapons sold to Iran were being diverted to the Contras.

1988 - [U.S. President Reagan](#) began his first visit to the Soviet Union in Moscow.

1988 - NBC aired "To Heal A Nation," the story of Jan Scruggs' effort to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

1990 - Boris Yeltsin was elected president of the Russian republic by the Russian parliament.

1997 - The ruling party in Indonesia, Golkar, won the Parliament election by a record margin. There was a boycott movement and rioting that killed 200 people.

1999 - Space shuttle Discovery completed the first docking with the International Space Station.

2000 - Fiji's military took control of the nation and declared martial law following a coup attempt by indigenous Fijians in mid-May.

2001 - In New York, four followers of Osama bin Laden were convicted of a global conspiracy to murder Americans. The crimes included the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa that killed 224 people.

2001 - The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that disabled golfer Casey Martin could use a cart to ride in tournaments.

2015 - The Obama administration removed Cuba from the U.S. terrorism blacklist. The two countries had severed diplomatic relations in January of 1961.

837. International Day of UN Peacekeepers - 29 May

2016 Theme: Honouring Our Heroes The theme for the 2016 International Day of UN Peacekeepers is Honouring our Heroes. The Day offers a chance to pay tribute to the Blue Helmets invaluable contribution to the work of the Organization and to honour more than 3,400 peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag since 1948, including 128 last year. Today, more than 124,000 military, police and civilian personnel are deployed in 16 peacekeeping operations on four continents. In a message to mark the Day, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: They manifest the best attributes of global solidarity, courageously serving in dangerous environments to provide security to some of the world's most vulnerable. Since its beginning in 1948, United Nations peacekeeping has evolved into one of the main tools used by the international community to manage complex crises that threaten international peace and security. In this period a total of 71 peacekeeping operations have been established. More than one million military, police and civilian personnel have served as UN peacekeepers. Over the past year, UN peacekeeping has faced many challenges. It has proven to be dynamic and flexible in its approach which has resulted in protecting populations at risk

and advancing peace processes. In South Sudan, more than 200,000 civilians, who feared for their lives, sought shelter at UN bases. In the Central African Republic, peacekeepers successfully supported landmark presidential and legislative elections that have set the once deeply troubled country on a path to peace and stability. In Mali, our Blue Helmets have suffered grave losses that have not deterred them from implementing their mandate. In many countries, peacekeepers have addressed the problems of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Currently, UN peacekeeping operations receive contributions of military and police personnel from 123 Member States. This impressive number reflects strong global confidence in the value of UN peacekeeping. While the official International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers Day is on 29 May, UN Headquarters in New York will celebrate on 19 May. The Secretary-General will preside over a wreath-laying ceremony in honour of all peacekeepers who have lost their lives while serving under the UN flag. In addition, the [Dag Hammarskjöld Medal](#) will be awarded posthumously to the peacekeepers who fell while serving in the cause of peace, during 2015. And the Secretary-General will preside over the inaugural ceremony for the 'Captain Mbaye Diagne Medal for Exceptional Courage.

838. India and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CPEC): What are the implications?

The Chinese designed One Belt- One Road (OBOR) project will surely be a mega changer for the economic and political future of the entire Eurasian region. OBOR aims to connect the Chinese mainland with Europe and Asia through a network of roads, rail and sea routes. An important part of the OBOR is the South Asia bound land route connecting Kazhgar in Xinjiang (Chinese autonomous region) with the Pakistans Persian Gulf port of Gwadar. The Kazhgar- Gwadar connectivity is bilaterally implemented as a part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project (CEPC). The 3000 km long route comprising of rail and road networks and development of the Gwadar port by the Chinese has a project cost of \$46 bn. Of the US \$46bn, between \$35bn to \$38bn were allocated for the energy sector, the rest for constructing rail and road networks. Despite the secrecy and confusion surrounding the project hope about the project is sky high in Pakistan. Following are the implications of the project for the two participants China and Pakistan and the neighboring India. What China gets from the Project? On the economic front, China is the biggest beneficiary as the project gives it a shortcut to Indian Ocean, bypassing the Strait of Malacca. It can access the Western part of the Indian Ocean in the most politically easiest way because of its friendly and strategic relationship with Pakistan. At present, China transports 80% of its oil through the strait of Malacca. This can be deviated through the Pak route. On the political front, a decisive advantage for China is that Pakistan historically shows willingness to play the role of satellite state to major powers including the US. Because of the India factor, Pakistan will remain an ally of China even by surrendering several rights to Chinese economic and strategic interests. This means that among all the OBOR associate country, Pakistan offers more strategic value to China. There is a future option for Beijing to retain a significant army in Pakistan in the pretext of providing security to the CPEC. What the project means for Pakistan? The project is described as a game changer for Pakistans economic future, which otherwise has only meagre prospects to develop its economy. Pakistans economy can get a rejuvenation due to Chinese investment. If Pakistan is able to overcome its security problems, the CPEC can be a game changer. At the same time, the benefit it can get from being a transit country for Chinese goods depends upon its ability to change itself by achieve industrial progress. The word game changer is to be carefully read along with the past great game played between US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on the one side and Russia, Iran and India on the other side to establish a land route to Central Asia. Pakistans effort to be the entry point into Central Asia foiled because the opposite side tried hard to retain their control over Afghanistan. Now, with Chinese help, Pakistan can get a chance to become at least one of the transit points. Pakistan can get an opportunity to develop its infrastructure especially energy. Bulk of the CPEC is aimed to develop Pakistans energy sector including the construction of the largest solar energy plant in the world. China will help Pakistan to develop its resource based industries so that they can be exported to China. Another advantage of the project is that with the potential economic decline of the Gulf States, Pakistan as a natural resource exporter can sell its commodities to the lucrative Chinese markets through the CPEC transit route. What the project means for India? India is the third party on which the CPEC impacts a lot of intangible and indirect effects. Given the political synergy between China and Pakistan, the CPEC will be a disguised political disturbance for India. Its strategic content is high and capable of restricting New Delhis maneuverability in the region. In an extreme scenario, Pakistan may act as a rented house for Chinese Military. The project goes through the disputed Pak occupied Kashmir (Gilgit- Baltistan) is a nuisance for India. Already, CPEC is getting lot of attention because of the direct involvement of the Pakistani military at the insistence of the Chinese leadership. So far, the quick progress in Gwadar Kazhgar project has compelled an otherwise slow New Delhi to get an agreement with Iran to construct a port at Chabahar. In future also, the India-Iran alliance for a geographic connectivity with Central Asia partnering Afghanistan will continue; but without hurting both Beijing and Islamabad.

839. RTI gets a memorial in Rajasthan

Ironical though it may sound, a unique memorial celebrating the Right to Information has come up in the Beawar town of Rajasthan where the RTI movement had started 20 years ago at a time when the Bharatiya Janata Party government in the State has opted to delete chapters on the evolution of RTI campaign and law from its school textbooks. Hundreds of people from all walks of life, who gathered at Chang Gate in Beawar on Thursday night to commemorate the historic 40-day dharna of 1996 for RTI, witnessed unveiling of the aesthetically-built memorial and demanded restoration of chapters dealing with common peoples contribution to RTI in the textbooks. The dark blue memorial, is perhaps the only structure of its kind in the country, giving recognition to peasants and labourers who launched the campaign for their right to know about the way the government functioned and spent the public money. 40-day dharna I can never forget those 40 days when we sat on a dharna organised by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) at Chang Gate. I was preserving every moment of it through my camera without a clue that we were making history, said Ashok Sain, an activist. The dharna, which lasted 40 days, went on to become a movement for transparency, accountability and participatory democracy and led to the establishment of the National Campaign for Peoples Right to Information (NCPRI). A strong movement The movement forced the Rajasthan government to pass the State RTI Act in 2000, after which Parliament enacted the RTI Act in 2005. Justice S.N. Bhargava, former Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court, who unveiled the memorial, dedicated it to the people.

840. Japan Hosts 42nd Annual G7 Summit Meeting in Ise-Shima

The G7 Ise-Shima Summit is the first G7 Summit to be convened in Asia since the Summit in Toyako, Hokkaido, eight years ago. The G7 Summit is a forum where leaders from Japan, United States, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, and the European Union, which share fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, have frank discussions on solutions that address global challenges. This time in Ise-Shima, there were fruitful discussions regarding issues confronting the international community such as the global economy and trade, foreign policy, including counter terrorism, the Middle East, Ukraine and North Korea, climate change and energy, sustainable development, quality infrastructure investment, health and women. Outcome documents are available on the Summit website. (<http://www.japan.go.jp/g7/summit/documents/index.html>) Ise-Shima was chosen by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as the venue for the G7 Summit so world leaders could experience a perfect example of Japans heartland. During the Summit, on the sidelines of meetings, G7 leaders and partners enjoyed several additional events, including an Automated-Driving and Fuel Cell Vehicle Presentation and Paralympic Sports Events.

841. Indian author Aditi Krishnakumar wins Asian Book Award

A 31-year-old Indian woman author in Singapore has won the 'Scholastic Asian Book Award' for her 32,000-word manuscript rooted in "love of Indian history". Aditi Krishnakumar won the Singapore dollar 10,000 award this week for her manuscript "Codex: The Lost Treasure Of The Indus". Aditi, who submitted her manuscript hours before deadline last September, said she juggles writing with her career in finance and ekes out time at night and on weekends to dream up stories. The Scholastic Asian Book Award (SABA) is the joint initiative of the National Book Development Council of Singapore (NBDCS) and Scholastic Asia.

842. Indian-American scientist wins Springer Theses Award

An Indian-American scientist has received the prestigious Springer Theses Award in recognition for his outstanding research in which he developed transgenic mice to study a critical tumour-suppressor called A20. Arnab Des thesis was nominated by New Yorks Columbia University. Before this, Mr. De, who has also developed peptide-based prodrugs as therapeutics for diabetes, had received the Young Investigator Award at the American Peptide Symposium. The thesis prize is awarded by Springer, a leading global publisher of renowned scientific journals and books, to recognise outstanding PhD research. Internationally top-ranked research institutes select their best thesis annually for publication in the book series: Springer Theses: Recognising Outstanding PhD research. Additionally, winners also get a cash prize of 500 euros. The research work was highlighted by the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO) Reports. Only research considered to be of fundamental relevance to a general readership is chosen to be highlighted by EMBO. Mr. De has dedicated his PhD thesis to cricketering legend Sachin Tendulkar and his alma mater, Kolkatas Presidency University. Mr. De said: Two things that have influenced me the most is sports and education. This thesis is dedicated to Sachin Tendulkar not only for the cricketering joy he provided me, but also for being a constant source of inspiration to all Indian youth. Ole John Nielsen (University of Copenhagen), who shared the 2007 Nobel peace Prize as a member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change along with US vice president Al Gore, had in 2012 described the Springer

award as an insanely great honour.

843. **Sadhguru to lead yoga session at UN on 2nd Int'l Yoga Day**

Spiritual leader and Isha Foundation founder Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev will lead a yoga session at the UN on the occasion of the second International Yoga Day next month.

The International Yoga Day will be commemorated on June 21 and this year's focus will be on the theme of Yoga for the Sustainable Development Goals.

India's Permanent Mission to the UN here said Sadhguru will lead the yoga session at the international yoga day in the premises of the world body's headquarters.

The first International Yoga Day was commemorated at the UN with aplomb last year, with External Affairs Minister [Sushma Swaraj](#) leading the celebrations along with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and US Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard.

Ban and his wife had joined hundreds of students and yoga practitioners to perform asanas and meditate during the event.

Apart from the Yoga day commemoration by the Indian mission in the UN, several events have been planned across the city by various organizations.

844. **Book Gujarat Files: Anatomy of a Cover Up authored by Rana Ayyub**

Book titled Gujarat Files: Anatomy of a Cover Up authored by Rana Ayyub was released in May 2016. The book is an account of an eight-month long undercover investigation by journalist Rana Ayyub, who posed herself as Maithili Tyagi, a filmmaker from the American Film Institute Conservatory to investigate the Gujarat riots. She was in Gujarat in 2010, when she was working for Tehelka magazine. The book narrates the story of fake encounters and the murder of state Home Minister Haren Pandya. Rana in form of Maithili met bureaucrats and top cops in Gujarat who held pivotal positions in the state between 2001 and 2010. The transcripts of the sting operation reveal the complicity of the state and its officials in crimes against humanity. With sensational disclosures about cases that run parallel to Narendra Modi and Amit Shahs ascent to power and their journey from Gujarat to New Delhi, the book tells the hushed truth of the state in the words of those who developed amnesia while speaking before commissions of enquiry, but held nothing back in the secretly taped videos which form the basis of this book.

845. **President to present Malti Gyan Peeth Puraskars 2016**

President Pranab Mukherjee will present the Malti Gyan Peeth Puraskars for the year 2016 at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan today.

The Malti Gyan Peeth Puraskar was instituted by Mohinder Singh Syngle Education and Research Society in honour of its founder Mrs Malti Mohinder Singh Syngle, eminent educationist and social worker.

Every year Government school teachers from Punjab Governments High and Higher Secondary Schools receive this award for their contributions in the field of education.

846. **All North Eastern states to be connected with broad gauge rail by 2020, says Rly. Minister**

Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu today said that all North Eastern states will be connected with broad gauge rail by 2020.

A press release issued by the North East Frontier Railways said, the minister was addressing public at a ceremony at Dibrugarh Town Railway station. Mr Prabhu dedicated four new passenger amenities to the nation.

These include a high-speed free Wi- Fi service and a Water Purifier Plant at Guwahati Railway Station. He also dedicated the newly constructed building of Jorhat Railway Station and Renovated Dibrugarh Town Railway Station to

the people.

847. Hollande, Merkel remember WWI dead 100 years after Verdun battle

French President Francois Hollande and German Chancellor Angela Merkel will today stand shoulder to shoulder on the battlefield of Verdun to remember those killed 100 years ago in one of the bloodiest episodes of World War I.

To mark the centenary, Hollande and Merkel will lay wreaths at cemeteries holding the dead of both sides in the northeast French town.

The 1916 offensive lasted 300 days and claimed more than 3 lakh lives.

Both leaders are expected to use the day of remembrance to stress the need for unity at a time when the European Union is under pressure from the migrant crisis and a possible Brexit.

848. Nepal unveils nearly 10 bln USD annual budget for 2016-17

Nepal has unveiled a nearly 10 billion US dollar Budget for fiscal year 2016-17 that will focus on implementing the new Constitution and accelerating post-quake reconstruction.

Finance Minister Bishnu Paudel on Saturday said he prepared the financial statement, in consultations with political parties among others.

Over one trillion Nepalese Rupees equivalent to nearly 10 billion US dollar budget also proposed a 25 per cent hike in the salary of civil servants.

Through the new budget, the government has allocated NRs 140 billion Nepalese Rupees for post-quake reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Nepal's economy has suffered after two major earthquakes last year and also because of protests by Madhesis over the new Constitution.

Around 30 per cent of the government expenditure will be financed through foreign aid, including soft loans and grant-assistance.

849. NGT imposes Rs.50 lakh fine on East Coast Railway

The National Green Tribunal has directed the East Coast Railway to pay Rs. 50 lakh for operating Jakhapura Railway Siding in Jajpur district without taking consent from the Odisha State Pollution Control Board.

Hearing a petition, the tribunal asked the East Coast Railway to pay the amount within two months to Jajpur district collector for development of periphery area of the railway siding.

The Tribunal has invoked its 'Polluter Pays' principle to impose fine on the Railways.

It has also directed the Railways to pay an additional one lakh rupee to the petitioner as the litigation cost.

850. Atal Pension Yojana attains positive impact in Kerala

Atal Pension Yojana, the new pension scheme of the Union Government aimed to provide pension to all the needy, attained much positive impact in Kerala.

Those who get enrolled in the scheme by submitting a simple application in any banks except those in co-operative sector, will get a minimum monthly pension of One thousand rupees, when they attain age of 60 years.

For that, subscribers shall have an option to make their contribution on monthly basis. AIR Thiruvananthapuram correspondent reports, this social security scheme which aims to promote savings, for the life period after 60 years, is

certainly a blessing to the financially unsound and poor people of the nation.

All Indians in the age group from 18 to 40 are eligible to be enrolled.

In Kerala, though a socially rich state, so far more than 64,000 people have enrolled.

The capital district Thiruvananthapuram stands first, in the enrolment.

Thrissur, the central district of Kerala is in the 2nd position.

Once the applicant attains the age of 60, they will become eligible for a minimum pension of Rs. 1,000/- and a maximum pension of Rs. 5,000/-.

It depends upon the monthly remittance they have made.

By remitting an amount of below Rs.100/- per month, those who come in the age group between 18 and 28 will get Rs.1,000/- per month from their 60th birthday.

To provide a pension benefit to unorganized sector mainly, the Government of India launched the Atal Pension Yojana on 1st of June 2015.

The scheme is designed to convert the pensionless society into pensioned society.

For opting for the Atal Pension Yojana, bank account is a must.

Remittance to the pension scheme are made through the bank account only.

Amount collected under scheme are managed by the pension funds appointed by PFRDA. In the State of Kerala all the banks are participating in implementation of the Atal Pension Yojana Scheme.

We expect the whole hearted support of all the bankers and the agencies involved.

We expect the numbers of enrollment to go up substantially in the coming days.

Union Government will co-contribute 50 per cent of the total contribution or Rs. 1,000/- per annum, whichever is lower, to the subscribers who joined in 2015.

They will get contribution from Government of India for 5 years.

851. Odisha govt to construct 19, 000 km roads under PMGSY; 9 lakh houses under PMAY

The Odisha government has decided to construct 19,000 kilometer roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana and 9 lakh rural housing units under the Prime Minister Awas Yojana in coming three years.

In a meeting of Central and State government officials of the Rural Development Department under chairmanship of Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi in Bhubaneswar on Saturday.

Notably, the Odisha government has built a total number of more than 10.8 lakh housing units in rural areas during the period from April 2014 and May 2016.

Out of this, more than 1.59 lakh houses built under the Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana while the rest under the Indira Awas Yojana.

852. Delhi Assembly Dy Speaker Bandana Kumari resigns

Delhi Legislative Assembly Deputy Speaker and AAP leader Bandana Kumari has tendered her resignation in the wake of defeat of the party's candidate in recent MCD by-polls.

A legislator from Shalimar Bagh, Kumari was unhappy with party nominating Anvika Mittal for a by-poll candidate.

Mrs Kumari has submitted her resignation to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

After winning five seats in the MCD by-poll, which was below the party's expectations, AAP had said that it will introspect over the results and also ask the MLAs the reasons for the defeat.

853. Centre urges States, UTs to promote Football ahead of FIFA U-17 WC

The Centre has urged the states and Union Territories to take necessary steps to popularize and promote the sport of Football in their territory to make the FIFA U-17 World Cup a huge success.

Sports Ministry has sent a letter to all Chief Secretaries of states and asked them to include Football in various programmes of the State Governments.

The Ministry has said that FIFA U-17 World Cup is going to be held in India in October next year and it is the first time that this prestigious tournament will be held in India.

It said, Prime Minister in his Mann ki Baat programme, has also called for building an atmosphere and fervor of Football in the country and he wants Football to be played in every nook and corner of the country.

The Ministry said, Department of Sports has initiated a series of steps to popularize Football throughout the country.

Mission 11 Million programme has been formulated and will be launched in coordination with FIFA in about 30 cities across the country.

The letter said, the primary objective of the programme is to engage more than 11 million children in activities relating to Football. It said, the programme is likely to be launched in October this year.

854. Real Madrid win Champions League

Real Madrid were crowned European champions for 11th time when Cristiano Ronaldo scored the winning penalty in a 5-3 shootout victory against Atletico Madrid on Saturday.

The match finished 1-1 after extra time with Real captain Sergio Ramos opening the scoring on 15 minutes before Atletico substitute Yannick Carrasco equalised in the 79th minutes.

Antoine Griezmann missed a penalty at the start of the second half for Atletico when he fired his shot against the bar. Atletico earlier lost in their two previous finals appearances.

855. Discus thrower Seema Punia qualifies for Rio Olympics

Asian Games discus throw gold medal winner Seema Punia today qualified for the Rio Olympics with a 62.62 meters effort at the Pat Young's Throwers Classic 2016 at Salinas (California) in the United States.

32-year-old Seema crossed the Rio Games qualification standard of 61 meters with her season's best effort of 62.62 meters.

The Haryana-based athlete won the gold in the event.

This will be Seema's third Olympic Games appearance having taken part in 2004 and 2012 where she failed to get past the qualification round on both the occasions.

She is the 19th Indian track and field athlete to have qualified for Rio Olympics.

856. PM to inaugurate Ujjwala Yojana in Davangere district of Karnataka today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Davangere district of Karnataka today to inaugurate the Ujjwala Yojana of the Union government.

The Scheme was launched by Mr Modi earlier this month to provide LPG connections without security deposit to 5 crore women from BPL households over the next three years.

He will also address a rally and highlight the achievements of the Union government, including Jan Dhan Yojna, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Beti Bachao Beti Pado and other schemes.

Mr Modi's visit is part of the nationwide celebrations to mark the completion of two years in office of the BJP-led NDA government at the centre.

857. NDA govt has taken unprecedented steps to combat corruption: PM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the NDA government has taken unprecedented steps to combat corruption in the country.

He attacked the opposition saying those who were earlier looting the nation are not enthused by his government.

Speaking at a gala event 'Ek Nayi Subha' at historic India Gate in New Delhi last night, to mark the two years of the BJP led NDA Government at the Centre, Mr Modi said on the one hand there is agenda of development, on other, there is agenda of obstructionism and the people are capable of finding the truth.

The Prime Minister said the Centre has found over a crore and sixty two lakhs fake ration cards, which has resulted in saving over Rs. 36000 crore leakages from the Government exchequer.

Mr Modi said in the last 15 days, the government work is being very carefully analysed, however, it must be evaluated against the work of previous regimes.

He said in a democracy, it is vital to analyse everyone's work but one can't make a mistake of creating a false atmosphere of despondency.

Saying the poor must get the fruits of development, Mr Modi said during next three years, five crore LPG connections will be provided to poor.

He said for good governance it is imperative for the government to trust its citizens.

Thanking the people of country for placing their faith in the BJP led NDA government, Mr Modi said Coal mine auctions have been done in transparent manner.

Highlighting the achievements of his government, he said the government has abolished the process of interview in Group C and D posts.

Earlier, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and many of his ministerial colleagues spoke about numerous steps taken by the government for development of the country during last two years.

Mr Jaitley said, the Indian economy can grow at the rate of 8-9 percent in the years to come.

He also said the government is making all-out efforts to unearth black money stashed in offshore accounts.

Union Minister for Roads, Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari said the Modi government has changed the

style of governance and ended policy paralysis that existed during the previous UPA regime.

He assured that the BJP led government is working with much tenacity for better road connectivity in the Northeastern region.

Mr Gadkari said, the NDA government has decided to increase the National Highways network to two lakh kilometre from 96,000 kilometre.

Union Human Resources Development Minister Smriti Irani has said the NDA government's efforts have accelerated skill education in the country.

She said the present regime has taken a series of measure in education sector.

The Minister said the Centre has made a provision that a institute which wants to impart skill education apart from regular courses can do so by informing to the UGC.

Minister of Development of North Eastern Region, Dr. Jitendra Singh said the northeast region will become a startup hub soon.

He said the 'Start Up India', Stand Up India scheme has helped youth to start their own enterprises.

Minister of Sate for Civil Aviation Dr. Mahesh Sharma said there are 30 crore middle class families in India and many of them never dreamt of flying.

He said the NDA regime has taken up the task of introducing affordable air travel to the masses.

Communication and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said, the Digital India scheme is for poor population of the country and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mission is to bring governance to the palms of people.

Mr. Prasad said, the NDA Government will open BPOs and Call Centers in rural areas.

Science and Technology Minister Dr Harshvardhan said, the government has reduced the paper work by implementing digital technology in the field of research.

Skill Development Minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy said, Mr Modi led government has prepared a framework for providing skill training to the people as per requirement.

He said, the present government wants to increase the income of the poor people by imparting skill training to them.

The event, spread over nearly six hours, was attended by Union Ministers, smattering of Bollywood actors, including megastar Amitabh Bachchan.

Mr Bachchan talked about one of the government's flagship programmes 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'.

858. Vice Admiral AR Karve takes charge of Southern Naval Command

Vice Admiral AR Karve took over charge as the Flag Officer Commander-in-Chief of Southern Naval Command from Vice Admiral Girish Luthra at Kochi today.

An impressive ceremonial parade was held at the Naval base on the occasion which was followed by traditional pulling out ceremony.

Earlier in the day, Vice Admiral Karve laid wreath at the ' War Memorial ' prior to assuming command as a tribute to the thousands of martyrs who fought for the country.

859. Sushma Swaraj inaugurates six language versions of PMO India website

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj today inaugurated six language versions of PMO India website.

The languages are Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu.

In a series of tweets, the Minister said, the move will go a long way in deepening Prime Minister Narendra Modi's connect with people.

She said, these versions in regional languages are a great opportunity to further discussion on Government's agenda of development and good governance.

In a tweet message, the Prime Minister thanked all those who worked tirelessly in the creation of the new versions.

He said, people should give feedback if any parts of these language websites need to be corrected.

860. India among top 10 steel importers in 2015: WSA

India, the world's third largest steel producer, was among the top 10 importers of the alloy last year, according to the latest data by the global industry body World Steel Association (WSA).

[India](#) imported 13.3 million tonnes (MT) of the metal in 2015 and was just a notch up from China, which imported 13.2 MT of steel during the same period.

According to the WSA data, European Union as a bloc imported 37.7 MT of steel last year, which was followed by the US (36.5 MT), [Germany](#) (24.8 MT), [South Korea](#) (21.7 MT), [Italy](#) (19.9 MT), Turkey (18.6 MT), Vietnam (16.3 MT), Thailand (14.6 MT), France (13.7 MT) and India (13.3 MT).

According to Indian government data, steel [imports](#) rose by 25.6 per cent to 11.71 MT during the 2015-16 financial year against 9.32 MT in the year-ago period. India was a net importer of the metal in the last fiscal.

WSA data also showed that India exported 7.6 MT of steel in 2015, which was just a fraction of what its neighbour [China](#) exported during the same period at 111.6 MT.

861. Today in History - May 30

1416 - Jerome of Prague was burned as a heretic by the Church.

1431 - Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in Rouen, France, at the age of 19.

1527 - The University of Marburg was founded in Germany.

1539 - Hernando de Soto, the Spanish explorer, landed in Florida with 600 soldiers to search for gold.

1783 - The first daily newspaper was published in the [U.S.](#) by Benjamin Towner called "The Pennsylvania Evening Post"

1814 - The First Treaty of Paris was declared, which returned France to its 1792 borders.

1848 - W.G. Young patented the ice cream freezer.

1854 - The [U.S.](#) territories of Nebraska and Kansas were established.

1868 - Memorial Day was observed widely for the first time in the [U.S.](#)

1879 - William Vanderbilt renamed New York City's Gilmores Garden to Madison Square Garden.

1883 - Twelve people were trampled to death in New York City in a stampede when a rumor that the Brooklyn Bridge was in danger of collapsing occurred.

1896 - The first automobile accident occurred in New York City.

1903 - In Riverdale, [NY](#), the first American motorcycle hill climb was held.

1911 - Ray Harroun won the first Indianapolis 500. At the time, it was known as International 500-Mile Sweepstakes Race. Harroun's average speed was 74.59 miles per hour.

1912 - The [U.S.](#) Marines were sent to Nicaragua to protect American interests.

1913 - The First Balkan War ended.

1921 - The [U.S.](#) Navy transferred the Teapot Dome oil reserves to the Department of the Interior.

1922 - The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington, [DC](#).

1933 - Sally Rand introduced her exotic and erotic fan dance to audiences at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition.

1943 - [American](#) forces secured the Aleutian island of Attu from the Japanese during World War II.

1958 - Unidentified soldiers killed in World War II and the Korean conflicts were buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

1967 - Daredevil Evel Knievel jumped 16 automobiles in a row in a motorcycle stunt at Ascot Speedway in Gardena, [CA](#).

1967 - The state of Biafra seceded from Nigeria and Civil war erupted.

1971 - Mariner 9, the American deep space probe blasted off on a journey to Mars.

1981 - In Chittagong, Bangladesh, President Ziaur Rahman was assassinated.

1982 - Spain became the 16th NATO member. Spain was the first country to enter the Western alliance since West Germany in 1955.

1983 - Peru's President Fernando Belaunde Terry declared a state of emergency and suspended civil rights after bombings by leftist rebels.

1989 - The "Goddess of Democracy" statue (33 feet height) was erected in Tiananmen Square by student demonstrators.

1996 - Britain's Prince Andrew and the former Sarah Ferguson were granted an uncontested decree ending their 10-year marriage.

1997 - Jesse K. Timmendequas was convicted in Trenton, [NJ](#), of raping and strangling a 7-year-old neighbor, Megan Kanka. The 1994 murder inspired "Megan's Law," requiring that communities be notified when sex offenders move in.

1998 - A powerful earthquake hit northern Afghanistan killing up to 5,000.

2002 - In New York, a ceremony were held to officially mark the end of the clean up from the World Trade Center terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.

2012 - New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg announced the Portion Cap Rule. The proposed amendment to the city health code would have required that food service establishments limit the size of sugary beverages to 16 ounces. On June 26, 2014, the New York Court of Appeals ruled that the New York City Board of Health had exceeded the scope of its regulatory authority.

862. What are Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC)?

The Indian Railway has big potential to develop goods transportation. In recent years, industrialisation and growing international trade along existing Eastern and Western Routes has led to the demand for additional capacity for rail freight transportation. To develop the freight traffic infrastructure, the Government has designed an expansion drive in the form of Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC). In the first phase, two corridors-the Western DFC (1504 route km) and Eastern DFC (Estimated 1856 route km)- with a total length of about 3360 route km were launched. Construction responsibility of DFCs is with Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited. The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL) is a Special Purpose Vehicle set up under the administrative control of Ministry of Railways to undertake planning development, mobilization of financial resources and construction, maintenance and operation of the Dedicated Freight Corridors. Objective of DFC To create world class rail infrastructure with advanced technology and knowledge to carry higher throughput per train. To improve overall transport efficiency. To offer customer guaranteed, faster transit, energy efficient, environment-friendly transport. To encourage total supply chain management. Reduce the unit cost of transport logistics. Increase Rail share in the freight market. DFCCIL has been set up with 100% equity by Ministry of Railways and registered as a company under the Companies Act 1956 on 30th October, 2006. The creation of the DFCs is due to saturation in rail transportation capacity of the Railways on the Golden Quadrilateral routes. Railways' network linking the four metropolitan cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Howrah, along with its two diagonals (Delhi-Chennai and Mumbai-Howrah) is commonly known as the Golden Quadrilateral. The Golden Quadrilateral has a total route length of 10,122 km and carries more than 58% of its revenue earning freight traffic. It is to generate additional freight transportation facilities, that the two DFCs are designed. The Western Dedicated Freight Corridor and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor The Dedicated Freight Corridors have two wings- the Western DFC and the Eastern DFC. The Western Corridor connecting Dadri in NCR Delhi to Mumbai - Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), will go through six states- Uttar Pradesh, Delhi NCR, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. It is the Western DFC that provides the connectivity of the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor. The Eastern Corridor, starting from Dankuni in West Bengal will pass through the states of Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana to terminate at Ludhiana in Punjab. Traffic on EDFC comprises of coal for the power plants in the northern region of India from Coalfields located in state of Bihar, Jharkhand and Bengal, finished steel, food grains, cement, fertilizer, limestone from Rajasthan to steel plants in the east and general goods. The Western DFC will join Eastern DFC at Dadri. Both these Dedicated Freight Corridors offer high-speed connectivity for High Axle Load Wagons (25 Tonne) of Double Stacked Container supported by high power locomotives.

863. BIS to Launch Android App to Check Hallmarking on Jewellery

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is all set to launch a new Android application for consumers to check the validity of hallmarking. BIS is working towards making the hallmarking compulsory for all Gold ornaments before Diwali this year. The app to check the validity of hallmarking will be launched before that. How the app will work The app will provide complete information about the gold ornament/jewellery by entering the 9 digit hallmarking number. The consumers will be able to see and verify the purity level of the purchased gold items. The hallmarking number can also be scanned by the app. Hallmarking Purity Levels Category Carat Hallmarking Number Gold Jewellery 22 Carat 916 Diamond Jewellery 18 Carat 750 Exported Jewellery 14 Carat 585 Silver Jewellery 20 Carat 833 Coin and Biscuits 24 Carat 100 Coin and biscuits to contain unique code of the Government Refinery This step of Government will also help prevent jewelers making false statements to consumers about the purity level of ornaments. Thus, bringing transparency to the system and making consumers the king. At present, there are only 375 hallmarking centers across the country but the government want to open a hallmarking center in every district before launching the app. This will help jewelers getting their gold jewellery hallmarked without much problem.

864. PM Narendra Modi to flag off trains to Mizoram, Manipur including Kamakhya-Vaishno Devi Katra weekly train

The prime minister, accompanied by Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu, will use the remote control from Shillong to flag off the passenger train services to Mizoram and Manipur, and the Kamakhya-Vaishno Devi Katra weekly train,"

Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) chief public relations officer Pranav Jyoti Sharma told IANS. "The Kamakhya-Vaishno Devi Katra weekly train was announced in the Railway Budget 2014-15," he said. "The prime minister would also attend the 65th Plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Shillong on Friday. He will flag off the train services in the afternoon, an NFR official said. The metre gauge to broad gauge conversion projects of Silchar-Jiribam (52 km) rail tracks in Manipur and Silchar-Bhairabi (120 km) tracks in Mizoram were part of the Lumding-Silchar and Badarpur-Agartala gauge conversion projects. The 437-km Lumding-Silchar and Badarpur-Agartala gauge conversion works were sanctioned in 1996 and completed earlier this year. Another NFR official told IANS that the prime minister was scheduled to lay the foundation stone of the Agartala-Akhaura (Bangladesh) railway project and flag off regular passenger train service from Agartala to Sealdah, and Agartala to Silchar on the newly-laid broad gauge line. But these events would be held in June in Agartala. The Rs.968-crore Agartala-Akhaura (5 km on the Indian side and 10 km on Bangladesh) railway project was finalised in January 2010 when Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met the then prime minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi. Subsequently, Modi discussed the railway project with Sheikh Hasina during his visit to Dhaka in June 2015.

865. Gujarat CM launches state-wide campaigns against malnutrition

Chief Minister Anandiben Patel today launched two state-wide campaigns against malnutrition at Ahwa town in Dangs district. As part of 'Bal Amritam' and 'Mission Shakti' campaigns, iron-rich supplementary food would be provided to children and women, whether they live in towns or remote forested areas, she said. She also called for creating awareness among tribal women about free screening and treatment of breast and cervical cancers at government hospitals, an official release said here. The chief minister also urged the people to take a pledge to work towards bringing down the infant and maternity mortality rates in this tribal-dominated district to the state's average. During her speech, she also slammed Congress, claiming "the same people who exploited tribal people as a vote-bank and didn't undertake development works for the last sixty years are now trying to create obstacles (in development)." During her visit Patel dedicated several projects to the people. They include a nursing school for 40 students and a hostel built at a cost of Rs 12.70 crore, a science college built for Rs 11 crore and modernisation of a civil hospital at a cost of Rs 31.46 crore.

866. Nasa Successfully Deploys Space Station's Inflatable Room

Nasa on Saturday successfully expanded and pressurized an add-on room at the [International Space Station](#) two days after [aborting the first attempt](#) when it ran into problems. The flexible habitat, known as the Bigelow Expandable Activity Module (BEAM), completed slowly extending 67 inches (170 centimeters) at 4:10 pm (2010 GMT) following more than seven hours during which astronaut Jeff Williams released short blasts of air into the pod's walls from the orbiting lab using a manual valve. After the expansion was completed, he opened eight air tanks inside [BEAM](#), pressurizing the pod to a level close to the space station's 14.7 pounds per square inch. "The module is fully expanded at this point and fully pressurized," Nasa spokesman Daniel Huot said. "A very successful day today with the expansion of the first expandable human-rated habitat to ever be flown into space." Astronauts will now perform a series of tests to ensure the pod does not leak air and conduct other preparations before entering it through the station's Tranquility module for the first time in approximately a week, [Nasa said](#). The inflation process may be better described as "unfolding" since it takes very little air to bring the pod to full size, experts said. Only about 0.4 pounds per square inch (psi) is needed to expand BEAM to its full shape. The expansion caused a popping sound not unlike that of popcorn as the structure slowly filled out, live video feed from the space station on [Nasa](#) television showed.

867. Govt recommends to extend tax holiday for Startups to 7 years

Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that Government has taken several steps in the last year to facilitate ease of doing business.

Speaking to media in New Delhi today on completion of two years of NDA Government, Mrs Sitharaman said,

Government has undertaken various training programmes for the benefit of exporters. She said, the India Trade Portal has been launched, which is proving to be of immense help to exporters.

She said, merchandise exports from India Scheme has also been expanded.

The Minister said, Government has done away with the need to produce landing certificates to facilitate ease of doing business.

She said, her Ministry has recommended to Finance Ministry to raise tax holiday for start-ups to 7 years from the present 3 years.

She also informed that FDI equity flow has grown by 53 per cent.

Replying to a question on Foodgrains, she said, India is in talks with Myanmar for import of pulses, to ensure sufficient stock and address speculation.

She said, the permanent solution for stock holding for food grains has been underlined.

On WTO, she said, India stood by the Bali Declaration at the talks and the Doha developmental agenda has been completely reinforced by the Government.

Answering a media query she said, her Ministry is in talks with the Finance Ministry on Apples foreign direct investment proposal that seeks a waiver from the country's local sourcing rules.

The Finance Ministry had asked the iPhone maker to meet rules that mandate foreign retailers to sell at least 30 per cent locally-sourced goods if it wished to open stores in the country.

The Minister, however, said she is not in favour of relaxing rules for Apple to sell refurbished second-hand phones in India. She said, her Ministry is ready to waive local sourcing requirement in retail for high-end tech companies like Apple, if they comply with conditions.

868. Jethmalani files nomination papers for RS election from RJD, Sharad Yadav from JD(U)

In Bihar, daughter of Mr Lalu Prasad, Misa Bharti and renowned lawyer Ram Jethmalani today filed their nomination papers from RJD.

Earlier, Mr Ram Jethmalani took membership of Rashtriya Janata Dal. Former JDU National President Sharad Yadav and sitting JDU Rajya Sabha Member R.C.P.Singh also filed their nomination papers.

BJP has nominated the former state BJP President Gopal Narayan Singh for Rajya Sabha election.

869. PM Modi asks railways to speed up redevelopment of stations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stressed upon the need to speed up the redevelopment of Railway Stations.

Reviewing the progress in the key infrastructure sectors of railways and roads, Mr Modi emphasized on the need for the railways to upgrade and diversify the usage of its infrastructure.

He reiterated that railway infrastructure in rural areas could be used for activities such as skill development, which could lead to an increase in non-fare revenue for the railways.

During the review, it was noted that the capital investment in last financial year was over 93 thousand crore rupees, which represents a massive increase of 65 per cent over the previous year.

Similarly, 1780 km of lines have been commissioned and 1730 kilometres electrified during 2015-16, which represent the best performance on these metrics in railway history.

In the roads sector, Prime Minister suggested for study of various models of road development across the country and adopt the best practices to attract more private investment into the highway construction sector. He also stressed the need to decongest critical stretches and adopt latest technologies for toll collection.

During 2015-16, over 6000 kilometres of highways were completed, while contracts for another over ten thousand kilometres were awarded.

870. Vice President embarks on 5-day visit to Morocco, Tunisia

Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari left for North Africa today on a two-nation visit to Morocco and Tunisia.

During the 5-day visit, Mr Ansari will hold deliberations with top leaders of both the countries, with an aim to give a filip to the bilateral relations and explore new avenues of co-operation.

The Vice President will reach Moroccan capital, Rabat Monday evening and will later meet King Mohammed 6th and Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane.

He will reach Tunis on Thursday and hold discussions with President Beji Caid Essebsi and Prime Minister Habib Essid.

Issues of terrorism, expansion of United Nations Security Council, investment, ways to strengthen outreach to Africa and regional matters are likely to figure during the talks.

A number of MoUs in various fields including education and IT, capacity building and cultural exchange are also expected to be signed.

AIR correspondent, covering the visit, reports that the tour comes in the backdrop of the recent attacks on African nationals in India, and the India-Africa Forum summit held in October last year in Delhi in which heads of 54 nations across Africa participated to give a new thrust to their partnership with India.

871. Maneka Gandhi releases Draft Trafficking of Persons Bill

Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi today released the Draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2016 in New Delhi.

The new bill aims to check human trafficking by unifying several existing laws, meting out tougher punishment for repeat offenders and ensuring the protection and rehabilitation of victims.

Besides creating a comprehensive law against trafficking, the draft bill calls for the creation of a special court and investigation agency to tackle such cases and joint working groups with neighboring countries to undertake preventive measures.

872. Vice Admiral Girish Luthra takes charge of Western Naval Command

Vice Admiral Girish Luthra today succeeded Sunil Lanba as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Naval Command.

Vice Admiral Luthra took over the reins from Vice Admiral Lanba in a ceremonial parade in Mumbai Monday morning.

Vice Admiral Lanba will take over as the Chief of Naval Staff in New Delhi tomorrow.

Addressing the personnel on parade, Vice Admiral Lanba complimented the personnel of the command who, notwithstanding the constraints of the service, have worked with synergy and teamwork in ensuring that ships, submarines and aircrafts are maintained in a high state of combat readiness at all times.

In keeping with the fragile maritime environment of the region, he said that, there is a need to be ever vigilant in all quarters and all fronts.

Before taking over as Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Western Command, Vice Admiral Luthra served as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Southern Naval Command.

He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy in Pune, the Defence Services Staff College in Wellington and Naval Command Naval War College, USA.

Luthra was awarded Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 2012 and Vishisht Seva Medal in 2008.

873. Soil health card for farmers spurs agricultural growth

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the last two years in office, has initiated several welfare schemes for all sections of the society including the farmers.

One of the major schemes is soil health card for farmers.

AIR correspondent reports on how this scheme is benefiting the farmers in Chhattisgarh:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched soil health card scheme on 19th February last year, seeking to spur agricultural growth.

The scheme has a target to provide soil health cards to more than 14 crore farmers by the year 2018.

The card will carry crop-wise recommendations of nutrients or fertilizers required for farms, making it possible for farmers to improve productivity by wisely using inputs and reduce costs.

A target for distribution of 37 lakh soil health cards has been fixed for Chhattisgarh. So far, more than eight lakh farmers have been provided these cards.

Soil testing laboratories have been set up in seven district headquarters. Efforts are on to establish soil testing facilities in eight more districts as well as in 11 Mandi premises.

Farmers in Chhattisgarh are of the opinion that the soil health card has been proving beneficial for soil health, besides improving productivity and reducing crop disease.

874. Haryana govt submits Parkash Singh Committee report to HC

Haryana government today submitted Parkash Singh Committee report to Punjab and Haryana High Court.

The Committee was constituted to probe the acts of omission and commission during the Jat reservation stir.

The Punjab and Haryana High Court had granted interim stay on last thursday on reservation given to Jats and five other castes in Haryana. The reservation was challenged in the court on the grounds that it was in violation of Supreme Court orders. The court has fixed July 21 next date of hearing.

The government of Haryana had approved the Haryana Backward Classes (Reservation in Services and Admission in Educational Institutions) Bill.

The bill enlists the Jats, Bishnois, Tyagis, and Rors in the recently sculpted Backward Classes (C) category, making them eligible for 10 per cent reservation in class 3 and 4 posts, and 6 per cent reservation in class 1 and 2 jobs.

875. Govt launches National Tobacco Quit line number

Government today launched National Tobacco Quit line number for those who want to quit tobacco.

The toll free number is 1XXX-XX-2356. Speaking at a programme marking World NO TOBACCO day in New Delhi, Health Minister J P Nadda said, 35 per cent of the country's population is effected by tobacco and half of these people want to quit.

He said, through this helpline number people can get information on how they can quit using tobacco products.

Mr Nadda said, government has taken a number of steps to spread awareness on diseases caused by tobacco.

He said the Ministry has also increased the pictorial warning on tobacco products to 85 per cent.

The Minister also asked states to train health workers to sensitize people about the consequences of tobacco consumption.

876. Railways conduct trial run of high-speed Talgo train

Indian Railways on Sunday conducted the first ever trial run for high-speed Talgo trains of Spain on the Bareilly-to-Moradabad stretch in Uttar Pradesh.

A statement from the ministry said, the test train consisted of one locomotive fit for 180 kmph along with one VIP coach, one first class coach, one cafeteria coach and four second class coaches.

The second trial run will be conducted on the Palwal-to-Mathura section of the North-Central Railway.

A railway official told media that the trial run will be conducted in a series of phases to test the riding, safety and stability of Talgo trains.

AIR correspondent quoting railway sources reports that after the successful completion of this phase, timing trial of the much awaited high-speed train will be conducted.

The trials will be conducted with empty coaches and later with sand bags filling the passenger sitting spaces.

The speed of the train during the trial run will vary from 130 kmph to 180 kmph.

Talgo is a Madrid-based Spanish leading manufacturer of semi-high speed (160-250 kmph) and high-speed (350 kmph) passenger trains, which are energy-efficient.

Last month, the Indian Railways flagged off country's first semi-high speed train -- Gatimaan Express between Delhi and Agra which can run at a maximum speed of 160 kmph.

877. Chief negotiator of Syria's main opposition group resigns

The chief negotiator of Syria's main opposition umbrella group, Mohammed Alloush, has resigned over what he called the failure of peace talks.

Mr Alloush, from the High Negotiations Committee (HNC), said the talks had not brought a political deal or eased the plight of Syrians in besieged areas.

The HNC suspended its involvement in the UN-brokered proximity negotiations with a Syrian government delegation in Geneva in April.

No date has been set for a resumption. A nationwide truce between rebel and government forces brokered by the US and Russia is officially still in place, but is frequently violated.

878. Govt notifies panel for Delhi Metro fare revision

Urban Development Ministry has notified the Fare Fixation Committee for recommending the passenger fares for Delhi Metro network in Delhi and National Capital Region.

An official release said, the Committee has been given three month time for submission of its report and recommendations to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Limited.

The Committee will be headed by Justice M L Mehta, retired Judge of the High Court of Delhi. The last Fare Fixation

Committee submitted their recommendations on metro fares in 2009.

879. Nagaland hospital gets laparoscopic training centre

In a major boost to healthcare services in the state, a laparoscopic training centre was formally inaugurated at Nikos Hospital and Research Centre in Dimapur yesterday.

Speaking on the occasion, Nagaland Health and Family Welfare Minister, P Longon, said quality healthcare is the need of the hour and healthcare system cannot be compromised at any cost.

The launching of the laparoscopic training centre coincided with the accreditation of Nikos Hospital Research Centre by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals Healthcare Providers (NABH).

With this, Nikos Hospital has earned the distinction of being the first hospital in Nagaland and the third in the North East Region to get NABH accreditation and also the first hospital in the Region to open a laparoscopic training centre.

880. Companies raise record Rs 4.92 lakh cr via debt placement in FY16

Indian companies raised a record Rs 4.92 lakh crore in the last fiscal through private placement of corporate bonds. This represents an increase of 6 percent over the preceding year.

A report by Prime Database said these funds were raised mainly for expansion of business plans and to support working capital requirements.

The financial services sector continued to dominate, collectively raising Rs 3.18 lakh crore, or 64 per cent of the total amount.

881. PM Mudra Yojana provides ease of doing business in Telangana

Ease of Business has become a common ground for thousands of vendors and small businesspersons in Telangana ever since the Prime Minister Mudra Yojana has been launched.

Over 4.7 lakh persons have got easy- loans ranging from Rs. 40,000 to Rs. 5 lakhs during the past 14 months.

Mudra Bank Assistant General Manager PSN Murthy told AIR Correspondent that the public sector banks in Telangana state put together disbursed Rs. 3,694 crore under the Prime Minister Mudra Yojana. These include Shishu, Kishore and Tarun plans.

She says the Mudra Yojana infused confidence besides hassles-free loans among these entrepreneurs.

AIR correspondent reports, the Prime Minister Mudra Yojana is not only offering surety-free loans to thousands of youngsters especially women who wanted to do something for their daily earnings, but also infusing confidence that they can prove themselves as successful entrepreneurs. I spoke to several such budding businesspersons who took Mudra loans in and around Hyderabad.

Vanisree, a mother of two children and resident of Ghatkeshar in Ranga Reddy District got Rs. one lakh as loan without any surety.

She got her loan in just a weeks time and started repaying as her sadi business began fetching profits.

Satish, a Computer Science Graduate, who helped his wife Shalini in taking a loan of Rs. 50,000 under the Shishu plan, says it immensely helped their business.

Kiran Yadav, an ITI certificate holder, has got a loan under Mudra Yojana and expanded his Internet Caf business without looking for a job under someone.

The State Bank of Hyderabad, the lead bank in Telangana has also developed a simple and single document process for loan seekers under Sishu plan.

The State Level Bankers Committee Convenor Thyagarajan also suggests further improvement in the Scheme so that both loan seekers and banks benefit.

Easy access to banks and quick and simple processes infuse confidence among these youngsters that they can flourish on their own.

882. SRH defeat RCB to win their maiden Indian Premier League title

Riding on brilliant all-round performance, Sunrisers Hyderabad, defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by eight runs to clinch their maiden Indian Premier League title in a high-octane summit clash at the Chinnaswamy stadium in Bangalore.

Chasing the target of 209 runs, Bangalore got off to a flying start as Chris Gayle (76) and Skipper Virat Kohli (54) laid a perfect platform and forged 114 run partnership.

But after the fall of the openers, no other batsman could contribute much, as a result they only managed to score 200 runs for seven in 20 overs.

Earlier, propelled by skipper David Warner, Hyderabad scored 208 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs. Warner, who hit 69, finished second in run-getters' list with 848 runs.

Ben Cutting of Hyderabad was declared the Man of the Match for his all round performance. He had scored 39 runs and claimed two wickets.

883. Yes Bank partners Click&Pay for cashless transactions

[Yes Bank](#) has partnered with ClickPay, a Hyderabad-based mobile payment solutions enterprise, to facilitate cashless, secure and flexible transactions for customers. As a part of this alliance [ClickPay](#) will issue Yes Bank sponsored mobile [wallets](#) and employ the bank's [immediate payment](#) service (IMPS) platform which will help ClickPay to process instant proximity transactions with merchants and person to person. Last month Yes Bank signed a memorandum of understanding with Hyderabad start-up incubation center, T-Hub to work with the latter's portfolio companies, including ClickPay. This mobile payment solutions start-up will reach out to around 1 million users this year by issuing the Yes Bank sponsored mobile wallet, according to a statement. "Our vision is to create a vibrant merchant ecosystem where millions of merchants would be able to accept digital payments using ClickPay. We have on-board around 750 merchants in Hyderabad," said Sai Sandeep, S, co-founder of ClickPay. Ritesh Pai, senior president and country head-digital banking at Yes Bank said they are investing to build strategic alliances in the digital world to deliver mobile banking and payment experiences that are simple, non-intrusive among other things. "This partnership with ClickPay will allow us to play a critical role in furthering the net generation of mobile payments," he said.

884. Today in History - May 31

1433 - Sigismund was crowned emperor of Rome.

1854 - The Kansas-Nebraska Act passed by the [U.S.](#) Congress.

1859 - The Philadelphia Athletics were formally organized to play the game of Town Ball.

1859 - In London, Big Ben went into operation.

1870 - E.J. DeSemdt patented asphalt.

1879 - New York's Madison Square Garden opened.

1880 - The first [U.S.](#) national bicycle society was formed in Newport, [RI](#). It was known as the League of American Wheelman.

1884 - Dr. John Harvey Kellogg patented "flaked cereal."

1889 - In Johnstown, [PA](#), more than 2,200 people died after the South Fork Dam collapsed.

1900 - [U.S.](#) troops arrived in Peking to help put down the Boxer Rebellion.

1902 - The Boer War ended between the Boers of South Africa and Great Britain with the Treaty of Vereeniging.

1907 - The first taxis arrived in New York City. They were the first in the [United States](#).

1909 - The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) held its first conference.

1910 - The Union of South Africa was founded.

1913 - The 17th Amendment went into effect. It provided for popular election of [U.S.](#) senators.

1915 - A German zeppelin made an air raid on London.

1927 - Ford Motor Company produced the last "Tin Lizzie" in order to begin production of the Model A.

1929 - In Beverly, [MA](#), the first [U.S.](#) born reindeer were born.

1941 - The first issue of "Parade: The Weekly Picture Newspaper" went on sale.

1943 - "Archie" was aired on the Mutual Broadcasting System for the first time.

1947 - Communists seized control of Hungary.

1955 - The [U.S.](#) Supreme Court ordered that all states must end racial segregation "with all deliberate speed."

1961 - South Africa became an independent republic.

1962 - Adolf Eichmann was hanged in Israel. Eichmann was a Gestapo official and was executed for his actions in the Nazi Holocaust.

1970 - An earthquake in Peru killed tens of thousands of people.

1974 - Israel and Syria signed an agreement on the Golan Heights.

1977 - The trans-Alaska oil pipeline was finished after 3 years of construction.

1979 - Zimbabwe proclaimed its independence.

1994 - The [U.S.](#) announced it was no longer aiming long-range nuclear missiles at targets in the former Soviet Union.

1995 - Bob Dole singled out Time Warner for "the marketing of evil" in movies and music. Dole later admitted that he had not seen or heard much of what he had been criticizing.

2003 - In [North Carolina](#), Eric Robert Rudolph was captured. He had been on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list for five years for several bombings including the 1996 Olympic bombing.

885. **World No Tobacco Day, 31 May 2016: Get ready for plain packaging**

Recent moves to introduce plain (standardized) packaging of tobacco products can save lives by reducing demand for tobacco products, according to WHO and the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Secretariat (WHO FCTC). Plain packaging of tobacco products restricts or prohibits the use of logos, colours, brand images and promotional information on packaging other than brand and product names displayed in a standard colour and font style. In December 2012, Australia became the first country to fully implement plain packaging. On 20 May 2016, France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland each began implementation of plain packaging. Ireland is also preparing to introduce the measure, while other countries are exploring the option.

886. **Manohar Parrikar inaugurates second submarine assembly workshop in Mazgaon**

Defence minister Manohar Parrikar, who was at the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) on Saturday to inaugurate a submarine assembly workshop, said the level of indigenisation in submarine construction should be much higher than the present. He said, "The overall level of indigenisation in the next line of submarines must be substantially higher." At present, MDL is building six Scorpene class of submarines for the Indian Navy with around 35% of indigenisation. The minister also emphasised that the defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSU) should undertake orders to export ships by having a dedicated "export cell". The newly built Submarine Marine Assembly Workshop is a pre-engineered building structure to handle construction of multiple submarines simultaneously. Built at a cost of Rs153 crore, it will make it possible to assemble five submarines in the workshop at the same time. The workshop has features such as rain water harvesting, sewage treatment plan, grey water treatment plant, oily water separator plant for treatment of sewage, grey water and oily water respectively, with zero discharge into the municipal drains. This facility will enable MDL to go in for a second line of submarines concurrently. The current construction of Scorpene class submarines is taking place at its East Yard in collaboration with DCNS of France. Kalvari, the first submarine of this class, is expected to join the Indian Navy later in the year. Talking about MDL's performance, Parrikar said the production value has improved from Rs2,865 crore in the year 2013-14 to Rs4,009 crore in 2015-16, which is around a 40% increase.

887. **Modi's mother given Nari Jagran Samman 2016 award**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mother Heeraben was today conferred the Nari Jagran Samman 2016 award by the Nari Jagran magazine in Varanasi. Somabhai Damodar Das Modi, elder brother of Narendra Modi received the award on behalf of his mother Heeraben. Nari Jagran magazine's editor Meena Chaubey and another member Ashok Chaurasia presented the award to Mr. Somabhai. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Somabhai regretted that his mother could not be present to receive this award, as his 96-year old has difficulty in travelling. He said that this award is dedicated to all the mothers of this country and for the safety of women (Nari Suraksha). The elder brother of PM said that he had visited Varanasi last in the year 2014 but this time he found lot of transformation Varanasi, which is the parliamentary constituency of Narendra Modi.

888. **Madhavan becomes goodwill ambassador for LEPRO India**

Bollywood Actor [R Madhavan](#) feels proud to be the [goodwill ambassador](#) for the [LEPRO India](#) organisation that fights against diseases like [leprosy](#) and tuberculosis. "I am proud to be a goodwill ambassador for LEPRO India spreading the word that leprosy is curable and no one needs to live with it," Madhavan tweeted on Monday. LEPRO India is a non-government organisation working in the fields of leprosy, tuberculosis, malaria, [HIV](#) or [AIDS](#) and community health. On the work front, Madhavan was last seen on the silver screen in 2016 "Saala Khadoos" directed by Sudha Kongara.

889. **Hamilton wins dramatic Monaco Grand Prix**

Lewis Hamilton secured his first victory of the season after an eventful Monaco Grand Prix from Daniel Ricciardo, while Sergio Perez took third for Force India. Changeable conditions saw plenty of action throughout the field with the race only just running inside of the time hour time limit. Sebastian Vettel was fourth for Ferrari, followed by Fernando Alonso McLaren, while Nico Hulkenberg snatched sixth from Nico Rosberg on the run to the line. With heavy downpours soaking the track prior to the start, it came as little surprise when the FIA announced that the race would begin under Safety Car conditions. Finally, the race was allowed to begin properly at the start of lap eight. Ricciardo made a strong getaway, pulling out a second over Nico Rosberg, Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel.

890. **Veteran film and TV actor Suresh Chatwal passes away**

The actor died in Mumbai, his son Yaman Chatwal said in a statement. He was cremated today. "With great grief, I inform you that my father, Suresh Chatwal is no more between us. He left for heavenly aboard yesterday succumbing to his ongoing illness," it stated. Suresh Chatwal's 'FIR' co-star Kavita Kaushik took to her social media account to express her grief. "Our beloved commissioner of f.i.r Shri Suresh Chatwal is no more, A man full of high energy and old filmy stories , He Always blessed me..R.I.P," Kavita tweeted. Chatwal made his acting debut in the year 1969 with 'Rakhi Rakhi' and was seen in films like 'Karan Arjun', 'Koyla' and 'Munna Bhai MBBS'. He was last seen on the big screen in 'Nakshatra' in 2010.

891. Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana – Health Insurance Scheme in Goa

Goa Government has launched Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana (DDSSY), a health insurance scheme on Goa Statehood Day. The scheme will benefit people residing in the state for 5 and more years. Goa is the first state to have a health insurance scheme which will benefit all residents of the state irrespective of their financial status. Any person residing in Goa for 5 and more years can enroll into the scheme. Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana Benefits Under the Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana (DDSSY), a family of up to 3 members will be provided an insurance cover of Rs. 2.5 Lakh while the family of 4 or more members will be provided a cover of 4 Lakh. The annual installment of the insurance premium which is Rs. 3,206 per family will be paid by the Government to the insurance company. Coverage under Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana The scheme will be applicable in all Government and private hospitals across the state. DDSSY will cover 447 types of investigations and related surgeries as per the Health Minister Francis DSouza. The insurance policy will cover treatment, investigations and medications for about 276 types of diseases in the government hospitals. Hospitalization for treatment of 147 diseases in the private hospitals is also covered under the health insurance scheme. The policy will cover hospitalization, medication as well as the cost of surgeries in government and empaneled private hospitals. If the expenses go beyond the cover limits under the insurance scheme, which is applicable in all hospitals, government as well as private, the patient will have to take the further treatment in a government hospital. How to Enroll into Deen Dayal Swasthya Seva Yojana

The state government will setup 16 centers across the state for registration and issuance of health insurance cards to the beneficiaries. Technical partner for providing the insurance cards is Goa Electronics Ltd (GEL) while the company which will provide the actual insurance cover is United India Insurance Company Ltd. By launching this scheme, the government aims to lessen the burden on Goa Municipal Corporation. The scheme is also expected to lessen the burden on state residents and help them get better treatments.

892. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) – Skill Training Scheme

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana is an initiative of Indian government to make countrys youth employable and strengthen them economically. The word Kaushal refers to Skill and the scheme objective is to encourage skill development for youth by providing them a meaningful, industry relevant, skill based training. Under the scheme, the beneficiaries who are successfully trained, assessed and certified are awarded financially by the government. There are several skill courses being run by the affiliated training providers under the Kaushal Vikas Yojana. PMKVY is being run by the Ministry of Skill Development Entrepreneurship (MSDE) while National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is the implementing agency for the scheme. The scheme also seeks to significantly scale up skill training activities in the country and enable skill training to happen at a fast pace without compromising the quality. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana Objectives The major objective of the scheme is to make people trained in various skills so that they can become employable and financially strong. The skill development scheme is also aimed to increase productivity of existing workforce and train certify them according to industry needs. Provide Monetary Awards for Skill Certification to boost employability and productivity of youth by incentivizing them for skill training. Providing an average monetary reward of Rs. 8,000/- per candidates to the beneficiary who is undergoing skill training. Main features of PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana The training under PMKVY is provided based on the standards (National Occupational Standards NOS and Qualification Packs QPs for specific job roles) defined by the industry-driven bodies, namely the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs). The skill training is provided based on assessment of skill demand and the Skill Gap Studies Government will provide training aligned with the national flagship programmes such as Swachh Bharat, Digital India, Make in India, National Solar Mission and so on. The training providers will undergo the due diligence according to the guidelines of PMKVY issued by NSDC before being registered to provide training to the youth. This will ensure the good quality of training. The training curricula also includes soft skill training, personal grooming, behavioral change for cleanliness, and good work ethics. Trainees with prior skills and experience will be assessed and given monetary rewards for

undergoing the assessment. Monetary rewards will be provided upon successful training and assessment to the beneficiaries according to their job roles and sectors. Higher incentives will be given to training in manufacturing, construction and plumbing sectors. The monetary reward amount will directly be transferred to the bank account of the beneficiary without any intermediaries. This will bring transparency to the system and fasten the whole process. Aadhar number of the beneficiary will be used for unique identification. The government also provides mentoring support to the candidates who have successfully completed the training and are looking for employment opportunities. Get Enrolled Under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 1. Find Training Center: The candidate who wants to get benefits of the scheme, have to find the affiliate training center who is offering a skill development course of your choice. The list of training centers is available on the official website of PMKVY at <http://pmkvyofficial.org> and further information of PMKVY can be obtained by joining Kaushal Vikas Shivir or by calling on the helpline number 88000-55555. 2. Get Enrolled: The second step is to choose the course you are eligible for. To be a trainee, the candidate have to pay training and assessment fees. And at the time of application submission for enrollment, the candidate have to submit their Aadhaar Card and bank account details. 3. Learn a Skill: Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) formulated the National Occupation Standards (NOS) and Qualification Packs (QPs) for trainings under the scheme, which will be received by a candidates from PMKVY affiliated training centers. 4. Be Assessed and Certified: To complete the course and get certified, the applicants will have to give an assessment of SSC approved agency. After passing the assessment and having a valid Aadhaar Card, the candidate will receive a government certification and skill card. 5. Get a Reward: For being certified, the trainee will received a monetary award from the government. The reward amount will be directly transferred to the trainees bank account. The certified trainee having a valid bank accounts and has not availed of the monetary reward before, will only be eligible for monetary reward. PMKVY Scheme Booklet More information about the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana can be obtained from the [scheme booklet](#) or from the official website as mentioned below.

893. The Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) Project

The Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) is an infrastructure and industrial project that aims to construct industrial areas, towns and other facilities across a 1504 km long corridor between Mumbai and Delhi supported by Dedicated Freight Corridor railway connectivity. According to the DMIC Corporation, High Speed - High Capacity connectivity under the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) provides the backbone of the project. The 1504 km long Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) between Delhi and Mumbai will go through six states - U.P, Delhi NCR, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The end terminals at Dadri in the Delhi NCR and Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT) near Mumbai. Dadri is a part of Delhi NCR as well as UPs Gautam Budha Nagar District. For the execution of the project, the government has formed the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Ltd. (DMICDC) as a special purpose company, was incorporated. The DMICDC undertakes project development services for investment regions / industrial areas / economic regions / industrial nodes and townships, for various central government agencies and also assists state governments. Shareholding in DMICDC Share-holding of DMICDC is: Government of India (DIPP) 49%, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) 26%, HUDCO 19.9%, IIFCL 4.1%, LIC 1.0%. The DMIC has six participating states - U.P, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Industrial Areas, Regions, Economic Corridors will be established in in these states. The DMIC envisages to develop investment regions / industrial areas / economic regions / industrial nodes and townships along its project areas. In Phase I, eight nodes/cities in the six DMIC states is chosen for development. These industrial areas (IA) or industrial regions (IR) are: Dadri -Noida - Ghaziabad IR in UP Manesar - Bawal IR in Haryana Jodhpur Pali Marwar IA in Rajasthan Khushkhara -Bhiwadi Neemrana IR in Rajasthan Ahmedabad -Dholera IR in Gujarat Pithampur Dhar -Mhow IR in Madhya Pradesh Shendra Bidkin IA in Maharashtra and Dighi Port IA in in Maharashtra The Dedicated Freight Corridor offers high-speed connectivity for High Axle Load Wagons (25 Tonne) of Double Stacked Container supported by high power locomotives.

894. Govt doctors' retirement age extended to 65 years

Government approved extending retirement age of doctors of Central Health Services to 65 years. Last week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made an announcement to increase the retirement age from 62 to 65 years at a rally in Saharanpur. The decision has been taken in view of shortage of doctors.

895. India, Morocco sign five MoUs in Rabat

India and Morocco today signed five Memoranda of Understanding in diverse fields. The MoUs were signed during

delegation-level talks in the presence of Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari and Moroccan Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane at Dar al-Kakhzen, the official residence of the King of Morocco in Rabat. The MoUs covered the fields of water resource management, television broadcasting, institutional co-operation, and cultural and educational exchanges.

In a joint statement after the talks, the Vice President said, India sees Morocco as a trusted partner in various fields. He said, during talks with the Moroccan Prime Minister, they reviewed all aspects of their bilateral co-operation and emphasised the need to identify new areas of collaboration. The Vice President said, wide ranging discussions on global and regional developments were also held during the talks. Mr Ansari appreciated Morocco's support for India's candidature to the expanded UN Security Council.

The Vice President also invited Mr Benkirane to pay a visit to India to which the Moroccan Prime Minister said, he will visit in the coming months. The Vice President, who is on a 2-nation visit to Morocco and Tunisia, will call on King Mohammed VI later today. He, along with the Moroccan Prime Minister, will also launch the India-Morocco Chamber of Commerce. Mr Ansari will deliver a lecture at the Mohammad V University tomorrow before leaving for Marrakech. He will proceed to Tunisia on Thursday. Earlier today, the Vice President also laid wreath at the Mausoleum of King Mohammed V.

896. Admiral Sunil Lanba takes charge as Navy chief

Admiral Sunil Lanba took over as the Chief of Naval Staff. 58-year-old Lanba, a specialist in Navigation and Direction, will have the full three-year tenure as the Navy Chief. He succeeded Admiral R K Dhowan.

An alumnus of Defence Services Staff College, Lanba is the 21st Indian to be the Navy Chief.

Admiral Lanba is a recipient of the Param Vishist Seva Medal and the Athi Vishist Seva Medal for distinguished service.

897. NGT junks AOL's plea for acceptance of fine as bank guarantee

The National Green Tribunal today junked the AOL - Art of Living's plea seeking its nod to accept the environment compensation, slapped for damaging Yamuna's biodiversity, as bank guarantee instead of payment of balance amount of 4.75 crore rupees. The green panel also slapped a fine of 5,000 rupees on Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's AOL for filing such application which lacks bonafide and directed it to pay the remainder amount in one week.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Swatanter Kumar rapped the AOL foundation for not depositing the amount despite assurance granted to the tribunal.

The green panel on March 9 had refused to prohibit the three-days 'World Culture Festival', held by AOL between March 11 and 13, but slapped a fine of Rs 5 crore on the foundation for damaging biodiversity and aquatic life of Yamuna.

Later, on March 11, AOL moved a plea seeking four weeks time for depositing the amount after which the tribunal allowed the foundation to deposit Rs 25 lakh on that day and granted three weeks time period to pay the balance amount.

AOL had also sought to submit a proposal for laying down methodology for collection of scientific data regarding assessment of actual environmental damage and requested the tribunal to grant 45 days for the same.

898. Former Delhi Police commissioner B S Bassi appointed UPSC member

B S Bassi, who had a controversial tenure as Delhi Police Commissioner with frequent run-ins with the AAP government, on Tuesday was appointed a member of UPSC, a Constitutional post, with a five year tenure. The Government cleared the name of 60-year-old Bassi as a member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts the civil services examination to select IAS and IPS officers among others. The Commission has a maximum strength of 10 members besides a Chairperson. A 1977 batch IPS officer of Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre, Bassi retired as Delhi Police chief in February this year after completing 60 years. He will have a tenure of about five years till February, 2021. Under the Constitution, a

member of the UPSC can have a maximum of six years tenure or till he attains age of 65 years. Basis tenure as Delhi Police Commissioner, especially towards the end, had come for criticism after the arrest of Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) President Kanhaiya Kumar over sedition row. The former police Chief was involved in a running battle with the AAP government led by Arvind Kejriwal. The UPSC is headed by a chairman besides maximum of ten members. With Basis appointment, the Commission is in its full strength. Alka Sirohi, David R Syiemlieh, Manbir Singh, Former Navy Vice Chief D K Dewan, Vinay Mittal, Chhatar Singh, Prof Hem Chandra, Arvind Saxena and Prof Pradeep Kumar Joshi are other members of the UPSC, headed by Deepak Gupta as its Chairman.

899. Prepare action plans to tackle drought impact, Centre tells states

The Centre has asked drought-affected States to prepare action plans on a weekly basis to tide over challenges such as shortage and scarcity of drinking water, promote conservation efforts and prudent usage of existing water resources. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his recent meetings with the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Karnataka, has discussed short- and long-term measures to be taken by both the Centre and states, involving local self-government, to tackle water scarcity, according to an official release of the Agriculture Ministry. Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh asked all States to take immediate action to fight drought and review it on a weekly basis. States have also been asked by the Centre to undertake a major drive for construction of farm ponds, adopt micro-irrigation and diversify into crops requiring less water. It was decided that while promoting dug wells and farm ponds, states would incentivise solar pumps for irrigation, the release said.

900. Ashok Lavasa Designated As Finance Secretary

Senior IAS officer Ashok Lavasa was on Tuesday designated as the Finance Secretary. Lavasa, at present serving as the Expenditure Secretary, is a 1980 batch IAS officer of Haryana cadre.

As per the convention, the seniormost Secretary in the Finance Ministry is designated as the Finance Secretary.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved designating Mr Lavasa as Finance Secretary, an order issued by

Department of Personnel and Training said. Mr Lavasa's batchmate Shaktikanta Das is working as Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs.

While Hasmukh Adhia is the Revenue Secretary, Anjuly Chib Duggal is Secretary, Department of Financial Services and Neeraj Kumar Gupta is Secretary in Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).

Mr Duggal and Mr Adhia are 1981 batch IAS officers, while Mr Gupta belongs to the 1982 batch.

901. Australia war dead repatriated from Malaysia

Half a century after they died, the bodies of 32 Australian soldiers and their dependents, many of whom were killed in the Vietnam War, were returned home from Malaysia Tuesday (May 31). In a sombre ceremony, their flag-draped coffins were loaded onto Australian airforce planes by a military guard of honour as a bugle sounded the Last Post. Australia sent more than 60,000 troops to fight in the Vietnam War and 521 were killed. Soldiers were buried in the nearest Commonwealth cemetery unless their families could pay for repatriation to Australia. "As a soldier, I am proud that the remains can be brought closer to their loved ones," said Abdullah Sani Mohamed, the Army Museum Director, who oversees Terendak Military Cemetery in Malaysia, where the Australians were buried. He said 21 of the deceased were Australian soldiers killed in Vietnam, three had been killed in the fight against communist insurgents in Malaysia, and eight others were family members. In 1966, Australia changed the repatriation policy so that all fallen soldiers would be taken home. Last year, the government offered to pay for the repatriation of any soldiers buried overseas prior to the policy change, with 33 families accepting the offer. Another body will be repatriated from Kranji Cemetery in Singapore, the Australian government said in a statement. The remains in Malaysia were driven from Terendak Military Cemetery to Subang Airbase, west of the capital Kuala Lumpur, in white vans early Tuesday. The caskets, draped with the Australian flag, were carried onto two waiting Royal Australian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft, as top brass and officials from both countries looked on. Family members of the deceased, including Christopher Bowtell, whose

grandfather Robert Walter Bowtell died in the Vietnam War, were at the event. "He is finally coming home," Bowtell, who also serves in the Australian army, told AFP, adding that his family were "pretty excited - it is going to be quite an experience". The coffins will be flown to Richmond Royal Australian Air Force Base, where families of the servicemen and civilians will gather for a ceremony Thursday. This year also marks half a century since the Battle of Long Tan, which took place in August 1966 and was Australia's costliest day in the Vietnam War, with 18 soldiers killed.

902. HC issues notice to Gujarat govt on ordinance giving 10% EWS reservation

Gujarat High Court today issued notice to the state government over a petition challenging an ordinance providing 10 per cent reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to members of Economically Weaker Section. A vacation bench of Justice Paresh Upadhyay issued notice to secretaries of Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs department, Education department and General Administrative department and posted the matter for further hearing on 22nd June.

However, the High Court has rejected the demand of petitioner to stay the ordinance issued by the Government. The notice was issued after a petitioner Jayant Manani filed a petition challenging the 1st May ordinance, in which he stated that special provision for reservation to economically weaker section is contrary to fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the Constitution.

The petitioner said that ordinance was in direct conflict with the judgement of the apex court that a state cannot provide more than 50 per cent reservation and that reservation could only be allowed on ground of social and educational backwardness and not poverty per se. The petitioner also questioned the passage of ordinance without collecting necessary data with regard to economical backwardness.

The state government had issued an ordinance -on 1st May.

Gujarat Unreserved Economically Weaker Sections (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions in the State and of Appointments and Posts in Services under the State) Ordinance, 2016 was issued against the backdrop of the agitation by Patidar community. The ordinance provides 10 per cent reservation to economically weaker sections of the society other than SCs, STs SEBCs for admissions in the educational institutions and government jobs. The reservation is applicable to persons with annual family income cap of Rs 6 lakh.

903. Odisha CM dedicates 200 hostels for SC/ST students

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today dedicated 200 new hostels for SC and ST students and inaugurated a programme for distribution of 20 thousand land pattas to all beneficiaries at a state level function in Bhubaneswar. Speaking on the occasion, Patnaik said his government has set up more than 1,600 schools and constructed more than 5 thousand hostels for SC and ST and tribal students.

He said his government has also implemented Akankhya and Anwesha schemes to provide opportunity to about 26 thousand SC, ST and dalit students to study in public schools in urban areas. The chief minister also announced that the government has set up 10 model residential schools for the poor students of and backward communities in the state. Classes would begin in these schools from 2018, he added.

904. Core industry sectors grow by 8.5% in April

The core sector output continued on its positive trajectory for fifth straight month in a row with a growth of 8.5 per cent in April as compared to growth 6.4 per cent in March. The eight core industries coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity comprising nearly 38 per cent of India's total industrial production.

While petroleum refinery production, fertilizer production, steel production, cement production and electricity generation rose coal production, crude Oil production, Natural Gas production saw a decrease.

905. Govt keen to set up stressed assets fund to fight NPAs: Sinha

Union minister of State for Finance Jayant Sinha said that India is looking to start a "significant" fund that will invest in distressed loans held by lenders, as regulators strive to clean-up non-performing loans in the struggling sector.

He further added that there are several players interested in investing in such a fund including the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund, special situation funds and smaller stressed asset funds.

Sinha was speaking on the sidelines of an event by credit ratings agency CRISIL in the financial capital. The minister also counted the achievements of the government on the completion of its 2 years and said that it works on sab ka saath sab ka vikas.

He further said that the government is a pro poor government and works on the lines of ending poverty through its various initiatives.

906. Alastair Cook becomes youngest batsman to score 10,000 Test runs

England captain Alastair Cook became the first English cricketer to reach the 10,000 runs milestone in Test cricket on Monday during the second Test against Sri Lanka at Chester-le-Street.

In the process, he also became the youngest batsman to achieve the extraordinary feat, surpassing Indian batting legend Sachin Tendulkar.

The British Prime Minister David Cameron congratulated the Left-handed opener for achieving the remarkable feat.

907. BCCI developing green stadiums: Anurag Thakur

BCCI President Anurag Thakur said, BCCI is developing green stadiums and has earmarked Rs. 100 crore for the purpose.

He said, BCCI has also taken steps for solar power generation and reuse of sewage water after getting it treated for grounds.

He was speaking to media on Monday after inaugurating a newly developed cricket stadium by Andhra Cricket Association and Krishna District Cricket Association at Mulapadu village, about 20 km from Vijayawada.

He said, the BCCI was making efforts to implement its "Go Green" initiatives.

He said, solar panels were being installed in cricket stadiums for power generation and steps were being taken for rain water harvesting structures and reuse sewage water for grounds after getting it treated besides conducting energy auditing.

908. Vice Admiral Karambir Singh, AVSM assumes charge as Vice Chief of Naval Staff

Vice Admiral Karambir Singh, AVSM, assumed charge as the Vice Chief of Naval Staff today, 31 May 16. The Admiral is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla.

Commissioned into the Indian Navy in July 1980, the Admiral earned his wings as a helicopter pilot in 1982 and has flown extensively on the Chetak and Kamov helicopters. He is a graduate of Defence Services Staff College, Wellington; College of Naval Warfare, Mumbai and has served as Directing Staff in both these institutions.

909. India Signs Grant Agreement with IBRD

An agreement for Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Grant of USD 9.20 Million with the World Bank for "Efficient and Sustainable City Bus Service Project" was signed here today by Shri Rai Kumar, Joint Secretary (MI), Department of Economic Affairs on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Onno Ruhl, Country Director, World Bank (India) on behalf of IBRD, acting as an Implementing Agency of the Global Environment Facility. Representatives from Ministry of Urban Development and State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Chandigarh (UT) were also present on the occasion.

The total program cost is USD 113.0 million, with USD 9.20 million as grant from the GEF and USD 103.07 million from Government of India and state city governments for funding of buses and ancillary infrastructure.

The project's development objective is to improve the efficiency and attractiveness of city bus transport and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the demonstration cities. It comprises: (i) a national capacity building component to be implemented by Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD); and (ii) city demonstration projects in the cities of Bhopal, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Mira Bhayandar.

SHANMUGAM IAS ACADEMY