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Quick Revision Prelims 2017

Part 1 - June, July & August 2016

Part 2 – September, October & November 2016

Part 3 – December 2016, January & February 2017 (would be available by 18th April 2017)

Part 4 – March, April & May 2017 (would be available by 25th May 2017)

1- Union Government launches POCSO e-box

- Launched by the Minister for Women and Child Development.
- Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO), e-Box, is an online complaint management system for easy and direct reporting of sexual offences against children and timely action against the offenders under the POCSO Act, 2012. E-Box is very simple to operate and will help to maintain the confidentiality of the complaint.
- The e-Box is incorporated prominently in the home page of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) website http://ncpcr.gov.in/ where a user has to simply push a button named POSCO e-Box.

2- India certified Yaws, Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus free by WHO

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) officially certified India as free of maternal and neonatal tetanus (MNT) and Yaws.
- Neonatal (in the first 28 days of birth) deaths annually. The elimination reflects improved institutional deliveries (now 75 per cent for India) and clean umbilical cord practices.
- MNT occurs in new borns through infection of the unhealed umbilical stump when it is cut with a non-sterile instrument.
- India being certified as the first yaws-free nation. Yaws is a chronic bacterial infection that affects the skin, bones and cartilages. India has achieved this important milestone in May this year much before the WHO global target year of 2020.
- MNT validation was started by the WHO in 1989 but India's first MNT-free state was Andhra in 2003. By April 17, 2015, all states were declared MNT-free, ahead of WHO's global MNT-free target deadline of December 2015.

3-Union Government launches Accessible E-Library Sugamya Pustakalaya

- Sugamya Pustakalaya: A step towards an Accessible Digital India" (An online library for persons with visual disabilities).
- "Sugamaya Pustakalaya" is an online platform that makes accessible content available to print-disabled people.
- It has been created by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, National Institute of Visually Handicapped (NIVH) in collaboration with member organizations of Daisy Forum of India and powered by TCS Access, Integrating libraries across India and the Globe, including the largest international library, 'Bookshare'.

4-Union HRD Ministry launches Prashikshak, an online teacher education portal

- 'Prashikshak' is launched with a vision to strengthen District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) and bring quality teachers into the Indian school education system.
- Developed by the ministry of HRD in collaboration with Central Square Foundation
- The objective of Prashikshak is to help DIETs make informed decisions about their institutes, compare the performance of their institute against other DIETs in the state/country as well as help aspiring teachers make informed decisions about which institute to join.

5- Union Cabinet approves introduction of Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016

- Surrogacy – when a couple wants a baby but is unable to have a child because either or both partners are medically unfit to conceive.
- Regulating surrogacy by establishing National Surrogacy Board at the central level and State Surrogacy Boards and Appropriate Authorities in the State and Union Territories.
- Prohibits commercial surrogacy and allow ethical surrogacy to the needy infertile couples.
- Allows ethical surrogacy for all infertile Indian married couple in the country.
- Protects rights of surrogate mother and children born out of surrogacy.
- All Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics will be registered.
- It bars foreigners, homosexual couples, people in live in relationships and single individuals to have babies through surrogacy.
- Background: India has emerged as a surrogacy hub for couples from different countries. incidents concerning unethical practices of surrogacy across country such as exploitation of surrogate mothers, abandonment of children born out of surrogacy and rackets of intermediaries importing human gametes and embryos were reported.
- The 228th report of the Law Commission of India (LCI) also had recommended for banning commercial surrogacy by enacting a suitable legislation. However, it had allowed ethical altruistic surrogacy to the needy Indian citizens.

6-UNICEF: State Of Children's Report

- Annual flagship report of United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).
- The report identifies the widening gap between rich and poor countries when it comes to ensuring child survival.
- It recommends ways to meet the 2030 goals to improve prospects for the survival and good health of all children in every society.

7- Union Government caps prices of 24 essential drugs

- Essential drugs: Essential medicines are those that satisfy the priority health care needs of the population. Essential medicines are intended to be available within the context of functioning health systems at all times in adequate amounts, in the appropriate dosage forms, with assured quality, and at a price the individual and the community can afford.
- In India National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) formed in 2011 decides the essential medicines. The list is prepared by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) is nodal government regulatory agency that controls the prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India. It functions under the aegis of Union Ministry of Chemical and Fertiliser.
- It revised ceiling prices of 24 scheduled formulations of schedule-I under Drugs (Price Control) Amendment Order, 2016.
- Prices of 42 essential medicines used in treatment of various ailments including tuberculosis, cancer, cardiac diseases, asthma, epilepsy and depression have been capped by the government.

8- Union Government launches Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight

- Health Ministry today launched 'Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight' (IDCF).
- Under this various activities has been planned including visits by ASHA(Accredited Social Health Activist) workers to all such households which have children under the age of five.

- The children will be administered Oral Rehydration Salt (ORS) and Zinc therapy by the ASHA workers while they will also be counselled about the benefits and the process of preparing it.
- The main reasons for diarrhoeal attacks amongst children are contaminated water, malnutrition, inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene and lack of immunisation.
- Under this initiative, government aims at covering over 80 per cent of children (of the 10 crore children below five years of age) affected by diarrhoea across the country

9-Union Cabinet approves Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016

- The cabinet approved the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016 for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgender.

- The Bill defines a transgender person as one who is partly female or male; or a combination of female and male; or neither female nor male. In addition, the person's gender must not match the gender assigned at birth, and includes trans-men, trans-women, persons with intersex variations and gender-queers.
- A transgender person must obtain a certificate of identity as proof of recognition of identity as a transgender person and to invoke rights under the Bill.
- Such a certificate would be granted by the District Magistrate on the recommendation of a Screening Committee. The Committee would comprise a medical officer, a psychologist or psychiatrist, a district welfare officer, a government official, and a transgender person.
- The Bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person in areas such as education, employment, and healthcare. It directs the central and state governments to provide welfare schemes in these areas.
- Offences like compelling a transgender person to beg, denial of access to a public place, physical and sexual abuse, etc. would attract up to two years' imprisonment and a fine.

Key Issues and Analysis

- The Supreme Court has held that the right to self-identification of gender is part of the right to dignity and autonomy under Article 21 of the Constitution. However, objective criteria may be required to determine one's gender in order to be eligible for entitlements.
- The Bill states that a person recognised as 'transgender' would have the right to 'self-perceived' gender identity. However, it does not provide for the enforcement of such a right. A District Screening Committee would issue a certificate of identity to recognise transgender persons.
- The definition of 'transgender persons' in the Bill is at variance with the definitions recognised by international bodies and experts in India.
- The Bill includes terms like 'trans-men', 'trans-women', persons with 'intersex variations' and 'gender-queers' in its definition of transgender persons. However, these terms have not been defined.
- Certain criminal and personal laws that are currently in force only recognise the genders of 'man' and 'woman'. It is unclear how such laws would apply to transgender persons who may not identify with either of the two genders.

10-Parliament passes Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2016

- The Bill seeks to amend the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, which prohibits the engagement of children in certain types of occupations and regulates the condition of work of children in other occupations.

- The Act prohibits employment of children below 14 years in certain occupations such as automobile workshops, bidi-making, carpet weaving, handloom and power loom industry, mines and domestic work. In light of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, the Bill seeks to prohibit employment of children below 14 years in all occupations except where the child helps his family after school hours.
- The Bill adds a new category of persons called "adolescent". An adolescent means a person between 14 and 18 years of age. The Bill prohibits employment of adolescents in hazardous occupations as specified (mines, inflammable substance and hazardous processes).
- The central government may add or omit any hazardous occupation from the list included in the Bill.
- The Bill enhances the punishment for employing any child in an occupation. It also includes penalty for employing an adolescent in a hazardous occupation.
- The penalty for employing a child was increased to imprisonment between 6 months and two years (from 3 months-one year) or a fine of Rs 20,000 to Rs 50,000 (from Rs 10,000-20,000) or both.
- The penalty for employing an adolescent in hazardous occupation is imprisonment between 6 months and two years or a fine of Rs 20,000 to Rs 50,000 or both.
- The government may confer powers on a District Magistrate to ensure that the provisions of the law are properly carried out.
- The Bill empowers the government to make periodic inspection of places at which employment of children and adolescents are prohibited.
- The Bill is aligned with the statutes of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention. It calls complete ban on child labour so they can get compulsory primary education in light of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

11-WHO Report On *The Health Workforce In India*

- Only one in five doctors in rural India are qualified to practice medicine.
- The health workforce in India, based on 2001 Census data says nearly one-third of those calling themselves allopathic doctors were educated only up to Class 12. Also, 57% of the practitioners did not have any medical qualification.
- Medical Council of India (MCI) only maintains the data regarding registered medical practitioners of Modern Medicine or Allopathic System of Medicine.
- At the national level, the density of doctors -- allopathic, ayurvedic, unani and homeopathic -- was 80 per 100,000 of the population and the number of nurses 61. The numbers compare poorly with China -- 148 for doctors and 103 for nurses.

12-Rajya Sabha passes Mental Health Care Bill 2013

The Bill repeals the Mental Health Act, 1987.

The Statements of Objects and Reasons to the Bill, state the government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007. The Convention requires the laws of the country to align with the Convention.

The key features of the Bill are:

- Rights of persons with mental illness: The right to access mental health care includes affordable, good quality of and easy access to services, protection from inhuman and degrading treatment, free legal services, access to their medical records, and complain regarding deficiencies in provision of mental health care.

- Advance Directive: A mentally-ill person shall have the right to make an advance directive that states how he wants to be treated for the illness during a mental health situation and who his nominated representative shall be.
- Central and State Mental Health Authority: These are administrative bodies are required to (a) register, supervise and maintain a register of all mental health establishments,(b) develop quality and service provision norms for such establishments, (c) maintain a register of mental health professionals, (d) train law enforcement officials and mental health professionals on the provisions of the Act, (e) receive complaints about deficiencies in provision of services, and (f) advise the government on matters relating to mental health.
- Mental Health Establishments: Every mental health establishment has to be registered with the relevant Central or State Mental Health Authority.
- Mental Health Review Commission and Board: The Mental Health Review Commission will be a quasi-judicial body that will periodically review the use of and the procedure for making advance directives and advise the government on protection of the rights of mentally ill persons.
- Decriminalising suicide and prohibiting electro-convulsive therapy: A person who attempts suicide shall be presumed to be suffering from mental illness at that time and will not be punished under the Indian Penal Code. Electro-convulsive therapy is allowed only with the use of muscle relaxants and anaesthesia. The therapy is prohibited for minors.

13- Hidden Hunger (Bio-fortification)

Hidden hunger is a form of under nutrition that occurs when intake and absorption of vitamins and minerals (such as zinc, iodine, and iron) are too low to sustain good health and development in children and normal physical and mental function in adults.

Causes include poor diet, disease, or increased micronutrient needs not met during pregnancy and lactation.

Green revolution focused on increasing productivity of staple crops in order to reduce malnutrition. However the intensified production of high-yielding cereal varieties may have both improved and worsened nutrition. The increase in total output of food staples translated into a drop in the prices of starchy staples relative to the prices of more micronutrient-rich non-staple foods, such as vegetables and pulses. While staple cereals became more affordable, the prices of non-staple foods in some countries rose, making micronutrient-rich foods less attractive to poor people.

Solutions to Hidden Hunger

Increasing dietary diversity

Commercial food fortification: common examples of fortification include adding B vitamins, iron, and/or zinc to wheat flour and adding vitamin A to cooking oil and sugar.

Biofortification: a nutrition-specific intervention designed to enhance the micronutrient content of foods through the use of agronomic practices and plant breeding.

Vitamin A supplementation is one of the most cost-effective interventions for improving child survival.

Distribution of Iron and Folic Acid Tablets

14-Global Nutrition Report

- Published by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- Theme: From Promise to Impact: Ending Malnutrition by 2030
- The Global Nutrition Report highlights progress in combating malnutrition and identifies gaps and proposes ways to fill them. Report helps to guide action, build accountability and spark increased commitment for further progress towards reducing malnutrition much faster.

- The World Health Organization(WHO) is a Global Nutrition Report Partner.

15-World Day against Child Labour: 12 June

- Organised by International Labour Organization (ILO).
- It focuses on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. This year, the focus for World Day against Child Labour is on child labour and supply chains.
- To support businesses in their actions to remove child labour from their supply chains, the ILO and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) have jointly created the Child Labour Guidance Tool.

16- Maharashtra Government grants minority status to Jews

- The Jews have been a part of Indian society for over 2,300 years now.
- Maharashtra Cabinet approves minority status to Jew community.
- This decision will benefit students from these communities to avail scholarships from the state government and setting up of educational institutions.
- According to 2001 Census, the number of Jews living in India was 4,650 with 2,466 of them living in Maharashtra.
- At present, there are six notified minority communities in India - Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis and Jains.

17- 11 July: World Population Day

World Population Day is observed on July 11 every year to raise awareness of global population issues.

2016 Theme : "Investing in teenage girls"

History : World Population Day is observed on July 11 every year to raise awareness of global population issues. On this date in 1989 world's population reached approximate Five Billion.

The day was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1989.

AIM : Observing the Day is aimed at highlighting the need is to pay attention towards reproductive health problems of the community people as it is the leading cause of the ill-health as well as deaths of pregnant women worldwide.

18- Kerala Government imposes 14.5 per cent fat tax on Junk Food

- Kerala Government has proposed a "Fat Tax" on fast food items like burgers, pizzas at 14.5% tax on branded restaurants.
- In sync with the World Health Organization's advocacy of using fiscal tools to promote healthy eating.
- Meanwhile, the state government has also made consumption of ready-to-eat chapatis dearer with the introduction of 5% tax on wheat products in packets. Along with this, 5% tax has been imposed on packaged basmati rice and coconut oil.
- Disposable glasses made out of plastic are set to be taxed at a whopping 20%.

AIM : Discourage the junk food culture.

- Kerala has one of the highest numbers of patients of diabetes or hypertension in the country caused due lifestyle changes.

- Fat tax on junk food has been successfully imposed in European countries such as Denmark and Hungary.
- In India Kerala isn't the first state to impose so-called Fat tax. In January 2016, Bihar government decided to impose a 13.5% value-added tax (VAT) on items such as salted peanuts, samosas, sweets and a few branded snacks.

19- Rajya Sabha passes Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Bill, 2016

- The Rajya Sabha passed the amendments to the Maternity Benefit Act that seeks to provide 26 weeks of maternity leave to working women and 12 weeks to commissioning mothers and introducing an enabling provision of "work from home" for nursing mother.
- In a step aimed at benefitting about 1.8 million women in the organised sector and   increasing the strength of the working women force.
- Once the new law is enacted, India will jump to third position in terms of the number of weeks for maternity leave after Norway (44) and Canada (50).
- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, protects the employment of women during the time of her maternity and entitles her full paid absence from work, to take care for her child.
- The legislation will go a long way in ensuring that the future generations are healthier, a woman's body needs to heal over a period of time. "It is a very stressful time for the mother, who should be with the child".

20- Quit India Movement 2 against social evils

- Quit India 2 Swaraj to Suraj Movement against various social ills during commemoration of Platinum Jubilee anniversary of the Quit India Movement launched by Maharashtra Government.
- On 8th August 1942, Mahatma Gandhi had given the clarion call of Quit India at the historic August Kranti Maidan, Mumbai.
- It would emphasize on freedom from social evils farmer suicide, illiteracy, wastage of water, malnutrition, addiction among youth and corruption in order to achieve faster all-inclusive progress on all fronts.

21. Union Government launches MAA, nation-wide breast feeding programme

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched MAA (Mothers Absolute Affection), a flagship programme for promotion of breastfeeding.
- The Ministry has allocated 30 crore rupees for the Programme and 4.3 lakh rupees for each district will be allotted for implementing the various activities under MAA programme.
- Around 20 percent newborn deaths and 13 percent under-five deaths can be prevented by breastfeeding.
- The programme will be monitored by UNICEF and other partners.
- Unicef has roped in actor Madhuri Dixit as brand ambassador to promote breastfeeding.

22- Microsoft to design app for HRD Ministry's SWAYAM platform

- The technology giant Microsoft is going to design mobile application for Union Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry's SWAYAM platform.

Key feature:

SWAYAM : It stands for "Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds"

- Microsoft has been selected as the technical partner for HRD ministry's SWAYAM platform that will launch 2,000 massive open online courses(MOOC).
- over three crore students will be benefited under this platform.
- After three years of launching the app, AICTE will take over the entire app from Microsoft.
- As per the sources, a deal of Rs 38 crore has been signed between Microsoft and All India Council of Technical Education.

23. Ramayana & Krishna Circuits under Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- The first meeting of National Committee on Ramayan Circuit and Krishna Circuit, under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism (MoT), was recently held in New Delhi.
- AIM : The Swadesh Darshan Scheme in 2014-15 with an aim to develop theme based tourist circuits in the country.
- Under Ramayana Circuit -
- 11 destinations spread across 6 states have been proposed.
o The destinations covered under
- Uttar Pradesh: Ayodhya, Nandigram, Shringhverpur & Chitrakoot,
- Bihar: Sitamarhi, Buxar & Darbhanga,
- Chattisgarh :Jagdalpur, Telangana : Bhadrachalam, Karnataka: Hampi and Tamil Nadu : Rameshwaram
- Expert committee suggested including Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh), Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra) and Mahendragiri (Odisha) in the proposed circuit.
- Under Krishna circuit -
- 12 destinations spread across 5 states have been proposed. The destinations covered are (i) Gujarat: Dwarka (ii) Rajasthan: Nathdwara, Jaipur and Sikar (iii) Uttar Pradesh: Mathura, Vrindavan, Barsana, Gokul, Nandgaon and Govardhan (iv) Odisha:
- Under the scheme, 13 thematic circuits have been identified – North-East India circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.

24- VIDYANJALI SCHEME

- The HRD Ministry has launched an initiative called 'Vidyanjali' to encourage youngsters to volunteer their services at any neighbourhood government school.
- This is sub-programme under SSA launched to enhance community and private sector involvement in Government run elementary schools across the country under the overall aegis of the SSA.
- Aim: To strengthen implementation of co-scholastic activities in government schools through services of volunteers.
- So far 3306 Volunteers registered for the programme creating 10443 activities to be conducted in schools, 841 Volunteers have gone to schools and conducted activities.
- Retired teachers, professionals government officials, defence personnel and women who are home makes can also offer to help under this programme which has been started on a pilot basis across 2,200 government schools in 21 states.

25- GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT

- The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time.
- The study examines 144 countries across four standards of health, education, economic opportunity and political empowerment.
- India ranks 87 in WEF gender gap report 2016.
- The rankings are designed to create global awareness of the challenges posed by gender gaps and the opportunities created by reducing them.

Scrapping the separate Rail Budget

- A panel headed by Niti Aayog member Bibek Debroy recommended that the integration of the Railway Budget with the General Budget is a necessary move.
- The Constitution does not mandate the government to lay a separate railway budget," the latest report said.

Bibek Debroy Committee recommendation The Bibek Debroy Committee is a high level committee for "Mobilization of Resources for Major Railway Projects and Restructuring of Railway Ministry and Railway Board".	

- The panel argued that the rail budget has become an exercise to dispense popular measures and have failed to address the "problem of under-investment".
- Following the recommendation of the Acworth Committee in 1920-21, headed by British railway economist William Acworth ,The "Acworth Report" led to reorganisation of railways
- The railway finances were separated from the general government finances in 1921. After that in 1924 the budget was announced, a practice that continued till 2016.

Office of Profit

- An office of profit means a position that brings to the person holding it some financial gain, or advantage, or benefit. It may be an office or place of profit if it carries some remuneration, financial advantage, benefit etc.
- The idea behind the concept of office of profit – which evolved in England – is to preserve the independence of the legislature by keeping the members away from any temptations from the executive that can come in the way of independent discharge of their duties.
- The term is used in Article 102 (1)(A) of the Indian Constitution. It refers to a post under central/state government which yields salaries, perks and other benefits and bars a member of the Indian Parliament from holding such an Office.

- There is no law which defines the term "Office of Profit". Therefore, one has to depend on the decisions of the Supreme Court of India. Accordingly SC has given these conditions to determine whether an office comes under office of profit or not.

1. The government makes the appointment

2. The government has the right to remove or dismiss the holder

3. The government pays the remuneration

4. The holder performs the functions for the government

5. The Government exercises control over the performance of those functions.

Issue of Parliamentary secretary in Delhi

- A Parliamentary secretary is a member of a Parliament in the Westminster system, who assists a more senior minister with his or her duties.

- In Delhi, CM Arvind Kejiriwal appointed 21 Parliamentary secretaries to his cabinet, which already has 7 ministers. To prevent their appointment becoming invalid, he sought to amend the "Delhi Members of Legislative Assembly (Removal of the Disqualification) Act, 1997".

- President Pranab Mukherjee had rejected the amendment, which sought to make the position of Parliamentary Secretary in the Delhi Assembly exempt from the definition of "Office of Profit.

- As per Article 239AA of the Constitution of India, The total number of ministers in the Council of Ministers in a Union Territory shall not exceed ten percent of the Total number of the members of the Legislative assembly.

- As per Article 191 of the Constitution of India, A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as member of Legislative assembly or Legislative council if, inter-alia, he hold an "Office of Profit" of the government.

- The Delhi High Court has set aside the order of the Arvind Kejriwal government appointing 21 of the party's MLAs as parliamentary secretaries.

Rejection of three Manipur Bills by President

- President Pranab Mukherjee returned three bills the Manipur Assembly had passed. The contentious bills were the Manipur Land Reforms and Land Revenue (7th Amendment) Bill, 2015, the Manipur Shops and Establishment (2nd Amendment) Bill, 2015, and the Manipur Protection of Peoples Bill, 2015.

- The controversy is related to The Inner Line of Permit. Since Manipur is not officially a tribal state, there are constitutional challenges to implementing the ILP system. The ILP is a special permit required to enter certain restricted areas in the country. The system is already in force in Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram.

- Had these biils got implemented strictly, many of the hill people (the Kukis and the Nagas) could have found themselves declared non-Manipuris since the bill requires a person to have been enumerated in all three registers — the National Register of Citizens, 1951, the Census Report 1951, and the Village Directory of 1951.

- Given the deep division between the hill and valley people on the issue, it was a right decision on the part of the president to return the bills back for re-examination by legal and constitutional experts.

Swachh Yug: Gram Panchayats along the Ganga to be made Open Defecation Free

- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in partnership with Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, is intensifying support to the five States of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, to make all villages along the banks of the Ganga Open Defecation Free (ODF).

- The campaign, being a collaborative effort between the Swachh Bharat Mission, local youth leaders (युवा) and the Namami Gange project (गंगा) - is being called 'Swachh यु-ग', which translates into 'the age of Swachh'.
- In addition to the monetary incentive offered by the government under the Swachh Bharat Mission, extensive interpersonal behaviour change communication training will be given to local trainers through a network of virtual classrooms across the 5 Ganga States.

Ammendment to the Citizenship Act,1955

- Amendments to citizenship law that will exempt minority citizens of Pakistan and Bangladesh who have come to India out of fear of religious persecution from being tagged as illegal migrants.
- The changes to the Citizenship Act, 1955, will give a legal path to the refugees to remain in India and even claim citizenship.
- As per the proposed amendments to Citizenship Act, December 31, 2014 will be designated as the cut-off date for eligibility for citizenship.
- The move stands to benefit nearly 2 lakh Hindus from Pakistan and Bangladesh who often complain they are treated as "second-class citizens" and are vulnerable to violence.

New print media advertisement policy

- The Information and broadcasting ministry has framed a new print media advertisement policy introducing a "marking system" to incentivize newspapers which have better professional standing and who get their circulation verified.
- The marking system is based on six objective criteria. Advertisements shall be released by DAVP to newspapers based on marks obtained by the publication.

It involves certification by RNI(Registrar of Newspapers for India) or ABC(Association of Boards of Certification) if circulation exceeds 45,000 copies per publishing day and for circulation up to 45,000 copies per publishing day certificate from cost or chartered accountant, statutory auditor certificate or ABC is mandated.

Reduced budget for Panchayati Raj Ministry

- After the BJP government closed two of its key programmes — the Backward Regions Grants Fund (BRGF) and the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA), the Panchayti Raj ministry is soon to be turned into a department under Ministry of Rural Development.
- With no funds in hands, the ministry is acting like an advisory body. Also, in view of the budget cuts, the Ministry recently realigned. Its mandate from financing panchayats to capacity-building and training.
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj looks into all matters relating of Panchayati Raj and Panchayati Raj Institutions. It was created in May 2004.
- Ministry of Panchayati Raj is responsible for the work of advocacy for and monitoring of the implementation of Constitution 73rd Amendment Act the Provisions of the Panchayats.

Privilege Motion

- A notice for a privilege motion has been given in the Rajya Sabha against Congress MPs Jairam Ramesh and Renuka Chowdhury for allegedly misbehaving with Union Minister Harsimrat Badal.
- Article 105 of the Indian Constitution, deals with the 'Parliamentary Privileges' enjoyed by the Parliament as a whole, and Members of Parliament (MPs) in their individual capacity.
- When any of these rights and immunities are disregarded, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under law of Parliament.

- Some of the privileges are: Freedom of Speech, Freedom of the public to publish parliamentary proceedings, Power of the Parliament to arbitrate its own proceedings etc.

Mhadei River water tribunal

- Mhadei river has a length of 77 km, 29 km of which lies in Karnataka and 52 km in Goa. It originates from a cluster of 30 springs at Bhimgad in the Western Ghats in the Belgaum district of Karnataka.Mhadei is also known by the name Mandovi in Goa.
- The Mahadayi water-sharing dispute has the states of Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka fighting for water from the Mahadayi river.
- Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (IRWD Act) was enacted by the parliament of India under Article 262 of Constitution to resolve the water disputes that would arise in the use, control and distribution of an interstate river or river valley.
- Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal (MWDT) Interim Order , the tribunal headed by J.N. Panchal Rejected Karnataka's plea for diversion of 7 tmcft of water from the river to the Malaprabha basin.
- The tribunal gave a number of reasons such as ecological concerns in Goa,costs of submersible pumps and wildlife concerns.
- The tribunal's interim order signals a halt to Karnataka's Kalasa-Banduri Nala project which is intended to utilise water from the Mahadayi river for drinking purposes in Hubballi-Dharwad and the districts of Belagavi and Gadag.

National Medical Commission Bill

- The bill seeks to repeal Indian Medical Council Act 1956 and be replaced by a body called National Medical Commission(NMC).
- NMC will become the main regulatory body and will take over all roles and responsibilities of the Medical Council of India.

Medical Council of India(MCI)
The Medical Council of India (MCI) is a apex body to establish and maintain high standards of medical education and recognition of medical qualifications in India. It is a statutory body (formed by an act of parliament) aimed to protect and promote the health and safety of the public by ensuring proper standards in the practice of medicine. The Medical Council of India was first established in 1934 under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933. The Council was later reconstituted under the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 that replaced the earlier Act.
The objectives of the Council are as follows:-
a- Maintenance of uniform standards of medical education, both undergraduate and postgraduate.
b- Recommendation for recognition/de-recognition of medical qualifications of medical institutions India or
foreign countries.
c- Permanent registration/provisional registration of doctors with recognized medical qualifications,
d- Reciprocity with foreign countries in the matter of mutual recognition of medical qualifications.

Members of MCI
The Council was superseded by the President of India and its functions entrusted to a Board of Governors.

- The bill seeks to constitute a Medical Advisory Council which will advise the NMC on various issues.

- NMC will have eminent doctors and experts from related fields to suggest the direction that should be given to medical education in the country so as to ensure that the quality of education is at par with global standards.
- The Bill also has provisions related to periodic assessment of institutions, encouraging research, ensures that medical institutions are flexible enough to adopt changing needs, ethical issues.

SC ends Impunity for Armed Forces in Disturbed Areas

- Every death caused by the armed forces in a disturbed area, whether the victim is a dreaded criminal or a militant or a terrorist or an insurgent, should be thoroughly enquired into .
- The judgment came on a plea by hundreds of families in the north-eastern State of Manipur for a probe by a Special Investigation Team into 1,528 cases of alleged fake encounters involving the Army and the police.
- Its a blow to the immunity enjoyed by security personnel under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 (AFSPA) against criminal action for acts committed in disturbed areas.
- The SC said there is no concept of absolute immunity from trial by a criminal court if an Army man has committed an offence. Alleged enemy is a citizen of our country entitled to all fundamental rights including under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Armed Forces Special Powers Act

- Armed Forces (Special Powers) Acts (AFSPA), are Acts of the Parliament of India that grant special powers to the Indian Armed Forces in what each act terms "disturbed areas.
- The Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance of 1942 was promulgated by the British on 15 August 1942 to suppress the Quit India Movement.
- On the lines of this ordinance, the Government of India promulgated four ordinances in 1947 to deal with internal security issues arising due to partition in Bengal, Assam, East Bengal and United Provinces.
- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was enacted in 1958 to bring under control what the government of India considered 'disturbed' areas. Presently it is in force in the states of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and J&K.
- Governor of the State and Central Government are empowered to declare any part or full of any state as disturbed area.
- Section 4 of the act gives special powers such as shoot(to even kill) to army officers in disturbed area. The only condition is that the officer has to give warning before opening fire.
- Section 6 provides immunity to officers so any prosecution requires prior sanction of the Central Government.

11th Inter State Council Meeting held after a gap of 10 years

- Article 263 for the establishment of an ISC for effective coordination between the states and was first setup on the recommendations of Sarkaria commission on 28 May 1990.
- It is not a permanent Constitutional Body and can be established at nay time President thinks to be fit. .ISC is supposed to meet thrice a year but in 26 years it has met just 11 times.
- PM acts as the ex officio chairman with cabinet ranked Union ministers and CMs of states and union territories as other members.
- In the latest meeting , issues related to AADHAR for DBT, Punchhi commission recommendations ,quality of school education and internal security were discussed.

Persecuted minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh to get faster benefits

- persecuted" minorities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh living in India on long-term visas can now take up self-employment, buy property, open bank accounts and get driving licenses', PAN card and Aadhaar.

- Many members of the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities have come to India fearing persecution in their home countries.
- Measures such as waiver of late application penalty, reduced fees for registration of citizenship, easier norms for Long term Visas, etc have been taken.
- Powers for such registration and related issues have been delegated to the District Collectors of the states such residents are present.

SC accepts Lodha Committee Recommendations

- Barring ministers and civil servants and those above 70 years of age from becoming BCCI members. An office-bearer of BCCI cannot hold a post for more than three years.
- Parliament to decide whether BCCI should come under the Right to Information Act (RTI) and the issue of legalizing betting. There should be a player's association in the BCCI.
- Disallowing BCCI office-bearer from holding dual posts simultaneously i.e. in a state cricket association and in the BCCI.
- Each state should have only one vote. states with more than one associations to have rotational voting rights. Member of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to be included in the BCCI's governing council.

Multiple life sentences will be served concurrently and not consecutively:SC

- Like any human being, a convict too has only one life and cannot serve consecutive sentences of life imprisonment, a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held.
- Logic behind life sentences not running consecutively lies in the fact that imprisonment for life implies imprisonment till the end of the normal life of the convict," Chief Justice Thakur observed in the verdict for the Bench.
- Interpreting Section 31 (sentence in cases of conviction of several offences at one trial) of the Criminal Procedure Code, the Constitution Bench clarified that two or more life sentences have to run concurrently and not consecutively.

Speaker's power to Disqualify Members

- A Speaker should refrain from deciding the disqualification of MLAs for defection under the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution if he himself is facing the prospect of removal, the Supreme Court has held.
- The court was discussing Speaker Nabam Rebia's disqualification of 14 legislators of Arunachal Pradesh assembly when a resolution against his own removal was pending.
- Article 179(c) provides that a Speaker (or Deputy Speaker) "may be removed from his office by a resolution of the Assembly passed by a majority of all the then members of the Assembly".
- The judgment points to the phrase "all the then members of the Assembly" to conclude that the composition of legislators should remain the very same while deciding whether a majority in the House wants the Speaker to continue or not.

Delhi HC says L-G is Delhi's Administrative Head

- Delhi High Court held that the Lieutenant Governor was its "administrative head".
- The High Court also set aside the AAP government's contention that the L-G was supposed to act "only on the aid and advice of the Ministers".
- It also held that "The matters connected with 'Services' fall outside the purview of the Legislative Assembly of NCT of Delhi.
- The HC also held that Delhi continues to be a Union Territory even after the Constitution (69th Amendment) Act, 1991 inserting Article 239AA making special provisions with respect to Delhi.

Standard Operating Procedure(SOP) to protect Good Samaritans and Bystanders

- Affidavit "Good Samaritan", a person who voluntarily declares himself to be an eyewitness, shall be treated by the investigating officer as a final statement.
- The crux of the guidelines is that no bystander rushing to the rescue of an accident victim should be subject to civil or criminal liability and/or be forced to be a witness.
- Complete anonymity in case the Good Samaritan does not want to reveal his name or details.
- SOPs as laid down by the court under Article 32 (right to constitutional remedies), read with Article 142, is binding on the Union Territories and the States.

1- HDFC issues world's first Masala bond listing in LSE

- Why in news?

HDFC Ltd, the country's largest private sector mortgage lender, plans to raise Rs.3,000 crore through synthetic bonds, the first ever by an Indian company.

- The corporation is the first Indian public issuer of synthetic INR notes.
- The synthetic notes are in the nature of rupee denominated bonds i.e. Masala bond as per applicable Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines.
- Masala Bonds are rupee-denominated bonds issued to overseas buyers. The rupee-denominated bonds or masala bonds are instruments through which Indian entities can raise funds by accessing overseas capital markets, while the bond investors hold the currency risk.

But How?

They are issued to foreign investors and settled in US dollars. Hence the currency risk lies with the investor and not the issuer, unlike external commercial borrowings (ECBs), where Indian companies raise money in foreign currency loans.

- The opening of the 'masala bond' market globally will support the Indian company and infrastructure financing.
- The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the investment arm of the World Bank, issued bond to fund infrastructure projects in India.

2- India Post Payment Bank launched

- The government launched the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), a basic financial services facility, as a pilot in Raipur and Ranchi with plans to scale it up to 650 branches by the end of September,2017.
- Payments banks can accept deposits up to Rs 1 lakh per account from individuals and small businesses.
- These new banks will focus on providing basic financial services, including payments of all sorts, including social security and utility bill payments, remittance services, current and saving accounts with a balance of up to Rs1 lakh; distribution of insurance, mutual funds and pension products, and acting as business correspondent to other banks for credit products, especially in rural areas and among the underserved segments of the population.

- IPPB will offer three distinct accounts to its customers: Safal, the regular account; Sugam, a basic savings bank deposit account (BSBDA); and Saral, BSBDA-Small.
- All three bank account options will request its customers to make a Rs100 initial minimum deposit, with no minimum balance requirements.
- Both Safal and Sugam need KYC (know your customer) details for verification and minimum age of 10 years.
- Saral can be opened by anyone above the age of 10 years without KYC.

Difference	Small Bank	Payment Bank
Eligibility	Professionals with 10 years in financial services or promoter group with 5 year track record.	Card Issuers, Finance Companies, Business Correspondents, Telecom Companies, Retailers etc.
Capital Requirement	Rs. 100 Crore Equity Capital	Rs. 100 Crore Equity Capital
Scope of Activity	Providing basic banking facilities to poor and small businessmen	Accept Deposits, Issue Debit Cards, Remittance services. Can not issue credit cards
Promoter Contribution	Promoter's initial contribution should be 40% lowered to 26% in 12 years.	Promoters should retain a 40% stake for first five years.

3- UPI becomes operational

- Why in news?

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) announced that bank applications for the Unified Payment Interface(UPI) have officially become operational, which means that UPI apps of banks can now be downloaded and used for transactions.

> About NPCI
> National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is an umbrella organization for all retail payments system in India.
> It was set up with the guidance and support of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and Indian Banks' Association (IBA).

- UPI is a payment system that allows money transfer between any two bank accounts by using a smartphone.
- UPI allows a customer to pay directly from a bank account to different merchants, both online and offline, without the hassle of typing credit card details, IFSC code, or net banking/wallet passwords..
- It is safe as the customers only share a virtual address and provide no other sensitive information.
- The per transaction limit is Rs.1 lakh.

6- Establishment of Fund of Funds for funding support to Start-ups

- The Cabinet has approved the establishment of 'Fund of Funds for Startups' (FFS) at Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for contribution to various Alternative Investment Funds (AIF), registered with SEBI which would extend funding support to startups in line with the 'Startup India Action Plan'.

What is Startup?

A startup company is an entrepreneurial venture which is typically a newly emerged, fast-growing business that aims to meet a marketplace need by developing or offering an innovative product, process or service.

A startup is usually a company such as a small business, a partnership or an organization designed to rapidly develop a scalable business model.

- FFS would encompass support at seed stage, early stage and growth stage.
- The Rs 10,000 corpus shall be built up over the 14th and 15th Finance Commission cycles, subject to progress of the scheme and availability of funds.

7- Sebi issues stricter KYC, disclosure regime for P-Notes

- The markets regulator SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) has put in place a stricter KYC (Know Your Customer) norms and disclosure regime for Participatory Notes (P-Notes).

- What are P-Notes?

P-Notes are offshore/overseas derivative instruments (ODIs) issued by registered foreign institutional investors (FII) to overseas investors.

They provide easier and cost-effective route to foreign investors to invest in Indian markets without directly registering as Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs).

8- Cabinet increases the limit for foreign investment in Stock Exchanges from 5% to 15%

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for raising foreign shareholding limit from 5% to 15% in Indian Stock Exchanges for a stock exchange, a depository, a banking company, an insurance company, a commodity derivative exchange.
- The move will help in enhancing global competitiveness of Indian stock exchanges by accelerating/facilitating the adoption of latest technology and global best practices which will lead to overall growth and development of the Indian Capital Market.

9- Arvind Subramanian committee to tackle the shortage of pulses

- The Union government established a committee to consider increasing the Minimum Support Price (MSP) and the bonus for pulses, a move that could promote pulses farming.
- The committee headed by Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian, and it would consider a reasonable increase in the MSP for pulses and bonus for farmers for growing the crops.
- In a move to contain the shortage of pulse, the government also decided to increase the buffer stock of pulses to 20 lakh tonnes from the current eight lakh tonnes.

11- Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A)

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines called Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A).
- Aim of these guidelines-

(a) To strengthen the lenders' ability to deal with stressed assets

(b) Put real assets back on track of entities facing genuine difficulties by providing an avenue for reworking financial structure.

- The S4A is an optional framework for the resolution of large stressed accounts.

- The S4A envisages determination of sustainable debt level of a stressed borrower and bifurcate outstanding debt into sustainable debt and equity/quasi-equity instruments.

12- CBDT inks 7 Advance Pricing Agreements to cut tax litigation
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has signed seven unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs) with Indian taxpayers to reduce tax litigation.

> - What is Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs)?
> An advance pricing agreement (APA) is an ahead-of-time agreement between a taxpayer and a tax authority on an appropriate transfer pricing methodology (TPM) for a set of transactions at issue over a fixed period of time.

- It seeks to introduce certainty in tax law by reducing compliance costs and make tax regime investment friendly.
- In Indian context, APAs seeks to give-
(i) Boost to economy and ease of doing business
(ii) Provide alternative path to the investors with rollback provision to reduce litigation
(iii) Strengthen Government's mission of fostering a non-adversarial tax regime.

13- BRICS Bank issued first Yuan denominated bond
- The New Development Bank of the BRICS countries issued its first Yuan-denominated bonds to finance sustainable development project.
- The NDB is planning to release more bonds in local currencies including in Indian Rupee .
- The NDB's first five-year yuan-denominated bonds (or green bonds) will be issued after receiving a rating from international ratings agencies as well as getting authorities' approval.
- The Shanghai-based New Development Bank (NDB) has been founded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS). It is headed by eminent Indian banker K V Kamath.

14- INFLATION TARGETING
- India adopted an inflation(CPI based) target of 4% for next five years under the monetary policy framework.
- Inflation targeting is in line with the government's focus on macroeconomic stability to boost growth while keeping prices in check.
- The Government fixes inflation target at 4 per cent with upper tolerance level of 6 per cent and lower limit of 2 per cent.
- What is Inflation targeting?
Inflation targeting refers to the monetary policy strategy where an inflation target is set and policy formulation is done in such a way so as to achieve that specified target.
- Monetary Policy Committee-
  1. A 6-member monetary policy committee is to be setup to decide key policy rates.
  2. The panel will have three members from RBI. They are the governor, deputy governor and another officer.
  3. The other three members will be decided by the centre based on the recommendations of a panel headed by the Cabinet Secretary.
  4. The RBI governor will have a vote in case of a tie.

15- Union Government approves 100% FDI in Aviation, Defence and e-commerce sectors

- The Union Government has eased foreign direct investment (FDI) norms for nine sectors to give impetus to job creation and ease of doing business in the country.
- With these changes, India becomes most open economy in the world for FDI.
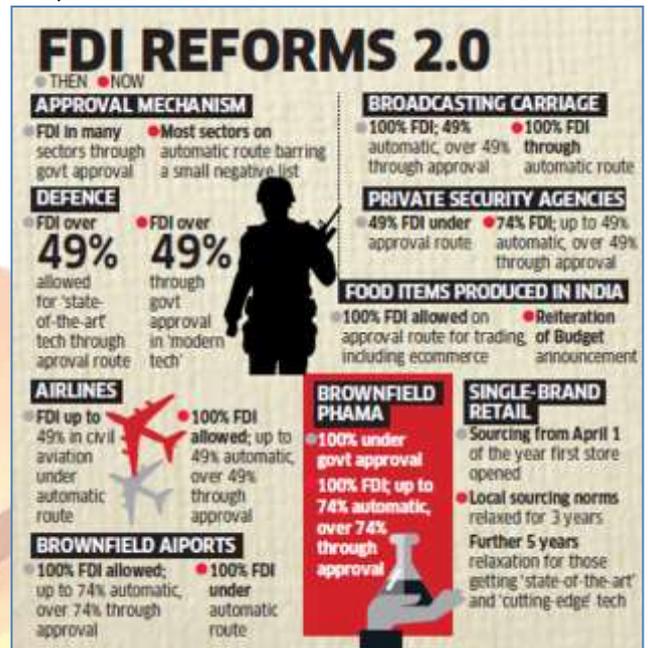
- FDI Reforms in various sectors :

(1) Defence sector-

Under the new reforms foreign investment in defence sector beyond 49 per cent (and upto 100 per cent) has been permitted through the government approval route, in cases resulting in access to modern technology in the country or for other reasons. Previously FDI limit in defence sector was 49%.

(2) Pharmaceutical Sector-

The government has permitted up to 74 per cent FDI under automatic route in existing pharmaceutical ventures. FDI allowed- (1) In Brown Field Pharma = upto 100% under government approval (2) Govt. allowed 100% ownership in Green Pharma Business

(3) Food products-

100% FDI under government approval route has been approved.

It will include trading in food products including through e-commerce, in respect of food products manufactured or produced in India.

(4) Aviation Sector-

The government has allowed 100 per cent FDI in airlines compared with 49 per cent now.

Up to 49 per cent FDI will be allowed under the automatic route and more than that after government permission.

The FDI limit for Brownfield airports has been raised to 100 per cent from 74 per cent, opening up the possibility of overseas acquisitions of existing facilities for development.

- FDI continues to be prohibited in :

Atomic energy, Lottery, Gambling, Real Estate and Real Estate Investments Trusts (REIT) and Railways Operations.

- Automatic route: By this route FDI is allowed without prior approval by Government or Reserve Bank of India.
- Government route: Prior approval by government is needed via this route. Foreign Investment Promotion Board is the responsible agency to oversee this route.

17- Grid of national highway corridors to improve road connectivity

- The National Highway Authority of India proposed a 'National Highway Grid.'
- The grid will include 27 horizontal and vertical highway corridors spread across the country.
- The corridors, that will crisscross and connect with each other, will be spaced at a distance of 250 kilometres.

- The grid will connect 12 major ports, 26 state capitals and more than 45 cities. It is expected to be 36,000 kms long.

18- Krishi Kalyan Cess

- The finance minister proposed the Krishi Kalyan Cess (KKC) in the February 2016 Budget.
- With effect from June 1, KKC adds on another 0.5 per cent to service tax.
- What is it?

Amounts collected via cess are meant be segregated in government accounts and used for a specific purpose. The KKC is based on the idea that levying a cess on a thriving sector service sector (58% of GDP) of the economy can help fund a lifeline to a sector that is in distress (Agriculture).

- KKC is not calculated on service tax, but on the total value of the service that is being provided.
- KKC is levied, charged, collected and paid to the government independent of service taxes. It is not applicable on services mentioned in the 'negative list' and 'mega exemption list'.

19- Development of Port-Rail Connectivity Projects approved under Sagarmala Programme

- Sagarmala is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Shipping for promoting port-led development in India.

- 4 major objectives of the programme -
(i) Port Modernization & New Port Development,

(ii) Port Connectivity Enhancement,

(iii) Port-led Industrialization and

(iv) Coastal Community Development.

- The Indian Port Rail Corporation Limited (IPRCL), which has been incorporated by the Ministry of Shipping, would take up the projects after prioritizing them.

20- Cabinet gives 'in-principle' nod to set up port in TN

- The Centre gave its 'in-principle' approval to set up the country's 13th major port at Enayam, near Colachel in Tamil Nadu.
- The new port at Enayam will reduce the logistics cost for exporters and importers in south India who currently depend on trans-shipment in Colombo or other ports leading to additional port handling charges.
- India has 12 major ports at present — Kandla, Mumbai, JNPT, Marmugao, New Managlore, Cochin, Chennai, Ennore, V.O. Chidambarnar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).
- Classification of Indian ports into major and minor is on the basis of administrative significance.

Major Port	Minor Port
The ports administered by Union Shipping Ministry are called major ports.	The ports managed by other relevant departments are called minor ports.

21- Draft policy for Second Generation Ethanol

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has announced come out with draft policy for 2nd generation ethanol.
- What is second generation ethanol ?

Second-generation biofuels, also known as advanced biofuels, can be produced by using biomass consisting of the unused (Ligno-) cellulosic plant parts such as stems, leaves and husks.

First Generation Ethanol-

The first generation biofuels refer to the fuels that have been derived from sources like starch, sugar, animal fats and vegetable oil. The oil is obtained using the conventional techniques of production. Example- Bio-diesel, Vegetable oil, Bio Gas, Bio alcohol, Syngas.

Third Generation Biofuels

Third generation biofuel refers to biofuel derived from algae. Algae are capable of much   higher yields with lower resource inputs than other feedstock.

The list of fuels that can be derived from algae includes:

- Biodiesel
- Butanol
- Gasoline
- Methane
- Ethanol
- Vegetable Oil
- Jet Fuel

22- Skill Bank to train workers for global market

- Why in news?

The government is setting up 50 global skill banks this year to train potential immigrant workers in 110 job roles as per international standards.

- These banks, or training centres, will impart skills across sectors such as medicine and healthcare, hospitality, IT, construction, automobile and retail trade — where job opportunities exist or are likely to arise across different countries.
- Before they emigrate, youth trained in these skill banks would also be made familiar with the respective local culture and language of the country they obtain a job in as well as its work ethic.

23- National Committee on Trade Facilitation(NCTF) constituted to develop the pan-India road map for trade facilitation.

- The Government of India has constituted an inter-ministerial NCTF, a body headed by the cabinet secretary to oversee the implementation of the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) ratified in April 2016.

Trade Facilitation Agreement

Trade facilitation—the simplification, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes— emerged as an important issue for the world trading system.

WTO members concluded negotiations at the 2013 Bali Ministerial Conference on the landmark Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which entered into force on 22 February 2017 following its ratification by two-thirds of the WTO membership.

The TFA contains provisions for expediting the movement, release and clearance of goods, including goods in transit. It also sets out measures for effective cooperation between customs and other appropriate authorities on trade facilitation and customs compliance issues.

It further contains provisions for technical assistance and capacity building in this area.

- The objective behind setting up the NCTF is to have a national level body that will facilitate domestic co-ordination and implementation of TFA provisions.
- It will play the lead role in developing the pan-India road map for trade facilitation.

24- Nuclear plants insured

- India's first insurance policy covering public liability to an atomic power plant operator has been issued to Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL).
- The policy complies with all the provisions of the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act (CLND).
- The Central government had announced in June 2015 the setting up of the Rs.1,500-crore India Nuclear Insurance Pool to be managed by national reinsurer GIC(General Insurance Corporation of India) Re.
- The policy would cover the liability towards public as a consequence of any nuclear accident in the plants covered under the policy and also the right of recourse of NPCIL against equipment suppliers.

25- SURYAMITRA

- In order to create more professionals in the field of solar energy, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy funded the SURYAMITRA Programme to train future solar energy technicians.
- The solar skill development programme, named "Suryamitra",has been launched under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- Suryamitra mobile application-
National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), an autonomous institute under the Ministry, has launched a mobile application to provide users information about technicians.

- To achieve and maintain the target of 100 GW solar power plants for 25 years, India requires about 6.5 lakh personnel, trained in solar energy sector (estimated by CII). This course is designed and oriented as per requirement of solar industry.

26- Rajya Sabha passes The Constitution (122nd Amendment) (GST) Bill, 2014

- The Bill amends the Constitution to introduce the goods and services tax (GST).

- Goods and Services Tax- GST is integration of most of the indirect taxes at union ans state level horizontally as well as vertically.

- Parliament and state legislatures will have concurrent powers to make laws on GST. Only the centre may levy an integrated GST (IGST) on the interstate supply of goods and services, and imports.
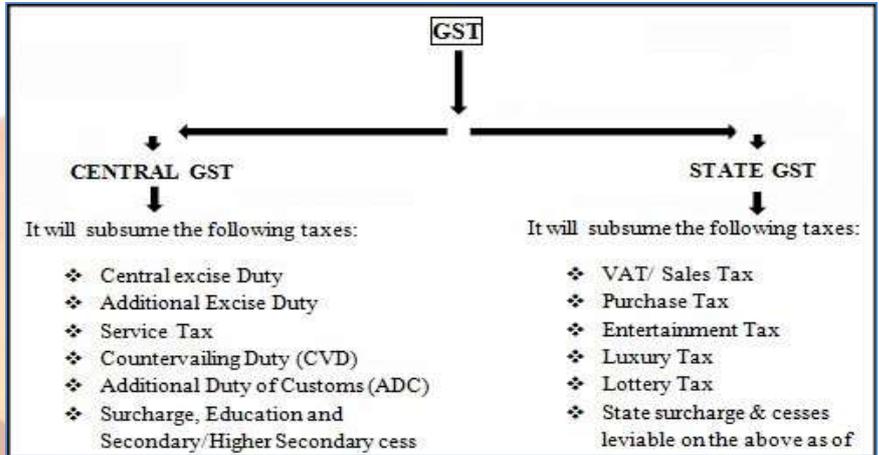
- Alcohol for human consumption has been exempted from the purview of GST.
- GST will apply to five petroleum products at a later date.
- The GST Council will recommend rates of tax, period of levy of additional tax, principles of supply, special provisions to certain states etc.
- The GST Council will consist of the Union Finance Minister, Union Minister of State for Revenue, and state Finance Ministers.
- The Bill empowers the centre to impose an additional tax of up to 1%, on the inter-state supply of goods for two years or more. This tax will accrue to states from where the supply originates.
- Parliament may, by law, provide compensation to states for any loss of revenue from the introduction of GST, up to a five year period.

27- Government to universalise the use of Public Financial Management System (PFMS)

- The government has decided to universalise the use of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) for all transactions or payments under the Central Sector Schemes.
- It will facilitate just-in-time releases and monitor the usage of funds including information on its ultimate utilization.
- About PFMS-
PFMS is a web-based online transaction system for fund management and e-payment to implementing agencies and beneficiaries.
The primary objective of PFMS is to establish an efficient fund flow system and expenditure network.
PFMS also provides various stakeholders with a reliable and meaningful management information system and an effective decision support system.
PFMS, administered by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance is an end-to-end solution for processing payments, tracking, monitoring, accounting, reconciliation and reporting.
- It provides the scheme managers a unified platform for tracking releases and monitoring their last mile utilization.

28- World Bank cuts global growth forecast to 2.4%

WORLD BANK CUTS GLOBAL GROWTH OUTLOOK

The World Bank on Wednesday lowered its global growth forecast, warning that risks to growth have increased since its earlier projection in January. The world economy will grow at 2.4% in 2016 and at 2.8% in 2017, lower than the earlier forecast of 2.9% and 3.1%, respectively, the World Bank said in its June report on global economic prospects. India will remain one of the fastest growing major economies, ahead of China, for the next three years, the report added. However, the World Bank lowered India's growth projections marginally to 7.6% for 2016-17 and 7.7% for 2017-18, citing the drag from exports on economic activity.

GROWTH RATE PROJECTIONS (in %)
☐ Jan ■ Jun

US — 2016: 2.7 / 1.9 ; 2017: 2.4 / 2.2
CHINA — 2016: 6.7 / 6.7 ; 2017: 6.5 / 6.5
INDIA — 2016: 7.8 / 7.6 ; 2017: 7.9 / 7.7
BRAZIL — 2016: -2.5 / -4 ; 2017: 1.4 / -0.2
EU — 2016: 1.7 / 1.6 ; 2017: 1.7 / 1.6
WORLD — 2016: 2.9 / 2.4 ; 2017: 3.1 / 2.8

Source: World Bank Global Economic Prospects

- The World Bank in its *Global Economic Prospects* report has cut global growth forecast to 2.4% in 2016 and at 2.8% in 2017.

29- India ranks second on GRD index on ease of doing business
- India has moved 13 positions to rank 2nd among 30 developing countries in 2016 on ease of doing business and China is topped in the list.
- About Global Retail Development Index(GRDI)
The Global Retail Development Index is an annual study that ranks the top 30developing countries for retail expansion worldwide.

The Index analyzes 25 macroeconomic and retail-specific variables to help retailers devise successful global strategies and to identify developing market investment opportunities.
- GRDI listed top 30 developing countries for retail investment worldwide.

30- India ranks 10th in FDI inflows: UNCTAD report

- Theme- Investor Nationality: Policy Challenges

India continues to be among the top ten countries in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows globally and the fourth in developing Asia, as per the World Investment Report 2016 by the United
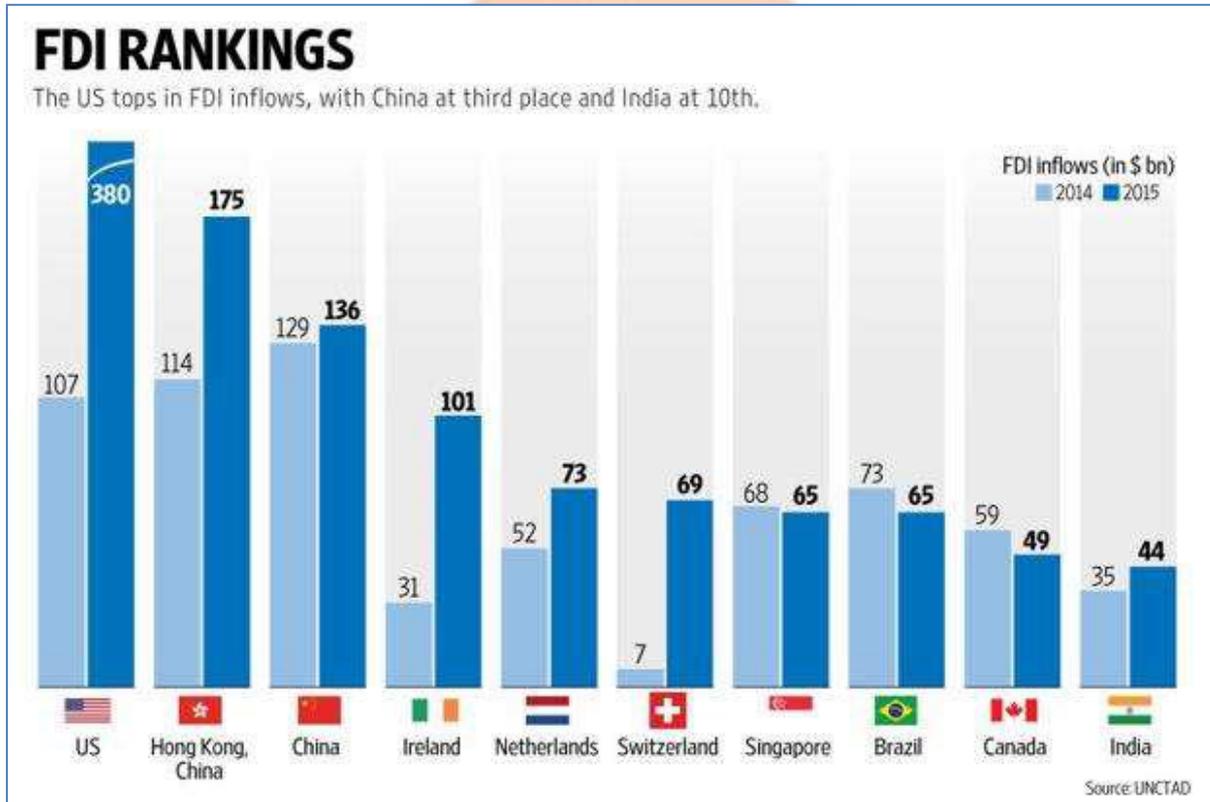
Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

31- WTO launches new World Trade Outlook Indicator

- The WTO has launched a new World Trade Outlook Indicator (WTOI) designed to provide "real time" information on trends in global trade.
- The WTOI was unveiled in Shanghai, China on 8 July, ahead of a meeting of G20 trade ministers.
- Combining a variety of trade-related indices, the WTOI is designed to give an early signal of the current direction of world trade and where it is likely to go in the near future.
- A reading of 100 would indicate trade growth in line with recent trends, a reading greater than 100 would suggest above trend growth, while a reading below 100 indicates below trend growth.
- The WTOI will be updated on a quarterly basis.

32- Logistics Performance Index, 2016 : World Bank Report
- The index was published in the World Bank bi-annual report.
- Theme- 'Connecting to Compete 2016: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy'.

- Among 160 countries India ranked 35th.
- Top 5 countries in 2016 LPI:

Germany (score: 4.23 points), Luxembourg (4.22), Sweden (4.20), Netherlands (4.19) and Singapore (4.14).

For the third time, Germany has topped in LPI.

- India has increased its LPI score to 3.42 compared to LPI score of 3.08 in 2014.

33- India ranked 105th on WEF's Human Capital Index

- India has been ranked 105th out of 130 countries on the World Economic Forum's Human Capital Index, which measures countries' ability to nurture, develop and deploy talent for economic growth.
- The report was released by Geneva-WEF in the Chinese city of Tianjin at its Annual Meeting of New Champions which is also known as `Summer Davos' summit.
- Top 10 Countries in 2016 HCI:

Finland (1st position), Norway (2nd), Switzerland (3rd), Japan (4th), Sweden (5th), New Zealand (6th), Denmark (7th), Netherlands (8th), Canada (9th) and Belgium (10th).

- India is ranked lowest among BRICS countries as against Russia (28th), China (71st), Brazil (83rd) and South Africa (8th).
- India has got better rankings HCI's indicators such as quality of education system (39th), staff training (46th) and ease of finding skilled employees (45th).

34- Annual Networked Readiness Index 2016: WEF

- India is ranked the lowest (91st) with Russia retaining the top place at 41st rank, followed by China at 59th (up three places), South Africa up 10 places at 65th and Brazil moving up to 72nd position.

- Others in the top-ten are Sweden, Norway, the US, the Netherlands, Switzerland, the UK, Luxembourg and Japan.
- India's position on the list has come down for the fourth year in a row, from 89th in 2015, 83rd in 2014 and 68th in 2013.
- The index, forming part of the WEF's Global Information Technology Report, measures countries' success in creating the conditions necessary for a transition to a digitised economy and society.

1- Colombia and FARC rebels sign historic ceasefire deal to end 50-year conflict

- The Colombian government and the leftist FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) rebels signed a historic ceasefire and disarmament agreement.
- This deal puts a definitive end to the longest civil war in Latin America.
- It was signed in presence of Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, FARC leader Timoleon Jimenez and UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon at a ceremony held in Havana, Cuba.
- Colombian president Juan Manuel Santos accepted the Nobel Peace prize,2016 for this historic deal with FARC.
- FARC is Colombia's largest rebel group and Latin America's oldest left-wing insurgency. It was established in 1964 as a communist-inspired peasant army fighting to reduce the gulf dividing rich and poor and land reform for equality in the Andean country.

2- SCO summit 2016 begins in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

- The 2016 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit started in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- The 2-day meeting of heads of state of SCO is being conducted under the presidency of Uzbekistan.
- In this summit, India and Pakistan signed a memorandum of obligation for obtaining SCO member states status. The acceptance process will take some months, by which they are expected to become full members by the next meeting at Astana in 2017.
- Issues related to strengthen stability and security in Central Asia was undertaken in the summit.
- SCO is a Eurasian economic, political and military organisation headquartered in Beijing,China.
- Established: 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders 6 countries viz. China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- It is an outcome of The Shanghai Five grouping established in 1996 by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.
- Currently Member States- China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan
- Acceding States - India & Pakistan

3- India becomes 35th member of Missile Technology Control Regime

- India became the 35th member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), which will enable India to buy high-end missile technology and also enhance its joint ventures.
- MTCR aims at restricting the proliferation of missiles, complete rocket systems, unmanned air vehicles and related technology for those systems capable of carrying a 500 kilogramme payload for at least 300 kilometres, as well as systems intended for the delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).
- MTCR - Informal and voluntary association of countries that works toward the non-proliferation of unmanned delivery systems capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction and seeks to coordinate national export licensing efforts.
- It was originally set up in 1987 by Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain, and the United States.
- China, Pakistan, Israel and Iran have not yet joined the voluntary regime.
- Admission to the MTCR would open the way for India to buy high-end missile technology, also making more realistic its aspiration to buy state-of-the-art surveillance drones.

- The MTCR membership will provide a boost to India's space and missile technology, besides the government's Make in India initiative.
- **WASSENAAR Agreement-**

The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, commonly known as the Wassenaar Arrangement, is a multilateral export control regime (MECR) with 41 participating states including many former COMECON (Warsaw Pact) countries.

The Wassenaar Arrangement has been established in order to contribute to regional and international security and stability, by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing destabilising accumulations.

- **AUSTRALIA GROUP**

The Australia Group (AG) is an informal forum of countries which, through the harmonisation of export controls, seeks to ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.

The group, initially consisting of 15 members, held its first meeting in Brussels, Belgium, in September 1989. With the incorporation of Mexico on August 12, 2013, it now has 42 members, including the European Commission, all 28 member states of the European Union, Ukraine, and Argentina.

The name comes from Australia's initiative to create the group. Australia manages the secretariat.

- **NSG(NUCLEAR SUPPLIER GROUP)**

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a group of nuclear supplier countries that seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation of two sets of Guidelines for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports.

The NSG was founded in response to the Indian nuclear test in May 1974 and first met in November 1975.

It has also been referred to as the London Group, or the London Suppliers Group. The name of the "London Club" was due to the series of meetings in London.

The NSG Guidelines also contain the so-called "Non-Proliferation Principle," adopted in 1994, whereby a supplier, notwithstanding other provisions in the NSG Guidelines, authorises a transfer only when satisfied that the transfer would not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

As of 2014 NSG has 48 members.

2016/2017 NSG Chair Country: Republic of Korea

The European Commission and the Chair of the Zangger Committee participate as observers.

4- India, Namibia sign two MoUs

- India and Namibia have signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) during the final leg of President Pranab Mukherjee's three-nation African visit.
- The two signed MoUs include- (1) MoU on Capacity building for civil servants of Namibia.
- (2) Mou on setting up of centre of excellence in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- CIVIL NUCLEAR DEAL- Later in the delegation level talks, Namibia has invited Indian companies to directly mine Uranium from the country.
- However, it has asked India to enter into similar nuclear agreements it has reached with other countries in order to convince the member-states of the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty (ANWFZT) which is also known as Pelindaba treaty.

- The Pelindaba Treaty signed in 1996, also known as the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, aims at preventing nuclear proliferation and preventing strategic minerals of Africa from being exported freely.

5- Mahashangarh declared as the SAARC cultural capital for 2016-17

- An archaeological site in Bogra, Bangladesh, Mahasthangarh (3rd century BC site) has been declared as the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SARRC) cultural capital for the year 2016-17.
- The cultural capital will be the historic place will host festivals on literature, films, foods and dances from October 2016 to September 2017.
- The same year 2016-17 has also be declared the SAARC Year of Cultural Heritage. Mahasthangarh is one of the earliest urban archaeological sites so far discovered in Bangladesh.

6- UNGA elect Ethiopia, Bolivia, Sweden and Kazakhstan as non-permanent UNSC member

- The UN General Assembly elected Ethiopia, Bolivia and Sweden as non-permanent members of the Security Council for a two-year period beginning in January, 2017.
- The two-year terms of the new members will begin January 1 next year and run through December 31, 2018.
- The UN Security Council consists of 10 non-permanent members who sit alongside the five permanent(P5), veto-wielding members - China, France, Russia, the UK and the US.

United Nations (UN)
- All members are part of the *General Assembly*
- 5 nations are permanent members of the *Security Council*
  - USA
  - China
  - Russia
  - France
  - United Kingdom
- 10 non-permanent members are elected every 2 years

7- Israel elected as Chair of UNGA's Legal Committee for the first time

- The U.N. General Assembly elected Israel to chair one of its six major committees for the first time.
- The legal committee deals with U.N. activities related to international law and the Israeli Ambassador said one of his first tasks will be to advance the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

8- Expanded Panama Canal reopens after 9 years of work

- Panama officially opened its revamped 80-kilometer long canal to far bigger cargo ships after nearly a decade of expansion work aimed at boosting transit revenues and global trade. The expansion is estimated to have cost USD 5.5 billion.

VAJIRAM & RAVI

- The Panama Canal is an artificial 77 km waterway that connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.
- A Chinese-based Neopanamax-class cargo ship will be the first vessel to test the new infrastructure, entering from the Atlantic and exiting into the Pacific.

9- United Kingdom in historic referendum votes to exit European Union (BREXIT)

What does Brexit mean?

- It is a word that has become used as a shorthand way of saying the UK leaving the EU - merging the words Britain and exit to get Brexit, in a same way as a possible Greek exit from the euro was dubbed Grexit in the past.

European Union

The European Union is a unique economic and political union between 28 European countries that together cover much of the continent.

The EU was created in the aftermath of the Second World War. The first steps were to foster economic cooperation: the idea being that countries that trade with one another become economically interdependent and so more likely to avoid conflict.

The result was the European Economic Community (EEC), created in 1958, and initially increasing economic cooperation between six countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Since then, a huge single market has been created and continues to develop towards its full potential.

Later a name change from the European Economic Community (EEC) to the European Union (EU) in 1993 reflected a purely economic union has evolved into a political union.

Why is Britain leaving the European Union?

- A referendum - a vote in which everyone (or nearly everyone) of voting age can take part - was held on Thursday 23 June, to decide whether the UK should leave or remain in the European Union. Leave won by 52% to 48%. The referendum turnout was 71.8%, with more than 30 million people voting.
- For the UK to leave the EU it has to invoke an agreement called Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty which gives the two sides two years to agree the terms of the split.

10- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between IWAI and IPGPL on the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) and India Ports Global Private Limited (IPGPL) have signed a MoU for implementation of additional works on the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) in Myanmar.
- As part of the MoU, both signatory parties will be implementing three additional works on the KMTTP, these three projects are-
  (1) Container handling facilities at Paletwa and Sittwe.
  (2) Operation and Maintenance (OM) of the completed works.
  (3) Removing wrecks in Sittwe Port basin area.
- The ambitious project seeks to facilitate connectivity between the mainland India and the landlocked North Eastern States through maritime shipping, inland waterways and roads of Myanmar.

11- India and Bangladesh Transit Facility "Kolkata-Ashuganj-Tripura" Becomes Operational

- The transit facility "Kolkata-Ashuganj-Tripura" under the revised Inland Water Transit and Trade Protocol between India and Bangladesh became operational after Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed it during his visit to Dhaka in June 2015.
- It has compacted the time of the journey of cargo from 30 days to just 10 days between central India and Northeastern states.
- The Kolkata-Ashuganj-Tripura transit route will provide central India cheaper and easier contact to the seven interior northeastern states.
- Under this Bangladesh is allowed to transit goods to Bhutan and Nepal while India can access Myanmar via Bangladesh giving impetus to Act east policy.
- Though this protocol trade and development will not only allowed between Bangladesh and India but also in the entire sub-region simplifying trade and growth in the sub-region.

12- PM Narendra Modi, Sri Lankan President inaugurate Duraiappah stadium in Jaffna

- Modi, along with Srilankan president Sirisena, jointly inaugurated the newly renovated Duraiappah Stadium, named in honour of a former Mayor of Jaffna late Alfred Thambirajah Duraiappah.

13- Afghanistan, India inaugurated Friendship Dam

- Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi have inaugurated a multi-million-dollar dam in western Afghanistan that will bring power and used for irrigation.
- The Afghan-India Friendship Dam (Salma Dam) in Herat province, which borders Iran, was built with Indian aid.

- Salma Dam is a landmark infrastructure project undertaken by Government of India on river Hari Rud , in Herat province of Afghanistan.
- Prime Minister Modi was also conferred with Afghanistan's highest civilian honour, the Amir Amanullah Khan Award.
- It is the Highest Civilian honour bestowed by Afghan government to Afghan national as well as foreigners in appreciation of their services.
- The award is named after the Afghan national hero, Amanullah Khan (Ghazi), who championed the cause of Afghanistan's freedom. He was the ruler of the Emirate of Afghanistan from 1919-1929 who led Afghanistan to independence.

14- Asia's largest annual security forum Shangri-La Dialogue opens in Singapore

- The Asia's largest annual security forum "Shangri-La Dialogue"(15th Asia security summit) has recently opened in Singapore to talk about security issues in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The forum has been organised by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).
- The IISS Asia Security Summit was launched in 2002 by the Singaporean government and British think tank the International Institute for Strategic Studies. This annual dialogue got its name from the location of the meeting, the Shangri-La hotel in Singapore.

15- India joins the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation

- India has joined the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC), a global ballistic missile proliferation regime.
- What is Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC)?

The HCoC is a voluntary, legally non-binding international confidence building and transparency measure that seeks to prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles that are capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

It was established on 25 November 2002 as a result of international efforts to regulate access to ballistic missiles which can potentially deliver WMDs.

The HCOC does not ban ballistic missiles, but it calls for restraining their production, testing, and export. It is the only normative instrument to verify the spread of ballistic missiles.

Ballistic Missile: It is a missile with a high, arching trajectory which is initially powered and guided, but falls under gravity on to its target. Most of its trajectory is unpowered and governed by gravity and air resistance if it is in the atmosphere. In contrasts, cruise missiles are aerodynamically guided in powered flight.

Ballistic missile	Cruise missile
1- A ballistic missile is a (usually) rocket-powered booster that propels its warhead on a ballistic (i.e. not aerodynamic) trajectory. 2- They fly high up into the atmosphere then just rely on gravity to bring them down. 3- Their flightpath is pretty much just a big arc.	1- A cruise missile is an unmanned, self-guided (usually) turbine-powered airplane that depends on aerodymanic lift. 2- Cruise missiles shoot up into the air (and in the case of a lot of them), will dive down a bit and fly the rest of their course at that altitude. 3- cruise missiles don't leave the atmosphere, so they can't rely on earth's gravity to carry them for the trip. Thus, they're always burning fuel and their engines are always running.

16- PM Narendra Modi, Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurate Petrapole Integrated Check Post

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina jointly inaugurated the Petrapole Integrated Check Post (ICP).
- Petrapole ICP is located in North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal.
- Petrapole is the Indian side of Petrapole-Benapole border checkpoint between India and Bangladesh.
- It is second ICP on India-Bangladesh border after Agartala ICP located at Agartala (India)-Akhaura (Bangladesh) land border.
- The Petrapole ICP will provide better facilities for efficient and effective discharge of functions such as security, customs, immigration, quarantine, etc.

17- OPERATION SANKAT MOCHAN

- Operation Sankat Mochan was the first big evacuation effort in a year after Operation Rahat evacuated hundreds of citizens of India and other countries in July 2015 from Yemen.
- Two C17 aircraft with a team under the leadership of Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh, to evacuate hundreds of Indians caught in the civil war in South Sudan.

18- RAMPAL POWER STATION

- Bangladesh and India today signed a landmark deal for the construction of a 1,320 megawatt coal fired power plant at Rampal , near the sunderbans., in Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh-India Friendship Power Company (Pvt) Limited (BIFPCL), the joint venture enterprise inked the deal with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), for constructing the super thermal plant.
- India's Exim Bank will provide $1.49 billion for the project, scheduled to start generating power in 2019.

19- eTHEKWANI DECLARATION

- In the 'eThekwani Declaration' adopted during the BRICS summit in March 2013 at Durban ,it was decided to explore, besides economic issues, various new areas of cooperation among the member States, including drug related issues.
- In keeping with the spirit of the eThekwani Declaration, the first anti-drug working group meeting of BRICS countries was organized at Moscow, Russia in November, 2015.
- The second anti-drug Working Group meeting of Heads of Drug Control Agencies of BRICS countries Was held at New Delhi.

20- The first meeting of the BRICS Working Group on 'Energy Saving and Energy Efficiency' held at Visakhapatnam

- The Working Group on Energy Saving & Energy Efficiency will deliberate on a plan on development of cooperation in energy saving and energy efficiency within BRICS.

> **About PAT scheme**
> The Perform Achieve Trade (PAT) is an innovative, market-based trading scheme announced by the Indian Government in 2008 under its National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) in National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
> It aims to improve energy efficiency in industries by trading in energy efficiency certificates in energy-intensive sectors
> The 2010 amendment to the Energy Conservation Act (ECA) provides a legal mandate to PAT.

- India will also showcase its efforts in energy saving, energy efficiency, particularly the LED street lighting programme and PAT (Performance Achievement & Trade) programme for industrial energy efficiency.

21- RIMPAC 2016

- RIMPAC, the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, is the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise. RIMPAC is held biennially during June and July of even-numbered years from Honolulu, Hawaii.
- RIMPAC 2016 Saw participation of navies from 26 countries. This year it is the 25th edition of biennial exercise in the series that began in 1971.
- In RIMPAC 2016, three new nations are participating for the first time. They are Denmark, Germany and Italy.
- It is hosted and administered by the United States Navy and other US agencies.India is being represented by Indian Naval ship (INS) Satpura, an indigenously built guided missile stealth frigate.

22- World Bank, ISA sign agreement for India's solar-energy program

- The World Bank (WB) Group has signed an agreement with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to provide more than 1 billion dollars to support India's solar initiatives.
- World Bank will support projects such as solar rooftop technology, infrastructure for solar parks, introducing innovative solar and hybrid technologies to market and transmission lines for solar-rich state.
- It will provide 625 million dollars to India's grid-connected rooftop solar programme that will finance the installation of at least 400MW of solar photovoltaic installations.
- ISA is an alliance of more than 120 countries, *sunshine countries*, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

23-Project Development Fund (PDF) for CLMV countries viz. Cambodia, Laos Myanmar and Vietnam.

- PDF will corpus of Rs 500 crore and should be located in the Department of Commerce.
- It will be operated by the EXIM Bank
- CLMV countries namely Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam have a special position in regional value chains in the Southeast Asian region.

24- LEMOA

- LEMOA stands for Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, one of the three foundational agreements — as referred to by the U.S.
- Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA) are referred to as the foundational agreements
- LEMOA gives access, to both countries, to designated military facilities on either side for the purpose of refuelling and replenishment.
- The agreement will primarily cover four areas — port calls, joint exercises, training and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. There will be no basing of the U.S. troops or assets on Indian soil. This is purely a logistical agreement.

25-The world's first self-driving taxis began picking up passengers in Singapore

- nuTonomy, an autonomous vehicle software startup has taken this initiative.
- Each car is fitted with six sets of Lidar a detection system that uses lasers to operate like radar, including one that constantly spins on the roof.
- There are also two cameras on the dashboard to scan for obstacles and detect changes in traffic lights.

26- AKASHVANI MAITREE INAUGRATED BY PRESIDENT PRANAB MUKHERJEE

- The channel is a unique venture of All India Radio and is aimed at strengthening ties between the two neighbours, India and Bangladesh.
- Channel's uniqueness lies in sharing of content between Bangladesh Betar & Akashvani Maitree.
- Duration of the channel will be 16 Hrs per day.

27- JOINT INAUGRATION OF STOR PALACE IN KABUL

- Restored by Indian help, the palace one of the rooms in the palace was the setting for the signing of the Rawalpindi Agreement, by which Afghanistan became an independent sovereign state.
- India has already helped Afghanistan to renovate their Parliament building apart from providing engineering support in building Salma dam.

28- US TO END AID TO PAKISTAN

- Under the Coalition Support Fund(CSF) , Pakistan used to get funds, which is essentially reimbursement money for the expenses made by Pakistan Army in support of U.S. operations in Afghanistan.
- The USA has decided to block $300-million military aid to Pakistan for its failure to take sufficient action against Haqqani network.
- The Haqqani Network has carried out a number of kidnappings and attacks against U.S. interests in Afghanistan, as well as Afghan government and civilian targets.

29- SIMILAR TARIFF CUTS TO ALL RCEP MEMBER NATIONS

- RCEP comprises the 10 economies of the ASEAN region (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and six of its free trade partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea).
- Japan has been pushing for a single-tier system to which India has now agreed.
- Negotiations on services front are still pending.

SUMMITS	HOSTS	REMARKS
Rajswa Gyansangam', An annual conference of tax administrators	New Delhi	First time that two Revenue Boards Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) & Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) are holding the conclave at the same time.
St Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF)	Russia	
SCO Summit 2016	Tashkent, Uzbekistan	India and Pakistan became permanent members
BRICS policy planning dialogue Meeting	Patna, Bihar	BRICS cooperation by adopting a five-pronged approach – • institution building to further deepen and sustain BRICS cooperation; • implementation of the decisions of previous Summits including Hon'ble PM's announcements at the Fortaleza and Ufa Summits; • integrating synergies among the existing cooperation mechanisms; • innovation, i.e., new cooperation mechanisms; and • continuity, i.e., continuation of mutually agreed existing BRICS cooperation mechanisms. In short, the 'IIIIC or I4C' objectives.
Second BRICS Youth Summit	Guwahati, Assam	The theme of the summit was "Youth as bridge for intra-BRICS exchanges". It also adopted the 'Guwahati BRICS Youth Summit 2016 Call to Action' and focused on skill development and entrepreneurship, social inclusions, youth volunteerism and youth participation in governance. Read more at: http://currentaffairs.gktoday.in/brics-youth-summit-concludes-guwahati-07201634132.html Read more at: http://currentaffairs.gktoday.in/brics-youth-summit-concludes-guwahati-07201634132.html
NATO Summit 2016	Warsaw, Poland	The Warsaw Declaration on Transatlantic Security was adopted. The declaration describes the negative long-term change in the security environment and NATO's response based on

		enhanced military presence on the eastern flank and building stability in both southern and eastern neighbourhood.
11th ASEM summit	Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	Theme: '20 Years of ASEM: Partnership for the Future through Connectivity'
India Education Fair	Dhaka, Bangladesh	'The Great India Education Fair' showcases the strengths of the Indian Education System and is the exciting platform for introducing various institution to an eager and growing market of large potential pool of international students.
International summit on Tobacco-Control	Noida, India	The purpose of the summit is to eliminate the illicit trade of tobacco products.
Counter-Terrorism Financing (CTF) Summit 2016	Bali, Indonesia	develop regional solutions to critical terrorism financing issues and risks
SAARC Young Parliamentarians Conference (YPC) on Peace and Harmony for Development'	Islamabad, Pakistan.	• First ever SAARC YPC conference. • SAARC YPC 2016 intends to offer young parliamentarians' narrative as a prelude to the 19th SAARC summit that Pakistan will be hosting
19th SAARC Summit	Pakistan	Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India didn't take part, so postponed
World Economic Forum(WEF)	Davos	Theme : 'Fostering an Inclusive India through Digital Transformation'
BRICS meeting on Disaster Risk Reduction	Udaipur	i. BRICS countries were striving to set up a joint task force on disaster management as a permanent forum for regular dialogue, mutual support among the member nations. ii. Meeting ended with the adoption of the Udaipur Declaration.
BRICS Women's Parliamentarian Forum	Jaipur, Rajasthan	i. First session on the theme of 'Achieving SDGs- Role of Women Parliamentarians in involving Citizens'. ii. Theme of the second session, to be held on the second day on August 21, was 'Containing Climate Change – Imperatives of Global Cooperation'. iii. Adopted the Jaipur declaration calling upon international financial institutions to "support and facilitate financing for development on favorable terms" to developing and least developed countries.

PAVA Shells to replace pellet guns

- Newly developed PAVA shells, a chilli-based less-lethal munition, which temporarily incapacitates the target and renders them immobile for several minutes.
- PAVA stands for Pelargonic Acid Vanillyl Amide, also called Nonivamide, and is an organic compound found characteristically in natural chilli pepper.
- The PAVA shell has a projected jet range of 4-5 metres, which gives officers a useful reactionary gap when dealing with violent subjects.
- It is completely odourless and will not damage clothes or skin.

Quantum Experiments at Space Scale(QUESS)

- QUESS is a proof-of-concept mission designed to facilitate quantum optics experiments over long distances to allow the development of quantum encryption and quantum teleportation technology.
- A satellite, nicknamed Micius or Mozi ,is operated by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, as well as ground stations in China. The University of Vienna and the Austrian Academy of Sciences are running the satellite's European receiving stations.
- It uses the principle of entanglement to facilitate communication that is totally safe against hacking, let alone decryption, by a third party by producing pairs of entangled photons.

SCRAMJET ENGINE

- India is the fourth country to demonstrate the flight testing of Supersonic Combustion Ramjet Engine(SCRAMJET).
- Scramet engine designed by ISRO uses Hydrogen as fuel and Oxygen from the atmospheric air as the oxidizer.
- Scramjet engines will help bringing down launch cost by reducing the amount of oxidiser to be carried along with the fuel.

    CYBATHLON

- The Cybathlon is an international competition organised by ETH Zurich for disabled competitors allowed to use bionic assistive technology.
- Other international competitions for disabled athletes, such as the Paralympics, only permit competitors to use unpowered assistive technology.
- The Cybathlon encourages the use of performance-enhancing technology such as powered exoskeletons and is dubbed as Bionic Olympics.
- The Cybathlon will feature six disciplines – a Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) bicycle race, a Powered Leg Prosthesis Race, a Powered Wheelchair Race, a Powered Exoskeleton Race, a Powered Arm Prosthesis Race, and a computerised race for competitors with paralysis using brain-computer interfaces.

PROXIMA B

- Proxima Centauri b Proxima b or Alpha Centauri Cb is an exoplanet orbiting within the habitable zone of the red dwarf star Proxima Centauri, the closest star to the Sun.
- It is located about 4.2 light-years from Earth in the constellation of Centaurus, making it the closest known exoplanet to the Solar System.
- It is unlikely to be habitable , as the windpressure from solar winds will destroy any existing atmosphere.
- The exoplanet is orbiting within the habitable zone of Proxima Centauri, the region where, with the correct planetary conditions and atmospheric properties, liquid water may exist on the surface of the planet.

HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS INFECTION

- Human papillomavirus(HPV) infection is an infection by *human papillomavirus* (HPV), a DNA virus from the papillomavirus family.
- Most HPV infections cause no symptoms and resolve spontaneously. HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection globally.
- In some, they persist and result in warts or precancerous lesions which increase the risk of cancer of the cervix, vulva, vagina, penis, anus, mouth, or throat. Nearly all cervical cancer is due to HPV.
- HPV Two vaccines — Gardasil and Cervarix — are available in India but both are infested with gynaecological concerns.

INDIGENOUS LEPROSY VACCINE

- A vaccine, called Mycobacterium indicus pranii (MIP), developed by the National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi will be launched on a trial basis.
- Leprosy, the disease, caused by the bacteria, Mycobacterium leprae , affects around 1.25 lakh people every year in India.
- MIP can bring down leprosy cases by 60 percent in three years.

CHINESE SCIENTISTS DISCOVER XMU-MP-1 MOLECULE TO REPAIR ORGANS

- Chinese scientists have discovered a small molecule (new drug) named XMU-MP-1 that can regenerate tissue.
- The drug, XMU-MP-1 can promote repair and regeneration in the liver, intestines and skin.
- It has potential to eliminate transplants of some organs.

Airlander 10: World's largest aircraft embarks maiden flight

- The world's largest (longest) aircraft the Airlander 10 has embarked its maiden flight.
- Airlander 10 is hybrid ship i.e. it is a partly plane and partly airship filled with helium gas.
- It can stay airborne for more than two weeks unmanned and up to five days if manned.

BARC develops portable kit for detection of Chromium contamination of water

- The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has developed a kit for onsite determination of toxic Hexavalent Chromium Cr(VI) in drinkingwater.
- Chromium is widely used in various industries like steel, leather, chrome plating, paint manufacturing, wood preservation etc.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has classified Cr(VI) as carcinogenic and can cause stomach ulcers, cancers and severely damage kidneys and liver.
- The water sample treated with reagent in the kit , the colour develops within 5 minutes and the distinction can be made with naked eye.

India's first facility to produce nickel at Jharkhand

- Launched by the Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) at its Indian Copper Complex (ICC) at Ghatshila in Jharkhand.
- It will produce nickel metal of London Metal Exchange (LME) grade from primary resource.
- The plant will utilize eco-friendly technology and help check pollution and also eliminate use of lead, reduce liquid effluents and cut down solid waste by 75%.
- Presently India is totally dependent on imports for high quality Nickel.

India's first ever BIO-CNG plant producing CNG at PUNE

- It will Compressed Natural Gas) from agricultural residue was inaugurated in Pune, Maharashtra.
- It has been set up as a Proof of Concept project which can be replicated elsewhere.
- It uses special bacterial solution for treating agricultural waste in the process of generation of CNG. The gas generated is cleaned and compressed for use in vehicles.
- The bio-fuel will help in reducing the import of diesel up to 50% and also will help reduce problem of disposal of agricultural waste was a major concern in the country.

  Researchers have successfully isolated cancer stem cells that cause skin cancer

- They have successfully demonstrated that Andrographolide (a compound) isolated and purified from Andrographis paniculata (a herb) found in India
- The study indicates that the compound Andrographolide has therapeutic potential for the management of cancer stem-cell mediated melanoma growth and lung metastasis.
- The compound has ability to inhibit CD133 positive cancer stem cells growth which mediates tumour growth and lung metastasis.

LAST UNIVERSAL COMMON ANCESTOR

- The Last universal Common Ancestor, also called the last universal ancestor (LUA), cenancestor, is the most recent organism from which all organisms now living on Earth have a common descent.
- LUCA should not be assumed to be the first living organism on Earth.
- LUCA is no less than 4 Billion years old and was a single celled organism.
- It also proves the Charles Darwin proposed theory of universal common descent through an evolutionary process.

TRI-NETRA

- TRI-NETRA stands for – Terrain imaging for diesel dRivers INfra-red, Enhanced opTical & Radar Assisted system.
- TRI-NETRA system is made up of high-resolution optical video camera, high sensitivity infra-red video camera and additionally a radar-based terrain mapping system.
- TRI-NETRA is designed to "see" the terrain ahead of the running locomotive during inclement weather.
- It will create a composite video image which shall be displayed in front of the Loco Pilot on a computer monitor.

AQUILLA

- Facebook has completed its first successful test of its solar-powered Aquila drone, being developed to deliver internet service to remote areas of the world.
- Aquila project is part of the Facebook's Connectivity Lab, which is creating new technologies including aircrafts, satellites and wireless communication systems .
- It will fly at an altitude of 60,000 ft. and will be launched by using Helium Balloons.
- Similar project being undertaken by Google's Parent company Alphabet Inc is named Project Loon.

JUNO SUCCESSFULLY ENTERS JUPITERS ORBIT

- NASA's unmanned Juno spacecraft has successfully entered Jupiter's orbit, after a five year journey.
- Juno became the first spacecraft to cruise this far out into the solar system powered solely by the sun, beating Europe's Rosetta spacecraft.
- The main aim of this spacecraft is to understand the origin and evolution of Jupiter.

- It is second spacecraft to orbit Jupiter after Galileo.

NASA'S DAWN MISSION

- The goal of the dawn mission is to characterize the conditions and processes of the earliest history of giant Proplanet Vesta and the dwarf planet Ceres.
- It explored the giant Proplanet Vesta in 2011-12 and is presently studying Ceres.
- Ceres, the largest object in the Asteroid belt , is a dwarf planet, the only one located in the inner circle of the solar system.

SOLAR POWER TREE

- It has been developed by the Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI), a constituent laboratory of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) .
- A solar power tree takes less space as compared to a conventional photovoltaic setup.
- By holding the panels at a higher height and rotating panels it captures more sunlight.
- There is also a provison of water sprinkler at the top for self cleaning of solar panels.

INDIA RECEIVES YAWS FREE STATUS FROM WHO AND UNICEF

- Yaws is a tropical infection of the skin, bones and joints caused by the bacterium *Treponema pallidum pertenue.*
- India is the first country officially declared free of yaws by WHO in 2016 and eradication was made possible by use of oral antibiotic Azithromycin.
- The disease affects mainly affects children below 15 years of age, living in hilly,tribal and remote parts and is spread by skin to skin contact of infected part.
- The disease is still prevalent in atleast 14 tropical countries as of 2012.

CHARGE SYNDROME

- CHARGE syndrome (formerly known as CHARGE association), is a rare syndrome caused by a genetic disorder(CHD7 Gene).
- The acronym "CHARGE" came into use for newborn children with the congenital features of coloboma of the eye, heart defects, atresia of the nasal choanae, retardation of growth and/or development, genital and/or urinary abnormalities, and ear abnormalities and deafness.
- A mutation in the CHD7 gene is responsible for 60-70 per cent of all CHARGE defects.
- The expression of the gene peaks in the early stages of embryo development, starting from 2-4 cells.

PLANET HD 131399Ab

- HD 131399 Ab is an exoplanet orbiting the star HD 131399 A, which is part of the trinary star system .
- Located about 320 light-years from Earth in the constellation of Centaurus it is about 16 million years old, making it also one of the youngest exoplanets discovered to date.
- It also marks the first discovery of an exoplanet made with the SPHERE instrument on the VLT telescope.
- SPHERE is sensitive to infrared light, allowing it to detect the heat signatures of young planets.

CASPOL

- CASPOL, IS A WATER-BASED READY-TO-COAT AND EASY-TO-USE FLAME-PROOF COATING, DEVELOPED BY ISRO(VIKRAM SARABHAI SPACE CENTRE)
- IT CONTAINS NO TOXIC MATERIAL, IS ECO FRIENDLY, KEEPS BUILDINGS AROUND 5-6ºC COOLER IN SUMMERS AND IS EVEN WATER SEEPAGE RESISTANT.
- IT HAS EXCELLENT FLAME RETARDANT, WATERPROOFING, AND THERMAL-CONTROL PROPERTIES. IT CAN BE APPLIED ON WALLS, CLOTHES, PAPER, THATCHED ROOFS, AND WOOD.

- IT HAS MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS RANGING FROM USE IN LAUNCH VEHICLES, HOUSEHOLD, AUTOMBILES AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

ZIKA VIRUS VACCINE

- ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE IS CAUSED BY A VIRUS TRANSMITTED PRIMARILY BY AEDES GROUP OF MOSQUITOES.
- ZIKA VIRUS CAUSES MICROCEPHALY(BABY'S HEAD MUCH SMALLER THAN EXPECTED) AND A RARE NERVOUS DISORDER GUILLAIN-BARRÉ SYNDROME.
- THE VACCINE WHICH GOES BY THE WORKING NAME GLS-5700 — IS A SO-CALLED DNA VACCINE.
- IN THIS KIND OF VACCINE, DNA CODED TO PRODUCE THE PROTEIN THAT SURROUNDS THE ZIKA VIRUS IS INJECTED INTO THE SKIN.

BONE RECONSTRUCTION METHOD BY IISC

- a a team of scientists from bengaluru's indian institute of science (iisc) has developed an alternative for bone reconstruction method similar to sutures.
- In this method Maltitol ,derived from Maltose, a sweetening agent is used to fill in the bone gap caused by fracture,instead of traditional rod.
- Maltitol is combined with other components to make long chain-like structures that become plastic which is then used to fill the gap.
- It offers advantage in terms of solubility in water, better drug delivery that hastens healing with fewer side effects.

LIDAR

- Lidar or Light Detection and Ranging is a surveying method that measures distance to a target by illuminating that target with a Laser light.
- Lidar uses ultraviolet, visible or near infrared light to image objects.
- A LIDAR instrument principally consists of a laser, a scanner, and a specialized GPS receiver .
- Recently Telangana government used it for mapping the river flow of Godavari and is planning to use it preparation of high resolution maps in various upcoming projects.

BIONIC LEAF

- Scientists from Harvard University have created a unique " bionic leaf " that uses solar energy to split water molecules into oxygen and hydrogen, and hydrogen-eating bacteria to produce liquid fuels from CO2.
- Bionic leaf is a true artificial photosynthetic system that can covert solar energy to biomass with ten percent efficiency, better than the efficiency of natural photosynthesis.
- It can be used to generate usable fuels like isopropanol and isobutanol by using an engineered bacterium *Ralstonia eutropha.*
- this new bioreactor could help mitigate planet-warming pollution problems while bringing cleaner fuels to people.

CHINA 'S FIRST DARK SKY RESERVE

- A Dark sky reserve is an area that is kept free of artificial light pollution with the purpose to promote astronomy.
- China established country's first dark sky reserve for astronomical observation in the Tibetan part of Ngari,measuring 2500 sq.km, bordering Nepal and India.
- Ngari is among the best sites for astronomical observation on earth, due to its high altitude and large number of cloudless days throughout the year.
- Light pollution is artificial brightening of the night sky caused by man-made lightening sources, which inhibits the observation of stars and planets.

LISA PATHFINDER

- LISA Pathfinder, formerly Small Missions for Advanced Research in Technology-2 (SMART-2), is an ESA spacecraft that was launched on 3 December 2015.
- This mission is to be carried out jointly by NASA and ESA will test technologies needed for the Evolved Laser Interferometer Space Antenna (eLISA), an ESA gravitational wave observatory planned to be launched in 2034.
- LISA itself plans to use a combination of three spacecraft, trailing the earth and using special laser beams and telescopes, the trio will measure gravitational waves.
- Since there are three points from which the observation is carried out, this space antenna will be able to pinpoint the location of the source of the detected gravitational waves to a high accuracy.

EINSTEIN RING

- An Einstein ring is a distorted image of a very distant galaxy, which is termed "the source". The distortion is produced by the bending of the light rays from the source due to a massive galaxy, termed "the lens", lying between it and the observer
- The strong gravitational field produced by the lens galaxy distorts the structure of space-time in its neighbourhood, and this does not only attract objects which have a mass, but also bends the paths of light
- These phenomena, predicted by Einstein's theory of General Relativity, are quite rare but scientifically interesting.

SUNWAY TAIHULIGHT

- A Chinese supercomputer named Sunway Taihu Light built using domestic chip technology has been declared the world's fastest supercomputer.
- The new number one is capable of performing some 93 quadrillion calculations per second or petaflops .
- Previous record holder ,Tianhe-2 is also from china but was made from Intel processor chips.

MISSION	OBJECTIVE
HAYABUSA 2	Launched by JAXA, is enroute to asteroid 162173 Ryugu.
OSIRIS-REx	Launched by NASA, is en route to asteroid 101955 Bennu.
ARTEMIS P1/P2	Launched by NASA, are studying the effect of the solar wind on the Moon. Originally launched as Earth satellites, they were later repurposed and moved to lunar orbit.
Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter	Launched by NASA, is engaged in lunar mapping intended to identify safe landing sites, locate potential resources on the Moon, characterize the radiation environment, and demonstrate new technology.
Akatsuki	The first Japanese Venusian probe. Also known as *Planet-C* and *Venus Climate Orbiter*, *Akatsuki* failed to enter Venusian orbit in December 2010. It continued to function and entered Venus orbit in 2015.
2001 Mars Odyssey,	A tribute to the classic novel and film, is one of six currently active human-made Mars satellites. It is continuing its extended mission to map the surface of Mars and also acts as a relay for the Curiosity and Opportunity rovers. Launched by NASA.

Mars Express	Mars orbiter designed to study the planet's atmosphere and geology, search for sub-surface water, and deploy the Beagle lander.
Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter	The second NASA satellite orbiting Mars. It is specifically designed to analyze the landforms, stratigraphy, minerals, and ice of the red planet.
Curiosity Rover	is searching for evidence of organic material on Mars, monitoring methane levels in the atmosphere, and engaging in exploration of the landing site at Gale Crater.
Mangalyaan	Is the first Indian interplanetary space probe. It was successfully inserted into orbit of Mars on 24 September 2014.
Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution Mission (MAVEN)	is a space probe developed by NASA designed to study the Martian atmosphere while orbiting Mars. Mission goals include determining how the planet's atmosphere and water, presumed to have once been substantial, were lost over time.
Trace Gas Orbiter (ExoMars 2016)	Launched by ESA is carrying the lander Schiaparelli ,scheduled to use atmospheric braking for some months before commencing data collecting operations.
Dawn	successfully entered asteroid Vesta's orbit in July 2011. There it studied Vesta until September 2012, when it departed for dwarf planet Ceres
Juno	Launched by NASA to scientifically investigate Jupiter andis in polar orbit around Jupiter .
Cassini Orbiter	Began studying Saturn and its moons after passing Venus and Jupiter and deploying the Huygens Landing Probe to Titan. It is primarily investigating Saturn's rings, its magnetosphere and the geologic composition of its satellites; the mission may potentially continue until 2017.
New Horizons	Is the first spacecraft to study Pluto up close, and ultimately the Kuiper Belt. It is the fastest artificially-accelerated object and will be the fifth probe to leave the solar system.
Voyager 1	Is currently the farthest man-made object from Earth, as well as the first object to leave the Solar System and cross into interstellar space. It was originally tasked with investigating Jupiter and Saturn, and the moons of these planets.
Voyager 2	Has not yet left the solar system, but will become one of the first five probes to do so eventually. Its mission to study all four gas giants. Scientists are now using Voyager 2 to learn what the solar system is like beyond the heliosphere.

Rosetta	Operated by ESA, is orbiting the comet 67P/Churyumov–Gerasimenko. On November 12, 2014, a lander was successfully deployed for further investigation. Mission ended on 30 September 2016, when the probe landed onto the comet's surface.
Messenger	was studying Mercury. It is only the second probe to do so and is the first to orbit the planet. Technologically, it is far superior to its 1975 predecessor, Mariner 10. Having previously passed Earth once, Venus twice and Mercury three times, it entered orbit in March 2011. Mission ended on 30 April 2015, when the probe crashed onto the planet's surface.
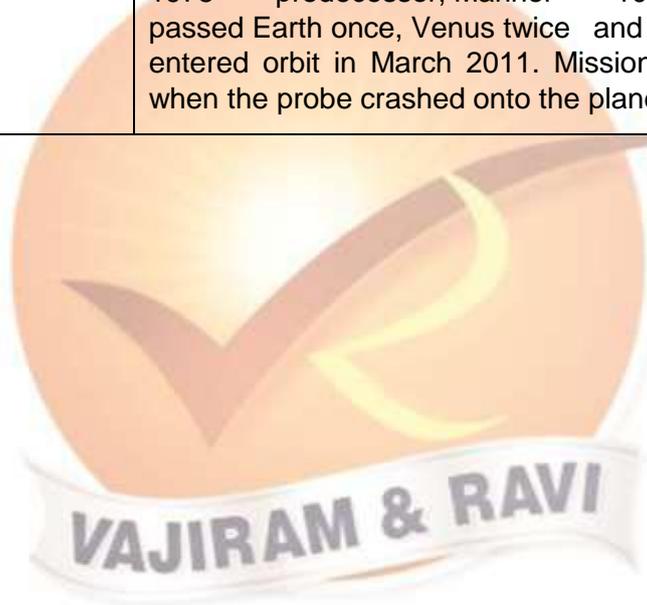
1- CSIR Launches its first anti diabetic ayurvedic drug

- The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) on Wednesday launched BGR-34(blood glucose regulator) -- the country's first anti-diabetic ayurvedic drug designed for Type-2 diabetes mellitus, which has been scientifically validated for its efficacy and safety.
- BGR-34 has been developed jointly by the National Botanical Research Institute (NBRI) and the Central Institute for Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP), which are the research units of CSIR and located in Lucknow.

2- Darjeeling zoo to receive snow leopard from London

- Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHZP) in the hill station of Darjeeling,West Bengal runs a specialized conservation breeding programme for snow leopards, an endangered species under International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red list. whose survival is challenged by poaching and habitat loss.
- The Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHZP) in Darjeeling, West Bengal has received a male snow leopard named Makalu from London's Dudley Zoological Gardens.
- The snow leopard is named after the world's fifth highest peak at 27,765 feet on the south-east side of the Everest.

3 - Australian Rodent Is First Mammal Made Extinct by Human-Driven Climate Change

- Australian researchers say rising sea levels have wiped out a rodent that lived on a tiny outcrop in the Great Barrier Reef, in what they say is the first documented extinction of a mammal species due to human-caused climate change.
- The long-tailed, whiskered creature, called the Bramble Cay melomys, was considered the only mammal endemic to the Great Barrier Reef.
- The key factor responsible for the death of the Bramble Cay melomys is almost certainly high tides and surging seawater, which has traveled inland across the island.

4 - Scientists turn CO2 into rock to combat climate change- Carbafix Project

- Scientists have turned carbon dioxide into stone in a matter of months by pumping it deep underground, offering a revolutionary new way of storing the greenhouse gas to tackle climate change.
- Basalt makes up most of the world's seafloors and approximately 10 per cent of continental rocks, according to the study's researchers. A porous, blackish rock, basalt is rich in calcium, iron and magnesium, minerals researchers said are needed to solidify carbon for storage.
- The Carbfix project at Iceland's Hellisheidi plant — the world's largest geothermal facility, which powers Reykjavik — sought to solidify the CO2.

5 - Norway Just Banned Deforestation

- Norway is the first country to adopt a ban on deforestation, a policy that will likely have global effects.
- The basis of the forest protection commitment comes from the UN Climate Summit in New York in 2014.

- Crops typically associated with large-scale rainforest destruction are soy, timber, palm oil and beef. The Norwegian government will now require sustainable policy and practice in producing the aforementioned products if they are to be procured by the government.

6 - Gangateic Dolphin to become city animal of Guwahati

- Assam's Guwahati became the first city in the country to have its own city animal with the district administration declaring the Gangetic river dolphin (Platanista gangetica) as the mascot.
- The district administration had organised online and offline voting among three protected creatures, which are on the verge of extinction, to decide the mascot.
- Along with Gangetic river dolphin, the other two animals were black softshell turtle (Bor Kaso) and greater adjutant stork (Hargila).
- Gangetic dolphin- locally named as SIHU, IUCN status- Endangered

7 - Dia Mirza is ambassador for Swachh Saathi

- Actor Dia Mirza has been named the ambassador for Swachh Bharat Mission's youth-based 'Swachh Saathi' (student internship) programme.
- Under the programme, more than 2,000 interns would be enrolled. They will coordinate with around 10,000 schools across the country to ensure that all students in these schools take the pledge for a clean India.

8 - RAJVAYU app launched by Rajasthan CM

- Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje launched a mobile app 'RajVayu' for sharing information about air quality index of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur.
- Another app 'Drishti' for monitoring of pollution levels in industrial regions was also launched by Raje.

9- Asia's first 'Gyps Vulture Reintroduction Programme'

- Haryana Government has launched Asia's first 'Gyps Vulture Reintroduction Programme' at the Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre at Pinjore.
- Himalayan Griffon vultures: They are closely related to the critically endangered resident Gyps species of vultures but are not endangered. The IUCN has listed this species as Near Threatened .
- They are scavengers, preying on dead animals as they have a robust digestive system which can even digest disease-causing pathogens found in rotting meat of dead. Thus, they help in keeping environment clean.
- The main reason for rapid decline in population of vulture is due to Diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug which is given to cattle in inflammation and pain.
- The Diclofenac drug was banned by Union Government of India for veterinary use in 2006. Later in July 2015, the multi-dose vials of Diclofenac drug for human use were banned by the Drug Controller General of India.

10- June 5- world Environment Day

- 2016 Theme: Go Wild for Life (Zero tolerance for the illegal trade in wildlife) This year's theme seeks to encourage conservation of all those species under threat and calls for taking action to help safeguard them for future generations

- 2016 Host Country: Angola. The African country is seeking to restore its elephant's herds, conserve biodiversity-rich wildlife. It also seeks to safeguard the environment as it continues to rebuild after more than a quarter-century of civil war.
- WED was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of United Nations Conference on the Human Environment 1972 which began in Stockholm.

11- Green Economy Visionary Award 2016

- R Seetharaman, group chief executive officer of Doha Bank , was honoured with the 'Green Economy Visionary award' at the 2016 Union of Arab Banks International Banking Summit held in Rome on Monday.
- He has been awarded for his contribution in environment-friendly activities and for promoting green economy for nearly two decades.

12 - Landmark meeting between Bhutan and India held at Guwahati

- For the 10th time since 2008, important delegates representing the Governments of Bhutan and India along with conservation NGOs of the region met in Guwahati, Assam.
- The landmark meeting was held on 21st-22nd June 2016 to discuss Conservation of Biodiversity issues and opportunities in the large Transboundary landscape between India and Bhutan across the International boundary from the river Sankosh in the west to the River Dhansiri in the east, referred to as the Transboundary Manas Conservation Area (TraMCA).
- In India, it includes the Manas Tiger Reserve, in Bhutan, the forested areas of south covering the Royal Manas National Park, Phipsoo Wildlife Sanctuary and Jomotshangkha Wildlife Sanctuary.

13 - Sailesh Nayak Committee report on coastal zone regulations released

- The Sailesh Nayak committee report was commissioned in June 2014 after states expressed dissatisfaction regarding the limitations set by the CRZ notification of 2011.
- The CRZ notification 2011 enshrined the concept of a Coastal Zone Management Plan (CZMP). It was to be prepared with the fullest involvement and participation of local communities. The amendment had mandated all states to submit coastal development plans for Centre's approval which were pending since 1991, the date of CRZ notification.

14 - Govt okays Rs 58 crore to mitigate NH-17 widening impact on Karnala Bird Sanctuary

- National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has made a provision of Rs 58 crore to mitigate the impact of widening of a National Highway-17 stretch passing through Karnala Bird Sanctuary, Mumbai, government said on Tuesday.
- The KBS is covered with moist mixed deciduous forest and falls in the Western Ghat bio-geographic zone. The sanctuary is particularly rich in climbers and as many as 11 species are recorded from KBS.
- Among mammals, three species of primates (Common Langur, Bonnet Macaque and Rhesus macaque) are occurring in the sanctuary.

15 - Eurasian Otter found in Kanha-Pench corridor

- During this year's camera trapping exercise by Wild Conservation Trust and Madhya Pradesh Forest Department, Eurasian otter (Lutra lutra), one of the rarest Indian mammals, was discovered from Satpura Tiger Reserve Madhya Pradesh and Kanha-Pench Corridor.

- The Eurasian otter has a wide distribution covering Europe, Africa and Asia. The species is listed as Near Threatened as per the IUCN Red List (2004, 2008).
- Eurasian otter is believed to be found in the Himalayas and in some parts of the Western Ghats.
- These records of the Eurasian otter from the Satpura Tiger Reserve and Kanha-Pench Corridor not only extends their geographical range to central India but also provides the first-ever photographic evidence of the species in India.

16 - Russian poplar species a public nuisance: High Court

- Observing that poplars of Russian species are public nuisance, the Jammu and Kashmir High Court has sought compliance of its orders on their chopping in Kashmir.

17 - June 17 - World day to combat desertification and drought

- 2016 Theme: Inclusive cooperation for achieving Land Degradation Neutrality
- Slogan: Protect Earth. Restore Land. Engage People
- The World Day to Combat Desertification has been observed since 1995 to promote public awareness relating to international cooperation to combat desertification and the effects of drought.
- In 1994, the United Nations General Assembly declared the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification(UNCCD) in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.
- The World Day to Combat Desertification is a unique occasion to remind everybody that desertification can be effectively tackled, that solutions are possible, and that key tools to this aim lay in strengthened community participation and co-operation at all levels.

18 - Axis bank launches india's first certified Green Bond at LSE(LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE)

- Axis Bank raised $500 million at the London Stock Exchange after it unveiled India's first internationally-listed certified green bond to finance climate change solutions around the world.
- The bond is certified by the Climate Bonds Standards Board.
- The proceeds of the bond will be invested in green energy, transportation and infrastructure projects, reinforcing India's commitment to produce 175,000 MW of renewable power by 2022.
- What are Green Bonds?
  1. A bond is a debt instrument with which an entity raises money from investors. The bond issuer gets capital while the investors receive fixed income in the form of interest. When the bond matures, the money is repaid.
  2. A green bond is like any other regular bond but with one key difference: the money raised by the issuer are earmarked towards financing `green' projects, i.e. assets or business activities that are environment-friendly. Such projects could be in the areas of renewable energy , clean transportation and sustainable water management.

19- June 8 observed as world ocean day

- 2016 Theme: Healthy oceans, healthy planet
- World Oceans Day is the official UN-designated international day of ocean celebration.
- The concept for a "World Ocean Day" was first proposed in 1992 by the Government of Canada at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

- United Nations General Assembly resolution passed in December 2008, World Oceans Day is now officially recognized by the UN as June 8th each year.

20- Assam's Majuli becomes India's first island district

- Majuli, the seat of neo-Vaishnavite Bhakti renaissance, became India's first island district.
- With this erosion-troubled Majuli island will become the 35th district of Assam. Earlier it was sub-division of Jorhat district.
- Majuli island is mostly inhabited by Mishing tribal people.
- It has been the hub of Assamese neo-Vaishnavite culture initiated by saint-reformer Srimanta Sankardeva in 15th century.

21- Arunachal tiger reserve bags Indian biodiversity award 2016

- Pakke Tiger Reserve in East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh has won the 'India Biodiversity Award 2016'.
- The tiger reserve was selected in the conservation of threatened species category for its Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme.
- Hornbill Nest Adoption Programme = The Programme is a joint collaboration of Ghora-Aabhe Society, Nature Conservation Foundation and the State Forest Department.
- The award recognise the contribution of a range of stakeholders towards the conservation of biodiversity.

22- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) to make India disaster resilient and reduce loss of lives.
- The first of its kind of national plan is based on the four priority themes of the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-30". They are -
  1. Understanding disaster risk
  2. Improving disaster risk governance
  3. Investing in disaster risk reduction (through structural and non-structural measures)
  4. Disaster preparedness, early warning and building back better in the aftermath of a disaster.

Salient Features of the Plan-

1. The plan covers all phases of disaster management: prevention, response, mitigation and recovery.
2. It provides for vertical and horizontal integration among all the Government agencies and departments.
3. It also spells out the roles and responsibilities of all levels of Government right up to Urban Local Body and Panchayat level in a matrix format.
4. The plan has a regional approach, which will be beneficial for disaster management and also for development planning.
5. It emphasizes on a greater need for Information, Education and Communication activities to prepare communities to cope with disasters.

23- Long Term Ecological Observatories for Climate Change

- Long Term Ecological Observatories (LTEO) for Climate Change Studies are one of the components under the 'Climate Change Action Programme' in the 12th Plan Period.

- A Science Plan of LTEO was released during the 21st Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at Paris in December 2015.
- LTEO Programme aims to understand the biophysical and anthropogenic drivers of ecosystem change in the selected biomes and their effects on social- ecological responses through a network of scientific institutions.

24- Indigenously developed fecal incontinence management system 'Qora' launched

- The Union Government has launched 'Qora', an indigenously developed affordable Faecal Incontinence Management System (FIMS).
- The FIMS-Qora was developed under the Union Ministry of Science & Technology's Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Bio design Programme by M/s. Consure Medical.
- What is Fecal incontinence?
  1. Fecal incontinence (FI) is a medical condition marked by inability to control one's bowel movements. It causes feces (stool) to leak unexpectedly from the rectum.
  2. This medical condition worldwide affects nearly 100 million bed ridden patients. Furthermore, about 50% of the psychiatric ward patients due to long-term neurological diseases have FI.

25.- Bornean orangutan

- A primate species has been declared critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).
- Bornean orangutan is a primate species native to the island of Borneo.
- Found only in the wild in Sumatra island (Indonesia) and Borneo in the Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah and Kalimantan.
- Together with the Sumatran orangutan, Bornean orangutan belongs to the only genus (Pongo) of great apes native to Asia.
- Reasons for decline in Population- Deforestation, Hunting , Slow breeding

26.- India's Agasthyamala listed among 20 world biosphere reserves

- India's "unique" Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve is among 20 new sites added by the UN's top cultural body UNESCOto its World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- "Located in the Western Ghats, in the south of India, the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve includes peaks reaching 1,868 metres above sea level.
- It is also a unique genetic reservoir of cultivated plants especially cardamom, jamun, nutmeg, pepper and plantain. Three wildlife sanctuaries, Shendurney, Peppara, Neyyar and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger reserve are included in the site.
- The Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve (ABR) was established in 2001 and is spread across the two states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- New reserves are designated each year by the International Co-ordinating Council of the UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, which brings together elected representatives of 34 UNESCO Member States.
- There are 18 biosphere reserves in India out of which only nine, including the Nilgiris, Nanda Devi, Nokrek, Gulf of Mannar, Sundarbans, and the Great Nicobar, had been included in the network. Biosphere reserves in India protect larger areas of natural habitat and often include one or more National Parks and/or preserves, along with buffer zones that are open to some economic uses.

27- Addis Ababa Action Agenda

- It provides a foundation for implementing the global sustainable development agenda.
- The agreement was reached by the 193 UN Member States attending the Conference.
- The Conference is the first of three crucial events this year that can set the world on an unprecedented path to a prosperous and sustainable future.
- The Action Agenda builds on the outcomes of two previous Financing for Development conferences, in Monterrey, Mexico, and in Doha, Qatar.
- United Nations-backed Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the 'Agenda' was to outline measures to generate funds to finance the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals, the successor to the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) that expired.

28- System of Aerosol Monitoring and Research (SAMAR)

- It will help the country in studying concentration of black carbon in atmosphere due to air pollution and its impact on climate.
- Aerosols are a subset of air pollution that contains gases, fumes and dust in harmful proportion. Aerosols particles can be both solid and liquid which also affects environmental visibility.
- The SAMAR, equipped with many sophisticated equipments including 12 sky radiometers, will study aerosols' different properties and determine how it impact the climate over a longer period of time.

29- Union Government launches National Green Highways Mission

- The Union Government has launched National Green Highways Mission (NGHM), a plantation drive around 1500 km of National Highways.
- National Green Highways Mission NGHM was launched under the Green Highways Policy, 2015 to provide a holistic vision of developing eco-friendly and green National Highways.
- The mission aims to provide a green canopy along 100,000 km of highways and create jobs for 1 million youth.
- The funds for the mission will be met by Green Fund corpus which is 1 per cent of the total project cost set aside for plantation purposes.

30- Kisan Harit Rajmarg Yojana

- It is a pilot scheme to extend green belt beyond the existing 'Right of Way' of highways.
- It seeks to engage farmers and also provide alternative livelihood option to the nearby communities.

31- 29 July: International Tiger Day

- The International Tiger Day (also known as Global Tiger Day) is observed annually on 29 July to raise awareness for tiger conservation.
- Goal of observance= To promote the protection and expansion of the wild tigers habitats, to gain support through awareness for tiger conservation.
- The International Tiger Day was founded in 2010 at the St. Petersburg Tiger Summit.
- The summit had issued St. Petersburg Declaration on Tiger Conservation with an aim to double the big cat population by 2022.

32- Gymnothorax indicus, new species of eel found in Bay of Bengal

- Scientists from have discovered Gymnothorax indicus (proposed name Indian unpatterened moray), a new species of eel (a snake-like fish) in the northern Bay of Bengal region along the West Bengal coast.

33- PM Narendra Modi launches first phase of SAUNI project in Gujarat

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the first phase of SAUNI (Saurastra Narmada Avataran Irrigation) Yojana at Sanodara of Jamnagar district of Gujarat.
- SAUNI Yojana is multipurpose project that aims to solve the water problems of a parched Saurashtra region of Gujarat.
- SAUNI is a 'linking' project where the water will be filled in irrigation dams that are already equipped with canal network.
- Under this project, 115 dams in the Saurashtra region will be filled with excess water from the Sardar Sarovar dam.
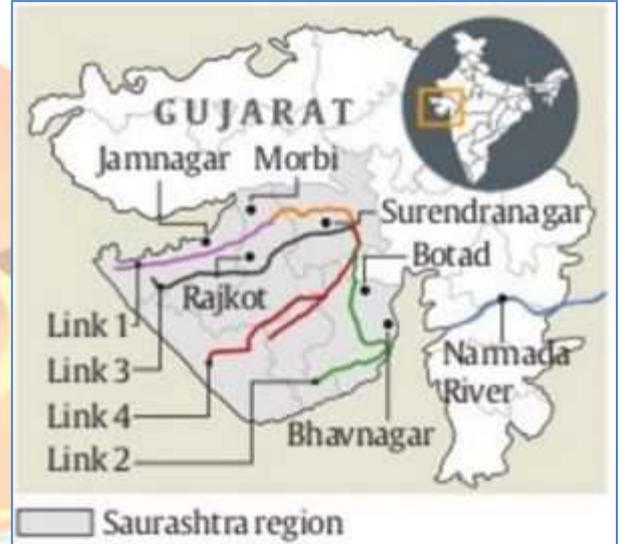
34- US to create world's largest protected marine area off Hawaii

- United States is going to create world's largest protected marine reserve area named as Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument off the Hawaiian coast.
- It will be created by expansion of present national monument off Hawaii.
- . In 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had designated the area a world heritage site.

35- Global Green Awards, 2016

- Kolkata scientist bagged highest international award in Environmental leadership i.e. Global Green Awards.
- Dr. Dhrubajyoti Ghosh, became the first Indian environmental activist to receive the Luc Hoffman award, about the recognition.
- The scientist mapped the East Kolkata Wetlands area and calculated its economic value.
- East Kolkata Wetlands is "wetland of international importance" under the Ramsar Convention.

NIHALI LANGUAGE IN DECLINE

- Nihali is a language spoken in Jalgaon Jahod in Maharashtra by close to 2,500 people of the region. It is said to be pre-Aryan and Pre-Munda language.
- The languages in India can be grouped into Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman, Austro-Asiatic or Andaman language families but Nihali is said to be a 'language isolate' as it does not belong to any of them.
- Nihali has been classified by UNESCO as a critically endangered language.

KAPALIKAS

- A nearly 1,000-year-old rare stone inscription on Kapalikas (worshippers of Bhairava, a manifestation of Shiva) was found in Raichur district.
- Kapalika was a mysterious cult known for human sacrifice and immolation among other things.
- The finding assumes significance especially in the wake of the lack of info about Kapalikas in any literature in Indian language, except Sanskrit.
- The inscription also refers to a 'Kankala Gorava' who hadmastered Somasiddantha or Kapalika Siddantha . It states that though Soma Siddanthis led a lavish life, they had a cordial relationship with the society.

PM Narendra Modi conferred Afghanistan's highest civilian honour

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with Amir Amanullah Khan Award, the highest civilian honors of Afghanistan.
- It was instituted in 2006 and is bestowed by the Government of Afghanistan to Afghan and foreign nationals in recognition of their services to Afghanistan.
- The award is named after Afghan national hero Amanullah Khan who championed the cause of Afghanistan's freedom.
- US President George W. Bush, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan are other notable winners.

UNESCO's World Heritage List: India gets three new sites

- In UNESCO's lexicon, a World Heritage Site is a place (such as a building, city, complex, desert, forest, island, lake, monument, or mountain) of special cultural or physical significance.
- The Nalanda Mahavira site in Bihar is often recognized as the most ancient university in India and dates back to the 3rd century BCE. It includes stupas, shrines, *viharas* and important art works in stucco, stone and metal.
- Le Corbusier's Capitol complex in Chandigarh is part of a transnational series comprising 17 properties that are spread over seven countries, and built over a period of 50 years. It includes the Complexe du Capitole in Chandigarh (India), the National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo (Japan), the House of Dr Curutchet in La Plata (Argentina) and the Unité d'habitation in Marseille (France).
- Sikkim's Khangchendzonga National Park—home to the world's third highest peak, Mount Khangchendzonga. Located in the heart of the Himalayan range, the Park includes a number of plains, valleys and lakes, alongwith snowcapped mountains and ancient forests. UNESCO has categorized it as a mixed site, which means it is part "natural" and part "cultural".

Age estimation of Indus Valley Civilization

- According to new research the IVC,the Bronze age civilization may be 8000 years old-2500 years older than previously dated.
- A team of researchers from prestigious Indian institutes including IIT Kharagpur, Institute of Archaeology, Deccan College Pune, Physical Research Laboratory and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)conducted the survey.
- They used carbon dating techniques on animal remains and pottery fragments from the Bhirrana site in India.
- Using optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) method researchers came to the conclusion that earlier dating may have been incorrect.

Moat restoration of Fort St. George

- The 2.3 km moat,the channel, surrounding the historic Fort St. George in Chennai is all set to be restored. The plan for its restoration has been launched by the Archaeological Survey of India - Chennai Circle, the Army, and the Public Works Department.
- The moat, dating back to 1760s and built in the wake of a French attack, became a waste water chamber over the years.
- Fort St George is the name of the first English (later British) fortress in India, founded in 1644 at the coastal city of Madras, the modern city of Chennai.
- The fort currently houses the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly and other official buildings. The fort is one of the 163 notified areas (megalithic sites) in the state of Tamil Nadu.

MYSURU DASARA TO GO GREEN

- The famed Mysuru Dasara will adopt a theme-based approach this year shifting the focus on water conservation in a bid to go green and on account of scanty rainfall in many parts.
- Mysuru Dasara is Nadahabba (state festival) of the state of Karnataka .This year Yuva Dasara will be back to woo the youth and the new generation.
- The Gajapayana , traditional march of the elephants from the jungle camps to the city signaling the countdown for the festival is an attraction of the event.

JUANG CHILDREN DEATHS

- Juang are a tribal (Adivasi) group of people of the Munda ethnic group found mainly in the Gonsaika hill range of Keonjhar district of Odisha, India.
- The Juang language belongs to the Munda family of the Austroasiatic languages.
- The Tribe has been identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
- Nineteen Juang tribal children have died in the last three months due to acute malnutrition-related diseases in inaccessible hamlets atop the Nagada hills, in Odisha's Jajpur district.

CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

- Madras High Court has disposed of a batch of public interest litigation petitions which challenged the classical language status accorded to Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam and Odia'
- The court has made it clear that only experts can verify whether the languages satisfy the norms set for according the classical status.
- Languages so far declared to be Classical are Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Odia.

- In 2004, the Government of India declared that languages that met certain requirements could be accorded the status of a "Classical Language in India Which include:
✓ High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500–2000 years.
✓ A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
✓ The literary tradition should be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
✓ The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

eNivaran scheme

- The Union Government initiated a step to launch "e-Nivaran"Scheme to deal with Tax related issues of the public and to respond to them timely on trial mode.
- Officials of the Central Board of Direct Taxes and the Central board of Indirect Taxes have created a website to examine tax reforms.

Vidyut Pravah & Urja Mobile App

- URJA- Urban Jyoti Abhiyaan Mobile app intends to enhance consumer connect with the Urban Power Distribution sector by providing information of IT aided towns.
- Vidyut Pravah App which will allow common people to demand 24X7 power and will take transparency that makes state governments more accountable.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan or Yojana

- Under the scheme the pregnant ladies will be given free health check-up and required treatment for free on 9th of every month and will be available across all government hospitals.
- The scheme is applicable only to the women in their pregnancy period of 3 to 6 months. The doctors will use different colors of stickers on the health cards of the pregnant women (red-risk prone and green risk free).
- All kinds of medical checkups several tests including blood pressure, sugar level, weight, hemoglobin test, blood test and screening will be completely free.

National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) for promoting industrial training

- The scheme with a total outlay of 10,000 crore Rupees has a target to train 50 lakh apprentices by the year 2019-20.
- The scheme will be implemented by the Director General of Training (DGT) under Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- Under the scheme, the government will incentivize employers to engage apprentices. 25% of the total stipend payable to an apprentice would be shared with employers directly by Government of India.
- The scheme also provides basic training, which is essential component of apprenticeship training. 50% of the total expenditure incurred on providing basic training will be provided by the union government.

Vidyalakshmi Scheme – Interest Free Loan Scheme for IIT Students

- Ministry of HRD has decided to launch a new scheme named as Vidyalakshmi to assist IIT students in getting loans to pay the fee.
- Under the Vidyalakshmi scheme, the Ministry will help students in getting interest free loans from the banks to pay their fee.
- The recent fee hike for IIT has proved to be difficult for the students in paying the fee. only the candidates whose family income is less than Rs. 9 Lakh per annum will be eligible for getting loans

Swayam Prabha – 32 DTH Channels for Live Telecast of Lectures

- The scheme will allow students from across the country to access classroom lectures on their TV sets. The lectures from different institutions on different subjects will be provided on 32 channels.
- Every day, there will be new content of at least four hours that would be repeated six times a day, allowing students to choose the time of their convenience.
- Under the Ministry of HRD, the scheme will have subject experts. The subject experts appointed by the government will be paid on an hourly basis to produce the good quality content.
- The interactive study content including pictures, videos and diagrams will be delivered by the subject experts appointed by the ministry. students can call on toll free helpline number to cleartheirdoubts.

Right to Light scheme

- Under this scheme the school goer students will get solar powered lamps for their study purpose in the evening or night.
- The program was recently launched inUP post its success in Assam,Bihar,Jharkhand,Odisha.
- In this program central government and state government have decided to distribute 1 crore lamps to students.
- The scheme is a brainchild of IIT Bombay .

Pradhan Mantri Gram Parivahan Yojana

- Under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Parivahan Yojana (PMGPY), the central government will provide commercial PV's to defence personnel and women self-help groups.
- The scheme will supplement the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana which was launched to improve road conditions in the villages.
- The government is considering to provide 10-12 seater passenger vehicles at subsidised rates to retired defence personnel and women self-help groups for running on these roads.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) with an outlay of Rs.12000 crore is the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- Objective : to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry-relevant skill training. Individuals with prior learning experience or skills will also be assessed and certified under Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).
- The target for skilling under the scheme will be associated with Government's flagship programmes such as Make in India, Digital India, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and National Solar Mission.
- The skill training will involve soft skills, good work ethics, personal grooming, behavioural change for cleanliness etc. will be undertaken on the basis of demand assessed on the basis of skill gap studies conducted by the NSDC for the period 2013-17.

Smart Ganga City programme

- The focus of the completely Centrally-sponsored programme, which will be extended to other cities, would be to build and upgrade sewage treatment infrastructure and improve drainage networks.

- National Mission for Clean Ganga has chosen Ten cities in the first phase of the project are :Rishikesh Haridwar Mathura, Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi , Allahabad, Patna ,Sahibganj and Barrackpore .
- The work would be done based on hybrid annuity model in which first 40 per cent of the project cost will be paid by the government annually over a fixed period to the developer while the remaining 60 per cent will be disbursed on the basis of the quality of the asset created.
- The government is trying to entrench a mechanism as per which treated water will be used by Industries.

Swachh Survekshan 2017
- Second survey after the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission was launched recently to assess and rank 500 cities and towns on the basis of the level of sanitation and municipal bodies efforts for the same.
- The aim: to capture progress towards Open Defecation Free status .Rankings will be based on reports of Urban Local bodies for construction of toilets,feedback from citizens, population of cities covered, etc
- The survey is conducted by the Quality Council of India and has increased its ambit from 73 to 500 cities with incentives for various players involved by rewarding the cities performing better, rewarding workers at the grass root level.
- A web portal Swachhta App and Swachhta Helpline 1969 were also launched to associate more citizens in urban areas with Swachh Bharat Mission. Mysuru is presently ranked no 1.

Mission Bhagiratha-The Water Grid System
- Mission Bhagiratha is an initiative of the state government of Telangana to provide safe drinking water to everyone through dedicated water pipeline in the state.
- The objective of Mission Bhagiratha is to provide 100 liters of clean drinking water per person in rural households and 150 liters per person in urban households.
- The state-level grid will comprise of a total of 26 internal grids. The main trunk pipelines of this project would run about 5000 km, and the secondary pipelines running a length of about 50000 km would be used to fill service tanks in habitations.
- From here the village-level pipeline network of about 75,000 km would be used to provide clean drinking water to households. The project will draw water from the two main rivers flowing through the state, Krishna and Godavari.

Miscellaneous

1- Hollywood actress Anne Hathaway appointed as UN Women Goodwill Ambassador

- Anne Hathaway is appointed by the United Nations as a global goodwill ambassador to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women.
- The UN Women also known as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women a nodal UN agency for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. It became operational in January 2011.

2- International Tennis Federation (ITF) bans Maria Sharapova for two years
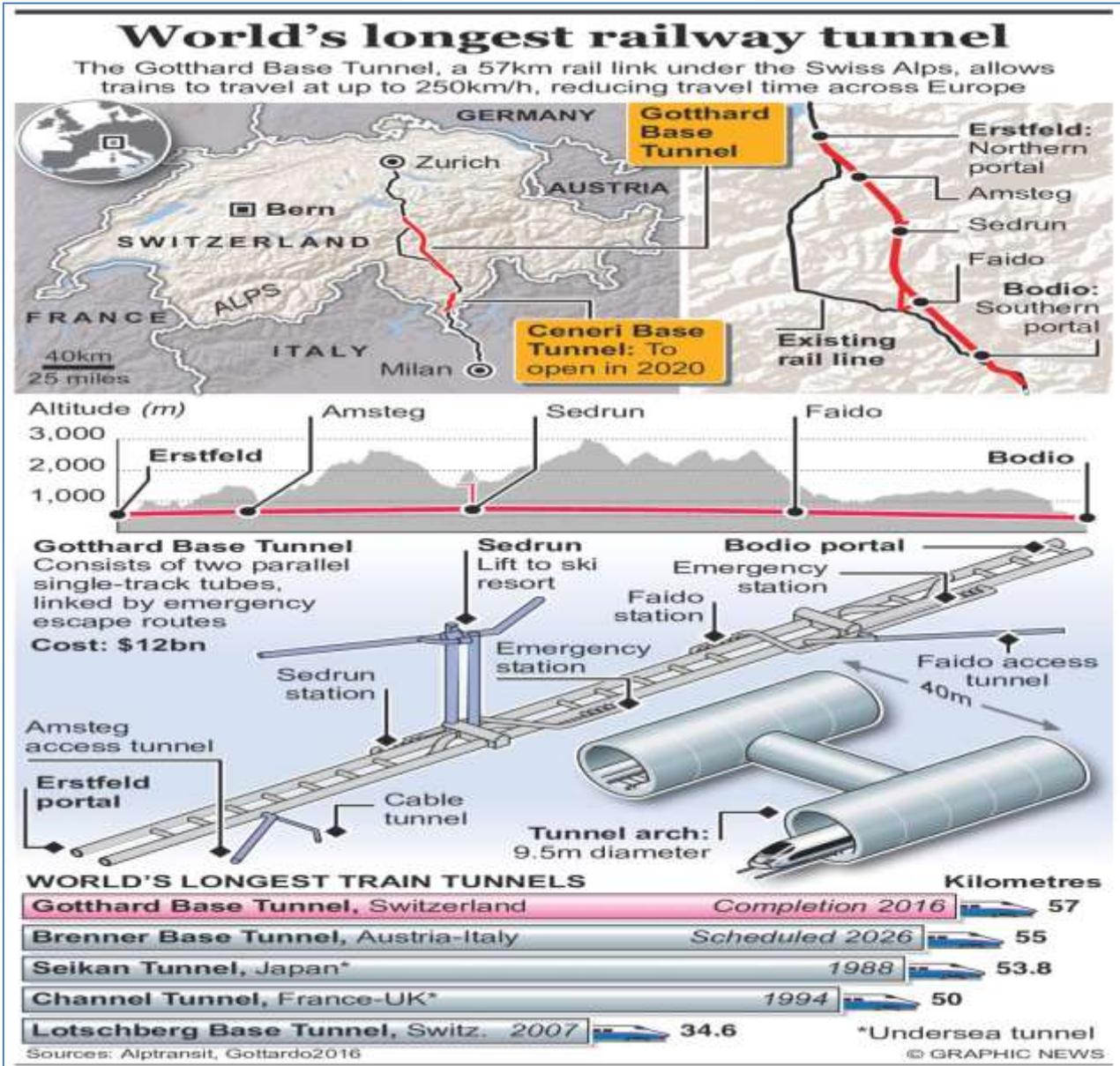
- Maria Sharapova has been handed a two-year ban from tennis after she tested positive for meldonium at the Australian Open in January.
- About Meldonium - It is a medical drug also known as Mildronate given to patients suffering from heart and circulatory conditions for enhancing their physical capacity and mental function. Its use mainly leads to production more red blood cells (RBCs) in the body in order to increase oxygen supply to muscles for enhancing endurance.

3- Thailand first Asian country to eliminate MOTHER-TO-CHILD HIV Transmission

- Thailand has become the first Asian country to eliminate mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.
- Elimination of transmission is defined as a reduction of transmission to such a low level that it no longer constitutes a public health problem.
- In 2015, Cuba was the world's first country to receive WHO validation for eliminating mother-to-child transmission of HIV.
- Thailand had launched a programme that year to provide antiretroviral (ARV) treatment and counselling for pregnant women with HIV.

4- World's longest rail tunnel to open in Switzerland under Alps

- The world's longest and deepest rail tunnel Gotthard base tunnel has officially opened in Switzerland, after almost two decades of construction work.
- The trailblazing rail passage under the Swiss Alps aiming to ease transit through the heart of Europe.
- The twin-bore Gotthard Base Tunnel is the first flat low-level route through the Alps Mountain and is situated 2.3 km deep under the Alps and 57 kms in length.

World's longest railway tunnel

The Gotthard Base Tunnel, a 57km rail link under the Swiss Alps, allows trains to travel at up to 250km/h, reducing travel time across Europe

WORLD'S LONGEST TRAIN TUNNELS

			Kilometres
Gotthard Base Tunnel, Switzerland	Completion 2016		57
Brenner Base Tunnel, Austria-Italy	Scheduled 2026		55
Seikan Tunnel, Japan*	1988		53.8
Channel Tunnel, France-UK*	1994		50
Lotschberg Base Tunnel, Switz.	2007		34.6

*Undersea tunnel

Sources: Alptransit, Gottardo2016   © GRAPHIC NEWS

5- WHO declares Brazil measles free

- WHO has declared Brazil free of measles after no case of the disease was registered in the last year.
- Measles, or Rubeola, is a viral infection (measles virus, single stranded RNA virus) of the respiratory system. Measles is a very contagious disease that can spread through contact with infected mucus and saliva.
- It can be spread rapidly through the air due to sneezing or a cough, and the first symptoms appear after 10 days with red spots on the skin.

6- International Yoga Day 2016

- Every year 21 June is being observed as International Day of Yoga across the globe to spread awareness about practicing yoga.

- An international day for yoga was declared by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on December 11, 2014.
- 2016 Theme: "Connect the Youth"
- Maharishi Patanjali is the 'father of Yoga' who compiled 195 Yoga Sutras that became the foundation of Yoga philosophy.
- The commentary on these sutras is called Bhasya.
- The core essence of Patanjali is the eightfold path of Yoga (Ashtanga Yoga) that focuses upon healthy living through Yoga.

7- Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety

- 2nd Global High Level Conference on Road Safety.
- At the close of the Conference, the 2200 delegates adopted the "Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety" through which they agreed ways to halve road traffic deaths by the end of this decade a key milestone within the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target.
- The Brasilia Declaration is a call to rethink transport policies in order to favour more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and using public transport.
- The Brasilia Declaration encourages WHO and partners to facilitate the development of targets to reduce road traffic crashes and fatalities, and support the definition and use of indicators linked to the SDG targets related to road safety.

8- Rio Olympics 2016 opens with a glittering ceremony in Rio De Janerio

- The 31st edition of Summer Olympic Games opened in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro.
- The theme of the 31st edition of Summer Olympic Games was "World peace and Environment".
- The 2016 Rio Olympics games are scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 5 to 21 August 2016. It is officially known as the Games of the XXXI Olympiad.
- It is for first time the summer Olympics will be held in South American Continent and Brazil is hosting it for the first time.

9- India's first Green Rail Corridor launched in Tamil Nadu

- The India's first Green Rail Corridor was inaugurated on the 114-km long Rameswaram-

> Bio-toilet
> Bio-digester technology treats human waste at the source. A collection of anaerobic bacteria that has been adapted to work at temperatures as low as -5°C and as high as 50°C act as inocula (seed material) to the bio-digesters and convert the organic human waste into water, methane, and carbon-dioxide. The anaerobic process inactivates the pathogens responsible for water-borne diseases and treats the fecal matter without the use of an external energy source.

   Manamadurai stretch in Tamil Nadu.
- The Green Rail Corridor ensures zero toilet discharge on rail tracks as part of its commitment to clean environment under the 'Swachh Rail-Swachh Bharat' initiative.
- Trains in the section have been equipped with bio-toilets to ensure zero discharge of human waste on the rail tracks.
- Under the bio-toilet concept of the DRDO, the bio-digester tank in every toilet is filled with inoculums containing four types of bacteria. The water trap system in the toilet prevents air from getting into the tank, the human waste is processed by anaerobic bacteria in seven chambers in the tank and the methane gas is allowed to escape into the air.

10- MOU in the field of production and marketing of Pigeon peas/ Tur Dal

- The Cabinet has approved a long-term contract for import of pulses(Pigeon pea) from Mozambique.
- The memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed with Mozambique provides for import of pulses either through private channels or government-to-government sales through State agencies nominated by the two countries, an official release said.
- India buys tur and green gram from Myanmar and Mozambique, chickpea from Australia and Russia, and yellow peas and lentils from Canada.

11- AR Rahman conferred with Japan's Fukuoka prize 2016

- Rahman has been conferred with the award for his outstanding contribution towards creating, preserving and showcasing South Asian traditional fusion music.
- The Fukuoka Prize is an award established by the city of Fukuoka and the Yokatopia Foundation to honor the outstanding work of individuals or organizations in preserving or creating Asian culture. There are three prize categories: Grand Prize, Academic Prize, and Arts and Culture Prize.
- Last year, noted Indian Historian Ramchandra Guha was conferred with Fukuoka Prize in academic category.

12-Margaret Atwood wins 2016 Pen Pinter Prize

- Margaret Atwood is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, and well known environmental activist is praised by judges for championing environmental and human rights cause.
- The prize was established in 2009 in memory of playwright and Nobel Laureate Harold Pinter, who had died the previous year.

13-South African writer Lidudumalingani wins 2016 Caine Prize

- The South African writer and filmmaker, Lidudumalingani, has won the prestigious Caine Prize for his short story, Memories We Lost.
- Africa's leading literary award.

14-Padma Sachdev awarded 2015 Saraswati Samman

- Eminent author Padma Sachdev was awarded the prestigious Saraswati Samman for the year 2015 for her autobiography 'Chitt-Chete' written in Dogri language.
- Saraswati Samman: the award was instituted in 1991 by the K. K. Birla Foundation.The award is given every year for an outstanding literary work written by an Indian citizen in any of the 22 Indian languages listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India, published during the last 10 years.

15- 51st Jnanpith Award conferred on Gujarati writer Dr. Raghuveer Chaudhari

- He was awarded with the India's highest literary honour for the year 2015.
- A scholar and a Gandhian in spirit and behaviour, authored more than 80 books and some of his notable novels include Amrita, Venu Vatsala, Uparvas, Purvarang and Laagni Samjyaa Vinaa Chuuta Padvan. He has received numerous accolades including Sahitya Acadmi Award for his novel Trilogy Uparvaas in 1977.
- Mr. Chaudhary is the fourth Gujarati litterateur to bag this prestigious award after Uma Shankar Joshi (1967), Pannalal Patel (1985) and Rajendra Shah (2001).

- Janpith was instituted in 1961 and is presented annually by Bharatiya Jnanpith trust founded by the Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain family that owns the Times of India newspaper group.

16-Bezwada Wilson, TM Krishna two Indians win Ramon Magsaysay Award 2016

- Human right activist Bezwada Wilson has been lauded for his efforts towards "asserting the inalienable right to a life human dignity."
- South Indian classical musician T M Krishnan has been awarded for "ensuring social inclusiveness in culture."
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award is an annual award, named after former Philippine President Ramon Magsaysay, to honour "greatness of spirit in selfless service to the peoples of Asia
- the four other awardees for 2016 are Conchita Carpio-Morales from the Philippines, Indonesian Dompet Dhuafa, Vientiane Rescue from Laos and the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers.

17-Mission Bhagiratha in Telangana

- Vision: To ensure safe and sustainable PIPED drinking water supply from surface water sources available in Krishna & Godavari.
- The aim of Telangana Water Grid is to provide 100 liters of clean drinking water per person in rural households and 150 liters per person in urban households. This project aims to provide water to about 25000 rural habitations and 67 urban habitations. Inspiration on Water Grid Project: drew from the success of another project ,The Siddipet Drinking Water Project.
- PM Narendra Modi to launch the first phase of Mission Bhagiratha on Aug 7th, 2016 at Komatibanda Village, Gajwel in Medak District of Telangana.

18-Internet Sathi' in West Bengal to empower rural women

- The Indian unit of search giant Google Inc and Tata Trusts launched 'Internet Saathi' program in West Bengal. The initiative will roll out from West Bengal's Purulia district and will focus on training women and larger communities in the state to learn and explore various uses and benefits of the Internet.
- This program has trained and benefitted over 2 lakh women across villages in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- The `Internet Saathi' initiative is part of Google's `Helping Women Get Online' campaign, which is designed to create awareness about the benefits of Internet among women in rural India.
- Tata Trusts will play a crucial role of training women master trainers identified from Self Help Groups and Women's federations. These master trainers are called "saathis" who then train more women in their own and neighbouring villages.
- Google will provide the mobile and tablet devices, the training material and also trains the master trainers. To drive broader access and continuity in usage after the training, Internet-enabled devices like tablets and smartphones are also made available within the school premises, community centres, self-help group meeting places, agriculture centres, PHCs, etc. for optimum exposure and learning amongst the community.

19-DISHA for timely implementation of Central Schemes

- Union government formed a District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee (DDCMC) in place of the District Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (DVMC) for effective implementation and development of Central government schemes to be named "Disha," whether it is for infrastructure development or Social and human resource development.

- The main purpose of this committee is to coordinate with Central and State and local Panchayat Governments, for successful and timely implementation of the schemes. Efforts will be made to ensure the participation of people's representative at all levels.
- The meetings of the committee should be held once in every Quarter (Third Saturdays of April, July, October and February) and this has been made mandatory.
- The Chairperson of the committee will be the senior most Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha) elected from the district, nominated by the Ministry of Rural Development.
- The Member Secretary should ensure that meeting notice, agenda notes and proceedings of meetings are uploaded on the website of the Ministry of Rural Development and also the website of the State.

20-Natural Gas Discovery Has Been Made In the Indian Ocean

- A large natural gas discovery has been made in the Indian Ocean following a joint expedition by India and the U.S., opening up a new resource to meet energy needs.
- India's Oil Ministry and the US Geological Survey made the discovery of large, highly enriched accumulations of natural gas hydrate — an icy form of the fuel — in the Bay of Bengal. Example:KG Basin in the Bay of Bengal.
- Natural gas hydrates are a naturally occurring, ice-like combination of natural gas and water found in oceans and Polar Regions. They are considered as vast resources of natural gas (methane) and are known to occur in marine sediments on continental shelf margins.
- Gas hydrate resources in India are estimated at 1,894 trillion cubic meters and these deposits occur in Western, Eastern and Andaman offshore areas.

21-Pattiseema Lift Irrigation Project

- Pattiseema lift irrigation project in Polavaram, Telangana aims to divert 80 tmcft of Godavari water to the Krishna delta.
- India's first river linking project from the ongoing Polavaram Multi-purpose Irrigation Project
- Water is pumped up to a nearby point and discharged into Polavaram Right Main Canal that flows under gravity to a tributary of River Krishna about 170 km. The project contains 24 pumps and 24 motors of 5,300 HP and 6,300 HP respectively with a combined capacity to discharge 8,500 cusecs of water.
- Polavarm project: It was declared as a national project under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 and was being funded by the Union Government. It is being built on Godavari   River.

22-Ministry Of Power Launches Surya Mitra Mobile App

- Ministery of Power, Coal and New & Renewable Energy launched "Surya Mitra" mobile App.
- Surya Mitra acts as a technical platform in the field of Renewable energy to serve customers at their doorsteps with quality installation, repair, and O&M services.
- The application looks to enhance the employment of trained youth in solar PV technology and also improve the businesses of solar entrepreneurs by improving quality of servicing and maintenance.
- Suryamitra Mobile App will come in handy with respect to O & M, Repair and maintenance of solar pumps. The GPS based mobile app is developed by National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) which is an autonomous institution of Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- Under NABARD scheme of off grid Solar PV system, few lakhs of off-grid systems have been installed and their systems require regular maintenance, which could be maintained by the

Suryamitras. MNRE has an ambitious target of installing 100,000 solar PV pumps in several states.

- MNRE set a target of 50,000 "Suryamitras" of skilled manpower in solar energy sector in next 3 years. As on date more than 3,200 Suryamitra are trained under the program.

23-Madhukar Gupta Committee: Recommendations on border protection

- The Madhukar Gupta Committee on border protection has submitted its report to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). The Committee was constituted to suggest recommendations for strengthening border protection and addressing the issue of gaps and vulnerability in border fencing along India-Pakistan Border.
- The committee has made a several recommendations regarding border protection on India-Pakistan border.
- The mandate of the committee was to study all types of gaps in fencing and all other vulnerabilities in the International Border and to suggest comprehensive approach to fix these gaps in fencing and other vulnerabilities on interim and permanent basis, use of technology and heightened vigil on riverine frontiers. It has expressed displeasure over not installing laser walls in many infiltration-prone areas due to treacherous and marshy terrain.

24-Andhra Pradesh becomes first state to launch DNA profiling of criminals

- As part of its proactive policing, the Andhra Pradesh government launched the DNA Index System for the first time in India. This system uses the latest DNA technology tool developed by IntegenX, Inc., USA known as RapidHIT DNA System.
- It allows generation of DNA profiles from live samples such as buccal swabs, blood stains, saliva etc., within less than two hours as the currently available technologies take at least two days or more.
- DNA profiling plays a crucial role not only in solving crimes but also has a potential to link a series of crimes by placing the suspects at the scene of crime and also helping to prove their innocence.
- DNA profiling (also called DNA fingerprinting, DNA testing, or DNA typing) is a forensic technique used to identify individuals by characteristics of their DNA. A DNA profile is a small set of DNA variations that is very likely to be different in all unrelated individuals, thereby being as unique to individuals as are fingerprints

25-India ranks 66th in 2016 Global Innovation Index

- India has ranked 66th in 9th edition of The Global Innovation Index 2016.
- The Global Innovation Index 2016 (GII) is co-published by France-based international business school INSEAD and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a specialised agency of the United Nations).
- The study ranked 142 economies across the world on their innovation capacity and efficiency.
- Among the middle income countries, India (25th) came second after China (17th) in innovation quality by overtaking Brazil (27th).

26-August 12: International Youth Day

- Observed by United Nations, since 1999.
- The theme of the 2016 International Youth Day is "The Road to 2030: Eradicating Poverty and Achieving Sustainable Consumption and Production".

- This year's Day is about achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It focuses on the leading role of young people in ensuring poverty eradication and achieving sustainable development through sustainable consumption and production.

27-UNESCO announces 9 new World Heritage Sites

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at the 40th session of The World Heritage Committee meeting in Istanbul, Turkey added nine new sites on its World Heritage List.

- Armenian city i.e. Old City Of Ani, near Turkey's now closed border with Armenia, once served as the capital of the Armenian kingdom in the 10th century. Mostly abandoned after a devastating earthquake in the 14th century, the ruins include a relatively well-preserved cathedral and hold major significance for Armenians.

- China's Zuojiang Huashan rock art cultural landscape: Dating back to the 5th century B.C., Zuojiang Huashon rock art cultural landscape straddles steep cliffs in southwest China and represent the only trace left of the Luoyue people.

- Iran's ancient aqueducts known as Qanat: Iran's Qanat system tapped into alluvial aquifer and transported water underground across vast valleys helping sustain agricultural life and settlements in arid areas.

- India's archaeological site of Nalanda Mahavihara: The Nalanda site comprises the archaeological remains of a monastic and scholastic institution dating from the 3rd century B.C. to the 13th century A.D.

- The medieval tombstones and graveyards, known as stecci, combine 30 sites in Bosnia, central and southern Croatia, western Montenegro and western Serbia. Carved from limestone, they feature decorative motives and inscriptions

- The Greek archaeological site of Philippi, founded in 356 B.C. by the Macedonian King Philip II, lies in the present-day region of eastern Macedonia and Thrace. It later became an important Christian site, following the visit of Apostle Paul, UNESCO said.

- The Antequera Dolmens site, in Andalusia, southern Spain, is comprised of three megalithic monuments as well as two natural mountainous formations.

- Micronesia's artificial islets of Nan Madol and simultaneously placed it on the List of World Heritage in Danger. Made of basalt and coral boulders, the 99 artificial islets of Nan Madol are home to ruins ranging from temple to tombs dating between A.D. 1200 and 1500.

- The natural sea caves —or Gorham's Cave Complex— in the British overseas territory of Gibraltar, also made the list, and provide evidence of Neanderthal occupation over a span of more than 125,000 years

28- Kabaddi World Cup, 2016 hosted by Gujarat

- The International Kabaddi Federation (IKF) announced that the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup will be hosted in Gujarat's leading city, Ahmedabad.
- Gujarat hosted the 12 Kabaddi teams from around the world including India, USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Iran, Poland, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Korea, Japan and Kenya.
- A special consideration of the IKF in inviting these countries is to make the Kabaddi World Cup representative of all the five geographies of the Olympic Games.
- The Kabaddi World Cup matches held in Ahmedabad's in state-of-the-art stadium, The Arena by TransStadia.
- Logo: Asiatic lion

- Finals: Men: India v/s Iran –winner: India

29-Rio Olympics 2016 held in Rio De Janerio, Brazil

- The 31st edition of Summer Olympic Games opened in the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro.
- The theme of the 31st edition of Summer Olympic Games was "World peace and Environment".
- The 2016 Rio Olympics games are scheduled to take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 5 to 21 August 2016. It is officially known as the Games of the XXXI Olympiad.
- It is for first time the summer Olympics will be held in South American Continent and Brazil is hosting it for the first time.

30- World No-Tobacco Day: 31 May

- WHO mark World No Tobacco Day (WNTD), highlighting the health and additional risks associated with tobacco use, and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption.
- The theme for World No Tobacco Day 2017 is "Tobacco – a threat to development."
- WHO is calling on countries to prioritize and accelerate tobacco control efforts as part of their responses to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is seen as one of the most effective means to help achieve SDG target 3.4 of a one-third reduction globally, by 2030, of premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular disease, cancers and chronic obstructed pulmonary disease.

31- RIMPAC 2016: World's largest international maritime exercise kicks off

- Theme: "Capable, Adaptive, Partners".
- RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific) 2016 began in Pacific Ocean at Hawaii, United States is world's largest international maritime exercise.
- In 2016, 26 navies from different countries participated. This year it is the 25th edition of biennial exercise in the series that began in 1971. 45 ships, 5 submarines, about 200 aircrafts and 25000 personnel are participating. Three new nations are participating for the first time. They are Denmark, Germany And Italy.
- India is being represented by Indian Naval Ship (INS) Satpura, an indigenously built guided missile stealth frigate.

32- India's first integrated Defence Communication Network launched

- The Defence Communication Network (DCN), a strategic, highly secure and scalable system, has a pan-India reach — from Ladakh to the North East to island territories.
- It will enable the army, air force, navy and the Special Forces Command to share situational awareness for faster decision-making process. It is first tri-service communication and IT network of the armed forces.
- While all the three forces have their own command, communication and intelligence networks, this is the first time when there will be a dedicated network for greater synergy.
- Built by HCL, DCN offers high quality voice, video and data services covering 111 entities spread across the country.
- It is capable of working on terrestrial as well as satellite mode of communication and has also been fixed onboard different military vehicles.

33- Medium range surface-to-air missile developed by India, Israel successfully test-fired

- India successfully test fired a new, long range surface-to-air missile jointly developed with Israel from a defence base off chandipur, Odisha coast.
- Apart from the missile, the system includes a Multi Functional Surveillance and Threat Alert Radar (MF STAR) for detection, tracking and guidance of the missile, providing the users the capability to neutralise any aerial threats.
- Indian Navy had also successfully test launched the long range surface to air missile (LR-SAM). The test was undertaken on the Western Seaboard by INS Kolkata.

34- Anti-submarine torpedo Varunastra inducted in Indian Navy

- Indigenously-built heavyweight anti-submarine torpedo Varunastra has been successfully inducted in the navy, making India one of the eight countries to have the capability to design and build such a system.
- Developed by Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL), a premier laboratory of DRDO.
- Varunastra, weighing around 1.25 tonnes that carries about 250 kg of explosives at a speed of around 40 nautical miles an hour. It has almost 95% indigenous content.
- Torpedo: It is a self-propelled weapon with an explosive warhead. It is launched above or below the water surface and propelled underwater towards a target. It is designed to detonate either on contact with its target or in proximity to it.

35- HAL unveils indigenous basic trainer aircraft HTT-40

- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) inaugurated indigenous Basic Trainer Aircraft (BTA) HTT-40 .
- The indigenous content on HTT-40 is close to 80 per cent. Almost 50 per cent of the components on HTT-40 are manufactured by private players of the Indian aerospace ecosystem.

36-India, Japan and US navies kick off 2016 Malabar Exercise near South China Sea

- India, Japan and United States (US) navies have kicked off 2016 MALABAR trilateral naval Exercise near South China Sea.
- It includes harbour phase exercises at Sasebo, Japan and the sea phase exercises in the Pacific Ocean.
- Aim of exercise: Increase interoperability amongst the three navies and develop common understanding of procedures for Maritime Security Operations.

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