

CURRENT AFFAIRS



DECEMBER 2015

tutorialspoint

SIMPLY EASY LEARNING

www.tutorialspoint.com



<https://www.facebook.com/tutorialspointindia>



<https://twitter.com/tutorialspoint>

Current Affairs December 2015

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and big collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **December 2015**. This guide helps you in preparation for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but you are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in precise and interesting way.

Copyright and Disclaimer

© Copyright 2016 by Tutorials Point (I) Pvt. Ltd.

All the content and graphics published in this e-book are the property of Tutorials Point (I) Pvt. Ltd. The user of this e-book is prohibited to reuse, retain, copy, distribute or republish any contents or a part of contents of this e-book in any manner without written consent of the publisher.

We strive to update the contents of our website and tutorials as timely and as precisely as possible, however, the contents may contain inaccuracies or errors. Tutorials Point (I) Pvt. Ltd. provides no guarantee regarding the accuracy, timeliness or completeness of our website or its contents including this tutorial. If you discover any errors on our website or in this tutorial, please notify us at contact@tutorialspoint.com

Table of Contents

Current Affairs December 2015	i
Audience	i
Copyright and Disclaimer	i
Table of Contents	ii
1. APPOINTMENTS	1
2. AWARDS.....	8
3. DEATHS	22
4. ECONOMIC.....	27
5. ENVIRONMENT.....	37
6. BANKING	43
7. IMPORTANT DAYS	45
8. INTERNATIONAL.....	47
9. MISCELLANEOUS	59
10. NATIONAL	63
11. NEW BOOKS	80
12. PERSONS IN NEWS	81
13. PLACES IN NEWS	83
14. REGIONAL.....	84
15. REPORTS.....	88

16. RESIGNATIONS	92
17. SPORTS.....	93
18. TECHNOLOGY.....	106
19. VARIOUS COMMITTEES	111

1. APPOINTMENTS

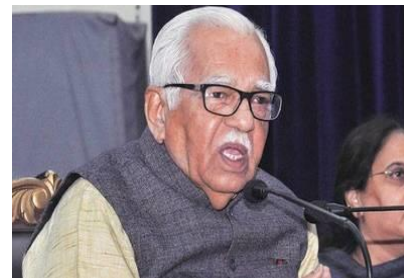
News 1 - Justice Reva Khetrpal took oath as Delhi's Lokayukta.

Former Delhi High Court Judge Reva Khetrpal on 17 December 2015 took oath as Delhi's new Lokayukta. She will succeed Justice Manmohan Sarin. She has given judgments in a few high-profile cases like the December 16 gang rape case. Where she upheld the death penalty of the convicts. She was also an additional judge in the Delhi High Court from February 28, 2006 to September 22, 2014.



News 2 - Justice Virendra Singh appointed as UP Lokayukta.

The Supreme Court by Using its extraordinary powers granted under Article 142 of the Indian Constitution has appointed Justice Virendra Singh as Uttar Pradesh Lokayukta. He belongs to the Yadav Community, and has served as a Judge in Allahabad High Court from 2009 to 2011.



News 3 - Arun Kumar Jain appointed the Chairman for Central Board of Direct Taxes.

Senior revenue service officer Arun Kumar Jain on 15 December 2015 was appointed as the Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Jain will have a short tenure of two months, till January 2016. The Central Board of Direct Taxes is a statutory authority functioning under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963.

The officials of the Board in their ex-officio capacity also function as a Division of the Ministry dealing with matters relating to levy and collection of direct taxes.



News 4 - Mumbai Police Commissioner Ahmad Javed appointed as Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on 11 December 2015 appointed Mumbai Police Commissioner Ahmad Javed as the Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. He will succeed Hamid Ali Rao. He is the fourth IPS officer appointed as India's envoy to Saudi Arabia.



News 5 - Radha Krishna Mathur appointed as Chief Information Commissioner of India.

Former Defense Secretary Radha Krishna Mathur was on 18 December 2015 appointed as Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) of India. He succeeded Vijai Sharma.

With this, Mathur became the eight CIC of India. His tenure will be for three years, till he attains the age of 65.



News 6 - Jeff Williams appointed as Chief Operating Officer of Apple Inc.

Jeff Williams was on 18 December 2015 appointed as the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Apple Inc. This post had been lying vacant since Tim Cook's ascension to the position of Chief Executive Officer of Apple Inc in 2011.

Williams has been working with Apple Inc for about 17 years now. Before joining Apple, Williams had worked at IBM for three years in engineering and operations roles.



News 7 - Justice Tirath Singh Thakur sworn in as 43rd Chief Justice of India.

Justice Tirath Singh (TS) Thakur was on 3 December 2015 sworn in as 43rd Chief Justice of India (CJI) by President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. Justice Tirath Singh (TS) Thakur succeeded incumbent Justice H L Dattu.



News 8 - Vijay Kumar Choudhary elected as Bihar Assembly Speaker.

Senior Janata Dal (United) leader Vijay Kumar Chaudhary on 2 December 2015 was unanimously elected as the new Speaker of the Bihar Legislative Assembly. Chaudhary was elected to the post after consensus was generated on his name among all political parties of the state, including the opposition.



News 9 - Kaher Kazem appointed General Motors India Head.

General Motors has appointed Kaher Kazem as President and Managing Director of its India operations, effective January 1, 2016. Kaher Kazem, who is currently chief operating officer (COO) of General Motors India, will be replacing Arvind Saxena. He was appointed as Vice President of Manufacturing and Quality for GM Thailand in 2009.



News 10 - Gautam H Bambawale appointed as India's High Commissioner to Pakistan.

Gautam H Bambawale was on 23 December 2015 appointed as the High Commissioner of India to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He is presently serving as the Indian ambassador to Bhutan. Bambawale will succeed TCA Raghavan, who will retire at the end of December 2015. Bambawale is an IFS officer of the 1984 batch.



News 11 - Pawan Kumar Agarwal appointed as CEO of FSSAI.

Senior IAS officer Pawan Kumar Agarwal was on 22 December 2015 appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of food regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI). He succeeded Yudhvir Singh Malik.

Prior to Pawan Kumar Agarwal's appointment, FSSAI Chairman Ashish Bahuguna was holding the additional charge as FSSAI CEO. Pawan Kumar

Agarwal is a 1985 batch IAS officer of West Bengal cadre. He is presently serving as the Joint Secretary in Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.



News 12 - Jet Airways appointed Amit Agarwal as Chief Financial Officer.

Jet Airways on 22 December 2015 appointed Amit Agarwal as its Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Prior to joining Jet Airways, he worked as the CFO of Suzlon Energy, where he used to manage the finances and drive its turnaround initiatives. Before Suzlon, he had held leadership roles at Arcelor Mittal - Europe and Essar Steel.



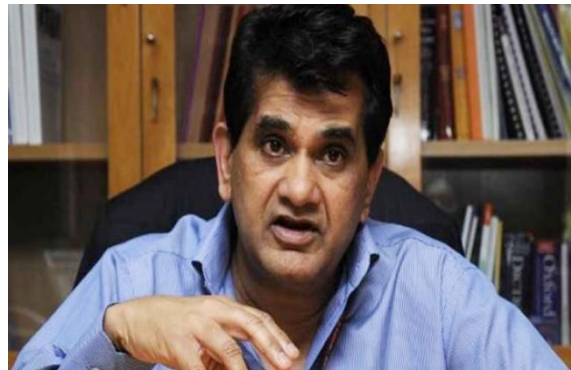
News 13 - Karan Adani new CEO of APSEZ.

Karan Adani, son of Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, has been appointed as the CEO of Adani Ports and SEZ (APSEZ) with effect from January 1, 2016. He will take over the top job from the outgoing CEO Sudipta Bhattacharya.



News 14 - Amitabh Kant gets additional charge of CEO of NITI Aayog.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on 28 December 2015 appointed Amitabh Kant as the Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog, effective 31 December 2015. Kant will replace the incumbent NITI Aayog CEO Sindhushree Khullar.



News 15 - Jetha Bharwad elected as the first Vice-Chairman of Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation.

Jetha Bharwad, Senior BJP MLA, was on 29 December 2015 unanimously elected as the first Vice-Chairman of Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) that sells its dairy products under brand name, Amul. He was the Chairman of Panchmahal Diary before this.



News 16 - Giorgi Kvirikashvili elected as Prime Minister of Georgia.

Giorgi Kvirikashvili was on 29 December 2015 elected as the Prime Minister of Georgia. He will succeed Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili, who resigned from the post on 23 December 2015. His appointment will now be ratified by the Georgia's President Giorgi Margvelashvili.



News 17 - Dr. Gyanendra D Bandgaiyan appointed DG of National Centre for Good Governance.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) on 30 December 2015 approved the appointment of Dr Gyanendra D Bandgaiyan as the Director General of the National Centre for Good Governance. The 54-year-old Bandgaiyan is a former IAS officer of the Union Territories cadre. He hails from Madhya Pradesh.

News 18 - Udai Kumar to take over as MD & CEO of Metropolitan SE.

The Metropolitan Stock Exchange (formerly MCX Stock Exchange) is set to appoint its interim Managing Director and CEO Udai Kumar as MD & CEO. The equities and commodities market regulator SEBI is expected to clear the appointment soon.



News 19 - ABB India appoints Sanjeev Sharma as MD.

ABB India Ltd. has appointed Sanjeev Sharma as ABB's Low Voltage Systems Managing Director with effect from January 1, 2016. Sanjeev Sharma will replace Bazmi Husain, who had been leading ABB India since 2011. Husain has been made the CTO Officer for the ABB Group.



News 20 - Mauricio Macri Blanco sworn in as new President of Argentina.

Mauricio Macri Blanco was on 10 December 2015 sworn in as the President of Argentina. He succeeded Cristina Elisabet Fernandez de Kirchner, who was in the office for two terms, 2007 and 2015.

Mauricio Macri is the leader of the centre-right Cambiemos (Let's Change) coalition. He secured 51.5 percent of votes in the elections held in November 2015.



2. AWARDS

News 1 - Husband-Wife duo Claude and Norma Alvares awarded with 2015 Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award.

The husband-wife duo of Claude and Norma Alvares on 18 December 2015 were honored with the 2015 Lifetime Service Award by Sanctuary Asia magazine.

On the other hand, Ashok Kumar, one of the pioneers of the fightback against wildlife crimes in India and Chairman Emeritus of the Wildlife Trust of India, was named the Sanctuary Legend.



The Wildlife Service Awards went to five personalities:

- Varad Giri, a scientist with the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bengaluru for his contribution to understand and classify little known species, including discovering new species of snakes, geckos, frogs and cecilians.
- Nandini Velho, organiser of the first Arunachal Pradesh Bird Festival.
- Param Jit Singh, a trained geologist and forest officer from Uttarakhand.
- Yash Veer Bhatnagar, director of the Snow Leopard Trust's India Program. He also conducted one of the first long-term studies on the Asiatic Ibex and organised a path-breaking scientific exploration of Ladakh.
- The Gir Lion Protection Team.



Varad Giri



Nandini Velho



Bhatnagar

News 2 - CII Industrial Innovation Awards 2015 conferred upon 35 companies.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 15 December 2015 conferred Industrial Innovation Awards 2015 upon 35 companies (10 start-ups and 25 other big and small companies). Delhi-based start-up Right Track Admizzionz Campuz won the top award in the start-up category, while the pharma major Zydus Cadila was adjudged the Most Innovative Company of the Year.

Special Category Awards:

Award	Winner
Start-up in Manufacturing	Ananya Seeds Pvt.Ltd.
Start-up in Service	Right Track Admizzionz Campuz Pvt.Ltd.
Manufacturing Sector in Large Enterprises	Zydus Cadila
Manufacturing Sector in Large Enterprises	Uflex Ltd.
Manufacturing Sector in Micro & Small Enterprises	CoreEL Technologies Pvt.Ltd.
Service Sector Large Enterprises	Robert Bosch Engineering & Business Solutions Pvt.Ltd.

News 3 - Sahitya Akademi awards announced for the year 2015.

Sahitya Akademi on 17 December 2015 announced the Sahitya Akademi Awards for the year 2015 in 23 languages. Poetry and short story writers dominated the awards. Sahitya Akademi Award was established in 1954.



Poets selected for the award are:

- Brajendra Kumar Brahma for Baidi Dengkhw Baidi Gab in Bodo.
- Dhian Singh for Parchhamen Di Lo in Dogri.
- Ramdarash Mishra for Aag Ki Hansi in Hindi.
- KV Tirumalesh for Akshaya Kavya in Kannada.
- Kshetri Ranjen for Ahingna Yekshilliba Mang in Manipuri.
- Ram Shankar Awasthi for Vanadevi (an epic) in Sanskrit.



Brajendra Kumar

KV Tirumalesh

Ramdarash Mishra

Authors of Short Stories selected for the award are:

- Kula Saikia for Akashar Chhabi Aru Anyanya Galpa in Assamese.
- Man Mohan Jha for Khissa in Maithili.
- Gupta Pradhan for Samayaka Prativimbaharu in Nepali.
- Bibhuti Pattanaik for Mahishasurara Muhan in Odia.
- Maya Rahi for Mahengi Murk in Sindhi.
- Volga for Vimuktha in Telugu.



Kula Saikia

Bibhuti Pattanaik

Volga

Novelists selected for award are:

- Cyrus Mistry for Chronicle of a Corpse Bearer in English.
- KR Meera for Aarachar in Malayalam.
- Jaswinder Singh for Maat Lok in Punjabi.
- Madhu Acharya 'Ashawadi' for Gawaad in Rajasthani.



Cyrus Mistry



KR Meera



Jaswinder Singh

Essayists selected for the award are:

- Rasik Shah for Antey Aarambh (Part I&II) in Gujarati.
- A Madhavan for Iiakkiya Suvadugal in Tamil.

Play Writers selected for the award are:

- Uday Bhembre for Karna Parva in Konkani.
- Rabilal Tudu for Parsi Khatir in Santhali.

Authors of Books on Criticism selected for the award are:

- Bashir Bhadarwahi for Jamis Ta Kasheeri Manz Kashir Natia Adabuk Tawareekh in Kashmiri.
- Shamim Tariq for Tasawwuf Aur Bhakti Tanqeedi Aur Taqabuli Mutalea in Urdu.



Bashir Bhadarwahi



Shamim Tariq

Author selected for the award for a book on memoirs is:

- Arun Khopkar for Chalat Chitravyooh in Marathi.

News 4 - American University announces APJ Abdul Kalam Fellowship for Indian students.

The University of South Florida (USF) has announced a postgraduate fellowship in the name of former president, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam to support accomplished and talented Indian students looking to study abroad.

This fellowship is open to Indian students, who wish to pursue PhD in specified fields of science and engineering at USF. Fellowship holders will receive a tuition waiver amounting to \$84,500 in four years, plus a stipend of \$18,000 per year.



News 5 - President Pranab Mukherjee earns Garwood Award for Outstanding Global Leader in Open Innovation.

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee received Garwood Award for **Outstanding Global Leader in Open Innovation** from UC Berkeley-Haas School of Business today (December 17, 2015) at Rashtrapati Bhavan.



News 6 - Renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman won 2016 Genesis Prize.

Renowned Israeli-US violinist Itzhak Perlman on 14 December 2015 was announced as the 2016 Genesis Prize Laureate for his accomplishments as a musician, teacher and advocate for people with disabilities.

Perlman will receive the award on 23 June 2016 from Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a ceremony in Jerusalem.



About Genesis Prize:

- The Genesis Prize, also known as the **Jewish Nobel**, was founded in 2012 as a 1 million US dollar award.
- It is given annually to an exceptional human being, who has attained outstanding excellence and international renown in his or her chosen field, is a role model in the community and who can inspire the next generation of Jews worldwide.

News 7 - West Bengal Government honored Bappi Lahiri and Kumar Sanu with Lifetime Achievement Awards.

The West Bengal Government on 14 December 2015 honored music composer Bappi Lahiri and singer Kumar Sanu with Lifetime Achievement Awards. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee handed over the awards at the inauguration of the annual **Bangla Sangeet Mela**.

Award	Winners
Sangeet Mahasamman	Shantanu Moitra
Bishesh Sangeet Samman	Dwijen Mukhyopadhyay, Ajoy Chakraborty, Sandhya Mukherjee
Special Sangeet Samman	Vocalists Nachiketa, Sriradha Bandyopadhyay, Dileep Kumar Bose, Fakir Alamgir

News 8 - Indian-origin writer J M Sali won 2015 South East Asian Write Award for Singapore.

Indian-origin Tamil writer Jamaludeen Mohamed Sali on 11 December 2015 was declared as the winner of the prestigious South East Asian Write Award for Singapore. Sali will receive the award for literary excellence on 14 December 2015 at a ceremony in Bangkok. His famous short stories and novels are Vellai Kodugal (White Lines) and Alaigal Pesuginrana (The Sound of the Waves). They are now studied by Tamil literature students in Singaporean and Indian universities.



News 9 - Apurvi Chandela, Chain Singh won Gold at 59th National Shooting Championship.

Rajasthan's Apurvi Chandela on 15 December 2015 won a Gold medal in the 10-metre Air Rifle event on the final day of the 59th National Shooting Championship in Delhi. Geetakshi claimed the Silver and Anjum won Bronze.

Army man Chain Singh won the Gold in the 50-metre Rifle 3 Positions event at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range. Gagan Narang and Swapnil Kusale won Silver and Bronze respectively.

Results of different events

Men : 50m rifle 3-position.	<p>Gold : Chain Singh 452.8 (1166)</p> <p>Silver : Gagan Narang 451.1 (1170)</p> <p>Bronze : Swapnil Kusale 441.7 (1166)</p>
Junior men : 25m sports pistol.	<p>Gold: Achal Pratap Singh Grewal 580</p> <p>Silver : Gurmeet Singh 571</p> <p>Bronze : Aadeithya Johal 568</p>
Women : 10m air rifle.	<p>Gold : Apurvi Chandela 207.8 (417.0)</p> <p>Silver : Geetakshi Dixit 206.8 (414.4)</p> <p>Bronze : Anjum Moudgil 185.7 (415.6)</p>
Juniors	<p>Gold : Geetakshi Dixit 414.4</p> <p>Silver : Prachi Pramod Gadkari 413.8</p> <p>Bronze : Nupur Hagawane Patil 413.5</p>
Youth	<p>Gold : Nupur Hagawane Patil 413.5</p> <p>Silver : Ayushi Podder 410.4</p> <p>Bronze : Manini Kaushik 410.4</p>

News 10 - Delhi Development Authority awarded with E-India Award.

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) received the E-India Award for adopting technology to serve the public better and using resources efficiently through mobile applications. The award was received by VS Tomar, Director (Systems) DDA during the e-INDIA SUMMIT 2015 in Mumbai.



News 11 - Renowned Violinist L Subramaniam to be honoured with ITC Sangeet Samman.

Renowned violinist Lakshminarayana Subramaniam will be honoured with the Sangeet Samman at the ITC Sangeet Sammelan 2015. Subramaniam has been awarded with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Limca Book of Records in 2012. He also won the President's Award for Best Violinist, All India Radio in 1963. In 2001, the renowned violinist was honoured with the Padma Bhushan.



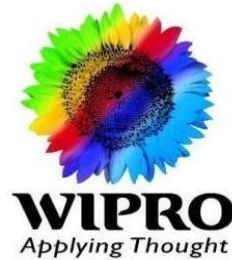
News 12 - Adidas India's Pulin Kumar won prestigious INBA Award.

Pulin Kumar, Group's Senior Legal and Compliance Director of Adidas India, on 26 November 2015 was conferred with the Indian National Bar Association's (INBA) General Counsel of the year 2015 - Retail Award in New Delhi.



News 13 - Wipro won 2015 Aegis Graham Bell Award for innovation in IoT.

Global software giant, Wipro on 11 December 2015 announced that it won the 2015 Aegis Graham Bell Award for developing a solution for the Internet of Things (IoT).



The Aegis School of Business established the Aegis Graham Bell Awards as a tribute to the father of the telephony, Sir Alexander Graham Bell. The award is intended to promote innovation, entrepreneurship in the field of Telecom, Internet, Media & Edutainment (TIME) and to provide recognition for outstanding contributions in this field in India.

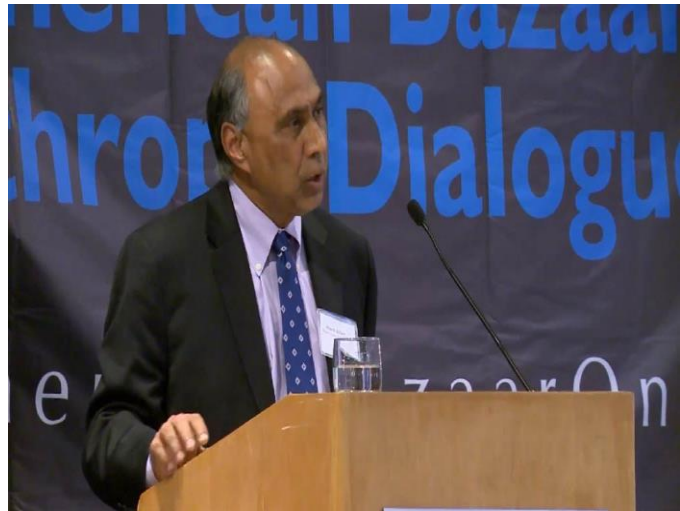
News 14 - Salman Rushdie honored with Mailer Prize for Lifetime Achievement.

India-born author Salman Rushdie on 10 December 2015 was awarded the prestigious **Mailer Prize for lifetime achievement**. American experimental performance artist Laurie Anderson presented the award to Rushdie at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York City.



News 15 - Indian-American entrepreneur Frank Islam to be conferred with Uttar Pradesh Ratna Award.

Frank Islam, an Indian-American entrepreneur and philanthropist, will be conferred with Uttar Pradesh Ratna Award on 4 January 2016 at the inaugural UP Pravasi Diwas in Agra. The UP Ratna Award is conferred to NRIs, who hail from the state. It is awarded to those individuals, who have made a significant contribution to the field of science, technology, culture, medicine, education, public service and commerce in foreign countries.



News 16 - Naseeruddin Shah honored with Lifetime Achievement Award at Dubai International Film Festival.

Veteran Indian actor, Naseerudin Shah on 9 December 2015 was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 12th edition of Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) in Dubai.

Besides, Egyptian actor **Ezzat Al Alayli**, award-winning French-Tunisian actor **Sami Bouajila** and French actress **Catherine Deneuve** were also honoured with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the festival.



News 17 - India's Kartik Sawhney and Neha Swain won 2016 Queen's Young Leaders Award.

Kartik Sawhney and Neha Swain, have won the 2016 Queen's Young Leaders award in the United Kingdom, which will be presented by the British monarch in Buckingham Palace in June 2016. Sawhney and Swain have won the prestigious award for their exceptional work in transforming the lives of others and making a lasting difference in their communities.



Neha Swain

Karthik Sawhney

News 18 - Hinduja Brothers received lifetime achievement award at Asian Business Leadership Forum 2015.

Hinduja Brothers on 29 November 2015 were honoured with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the annual Asian Business Leadership Forum (ABLF) Series in Dubai. It was awarded to Gopichand P Hinduja, Co-Chairman, Hinduja Group of Companies, The Hinduja Group, UK. The Asian Business Leadership Forum (ABLF) Series is Asia's most prestigious annual business leadership event series.



News 19 - Dr Abdul Kalam IGNITE award presented by President Pranab Mukherjee.

President Pranab Mukherjee presented Dr APJ Abdul Kalam IGNITE awards 2015 to a total of 40 school students. The awards were given away for 31 grass root innovations at the prestigious Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A).

Dr APJ Abdul Kalam IGNITE Award is a national competition of original technological ideas and innovations by children up to class 12 or those out of school up to the age of 17 years.



The competition is organized by National Innovation Foundation (NIF) in association with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Honey Bee Network, other State Educational Boards and other partners every year to promote creativity and originality among children. The awards of IGNITE competition are announced every year on 15 October, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam's birthday, which is celebrated as the Children's Creativity and Innovation Day by NIF.

News 20 - Tech Mahindra bags 'Forbes Top 100 Middle East - Global Meets Local 2015' Award.

Tech Mahindra has been awarded the prestigious 'Forbes Top 100 Middle East - Global Meets Local 2015' Award. This Award was presented at a special event hosted by Forbes Middle East in Dubai. Tech Mahindra is a specialist in Digital transformation, Consulting, and Business re-engineering solutions.



News 21 - Former Wicket Keeper Syed Kirmani nominated for 2015 Col. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award.

Former Indian Wicket-Keeper Syed Kirmani was on 24 December 2015 nominated for the 2015 Col. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award.

Kirmani represented India at the international level. His record includes 160 catches and 38 stumpings in tests and 27 catches and 9 stumpings in ODIs.



About Col. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award

- It was instituted by the BCCI in 1994 to celebrate the birth centenary of Col. Cottari Kanakaiya Nayudu, the country's first test captain.
- It honors individuals for their unparalleled contribution to Indian cricket, on and off the field.
- It comprises a trophy, citation and cheque for 25 lakhs rupees.
- The award in 2014 was received by Dilip Vengsarkar.

News 22 - Globe Soccer Awards 2015 conferred.

The Globe Soccer on 27 December 2015 presented the sixth edition of Globe Soccer Awards 2015 to the winners at a ceremony held in Dubai, UAE.

Winners of Globe Soccer Awards 2015

Award	Winner
-------	--------

Best Player of the Year	Lionel Messi
Best President of the Year	Josep Maria Bartomeu
Best Club of the Year	F.C. Barcelona

News 23 - CRI Pumps bags export quality excellence award.

Pump manufacturing major CRI Pumps has bagged 'Export Quality Excellence' award for the 11th time in a row. The Joint Managing Director of CRI Pumps, G Selvaraj, received the EEPC award from the Governor of Karnataka, Vajubhai Vala, at an award ceremony held in Bengaluru.



News 24 - Indian Oil Corp tops in 2015 Fortune 500 companies in India list.

State-run Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has emerged as the country's biggest company in terms of annual revenue as per an annual list of 2015 Fortune 500 companies in India. IOC topped the list for the sixth year consecutively with an annual revenue of Rs. 4,51,911 crores. IOC was followed by Mukesh Ambani-led private sector Reliance Industries at the second place with a revenue of Rs. 3,82,565 crores.



Here is the list of the top 10 companies –

- Indian Oil Corp (IOC)
- Reliance Industries
- Tata Motors
- State Bank of India (SBI)
- Bharat Petroleum (BPCL)

- Hindustan Petroleum
- Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)
- Tata Steel
- Hindalco Industries
- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

News 25 - Santa Claus sculpture created by Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik featured in Limca Book of Records.

Well-known sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik's Santa Claus sculpture on 29 December 2015 found a place in Limca Book of World Records after he created a 45 feet high sand Santa Claus at Puri beach on 24 December 2015, which was recognized as the **largest sand Santa Claus as of today** by the Limca Book of World Records.

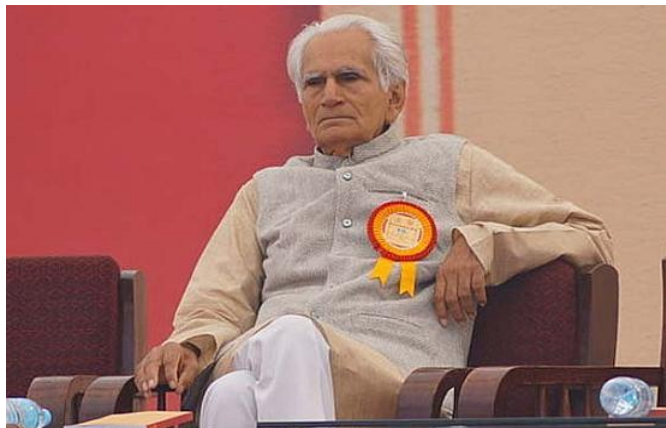


News 26 - Noted Gujarati writer Raghuvver Chaudhary selected for 51st Jnanpith award.

Eminent Gujarati littérateur, Raghuvver Chaudhary was on 29 December 2015 selected for the 51st Jnanpith award for his contribution to the Indian literature.

Chaudhary is the fourth Gujarati littérateur to bag this prestigious award after Uma Shankar Joshi (1967), Pannalal Patel (1985) and Rajendra Shah (2001).

The award includes a cash prize of 11 lakh rupees, a citation plaque and a bronze replica of Saraswati.



3. DEATHS

News 1 - Veteran Communist leader Noorul Huda passed away.

Noorul Huda, veteran leader of Communist Party of India (M) of Eastern India, passed away on 17 December 2015 following a cardiac arrest in Kolkata. He was 86. Huda is survived by his wife. He was a member of the Assam State Assembly from 1978 to 1983, and also a member of the CPI-M for three decades.



News 2 - British Novelist Peter Dickinson passed away.

British Novelist Peter Dickinson passed away on 16 December 2015 following a brief illness in Winchester, Hampshire. He was 88. He had the distinction of being the first author to receive the prestigious Carnegie medal twice. He wrote almost 60 books.



News 3 - Noted theatre artiste Chatla Sriramulu passed away.

Noted writer and theater artiste Chatla Sriramulu passed away on 18 December 2015 at Secunderabad, Telangana following a brief illness. He was 84. He acted in and directed more than 100 plays and wrote several books on a wide range of subjects. Sriramulu was a railway employee, who hailed from Vijayawada.



- He was awarded as the Best Actor twice by Andhra Nataka Kala Parishad and was also a recipient of the Union Government's Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1982.
- He was the first artiste from Andhra Pradesh to receive Emeritus Fellowship from the Human Resources Department of Union Government.
- He was awarded the certificate of Producer and Teacher by the British Drama League, London in 1970.

News 4 - Russian film-maker Eldar Ryazanov expired.

One of the most popular Russian film directors of the Soviet era, Eldar Ryazanov, expired following a prolonged illness. He was 88. In 1984, he received one of the top Soviet artistry title - People's Artist of the USSR and received the USSR State Prize in 1977.



News 5 - Sarangi Maestro Ustad Sabri Khan passes away.

Renowned sarangi player, Ustad Sabri Khan, died on 30 November 2015 in New Delhi due to breathing problems. He was 88. He was born on 21 May 1927 in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh. Khan belonged to the Sainia Gharana, which traces the tradition of its music back to Tansen.



News 6 - Industrialist MAM Ramaswamy is no more.

Industrialist, founder of Chettinad Group, former parliamentarian MAM Ramaswamy passed away on 2 December 2015 in Chennai due to prolonged illness. He was 84. He was a Member of the Parliament and controlled the 103-year-old Chettinad Group of Businesses.



News 7 - Famous German conductor Kurt Masur passed away.

Kurt Masur, widely regarded as one of the world's greatest conductors, passed away on 19 December 2015 in the United States. He died from complications of the Parkinson's Disease. He was 88.

Known as **one of the last old-style maestros**, Masur became principal conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) and held the position until 2007. In April 2002, he became music director of the Orchestre National de France (ONF) and served the post until 2008.



News 8 - Senior Telugu actor Chilukoti Kashi Viswanath passed away.

Senior Telugu actor and dialogue writer Chilukoti Kashi Viswanath passed away on 22 December 2015 following a massive cardiac stroke, while traveling in the Lokmanya Tilak Express from Hyderabad to Visakhapatnam. He was 69.

He started his career as a dialogue writer in 1980 with Ramayanamloo Pidakala Veta. Since then, he worked as a dialogue writer for over 70 films. He was awarded the Sahitya Academy award in 1980. He also got Nandi awards for his plays Kala Sagar, Manavatvaniki Maro Konam and Trend Marindi.



News 9 - Veteran actress Sadhana passes away in Mumbai.

Hindi film actress Sadhana, known for some of the memorable films, such as Love in Shimla, Parakh, Waqt, Woh Kaun Thi, Mera Saaya, Geeta Mera Naam among others, passed away in Mumbai at the age of 74. She was one of the leading actresses in the 1960s and early 1970s.



News 10 - Renowned science-fiction writer George Clayton Johnson passes away.

Popular science-fiction writer George Clayton Johnson, passed away on 25 December 2015 due to cancer in Los Angeles, California. He was 86. He is famous for his script for the first Star Trek episode, **The Man Trap** and The Twilight Zone.



News 11 - Oscar-winning cinematographer Haskell Wexler passed away.

Oscar-winning cinematographer Haskell Wexler passed away on 27 December 2015 in California, US. He was 93. He was one of America's most influential cinematographers. He won Oscar Awards for his films, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* (1966) and *Bound for Glory* (1976).



News 12 - Mangesh Keshav Padgaonkar, Marathi poet, passed away.

Marathi poet and Padma Bhushan recipient Mangesh Keshav Padgaonkar passed away on 30 December 2015 after a brief illness. He was 86. In 2008, Padgaonkar was awarded with the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan Award as well.



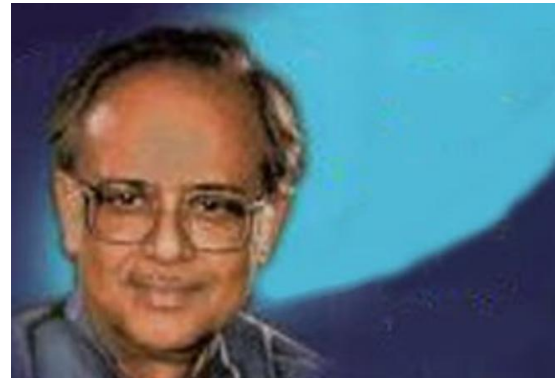
News 13 - Ian Fraser Lemmy Kilmister, founding member of metal band Motorhead, died.

Ian Fraser Lemmy Kilmister, founding member and singer in the British heavy metal band, Motorhead passed away on 28 December 2015 after battling cancer. He was 70. Rock Metal Band, Motorhead released 23 studio albums. They are famous for their 1980's single, Ace of Spades.



News 14 - Veteran singer Subir Sen passed away.

Veteran singer Subir Sen passed away on 29 December 2015 due to lung cancer in Kolkata. He was 81. He is also known for his work in the movie, Chhoti Bahen. Subir Sen sung many songs in Hindi and Bengali films. He had also sung duets with Asha Bhonsle and the legendary Lata Mangeshkar.



News 15 - Ex Chief of Indian Army General Om Prakash Malhotra passes away.

General Om Prakash Malhotra, former Punjab Governor and ex-Chief of Army, passed away at the age of 93. He was the 13th Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army from 1978 – 1981. For his outstanding services to the nation and the Indian Army, he was honored with Param Vishist Seva Medal in 1976.



4. ECONOMIC

News 1 - Federal Reserve of US increased the interest rate by 0.25% for the first time since 2006.

The Federal Reserve System on 16 December 2015 increased the interest rate by 0.25 percent. A decision in this regard was approved by the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System chaired by Janet L Yellen. With this, the interest rates in the US are now in the range of 0.25 – 0.50 percent. This is the first rate increase since 2006.

News 2 - NSE launches three new group indices.

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched three separate indices on three corporate houses of India viz. Tata, Aditya Birla and Mahindra Group. These indices are first of its kind and have been designed to reflect the performance of all the companies belonging to their respective business group.



1) Nifty Tata Group Index: It includes 25 companies across 12 sectors with a total market capitalization of 7.51 lakh crore rupees. It represents 7.83 per cent of the total market capitalization of companies listed on the NSE.

2) Nifty Aditya Birla Group Index: It consists of eight companies across seven sectors with the market capitalization of 2.08 lakh crore rupees. It represents 2.17 per cent of the total market capitalization of companies listed on the NSE.

3) Nifty Mahindra Group Index: It consists of seven companies with a market capitalization of about 1.64 lakh crore rupees. It represents 1.71 per cent of the total market capitalization of companies listed on NSE.

These three indices have been created by the NSE's group company, India Index Services & Products Ltd (IISL). The company is planning to launch indices on other corporate groups and third-party products based on such indices.

News 3 - IRCTC ties up with Paytm for e-catering payments.

Train passengers will now find it easier to make online payments for the food ordered through e-catering with the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) entering into a tie-up with Paytm, a leading payment and e-commerce shopping website.



This e-catering facility allows passengers to order meals while traveling, either online on www.ecatering.irctc.co.in or by making a phone call to 0120-2383892-99 or the toll-free number at 1800-1034-139. They can also choose to do so through an SMS to 139 by giving details of their PNR and seat number.

News 4 - Union Ministry of Finance raised monetary limit for filing appeals in Courts.

The Union Ministry of Finance on 15 December 2015 raised the monetary limit for filing appeals to 10 lakh rupees in Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) and 20 lakh rupees in High Courts. With this, the ministry seeks to reduce tax litigation by about 50 percent.

News 5 - Mahindra Group acquired Italian auto design firm Pininfarina.

Tech Mahindra and Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd, part of the Mahindra Group, on 14 December 2015 acquired Italian car designer Pininfarina SpA for 165 million US dollars in an all-cash deal. Pininfarina is well-known for designing cars for Ferrari, Maserati, Rolls-Royce and Cadillac.



For the acquisition of Milan-listed Pininfarina, Tech Mahindra and Mahindra and Mahindra have formed a 60:40 joint venture. The joint venture will acquire 76.06 percent in Pininfarina from its controlling shareholder Pincar Srl at a price of 25.3 million euros.

News 6 - PFRDA switches to PAN for online enrolment under NPS.

Pension fund regulatory body PFRDA has started using PAN instead of Aadhaar for validation of new customers, who can now be registered online under the National Pension System (NPS) scheme. The Aadhaar-based online NPS account facility was started on a pilot basis, but following a Supreme Court judgment on usage of Aadhaar, it had to be discontinued.



News 7 - ICBC to become Tata Group's strategic banking partner.

Tata Sons Ltd and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd (ICBC) have formed a long-term partnership, under which ICBC will become a strategic banking partner to the Tata group. Tata Sons is the principal investment holding company of \$108 billion Tata Group and promoter of Tata companies.



News 8 - CEA Dr. Arvind Subramanian Committee suggests GST rate of 17-18%.

Chief Economic Advisor Dr. Arvind Subramanian led Committee has recommended standard rate for Goods and Services Tax (GST) at 17 to 18 per cent and dropping of the one percent additional tax on inter-state sales. The Committee has submitted its report to Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in New Delhi.



News 9 - Singapore replaced Mauritius as top source of FDI into India.

Singapore replaced Mauritius as top source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India during April-September of 2015-16 financial year.

As per the data, between 15 April and 15 September 2015, the FDI flow stands as below –



Singapore	43096 Cr
Mauritius	23490 Cr
Netherlands	7017 Cr
USA	5435 Cr

However, in terms of cumulative inflows between April 2000 and September 2015 Mauritius still leads the investment list.

News 10 - Commemorative coins of Rs 125, Rs 10 released in honour of Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 6 December 2015 released two commemorative coins of 125 rupees and 10 rupees, as part of the 125th birth anniversary year celebrations of Dr. Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar.



News 11 - Alibaba agreed to buy 112-year old newspaper South China Morning Post of Hong Kong.

Alibaba Group Holding Ltd on 11 December 2015 announced that it has agreed to buy the 112-year old English newspaper South China Morning Post (SCMP) for an undisclosed amount.

The acquisition of this Hong Kong's flagship English-language newspaper is the most politically sensitive acquisition by the e-commerce giant till date.



News 12 - Quick Estimates of IIP and Use-Based Index for October 2015 released.

Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Use-Based Index with the base year 2004-05 for the month of October 2015 were released by Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the Union Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.

The main highlights of this Index of Industrial Production (IIP) are –

- IIP for October 2015 stood at 181.3, which is 9.8% higher as compared to the level in October 2014. In September 2015 (month-on-month), IIP growth rate stood at 3.6 percent.
- The cumulative growth for the period of April to October 2015-16 over the corresponding period of the 2014-15 stood at 4.8%.
- The IIP for the Mining, Manufacturing and Electricity sectors for October 2015 stood at 130.0, 188.1 and 201.6 respectively, with the corresponding growth rates of 4.7%, 10.6% and 9.0% as compared to October 2014.
- The cumulative growth in the three sectors during April-October 2015-16 over the corresponding period of 2014-15 was 2.0%, 5.1% and 5.2% respectively.
- In terms of industries, seventeen (17) out of the twenty-two (22) industry groups (as per 2-digit NIC-2004) in the manufacturing sector have shown positive growth during the month of October 2015 as compared to the October 2014.

News 13 - MSDE and DHI signed MoU for skill development in manufacturing sector.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for skill development in the manufacturing sector was signed on 8 December 2015 between Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Department of Heavy Industry (DHI).

The MoU **focused on capital goods and automotive sector.**

Key highlights of the MoU

- The **purpose of the MoU is to create centres of excellence** for different manufacturing skills and a multi-location national institute of manufacturing technologies for training education and research by utilizing/upgrading the existing training facilities of Central PSUs such as HMT, BHEL and Instrumentation Ltd. under the DHI.
- These centers of excellence will ensure that a robust national ecosystem for development of skills in the manufacturing sector is created in the country and internationally known best practices in this field are brought in with active participation of countries like Germany.

News 14 - ONGC joined World Bank's Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 Initiative.

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited on 7 December 2015 joined Zero Routine Flaring by 2030 Initiative of the World Bank on the sidelines of Conference of Parties-21 (COP-21) of UNFCCC in Paris.



With this joining, ONGC has become the first oil company from India to join the global initiative that is aimed at curbing routine gas flaring at oil production sites around the world by 2030.

Along with ONGC, 19 other entities endorsed the initiative taking the number of total countries or companies or development institutions to 45, since its inception in April 2015.

Altogether these 45 endorsers represent more than 40 percent of all global gas flaring.

Features of Zero Routine Flaring by 2030

- It encourages oil companies to seek economically viable solutions to eliminate ongoing "legacy" flaring as soon as possible and no later than 2030.
- It will ensure that when oil fields are developed, plans include gas utilization solutions that do not involve routine flaring or venting.
- It will end routine gas flaring that stops millions of tons of CO₂ going into the atmosphere every year.
- The initiative, once successful, will contribute to improving the life of the people who live around gas flare sites.

News 15 - Indian economy grew by 7.4% in Q2 of FY 2015-16: CSO.

- CSO on 30 November 2015 announced that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 7.4 percent in the second quarter (July-September) of 2015-16 financial year compared to the same period during 2014-15. CSO stands for Central Statistical Office and is a part of the Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation.
- The high growth rate became a possibility due to 10.6 percent registered by trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting sectors.
- The manufacturing sector also grew by 9.3 percent compared to 7.9 percent in Q2 of FY 2014-15.
- With 7.4 percent growth, India continues to be the fastest growing large economy in the world in 2015. Earlier this year, India had overtaken China as the world's fastest growing major economy in the January-March quarter, growing 7.5 percent against China's 7 percent.
- India further continued the growth momentum in the April-June quarter with 7 percent.

News 16 - Singapore's Changi airport to run Jaipur, Ahmedabad airports.

The Governments of India and Singapore signing an agreement for Singapore airport developer Changi being nominated for taking up the operations and management of two Indian airports, Jaipur and Ahmedabad.



The agreement was signed on November 24 during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the island-city state and will see Changi manage the retail space inside the terminal building and car parking space, a senior Airports Authority of India (AAI) official said. The operations of the airport will remain with AAI.

News 17 - Karnataka govt signs EoI with Reitzel Group.

Karnataka delegation, which is touring France to promote 'Invest Karnataka 2016' (global investment meet), has signed an Expression of Interest (EoI) agreement with Reitzel Group. As per the EoI, the company is expected to invest 3 million Euros (about Rs. 20 crore) and create about 50 new jobs to the already 200 existing jobs. Reitzel is a Paris-based family-owned company in the agri and food processing industry.



Government of Karnataka

News 18 - RBI extended deadline to exchange pre-2005 notes to 30 June 2016.

The Reserve Bank of India on 23 December 2015 extended the deadline for exchanging pre-2005 currency notes of various denominations by another six months to 30 June 2016.



Earlier on 25 June 2015, the Reserve Bank had set the last date for public to exchange pre-2005 banknotes notes as 31 December 2015.

The Reserve Bank pointed out that it is standard international practice not to have currency notes from multiple series in simultaneous circulation. The Reserve Bank will continue to monitor and review the process so that the public is not inconvenienced in any manner. The post-2005 notes have added security features and will help in curbing the menace of fake currency.

News 19 - Idea became third mobile operator to launch 4G services in India.

Idea Cellular on 23 December 2015 became the third mobile operator in India to launch 4G services in India. Earlier, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone India had launched 4G services in India. Idea Cellular launched 4G services across 75 towns.



News 20 - On-demand grocery service PepperTap acquires Jiffstore.

Gurgaon-based on-demand grocery service PepperTap on 21 December 2015 acquired Bengaluru-based hyperlocal grocery delivery startup, Jiffstore in a cash-and-stock deal. However, the deal details were not disclosed.

News 21 - Digital media company Arre acquired Apalya Technologies.

Arre, the digital media brand from UDigital, a venture founded by Ronnie Screwvala, B Saikumar and Ajay Chacko, on 21 December 2015 announced the acquisition of Apalya Technologies. As part of the deal, the cofounders of Apalya, Vamshi Reddy and Shiva Bayyapunedu, will get 2 percent sweat equity in UDigital.



News 22 - Tata Motors listed as the only Indian firm in the top 50 Global R&D spenders.

Tata Motors on 20 December 2015 made it to the Top 50 in the **annual Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard for 2015**.

Prepared by the European Commission, the annual Industrial R&D Investment Scoreboard for 2015 was topped by the German automaker Volkswagen. In the top five R&D spenders, Volkswagen was followed by Samsung, Microsoft, Intel and Novartis. In terms of the number of companies on the list, India was overall placed at 15th position.



News 23 - CCEA approved investment of 5000 crore rupees into ONGC Videsh.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 22 December 2015 gave its approval for investment of 5000 crore rupees by Oil and Natural Gas Company Limited (ONGC) into the equity share capital of ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) by conversion of existing loan of equivalent amount into equity. With this investment, the equity base of OVL will rise to 15000 crore rupees. All the loan ONGC had given to OVL was at zero interest.



News 24 - RBI created Dedicated Helpline for guiding Start-ups in India on Forex Matters.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 22 December 2015 created a dedicated helpline (Email) for start-ups in India in order to offer assistance on Forex matters to them for undertaking cross-border transactions within the ambit of the regulatory framework. The cross-border transactions of resident Indians are subject to the regulatory regime provided by the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999.



News 25 - Reliance Jio launched 4G telecom service.

Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (RJIL) or Reliance Jio on 27 December 2015 launched 4G telecom service. The service was launched at the Reliance Corporate Park in Navi Mumbai to mark the birth anniversary of Dhirubhai Ambani, founder of the Reliance Industries Limited (RIL).



However, at present, it is limited to 85000 employees and their families of the company, while the **commercial services** are expected to begin **by April 2016**.

News 26 - Tech Mahindra launched NFC-based wallet MoboMoney.

Tech Mahindra Limited launched India's first contactless digital payment ecosystem, branded MoboMoney. It is a prepaid wallet issued in the form of an NFC Contactless Tag. It can be used to **Tap n Pay** on a network of NFC enabled Merchant point of sale, thus allowing customers without an NFC-enabled phone to enjoy the simple tap and pay experience to purchase goods. It allows consumers to load their wallet by paying cash at its 1000+ retail network, helping convert cash into e-cash.



News 27 – 'Make in India Week' to start from Feb 13.

The Central Government is organizing "Make in India Week" in Mumbai between February 13-18, 2016. It will be organized by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) along with the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It will have an investors meet for the manufacturing sector under Make in India.



News 28 - Wicked Ride launches utility bike rental service

Wicked Ride, a start-up, has launched its brand 'Apna Ride' for utility bike rentals, targeted primarily at budget conscious bike enthusiasts. The service would be initially available at Bengaluru, Mysore and Jaipur and bookings can be done through www.apnaride.com.

Whereas, Wicked Ride would focus on renting high-end luxury bikes like Harley-Davidson, Triumph, Ducati and Royal Enfield, 'Apna Ride' would focus on utility motorcycles, electric bikes and scooters.

News 29 - Bharat Petroleum commissioned Crude Distillation unit in Mumbai.

Bharat Petroleum on 28 December 2015 was commissioned a new 6-million tonne Crude Distillation Unit (CDU) at its Mumbai refinery, which will take the capacity of its oldest facility to 12 million tonne per annum.

This new state of the art CDU that came at a cost of 1419 crore rupees is a replacement of old Crude and Vacuum units of the refinery.

News 30 - Report of Vijay Kelkar Committee on Revisiting & Revitalizing PPP Model released.

The Union Ministry of Finance on 28 December 2015 released the report of the Committee on Revisiting and Revitalising Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model. The 9-member committee was headed by former Finance Secretary Vijay Kelkar.

This committee was **constituted on 26 May 2015** to review the experience of PPP Policy and suggest measures to improve capacity building in Government for their effective implementation. More importantly, the committee recognized the PPP Model in infrastructure as a valuable instrument to speed up infrastructure development in India.

News 31 - RBI released report of Deepak Mohanty Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion.

The Reserve Bank of India on 28 December 2015 released the Report of the Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion. The committee was constituted on 15 July 2015 by the RBI with the objective of working out a medium-term (five year) measurable action plan for financial inclusion. This 14-member committee was headed by **RBI Executive Director, Deepak Mohanty**.

News 32 - SpiceJet launched travel solutions platform SpiceVacations.com.

SpiceJet on 29 December 2015 launched an end-to-end travel solutions platform, SpiceVacations.com. The platform offers customized travel packages to customers, who can avail various services, while planning their holiday, at no added cost.



News 33 - IMF approved China's Yuan as Elite Reserve Currency.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) on 30 November 2015 included China's Yuan, also known as Chinese Renmimbi (RMB) into its elite reserve currency basket. Yuan's entry into the basket takes effect from 1 October 2016.



The action was taken after the executive board at IMF completed the regular five-yearly review of the basket of currencies that make up the Special Drawing Right (SDR). Yuan will be a freely usable currency and will be included in the SDR basket as a fifth currency, along with the US Dollar, Euro, Japanese Yen and British Pound.

What is a SDR?

The SDR is an international reserve asset, which the IMF uses to supplement its member countries reserves. The SDR's value is based on the basket of the four international currencies and SDRs can be exchanged for "freely usable" currencies.

News 34 - Union Government slashed Minimum Export Price of onions to 400 US Dollars per tonne.

Union Government on 11 December 2015 slashed the Minimum Export Price (MEP) of onions to 400 US Dollars per tonne from 700 dollars a tonne. The decision to slash the MEP on Onions was taken at a meeting chaired by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.

MEP is the rate below which no traders are allowed to export their goods. The rise in MEP restricts exports and improves domestic supply.

News 35 - A portal to help SMEs get bank loans.

A portal called Quickrupee was launched by a Chennai based start-up promoted by Jyotsna and HD Sheriff. The portal can be used by SMEs to get consultation and facilitation on bank loans.

Quickrupee has tied up with 16 bankers (mostly private banks and NBFCs) and another seven are in the pipeline, Jyotsna and HD Sheriff said.

News 36 - Myanmar inaugurated Yangon Stock Exchange.

Myanmar on 9 December 2015 inaugurated a new stock exchange, named Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), with plans for six companies to start trading in March 2016.



Initially, the Yangon Stock Exchange will be open only to Myanmar based companies and investors and will eventually allow foreigners to invest in Myanmar shares.

5. ENVIRONMENT

News 1 - SC banned registration of new diesel SUVs, luxury cars in Delhi till 31 March 2016.

The Supreme Court (SC) on 16 December 2015 banned the registration of all diesel SUVs and luxury cars with engine capacity of 2000cc or more in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) region till 31 March 2016. The landmark ruling was aimed at curbing the alarming pollution level in Delhi.



News 2 - Typhoon Melor struck the Philippines.

Typhoon Melor on 14 December 2015 struck the Philippines. This typhoon was ranked as a Category 3 storm by the US military's Joint Typhoon Warning Center, which is located at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii. This storm triggered flooding, landslides and 4-meter storm surges in the coastal region. As per an estimate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison the wind speeds had reached 220 km/h, when it hit the coast.

The typhoon was **locally called as Typhoon Nona**.

News 3 - COP 21 under UNFCCC adopted Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Conference of the Parties 21 (COP 21) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on 12 December 2015 adopted the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which was attended by 192 parties. India was represented by Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar.



This agreement facilitates enforcement of global greenhouse emission reduction measures in the post-2020 (post Kyoto Protocol) scenario. It was prepared based on consensus among the parties incorporating **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)** of the respective parties including that of **India**.

News 4 - India's biggest wildlife rescue center commissioned in Nagpur.

India's biggest Wildlife Rescue Centre named as Gorewada Zoo and Wildlife Rescue Centre has been commissioned at Gorewada near Nagpur, Maharashtra. The center was inaugurated by Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis.

News 5 - ZSI Scientists discovered a new eel species named Bengal Moray eel.

Scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new species of eel named Bengal Moray (*Gymnothorax Mishrai*) along the coast of Digha in Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal. These eels are mainly snake-like fish with fins and gills and are mostly found at the bottom of rivers and seas.



News 6 - Uttar Pradesh government bans use of Polythene bags.

Uttar Pradesh government has decided to enforce ban on the use of polythene bags in the state to protect the environment and public health. The ban prohibits manufacturing, importing, purchasing and storage of all kinds of plastic carry bags in state.

News 7 - South Western Railway Zone introduces Biodiesel for trains.

The South Western Railways (SWR) Zone with its headquarters in Hubli, Karnataka has introduced biodiesel for trains operating under its zone. In this regard, SWR's first train Hubballi-Bengaluru Janshatabdi Express powered by five per cent biodiesel blended with High Speed Diesel was flagged off from Hubli. The main aim of this initiative is to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) emission and carbon footprint and also to make fuel consumption more efficient. To



meet its biodiesel demand, SWR zone has set up Biodiesel filling centres at Hubli, Bengaluru and Hospet. In next one year all the 13 railway depots within this zone will have their own filling units and biodiesel blending will be gradually increased to ten percent.

News 8 - Myanmar launched its first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Inle Lake.

Myanmar on 11 December 2015 launched its first UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Inle Lake in Shan state. It was designated as UNESCO Biosphere reserve in Paris in June 2015.

This lake is spread on an area of 489721 hectares and is located in Nyaungshwe township, Taunggyi district in Myanmar's eastern Shan state. The lake gets funding from the Government of Norway under the framework of the Inle Lake Conservation and Rehabilitation project. The wetland ecosystem of this freshwater lake is home to 267 species of birds, out of which 82 are wetland birds, 43 species of freshwater fishes, otters and turtles. The Inle Lake is reported to be the nesting place for the globally endangered Sarus crane.



News 9 - Delhi Government announced odd-even vehicle scheme to curb air pollution.

Delhi Government on 4 December 2015 announced odd-even vehicle scheme to curb air pollution in the city. A decision in this regard was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.



The primary objective of this initiative is to halve the vehicular population in the city and thereby to bring pollution levels under control.

In the first phase, **vehicles with odd and even number plates would be allowed to run on alternate days** between 1 and 15 January 2016. This rule will be enforced between 8am and 8pm only and there will be no restrictions on Sundays. However, emergency vehicles such as ambulances were excluded from this restriction.

News 10 - Yes Bank announced to mobilize 5 billion US dollars for climate action by 2020.

The Yes Bank Limited announced to mobilize 5 billion US dollars from 2015 to 2020 for climate action through lending, investing and raising capital towards mitigation, adaptation and resilience. The announcement was made on the occasion of COP 21 climate summit in Paris.



Furthermore, to achieve holistic impact and aid India's target of meeting its **Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs)**, the bank committed to achieve the following by 2020 –

- Target funding of 5000 MW of clean energy.
- Gradually increase percentage of Renewable Energy in its power portfolio.
- Contribute towards creating a carbon sink by planting 2 million trees.
- Touch 100 million lives through its safe and clean drinking water program.
- Offset Carbon Emissions of the bank's operations.

News 11 - Beijing issued first-ever Red Alert on Air Pollution.

Authorities in China's capital, Beijing on 7 December 2015 issued its first-ever red alert on air pollution ordering schools to close due to hazardous air quality. Red alert is the highest possible state of caution.



News 12 - African Restoration Initiative unveiled to restore 100 million hectares of forest.

A coalition of African countries and donors unveiled African Restoration Initiative (AFR100) on the sidelines of a conference of the 195-nation UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris.

The ambitious initiative looks forward to restore 100 million hectares (250 million acres) of degraded and deforested land by 2030.

Ten African countries, nine financial partners and 10 technical support partners have pledged support. The countries that agreed to join AFR100 initiative include Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Togo and Uganda.



News 13 - India's forest and tree cover increased by 5081 sq km: India State of Forest Report 2015.

The Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on 4 November 2015 released the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2015. The report states that India's forest and tree cover has increased by 5081 sq km.

The total forest and tree cover is 79.42 million hectares, which is 24.16 percent of the total geographical area. While the total forest cover of the country has increased by 3775 Sq. kms, the tree cover has gone up by 1306 Sq. kms.

Changes observed in States as per India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2015:

- The maximum increase in forest cover has been observed in Tamil Nadu that is 2501 Sq. kms, followed by Kerala that includes 1317 Sq. kms forest cover and Jammu & Kashmir with 450 Sq. kms forest cover.
- Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover of 77462 Sq. kms in the country, followed by Arunachal Pradesh with a forest cover of 67248 Sq. kms and Chhattisgarh with 55586 Sq. kms.
- Mizoram with 88.93 percentage of forest cover has the highest forest cover in percentage terms, followed by Lakshadweep with 84.56 percent.
- 15 States/Union Territories have above 33 percent of the geographical area under forest cover.

News 14 - MoEF released Draft Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules, 2015.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on 30 November 2015 released Draft Environment (Protection) Amendment Rules, 2015. They are intended to amend the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 and issued in exercise of the powers conferred by section 6 and 25 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The purpose of the draft was to specify Primary Water Quality criteria for bathing water in water bodies.

News 15 - Bill Gates led Breakthrough Energy Coalition formed to reduce demand for fossil fuels.

Bill Gates led Breakthrough Energy Coalition was formed on 30 November 2015 to reduce demand for fossil fuels. The coalition was launched by global business leaders at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) in Paris, France.

It was launched alongside **Mission Innovation**, wherein 20 participating countries pledged to double their clean energy research and development funding by 2020.



Key features of Breakthrough Energy Coalition:

- It involves 28 rich and powerful people from different countries across the world.
- It works on five Investment Principles – Invest Early, Invest Broadly, Invest Wisely and Invest Together.
- It will invest in early-stage startups that promise to provide everyone with affordable and reliable energy that produces zero carbon emissions.
- The financial cooperation will also be extended to government-backed green energy research.
- While Bill Gates (Microsoft), Jeff Bezos (Amazon) and Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) are the prime figures in the coalition at the global level, from India, Ratan Tata (Tata Sons) and Mukesh Ambani (Reliance Industries) are the partners in this initiative.

News 16 - World leaders launched Mission Innovation for accelerating Clean Energy Revolution.

World leaders on 30 November 2015 launched **Mission Innovation** for accelerating clean energy revolution across the world. This mission was launched by 20 participating countries, including India, at the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2015 (COP21) in Paris-Le Bourget, France.

As a part of this initiative, the participating countries double their clean energy research and development funding by 2020. It was launched alongside Bill Gates' led **Breakthrough Energy Coalition** that aims at reducing demand for fossil fuels.

Participating countries included: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and the USA.

News 17 - UN adopted resolution to observe 5 November as World Tsunami Awareness Day.

The United Nations General Assembly on 22 December 2015 adopted a resolution to observe 5 November every year as World Tsunami Awareness Day. The creation of the day is aimed at raising awareness among people regarding the dangers of Tsunami and stressing the importance of early warning systems in order to mitigate damage. This proposal was first suggested by the Japanese Government after **the Third UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan** in March 2015.

News 18 - Bihar Government banned 15-year-old diesel vehicles from plying on Patna roads.

Bihar government on 23 December 2015 banned 15-year-old diesel vehicles from plying in their capital city Patna. The decision was taken in view of increasing pollution. This decision was made during the review meeting of the environment and forests department under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. The execution was pending since October 2013, when the state transport authority had reached a decision regarding this.

News 19 - Union Ministry of Environment notified norms for Coal-based Thermal Power Plants.

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change on 7 December 2015 notified revised norms of emission standards for coal-based thermal power plants in India. The Ministry also made it mandatory for the existing plants to meet the new emission parameters within two years.

The new emission standards for the plants are based on the recommendation of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). These new standards are aimed at reducing emission of PM10 (particulate matter), Sulfur Dioxide, and Oxide of Nitrogen. It will help in bringing about an improvement in the Ambient Air Quality (AAQ) in and around the thermal power plants.

News 20 - India launched I-LTEO program to monitor 8 different biomes.

India on 7 December 2015 launched the Indian Long Term Ecological Observatories (I-LTEO) program to scientifically monitor eight different biomes (natural landscapes) across the country. The initiative was launched on the sidelines of the Conference of Parties-21 (COP-21) of UNFCCC in Paris.

The work on LTEO Program is being done in a number of developed and developing countries. India too was doing it, but was restricted to only one place in the country – a 50-hectare plot at Mudumalai, which has been monitored for over the past 30 years by the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

News 21 - NGT gave directions to keep River Ganga Pollution Free.

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on 10 December 2015 gave a slew of directions to keep River Ganga pollution free. The bench, that gave the ruling, comprised of Judicial Member MS Nambiar and Expert Members DK Agrawal and BS Sajwan.



6. BANKING

News 1 - RBI liable to disclose information about banks under RTI Act: Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court on 16 December 2015 held that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is liable to disclose information about the banks and financial institutions for their action against the loan defaulters including industrialists under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005. The ruling was made by a bench headed by M Y Eqbal and C Nagappan.



C Nagappan

M Y Eqbal

This Bench gave the ruling against the petition filed by PP Kapoor, who had asked about the details of the loans taken by the industrialists that have not been repaid and he had asked about the names of the top defaulters, who have not repaid their loans to public sector banks.

News 2 - RBI released final guidelines of Marginal Cost of Funds Methodology to calculate Interest Rates.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 17 December 2015 released the final guidelines on computing interest rates on advances based on the **Marginal Cost of Funds Methodology**. These guidelines will come into effect from 1 April 2016.

The new methodology is aimed at bringing uniformity among Base Rates of Banks, so that they will be more sensitive to any changes in the policy rates of the RBI, like the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR), Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR), etc.

- This new methodology will help improve the transmission of policy rates into the lending rates of banks.
- These guidelines are also expected to ensure availability of bank credit at interest rates, which are fair to the borrowers as well as the banks.
- Further, marginal cost pricing of loans will help the banks become more competitive and enhance their long run value and contribution to economic growth.

News 3 - Axis Bank launches country's first 'display variant' debit card.

Axis Bank launched a 'display variant' debit card, which does away with the hassles of generating one-time password (OTP) over SMS while transacting. This card, which is being made available for high-value NRE customers, has an embedded EMV chip, a display screen and a touch-sensitive button, which helps generating the OTP on the card itself.



News 4 - RBI bars 56 NBFCs from conducting business.

The Reserve Bank of India has cancelled the certificate of registration of 56 non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). Following the cancellation of registration certificate, these companies cannot transact in the business of an NBFC as laid down under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.



News 5 - Centre to support rural entrepreneurs under MUDRA.

In an effort to support rural entrepreneurs of India, the Centre on Saturday said it would think of giving loans under the Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) Yojana of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It provides services for Small Entrepreneurs.



News 6 - RBI announced revised Priority Sector Lending norms for Regional Rural Banks.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced revised Priority Sector Lending (PSL) norms for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). Among other things, the PSL target was increased to 75 percent of total outstanding from the existing 60 percent. The revised target will be effective from 1 January 2016.



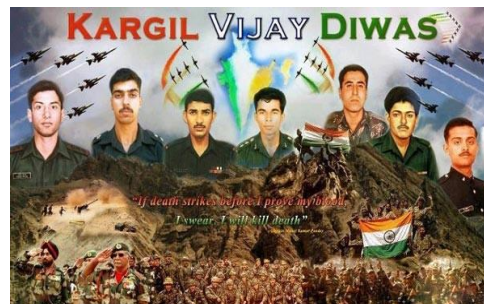
- Medium enterprises, social infrastructure and renewable energy were included under PSL category.
- Loans to individual farmers, for the purpose of PSL, was increased to 50 lakh rupees from the present 10 lakh rupees against pledge / hypothecation of agricultural produce (including warehouse receipts) for a period not exceeding 12 months.
- The RBI has lowered the quantum of loans that will qualify as PSL. Against the earlier limit of 25 lakh rupees, loans to individuals up to 20 lakh rupees only are considered as PSL as per revised guidelines. Housing loans to banks' own employees will be excluded from this limit.

7. IMPORTANT DAYS

News 1 - Vijay Diwas observed across the country to commemorate India's victory in the 1971 war.

16 December: Vijay Diwas.

Vijay Diwas was observed across the country on 16 December 2015. On this day, nation remembers those martyrs, who laid down their lives during the Indo-Pak War of 1971.

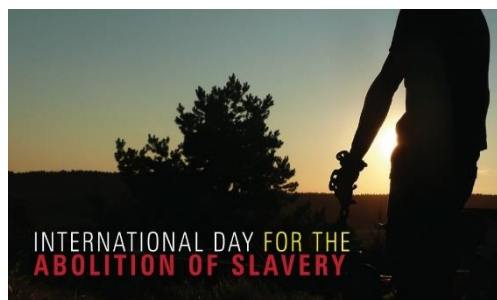


About Vijay Diwas:

- On 16 December 1971, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, Chief of Pakistan forces along with 93000 troops had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces after the defeat of Pakistan in the war.
- The forces consisted of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini. They were led by General Jagjit Singh Aurora in Dhaka.
- The end of the India- Pakistan war 1971 also resulted in subsequent secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.
- Since then, this day is being celebrated as Victory Day in Bangladesh and Vijay Diwas in India.

News 2 - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery Observed globally.

The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery was observed globally on 2 December 2015. The day is observed to focus on the elimination of human trafficking, child labour and other forms of modern-day slavery.



News 3 - 44th Navy Day observed on 4 December.

The 44th Navy Day was observed on 4 December 2015. The occasion saw screening of Navy Telefilm 2015 titled Empowering India Through Maritime Security and Indigenisation on DD National. This Navy day is celebrated every year to commemorate the success of Operation Trident of Indian Navy on Karachi Harbour during the 1971 Indo-Pak war.



News 4 - International Volunteer Day observed globally.

The International Volunteer Day (IVD) was on 5 December 2015 observed across the world with the theme **The world is changing. Are you? Volunteer!**



This day is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organizations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values and to promote their work among their communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, government authorities and the private sector.

News 5 - Human Rights Day observed across the world.

Human Rights Day was observed across the world on 10 December 2015. The United Nations (UN) Human Rights Office launched "**Our Rights, Our Freedoms, Always**", a year-long campaign to shine a light on rights of global citizens. It is aimed to promote and raise awareness of the two Covenants of Human Rights Day – International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

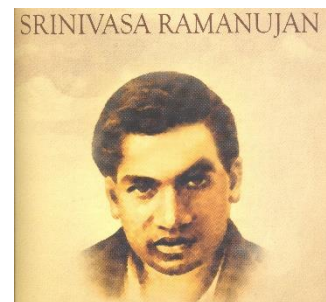
News 6 - 30th National Consumers Right Day observed.

The 30th National Consumer Rights Day was observed across India on 24 December 2015. This day is being observed annually on 24 December, since the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was enacted on this date. The theme was - **Safe & Healthy Food: Combating Food Adulteration.**

The **World Consumer Rights Day** is observed on **15 March** annually.

News 7 - National Mathematics Day observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.

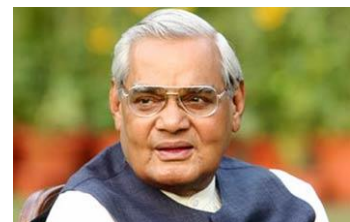
India on 22 December 2015 celebrated National Mathematics Day to commemorate the birth anniversary of the great Mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan.



The declaration to observe 22 December as National Mathematics Day was made by the former Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh on 26 February 2012 at the Madras University on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Ramanujan. It was also declared to observe year 2012 as the National Mathematics Year.

News 8 - Good Governance Day observed on 25 December.

Good Governance Day was observed on 25 December 2015 across the country. It marks the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



To mark the occasion, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, J P Nadda announced four new IT-based initiatives - three applications namely **Kilkari, Mobile Academy and M-Cessation** and a dedicated toll free number 1800-11-6666 to provide round the clock support for counselling and treatment support services for TB patients.

8. INTERNATIONAL

News 1 - 2nd World Internet Conference concluded in Wuzhen, China.

The three-day long 2nd World Internet Conference was concluded on 18 December 2015 at Wuzhen in China. The theme of the conference was "An Interconnected World Shared and Governed by All — Building a Cyberspace Community of Shared Destiny."

It was jointly organized by the Cyberspace Administration of China and the People's Government of Zhejiang Province. This conference focused on facilitating strategic-level discussions on global Internet governance, cyber security, the Internet industry as the engine of economic growth and social development, technological innovation and philosophy of the Internet.



News 2 - International Migrants Day observed across the world.

18 December: International Migrants Day.

About International Migrants Day

The UN General Assembly on 4 December 2000 declared 18 December as the International Migrants Day. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families was adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1990.

News 3 - UN-brokered Libyan Political Agreement on National Unity Government signed.

The United Nations-brokered Libyan Political Agreement on formation of a national unity government was signed on 17 December 2015 in Skhirat, Morocco.

In finalizing the agreement, Martin Kobler played a key role. He is the Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL).



News 4 - China 1st manned electric aircraft gets license for production.

China has granted a license for production of its first manned two seater electric aircraft known as RX1E by the Civil Aviation Administration of China. The aircraft has been designed by Shenyang Aerospace University and Liaoning General Aviation Academy in northeastern Liaoning province.



Key Facts:

- RX1E is an electric light-sport aircraft and it is China's first manned electric light aircraft. This plane is powered by lithium batteries and is capable of flying a maximum altitude of 3000 meters.
- This plane has a 47-foot wingspan and has a charging time of 90 minutes, enabling it to fly for 45 to 60 minutes.

This light aircraft can take the maximum takeoff weight of 480 Kgs.

News 5 - UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution to cut-off supply of funds to ISIS group.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) on 17 December 2015 unanimously adopted a resolution to increase sanctions against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) group and other terrorist groups. The resolution seeks to cut off its revenue flows including ransom payments, no matter by whom.



This resolution was adopted at the first-ever meeting of Finance Ministers of the UNSC. This meeting was presided over by Treasury Secretary, Jack Lew of the United States, which holds its monthly presidency.

News 6 - 14th Meeting of Heads of Governments of SCO Member States concluded in Zhengzhou, China.

The two-day 14th Meeting of the Council of Heads of Governments of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States was concluded on 15 December 2015 at Zhengzhou, China.



India, which is **an acceding state** at present, was represented by Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen V K Singh.

At the end of the meeting, the leaders issued a **joint statement on regional economic cooperation**, which emphasized the importance of **China's One Belt, One Road** initiative for developing infrastructure in the region.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) or Shanghai Pact is an inter-governmental organization founded in Shanghai on 15 June 2001 by six countries, People's Republic of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- In July 2015, India and Pakistan were accepted as the full members of this organization.
- There are four observer states at present – Afghanistan, Belarus, Mongolia and Iran.

News 7 - EC adopted proposal for a European Border and Coast Guard to protect Schengen area.

The European Commission (EC) on 15 December 2015 adopted the proposal for a **European Border and Coast Guard Force** to protect Europe's external border and Schengen area without internal border.

The creation of this new border force was a part of proposals to **manage migration** more effectively, improve the internal security of the European Union, and safeguard the principle of free movement of the people.



News 8 - Saudi Arabia launched 34-nation Islamic Military Coalition to counter terrorism.

Saudi Arabia on 15 December 2015 announced the launch of Islamic Military Coalition to counter terrorism. The coalition will be led by Saudi Arabia and it has the participation of 34 nations.

It was established in pursuance of the principles and objectives of the charter of the **Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**. It will have a **joint operations center** based in Saudi Arabia's capital, **Riyadh**.

Member Nations includes Saudi Arabia, Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Turkey, Chad, Togo, Tunisia, Djibouti, Senegal, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Gabon, Guinea, Palestine, Comoros, Qatar, Cote d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Mali, Malaysia, Egypt, Morocco, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Yemen.



News 9 - Saudi voters elected women candidates for first time in Municipal council polls.

Saudi Arabian voters on 12 December 2015 voted to elect women in at least 18 municipal council seats. This was a historic local election in Saudi Arabia in which women were allowed to vote and run for office for the first time. This event occurred for the first time in the history of this country. The results of the election were declared on 13 December 2015.

News 10 - Afghanistan becomes 163rd member of WTO.

WTO has formally approved Afghanistan's membership (163rd member) proposal at its ongoing 10th ministerial conference in Nairobi, Kenya. In this regard, Protocol of Accession (PoA) was signed by WTO Director, General Roberto Azevedo and Afghanistan's First Deputy Chief Executive Mohammad Khan Rahmani. The final accession to become a full member will come into effect after PoA is ratified by Afghanistan Parliament till June 2016. It will be the 36th least developed country (LDC) to join the global trade body.



News 11 - US Security Council unanimously adopts resolution on Syria peace plan.

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has unanimously adopted a resolution No. 2254 outlining a peace process in Syria. The resolution endorses an international roadmap for a Syria peace process to end Syria's five-year-long civil war.



News 12 - UN launched 2016 International Year of Pulses.

2016: International Year of Pulses

The UN has declared year 2016 as International Year of Pulses. The UN on 10 November 2015 announced it at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy. It was launched with the theme **nutritious seeds for a sustainable future**.

The purpose of this launch is to raise awareness of the many benefits of pulses, boost their production and trade, and encourage new and smarter uses throughout the food chain.



News 13 - World Bank Released Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016.

World Bank Group's Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development (KNOMAD) initiative on 18 December released the Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016. As per the report, **the number of international migrants** is expected to **surpass 250 million** in 2015, **an all-time high**.

And, **India was the largest remittance receiving country**, with an estimated 72 billion US dollars in 2015, followed by China (64 billion) and the Philippines (30 billion US dollars). **The United States was the largest remittance source country**, with an estimated 56 billion US dollars in outward flows in 2014, followed by Saudi Arabia (37 billion) and Russia (33 billion).



News 14 - Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach crowned Miss Universe 2015.

Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach was on 20 December 2015 crowned Miss Universe 2015 at the final of 64th edition of Miss Universe held in Las Vegas, the USA. She was crowned by **Miss Universe 2014 winner Paulina Vega of Columbia**. Pia is a Filipino-German actress, model and beauty pageant titleholder.



Urvashi Rautela who represented India in the contest couldn't make it to top 15 semi-finals round.

News 15 - Miss Spain Mireia Lalaguna Royo crowned Miss World 2015.

Miss Spain Mireia Lalaguna Royo on 19 December 2015 was crowned Miss World 2015 at the Beauty of Crown Theater in Sanya, China. Rolene Strauss of South Africa crowned Mireia Lalaguna as her successor at the end of the event. **It is the first time Spain has won the title of Miss World.**



Mireia is a 23-year-old medical college student and a pianist from Barcelona. Miss Russia Sofia Nikitchuk was the runner-up, while Miss Indonesia Maria Harfanti stood third in the pageant. Miss India Aditi Arya won the People's Choice Award, which ensured her direct entry in the competition.

News 16 - Australia passes Anti-Terrorism Law to strip citizenship.

Australia's Federal Parliament passed Australian Citizenship Amendment (Allegiance to Australia) Bill, 2015 to strip citizenship of convicted persons on terrorism charges. This new legislation allows government to strip dual nationals of their citizenship, if they are convicted of terrorism offenses. Those who are found to have fought for banned terrorist group overseas, their citizenship will be automatically terminated.



News 17 - DuPont and Dow Chemical Company announced to merge to form DowDuPont.

The Board of Directors of DuPont and Dow Chemical Company on 11 December 2015 unanimously approved a definitive agreement to merge the two companies in an all-stock deal. The merged company will be named as **DowDuPont**.



DuPont is an American chemical company that was founded in July 1802 as a gunpowder mill. The Dow Chemical Company is an American multinational chemical corporation headquartered in Midland, Michigan, United States.

News 18 - 10th WTO Ministerial Conference adopted Nairobi Package.

The 10th World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference, attended by trade ministers of **162 member countries**, concluded on 19 December 2015 in Nairobi, Kenya. India was represented by Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce & Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman. The Nairobi Package contains a series of **six Ministerial Decisions** on agriculture, cotton and issues related to least-developed countries.



News 19 - Conservative People's party won Spain election; but falls short of majority.

Governing conservative People's Party (PP) of Spain's Prime Minister, Mariano Rajoy on 20 December 2015 won the most seats in the general elections of the country. People's Party was on 28.7 percent. The Socialists which received 90 seats was on 22 percent. Anti-austerity Podemos along with its allies received 69 seats and was 20.6 percent. Liberal Ciudadanos party that won 40 seats had 13.8 percent of the vote.



News 20 - Miss Iraq beauty pageant held for the first time since 1972.

Miss Iraq beauty pageant was held for the first time since 1972. It was held on 20 December 2015 in Baghdad and involved eight contestants. **Shaymaa Qasim Abdelrahman** was crowned Miss Iraq.

The contest was held successfully despite the death threats from Islamic militant organizations like ISIS. It, now, allows Iraq to send its representative for the international Miss Universe contest.



News 21 - US Senate ratified IMF reforms in budget bill to boost representation of emerging economies.

The Senate of United States (US) on 19 December 2015 ratified reforms to boost the representation of emerging economies at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of Budget Bill. The legislation will now go to President Barack Obama.

If adopted, it will allow emerging economies and industrial powerhouses like India and China to have a greater say in how the IMF is managed.

Changes under the Reforms –

- China's voting rights will rise to 6 percent from 3.8 percent and the nation will become the third-largest shareholder, from its previous sixth position.
- It would also double the IMF resources to about 660 billion dollars.

- As China's voting rights rise, the US will see its share drop from 16.7 percent to 16.5 percent.
- Under the new proposals, the IMF board will be entirely elected.
- India's voting rights will also rise to 2.6 percent from the current 2.3 percent.
- The biggest losers are European economies, which will see their voting rights diminished.
- The US retains its veto power.

News 22 - India-Pakistan agreed to replace 8-point Composite Dialogue with 10-point Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue.

India and Pakistan on 9 December 2015 agreed to replace 8-point Composite Dialogue Process (CDP) with 10-point Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue (CBD).

The decision was stated in the joint statement that was issued after a meeting between External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Pakistan Prime Minister's Advisor on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz in Islamabad.



News 23 - Luxembourg became the 10th country to ratify AoA of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Luxembourg on 8 December 2015 became the 10th country to ratify the Articles of Agreement (AoA) that will lay the legal framework for the China-initiated Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB). Apart from Luxembourg, Australia, Austria, Brunei Darussalam, China, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Singapore and United Kingdom ratified the 60-article agreement so far.

These 10 countries are among the 57 founder-member countries of the multilateral bank that has its headquarters in the Chinese capital, Beijing. Among the 57 founder-member countries, except the Philippines all other 56 countries have signed the AoA and 46 countries are yet to ratify it.

News 24 - 2016: UK-INDIA Year of Education, Research and Innovation launched.

India and United Kingdom on 9 December 2015 launched a joint initiative 2016: UK-INDIA Year of Education and Research in New Delhi. It was launched by visiting Secretary of State, Business Innovation and Skill of the UK, Sajid Javid along with Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister, Smriti Irani.

Main Highlights of 2016: UK-INDIA Year of Education and Research –

- In 2016, it will allow UK academicians to come to India under **Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) programme**.
- It will enhance partnership in research work in ten research priority areas under **IMPRINT (IMPActing Research Innovation and Technology)**.

Apart from 2016: UK-INDIA Year of Education and Research, Sajid Javid also announced the launch of 20th year of Chevening Gurukul Fellowship program for Leadership and Excellence.

UK-India Education and Research Initiative-III.

Javid also said that he looks forward to launch third phase of UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI-III), which could build upon good work already done under earlier phases of UKIERI.

The third phase of UKIERI-III, with higher budgetary allocation of 3 million Pounds per year from each side, will commence on 1 April 2016.

News 25 - TIME Magazine named German Chancellor Merkel as 2015 'Person of the Year'.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel was named as 2015 Person of the Year on 9 December 2015 by Time Magazine. The magazine cited her role in Europe's crisis over migration and Greek debt.



Islamic State leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was named runner-up and third place went to US Presidential Candidate, Donald Trump.

TIME's Person of the Year since 2000

This is an annual honor bestowed by Time magazine since 1927. It goes to the person, who most influenced the news during the year for better or worse.

Year	TIME's person of the Year
2000	George W Bush
2001	Rudolph Giuliani, who was New York City's mayor on 9/11
2002	The Enron Whistleblowers
2003	The American soldier
2004	George W. Bush
2005	The Good Samaritans - Bono and Bill Gates
2006	You - represented by the Internet
2007	Vladimir Putin
2008	Barack Obama
2009	Ben Bernanke

2010	Mark Zuckerberg
2011	The Protester
2012	Barack Obama
2013	Pope Francis
2014	Ebola fighter

News 26 - New Zealand formally becomes member of AIIB.

New Zealand has formally become a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Finance Minister Bill English said Tuesday. New Zealand's ratification would contribute to the AIIB reaching the 50-percent threshold of the needed for the AIIB to establish operations, English said in a statement.



The move followed the passage of the International Financial Agreement Amendment Act in the New Zealand Parliament in November. New Zealand was the ninth country to formally become a founding member. The AIIB would have around 100 billion U.S. dollars of initial capital to promote sustainable development in the region. New Zealand's paid in capital will be around 125 million NZ dollars (83.05 million U.S. dollars), paid over five years.

News 27 - UN agencies launched \$1.98 billion Sahel humanitarian appeal for 2016.

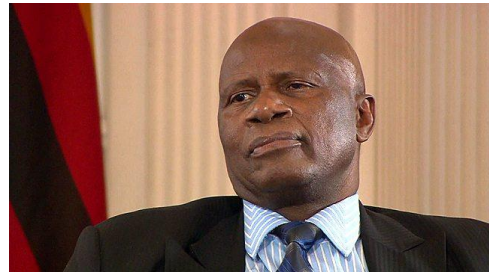
The United Nations agencies and partners on 9 December 2015 launched the Sahel Humanitarian appeal for 2016. The purpose of this initiative is to mobilize international support to tackle triple crisis of poverty, insecurity and climate change that plagues the Sahel region in Africa (It is a vast belt in northern Africa dividing the Sahara Desert and the Savanna's to the south. It covers parts of Northern Senegal, Southern Mauritania, Central Mali, Northern Burkina Faso, extreme South of Algeria, Niger, extreme North of Nigeria, Central Chad, Central and Southern Sudan, and Northern Eritrea).

Highlights of Sahel humanitarian appeal for 2016 –

- It includes a regional plan that calls for 1.98 billion US dollars to provide vital assistance to millions of people in nine countries across the region.
- It will focus on tackling dire effects of climate change, abject poverty, fast population growth and a tormenting rise in violence and insecurity in Africa’s Sahel region.
- It will ensure millions are afforded the most basic assistance and protection they deserve to survive and live a dignified life in the region.

News 28 - Zimbabwe announced to adopt Chinese currency Yuan.

Zimbabwe's Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa on 21 December 2015 announced that the country has planned to adopt the Chinese Yuan as legal tender. It will be done in return for debt cancellation worth 40 million dollars in the second week of December 2015.



As per this decision, Yuan will be a function of trade between China and Zimbabwe and acceptability with customers in Zimbabwe.

News 29 - Philippines became first Asian country to approve world's first-ever dengue vaccine.

The Philippines on 22 December 2015 became the first Asian country to approve the sale of the world's first-ever dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia. The Philippines' Food and Drug Administration approved the dengue vaccine for the prevention of disease caused by all four dengue types in individuals from 9 to 45 years old living in endemic areas.

Earlier on 9 December 2015, Dengvaxia, manufactured by French pharmaceutical giant Sanofi, secured its first regulatory approval in Mexico.

News 30 - World Bank to give \$35mn to Pakistan for Indus River Basin.

The World Bank has approved an additional financial assistance to Pakistan of \$35 million to support improved management, planning and development of water resources in the Indus River Basin in Pakistan. This \$35 million is in addition to the \$38 million given earlier towards improvement of water resources management in the Indus River system, the Bank said.



News 31 - China adopted Anti-Terrorism Bill, 2015; First counter-terrorism law in history.

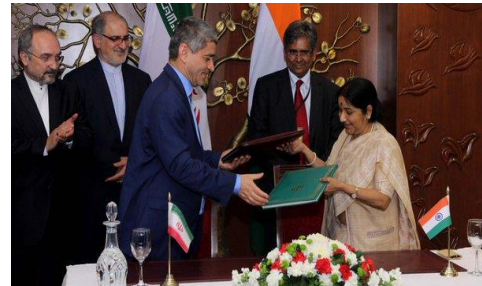
China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, country's top legislature, on 27 December 2015 approved Anti-Terrorism Bill, 2015 **to address terrorism at home and help maintain world security**. It is country's first counter-terrorism law and will enter into force in January 2016.

News 32 - China amended One Couple, One Child Policy.

China's National People's Congress Standing Committee on 27 December 2015 gave its approval to amend the One Couple, One Child Policy. This amended policy will come **into force on 1 January 2016**, will lift the restrictions on couples from having only one child.

News 33 - 18th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting held in New Delhi.

The 18th Session of the India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held on 28 December 2015 in New Delhi. This session was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister of India (EAM) Sushma Swaraj and Ali Tayebnia, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran. Both the leaders reviewed the progress in trade and economic cooperation and a number of related matters. They also discussed the possibilities in cooperation in railways, including by supply of rails, rolling stock and signaling.



News 34 - WHO officially declared Guinea Ebola-free

The World Health Organization (WHO) on 29 December 2015 declared the end of Ebola virus transmission in the Republic of Guinea. The organization took the decision after observing that 42 days have passed without any new case coming in.



News 35 - Japan and South Korea reached Agreement on Issue of Comfort Women.

Japan and South Korea on 28 December 2015 reached an Agreement on Issue of Comfort Women. It aims to resolve a decades-old dispute over Korean women, who were used as sex slaves by Japanese soldiers during World War II.



News 36 - Brazil entered longest recession, since the 1930s.

Brazil's economy contracted by 1.7 percent during July-September 2015 compared to April-June period in 2015. It was Brazil's third consecutive quarter of contraction starting from January 2015 and thus, making it the country's longest recession since the 1930s.

The reasons for this recession in Brazil are multiple. They range from continuing global economic slowdown, shrinkage in exports and unprecedented scandal at the government-run oil company, Petrobras.

News 37 - Roch Marc Christian Kabore elected president of Burkina Faso.

Roch Marc Christian Kabore on 30 November 2015 was elected as the President of the West African Country, Burkina Faso. Kabore is a Burkina politician. He served as Prime Minister of Burkina Faso between 1994 to 1996, and as President of National Assembly of Burkina Faso from 2002 to 2012.



News 38 - UN chief launched Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape Initiative to build climate resilience.

The United Nations (UN) Chief Ban Ki-moon along with the agencies of the UN system on 30 November 2015 launched an initiative titled Anticipate, Absorb, Reshape to build climate resilience in the world's most vulnerable countries.

The initiative was launched during the United Nations climate change conference (COP21) in Paris.



9. MISCELLANEOUS

- In Odisha, a Special Chit Fund Court in Cuttack on 23 December 2015 passed orders for confiscation of the properties of chit fund company – **GLP Developers Ltd**
- The minimum age fixed to be categorized as juvenile as per Juvenile Justice (Amendment) Bill, 2015 passed by the Rajya Sabha on 22 December 2015 – **16 years.**
- The Grand Prix badminton title won by the Indian pair Manu Attri and Sumeeth Reddy – **Mexico Grand Prix.**
- Indian-origin software engineer who won Innovate UK's KTP Best of the Best Awards 2015 on 21 December 2015 – **Nandagopal Lakshminarayanan.**
- The state that decided to provide a cashless medical scheme for regular government employees, pensioners and their dependents – **Assam.**
- In order to minimize pollution from Coal-based Thermal Plants, the Environment Ministry notified to cut the emission of particulate matter by 40 percent from thermal plants by – **1 January 2017.**
- Giving a boost to Make in India initiative, which Chinese telecom major will set up a manufacturing plant in Noida – **Vivo.**
- The cricketer who will lead the Under-19 Indian cricket team for the upcoming World Cup – **Ishan Kishan.**
- Famous on-screen Bollywood couple named as brand ambassador of Haryana tourism – **Dharmendra & Hema Malini.**
- Delhi government appointed him to head the inquiry commission to probe financial irregularities in the Delhi and District Cricket Association – **Gopal Subramaniam.**
- The European Union on 21 December 2015 extended its economic sanctions against Russia for six months over its involvement in – **Ukraine crisis.**
- The Union government on 21 December 2015 approved an assistance of 678 crore rupees for 73 projects to build houses for people belonging to economically weaker section in – **Telangana.**
- The state which became the first state to rehabilitate the persons living in slums on PPP mode – **Gujarat.**
- First cricketer from New Zealand to top the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) Test rankings is – **Kane Williamson.**
- Method announced by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 17 December 2015 to compute interest rates on advances – **Marginal Cost of Funds Methodology.**
- The former Indian cricketer appointed as the bowling coach of Afghanistan's national cricket team – **Manoj Prabhakar.**

- The aviation industry turnaround expert who on 17 December 2015 resigned from the post of Chief Executive Officer of Jet Airways is – **Cramer Ball**.
- Hindustan Unilever is set to acquire Mosons Group's flagship brand known as – **Indulekha and Vayodha**.
- An Italian Catholic newspaper on 17 December 2015 reported that the new person who will be given Sainthood is – **Mother Teresa**.
- India announced that it will contribute 5 Lakh US dollars to the United Nations Annual Emergency Response Fund (ERF) to support – **Global Humanitarian Relief Operations**.
- The Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar declared Emperor Ashoka's birth date as a holiday in the state – **14 April**.
- The state which announced a 10,512 crore rupees' relief package for drought-hit villages is – **Maharashtra**.
- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation partnered with Paytm for – **E-catering payments**.
- The country which was adjudged as the best to do business with, by Forbes in its 'Best Countries for Business Report 2015' – **Denmark**.
- The railway station that will be the first one to get Wi-Fi services as part of a partnership between Google and RailTel that aims at providing the services in 400 railway stations across the country – **Mumbai Central**.
- For the first time since 2006, the US Federal Reserve on 16 December 2015 increased the interest rate by – **0.25%**.
- The city in which the two-day 14th Meeting of Heads of Governments of SCO Member States was concluded on 15 December 2015 – **Zhengzhou (China)**.
- Title of the United Nations Human Development Report 2015 that was released on 14 December 2015 – **Work for Human Development**.
- The Government of India on 11 December 2015 signed a protocol to amend double taxation avoidance pact with – **Japan**.
- He was on 10 December 2015 sworn in as the President of Argentina – **Mauricio Macri**.
- Campaign launched on the occasion of Human Rights Day that was observed across the world on 10 December 2015 – **Our Rights. Our Freedoms. Always**.
- The bilateral maritime exercise Indra Navy 2015, which commenced on 7 December 2015 in Vishakhapatnam is between India and – **Russia**.
- The winner of the 2014–15 Men's International Hockey Federation (FIH) Hockey World League Final is – **Australia**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 6 December 2015 released two commemorative coins of 125 rupee and 10 rupee denomination, as part of the 125th birth anniversary year celebrations of – **Dr Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar**.

- Winner of 2015 Davis Cup tennis title – **Great Britain**.
- Winner of 2015 Formula 1 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix title – **Nico Rosberg**.
- He led the formation of Breakthrough Energy Coalition on 30 November 2015 to reduce demand for fossil fuels – **Bill Gates**.
- The Polish professional footballer, who plays for German club, Bayern Munich awarded with four separate official Guinness World Records certificates is – **Robert Lewandowski**.
- The initiative launched by India and France jointly on 30 November 2015 – **International Solar Alliance**.
- Person sworn-in as the 43rd Chief Justice of India (CJI) on 3 December 2015 – **Justice Tirath Singh Thakur**.
- Indian-American techie who has been appointed as advisor to the Accessible India campaign of Prime Minister Narendra Modi – **Pranav Desai**.
- The percentage to which the priority sector lending target for RRBs was increased to by the RBI – **75%**.
- Bangladesh's state-run Atomic Energy Commission signed a deal with Russia to set up two nuclear power plants, each with 1,200 MW capacity, an investment totaling \$12.65 billion.
- Direct-selling FMCG firm, Amway India announced Bollywood actor Farhan Akhtar as its brand ambassador to promote Nutrilite range of the products.
- Sri Lankan cricketer, who is facing the prospect of a four-year ban after his Blood sample tested positive for a banned substance – **Kushal Perera**.
- The first Indian to officiate a wrestling competition in Olympics – **Ashok Kumar**.
- **Lallianzuala Chhangte** became the youngest ever goal-scorer for India in football on 27 December 2015 by scoring against Nepal.
- 2015 Atal Samman Award was conferred to **Achyutanand Mishra**.
- **Karnataka** Legislative Council achieved the rare feat of recording 99 percent voting in the recently held elections for Legislative Council.
- In accordance with the Good Governance initiative, the **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development** launched the e-office in the Ministry on 28 December 2015.
- The new crude distillation unit of **Bharat Petroleum** was dedicated to the nation on 28 December 2015.
- The government had announced that individuals above **10 lakh rupees** taxable income limit in the financial year 2014-15 will not be able to avail the benefits of LPG subsidy.
- **Dr. Vijay Kelkar** is the chairman of the Committee on Revisiting and Revitalizing the PPP Model of Infrastructure Development. Its report was released by the Union Government on 28 December 2015.

- The report of the RBI's Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion headed by **Deepak Mohanty** was released on 28 December 2015.
- The 18th Session of the India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting was held on 28 December 2015 in **New Delhi**.
- **Gulmarg in Jammu & Kashmir** will host the 5-day long 12th National Skating Championship that will begin on 30 December 2015.
- **Rajiv Gandhi International Airport**, Hyderabad has become country's first airport to offer e-boarding facility.
- **Ramakrishna Mission** established official ties with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- The Government of Andhra Pradesh has proposed an underwater tunnel in the river **Krishna** to connect Amaravati and Vijayawada.
- The Union Government on 1 January 2016 formed **Shyam Benegal Committee** for holistic interpretation of the provisions of the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- Veteran South Indian classical vocalist **Sanjay Subrahmanyam** was on 1 January 2016 conferred with the 2015 Sangita Kalanidhi award.
- The former Bengal Cricket Captain **Laxmi Ratan Shukla** on 30 December 2015 announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.
- The Indian-origin cancer research expert, **Harpal Singh Kumar** received a Knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II.
- The Union Cabinet approved the construction of 69 bridges on the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa road section of the trilateral highway in –**Myanmar**.
- **Gyanendra D Bandgaiyan** was on 30 December 2015 appointed as the Director General of the National Centre for Good Governance.
- The lady weightlifter, who won the gold medal in 75 kilograms category at the Senior National Weightlifting Championship is – **Kavita Devi**
- **DAVA (Drug Authentication and Verification Application)** project of the Department of Commerce won the 2015 eASIA Award under Trade Facilitation category as announced by Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT) in Tehran, Iran on 31 December 2015.

10. NATIONAL

News 1 - Lok Sabha passed Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2015

The Lok Sabha on 17 December 2015 passed the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2015. This Bill aims to make the arbitration process friendlier and cost effective for investors, ensuring speedy disposal of cases. It aims to amend Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

The **amendments to the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996** were approved by the Union Cabinet in August 2015.

News 2 - Union Cabinet Approved Amendments in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 16 December 2015 gave its approval for introduction of a Bill in the Parliament for Amendments in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. This bill seeks to modify the list of Scheduled Castes in respect of Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Odisha and West Bengal and in the Central List of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) of Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Kerala consequent upon inclusion of certain castes or parts thereof in the lists of Scheduled Castes.

News 3 - Lok Sabha passed Bill to create Commercial Benches in High Courts.

The Lok Sabha on 16 December 2015 passed the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Bill, 2015. This Bill will help bring in big foreign investments into the country and improve India's global image on ease of doing business. It will help set up commercial benches in select high courts to settle high value commercial disputes.

News 4 - Union Cabinet approved revised Model Text for Indian Bilateral Investment Treaty.

The Union Cabinet, presided by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on 16 December 2015 gave its approval for the revised Model Text for the Indian Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT). The revised Indian model text for BIT will replace the existing Indian Model BIT.

News 5 - Union Cabinet Approved MoU with BRICS for energy conservation.

The Union Cabinet on 16 December 2015 gave its approval to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa) for strengthening energy efficiency cooperation.

The MoU provides for:

- Joint scientific and technological research.
- Conferencing and holding of lectures and seminars
- Capacity building and technology transfer
- Technology development, sharing policies and best practices
- Encouragement of use of energy efficient and energy saving approaches and instruments in the work of the business entities of the BRICS countries, carried out within the BRICS countries in Consultation with the host country.

News 6 - UNION GOVERNMENT GIVES IN PRINCIPLE APPROVAL TO GOOGLE'S LOON PROJECT.

Union Government has given in principle approval to work on **Loon project** of internet search engine giant, Google for providing Internet connectivity by using large balloons. The project will be started with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited to expand Internet connectivity in the country. Google's Loon project is Google's research and development project, which aims at providing low-cost Internet availability to rural and remote areas.



News 7 - Operation Smile-II to start from 1 January 2016.

Union Government on 14 December 2015 requested the states and Union Territories (UT) to start Operation Smile-II from 1 January 2016. The operation will end on 31 January 2016. Operation Smile-II is a campaign to rescue/rehabilitate the missing children. It is a follow up of the exercise Operation Smile that helped in rescuing and rehabilitating 9,146 missing children.

Similarly, another dedicated campaign titled **Operation Muskaan** was launched in the month of July 2015 throughout the country. About 19,742 children were rescued and rehabilitated under this operation.

News 8 - World Bank approved 1.5 billion US dollar loan to support Clean India Campaign.

The World Bank on 15 December 2015 approved a 1.5 billion US dollar loan for the ambitious Clean India Campaign (Swachh Bharat Mission). The loan was granted to support the government in its efforts to ensure all citizens in rural areas have access to improved sanitation and end the practice of open defecation by 2019.



The loan will be used for Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Support Operation Project. Swachh Bharat Mission, launched on 2 October 2014 by the Government of India, plans to construct 12 crore toilets in rural India by October 2019, at a projected cost of 1.96 lakh crore rupees.

News 9 - Lok Sabha passed Atomic Energy (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

The Lok Sabha on 14 December 2015 passed the landmark Atomic Energy (Amendment) Bill, 2015. The bill seeks to overcome difficulties encountered in the setting up of new nuclear projects and enhancement of nuclear power generation. This bill was passed with a voice vote from both treasury as well as opposition benches. It will now be referred to Rajya Sabha for ratification.

News 10 - Government of India signed MoU to establish three IIITs on PPP mode.

The Union Government on 12 December 2015 signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and documentation for establishing three Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIITs) at Ranchi, Nagpur and Pune. These IIITs are operated on a Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) mode with participation of State Government and Industry, apart from the Union Government.

News 11 - Construction work of TAPI Gas Pipeline started.

Construction work on the TAPI (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) Gas Pipeline project started in Turkmenistan on 13 December 2015. This pipeline will carry gas from the Dauletabad gas field in Turkmenistan to the Indian town of Fazilka, in Punjab, near the Pakistan-India border.

These four countries signed the TAPI gas pipeline (also known as Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline) deal in September 2010. It is a natural gas pipeline being developed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at an estimated cost of 10 billion US dollars. It will become operational by 2018.

News 12 - India and Japan inked three agreements for cooperation in Railway Sector.

MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) on cooperation and assistance in the Mumbai – Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project (Bullet Train Project) – This project is a 508 Kilometer railway line costing a total of 97,636 crore rupees. It will be implemented in a period of seven years.



Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Ministry of Railways and MLIT, Japan on technological cooperation.

Areas of cooperation include –

- Railway Safety and Electrification.
- Rolling stock including train sets/EMUs.
- Information sharing for station development and land value capture.
- Information sharing for environment friendly sanitation technology in trains.

MoU on technological cooperation between RDSO and Railway Technical Research Institute Japan.

- Safety in train operation.
- Advanced techniques of maintenance.
- Use of environment friendly technologies.
- Throughout enhancement measures.

News 13 - DAC approved purchase of Russian S-400 Triumpf Air Defence Missile System.

The Defense Acquisition Council (DAC) on 18 December 2015 has approved the purchase of 5 Russian advance S-400 Triumpf Air Defence Missile Systems from Russia at an estimated cost of 40,000 crore rupees. The approval was given by Union Defense Minister Manohar Parrikar during DAC meeting in New Delhi.



This system is capable of destroying incoming hostile missiles, aircraft and even drones within a range of up to 400 kms and can take on up to 36 targets at a range of over 150 kilometers.

News 14 - PM Narendra Modi inaugurates top Police Officers' Conference in Gujarat.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has formally inaugurated the All-India Conference of Directors General of Police (AICDGPs) at Dhordo in White Rann of Kutch region near Bhuj, Gujarat. This three-day conference was inaugurated in the presence of Union Minister for Home, Rajnath Singh, Minister of State for Home, Kiran Rijju and Haribhai Patel.



News 15 - Union Government launched IPV injection as part of Global Polio Endgame Strategy.

As a part of its commitment to the Global Polio Endgame Strategy, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, JP Nadda launched the injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV). The first phase of this vaccine will be introduced in six states, viz Assam, Gujarat, Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.



IPV will roll-out to 126 countries, which are only using OPV in the National program and it will be the largest and fastest globally-coordinated vaccine introduction project in history.

News 16 - Union Government launches GIAN Scheme to boost higher education.

Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has launched Global Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) Scheme to boost the quality of higher education in India. GIAN Scheme aims at improving the quality of higher education in the country through international collaboration.



These courses will vary in duration from one to three weeks depending on the subject and will be free for students of the host institution and available at a nominal fee for others. These courses will be web-casted live for students across the country through web portal www.gian.iitkgp.ac.in, which is designed by IIT Kharagpur.

News 17 - President gave nod to Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2015 to allow women to work in night shifts.

President Pranab Mukherjee on 1 December 2015 gave assent to Factories (Amendment) Bill, 2015 of Maharashtra. Among other things, the bill amends Section 66(1)(c) of the Factories Act, 1948 that restricts women from working at a factory between 7 PM and 6 AM.



News 18 - Lok Sabha passed bill to establish BIS as National Standards Body.

The Lok Sabha on 3 December 2015 passed the Bureau of Indian Standards Bill, 2015 to establish the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) as a National Standards Body.

News 19 - First India International Science Festival began at IIT-Delhi.

The first India International Science Festival (IISF) began on 4 December 2015 at IIT-Delhi. The five-day festival will explore ways to translate academic research into industrial applications benefiting the common man and encourage culmination of scientific temperament among youngsters, especially school children.



News 20 - NTC signed Integrity Pact with Transparency International India.

National Textile Corporation (NTC) Limited on 3 November 2015 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Transparency International India (TII) for adopting Integrity Pact (IP).



With this signing, NTC became the 51st Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) and 49th Central PSU to sign a MoU with TII. This Integrity Pact ensures that all activities and transactions between a Company or Government Department and their Suppliers are handled in a fair, transparent and

corruption-free manner. It also prohibits any kind of bribing, favor or any other unethical practice, which is closely monitored by honorary Independent External Monitors (IEMs).

News 21 - YouTube opens first video production studio in India.

YouTube along with Subhash Ghai-owned film school, Whistling Woods International, has opened its first video production studio in the country called YouTube Spaces. Through this collaboration, India's popular upcoming YouTube creators, as well as their students, will have free access to Whistling Woods' studios, high-end audio, visual and editing equipment, in addition to training programs, workshops and community events.



News 22 - GAIL, ISRO launch satellite based portal to monitor pipelines.

GAIL (India) Limited in collaboration with National Remote Sensing Centre, a unit of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), has launched a surveillance geo-portal – 'Bhuvan-GAIL Portal' – that utilizes space technology for its pipeline safety application. The launch took place in the presence of B.C. Tripathi, Chairman GAIL (India) Ltd, V.K. Dadhwal, Director NRSC, ISRO and senior officials from GAIL and ISRO.



News 23 - Cochin Shipyard launches fast patrol vessels for Coast Guard.

Cochin Shipyard Ltd has launched the nineteenth of the 20 Fast Patrol Vessels being built for the Indian Coast Guard. The vessel was named "ICGS Atulya". As on date, 15 ships out of 20 have been handed over to the Indian Coast Guard.



News 24 - India and Japan exchanged 16 documents; Reached Agreement on Civil Nuclear Energy.

India and Japan on 12 December 2015 exchanged 16 bilateral documents including agreement on civil nuclear energy cooperation. Besides, both the sides issued Joint Statement on India and Japan Vision 2025: Special Strategic and Global Partnership Working Together for Peace and Prosperity of the Indo-Pacific Region and the World.

News 25 - National Commission for Safai Karamcharis recommended to make it a Permanent and Statutory Body.

National Commission for Safai Karamcharis presented its Annual Report 2014-15 to the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Thawar Chand Gehlot on 11 December 2015. It was constituted on 12 August 1994.

In its Annual Report, the Commission has made following important recommendations –



- Make the Commission a permanent and statutory body with powers of Civil Court to lend it more credibility.
- The Contract system should be abolished and payment ensured of minimum wages for Safai Karamcharis.
- Death victims among Safai Karamcharis should be compensated with a minimum of 10 lakh rupees as has already been ordered by the Supreme Court.

News 26 - UNESCO designated Varanasi and Jaipur as members of Creative Cities Network.

Two Indian cities, Varanasi and Jaipur, on 11 December 2015 have made it to the Creative City Network of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the first time ever. Varanasi and Jaipur made it to the network in the categories, City of Music and City of Crafts and Folk Art respectively.



UNESCO Director-General, Irina Bokova, announced the designation of 47 cities from 33 countries as new members of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network.

News 27 - Rajya Sabha passed SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2015.

Rajya Sabha on 21 December 2015 passed the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2015. The bill seeks to amend the SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. Lok Sabha passed this bill in August 2015.

These bills **add new offences**, namely (a) Garlanding with footwear, (b) Compelling to dispose or carry human or animal carcasses, or do manual scavenging, (c) Abusing SCs or STs by caste name in public, (d) Attempting to promote feelings of ill-will against SCs or STs or disrespecting any deceased person held in high esteem, and (e) Imposing or threatening a social or economic boycott.

News 28 - Union Cabinet approved 4000 crore rupees proposal for shipbuilding and ship repair industry.

Highlights of the proposal –

- To counter the cost-disadvantages, the government will grant a financial assistance of 20 percent of the contract price or the fair price, whichever is lower following the delivery of the ship.
- The assistance will be reduced by 3 percent in every three years and will be given for all types of ships.
- This policy will be in force for ten years. The implementation of this policy would require budgetary support of 4000 crore rupees over ten years.
- The proposals also include grant of a Right of First Refusal for Indian shipyards for government purchases; tax incentives and grant of infrastructure status for shipbuilding and ship repair industry.

News 29 - Operationalize Organized Crimes Investigation Agency by 1 December 2016: SC.

The Supreme Court on 9 December 2015 asked the Union Government to operationalize the Organized Crimes Investigating Agency (OCIA) by 1 December 2016. OICA will probe human trafficking cases across the nation. The direction was given by Supreme Court bench headed by Justice AR Dave and comprising of Justice Madan B Lokur and Justice Kurian Joseph.

News 30 - Lok Sabha passed Indian Trusts (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

The Bill seeks to amend the **Indian Trusts Act, 1882** to remove the archaic provisions from the 133-year-old legislations. Indian Trusts Act, 1882 regulates the functioning of private trusts and trustees in India. It also outlines the procedure for investment of surplus funds of the trust for future use.

- It seeks to do away with the seven categories of securities in which trust money can be invested as stated in the Act.
- It enables the Union Government to notify securities or class of securities for investment by trusts.
- It states to take consent of any person, who is competent to contract and entitled to receive the trust income for his life.
- It also outlines the manner in which surplus funds of the trust may be invested for future use of the trust.
- It deletes all the other investment avenues specified in the Act.

News 31 - Union Cabinet approved amendments in the National Waterways Bill, 2015.

These amendments provide enacting a Central Legislation to declare 106 additional inland waterways as national waterways. After the inclusion of these 106 additional inland waterways to the existing five national waterways, the total number of national waterways will go up to 111. The right over the use of water, river bed and the appurtenant land will remain with the State Government. The expeditious declaration of National Waterways and its subsequent development will enhance the industrial growth and tourism potential of the hinterland along the waterway.

News 32 - Union Cabinet approved Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Bill, 2015.

The salient features of the Bill are –

- Applicable both for commercial and residential real estate projects.
- Establishment of 'Real Estate Regulatory Authority' in States/UTs to regulate real estate transactions.
- Registration of real estate projects and real estate agents with the Authority.

- Mandatory disclosure of all registered projects, including details of the promoter, project, layout plan, land status, approvals, agreements along with details of real estate agents, contractors, architect, structural engineer etc.
- Deposit of specified amount in a separate bank account to cover the construction cost of the project for timely completion of the project.
- Establishment of fast track dispute resolution mechanisms for settlement of disputes through adjudicating officers and Appellate Tribunal.
- Civil courts jurisdiction prohibited from taking up matters defined in Bill, however, consumer court allowed to hear real estate matters.
- Promoters barred from changing plans and design without consent of consumers.
- Provision of Appropriate Government to make rules for the matters specified in the Bill, and the Regulatory Authority to make necessary regulations.

News 33 - Centre sets up 'SETU' to support start-up businesses.

A mechanism known as SETU to support all aspects of start-up businesses and other self-employment activities has been set up by the government.

The Minister said the Department of Electronics and Information Technology is implementing a scheme entitled 'Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs' (TIDE) under which 147 start-ups have been supported at 25 TIDE centres established in premier institutes like IITs, NITs, IIMs etc.



News 34 - Indo-Russia bilateral naval exercise Indra Navy-15 began in Visakhapatnam.

Indo-Russia bilateral maritime exercise Indra Navy 2015 commenced on 7 December 2015 in Visakhapatnam. The 8th edition of Indra Naval Exercise was conducted in the Bay of Bengal till 12 December 2015. In the current exercise, Indian Navy is represented by INS Sahyadri, INS Ranvijay and INS Shakti.



News 35 - SC directed State and UT Governments to consider acid-attack victims under Disabled Quota.

The Supreme Court bench of Justice MY Eqbal and Justice C Nagappan on 7 December 2015 directed State and Union Territory (UT) Governments to consider acid-attack victims under the disabled quota. The decision was made to make sure that the acid-attack survivors can be able to get reservations in government jobs as well as education benefits as disabled person.



News 36 - India’s first indigenously designed & built warship INS Godavari decommissioned.

India’s first indigenously designed and built warship, Indian Navy Service (INS) Godavari was on 23 December 2015 decommissioned in the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. It was commissioned into the Navy on 10 December 1983.



It was the lead ship of her class of three guided-missile frigates of the Indian Navy. The **other two warships are INS Ganga and INS Gomati**. Over its 32 years of service, it was successfully deployed in numerous operations.

37) North India's first cable bridge inaugurated at Basohali town of J&K

The Basohali town which is located in Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir was in news on 24 December 2015 as the Union Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar dedicated the first cable-stayed bridge of North India to the nation.



Key details related to Basohli Cable-Bridge –

- The 592-metre bridge was constructed over river Ravi on Dunera- Basohli-Bhadharwah road.
- It would provide close connectivity between three northern states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab.
- It was constructed by Border Roads Organization (BRO) at a cost of 145 crore rupees.

Other three major cable-stayed bridges in India –

Vidyasagar	Over the Hoogly River in Kolkata
Bandra-Worli Sea Link	Mumbai
New Yamuna Bridge	Over Yamuna River in Allahabad

News 38 - Lok Sabha passed The Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Bill, 2015.

The Lok Sabha on 22 December 2015 passed The Payment of Bonus (Amendment) Bill, 2015. The Bill seeks to amend the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.

Provisions of the Bill –

- It seeks to raise the eligibility limit for payment of bonus from a salary of 10000 rupees to 21000 rupees a month.
- It seeks to raise this calculation ceiling of bonus to 7000 rupees per month or as per the minimum wage notified for the employment under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 (whichever is higher).
- It will have retrospective effect and will come into force on 1 April 2016.

News 39 - Union Government launched two Mobile Apps for Farmers.

Union Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister, Radha Mohan Singh on 23 December 2015 launched two mobile apps namely **Crop Insurance** and **AgriMarket Mobile** for farmers.



These apps were launched to celebrate the birth anniversary of former Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Choudhary Charan Singh. Their birthday will be celebrated by organizing Kishan Jai Vigyan Week.

The Mobile App Crop Insurance will help the farmers not only to find out complete details about insurance cover available in their area, but also to get details of normal sum insured, extended sum insured, premium details and subsidy information of any notified crop in any notified area.

Mobile app AgriMarket Mobile can be used by the farmers to get the market prices of crops in the mandi within 50 kms radius of the device and other mandis in the country. The prevailing prices are fetched from the Agmarknet portal.

News 40 - Cow named as Yahoo's Personality of the Year.

- Search engine giant Yahoo on 21 December 2015 named **Cow** as the **Personality of the Year 2015**.
- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal were among the **top newsmakers of 2015**.
- The rise of ISIS, 2015 World Cup, APJ Abdul Kalam's demise, the Sheena Bora Murder investigation and the Vyapam Scandal featured on the list of **Most searched news / events** in 2015.
- In addition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi remained the **Most Searched Politician** in 2015 too.

- Barack Obama's India visit, AAP's landslide victory in the Delhi elections, Lalitgate and Bihar's Mahagatbandhan were among the **Top 10 Political Moments of the Year**.
- **Sunny Leone** fetched the top position as the Most Searched Female Celebrity for the fourth year in a row. Katrina Kaif and Deepika Padukone took the second and third slots respectively.
- Among the male celebrities, **Salman Khan** claimed the top spot, while singer-rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh came in second.

News 41 - Union HRD Ministry launched the 6th All India Survey on Higher Education.

The Union Minister of Human Resource Development Zubin Irani on 21 December 2015 launched the 6th All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) in New Delhi. She represents the state of Gujarat as a member of parliament in Rajya Sabha.



The major findings of the AISHE 2014-15 are:

- Increase in **overall enrolment** from 27.5 million in 2010-11 to 33.3 million in 2014-15.
- Improvement in **Gross Enrolment Ratio** which is a ratio of enrolment in higher education to population in the eligible age group (18-23) years from 19.4 percent on 2010-11 to 23.6 percent in 2014-15.
- **Gender Parity Index (GPI)**, a ratio of proportional representation of female and male, has marginally improved from 0.86 to 0.93 to the corresponding period.
- **Number of institutions of higher education** listed on AISHE portal has also increased significantly – universities from 621 to 757 and colleges from 32974 to 38056 during the period.

News 42 - Cochin Shipyard Limited became first licensed Indian shipyard to make LNG Ships.

Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) on 21 December 2015 received certification to build LNG-transporting ships for any client world-wide making it the first shipyard in India to get the nod.



This shipyard successfully completed a **Mark-III Flex Mock-Up**, which has been certified by **Gaztransport et Technigaz (GTT), France**, thereby completing all requirements to be licensed by GTT.

About LNG Vessels –

LNG Vessels are very complex ships and only a few yards in the world have the capability to build these ships. The most critical aspect of an LNG ship is its cryogenic containment and handling system as the LNG is carried at a temperature of -163 degrees. This requires fool-proof cryogenic containment and safe handling and transfer system.

News 43 - Rajya Sabha passed Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015.

Rajya Sabha on 22 December 2015 passed the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2015. With this passage, the bill awaits the President's nod to be qualified as an act. Most importantly, the Bill permits juveniles between the ages of 16-18 years to be tried as adults for heinous offences. Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB) and Child Welfare Committees (CWC) will be constituted in each district.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires all signatory countries to treat every child under the age of 18 years as equal. The provision of trying a juvenile as an adult contravenes the Convention.

News 44 - Union Cabinet approved Lucknow Metro Rail Project Phase-1A.

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 December 2015 approved the Lucknow Metro Rail Project Phase-1 A. To be developed at an expenditure of 6928 crore rupees, the project will cover a length of 22.878 km with 22 stations.



The project will be implemented by the Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC), which will be reconstituted into a 50:50 jointly owned company of Union Government and Government of Uttar Pradesh.

The project will come under the legal framework of –

- The Metro Railways (Construction of Works) Act, 1978.
- The Metro Railways (Operation and Maintenance) Act, 2002.
- The Railways Act, 1989, as amended from time to time.

News 45 - CCEA approved 3000-crore rupees scheme for integrated development and management of fisheries.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 22 December 2015 gave its approval for implementation of an umbrella scheme for integrated development and management of fisheries. The scheme will be implemented at an outlay of 3000 crore rupees, for a period of five years.

It will cover development and management of inland fisheries, aquaculture, marine fisheries and all activities undertaken by the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) towards realizing Blue Revolution.



News 46 - Reliance Defense signs \$6 billion pact with Russian arms firm as Modi visits Moscow.

Reliance Defense said on Thursday it had signed a manufacturing and maintenance deal potentially worth \$6 billion with Russia's Almaz-Antey.

News 47 - Modi inaugurates new Afghan Parliament built by India in Kabul.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 25 December 2015 inaugurated Afghanistan's newly-built Parliament House in Kabul.

The house was entirely **built by** India's government owned construction agency **Central Public Works Department (CPWD)** at an estimated cost of 90 million US dollars. Its foundation stone was laid by the then Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh in August 2005.



The Parliament Block has two large assembly halls to accommodate the Wolesi Jirga (the House of the People) and the Meshrano Jirga (the Upper House). A **block** in the Parliament House was named after former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

News 48 - Indian Oil, Oil India sign MoU with Rosneft.

Indian Oil Corporation and Oil India Ltd have signed a memorandum of understanding with Russian national oil company Rosneft for cooperation in geologic survey, exploration and production of hydrocarbons in select onshore areas in Russia.



The MoU document was signed during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Russia. In all, 16 agreements were signed between Indian and Russian firms in the field of nuclear energy, hydrocarbon, defence and other sectors.

News 49 - India, Russia signed 16 pacts to deepen bilateral cooperation.

India and Russia on 24 December 2015 signed 16 Agreements/Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) to deepen bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, security, technology, etc. The pacts were signed after the conclusion of the **16th India-Russia Annual Summit in Moscow**. The theme of the summit was Shared Trust, New Horizons.



News 50 - Union Government announced 4 new IT-based initiatives for citizen-centric health services.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda on 25 December 2015 announced 4 new Information Technology-based initiatives to provide citizen-centric health services. The initiatives include three applications, namely, **Kilkari, Mobile Academy and M-Cessation** and a dedicated **toll free number 1800-11-6666** which will provide round the clock counselling and treatment support services for TB patients.



News 51 - Seychelles Govt allows India to build Naval Base on its Assumption Island.

Seychelles government allowed India to build its first Naval Base on the Assumption Island in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) as a joint project between both countries.

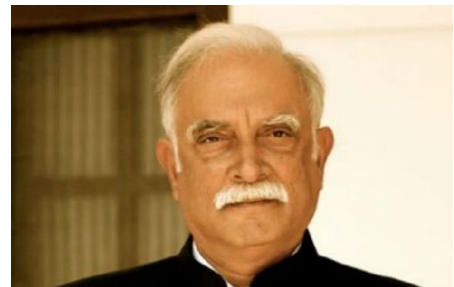
News 52 - Union Govt brings 376 drugs under the NLEM.

The Union Government has added 106 drugs including that of HIV/AIDS, Cancer and Hepatitis C to the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). Apart from that 70 medicines were deleted from the list. With this total number of essential medicines in the list has gone up to 376 from earlier 348 medicines. This move will ensure their availability across the country at affordable prices.

News 53 - Civil Aviation Ministry gave clearance for four greenfield airports.

The Civil Aviation Ministry on 28 December 2015 gave clearance for four greenfield airports - three airports in Andhra Pradesh and one international airport at Dholera, Gujarat.

Greenfield Airport means a new airport, which is built from scratch in a new location, because the existing airport is unable to meet the projected requirements of traffic. The projects which are modified or upgraded from existing facilities are called **Brownfield Projects**.



News 54 - Russia tied up with HAL to manufacture Kamov 226T helicopters.

Russia's Rostech State Corporation on 29 December 2015 tied up with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to manufacture at least 200 Kamov 226T light helicopters. The Kamov will replace the ageing fleet of Cheetah and Chetak.



The deal is estimated to be worth 1 billion US dollars and is the first Russian-Indian high-tech project implemented by the Indian government within the framework of the **Make in India** initiative.

News 55 - CCEA approved Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme for textiles industry.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on 30 December 2015 approved the introduction of Amended Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) in place of the existing Revised Restructured Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (RR-TUFS), for technology upgradation of the textiles industry.

The implementation of this scheme will be executed and monitored online under iTUFS, launched in April 2015.

News 56 - Union Cabinet approves Raptor MoU for conservation of migratory birds of prey.

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia.

This MoU is also called as the 'Raptor MoU' under the Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS). By signing this, India will become the 54th signatory to the MoU.



News 57 - Union Govt approves constitution of 69 bridges on Trilateral Highway in Myanmar.

The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of 69 Bridges including Approach Roads on the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) road section of the Trilateral Highway in Myanmar. Budget for constructing these 69 Bridges is 371.58 crore rupees. It will improve connectivity between India and Myanmar for movement of goods and traffic.



News 58 - Union Govt unveils National Biotechnology Development Strategy 2015-2020.

Union Government has unveiled National Biotechnology Development Strategy (NBDS) 2015-2020 to establish India as a world-class bio-manufacturing hub. It was unveiled by the Union Science and Technology Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi.



News 59 - India received first consignment of uranium from Canada.

India on 4 December 2015 received its first uranium consignment of about 2730 tonnes from Canada. The uranium is shipped to India for the country's nuclear power reactors.

The consignment was shipped by Canada's **Cameco Inc**, which entered into a contract with India's **Department of Atomic Energy** during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ottawa in 2015. As part of the agreement signed in April 2015, Canadian Cameco Corporation will supply 7.1 million pounds of uranium concentrate to India till 2020. The deal is worth 350 million US dollars.

News 60 - Union Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Germany for Solar Energy.

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 November 2015 approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Germany to expand bilateral development cooperation in the field of Solar Energy.



Under this agreement, Germany would provide concessional loans in the range of one billion Euros over the next five years through Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). These funds from KfW will also be utilized for providing soft loans to the end-users through partner banks.

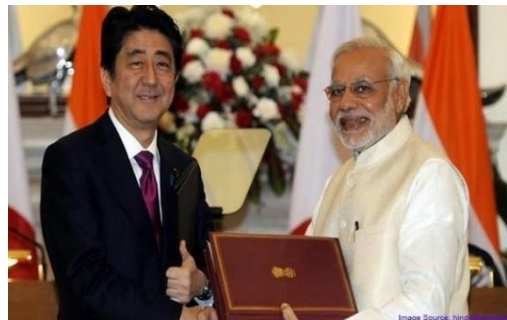
News 61 - Union Cabinet Approved MoU with Israel on water resources management and development cooperation.

The Union Cabinet presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 December 2015 gave its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Israel in the field of water resources management and development cooperation.



News 62 - Union Cabinet approved DTAC agreement with Japan.

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 December 2015 approved signing and ratification of Protocol between India and Japan for amending the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) in order to facilitate tax-related exchange of information.



DTAC was signed between the two countries in 1989 for avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion through a protocol.

News 63 - India, France launched International Solar Alliance.

India and France on 30 November 2015 launched the International Solar Alliance in Paris. The alliance was launched jointly by PM Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande during the United Nations climate change conference (COP21).



The alliance also invited all countries located fully or partly between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn to join the group. It will function from the National Institute of Solar Energy in India, Gurgaon.

11. NEW BOOKS

News 1 - The Bose Brothers and Indian Independence – An Insider’s Account authored by Madhuri Bose.

The book titled The Bose Brothers and Indian Independence – An Insider’s Account authored by Madhuri Bose came in news after the author presented a copy of her book to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17 December 2015.



News 2 - Sharad Pawar’s autobiography On My Terms released.

Sharad Pawar's On My Terms: From the Grassroots to the Corridors of Power, an autobiography of Sharad Pawar was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 10 December 2015. The book was released on the 75th birthday of Pawar, the Maratha strongman and the leader of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).



12. PERSONS IN NEWS

News 1 - Indian-origin official Sanjay Pradhan to lead Open Government Partnership.

The Open Government Partnership (OGP) on 16 December 2015 selected Indian-origin World Bank official, Sanjay Pradhan (Currently Vice President for Change, Leadership and Innovation at the World Bank Group) to lead the organization. He holds a PhD and a Bachelor's degree from Harvard University.



News 2 - French President Francois Hollande to be Chief Guest at Republic Day in India.

President of France Francois Hollande will be the Chief Guest at 67th India's Republic Day (26 January 2016) celebrations.



Apart from this, Hollande will be the fifth French leader to be a chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations, maximum number from any country so far. Bhutan's head has presided four times so far. In 2015, the United States President Barack Obama was invited as the chief guest on the Republic Day. Obama was the first US President to attend the Republic Day Parade of India.

News 3 - Indian-origin politician Pravin Gordhan becomes South Africa's Finance Minister.

An Indian-origin politician, Pravin Gordhan has been appointed as South Africa's new Finance Minister. He replaces David van Rooyen. Pravin Gordhan is also former Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs for 2014-2015, he succeeded Lechesa Tsenoli.



News 4 - Sir Venkatraman Ramakrishnan assumed Presidency of the Royal Society.

Sir Venkatraman Ramakrishnan on 1 December 2015 assumed Presidency of the Royal Society in London. He was elected to the office in March 2015 by the society's council and will serve for up to five years. Sir Venkatraman Ramakrishnan is the 61st president of this Society.



News 5 - Indian-American Dr. Vijay M Rao named as Chairperson of RSNA.

Indian-American Dr. Vijay M Rao was named as the chairperson of the prestigious Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) Board of Directors on 2 December 2015. She is the first woman chairperson of a Clinical department in Jefferson's history (2002).



News 6 - Indian American Rakesh K Jain selected for US National Medal of Science 2015.

Indian American Professor, Rakesh K Jain was on 22 December 2015 selected for the National Medal of Science 2015 of United States (US). Jain is a professor at Harvard Medical School and Director of the Tumor Biology Laboratory at Massachusetts General Hospital.



He will receive the honor along with 16 other winners of the National Medal of Science and National Medal of Technology and Innovation at a White House ceremony in 2016. Awarded annually, this Medal recognizes individuals, who have made outstanding contributions to science and engineering. It is considered as the United States' highest honor for achievement and leadership in advancing the fields of science and technology.

News 7 - Kapil Chopra to head World Tourism Council.

Kapil Chopra, President, The Oberoi Group, has been appointed as the Chairman of World Travel & Tourism Council, India Initiative (WTTTCII) for 2016, a statement from the hotel group said on Thursday.

Ashwani Lohani, Chairman & Managing Director, Air India, has been appointed as the Vice-Chairman of WTTTCII for 2016.



13. PLACES IN NEWS

News 1 - Commanders Conference held in Kochi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 December 2015 chaired the combined Commanders Conference, an annual tri-services event held on board INS Vikramaditya about 50 kms off Kochi coast, Kerala.

The Conference, also known as the Unified Commanders' Conference, is an occasion in which India's defence policy, doctrine and operational challenges are discussed in detail. Other participants of the event included Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar, National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, and Chiefs of Army, Navy and Airforce.



News 2 - GIFT City Phase-2 work launched.

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) on Monday announced the launch of the Phase-2 development, which will be focused on International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) to be set up in GIFT SEZ. GIFT IFSC has already made allotment to around 20 institutions, including leading names such as SBI, IDBI Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and YES Bank.

GIFT has also signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with various leading Capital Market players namely, BSE, NSE, MCX and DMCC. India's first IFSC is already operational with the commencement of IFSC banking units by Yes Bank & Federal Bank in November 2015.



14. REGIONAL

News 1 - MLAs of Arunachal Pradesh Assembly passed resolution to remove Speaker Nabam Rebia.

Out of the total 60 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) of the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly, 33 members on 16 December 2015 passed a resolution to remove the Speaker Nabam Rebia. Resolution was passed using the voice vote system. In 33 MLAs, 20 are rebel congress, 11 from BJP and 2 are Independents.



News 2 - AP CABINET DECIDED TO ABOLISH VAT AND CST ON SUGAR FACTORIES.

Andhra Pradesh Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu decided to abolish Value-added tax and Central Sales Tax on Sugar factories. VAT is governed by each state separately and every state has distinct VAT act for their state.



News 3 - WB Govt approves proposal for formation of 5 new districts.

West Bengal Government has approved proposal for formation of five new districts in the state. With this the total number of districts in Bengal will increase to 25. Following are the new district names –

- Kalimpong
- Sundarbans
- Basirhat
- Burdwan (Industrial)
- Jhargram



News 4 - Himachal Pradesh became first state to launch Rotavirus vaccination project.

Himachal Pradesh on 3 December 2015 became the first state of India to launch Rotavirus vaccination project. The vaccine will help in controlling the child mortality rate (under five years of age) due to diarrhoea. International Clinical Epidemiological Network will provide technical assistance and will also bear the entire cost of the vaccines. The project will soon be launched in Vellore in Karnataka and Pune in Maharashtra.



News 5 - Uttar Pradesh Government launches first International festival on Birds.

Uttar Pradesh Government has launched International festival on Birds in a bid to promote state as an international bird-watching destination. The first-of-its-kind festival was inaugurated by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav at the National Chambal Sanctuary (NCS) in Agra.



News 6 - Delhi Assembly passes Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill, 2015.

The Delhi Assembly has unanimously passed the Delhi Jan Lokpal Bill, 2015 for establishment of statutory anti-corruption ombudsman. The Bill provides powers to Lokpal to act against any government functionary including those of the Centre and in the national capital territory (NCT) of Delhi through its own investigation wing.



Janlokpal will be a three-member body with Chairperson and two members. They would be appointed by on recommendation of selection committee consisting of Chief Minister, Leader of Opposition and Speaker of Delhi Legislative Assembly. On receiving corruption complaints from the government or from members of public Janlokpal is empowered to investigate an allegation of corruption in the NCT including the Chief Minister's office.

News 7 - AP, Jharkhand join UDAY scheme to bolster Discoms.

The Andhra Pradesh government has conveyed its in-principle decision to the Ministry of Power of joining UDAY (Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana) scheme.

The UDAY scheme has inbuilt incentives encouraging State governments to voluntarily restructure their debts. These incentives include taking over of Discom debt by the States outside the fiscal deficit limits, reduction in the cost of power through various measures such as coal linkage rationalisation, liberal coal swaps, coal price rationalisation, correction in coal grade slippage, allocation of coal linkages at notified prices, priority/additional funding through schemes of Ministry of Power and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and, reduction in interest burden.

News 8 - Maharashtra becomes first state to allow MLAs raise online question.

The Maharashtra legislature has become the first in the country to launch an online mechanism for its members to send questions and move different motions in the House. In this regard state government has launched a website mls.org.in as part of Digital MLAs initiative in the winter session of state legislature in Nagpur.



News 9 - SmartCity Kochi to open next month.

The much-delayed first phase of SmartCity Kochi, a joint venture of SmartCity Dubai and the Kerala Government, is ready for opening and will most likely take place in January. SmartCity Kochi is an IT Special Economic Zone. SmartCity Kochi is also known as the SCK.



News 10 - 'Biz Bridge' meet in Kolkata.

Loan applications worth Rs. 50 crores were received from micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), both existing and prospective, from the eastern region, particularly West Bengal, at the end of the four-day 'Biz Bridge 2015' organised here in the city. Organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry, Biz Bridge 2015 had about 100 exhibitors coming from across the country and drew over 10,000 high-end visitors.



News 11 - GRSE launches fifth ship of Indian Navy's LCU MK IV project.

The fifth ship of Indian Navy's LCU MK IV project, was launched on Monday at Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) in Kolkata. LCU L-55 is the fifth vessel in the series of eight Landing Craft Utility Ships being designed and built by GRSE for the Indian Navy. The chief guest, Vice Admiral AV Subhedar, AVSM, VSM, Chief of Material, Chairman & Managing Director GRSE were present on the occasion.



News 12 - Odisha Government launched Anwasha scheme to provide free education to SC/ST students.

The Odisha Government on 21 December 2015 launched Anwasha scheme, in which, 5000 SC and ST children will annually be enrolled into Standard I in leading private schools in urban areas of the state. State CM Naveen Patnaik announced the Anwasha Scheme.



Highlights of the Anwasha Scheme

- The government will bear all expenses for education of the students under the scheme, which will be implemented in 17 districts.
- The expenses for fees, uniform, books, hostel accommodation as well transportation will be sponsored by the government.
- The government aims to enroll a total of 50,000 SC and ST students in phases.

- Over 3.5 lakh ST and SC students staying in hostels are to continue their education while 2 lakhs more will avail the facility soon.
- For each student, government will give 25,000 rupees for school fees per annum excluding hostel cost and scholarship.
- Separate hostel will be constructed for these children.

News 13 - Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar approved Patna Metro Rail project.

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on 22 December 2015 approved much anticipated Patna Metro Rail project's proposal. The state government will now send the proposal for the union government's clearance. The Project estimates 14,000 to 17,000 crore rupees.



News 14 - AP Government signed MoU with Microsoft India on technology initiatives.

Government of Andhra Pradesh and Microsoft India signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a range of technology initiatives. The MoU was signed after a meeting between the Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella in Hyderabad. Microsoft India will set up a **Centre for Excellence (CoE) in Visakhapatnam.**



News 15 - BHEL commissions Prayagraj power project unit in UP.

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has commissioned a 660 MW unit of Prayagraj Super Thermal Power Project at Bara town in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh. This is the first supercritical thermal unit to be commissioned in the state to achieve capacity addition on attaining full load.



It is a Greenfield thermal power project owned by Prayagraj Power Generation Company Limited (PPGCL), a subsidiary company of Jaiprakash Power Ventures Limited. Super-critical units are generally eco-friendly and more efficient thermal power plants as they consume less coal as fuel.

15. REPORTS

News 1 - ILO released Global Estimates on Migrant Workers.

United Nations International Labor Organization (ILO) on 16 December 2015 released a report titled Global Estimates on Migrant Workers. Migrant worker's population account for 150.3 million of the world's approximately 232 million international migrants.



- Among migrant workers, 83.7 million are men and 66.6 million are women, corresponding to 55.7 per cent and 44.3 per cent of the total respectively.
- Migrants constitute 3.9 percent of the total global population (aged 15 years and over), however, migrant workers constitute a higher proportion (4.4 percent) of all workers.

News 2 - United Nations Human Development Report 2015 released.

The United Nations Human Development Report 2015 was released on 14 December 2015 with the title **Work for Human Development** in Ethiopia. In the report, India with a score of 0.609 has been ranked 130 out of 188 countries in terms of Human Development Index (HDI). In the 2014 report, India was ranked 135 out of 187 countries.

Human Development Index (HDI) in Tables.

Top Five Countries:

Country	HDI in 2014	Rank
Norway	0.944	1
Australia	0.935	2
Switzerland	0.930	3
Denmark	0.923	4
Netherlands	0.922	5

India's HDI vis-a-vis BRIC:

Country	HDI (2014)	Rank	Category of Human Development
Russia Federation	0.798	50	High
Brazil	0.755	75	High
China	0.727	90	High
South Africa	0.666	116	Medium
India	0.609	130	Medium

India's HDI vis-a-vis SAARC countries:

Country	HDI (2014)	Rank	Category of Human Development
Sri Lanka	0.757	73	High
Maldives	0.706	104	High
India	0.609	130	Medium
Bhutan	0.605	132	Medium
Bangladesh	0.570	142	Medium
Nepal	0.548	145	Low
Pakistan	0.538	147	Low
Afghanistan	0.465	171	Low

News 3 - Green Peace India released report on National Air Quality Index of 17 cities.

Green Peace India on 15 December 2015 released a report on National Air Quality Index (NAQI) of 17 cities. The report is the first analysis of air pollution levels in Indian cities carried out by Green Peace using the NAQI system.

As per the report, Delhi was listed as the most polluted city in the world, while **13 Indian cities were figured in the list of 20 most polluted cities** on the planet. The 13 cities were among the 17 countries surveyed by the Green Peace.

List of 20 most Polluted cities in World: WHO

Rank	City	Country	PM2.5 Annual Average ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)
1	Delhi	India	153
2	Patna	India	149
3	Gwalior	India	144
4	Raipur	India	134
5	Karachi	Pakistan	117
6	Peshawar	Pakistan	111
7	Rawalpindi	Pakistan	107
8	Khoramabad	Iran	102
9	Ahmedabad	India	100
10	Lucknow	India	96
11	Firozabad	India	96
12	Doha	Qatar	93

13	Kanpur	India	93
14	Amritsar	India	92
15	Ludhiana	India	90
16	Igdir	Turkey	90
17	Narayonganj	Bangladesh	89
18	Allahabad	India	88
19	Agra	India	88
20	Khanna	India	88

News 4 - Global Financial Integrity released the Global Illicit Financial Flows Report 2015.

- Among the 149 countries surveyed, India stood at the 4th position in terms of illicit financial flows between 2004 and 2013 with 51 billion US dollar.
- The top 5 countries with highest illicit financial flows- China (1), Russia (2), Mexico (3), India (4) and Malaysia (5).
- While illicit out flows from China, during 2004-13, was pegged at 139 billion US dollars, in case of Russia it was 104 billion US dollars.
- 1.1 trillion US dollars flowed illicitly out of developing and emerging economies in 2013 due to tax evasion, crime, corruption, and other illicit activity.

16. RESIGNATIONS

News 1 - Latvia's Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma resigned.

Latvia's first female Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma announced her resignation on 7 December 2015.



17. SPORTS

News 1 - Rory McIlroy bagged European Tour Golfer of the Year award.

Rory McIlroy on 15 December 2015 was named the European Tour Golfer of the Year. He received the award for the third time in four years. Previously, McIlroy was named the European Tour Golfer of the Year in 2014 and 2012. His official World Golf Ranking is Number One.



News 2 - Shiva, Mandeep among four boxers to receive IOC Olympic scholarships.

Four Indian boxers, namely Shiva Thapa, Mandeep Jangra, Gaurav Bidhuri and Sumit Sangwan on 15 December 2015 were selected by the International Olympics Committee (IOC) for a scholarship.

Under the scholarship, the boxers will get a sum of 800 US dollars (about 53 thousand rupees) every month till August 2016, provided they qualify for the Olympic Games. They will also get an additional 5000 US Dollars (about 3 lakh 34 thousand rupees) to cover their transportation cost for participation in the Olympic qualifying events.



Shiva Thapa



Mandeep Jangra



Gaurav Bidhuri



Sumit Sangwan

News 3 - Vijay Kumar won gold in the 59th National shooting championship.

Vijay Kumar on 13 December 2015 won the center fire pistol gold in the 59th National shooting championship at the Dr. Karni Singh Range in Tughlakabad in New Delhi. The 15-day event began on 1 December 2015.



To win the gold, Vijay Kumar scored 588 points to pip Gurpreet Singh by two points. Vijay Kumar had won the silver medal in the 25m rapid fire pistol event in 2012 Olympics held in London.

Other gold medalists in the Championship

- Gurpreet Singh – 25m standard pistol.
- Pemba Tamang - Rapid fire pistol.
- Achal Pratap Singh Grewal – Air pistol & Standard pistol events.

News 4 - Japan's Nozomi Okuhara, Kento Momota won singles titles at World Dubai Superseries Finals.

Japanese shuttlers Kento Momota and Nozomi Okuhara on 13 December 2015 won the Men's singles and Women's singles title respectively at the BWF World Super series finals held at the Hamdan Sports Complex, Dubai.

Okuhara defeated China's Wang Yihan by 22-20, 21-18 to grab the women's singles crown. Not much later, Momota crushed Denmark's Viktor Axelsen by 21-15, 21-12 and clinched the Men's singles title.



Kento Momota



Nozomi Okuhara

News 5 - Rohit Sharma to launch cricket comic series 'Hyper Tygers'.

Cricketer Rohit Sharma along with Graphic India, UK-based ISM Komix and Cornerstone Sport are set to launch a new environmental superhero team called 'Hyper Tygers'. The digital comic will be free to read on all devices from February 1 through Sharma's Facebook page and the Graphic POP! Mobile app.



News 6 - Mascot and Logo of 2016 South Asian Games unveiled.

Organizing committee of 12th South Asian Games (OC-SAG) on 13 December 2014 unveiled mascot of the games and logo at ITA Cultural Center Machkhowa in Guwahati, Assam.

The mascot Tikhor is a one horned rhino and is the brand ambassador of the games carries the message of peace, stability, amity and progress in the South Asian region. On the other hand, the logo has eight petals representing the countries participating in the mega event. The mega event will be jointly held in Guwahati and Shillong from 6 February to 16 February 2016.



News 7 - Anirban Lahiri wins Order of Merit crown of Asian Tour.

India's star golfer Anirban Lahiri (28) has won the coveted Order of Merit crown of Asian Tour for year 2015. In the 2015 season world No. 41, Lahiri has earned \$1,139,084, which is way ahead of second-placed Scott Hend of Australia, who has earned \$491,631.



News 8 - Australia defeated Belgium to win Hockey World League Final.

Australia on 6 December 2015 defeated Belgium by 2-1 to win 2014-2015 Men's Hockey World League Final, which was held at Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Stadium, Raipur. India defeated world number two and defending champions Netherlands by 3-2 in the penalty shoot-out, and clinched the bronze medal in the tournament.

A total of 8 teams competed for Hockey World League Final. The teams were India, Germany, Argentina, Netherlands, Canada, Australia, Belgium and Great Britain.



News 9 - Indian cyclist Deborah Herold became World No. 4 Cyclist.

Indian cyclist Deborah Herold on 11 December 2015 became the first Indian female cyclist to be ranked fourth in the World Elite Women Ranking for the 500m time trial event. The ranking was issued by cycling world body International Cycling Union (UCI).



Besides this, the Indian team also improved its world ranking to 13th. India is the highest ranking Asian country in 500m time trial. China fetched the 15th spot in the ranking.

News 10 - Elizabeth Susan Koshy clinched gold in 59th National Shooting Championships.

Elizabeth Susan Koshy on 11 December 2015 won the Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions Gold at the 59th National Shooting Championships held at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting range in New Delhi. Anjum Moudgil and Gaayathri N won the silver medal and bronze respectively.



News 11 - Abhay Singh won U-19 Singapore Squash Open.

India's Abhay Singh won the Under-19 Singapore Squash Open. In the final of the Old Chang Kee Singapore Open, he defeated second seed Alwin Chai of Malaysia. With this win, Abhay, the world number one junior player, has won seven junior titles in the year 2015. Out of these seven titles, two of them are international titles.



News 12 - Eugeneson Lyngdoh and Bala Devi bagged top AIFF honors.

Eugeneson Lyngdoh (BFC) and Striker Bala Devi on 20 December 2015 were named Player of the year and Footballer of the year, respectively. These awards were announced at the AIFF Annual General Body Meeting held in Margao, Goa.

AIFF Awards	Winner
Player-of-the-Year	Eugeneson Lyngdoh
Woman Footballer-of-the-Year	Bala Devi
Emerging Player of the Year	Pritam Kotal

Emerging Woman Football of the Year	Pyari Xaxa
Best Grassroots Programme	Football Association of Odisha
Long time contribution to Indian Football	Coca Cola
Best Referee	CR Srikrishna
Best Assistant Referee	Sapam Kneddy

News 13 - OUE Singapore Slammers crowned Champions of IPTL 2015.

The hosts Singapore Slammers on 20 December 2015 beat Micromax Indian Aces in the final to win the crown of the Indian Premier Tennis League (IPTL) – 2015, played at Singapore Indoor Stadium. The champions won the prize money of 1 million US dollars, while the runners-up got 500000 US dollars.

The Most Valuable Player (MVP) in the Male category was Ivan Dodig (Aces), while in the women category, the MVP was Belinda Bencic (Slammers). Both the MVPs won 50000 US dollars each as prize money.

About Indian Premier Tennis League (IPTL) –

Indian Premier Tennis League (IPTL) was founded by Mahesh Bhupathi in 2014. It’s the first city-based professional league in the world, played in the respective countries. In its 2014 inaugural edition, four teams had participated with Micromax Indian Aces winning the crown of IPTL 2014. It had five city-based teams, namely OUE Singapore Slammers, Micromax Indian Aces, OBI UAE Royals, Legendari Japan Warriors and Philippine Mavericks.

News 14 - FC Barcelona won 2015 FIFA Club World Cup.

FC Barcelona on 20 December 2015 won the 2015 FIFA Club World Cup by defeating Argentina’s River Plate 3-0. The final match was held at the International Stadium in Yokohama, Japan. At the end of the annual event, Suarez collected the Player-of-the-Tournament and Golden Boot awards. So far, the event was held for 12 times and Barcelona tops the table of winners with three titles overall. The 2013 title was won by FC Bayern Munich that was held in Morocco.



News 15 - Chennaiyin FC crowned 2015 ISL champion.

Chennaiyin FC was crowned as the champions of the 2nd Indian Super League (ISL) Football tournament on 20 December 2015. In the final played at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Fatorda, Goa, Chennaiyin defeated the hosts FC Goa, 3-2. Mendoza, who finished as the tournament's highest scorer with 13 goals, bagged the 'Golden boot' as well as the 'Hero of the League' award.



Coaches of the two teams –

Team	Coach
FC Goa	Zico
FC Chennaiyin	Marco Materazzi

News 16 - Mahela Jayawardene awarded honorary lifetime membership of MCC.

Former Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene on 9 December 2015 was awarded with an honorary life membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), London. Jayawardene became the 14th Sri Lankan to be awarded with MCC Honorary Life Membership. Kumar Sangakkara, Muttiah Muralitharan and Chaminda Vaas were awarded with the same.



About Marylebone Cricket Club –

- MCC is a cricket club in London.
- It was founded in 1787.
- It owns, and is based at, Lord's Cricket Ground in St John's Wood, London NW8 8QN.
- It was formerly the governing body of cricket both in England and Wales as well as worldwide.
- In 1993, many of its global functions were transferred to the International Cricket Council (ICC).

News 17 - Rohit Sharma became co-owner of UP Warriors in Pro Wrestling League.

Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma on 9 December 2015 became the co-owner of the Pro Wrestling League team, UP Warriors. The team includes celebrated Indian wrestlers like Sushil Kumar and Joginder Kumar.



Pro Wrestling League

The Pro Wrestling League (PWL) is an initiative of ProSportify and Wrestling Federation of India. It is the richest wrestling event ever. The six-city based tournament will commence at New Delhi's KD Jadhav Stadium on 10 December 2015. Its semifinals will be held on 25 and 26 December 2015, with the final on 27 December 2015. Each team will have 9 players – 5 Indians and 4 foreign (5 men, 4 women).

Six participating teams of this league are –

- Mangalayan University Dilli Veer
- UP Warriors
- Haryana Hammers
- Punjab Royals
- Revanta's Mumbai Garuda
- Bengaluru Yodhas

News 18 - Chen Long and Carolina Marin bagged 2015 BWF Player of the Year Awards.

Chen Long of China and all England as well as World Champion, Carolina Marin of Spain on 7 December 2015 bagged the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Male and Female Player of the Year Awards, respectively in Dubai.

Marin held off competition from Zhao Yunlei, Saina Nehwal and Bao Yixin. On the other hand, Long retained the Male Player of the Year award that he won last year.

China's rising star and World Junior Champion in Mixed Doubles and Men's Doubles Zheng Si Wei grabbed the Eddy Choong Award for Most Promising Player of the Year.

BWF, for the first time, honoured para-badminton players with the year-end awards. Lee Sam Seop of Korea was named Male Para-Badminton Player of the Year. Helle Sofie Sagoy was awarded with the Female Para-Badminton Player of the Year.



Chen Long



Carolina Marin

News 19 - Pune, Rajkot became interim IPL franchisees to replace CSK, RR.

Pune and Rajkot on 8 December 2015 became the interim franchisees in the Indian Premier League (IPL) till 2017. They will take place of the suspended teams of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Rajasthan Royals (RR). The Pune franchise was bought by Kolkata-based business tycoon Sanjiv Goenka's company New Rising, while the Rajkot bid was won by Intex Mobiles through reverse bidding.

News 20 - New Zealand cricket captain Brendon McCullum announced retirement.

New Zealand cricket captain Brendon McCullum on 22 December 2015 announced retirement from all forms of international cricket. He will retire after the two home test series against Australia, which will begin in February 2016.

In April 2015, he was conferred with the Sir Richard Hadlee Medal for 2014-15.



News 21 - Andy Murray won 2015 BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award.

Andy Murray of the UK on 20 December 2015 received the 2015 BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) Sports Personality of the Year award in London. For Murray, it was the second award in three years. He received the previous award in 2013.



About BBC Sports Personality of the Year award





- It is the annual sports award presented by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).
- The winner is the sportsperson, judged by a public vote, to have achieved the most that year.

- The recipient must either be British or reside and play a significant amount of their sport in the United Kingdom.
- The winner is selected by a public-vote from a pre-determined shortlist.
- In 2014, the award was received by Formula One racing driver, Lewis Hamilton.

News 22 - International Tennis Federation announced winners of 2015 World Champions.

International Tennis Federation (ITF) on 22 December 2015 announced winners of 2015 World Champions. The awards were conferred on the basis of players’ performance in the 2015 season. They will receive their awards at the 2016 ITF World Champions Dinner on 31 May 2015, in Paris, during Roland Garros.

List of ITF 2015 World Champions –

Image	Award	Winner
	Men’s World Champion	Novak Djokovic (Serbia)
	Women’s World Champion	Serena Williams (the USA)
	Men’s Doubles World Champions	Jean-Julien Rojer (Netherlands) & Horia Tecau (Romania)
	Women’s Doubles World Champions	Martina Hingis (Switzerland) & Sania Mirza (India)

	ITF Junior World Champions	Dalma Galfi (Hungary) & Taylor Fritz (the USA)
	ITF Wheelchair World Champions	Jiske Griffioen (Netherlands) & Shingo Kunieda (Japan)

News 23 - FIFA’s Independent Ethics Committee banned Sepp Blatter, Michel Platini from football for 8 years.

The adjudicatory chamber of the **Ethics Committee** on 21 December 2015 banned FIFA President Sepp Blatter and Vice-President and member of the Executive Committee of FIFA and President of UEFA Michel Platini. They were banned for eight years from all football-related activities (administrative, sports or any other) on a national and international level. They have also been fined 40000 US dollar and 80000 US dollar respectively.

The Ethics Committee of football's global governing body that suspended the duo was chaired by Hans-Joachim Eckert. The decision was made in the wake of payment of 20 lakh Swiss Francs (CHF), which was transferred to Platini by Blatter in February 2011.

News 24 - Winners for the 2015 ICC Awards announced.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on 23 December 2015 announced the winners for the 2015 ICC Awards in Dubai, the UAE. The awards were based on performance of individuals and teams, for both men and women, **between 18 September 2014 and 13 September 2015.**

List of ICC Awards 2015 Winners –

Award	Winner
Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year	Steven Smith (Australia)
ICC Test Cricketer of the Year	Steven Smith (Australia)
Steven Smith (Australia)	AB de Villiers (South Africa)
ICC Women’s ODI Cricketer of the Year	Meg Lanning (Australia)

ICC Emerging Cricketer of the Year	Josh Hazlewood (Australia)
ICC Associate and Affiliate Cricketer of the Year	Khurram Khan (UAE)
ICC Twenty20 International Performance of the Year	Faf du Plessis (South Africa)
ICC Women’s T20I Cricketer of the Year	Stafanie Taylor (West Indies)
David Shepherd Trophy for ICC Umpire of the Year	Richard Kettleborough
ICC Spirit of Cricket Award	Brendon McCullum (New Zealand)

News 25 - Shiva Keshavan clinched silver at Asian Luge Championship.

Shiva Keshavan on 27 December 2015 grabbed a silver medal in the 18th edition of the Asian Luge Championship held in Nagano, Japan. The first place was claimed by defending champion Hidenari Kanayama of Japan and South Korea's Kim Dong-Hyeon got the third place.



News 26 - Gujarat clinched maiden Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Gujarat on 28 December 2015 clinched the maiden Vijay Hazare Cricket Trophy. In the final, Gujarat defeated Delhi by 139 runs at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru. The 2015–16 Vijay Hazare Trophy was the 14th season of the Vijay Hazare Trophy.



News 27 - Bjorn Isberg named as Tournament Director of 2016 Hockey India League.

Sweden's Bjorn Isberg on 30 December 2015 was appointed as the Tournament Director of Coal India Hockey India League (HIL), the premier league for hockey in India. On the other hand, Muthukumar Balakrisnan from Malaysia was given the role of the Assistant Tournament Director in the 4th edition of the Coal India Hockey India League. Andy Mair from Scotland was named as the umpire's manager for the league.



News 28 - International Cricket Council announced OPPO as Global Partner.

The International Cricket Council on 10 December 2015 announced new global partnership with OPPO, one of the world's leading mobile telephone device companies. ICC roped in OPPO on a four-year deal which runs from 2016 until 2020.



*International
Cricket Council*

News 29 - Robert Lewandowski awarded with four Guinness World Record certificates for scoring five goals. in nine minutes.

Polish professional footballer Robert Lewandowski's nine-minute, five-goal haul for German Football Club **Bayern Munich** against **Wolfsburg** was officially recognised on 30 November 2015 by Guinness World Record.



He broke a series of records including *Fastest Bundesliga hat-trick* (3 minutes 22 seconds), *Fastest Four Goals in a Bundesliga Match* (5 minutes 42 seconds), *Fastest Five Goals Scored in a Bundesliga Match* (8 minutes 59 seconds), *Most Goals Scored by a Substitute in a Bundesliga Match* (5 goals).

News 30 - India's Thakur Anoop Singh won gold medal in World Bodybuilding and Physique Championships.

India's Thakur Anoop Singh on 28 November 2015-won gold medal in the 7th (WBPF) World Bodybuilding and Physique Championships. He won the medal in the fitness physique category.



Along with him, Arambam Bobby (Manipur) also won gold in the championship. For him, it was the 4th world title in his career.

News 31 - November 2015 Edition of FIFA World Rankings announced; Belgium topped the list.

The November edition of the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Rankings was released on 3 December 2015. In the final rankings of 2015 Belgium topped the list. *Indian team jumped six places* to reach the 166th spot.

Top 10 teams in November 2015 edition –

- Belgium (1)
- Argentina (2)
- Spain (3)
- Germany (4)
- Chile (5)
- Brazil (6)
- Portugal (7)
- Columbia (8)
- England (9)
- Austria (10)

News 32 - India won four-match Test series against South Africa, 3-0.

India on 7 December 2015 won the four-match Test series against South Africa 3-0. In the fourth and final match played at Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi, India defeated South Africa by 337 runs. The test series between India and South Africa was named as **Freedom Trophy**. The trophy was dedicated to **Mahatma Gandhi** and **Nelson Mandela**, who won independence for their respective countries through nonviolence.

Man of the Series – Ravichandran Ashwin.

News 33 - Maharashtra won Wheelchair Basketball Championship.

Maharashtra defeated Punjab to win the 2015 National Wheelchair Basketball Championship. The competition opened on the eve of the **International Day of People with Disabilities**. Nine states took part in the competition, which include Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

18. TECHNOLOGY

News 1 - ISRO' PSLV-C29 successfully launched 6 Singapore satellites into space.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on 16 December 2015 successfully launched 6 satellites of Singapore into Space. The satellites were launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C29 from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.



News 2 - Navy inducts decoy system Maareech.

Maareech, a fully indigenous decoy system, that can divert underwater torpedo attacks on ships and submarines, has been developed by Visakhapatnam based Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL).



3) Ministry flagged off first double decker Goa-Mumbai train of Railways.

Railways Minister Suresh Prabhu on 6 December 2015 flagged off the first Goa to Mumbai double-decker Shatabdi train through video conference from Panaji, Goa.



The fully air-conditioned double-decker train is the first-of-its-kind in India. The train will run thrice a week between Margao and the Lokmanya Tilak Terminus (LTT) in Mumbai. The double decker train will cover the distance in around 12 hours. It has eight compartments with a seating capacity of 120 in each compartment.

News 4 - Atlas V rocket lifted off with Cygnus Cargo Spaceship to ISS.

A United Launch Alliance Atlas V (401 configuration) rocket carrying the OA-4 Cygnus cargo spacecraft with much needed supplies blasted off towards the International Space Station (ISS) on 6 December 2015. Supplies at the station are running low due to several failed delivery runs and botched rocket launches. The capsule carries more than 3500 kgs of food, clothing, computer gear, spacewalk equipment, science experiments and other supplies.



News 5 - IISc Bangalore bagged solar panel research & development contract from US Military.

The prestigious Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore on 9 December 2015 bagged a US military contract for research and development on solar powered micro-grid. It is one of the rare instances that an Indian scientific institute has been awarded a federal contract by the US military.



Key points of the contract –

- The federal contract worth 52900 US dollars was awarded by the US Pacific Air Forces, Yokota Air Base in Japan.
- The contract is awarded to develop solar powered micro-grid with battery and supercapacitor energy storage system.

News 6 - Union Cabinet approved introduction of Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2015 in Parliament.

Union Cabinet on 2 December 2015 approved introduction of Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2015 in the Parliament.

Highlights of Regional Centre for Biotechnology Bill, 2015 –

- It will enable the centre to function independently as an autonomous body.
- It will give recognition to the centre as an Institution of National Importance for education, training and research in the areas of biotechnology.
- The centre is a regional hub for interdisciplinary education, training and research in biotechnology with emphasis on novel education programmes relevant to industry.
- The focus areas include bio-drug discovery science, nano-science and medicine, imaging techniques, designer crops, bioengineering and biomaterials and intellectual property among others.
- It will help in overcoming the acute shortage of skilled human resources in India and the region.
- It would be a hub of biotechnology expertise in the countries in SAARC region and more generally in the Asia region.

News 7 - Hetero became first Indian company to receive DCGI's approval for Hepatitis C drug.

Hyderabad based Hetero Drugs on 8 December 2015 announced that it received the approval of Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to launch fixed-dose combination therapy, Ledipasvir-Sofosbuvir. This product will be available under the brand name, Ledisof in India.



With this approval, Hetero became the first company in the country to get approval from DCGI to launch Hepatitis C medicines. In September 2014, Hetero signed a non-exclusive licensing agreement with the USA-based Gilead Sciences in to manufacture and market chronic hepatitis C medicines.

News 8 – Biocon launched generic version of Hepatitis-C drug Harvoni in India.

Biocon Limited on 24 December 2015 launched the generic version of **Hepatitis – C drug** in the Indian market. The generic version of the drug named **Harvoni** will be sold under the brand name, **CIMIVIR-L**.



According to Biocon, the CIMIVIR-L, a once-a-day oral therapy, will offer a convenient, effective and safe alternative to people infected with the Hepatitis-C virus (HCV).

Hepatitis-C is a viral disease that causes liver inflammation leading to diminished liver function or liver failure. It is estimated that nearly 100,000 people die annually in India from HCV infection and co-morbidities. Around 25% of 18 million HCV patients in India are indicated for Hepatitis-C genotype 1.

News 9 - Pandorum Technologies developed India's first Artificial Liver Tissue using 3D printing.

Pandorum Technologies Private Limited in the third week of December 2015 developed India's first artificial liver tissue with the help of 3-D printing technology. This development is a major step forward in the on-demand manufacturing of 3D printed human organs. This artificial liver tissue performs critical functions of a human liver including, metabolism, secretion of biochemicals such as cholesterol and albumin and detoxification.



The key features of an artificial liver tissue are –

- It can grow and survive up to eight weeks.
- 3D printing mini-livers has the potential to save lives of patients with liver failure.
- 3D bio-printed mini-livers that mimic the human liver will serve as test platforms for discovery and development of drugs with better efficacy.
- It has less side-effect and can be made at lower costs.

About Pandorum Technologies:

This biotechnology start-up firm focused on tissue engineering was founded in 2011 by Arun Chandru along with Tuhin Bhowmick, both researchers from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore. It was founded to make artificial human organs on demand.

News 10 - China launched DAMPE satellite to shed light on mysterious dark matter.

China on 17 December 2015 launched the Dark Matter Particle Explorer (DAMPE) Satellite to shed light on mysterious dark matter. The satellite was nicknamed "Wukong". It was the country's first space telescope and was launched on a Long March 2-D rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center.



The purpose of this satellite is to search for smoking-gun signals of dark matter, invisible material that scientists say makes up most of the universe's mass.

News 11 - SpaceX successfully launched and landed Falcon 9 rocket.

American aerospace company SpaceX on 21 December 2015 achieved the historic feat of successfully launching and landing Falcon 9 rocket.

It is the first time in the history of rocketry that a rocket has returned back after delivering a spacecraft to its orbit, so that it could potentially fly again. This exercise of using reusable rockets will help in reducing the cost of access to space making explorations a more realistic goal.



News 12 - Indigenously developed Air-to-Air missile Astra successfully test fired.

Indigenously developed Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile, Astra, successfully test fired on 25th December, 2015. The test was conducted by the Indian Air Force off the coast of Odisha near the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore.



Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Astra is India's first beyond visual range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM) that is capable of engaging its target at ranges of 37 km or beyond. It has operational range of 60km.

News 13 - World's first dengue vaccine, Dengvaxia, approved for use in Mexico.

The Mexican authorities approved the use of the first-ever vaccine against dengue fever.

French manufacturer Sanofi Pasteur declared that the Mexican authorities have granted marketing authorization to **Dengvaxia**, the vaccine against dengue fever.



19. VARIOUS COMMITTEES

News 1 - AP Shah Committee appointed to look into ONGC, RIL dispute on KG gas fields.

Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on 15 December 2015 appointed a single-member committee to look into the dispute between Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) and Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) on Krishna Godavari (KG) gas fields. The committee will be headed by the Chairman of the 20th Law Commission of India, Justice (retd) Ajit Prakash Shah.



News 2 - Union Government appointed L Narasimha Reddy to head Judicial Committee on OROP.

The Union Government on 14 December 2015 appointed Justice L Narasimha Reddy, retired Chief Justice of Patna High Court, to head the Judicial Committee, which will look into the implementation of One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme for the ex-servicemen.

