

CURRENT AFFAIRS for MAY-2017

List of Important Days

- May 1 - International Workers' Day
- May 2 - (1st Tuesday of May) World Asthma Day (Theme - "It's Time To Control Asthma")
- May 3 - World Press Freedom Day (Theme—"Critical Minds for Critical Times: Media's role in advancing peaceful, just and inclusive societies")
- May 4 - International Firefighters' Day
- May 5 - International Midwives Day
(Theme - "Midwives, Mothers and Families: Partners for Life!")
- May 6 - International No Diet Day
- May 8 - World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day (Theme - "Less Known Red Cross Stories")
- May 8 - World Thalassaemia Day (Theme – "Together for Humanity")
- May 10 - World Migratory Bird Day. (Theme – "Their Future is our Future")
- May 11 - National Technology Day (Theme—"Technology for inclusive and sustainable growth")
- May 12 - International Nurses Day
(Theme – "Nursing: A voice to lead – Achieving the sustainable development goals")
- May 13 - (2nd Saturday of May) World Fair Trade Day
(Theme – "Human Chains for Fair Trade and the Planet")
- May 14 - (2nd Sunday of May) Mother's Day (Theme - "Every Mother knows")
- May 15 - International Day of Families. (Theme - "Families, education and well-being")
- May 17 - World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD 2017)
(Theme – "Big Data for Big Impact")
- May 17 - International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia. (Theme - "families")
- May 18 - International Museum Day
(Theme - "Museums and contested histories: Saying the unspeakable in museums")
- May 21 - World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development
(Theme - "Local Culture as a Driver for Economic Growth")
- May 21 - Anti-Terrorism Day was observed across India
- May 22 - International Day for Biological Diversity
(Theme - "Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism")
- May 23 - World Turtle Day
- May 25 - International Missing Children's Day
- May 28 - Menstrual hygiene day
(Theme - "Education about Menstruation Changes Everything.")
- May 29 - International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers
(Theme - "Investing in Peace around the world")
- May 30 - Hindi Journalism Day
- May 30 - Goa is celebrating its 30th Statehood Day
- May 31 - World No Tobacco Day (Theme - "Tobacco – a threat to development")

Reserve Bank of India

- President Pranab Mukherjee signed an ordinance giving more power to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to deal with the growing problem of non-performing assets.

The ordinance means an amendment to the Banking Regulation Act.

The amendment will give RBI the power to issue directions to banks to recover dues from loan defaulters, among others.

- The RBI has decided to introduce new batches for settlement of payments through the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) from July 10.

- The RBI said additional settlements in the NEFT system at half-hour intervals are being introduced to enhance the efficiency of the system and add to customer convenience.
- To avoid 'WannaCry' ransomware from spreading, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to not operate ATMs till their software is updated.
- In this regard, RBI has asked banks to update specific Windows patches on ATMs urgently.
- The advice comes as over 60% of ATMs in India run on an outdated version of Windows and hence, are vulnerable to the attack.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) urged the banks to appoint qualified Chief Financial Officers (CFOs) and Chief Technology Officers (CTOs).
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will soon put into circulation new notes in One Rupee denomination while existing notes and coins will continue to be legal tender.

State Bank of India

- The State Bank of India (SBI) has cut its term deposit rates by up to 50 basis points for various maturities.

The rates have been revised for medium and long term deposits and for amount below 1 crore. The lender offering the new rates for fresh deposits and renewals, applicable from April 29, 2017.

- India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has cut its interest rate for home loans up to 30 lakh by 0.25% to 8.35%, while those above 30 lakh saw a cut of 0.10%.
- The State Bank of India (SBI) is going to introduce a new facility that would enable withdrawal of cash through ATMs using the bank's mobile wallet.
- SBI has revised service charges on various cash transactions effective June 1, including a Rs. 25 charge on withdrawing money from an ATM through SBI's mobile wallet app.

Customers will be charged for exchanging more than 20 soiled notes and of value above 5,000. Basic Savings Bank Deposit account customers will get four withdrawals, including ATM

withdrawals, free in a month.

Other Banks

- Kotak Mahindra Bank presents 811, India's first downloadable Digital Savings Account. Customers can open an 811 account in five minutes from their phone with just their Aadhaar and PAN details.
- ICICI Bank cuts home loan rate by up to 0.3% for loans up to 30 lakh to promote affordable housing.
- Vijay Shekhar Sharma-led digital wallet Paytm launched its Payments Bank operations in Delhi-NCR, with 4% interest on savings account.
- Uday Kotak, the billionaire head of Kotak Mahindra Bank, sold a less than 1% stake worth \$261 million (over 1,600 crore) in the lender, complying with an RBI order to cut his holding. The RBI

asked Kotak to lower his holding in the bank to 30% by June-end, 20% by December-end 2018, and to 15% by March 2020.

- ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar has drawn 7.85 crore as total remuneration in 2016-17, a jump of nearly 64% from a year ago.

- Russia's largest bank Sberbank is going to deliver cash via drones, its Deputy Chairman Stanislav Kuznetsov has announced.

- The cash delivered through the drones would come with certain security features like permanent ink taint to catch the thieves red-handed.

Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court upholds the conviction and death penalty to four convicts' Mukesh, Akshay,

Pawan and Vinay awarded to them by the High Court in the 16th December, 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case.

- The Supreme Court asked the state governments to issue a notification to include children affected with HIV in the disadvantaged group for imparting free, compulsory education under the 2009 law.

- PM Narendra Modi launched the Integrated Case Management Information System (ICMIS) to help the Supreme Court go paperless. This system will help litigant's access data and retrieve information online.

- A 5-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India JS Khehar has begun hearing petitions challenging the practice of Triple Talaq.

- In a first, a Supreme Court bench found Justice CS Karnan of the Calcutta High Court guilty of contempt of court and sentenced him to six months in prison.

High Courts and Sessions Courts

- The Delhi High Court has ruled that the Income Tax Department has the powers to seize undisclosed money even from bank accounts not owned by a person being probed, as long as the department is satisfied the money belongs to that person.

Election Commission

- Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi has announced that all future elections in the country will be held using Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines along with the electronic voting machines.

- The Election Commission was hold a live demo of EVMs and voter verifiable paper audit trails at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.

The EC also give a press conference on the "EVM Challenge" hackathon, announcing its date and venue.

This comes after the AAP gave an EVM tampering demonstration on a dummy device in Delhi Assembly.

- The Election Commission held a demonstration on the working of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) System to prove that the machines are tamperproof.
- The candidates fighting election will now have to declare their as well as spouse's sources of income while filing nominations.
- African country Botswana is going to use India manufactured Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) with the voter verifiable paper audit trail for its 2019 general elections.

Central Government

- After PM Narendra Modi pitched for shifting to a January-December financial year, Madhya Pradesh has decided to adopt the January-December financial year format from the present April-March cycle.
- With this, Madhya Pradesh has become the first in the country to adopt the change.
- With this, the next budget in Madhya Pradesh will be presented in December 2017.
- India will discuss and take a decision on the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status given to Pakistan, MoS for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman announced.
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for National Steel Policy (NSP) 2017 to give impetus to the steel sector.
- India is the 3rd largest global producer of steel.
- The government has declared the entire Assam as a “disturbed” area under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act for another 3 months.
- The Centre has allowed emergency vehicles, including those of police, defence and paramilitary forces, to use multi colored beacons having red, blue and white colors.
- Further, duties relating to disaster management have also been permitted to use such lights.
- The Union Cabinet has cleared a proposal allowing for the construction of 10 indigenous Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR).
- The reactors will have a capacity of 700 MW.
- These reactors will add 7000 MW capacity and will ramp up nuclear power generation in the country.
- The Centre is going to permit Internet on flights in India by end of August.
- International airlines, which have to switch off WiFi in Indian airspace as in-flight Internet is banned on security grounds, are also in talks with the government.
- The Union Cabinet approved abolition of foreign investment regulator the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).

- The government is going to bring 14 new categories, including acid attack survivors, under the Disability Act, 2016.

States

- Uttar Pradesh state government is going to waive loans of up to 1 lakh of 'Divyangs' (differently-abled). The government also plans to hold "Samadhan Diwas" every month to resolve their problems.

- Chairing a Cabinet meeting, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has decided to celebrate January 24 as 'UP Diwas' (UP Day). The United Provinces unit was renamed as Uttar Pradesh on this day (January 24) in the year 1950.

- Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya has flagged off 'Gauvansh Chikitsa Mobile Vans', an Ambulance Service that would cater to the needs of the cows.

- All Uttar Pradesh government officials above the age of 50, who are found unfit by the government, will compulsorily be asked to retire, CM Yogi Adityanath ruled. The officials will be judged on the basis of performance, punctuality and public image. The CM has directed to make the list of unfit officials ready by June 30.

- Haryana police re-launched 'Operation Durga' to ensure women's safety. The state government had started the operation earlier this month but it was stopped within a week.

- Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar has announced that the state will become stray cattle free by August 15.

- Rajasthan has launched mobile patrolling units to prevent molestation, harassment or eve-teasing against women in the state.

- The Madhya Pradesh Cabinet decided to grant the status of "living human entity" to Narmada River. The proposal to grant the status to Narmada River came after the Uttarakhand High Court accorded the status to Ganga and Yamuna rivers.

- The Karnataka government passed an order putting a cap of Rs. 200, exclusive of taxes, on the price of movie tickets at cinema halls, including multiplexes, across the state.

- The Assam government is going to introduce a 'traditional' dress code — dhoti-kurta for men and mekhela-chador for women — for its employees on first and third Saturdays of every month, on voluntary basis.

- The Assam government changed the names of all the major roads of Guwahati.

- GS Road has been renamed as Mahapurush Srimanta Sankerdev Path, BeltolaKhanapara Road is renamed as Peer Azan Fakir Road.

- Aiming to end VIP culture in the state, the Andhra Pradesh government banned the use of Blue beacons on cars belonging to dignitaries.

- According to the new order, only emergency and disaster management vehicles have been permitted to use blue beacons.

- These beacons are generally used by police and IAS officers.
- The Maharashtra government has declared its Bhilar village in the Satara district as India's first 'Pustakanche Gaav' (village of books).
- As many as 25 locations around the village have been turned into reader hot-spots with display of books.
- Inspired by Britain's Hay-on-Wye town, the aim of the project is to promote the "culture of reading" and boost tourism.
- Telangana has become the 1st state to introduce a logo for vehicles driven by persons with hearing impairment.
- The Andhra Pradesh Assembly passed an amendment to its public services law to appoint Olympics silver medal-winning shuttler PV Sindhu as a Group-1 officer in the government.
- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has launched a new scheme titled 'She Pad' under this scheme, the government will distribute sanitary pads to girls in all the schools in the state.
- The Uttar Pradesh government has renamed its "antiRomeo" squad as Nari Suraksha Bal, which intends to curb harassment of women at public places.
- The Maharashtra government has decided to form 'Good morning' squads to monitor and stop open defecation across the state.
- The New Delhi Municipal Corporation operates an ambulance dedicated for the treatment of trees.
- The Lucknow Police began a new drive in Uttar Pradesh capital wherein petrol will not be provided to refill the tanks of two-wheelers if the riders are found not wearing a helmet.
- The Uttarakhand government is going to promote sites with a reputation for being haunted, as part of its ghost tourism project.
- Goa CM Manohar Parrikar announced that buying or selling of plastic bags in the state will be an offence from July and defaulters can be fined up to 5,000 for it.

Place in the News

- Marking the formation day of Maharashtra, CM Devendra Fadnavis hoisted India's second tallest national flag in Kolhapur at 303 feet.
India's tallest flag pole, at 360 feet, is installed at the Attari-Wagah border in Punjab.
- World's highest railway bridge which will be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower is to come up over the Chenab River in Jammu and Kashmir at a cost of around Rs. 1,100 crore in around two years from now. This bridge will connect Bakhal (Katra) and Kauri (Srinagar).
- Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh adjudged as cleanest railway station followed by Secunderabad in Telangana & Jammu Tawi.

- India's first underwater tunnel, which was built under the Hooghly River for establishing a metro link in Kolkata, has been completed before the deadline.

- A giant tunnel-boring machine was deployed to dig the underwater tunnel that runs a length of 502 metres under the river.

Personalities

- To mark the 156th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, India was organized Tagore cultural Festival in Egypt from 8th to 12th May.

- This Festival was organized by the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture (MACIC), which is the cultural wing of the Indian Embassy in Cairo.

- Canadian singer and songwriter Justin Bieber performed at his first ever concert in India at Mumbai's DY Patil Stadium, where he waved the Indian flag towards the end of the concert.

- The 23-year-old singer performed his songs including 'Baby' and 'Cold Water'.

Defence and National Security

- The Indian Army successfully test-fired an advanced version of the BrahMos land-attack cruise missile in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- Israel showed off its three new F-35 stealth fighter jets recently delivered from the United States as part of an air show marking its annual Independence Day celebrations.

- The F-35 jet is the most expensive weapons system in history, costing nearly \$1.5 trillion throughout its decade and a half of development.

- The 29th India–Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) has commenced at Port Blair under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command.

- The bilateral exercise was held from 9th to 25th May.

- Indian Army has planned to re-introduce Cordon And Search Operations (CASO) as a part of its counter terrorism operations after a gap of 15 years.

- The major objective behind the reintroduction of combing operations is to bring the situation in the Kashmir Valley under control.

- In order to handle or foil possible chemical, biological or nuclear-based attacks, India will buy Anti-Nuclear and Anti-Chemical Suits from the United States for 480 crore.

- The US is close to completing a series of Arms deals with Saudi Arabia totaling more than \$100 billion which could surpass over \$300 billion over a decade.

- Saudi Arabia is leading a military coalition in Yemen which has been accused by UN of carrying out attacks that "may amount to war crimes"

- India's indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas successfully demonstrated an air-to-air Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missile firing capability.

- The Derby BVR missile destroyed a maneuverable aerial target with pinpoint precision at the Interim Test Range in Odisha's Chandipur.

- The Derby firing is a major step towards clearing BVR capabilities on LCA aircraft.

· Two warships of the Indian Navy reached Malaysia on a 6-day visit to step up maritime cooperation, including effectively containing piracy in the Indian Ocean region.

· India received the first artillery guns 30 years after the 1980s Bofors scandal, as two of the 145 M777 ultra light artillery guns ordered from the US arrived ahead of schedule.

- The guns will be tested at the Pokhran field firing range in Rajasthan.

- Out of the 145 guns, 120 will be assembled in India, by Mahindra Defence.

· SIMBEX, the 24th bilateral exercise involving Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy has commenced in South China Sea.

- SIMBEX - "Singapore India Maritime Bilateral Exercises".

- The exercise was held from May 18, 2017 to May 24, 2017.

· Chinese navy ships are visiting and other joint exercises with the

Myanmar and will conduct communications, search and rescue, Myanmar navy, China's Defence Ministry has announced.

· Iran has built a 3rd underground ballistic missile production factory and vowed to keep developing its missile program.

· Preparing for North Korea's growing threat, the US Defence Ministry was shooting down an Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) for the first time.

· North Korea test-fired a short-range ballistic missile that flew 450 kilometers before landing in Japanese waters.

Committees/Commissions

· The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to form 'Maa' committees to keep an eye on mid-day meals served to students in state-run primary schools.

Each 'Maa' committee will have six mothers, from all sections of society, whose students are studying in that school.

· The Chitale Committee on Desiltation of Ganga has recommended a slew of measures including study of reach wise sediment transport processes along with establishing annual sediment budgets to guide de-silting activities and entrusting a technical institute to conduct sediment budget, morphological and flood routing studies that would examine and confirm the necessity of the de-silting of the reach under consideration.

Head of the Committee: Madhav Chitale (Expert Member of National Ganga River Basin Authority).

· A 7-member High-Level Committee on Scouts and Guides has submitted its Final Report to Minister for State (Independent Charge) for Youth Affairs & Sports, Vijay Goel with various recommendations.

The committee has suggested for the constitution of an Enquiry Committee to take stock of complaints and grievances and submit its report.

This committee was Headed by: Harsh Malhotra

Schemes/Initiatives

· Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated India's First Integrated Bio refinery for Renewable Fuels & Chemicals for producing ethanol from a variety of biomass.

- The plant is situated at Rahu in Pune district of Maharashtra.

· Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani launched Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin Gujarat for 5 districts of the state.

· UJALA (UK Joins Affordable LEDs for All), the world's largest efficient lighting programme, was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines, Piyush Goyal in London.

- This programme aims to increase LED penetration in UK.

· Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the river conservation project 'Narmada Seva Mission'.

- This project is a road-map for steps to be taken for the conservation of the Narmada River in Madhya Pradesh.

· The Minister of State for Communications Manoj Sinha has launched 3 new initiatives.

- BSNL's Satellite Phone Service: The service will cover areas where no networks are present and will be provided by INMARSAT which has 14 satellites. This service will be initially offered to government agencies and later opened for others citizen in phased manner.

- Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Sanchar Kaushal Vikas Pratisthan Scheme : This is a skill development scheme named after RSS ideologue Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya that will train rural youth to maintain mobile towers, repair optical fibres and fix other communication technologies across India.

- Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Telecom Skill Excellence Award Scheme : The government will reward people doing innovative work in the telecom space under this scheme

· Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma has launched Swachh Bharat app at the National Museum in New Delhi.

· PM Narendra Modi inaugurated India's longest bridge, the Dhol-Sadiya Bridge, in Assam.

- The 9.15-km-long bridge located over the Brahmaputra replaced Mumbai's Bandra-Worli Sea Link as India's longest bridge.

- Modi announced that the bridge will be named after Dr Bhupen Hazarika, a noted playback singer, lyricist, musician, poet, and filmmaker from Assam.
- The government has renamed the Matritva Sahyog Yojana, a scheme launched in 2010 by the Congress for pregnant and lactating mothers, as 'Pradhan Mantri Matritva Vandana Yojana'.
- Delhi's taxi drivers have launched their own taxi app called 'Sewa Cab' to take on Uber and Ola.
- HRD minister Prakash Javadekar launched an Anti-Ragging Mobile App introduced by the University Grants Commission (UGC) at New Delhi.
- The government launched the 'Darwaza Band' campaign supported by the World Bank, to promote the use of toilets and freedom from open defecation across the country.
- Several Bollywood actors like Amitabh Bachchan and Anushka Sharma will help promote the campaign.
- In support of the Indian Army, Cricketer Gautam Gambhir has started a campaign titled #SoldierSelfies.
- Under this campaign he asked people to take selfies with soldiers and post them on social media with the above hashtag.
- Mumbai MLA Bharati Lavekar has launched India's first digital bank for sanitary pads on the occasion of World Menstrual Hygiene Day.
- The Indian Railways has introduced 'Buy Now, Pay Later' service for passengers to book tickets online first and make payment for the reservations within a window of 15 days.
- The facility, which allows passengers to travel after five days of booking the ticket, is available for confirmed, waitlisted, and Reservation Against Cancellation (RAC) berths.

Summit/Conference

- Bihari delicacy litti-chokha will represent India at the 5-day World Street Food Congress to be held in the Philippines capital, Manila.

Agreement/Deal/Signed

- India and Turkey have signed 3 agreements following delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.
- Russia and Iran which are allies of the Syrian regime as well as the rebel supporter Turkey signed a Russia backed plan for creating safe zones in Syria.
- The pact which was signed in the Kazakh capital Astana was meant to halt fighting in the war torn Syria.
- Nepal and China signed a framework agreement on Beijing's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, days ahead of a summit in Beijing to showcase President Xi Jinping's ambitious plan to build a modern day Silk Road.

- The US and China have signed a 10-point trade deal that opens the Chinese market to US credit rating agencies and lifts China's ban on US beef imports and shipments of liquefied natural gas.
- India and Palestine signed 5 agreements during the 4 day visit of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to India.
- Indian Navy and the Space Application Centre have signed a MOU on Data Sharing and Scientific cooperation in the field of Meteorology and Oceanology.
- Indian state-owned telecommunications company Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has inked agreements with Facebook and MobiKwik in order to popularize the internet and its value added services among its customers.
- Further, BSNL has also signed a third MoU with Disney Land India to offer premium online gaming services to its mobile customers.
- IIT Kharagpur's Rekhi Centre of Excellence for the Science of Happiness and Madhya Pradesh government's 'Rajya Anandam Sansthan' (Department of Happiness) has signed a MoU to collaborate on the development of a Happiness Index for measuring the well-being of the residents of the state.
- India and Spain have signed 7 agreements following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Spanish counterpart Mariano Rajoy at the Moncloa Palace in the Spanish capital.
- Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) which markets its product under the brand name 'Amul' has signed a MoU with ISRO for fodder acreage assessment using satellite observation and space technology.
- India and Germany has inked 12 agreements after delegation level talks between Prime Minister Modi and German chancellor Angela Merkel on a range of issues like trade, skill development, cyber security and terrorism.
- India and Fiji have signed an MoU on defence cooperation after the delegation level talks between Minister of Defence, Finance and Corporate Affairs, Arun Jaitley and the Minister of Defence and National Security of Fiji, Ratu Inoke Kubuabola in New Delhi.
- India and Mauritius signed 4 agreements after delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritius counterpart Pravind Kumar Jugnauth in New Delhi.

Meet/Visit

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the International Vesak Day celebrations in the Colombo (Sri Lankan capital) as the Chief Guest.
- While speaking at International Vesak Day celebrations, Modi announced that Air India will operate direct flights between Colombo and Varanasi (Modi's Lok Sabha constituency) starting August.
- US President Donald J. Trump was visited to Middle East and Europe.
- This is his first ever foreign trip after taking over the Presidency in January, 2017.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 52nd Annual General Meeting of the African Development Bank in Gandhinagar.

- This meeting was held during 22nd to 26th May 2017.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited to 4 countries in a tour lasting six days.
- The 4 Countries: Germany, Spain, Russia, and France
- Aim of this Tour: To strengthen bilateral ties.

- Narendra Modi became the first Indian PM to visit Spain in nearly 30 years.

Bills

- The Real Estate Act which aims to protect the interests of homebuyers by ensuring transparency has come into effect.
- Madhya Pradesh became the 6th state in the country to pass the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill 2017. Uttarakhand, Telangana, Bihar, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh had earlier passed the bill.
- The US House of Representatives approved a revised bill to repeal Obama care and replace it with a Republican healthcare plan, handing President Donald Trump his first major legislative victory. Now the bill needs to pass the Senate to become a law.
- A law banning excessively thin models has come into effect in France, and 'unhealthily skinny' models will not be allowed to work in the fashion industry unless they provide a doctor's medical certificate.
- The Japanese government approved a one-off bill allowing ageing Emperor Akihito to step down from the Chrysanthemum Throne, in the first such abdication in two centuries.
- Sualgiri and Swalgiri communities of Odisha have been notified as Scheduled Castes after President Pranab Mukherjee gave his assent to the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order (Amendment) Act, 2017.
- The Russian parliament's lower house has passed an Anti-Suicide bill to combat the Blue Whale suicide challenge, which has caused over 100 teen deaths in the country.

Fund

- India will give Rs. 35 crore rupees to children of freedom fighters in Bangladesh under the new 'Muktijodha scholarship' scheme in the next five years.
- Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have pledged a combined \$100 million to a Women Entrepreneurs' Fund proposed by US President Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka Trump.
- The fund, which Ivanka first proposed during her Germany trip, will be run by the World Bank to help female entrepreneurs with the capital and networking resources to start businesses.
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for allocating 2.5% of the Central Road Fund (CRF) for the development of the National Waterways.

Economy

- Digital currency Bitcoin, whose value surged this month, is now worth almost double an ounce of gold, with a single coin priced at about \$2,500 (1.61 lakh).
- In just five days, Bitcoin rose to over 40% and has gone up by 88% so far this month.
- Bitcoin surpassed the price of gold for the first time in March.

Companies/Industry

- Samsung has received approval from the South Korean government to begin testing self-driving cars on public roads in the country.
- India's third largest IT firm Wipro has replaced its multi-colored sunflower logo, which was introduced in 1998, with a new one.
- The new logo comprises dots, which according to Wipro, represent the way the company "connects the dots" for its clients.
- In just six months of launching its telecom operations, Reliance Jio has accounted for nearly 40% of India's broadband connections, according to data by telecom regulator TRAI.
- Reliance Jio accounted for 102.84 million users, the highest, followed by Bharti Airtel at 46.69 million broadband connections.
- India's first private sector small arms manufacturing plant, Punj Lloyd Raksha Systems has been inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh.
- This plant is going to supply world class weapons to the armed forces in line with the India's defence indigenization programme.
- This is a joint venture between India's Punj Lloyd and Israel Weapon Systems.
- Facebook has launched its "Express WiFi" commercially in India.
- This service is now available via 700 hotspots across four states of Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Meghalaya.
- Apple briefly touched \$800 billion market valuation, making it the world's first ever company to hit the milestone.
- The world's most valuable company, Apple is followed by Google parent Alphabet, and Microsoft in market valuation.
- Adi Godrej has handed over Godrej Group's flagship firm Godrej Consumer Products to daughter Nisaba.
- Nisaba (39) is among the youngest women to head a large-sized Indian firm.
- Paytm has signed a non-exclusive term sheet to acquire Snapdeal-owned payments platform FreeCharge.

- Hello, the social network founded by Orkut creator Orkut Buyukkocuten, has been launched in India.
- The app, which is still in beta phase, claims to let users build "personas" based on their passions and interests.
- Moody's Investors Service downgraded China's credit ratings for the first time since 1989, saying it expects the economy's financial strength to erode in coming years as growth slows and debt rises.
- Apple has opened its first store in Southeast Asia at Singapore's up market shopping district.

Exports/Imports

- India has imposed anti-dumping duty on a Chinese chemical used in pharma industry and aluminium foil to protect domestic industry from cheap imports.

Taxation/Trade

- The Income Tax department activated the e-filing facility for all categories of Income Tax Returns (ITRs) for the assessment year 2017-18.
- The new ITRs have been made available for filing on the e-portal of the department.
- The government had launched all ITRs on March 31 including the one page simplified ITR 1 (Sahaj) for salaried class.
- The Income Tax department has launched a new e-facility to link a person's Aadhaar with the Permanent Account Number (PAN).
- The Income Tax Department has launched a facility allowing people to correct errors in their PAN and Aadhaar details.
- The links for corrections are available on incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in, the department's e-filing website.
- India added 9.1 million new taxpayers during financial year 2016-2017 due to demonetization of high-value currency notes in November, witnessing an increase of 80% annually.
- The Centre exempted NRIs, citizens above 80 years, and residents of Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, and Meghalaya from having to mandatorily quote their Aadhaar numbers to file income tax returns.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has launched the 'Operation Clean Money' portal that aims "to create a tax-compliant society".
- The portal will identify those who have made deposits or purchases not in line with the declared income.
- The GST Council finalized tax rates for services under the GST regime, scheduled to be rolled out from July 1.
- There will be four rates for services at 5%, 12%, a standard rate of 18% and luxury rate of 28%.

- The 5% rate will be levied on transport services.
- Healthcare and education will be exempted from GST.
- The tax rates for 1,211 items with a majority of items being kept under 18%.
- Food grains will get cheaper, milk and cereals will be exempted, while sugar and edible oil will attract 5% tax.

Agriculture/Production

- Maharashtra became the first state to install first of-its-kind automated weather stations for farmers in the region.
- The state government aims to install a total of 2,065 such units at the village/mandal level across Maharashtra.

Space

- Elon Musk-led aerospace startup SpaceX successfully launched a spy satellite into orbit for the US military.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) successfully launched GSAT9 also known as the "South Asia" satellite from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The satellite, which costs 235 crore, will provide communication, disaster management support, and connectivity to South Asian countries during a 12 year mission.
- 7 of the eight SAARC countries excluding Pakistan are part of the project.
- The recently launched GSAT-9 / 'South Asia Satellite' became the 1st Indian spacecraft to use an electric propulsion system (EPS).
- It significantly reduced the payload weight as the satellite carried only 80kg of chemical fuel for its 12- year-long mission, 25% of the fuel otherwise needed.
- NASA astronauts Peggy Whitson and Jack Fischer successfully completed the 200th spacewalk for the \$100- billion International Space Station (ISS).
- ISS' first spacewalk was conducted on December 7, 1998, by NASA astronauts Jerry Ross and Jim Newman.
- ISRO is going to launch its most powerful rocket, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) MarkIII in June.
- Being termed a "game changer", it can carry satellites weighing up to 4.4 tonnes. With the introduction of the Mark-III, India will not have to rely on expensive foreign carriers to launch payloads above 2.2 tones in weight.
- Rifath Sharook, an 18-year-old student from Tamil Nadu, has developed what he claims is the world's smallest and lightest satellite.
- Sharook, whose satellite will be launched by NASA in June, will be the first Indian student to have his experiment launched by NASA.

- The satellite, made using reinforced carbon fiber polymer, is named 'KalamSat', after former President APJ Abdul Kalam.
- NASA paid tribute to late President APJ Abdul Kalam by naming a newly discovered organism after him.
- As of now, the bacterium named 'Solibacillus kalamii' by NASA scientist Kasthuri Venkateswaran, is found only on the ISS, which is orbiting Earth at 400 km.
- US and Indian space agencies, NASA and ISRO will jointly develop and launch the world's biggest and most expensive earth imaging satellite, costing \$1.5 billion.
- The satellite has been named NISAR – NASA ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar.
- American aerospace corporation Rocket Lab has become the first company to successfully launch an orbital-class rocket into space from a private launching facility.
- The test flight from New Zealand's Mahia Peninsula was also the first rocket launch for the country.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) will commence the operation of India's own 'GPS' or positioning system, Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS), in early 2018.
- This would make India part of an elite group of countries that have their own positioning system.

Science and Technology

- India will replace its Maitri station in Antarctica in next 3 to 4 years, the Ministry of Earth Sciences has announced.
- To expand India's research in Antarctica, a new ship with ice-cutting facility would be procured, he added.
- A massive ransomware Cyber Attack dubbed WannaCry, targeted computers in 99 countries including India, with more than 57,000 attacks detected so far, cyber security firms Kaspersky and Avast have confirmed.
- Russia was the worst hit country, witnessing over 70% of the affected computers, while India was third on the list.
- Cyber security agency Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) has issued a red alert in the country against 'WannaCry' ransomware that hit 150 countries.
- Security researchers have identified a new malware called 'Eternal Rocks', which exploits the same vulnerability as WannaCry ransomware and is stronger than the latter.
- Similar to WannaCry, EternalRocks uses NSA tool 'EternalBlue' to spread itself from one computer to the next through Windows.
Additionally, it uses six other NSA tools that could help it spread faster than WannaCry.

- The construction of the world's largest optical and infrared telescope has begun in Chile's Atacama Desert.

- A malware named 'Judy' has attacked over 3.65 crore Android users through simple fashion and cooking game apps on Google Play Store, according to security firm Check Point.

Health/Diseases/Drugs

- The Maharashtra government banned the sale of 'High in Fat, Salt and Sugar' (HFSS) food in school canteens across the state.

- Furthermore, schools have been asked to replace the junk food items with healthy food such as whole grain, home-made rotis, parathas, rice, etc.

- Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has said the government-run district and rural hospitals in the state will soon provide free blood tests, X-rays, CT scans and other medical tests 24 hours a day.

- Brazil has declared an end to its public health emergency over the Zika virus, 18 months after the outbreak in 2015.

- The number of cases dropped 95% between January and April, compared to the same period a year ago.

- The World Health Organization had lifted its own international emergency in November last year.

- Union Health Minister JP Nadda launched new Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) for pneumonia in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.

- Cabinet gives its ex-post facto approval to Pan-India implementation of Maternity Benefit Programme.

- The programme now has been extended to all districts of the country from 1st of January this year.

- This Programme will provide compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentives so that the women can take adequate rest before and after delivery and not be deprived of proper nutrition.

- Doctors at a Pune hospital successfully conducted India's first womb transplant by transferring a woman's uterus to her 21 year old daughter, who was unable to conceive a child.

- Womb transplantation was first performed in Sweden in a 16-hour-surgery in 2012 and the first baby, born to the recipient in 2014, was delivered prematurely by caesarean section in a healthy condition.

- The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed India's first three cases of Zika virus infections, all from the same area in Ahmedabad.

Energy/Gas/Oil

- India has overtaken the US to become the second-most attractive country for renewable energy investment after China.

- World's biggest and most powerful wind turbines have begun generating electricity off the Liverpool coast in the UK.
- Danish company DONG Energy has installed 32 turbines, each 195 metres tall, with blades longer than nine buses combined.
- The tiny island of Nauru (world's smallest republic) has become the 6th country to ratify the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework pact.
- The Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IIST) has successfully created India's first smart grid project, which will generate power from renewable sources of energy.
- The project will soon be inaugurated by President Pranab Mukherjee, IIST Director Ajoy Kumar Roy told.
- Kazakhstan, the world's biggest uranium producer, will start producing nuclear fuel for Chinese power plants in 2019 through a joint venture set up by the two countries.
- The first stage of the joint venture will produce about 200 tonnes of ready-to-use nuclear fuel assemblies a year, using technologies and equipment supplied by France.

Environment

- The Ministry of Environment and Forests have come up with new regulations that ban the sale of cattle for slaughter.
- The rules have been notified under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960.
- As the Aadhaar ID for cattle process begins in Gujarat to prevent cow slaughter, a team of technicians in the state has started implanting GPS-enabled microchips in the animal's ears.

Education

- The Visva-Bharati University has started a certificate level course to teach Mandarin (the Chinese language) to Indian soldiers which will reportedly help them gather intelligence.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Patanjali Research Institute at Patanjali Yogpeeth in Haridwar.
- India's leading overseas education consultant Edwise was organized by the World Education Fair across 12 cities from May 13 to 28.
- To reduce unnecessary competition and stop education from becoming a trade, Tamil Nadu's Education Department has decided to not announce the first three ranks in the state board exams.
- The Uttar Pradesh government was making May 13 as 'no school bag day' in the state-run schools.
- West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee has announced that school students across the state, irrespective of boards, will have to study Bengali as a compulsory subject upto Class 10.
- The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations has decided to make digital copies of the mark sheets available to ICSE and ISC candidates along with the traditional hard copies from

this year.

- The students can now access the mark sheets digitally anywhere from their DigiLocker.
- To curb fraudulent admissions, the Uttar Pradesh government has made Aadhaar Card mandatory for students taking board exams in 2018.
- Students will have to fill in their Aadhaar numbers at the time of board registration in class IX and XI.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid the Foundation Stone of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Gogamukh in Assam's Dhemaji district located on the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border.
- This will be the third Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI).
- Modi also laid the foundation stone for All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Changsari in the Kamrup District of Assam.
- The results of the Civil Services Examination 2016 were declared by the Union Public Service Commission.
- The top three positions were secured by Nandini KR, Anmol Sher Singh Bedi and Gopalakrishana Ronanki respectively.
- Cabinet approves setting up of new AIIMS in Kamrup, Assam under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana.

Transport/Cars/Scooters

- Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain flagged off Assam's first Shatabdi Express from Dibrugarh.
- Considering the growth in passenger traffic and demands from airlines, the Centre approved the conversion of Vijayawada airport into an international airport.
- This makes Vijayawada the 4th international airport in Andhra Pradesh, with Hyderabad, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam already having such airports.
- The first Chinese built passenger jet, C919, completed its maiden flight.
- The twin engine 158174 seat passenger jet, made by state owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation, features several imported elements like German landing gear and an Austrian interior.
- China is expected to overtake the United States as the largest aviation market by 2024.
- The world's first "ladies special" suburban train, which runs in Mumbai, has completed 25 years.
- Union Minister of State for Aviation Jayanta Sinha announced that the Centre will bring 200 airports under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) regional air connectivity scheme.
- Indian Railways subsidiary IRCTC was introducing Pay-on-Delivery option for buying train e-tickets, allowing users to pay at the time of ticket's delivery to their home.

- The service will be available in over 600 cities and would be initially available five days before the departure date.

· Indian Railways is going to acquire End of Train Telemetry (EoTT) systems, to do away with the need of guards stationed in the last coach of trains.

- The systems will be used to establish communication between the driver and the last wagon, ensuring that the train is running with all wagons.

· Indian Railways is going to charge 50-100 extra on the booking of lower berths as there is a high demand for these berths.

- The move, similar to airlines charging extra for window seats, is aimed to benefit senior citizens and those in need.

· The Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad is set to become south India's first airport to go 100% LED-lit.

· The Indian Railways' Mumbai-Goa luxury train Tejas Express, which has features like LCD screens, onboard infotainment, WiFi, CCTV, and tea/coffee vending machine, was flagged off by Union Minister Suresh Prabhu.

· Airlander 10, the largest aircraft in the world, has successfully completed its test flight in the UK.

- Dubbed the 'flying bum' over its appearance, the 92- metre-long helium-filled airship can fly at altitudes of 6,100 metres.

· Inaugurating India's first electric mass mobility system, Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari flagged off 200 electric public transport vehicles in Nagpur.

Films and Film Festival

· India's first full-length feature film 'Raja Harishchandra' was released 104 years ago on 3rd May in the year 1913. This film was produced and directed by Dadasaheb Phalke.

· SS Rajamouli directed movie 'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion' has become the 1st ever Indian movie to achieve 1,000 crore earnings milestone.

· Konkona Sen Sharma has been named the Best Actress for the film 'Lipstick Under My Burkha' at the 17th edition of the New York Indian Film Festival.

- She also received the Best Director award for her directorial debut, 'A Death in the Gunj'.

· The 70th edition of the Cannes Film Festival began in France.

· American television host Jimmy Kimmel will host the 90th Oscars in 2018.

· The Swedish film 'The Square', directed by Ruben Ostlund won the Palme d'Or, the top prize at Cannes Film Festival.

- The film '120 Beats Per Minute!' won the Grand Prix, the runner-up prize.

- Further, the Best Actor prize was awarded to Joaquin Phoenix for 'You Were Never Really Here' while Diane Kruger won Best Actress for 'In the Fade'.

Media /I.T / Telecommunication

· The Department of Telecommunications has launched a web portal called the 'Tarang Sanchar' that will allow tracking of radiation emitted from mobile towers within their locality and check for their compliance with the Electromagnetic field (EMF) emission norms defined by the government.

· The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) announced that it will soon launch a smart phone app which will allow people to rate the service quality of their call after the call ends.

- It also announced that it will further bolster the existing 'Do Not Disturb' system, which helps people to avoid calls from telemarketers.

· I & B Minister M Venkaiah Naidu announce setting up of 24x7 satellite channel of Doordarshan for the state of Chhattisgarh.

- The minister also announced setting up of 3 new FM transmitters in Chhattisgarh, one each in Bastar, Surguja & Rajnandgaon.

· 3 day India Mobile Congress 2017 (IMC 2017) is scheduled to be held from 27th to 29th September 2017 in New Delhi.

- With a total subscriber base of over 1.18 billion, Indian telecom market is the second-largest in the world after China.

Appointments/Election (or) Latest who is who?

· Prabhat Kamal Bezboruah has been appointed as the Chairman of the Tea Board.

· M S Boje Gowda has been appointed as the Chairman of the Coffee Board.

· In a bid to improve their efficiency, the Indian government appointed heads for 7 Public Sector Banks. They are :

- Sunil Mehta - Punjab National Bank

- Dinabandhu Mohapatra - Bank of India

- Usha Ananthasubramanian - Allahabad Bank

- Melwyn Rego - Syndicate Bank

- Rajkiran Rai G - Union Bank of India

- R.A. Sankara Narayanan - Vijaya Bank

- R. Subramaniakumar - Indian Overseas Bank

· The Palestinian Islamist movement, Hamas, elected Ismail Haniyeh as the new leader of its political wing.

· Former French Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron has been projected as the 25th President of France based on exit polls after the final round of voting in the presidential elections.

- The 39-year-old centrist will be the youngest ever leader of the country.

· Seasoned diplomat Venu Rajamony, currently Press Secy. to President of India Pranab Mukherjee, has been appointed as India's Ambassador to the Netherlands.

· One of Pakistan's senior-most diplomats, Sohail Mahmood, will replace Abdul Basit as Pakistan's new High Commissioner to India.

· US President Donald Trump has nominated Indian-American Neil Chatterjee as a Member of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

- FERC is an agency responsible for overseeing America's power grid and deciding on multibillion-dollar energy projects.

· Liberal Moon Jae-in has won South Korea's presidential election, ending nearly a decade of conservative rule in the country.

· Twitter has elevated Taranjeet Singh as its Country Director for India.

· The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of 1982 West Bengal cadre IAS officer Sanjay Mitra as the next Defence Secretary.

· Justice Mukul Mudgal, who headed the panel probing the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal, was elected Head of FIFA's governance committee at the 67th FIFA Congress in Bahrain.

- All India Football Federation chief Praful Patel is the only other Indian on a FIFA committee.

· Diplomat Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been appointed as India's next ambassador to France.

- He is currently serving as joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

- He will replace Mohan Kumar who is due to retire soon.

· Actor Amitabh Bachchan has been appointed as World Health Organisation's Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South-East Asia Region.

- He has been appointed to boost awareness and intensify action to stop the spread of hepatitis.

· 4 new Delhi High Court judges, including two women, were sworn in May 15, taking the working strength of the court to 38 (sanctioned capacity is 60).

- They are: Rekha Palli, Prathiba Singh, Navin Chawla, and C Hari Shankar

· Senior IPS Officer A K Viswanathan assumed charge as Commissioner of Police, Greater Chennai.

- A 1990 batch IPS officer, Viswanathan replaces Karan Singha.

- French President Emmanuel Macron has named centre-right Edouard Philippe as his first Prime Minister, making his first major political decision a day after being inaugurated as the country's leader.
- Pradeep Amat elected as Speaker of Odisha Assembly following voice vote in House.
- Renu Satti has been appointed as the new CEO of Paytm Payments Bank.
- Indian national Ovais Sarmad has been appointed by the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to the post of Deputy Executive Secretary, which is a key post in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- Minister of Earth Sciences and Science and Technology, Harsh Vardhan, has been given additional charge of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF) after the demise of Union Minister Anil Madhav Dave.
- The US Justice Department appointed former FBI director Robert Mueller as special prosecutor to oversee the federal investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election.
- Former Supreme Court judge Dalveer Bhandari was among the 11 judges of the International Court of Justice panel presiding over Kulbhushan Jadhav's case.
- Reformist Hassan Rouhani won Iran's presidential election, beating principles opponent Ebrahim Raisi to begin his second four-year term in office.
- Air Marshal PN Pradhan took over as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations), a key platform to ensure a high degree of synergy between the armed forces.
- Saurabh Agrawal, head of corporate strategy at the Aditya Birla group, has been appointed the group Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Tata Sons.
- Rehana Ameer, a 43yearold UK entrepreneur, has become the first Indian-born woman to be elected as a Councillor to the City of London Corporation.
- Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh given additional charge of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Ministry.
- Ford Motor has announced it was replacing CEO Mark Fields with James Hackett, the head of the unit developing self driving cars, in response to investors' growing unease over the carmaker's stock performance.
- The Bahamas has elected Free National Movement's Hubert Minnis as its new Prime Minister, defeating incumbent Progressive Liberal Party's leader Perry Christie in a parliamentary split.
- Vijay Shekhar Sharma-led Digital wallet Paytm has added 3 independent directors to its newly-launched Payments Bank's board.
- PV Bhaskar - Former Executive Director of RBI
- Ash Lilani - Co-founder and managing partner at Saama Capital
- GS Sundararajan - Former Director at Shriram Group

- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has appointed Anurag Tripathy, a 1998 batch officer of Indian Railway personnel Service (IRPS) as the new Secretary of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
- Socialist Lenin Moreno was sworn in as Ecuador's President.
- The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has appointed Google India managing director and angel investor Rajan Anandan as its new Chairman.
- Deep Kalra (Chairman and Group CEO of MakeMyTrip), is the new vice-chairman of the association.
- India's Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu became one of the members of the BWF Athletes' Commission.
- United States senate has confirmed Amul Thapar as a Judge to the Cincinnati-based Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals.
- Flipkart CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy has taken additional charge of the Human Resources at the e-commerce startup amid merger talks with Snapdeal.
- The UN has appointed Indian Supreme Court advocate and human rights lawyer Indira Jaising to lead a probe into alleged rape, torture, and killings by security forces against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar's Rakhine state.
- French cosmetics company L'Oréal Paris has named Val Garland as its Global Makeup Director.
- The Minister of State for Minority Affairs (Independent Charge) Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has appointed a renowned social and educational activist George Kurian as Vice-Chairman of National Commission for Minorities.

Resignation/Dismissed/Retired/Quit

- Prince Philip, the 95-year-old husband of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II shall retire from his public duties this autumn, the Buckingham Palace announced.
- However, the 91-year-old Queen shall continue to carry out her full programme of engagements.
- Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, also known as 'Prachanda', resigned honouring a power-sharing agreement between his party and the ruling Nepali Congress party.

Deaths

- India's first woman High Court Chief Justice and Delhi High Court's first woman judge, Justice (retired) Leila Seth (86), passed away.
She was the mother of noted author Vikram Seth (A suitable boy, Two lives)
- Swimming legend Adolph Kiefer (98), USA's oldest living gold medalist in any sport, died in Illinois aged 98 after reportedly suffering from pneumonia.
- American musician Chris Cornell (52), known as the lead singer of bands Soundgarden and Audioslave, passed away.

- Union Environment Minister Anil Madhav Dave (60) passed away.
- Veteran actress Reema Lagoo (59) passed away.
- Fox News has revealed that its former Chairman and CEO Roger Ailes (77) died.
- Businessman Matthunny Mathews (81) who had helped thousands of Indians to flee Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990 passed away.
- Sir Roger Moore (89), known for portraying fictional British spy James Bond in films, passed away.
- Former DGP of Punjab KPS Gill (82), who is credited with wiping out militancy in the state, passed away.
- Allman Brothers Band Co-founder Gregg Allman (69) passed away.
- Yoshie Oka (86), the first person to raise the alarm outside Hiroshima that the Japanese city had been hit by an atomic bomb, has died.
- Veteran Telugu director-actor Dasari Narayana Rao (75) passed away.

Awards/Honours

- Sanjay Pratihar, a scientist at Assam's Tezpur University, has been selected for the prestigious Indian National Science Academy (INSA) medal for the Young Scientist Award, 2017, for his contribution to "multi-metal complexes, theoretical understanding, selective sensing of Hq2+ions and important applications in agriculture"
- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu has been selected for the 'Transformative Chief Minister Award' in recognition for his role in advancing the US-India partnership at the state level.
- BCCI has nominated Cheteshwar Pujara and Indian women's team member Harmanpreet Kaur for the Arjuna award.
- In the recently concluded Test season, Pujara scored 1,316 runs, the highest ever aggregate of runs by an Indian in a single Test season.
- Saqib Majeed, a Kashmir based freelance photographer has bagged prestigious 2016 Wisden-MCC (Melbourne Cricket Council) Cricket 'Photograph of the Year' Award.
- With this he has become the first Kashmiri and second Asian after Atul Kamble to receive the prestigious award.
- Child actor Sunny Pawar, who featured in the Oscar nominated film 'Lion', has been named the 'Rising Star' at the 7th Annual Asian Awards.
- Rajgauri Pawar, a 12 year old Indian origin girl from England, has scored 162 points in the Mensa IQ test, two points higher than geniuses Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking.

- Hollywood Actress Emma Watson won the 1st ever genderless Best Actor award for her role in Beauty and the Beast at the MTV Movie & TV Awards.
- Vikram Vishal, an IIT-Bombay Assistant Professor, has won the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) Medal for Young Scientists, 2017.
- The 112-foot tall bust of 'Adiyogi' Lord Shiva at the Isha Yoga Foundation in Tamil Nadu has been declared the world's largest bust (sculpture) by the Guinness World Records.
- Chhavi Verg, an Indian-born, Hindi and Spanish-speaking business student, was named runners-up at Miss USA 2017.
- Scientist and activist Kara McCullough, who works as a radio chemist with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that regulates nuclear plants, was crowned Miss USA 2017.
- Anshu Jamsenpa, a native of Bomdila in Arunachal Pradesh has scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman to scale Mount Everest for the 4th time.
- Indian scientist Shrinivas Kulkarni has won the prestigious Dan David prize for his work in the field of astronomy.
- The prize was conferred at a ceremony in Tel Aviv, Israel on May 21.
- Sanjay Gubbi (Karnataka), Purnima Barman (Assam) has won the prestigious Whitley Award for their contributions in wildlife conservation.
- Whitley awards are popularly known as Green Oscars.
- Two Indian peacekeepers Brijesh Thapa & Private RaviKumar to be honored with United Nations medal awarded for courage & sacrifice in line of duty.
- Brijmohan Sharma, popularly known as Breeze Sharma, has become the first civilian from the Indian Navy to summit Mount Everest.
- He was also the fastest Indian at the world's toughest foot race, Badwater, in 2016.
- Winners of the 2017 Google Play Awards Language learning app 'Memrise' was adjudged the best app for its design and user experience.
- 'TRANSFORMERS: Forged to Fight' won the best game award.
- 'ShareTheMeal' by United Nations won the award for the app with the best social impact.
- India's Anshu Jamsenpa became 1st woman to conquer Mount Everest twice within five days.
- Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud presented US President Donald Trump with the Gold King Abdulaziz medal, the kingdom's top civilian honor.
- Canadian rapper and singer Drake won 13 awards at Billboard Music Awards, making him the biggest single year winner in the history of the annual event.
- He surpassed the 12award record set by Adele in the 2012 edition of the awards.

· 2nd Annual Asian Voice Charity Awards 2017 Winners Bollywood Actress Jacqueline Fernandez received the International Humanitarian Award.

- Bestselling author Jeffrey Archer was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

· India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has won the International Cricketer of the Year award at CEAT Cricket Rating (CCR) International awards 2017.

· 3 Indian origin scientists have been elected fellows of the Royal Society, the world's oldest scientific academy in continuous existence.

- The scientists are: Krishna Chatterjee (University of Cambridge), Yadvinder Malhi (University of Oxford), and Subhash Khot (New York University).

· 12-year-old Padmalaya Nanda from Odisha is set to represent India at the Little Miss Universe beauty pageant, to be held in Georgia, US from 31st May to 6th June 2017.

· Visual theatre pioneer Satyabrata Rout has been awarded Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar for the year 2016.

· 6th Lonely Planet India Travel Awards, Thailand was named the world's best destination for relaxation.

- Austria was named the Best destination for Romance.

- Spain was named the Best destination for food and drink.

- Japan was named the Best destination for culture.

- Singapore was named the Best family destination.

Sports/Game

· Spain's Rafael Nadal defeated Austria's Dominic Thiem to win his 10th Barcelona Open title.

- Barcelona Open Doubles Title was won by Florin Mergea (Romania) and Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi (Pakistan).

· Indian squash player Joshna Chinappa defeated compatriot Dipika Pallikal in the women's singles final to become the first Indian to clinch the Asian Squash Championship title.

· Mercedes' Finnish Formula One driver Valtteri Bottas claimed his first ever Grand Prix victory after winning the Russian Grand Prix.

· The top-seeded Indo-American pair of Leander Paes and Scott Lipsky defeated Argentine third seeds Leonardo Mayer and Maximo Gonzalez to win the Tallahassee Challenger title of the men's double.

· English professional snooker player Mark Selby won his third World Snooker Championship in four years after registering victory against John Higgins.

· Kaur, who represents Sydney Thunder in the Women's Big Bash League, was a significant part of India's Asia Cup victory.

- Indian table tennis player Soumyajit Ghosh became the 3rd Indian to win a men's singles title at an ITTF Challenge Series at the Chile Open.
- The Indian T20I team slipped a spot to the 4th place in the ICC T20I team rankings, according to the latest ICC rankings released.
- Top 10: New Zealand, England, Pakistan, India, South Africa, Australia, West Indies, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh
- India's National Football Team entered the top 100 of the FIFA national team rankings for the first time in 21 years after getting placed at the 100th spot in the latest FIFA rankings released.
- India's football team last entered FIFA's top 100 in February 1996, when they were ranked at the all time high ranking of 94.
- Boxer Shiva Thapa won a Silver medal at the Asian Boxing Championships in Uzbekistan.
- With this he became the first Indian to claim three back-to-back medals at the event
- India's men's hockey team clinched the Bronze medal at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, after defeating New Zealand in Malaysia.
- The Indian cricket team has received the green signal to participate in the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy after BCCI's Special General Meeting.
- India will begin their campaign against Pakistan on June 4, with the squad for the tournament to be announced.
- Mumbai Indians pacer Lasith Malinga has become the first bowler to complete 150 wickets in the IPL.
- Argentinian football legend Diego Maradona has been appointed the Coach of Fujairah FC, a second-tier football club in the UAE.
- India ended the Grand Prix of Liberation Plzen 2017 Shooting championships with 7 medals after Indian shooter Heena Sidhu claimed a bronze medal in the women's 10-metre Air Pistol event.
- World Basketball governing body Basketball Federation of India, FIBA revises its earlier rule banning players from wearing headgear.
- This move will enable India's Sikh players to wear turbans and play in the upcoming FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 Qualifiers in China.
- South African cricket's governing body Cricket South Africa has regained the right to bid for and host major tournaments after their changes met the government's transformation criteria.
- The South African government had asked the board to include a minimum average of six players of color, including two black Africans, in the South African squad over the course of the season
- Indian women's cricket team pacer Jhulan Goswami became the all-time leading wicket-taker in women's ODI cricket after picking up her 181st wicket against the South African women's team.
- Goswami, who has featured in 153 ODIs for the Indian women's team so far, went past Australia's Cathryn Fitzpatrick, who had picked up 180 wickets in 109 matches.
- Indian wrestler Harpreet Singh (80kg) has won Bronze medal in Greco- Roman category at Asian Wrestling Championship.

- Indian wrestlers Anil Kumar and Jyoti won Bronze medals in their respective categories on the second day of the Asian Wrestling Championships in New Delhi.
- Sachin Tendulkar has bought a stake in the new Tamil Nadu franchise of the Pro Kabaddi League.
- This is Tendulkar's second investment in a sports team, with the player owning the Kerala franchise in the Indian Super League.
- Former cricketer VVS Laxman has been awarded honorary life membership of the Marylebone Cricket Club.
- Wrestler Bajrang Punia won the Gold medal in the men's 65 kg final at the Asian Wrestling Championships, defeating South Korea's Lee Seung-chul in Delhi.
- Ramudri Someswara Rao has won a Gold medal in the men's 200-metre T44 event at the 2017 World Para Athletics Grand Prix in China.
- Indian para-athlete Hokato Sema won a bronze medal in the shot put event.
- Indian dairy cooperative Amul will sponsor the New Zealand cricket team for the upcoming Champions Trophy in England.
- Amul had earlier sponsored Netherlands in the 2011 Cricket World Cup.
- Mercedes's Lewis Hamilton has won the Spanish Grand Prix from pole position in the Formula One championship. This is Hamilton's 55th career win and second wins of the season.
- Arjun Maini has become the first Indian to win a GP3 series race, an F1 support race, after registering a win in Barcelona on the sidelines of the F1 Spanish Grand Prix.
- Nine-time French Open Champion Rafael Nadal continued his unbeaten run on clay this season after winning the Madrid Masters for the 5th time by defeating Austria's Dominic Thiem.
- India ended the Asian Wrestling Championship with 10 medals after Sumit Malik claimed the silver medal in the men's 125-kg freestyle event on the final day of the championship.
- India's tally of ten medals, which includes one gold, five silver and four bronze, is a medal better than the tally from the previous edition in Bangkok.
- Umpire Sundaram Ravi will be the only Indian umpire to officiate in matches during the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy.
- Indian cricket team has retained its top position in the latest ICC Test rankings with 123 points.
- Top 10 in ICC Test Rankings: India, South Africa, Australia, England, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, West Indies, Bangladesh, and Zimbabwe.
- India's compound men's archery team comprising Abhishek Verma, Chinna Raju Srither and Amanjeet Singh beat Colombia to win the Gold medal at the season's first World Cup in Shanghai.
- Mumbai Indians defeated Rising Pune Supergiant by 1 run to win their third Indian Premier League title.

- India's premier squash player Harinder Pal Sandhu has won the Makati Open (Squash) title by beating Mohd Syafiq Kamal.
- Bengaluru FC lifts Federation Cup by beating defending champions Mohun Bagan.
- Sweden won the Ice hockey world championships for the 10th time with a 21 victory over 2016 champions Canada after the final was settled by a penalty shootout.
- Indian-origin wrestler Jinder Mahal beat Randy Orton at the pay preview event 'Backlash', to become the WWE Champion for the first time in his career.
- The Great Khali was the first, winning the now defunct World Heavyweight Championship in 2007.
- World number two Serbia's Novak Djokovic has appointed former world number one Andre Agassi as his new coach, after having parted ways with another former world number one Boris Becker earlier this year.
- Germany's 20 year old Alexander Zverev became the 1st player born in the 1990s to earn an ATP Masters title after defeating Serbia's Novak Djokovic in straight sets at the Italian Open in Rome.
- India's R Vaishali won the women's title with eight points from nine rounds in the Asian Continental Blitz Chess Championship in Chengdu, China.
- Chennai Super Kings announced their comeback to the IPL next year, tweeting the news from their official handle.
- India's Nitin Tomar became the costliest player in Pro Kabaddi League history, being bought for 93 lakh by the new GMR-owned UP franchise.
- In a bid to boost sports in the state, Jammu and Kashmir's 1st professional football academy was launched in Srinagar.
- India footballer Mehrajuddin Wadoo would be the head of the academy.
- India's CA Bhavani Devi has won the Gold medal in the Sabre event of the Turnoi Satellite Fencing Championship held at Reykjavik in Iceland.
- World Table Tennis Championships begin in Dusseldorf, Germany with the Qualification matches.
- Top-ranked Indian in the world, Achanta Sharath Kamal will lead the 8-member Indian squad.
- Indian Cricketer Virat Kohli has become the only cricketer to get featured in the top 10 of the ICC Players Rankings for ODIs as he managed to stick to the third spot in the ODI batsman's chart.

Report

- The Swachh Bharat survey 2017 has declared Madhya Pradesh's Indore as the cleanest city in India.

- The survey, conducted in 434 cities, declared Gonda in Uttar Pradesh as the filthiest Indian city.
- The top 10 cleanest cities are: Indore, Bhopal, Visakhapatnam, Surat, Mysuru, Tiruchirapally, New Delhi, Municipal Council Navi Mumbai, Tirupati, and Vadodara.
- India now ranks 3rd globally in number of startup incubators and accelerators. China is at the top followed by the US.
- 3 India-born citizens are among top 5 richest people in Britain, according to the Times Rich List 2017.
- Hinduja Brothers Srichand and Gopichand have topped the list to become the top of 134 billionaires in the country.
- David and Simon Reuben, of Iraqi Jewish origin but Mumbai-born, have been ranked the third-richest with an \$18 billion fortune.
- Steel magnate Lakshmi N Mittal is UK's fourth-richest with \$17 billion.
- Bangalore has topped the list of most affordable tech cities in the world followed by Cape Town and Santiago, according to the Savills Tech Cities Index.
- India moved up to the 26th spot in the Global electricity accessibility rankings of the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index.
- India was at the 99th position in 2014; it jumped 73 ranks in 2016.
- As per recently released Public Affairs Index (PAI) 2017, Kerala has been declared as the State with the best governance in the country for a second straight year.
- Top 5 – Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka.
- Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's Founder Jack Ma has surpassed real estate and entertainment tycoon, Wang Jianlin, to become China's richest person with a \$30.9 billion fortune.
- Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani has been featured in the Forbes Global Game Changers List for 2017.
- The list also includes Snapchat CEO Evan Spiegel and Saudi Arabia's Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.
- Brand finance in its 2017 report that lists India's 100 most valuable brands has named Tata Group as the most valuable brand in India at an estimated brand value of \$13.1 billion.
- Top 5: Tata Group, Airtel, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Infosys, and State Bank of India
- Marian Ilitch, the owner of Little Caesars pizza chain and Detroit's MotorCity Casino Hotel, has topped the Forbes List of America's Richest Self-Made Women for 2017 with a net worth of \$5.1 billion.

- She is followed by roofing supply company ABC Supply's Diane Hendricks with a \$4.9 billion fortune, and Judy Love and Oprah Winfrey, worth \$2.9 billion each.
- In a Global Healthcare Access and Quality Index study, India was ranked 154 among the 195 countries surveyed between 1990-2015.
- Europe's Andorra topped the list followed by Iceland, and Switzerland, while the US was placed 35th.
- Mumbai has been ranked the world's second most densely populated city with 31,700 people per sq km, by the World Economic Forum (WEF) citing UN Habitat Data.
- Bangladesh's capital Dhaka topped the list with 44,500 people per sq km.
- Rajasthan's Kota has been ranked the world's seventh most densely populated city with 12,100 people per sq km.
- Top 10: Dhaka (Bangladesh), Mumbai (India), Medellin (Columbia), Manila (Philippines), Casablanca (Morocco), Lagos (Nigeria), Kota (India), Singapore, and Jakarta (Indonesia)
- Indian tax laws are perceived to be second most complex in the Asia Pacific region, a Deloitte survey has recently announced.
- India ranks only after China in having most complex jurisdiction for taxation and most complicated requirements of tax.
- Top 6: China, India, Japan, Australia, Indonesia, and South Korea
- MoS for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha announced that India has emerged as the world's third largest aviation market, with passenger traffic exceeding 10 crore in 2016- 17.

General - National

- Women and children were allowed to use toilet facilities at hotels and restaurants, including five-stars, in South Delhi for free from 1st May 2017.
- Australia will be selling Kesar variety of Indian mangoes for the first time with the inaugural consignment of nearly 400 trays landing in Sydney.
- The strategic anti-Naxal operations command headquarters of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been shifted back from Kolkata to Raipur.
- India has been unanimously elected as the President of the UN-Habitat, an organ of the United Nations to promote sustainable human settlements across the globe.
- UN-Habitat reports to the United Nations General Assembly.
- Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Minister M Venkaiah Naidu, was chair the four-day meeting of the 58-member Governing Council (GC) of UN-Habitat in Nairobi in Kenya.

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has asked all the state governments to link prisons with courts through video conferencing in order to expedite trials and to save costs of escorting under trials to courts.
- The International Court of Justice, United Nations' principal judicial organ, has stayed the hanging of ex-Indian Navy officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was given death sentence by Pakistan for spying.
- India is going to commence a 10,000-crore deep sea mission by the year end to explore mineral wealth beneath the Indian Ocean floor, the Ministry of Earth Sciences announced.
- Kochi Metro is going to employ 23 members from the Transgender community.
- This is the 1st time a government owned company has formally appointed members of the transgender community.
- UPSC has decided to share online the scores and educational qualification of candidates who took competitive examinations and appeared till the final round.
- The move will help private sector employers search for candidates suitable for them.
- India is set to skip China's two-day Belt and Road Forum due to sovereignty concerns on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a part of China's One Belt One Road project.
- Voting has begun in Nepal's first local-level polls in two decades, a landmark moment in the country's transition to democracy.
- At least 49 lakh people are eligible to vote in the election in which nearly 50,000 candidates are contesting for the position of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Ward Chairman and Ward Member in 283 municipalities.
- In order to ensure round-the-clock security to passengers including women, Indian Railways will install 19,000 high definition CCTV cameras at over 983 stations across the country under the Nirbhaya Fund at an approved cost of Rs 500 crore.
- Job cuts in the IT sector will be up to 2 lakh annually for next three years due to under-preparedness in adapting to newer technologies, Head Hunters India reported.
- Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar announced that WiFi services will be launched in 38 Central universities, starting July.
- China and the 10 member of the ASEAN grouping have agreed to a framework of a legally binding code of conduct aimed at preventing disputes in the strategic South China Sea.
- Japan is going to build a war museum at the hillock at Maiba Lokpa in Manipur, Japanese ambassador to India Kenji Hiramatsu has announced.
- It is not mandatory to provide age proof for Aadhaar enrolment but a valid document is required to correct the date of birth registered for the unique identity, UIDAI announced.

General - International

- European Union leaders have promised to embrace the British province of Northern Ireland after Brexit if it ever unites with Ireland.

· Dubai government announced the launch of "Dubai Font", the world's first typeface developed by Microsoft for a city.

- Dubai's Crown Prince, Hamdan bin Mohammed alMaktoum, has urged all government institutions to adopt the font in official correspondence.

· China is going to launch its own online encyclopedia next year rivaling Wikipedia and Britain's Encyclopedia Britannica.

- This project will be executed under the guidance of the state-owned China Publishing Group.

· Donald Trump signed an executive order on religious liberties designed to ease a ban on political activity by churches and other tax exempt institutions.

- The order also gives regulatory relief to religious employers that object to an Obamacare mandate for contraception in healthcare.

· Russia has blocked access to Chinese social media app WeChat for failing to give its contact details to country's communications watchdog.

- Last year, Russia blocked US social networking site LinkedIn for violating a law that requires data of Russian citizens to be stored on Russian servers.

· The Vatican is celebrating the big-bang theory.

- The Vatican Observatory has invited leading scientists and cosmologists to talk black holes, gravitational waves and space-time singularities as it honors the late Jesuit cosmologist considered one of the fathers of the idea that the universe began with a gigantic explosion.

- The May 9-12 conference aims to help correct the notion that the Roman Catholic Church was hostile to science.

· The 2017 Moscow Victory Day Parade was recently took place in Red Square in Moscow.

- Russia observed this parade to commemorate the 72nd anniversary of the capitulation of Nazi Germany (Soviet Union's triumph over Hitler) in 1945.

· Several European Union countries including France, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Portugal and Britain have refused to sign a trade statement at China's One Belt, One Road (OBOR) summit.

- This is seen as a setback to China's efforts to gain full support for its initiative which it hopes will revive ancient trade routes from Asia to Europe.

· Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko has imposed a ban on Russia's social media networks and internet services as part of economic sanctions against Russia.

- The sanctions were imposed over Russian annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and its alleged support to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

· Austria has passed a new law which bans women from wearing full-face Islamic veils in public, in the latest restriction on the country's Muslim population.

- The law also forbids distribution of the Quran and requires all migrants in Austria to participate in an "integration" year, during which they would take classes to learn German and ethics considered customary in Austria.

· The United States and 6 Gulf countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE) have joined hands to curb financing of dreaded terror groups such as Islamic State, Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Haqqani network and Taliban.

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) in this regard was signed by the US and six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in Riyadh.

· In order to eliminate distractions for drivers and increase safety, the Philippine authorities have banned hanging rosaries and religious icons off car dashboards.

- This ban is the part of a new law which also bars talking or sending messages on mobile phones, putting on makeup, and eating or drinking coffee while driving.

· Taiwan's constitutional court on ruled in favor to recognize same-sex marriage on the island.

- This is the first such ruling in Asia

· The Dubai police have officially inducted the world's first operational robot police officer into the force.

- The 'robocop' is over 5 feet tall, weighs 100 kg and has facial recognition software with which it can identify offenders.

- The robot is capable of speaking six languages and people can use its built-in tablet device to access various police services.

· In a crackdown on child sex tourism, Australia will ban convicted paedophiles from leaving Australia and cancel their passports.

- The new laws, to be introduced in Parliament, will apply to convicts while they are on the offenders' register.

- Paedophile meaning: a person who is sexually attracted to children.

· Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has signed an executive order banning smoking in public across the country.

Books and Authors

· The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has released a two part book series titled – M.S. Swaminathan: The Quest for a world without hunger.

- These books were written by the eminent agricultural scientist Dr. M.S. Swaminathan who is also known as the Father of the Green Revolution in India.

· Union Minister Kiren Rijju has released a philosophical novel for God titled “Confessions of a dying mind: the blind faith of atheism“.

- The book was written by IAS officer Haulianlal Guite.
- This book is touted as “the world’s first philosophical novel for God“.
- Two books based on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popular radio show 'Mann Ki Baat' have been launched by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan at Rashtrapati Bhawan's Darbar Hall.
- They are, ‘Mann Ki Baat: A Social Revolution on Radio’: This book was compiled by Rajesh Jain.
- ‘Marching With A Billion Dreams’: This book is written by eminent journalist Uday Mahurkar.

TO THE POINTS: MAY-2017

- According to RBI, India’s forex reserves rose to USD 372.73 billion.
- e-VIN - Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network
- World’s fastest film camera can ‘capture’ light.
- Emmanuel Macron has become France’s youngest president.
- Punj Llyod Ltd and its JV partner Israel Weapon Industries (IWI) have inaugurated the country's first private sector small arms manufacturing plant at MP.
- Banganpalle mango received the GI tag in May 2017.
- Russia, Iran, and Turkey signed a MoU for safe zones in Syria.
- IIT Madras developed white light emission using natural extracts red pomegranate and turmeric.
- Chenanisaurus barbaricus is the last living dinosaur prior to the asteroid strike 66 million years back.
- Adolph Kiefer was America's oldest living Olympic Champion till May 5th 2017.
- Leila Seth was the first woman Chief Justice of a State High Court.
- RBI has tightened the rules around JLFs. JLF - Joint Lenders Forum.
- Odisha launched a boat ambulance service.
- Sachin Tendulkar received the Fellowship award at the 7th Asian Awards on 8th May 2017.
- Quikr acquired home services marketplace Zimber.
- Germany is a major portion of the world’s biggest X-ray laser located.
- India's first integrated bio-refinery for renewable fuels and chemicals been inaugurated in Rahu, Pune.

- India organized a cultural festival to mark Rabindranath Tagore's 156th birth anniversary in Egypt.
- As per the Times Rich List, Hinduja Brothers topped the list of 134 Indian billionaires in Britain.
- The CRPF anti naxal operations command HQ shifted to Raipur.
- Hollywood actor Emma Watson has received Genderless Acting Award for Best Actor Award, marking the first time for such an award.
- India has been elected as the President of the UN Habitat.
- Haryana is set to issue a house ID for every home.
- Baahubali 2: The Conclusion is the highest grossing Indian film ever.
- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has inked an agreement with World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to set up Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISC) or technology and innovation support centres.
- FBI director James Comey led the bureau against the Trump administration for alleged interference of Russia in the US polls.
- Indian born sitar player Ustad Raees Khan belonging to the Mewati Gharana was the grandson of noted maestro Inayat Ali Khan.
- Indian woman cricketer Jhulan Goswami became the highest wicket taker in ODIs.
- Pooja Kapur has been appointed the next ambassador of India to Bulgaria.
- Moon Jae-in has won the South Korea presidential election.
- ICMIS - Integrated Case Management Information System
- EoTT - End of Train Telemetry
- BSE Sensex reached its record close of 30,248 in May 2017.
- Jharkhand signed a MoU with Oracle for improving citizen service and business.
- Justice Karnan became the first to be sentenced to imprisonment.
- J&K got its first cricket academy.
- National Technology Day being observed on May 11 across India.
- Theme for World Migratory Bird Day - Their Future is Our Future.
- DIPAM has set up an Investor Facilitation Platform. DIPAM - Department of Investment and Public Asset Management.
- Maitri is the name of the Indian research station in Antarctica.

- Aruna Sundararajan has been appointed the new Department of Telecommunications (DoT) secretary on May 10, 2017.
 - Vinay Mohan Kwatra is India's next ambassador to France.
 - Telangana has introduced a logo for Hearing impaired category of vehicle drivers.
 - Ministry of health and family welfare has launched a new vaccine for Pneumonia in May 2017.
 - The invisible laser wall Kavach to be used for the protection of the Indo-Pak border by BSF.
 - 2011-2012 is the new base year for industrial production (IIP) and the wholesale price index (WPI).
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- Wrestlers Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat, and Divya Kakran won silver medals at the Asian Wrestling Championship, 2017.
 - Indian batsman VVS Laxman is the fifth to be awarded the MCC honorary life membership.
 - Leena Nair took charge as Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs on May 15, 2017.
 - According to PAC report, Kerala has secured the first rank for the second consecutive year in the public affairs index.
 - India has jumped 73 spots to be 26th on World Bank's electricity accessibility index.
 - Mark Lowcock has been appointed the next UN humanitarian chief.
 - Hubert Minnis is the fourth PM of Bahamas since the time of its independence.
 - Indian driver Arun Maini became the first to win a GP3 series race.
 - VO Chidambaranar Port will see a 4 fold rise in capacity of its coal jetties following up gradation.
 - Former Puducherry Chief Minister Subrahmanyam Ramaswamy passed away on 15 May 2017 in Puducherry.
 - Coir sector's revenue from exports touched an all time high of INR 2282 crore this fiscal.
 - Mumbai Chatrapati Shivaji International airport is the world's busiest single-runway airport.
 - Chile has an expanded Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with India on 16th May 2017.
 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the river conservation project 'Narmada Seva Mission' on 15 May 2017 in Madhya Pradesh.
 - Indian navy signed an MOU with Space Application Centre (SAC) on data sharing and scientific cooperation.
 - India became the first non Arab state to recognize PLO in Palestine in 1974.
 - Citizens Charter 2017 is an attempt to bring accountability and transparency in EPFO functioning.

- A separate 24/7 DD channel has been announced for Jharkhand in May 2017.
- MoS signed a MoU for development of skills in coastal area youth with Ministry of Rural Development.
- Amitabh Kant and Ratan P Watal chaired the first Niti Aayog Samavesh meeting held in New Delhi on May 17, 2017.
- New portal Operation Clean Money has Income Tax Department (ITD) launched in May 2017.
- Anshu Jamsenpa has become the first Indian woman to scale Mount Everest for the 4th time.
- 10 new indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR) were approved by cabinet in May 2017.
- West Bengal has made the state language compulsory in all its schools.
- Cricketer Suresh Raina has launched a foundation to create awareness for mental and physical help to women and children.
- Ovais Sarmad has been appointed the UNFCCC Deputy Executive Secretary on May 16, 2017.
- Veteran Bollywood actress Reema Lagoo's birth name was Nayan Bhadbade.
- Late Environment Minister Anil Madhav Dave's residence is known as Nadi Ka Ghar.
- India is getting its first artillery gun after 30 years. It is called as M777.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved a mission between industry and academia. It is called as Innovate in India.
- Shrinivas Kulkarni, Zubin Mehta, and Amitav Ghosh has won the Dan David prize from India so far.
- In the ICC test rankings India secured the top position with 123 points in May 2017.
- 2017 has been selected by World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as year of polar prediction.
- Whitley Award is also known as the Green Oscars.
- World Telecommunications and Information Society Day observed on May 17.
- Prashant Ranganathan has won the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in the US in May 2017.
- BSNL has inked agreements with Facebook and MobiKwik to promote value added and internet services.
- Chitale committee has recommended guidelines for de-siltation of River Ganga from Bhimgauda to Farakka.

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has banned open defecation and dumping of wastes in the floodplains of Yamuna River.
- UNICEF has reported that number of children travelling alone has increased 5 times since 2010.
- CRMM - Common Risk Mitigation Mechanism
- 5, 12, 18, and 28 rates are the 4 slab service tax structures proposed by the GST council.
- PN Pradhan has been appointed as IDS deputy chief.
- According to a study by UK scientists, plant life in Antarctic is growing rapidly due to climate change.
- Hasan Rouhani has been re-elected president of Iran for the second time.
- MP government has put an indefinite ban on sand excavation in Narmada River.
- The Banga Samman awards were instituted on 2011.
- Scientists at NASA have named a new organism discovered by them after the much-loved Indian scientist and former President, APJ Abdul Kalam.
- Haryana state students can now download school books from an e-textbook portal.
- Alexander Zverev became the youngest Masters 1000 titlist since 2007.
- Theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity in 2017 - Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism.
- The death day of former PM Rajiv Gandhi is observed as Anti Terrorism Day in India.
- Saurabh Agrawal has been appointed group CFO of TATA Sons.
- Karnataka Bank signed a MoU with Life Insurance Corporation.
- Sloan Digital Sky Survey has created the first map of the bigger universe based on the position of quasars.
- Vaishnavi won the first Asia Level Yoga Competition.
- Reliance Jio has received the TM Forum Digital Service Innovator of the Year Award 2017.
- Nauru is the world's smallest republic.
- MP has signed a MoU with IIT Kharagpur.
- Avid cartoonist - conversationist Rohan Chakravarthy won the International President's award 2017.

- Israel Aerospace Industries has closed a deal to supply air and missile defence systems to India in May 2017.
- HDFC Life announced the launch of an artificial intelligence-based application that can automatically read, understand, categories, priorities and respond to customer emails sent to the private insurer.
- Culture ministry launched a Swachh Bharat app for ASI monuments.
- SEVA - Saral Eindhyan Vitaran App
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has been appointed the new DG of WHO.
- Hindi Advisory Committee has recommended Hindi be taught voluntarily.
- Indian Space Research Organization and NASA are collaborating to make satellite NISAR.
- US and Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman signed an MoU in the area of terror financing.
- Rajan Anandan is the new Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) chairman.
- Off spinner Ravichandran Ashwin won the CEAT cricket award for top international cricketer of the year.
- Dubai police force officially inducted world's first operational robot police officer.
- Indian researchers saw reduction in TB bacteria using phytochemical Bergenin extracted from Sakhua tree.
- Anurag Tripathy has been appointed the CBSE secretary on 25th May 2017.
- India has inked 4 agreements with Mauritius. PM of Mauritius - Pravind Kumar Jugnauth.
- The country's first e-vehicle services for a taxi aggregator launched in Nagpur.
- The world's largest telescope being constructed in Atacama Desert.
- KPS Gill was known as the super cop for the crackdown on Khalistani terrorists.
- India got no. 1 rank in milk production in the world.
- Defence and Finance Ministry inaugurated the DRDO Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Chitradurga Karnataka.
- Zbigniew Brzezinski, the National Security Adviser to former US President Jimmy Carter, passed away on 26 May 2017 in Virginia.
- CA Bhavani Devi became the first Indian to win a gold medal in an international fencing tournament.
- Satyabrata Rout has won the Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar for 2016.
- Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar has launched a mobile app at UGC on Anti-ragging issue.

- Maarutha was the first cyclone of 2017.
- The new campaign for promotion of toilet usage launched on May 30, 2017 called as Darwaza Band.
- Theme for the 2017 International Day of UN Peacekeeper - Investing in peace around the world.
- Bihar is leading in the production of litchi.
- Indian Oil Corp (IOC) has overtaken Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) to become India's most profitable state owned company.
- Dailong has been declared as the biodiversity site in Manipur.
- India will give Rs.35 crore rupees to children of freedom fighters in Bangladesh under Muktijodha scholarship scheme in the next five years.
- Marking the formation day of Maharashtra, CM Devendra Fadnavis has hoisted India's second tallest national flag in Kolhapur at 303 feet.
- India's tallest flag pole, at 360 feet, is installed at the Attari-Wagah border in Punjab.
- Joshna Chinappa, the 1st Indian to clinch the Asian Squash Championship title.
- Theme of World Asthma Day 2017 - It's Time To Control Asthma.
- World's highest railway bridge Chenab will be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower is to come up over which River in Jammu and Kashmir.
- India's National Football Team has recently entered the top 100 of the FIFA national team rankings for the first time in 21 years.
- China is going to launch its own online encyclopedia next year rivaling Wikipedia and Britain's Encyclopedia Britannica.
- The Indian T20I team has slipped a spot to the 4th place in the recently released ICC T20I team rankings. 1st Place - New Zealand.
- The Swachh Bharat survey 2017 has declared Indore of Madhya Pradesh as the cleanest city in India.
- The world's first "ladies special" suburban train has completed 25 years. This train runs in Mumbai.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has successfully launched GSAT-9 satellite from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. This satellite is also known as South Asia Satellite.
- The government has declared the entire Assam as a "disturbed" area for another 3 months under Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act.
- 1st Indian spacecraft to use an electric propulsion system (EPS) is GSAT-9.

- Usha Ananthasubramanian has been recently appointed as the new Head of Allahabad Bank.
- USA's oldest living gold medalist in any sport Adolph Kiefer was recently passed away. He is related to Swimming.
- Hollywood Actress Emma Watson has won the 1st ever genderless Best Actor award.
- India now ranks 3rd globally in number of startup incubators and accelerators. 1st Rank – China.
- Diego Maradona has been appointed the Coach of Fujairah FC, a second-tier football club in the UAE.
- Lasith Malinga has become the first bowler to complete 150 wickets in the IPL.
- World Red Cross Day is observed on 8th May.
- The Maharashtra government has declared Bhilar as India's first 'Pustakanche Gaav' (village of books).
- An IIT-Bombay Assistant Professor Vikram Vishal has won the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) Medal for Young Scientists, 2017.
- Venu Rajamony has been recently appointed as India's Ambassador to the Netherlands.
- The 29th India–Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) has commenced at Port Blair under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command.
- Adi Godrej has handed over Godrej Group's flagship firm Godrej Consumer Products to Nisaba.
- Sohail Mahmood has been recently appointed as Pakistan's new High Commissioner to India.
- Twitter has elevated Taranjeet Singh as its Country Director for India.
- Sanjay Mitra has been recently appointed as the next Defence Secretary.
- Hubert Minnis has been recently elected as the Prime Minister of The Bahamas.
- Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan has been appointed as World Health Organization's Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in SouthEast Asia Region.
- Theme of Mother's Day 2017 - Every Mother knows
- Uttar Pradesh is going to make Saturdays as 'no school bag day' in the state-run schools.
- Lewis Hamilton is the winner of Spanish Grand Prix 2017.
- Indian dairy cooperative Amul is going to sponsor the New Zealand cricket team for the upcoming Champions Trophy in England.
- Kotak Mahindra Bank has recently launched 811, India's first downloadable Digital Savings Account.

- Edouard Philippe has been recently appointed as the new Prime Minister of France.
- Rifath Sharook, an 18-year-old student from Tamil Nadu, has developed what he claims is the world's smallest and lightest satellite. The satellite name is KalamSat.
- Pradeep Amat has been recently appointed as the Speaker of Odisha Assembly.
- To promote affordable housing, ICICI Bank cuts home loan rate by up to 0.3% for loans up to 30 lakh.
- Renu Satti has been recently appointed as the new CEO of Paytm Payments Bank.
- India has overtaken the US to become the second-most attractive country for renewable energy investment. 1st Place – China.
- Indian Mountaineer Anshu Jamsenpa became First Woman in World to Climb Mount Everest 4 times.
- Indian businessman Mukesh Ambani (Reliance Industries) has been featured in the Forbes Global Game Changers List for 2017.
- India recently received the first artillery guns 30 years after the 1980s Bofors scandal. These 145 M777 ultra light artillery guns were ordered from US.
- Vishakhapatnam has been adjudged as cleanest railway station.
- The 24th bilateral exercise SIMBEX involving Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy has recently commenced in South China Sea.
- SIMBEX - Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercises
- Sanjay Gubbi (Karnataka) and Purnima Barman (Assam) have won a Whitley Award for their contributions in wildlife conservation.
- The President of Philippines Rodrigo Duterte has recently signed an executive order banning smoking in public across the country.
- Former Chairman and CEO of Fox News Roger Ailes was recently passed away.
- The social network Hello founded by Orkut creator Orkut Buyukkokten, has been recently launched in India.
- The businessman Matthunny Mathews had helped thousands of Indians to flee Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990, was recently passed away.
- The language learning app Memrise was adjudged the best app for its design and user experience in 2017 Google Play Awards.

UNION BUDGET 2017-2018

Presented by Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley on 1st February, 2017 in Parliament, New Delhi.

BUDGET- HIGHLIGHTS

- Holding period for long-term capital gains for land and building reduced to two years.
- Income tax for companies with annual turnover up to Rs.50 crore reduced to 25 per cent. Micro, small and medium enterprises will benefit.
- MAT credit allowed to be carried forward up to a period of 15 years instead of 10 years.
- Foreign Investment Promotion Board to be phased out.
- More tax incentives for affordable housing. 30-60 sqm carpet area will be counted instead of built-up area in the affordable housing scheme.
- 5 years to complete affordable housing scheme, extended from earlier three-year period.
- Rs.20000 crore will be used for refinancing individual housing loans by the National Housing Bank.
- Allowable provision for NPAs of banks increased from 7.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent. Rs.10,000 crore provided for bank recapitalisation.
- Legislation to confiscate assets of absconding offenders.
- Tax revenue growth pegged at about 12 per cent.
- Net Market borrowing restricted to Rs.3.48 lakh crore, lower than Rs.4.25 lakh crore in the current Year.
- Defence outlay increased by 6 per cent.
- High-quality foreign portfolio investors exempt from indirect transfer provisions.
- Rs.72,500 crore expected from disinvestment FY18, against Rs.45,500 crore in FY17.
- Rs.46,500 crore expected from sale of minority shares in public sector companies in FY18. Rs.15,000 crore expected from strategic sales against Rs.5,500 crore in FY17.
- Fiscal Deficit - (As % of GDP) targeted at 3.2% as against 3.5% in the current year.
- Income tax 25 per cent increase in personal I-T Revenue; 10 per cent surcharge on incomes from Rs.50 lakh to Rs.1 crore.
- Transport push - 20 per cent boost to spending on transport over revised estimates of 2016-2017.
- Cash Limit - Rs.3 lakh limit on cash transactions following recommendations of special investigative team.
- 5% reduction in tax rate for individuals earning between Rs.2.5 lakh and Rs.5 lakh.
- Rs.12,500 uniform tax benefit for individuals earning above Rs.5 lakh.

- Focus on Rural, Agri & Infra sectors to boost formal economy. The planned investment in these sectors will not only create jobs but spur consumer spending.
- Rs.70,000 crore allocated for fertiliser subsidy in 2017-18, same as revised estimates of 2016-17.
- Rs.145,000 crore allocated for food subsidy against revised estimate of Rs.135,173 crore for 2016-17.
- Rs.25,000 crore as subsidy on petroleum products, lower than Rs.27,532 crore in 2016-17.
- Rs.21.47 lakh crore allotted for total expenditure, capital expenditure up 25.4%.
- Rs.1.8 lakh crore allocated for rural, agriculture and allied sector, up 24% from 2016.
- Rs.2.74 lakh crore kept for defence expenditure doesn't include pension.
- 1.9% revenue deficit is expected in 2017-18, against 2% mandated by the FRBM Act.
- 3.48 lakh crore is the limit set for net market borrowing after buyback in 2017-18.
- Rs.2,000 new limit for cash donation to political parties, reduced from Rs.20,000.
- 35% increase in allocation to scheduled castes; minorities given Rs.4,195 crore.

Little in Budgets for stressed loan-laden banks

- Outlay for capital infusion in public sector banks pegged at Rs.10,000 crore.
- Total capital requirement for 2016-2019 is Rs.1,80,000 crore.
- Government expects banks to raise Rs.1,10,000 crore from market.
- Listed public sector banks have low valuation.
- Resolution of stressed loans is a painfully slow process.
- The proposal for "bad bank" to take over non-performing assets revived.

BUDGET IN DETAIL-SECTOR-WISE

PERSONAL TAX

- Till now, there is a surcharge (of 15 per cent) on those with an income above Rs.1 crore. With the Budget introducing a surcharge of 10 per cent for people with incomes of over Rs.50 lakh to Rs.1 crore, the net has widened. There would be a rise of around 3 per cent in the income tax payout.

The new calculation for income-tax rate for this slab will be 30 per cent tax + 10 per cent surcharge on tax + 3 per cent cess on both tax and surcharge) or in total, 33.99 per cent. However, the vast majority of taxpayers with taxable incomes of Rs.2.5 lakh to Rs.5 lakh should be a happy lot as their tax burden is down by a half.

- For everyone in the above Rs.5 lakh income bracket, there is a tax rebate of Rs.12,500.

- One reason is to persuade more people to either file their returns for the first time or declare their income honestly. First-year returns of those having income less than Rs.5 lakh will not be scrutinised unless the tax authorities have specific information against the assessee.
- The standard deduction stands at Rs.2.5 lakh. On the next Rs.50,000, a tax rate of 5 per cent would have amounted to a tax bill of Rs.2,500. But the rebate of Rs.2,500 under Section 87A means that people with income up to this level don't have any tax burden.
- Enforcement is likely to become stricter. Some of the data cited by the FM - 7.6 million tax payers in the country, of which 5.6 million belong to the salaried class – was astonishing. The government will use data analytics to get more people to file IT returns and disclose their income honestly.
- Henceforth, cash transactions of above Rs.3 lakh will not be permitted. This was a recommendation of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) which the government has accepted.
- No tax on income upto Rs.3,00,000/-.

CONSUMER GOODS

- In view of the proposed GST tax expected to come in effect by July 2017, the budget has left most consumer goods untouched.
- Reductions in personal tax liabilities and enhancing the farm credit target will do their bit to boost consumption in rural India, in sectors like consumer products and automobiles.
- There is no change in the tax on daily consumption items such as toiletries, snacks.
- Cigarette prices are likely to go up by 4-6%, making it one of the softest hikes in the last six years. There is an increase in the additional excise duty for filter cigarettes which went up by 44% to 49%.
- Chewing pan masala, gutka, zarda and khaini will become expensive with prices set to go up by 8-10%.
- Made in China Mobiles to be dearer.
- Five special tourism zones to be built jointly with the states, launching the Incredible India campaign across the world and special pilgrimage trains are three key proposals for the tourism sector.

MARKET-CAPITAL GAINS AND DIVIDEND

- The holding period for long-term capital gains (LTCG) to be applicable remains constant at one year. The government stuck to its fiscal road map and made no changes to the long-term capital gains tax structure.
- Promoters holding shares through private trusts will now have to pay 10% tax on dividend income above Rs.10 lakh.
- At present, income by way of dividend in excess of Rs.10 lakh is chargeable at the rate of 10% for individuals, Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) or partnership firms. The rule has now been extended to include private trusts in the budget on 1st February, 2017.

- Tax experts said this would impact succession planning of promoters, since many of them own their company's shares through family trusts - especially the large conglomerates.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Oil/Gas/Electricity

- The government will build two more strategic crude oil reserves - at Chandikhole in Odisha and Bikaner in Rajasthan - that will take the country's strategic reserve capacity to 15 million metric tonnes, enough to maintain oil supplies for 90 days in case there is a disruption. Each will cost Rs.10,000 crore. India already has three reserves with a combined capacity of 5 million tonnes at Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur. These were built for Rs.4,000 crore and nearly half of their capacity is already filled with crude.

- Power for all, pet project of power, coal, renewable energy and mines minister Piyush Goyal, is progressing well and on track to achieve 100% village electrification by May 2018, this year's Budget has declared. The finance minister has announced an increased allocation of Rs.4,814 crore under the Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana next fiscal.

Metro Rail

- The Budget recognised Metro Rail as the emerging mode of urban transportation. Finance minister said a new Metro Rail Policy will be announced with a focus on innovative models of financing and implementation. It will also focus on indigenization and standardisation of hardware and software. The government expects this to open up new job opportunities.

Highway Construction Accelerates

- The government will spend Rs.64,900 crore to build new highways in the new fiscal year, 12% higher than the previous allocation. The government will build and develop 2,000 km of roads for coastal connectivity. Total length of roads constructed since 2014-15 under various schemes- including the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna-is about 1,40,000 km, which is significantly higher than the previous three years.

Airlines get tax cuts for small town

- The government has waived the service tax on airlines offering cheap tickets with the help of viability gap funding to help people at smaller airports that are not commercially attractive. The service charge would otherwise have been in the range of 14%.

DIGITAL ECONOMY, 2.5K CR DIGITAL TRANSACTIONS IN 2017-18

- On the cusp of a revolution, Digital payments are poised to become the new norm in 2017, and as more people transact online, India should see new taxpayers and better transparency in income in the days to come. Budget handholds India to take the next step in Digitisation, carries forward the task of financial inclusion by proposing many measures. To achieve this, the government will employ all tools at its disposal - UPI, USSD, Aadhaar Pay, etc. and will increase deployment of debit and credit card readers by banks to create a robust digital payments infrastructure.

- The government proposes to launch two schemes to promote the use of its payments app, BHIM - a referral bonus scheme for individuals and a cashback scheme for merchants.

- The finmin has proposed creating a Payments Regulatory Board within the RBI, replacing the Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment & Settlement Systems.

A High-speed Digital Highway

- In 14 months, more than 1,50,000 gram panchayats, will have access to high-speed broadband connectivity, along with WiFi hotspots and other low-tariff digital services. FM has proposed stepping up the budgetary allocation for this to Rs.10,000 crore in 2017-18. It could lead to new models in sectors such as health, education and skills development.

More Power to Electronics Manufacturing

- Finance minister increased the budgetary allocation for initiatives such as Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme (M-SIPS) and Electronics Development Fund (EDF) to Rs.745 crore in 2017-18.

- India Stack - which builds on JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) and provides solutions like Unified Payments Interface, BHIM, eKYC, eSign and DigiLocker - is seeing increasing uptake.

CERT Protection for Financial Sector

- The government is finally set to implement a longstanding demand to enhance cyber protection for the country's financial systems, especially as digital transactions increase post demonetisation. The FM proposed creating Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) for the financial sector, that will work in co-ordination with all the regulators and stakeholders in the financial sector. TDS on payments to call centres has been reduced from 10% to 2%, terming it "the only IT sector focused announcement in the Budget".

- The government's push to enlarge India's digital footprint is set to deliver a vast slew of opportunities for startups in areas from education to healthcare, entertainment and financial technology. Allocation of Rs.10,000 crore for the Bharat Net is set to spur rural connectivity.

Startups Get More Time to choose their 3-year Tax Holiday

- Income tax rebates for startups have been extended for three out of the first seven years since

incorporation. The industry is cheering the move to allow startups - certified under the IT Act or those established after April 2016 - to carry forward losses so long as the promoters retain their holding in the company, without the earlier stipulation to maintain a 51% stake.

DIRECT TAX

- The government has armed tax officers with sweeping powers to conduct searches and surveys, a move that's made industry jittery, saying it could lead to arbitrariness and harassment.

- The government has eased the compliance burden on transfer pricing for domestic companies. The law mandates transactions between group companies to be priced at market rates. The Budget proposal excludes transactions between two group companies from the transfer pricing law as long as both of them do not enjoy a tax holiday.

- There is no change in the tax structure of companies with large turnover.

- Small and medium companies with a turnover of up to Rs.50 crore will be taxed at 25% against 30% now, making them more competitive. This will benefit about 96% of the companies. There is a

flip side: a company with a turnover exceeding Rs.50 crore will pay higher tax even if its taxable profit is the same as an entity with lower revenue.

- Minimum alternate tax (MAT), meant for zero tax companies, will be scrapped only when exemptions are phased.

- Fewer tax breaks for Arms of Foreign Cos. The government has limited tax breaks for Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies on the interest they pay to the parent. The rule will hurt Indian cos which borrow from foreign parent and associates to use interest outgo in lowering taxable income. But it is in sync with global norms aimed at ensuring MNCs pay their taxes in the country where they make profit.

- The government has prepared the transition for Indian companies to adopt Ind-AS. The accounting standards will transform balance sheets and improve transparency in financial statements.

- Banks have got partial relief. A cut in the corporate tax rate would have reduced their tax outgo and improved valuation. Instead, they can claim higher provision.

- The Budget has implemented key proposals of SIT like disallowing any cash transaction above Rs.3 lakh as a tax deduction & of EC to limit cash donations to Rs.2,000 to a political party.

INDIRECT TAX

- Sticking to its commitment to roll out the goods and services tax (GST) on time, the government will begin its outreach to trade and industry on 1st April, to make stakeholders aware of the benefits of the indirect tax reform. The GST Council has finalised its recommendations on almost all issues based on a consensus approach. GST's tech backbone is also getting ready as per schedule. The budget prepares the ground for its rollout.

No service tax on Insurance for armed forces

- The armed forces are not required to pay service tax on life insurance schemes as the government has exempted them from paying this levy.

Pay less for flagship IIM programmes

- Those admitted to two year, full-time post graduate programmes at the IIMs will now pay less, irrespective of whether they are living on campus as the government has fully exempted the course from 14% service tax.

Boost for local Manufacturing

- India's ambitious Make in India programme got a boost with the budget unveiling fresh steps to correct anomalies in the indirect taxes structure to encourage manufacturing in the country.

- Sectors including information technology hardware, capital goods, defence production, textiles, mineral fuels and mineral oils, chemicals and petrochemicals, paper, paperboard and newsprint,

maintenance repair and overhauling (MRO) of aircraft and ship repair will see changes in their customs and excise duty structure.

- This will bring down manufacturing and compliance costs, boosting global competitiveness. In many of these cases, inputs attract higher duties than finished goods, making imports more attractive than local manufacture.
- Customs and excise duty structure plays an important role in incentivising domestic value addition towards Make in India campaign of government.
- Government's decision not to go ahead with the hike in service tax rate comes as a pleasant surprise to both industry and the common man.

ECONOMY

- States are budgeted to get Rs 10.85 lakh crore in resource transfer from the Centre in FY18, nearly 10% more than that in the current year. More than half of this amount, or Rs.6.75 lakh crore, is via their share in taxes while finance commission grants will yield another Rs.1.03 lakh crore. Rs.2.12 lakh crore is via scheme-related transfer.

Smart Cards for health of seniors

- Aadhaar-based smart cards containing health details of senior citizens will be introduced through a pilot project in 15 districts in 2017-18. A new LIC scheme will provide assured pension with a guaranteed return of 8% p.a. for 10 years.

PDS Sugar Subsidy Goes

- Government will not give Rs.18.50 per kg subsidy on sugar to states for selling it via ration shops from next fiscal and has allocated only Rs.200 crore in the Budget for clearing claims.

Sops for Footwear

- Leather and footwear industries will be incentivised for additional employment generation, on the lines of the textile sector. Sops include giving employers option of fixed-term employment, waiving off their contribution to PF and giving workers earning less than Rs.15,000 a month the option of not contributing to the PF. In June, the textile sector was given a Rs.6,000-crore package to create one crore new jobs over 3 years.

Government spend up across sectors

- Government has significantly enhanced allocation to infrastructure, social, rural and employment generation sectors. There is over 24% rise in rural, agriculture and allied sectors at Rs.1,87,223 crore while infra spend is up 10% to Rs.3,96,000 crore. Centre has increased spend on women and children welfare by 18% to Rs.1,84,000 crore.

Sankalp for Skilling Rs 3.5 crore Youth

- The government will launch the Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion programme (Sankalp) this year at an investment of Rs.4,000 crore. Sankalp will provide market-relevant training to 3.5-crore youth.

Subsidies Down to 1.61% of GDP

- The allocation for subsidies is budgeted to fall further to 1.61% of GDP in FY18 from 1.9% in FY16. Fertiliser subsidy is stagnant at 70,000 crore while allocation for food is up marginally to Rs.1.45 lakh crore from Rs.1.35 lakh crore. The declining trend in petroleum subsidies continues

with allocation pegged at Rs.25,000 crore, lower than Rs.27,532 crore expected in 2017. Total subsidies, including minor ones, add up to Rs.2.72 lakh crore in FY18 against Rs.2.6 lakh crore in 2017.

Jharkhand, Gujarat to Get AIIMS

- Two new AIIMS would be set up in Jharkhand and Gujarat. Also, 5,000 postgraduate seats will be added per annum to ensure adequate availability of doctors.

Farewell FIPB, After Two Decades

- JOB DONE - e-filing and online processing of applications achieved; more reforms in foreign direct investment policy awaited; 90% proposals take automatic route; first-half year inflows rise 35% to Rs.145,000 crore in India against 5% dip globally.

- Finance minister has proposed abolition of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), a move that sets the stage for more reforms in the FDI policy. Housed in the finance ministry's Department of Economic Affairs, the FIPB is an inter-ministerial body responsible for processing of FDI proposals and making recommendations for government approval.

- It was initially constituted under the Prime Minister's Office in the wake of the economic liberalisation drive of the early 1990s. FIPB has successfully implemented e-filing and online processing of FDI applications.

- The finance minister said a road map for the post-FIPB scenario will be announced in the next few months.

Selloff Target Fixed at Rs.72.5 k cr, Steps to Help Timely Listings

- The government has set a record disinvestment target of Rs.72,500 crore for the next financial year with plans to list railway sector firms and general insurers, explore mergers among state-run oil companies and come up with a new central public sector enterprises exchange-traded fund.

- The disinvestment target, which experts say is achievable, has allowed the government to step up capital spending while keeping fiscal expenditure in check.

- The government expects to raise another Rs.15,000 crore in the next two months and clock the highest-ever proceeds from disinvestment at Rs.45,550 crore at the end of this fiscal year, against the initial target of Rs.56,500 crore.

- Finance Minister budgeted for just a marginal relaxation while setting the fiscal deficit at 3.2% against a pledge of 3% for F.Y. 2017-18, even as the committee set up to review government finances had given him an 'escape clause' of up to 0.5 percentage point. The extra headroom is being used for capital spending.

Funds Spent Well, MGNREGS Gets Fresh Rs.48,000 cr. Infusion

- The government's flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is likely to begin the next fiscal with a clean slate, unlike a year ago when it faced huge arrears. The government has allocated Rs.48,000 crore to the scheme in this year's Budget.

DEFENCE

- A modest 6% hike in allocation shows that defence spending remains a low priority area for the government. The hike is unlikely to meet the impact of inflation, depreciation of the rupee and the imposition of customs duty on military imports from 2016.

AGRICULTURE

Farmers to Get Easier Access to Credit, Insurance

- The budget has proposed various initiatives that promise to improve farmers' incomes and productivity. They include higher investment in irrigation, increased coverage under crop insurance, a fund to develop dairies, wider access to credit, and expansion of agri-markets by denotifying fruits and vegetables.
- The move to double long-term irrigation fund to Rs.40,000 crore will help increase area under irrigation and improve efficiency of irrigation. Currently less than half of 142 million hectares of farmland in the country is irrigated. The Budget also paves way for a micro-irrigation fund to be set up by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) with an initial corpus of Rs.5,000 crore.
- The Budget has advised states to de-notify perishables from agricultural produce market committee (APMC) and expand the electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) to 585 mandis from 250 now. The de-notification of fruits and vegetables from APMC if it happens will be a welcome announcement because farmers will get good rate for their produce and supply chain will be reduced, leading to fall in post-harvest losses.
- Nabard has also proposed to set up a dairy processing and infrastructure development fund with an investment of Rs.8,000 crore over three years.
- The budget proposed increased farm credit of Rs.10 lakh crore.
- The government more than doubled the funding for crop insurance scheme, raised allocation for PMFBY to Rs.9,000 crore in FY18, from Rs.5,500 crore in 2016.
- Coverage under PMFBY is also proposed to increase to 40% of cropped area in 2017- 18 and 50% in the following year, up from 30% now.
- Total Budget allocation for agriculture, rural and allied sector stood at Rs.1,87,280 crore.

FINANCE AND BANKING

- The government is considering legislative changes to confiscate Indian assets of loan offenders, who give the law the slip and flee the country; such a provision will strengthen the hands of investigating agencies.
- India may attach local properties of loan defaulters such as liquor baron Vijay Mallya and Winsome Diamonds' Jatin Mehta, industrialists who left the country in the midst of judicial proceedings, signalling a tougher stance against future debtors seeking to escape the law of the land.
- The government move could help reduce future wilful defaults as many highprofile borrowers, while owing thousands of crores of rupees to Indian banks, lead lives of luxury, engaging a battery

of attorneys to fight protracted courtroom battles on their behalf. India's stodgy legal system is often blamed for giving unscrupulous borrowers the latitude they would otherwise be denied.

· "We have to ensure that the law is allowed to take its own course. The government is, therefore, considering introduction of legislative changes, or even a new law, to confiscate the assets of such persons, located within the country, until they submit to the jurisdiction of the appropriate legal forum."

Payments System

· Payments Regulatory Board will replace Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems.

· Board to be set up on the recommendations of Ratan Watal committee and CMs' panel for digital payments.

· It will have the RBI governor as chairman.

· Two RBI officials, including deputy governor in charge of payments, and three government nominees will be members.

· It will look at payments, innovation, cyber security, customer grievance and redressal.

BANKING

· Recovery After a Cheque Bounces to Get Easier Now. One of the biggest problems in Indian business is payments through cheques, despite uptick in digital payments. When cheques bounce due to lack of funds, the payees are at a disadvantage. FM has promised to amend the Negotiable Instruments Act so that payments happen quickly. There may be a time-frame for disposal of such cases.

· Banks Saddled with Bad Loans Get Tax Rebate. Banks will have more incentive to make higher provisions for problem loans with finance minister giving higher tax rebate from the next fiscal year. The move will help reduce the tax liability on banks. Banks, saddled with bad loans of over Rs.7 lakh crore, have been forced to increase provisions for bad loans over the last year 2016.

· There will be no windfall from the RBI for the government in FY18. The finance minister has made provision of only Rs.74,901 crore as surplus transfer from the RBI, dividends from banks and financial institutions.

· Just Rs.10k crore Set Aside to Recapitalise Banks. Banks will have to tap the equity market and sell non-core assets as the Budget has allocated just Rs.10,000 crore to the lenders struggling with bad loans. In August 2015, the government had said Rs.70,000 crore will be allocated as capital to banks in phases till 2018-19. In July 2016, it allocated Rs.22,915 crore, with State Bank of India getting Rs.7,675 crore. Indian Overseas Bank got Rs.3,101 crore and Punjab National Bank got Rs.2,816 crore.

· Withholding Tax Relief Extended for 3 More Years. The cost of capital for companies seeking foreign debt may fall amid a rise in overseas investor interest after the Budget extended a concessional 5% withholding tax for three years even for Masala bonds.

RAILWAY BUDGET 2017-2018

Highlights of the Railway Budget 2017-18 presented by Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu in the Lok Sabha on 1st February, 2017 :

(i) Rail PSUs to be Listed on Stock Exchanges- The shares of railway public sector enterprises will now be listed on stock exchanges to foster greater public accountability and let these companies grow to their potential. There will be a time-bound procedure for listing of identified public sector undertakings. The companies include IRCTC, IRFC and IRCON.

- Metro Rail Policy - A new policy will be announced with a focus on innovative models of implementation and financing for metro rail, as well as standardisation and indigenisation of hardware and software for the segment. This will open up new job opportunities. A Metro Rail Act will be enacted by rationalising the existing laws. This will facilitate greater private participation and investment in construction and operation.

- Rs.1 Lakh Cr. for Safety - Finance minister Arun Jaitley has proposed to create a rail safety fund, Rashtriya Rail Sanraksha Kosh, with a corpus of Rs.1 lakh crore over five years. It will draw 75% of the funds from the finance ministry while railways will raise the rest on its own. The finance ministry has already given Rs.15,000 crore to the fund. This will be used exclusively for safety related issues, a big focus area for the government after recent rail accidents. Clear guidelines will be framed for implementation of safety works under this fund.

- Competitive Fares for Railways - The tariffs of the railways would be fixed taking into consideration costs, quality of service, social obligations and competition from other forms of transport. The structure of an independent rail fare setting authority has already been worked out and the railways ministry is expected to soon get it cleared by the Cabinet.

- Swachh Railway - Bio-toilets will be installed in all rail coaches by 2019. An SMS-based Clean My Coach Service' has also been started to ensure cleanliness of passenger coaches. Plants for environment-friendly disposal of solid waste and conversion of biodegradable waste into energy are being tested at New Delhi and Jaipur railway stations. There are plans to set up such facilities at five more stations.

- Digitisation Push - Service charge on e-tickets booked through IRCTC has been scrapped to promote the use of the popular Web portal for ticketing. Cashless reservations had increased to 68% of the total from 58% after demonetisation. The aim is to digitise all railway transactions to make user experience smoother and ensure faster delivery of services.

- Station Redevelopment - At least 25 stations are expected to be awarded during 2017-18 for redevelopment. As many as 500 stations will be made friendly to the differently abled by providing lifts and escalators. About 7,000 stations have been identified to be retrofitted with solar power panels in the medium term and the work is currently on at 300 stations.

(ii) The Union Budget pegged the Indian Railways' capital expenditure for 2017-18 at Rs.1.31 lakh crore, the highest ever in the history of the national transporter. It will receive Rs.55,000 crore from the finance ministry as gross budgetary support. The railways will raise the rest from other sources.

- The funds would be utilised for acquiring new coaches, building new tracks and electrification.

- The railways will get Rs.18,000 crore from Life Insurance Corporation as loans, while Indian Railway Finance Corporation, the railway ministry's dedicated financing arm, will issue bonds to raise nearly Rs.22,000 crore. The rest will be mobilised through internal resources and public-private partnerships.

- The railways has several joint ventures with state governments. Funds spent through these ventures by state governments are accounted under public-private partnerships (PPP).

- The railways will raise Rs.22,000 crore from PPPs, including its joint ventures with state governments and public sector units. Internal accruals are estimated to bring in Rs.14,000 crore. For the financial year 2017-18, the railways plans to spend Rs.21,185.49 crore on construction of new lines and Rs.650 crore on plant and machinery, among other expenditures.

- It plans to also invest more than Rs.700 crore in public sector units, and Rs.16,790 crore in special purpose vehicles and JVs.

- The railways plans to use funds also for constructing freight corridors, improving connectivity in Kashmir and the Northeast, upgrading signalling, re-developing stations, improving passenger amenities, acquiring rolling stock and expanding critical freight lines near coal fields and ports.

- The railways, however, will still be responsible for its losses and all expenditure including salaries and pensions. All the burden will have to be met on its own, through revenue from carrying freight and passengers.

(iii) The railways expects its revenue to grow nearly 10% in the next fiscal year. The budget estimates for 2017-18 have pegged the overall earnings at Rs.189,498.37 crore as against Rs.172,305 crore in the current fiscal.

- Freight earnings are expected at Rs.118,156.50 crore in consonance with the loading target of 1,165 million tonnes (MT), which is 71.50 MT incremental over RE 2016-17. Passenger earnings in the next fiscal have been pegged at Rs.50,125 crore, up from Rs.48,000 crore in the current year.

- The railways expects passenger loading to grow a marginal 0.2%, while revenue from the passenger segment is expected to rise to almost Rs.2,000 crore. Other coaching earnings and sundry earnings have been estimated at Rs.6,494.04 crore and Rs.14,122.83 crore, respectively. The growth in coal and steel loading has been flat.

- Operating ratio is the single most important efficiency parameter for the Railways. Operating Ratio is expected to be at 94.57%, which means the railways will be spending Rs.94.57 to earn Rs.100.

This is because of high expenditure and stunted growth in passenger and freight loading. The transporter's high pension and salary bills are also thwarting its efforts to maintain a stable operating ratio.