

### Ruling conservative People's Party wins Spain's general election

Ruling conservative People's Party (PP) of Spain led Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy by has won the 2015 general election of the country. In the general election, PP won the 123 seats by securing in the lower house of the 350-member Parliament and securing 28.7 percent vote share. Now the People's Party has to form a coalition government with support of other political parties to govern for another four-year term.

### Philippines – First Asian country to approve sale of dengue vaccine

Philippines became the first Asian country to approve the sale of the world's first ever dengue vaccine Dengvaxia in the country. The Dengvaxia vaccine has been manufactured by French pharmaceutical manufacturer Sanofi Pasteur. It has been designed to protect people in the 9-45 age groups from all four subtypes of the virus. Earlier it secured its first regulatory approval in Mexico a fortnight ago and is currently being reviewed by around 20 countries in Asia and Latin America. Clinical tests of the vaccine carried out on 40,000 people from 15 countries by the company has shown that vaccine can immunise two-thirds of people aged 9-45.

### China passes first law against domestic violence

China's parliament adopted the country's first law against domestic violence bringing traditionally silent abuse victim, including couples who are in live-in relationship, under legal protection. The new law passed by the Chinese national legislature, prohibits any form of domestic violence, including psychological abuse. The legislation was approved at the end of a week-long bi-monthly session of the National People's Congress (NPC) standing committee.

### Cabinet approved India joining the International Energy Agency Ocean Energy Systems

On 13 January 2016 the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi gave its approval for India becoming a member country of the International Energy Agency – Ocean Energy Systems (IEA-OES) by signing the Implementing Agreement (IA). The nodal agency for the membership would be Earth System Science Organisation – National Institute of Ocean Technology (ESSO-NIOT) under the Ministry of Earth Sciences. By becoming a member of the IEA-OES, India will have access to advanced R&D teams and technologies across the world. India will partner in developing test protocols along with other countries. This will help in testing Indian prototypes as per international requirements and norms.

### WHO Declares End to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

The World Health Organization on 14 January 2016 declared an end to the Ebola outbreak in Liberia – marking the first time since the outbreak began in 2014 that the three hardest hit countries (including Sierra Leone and Guinea) have been considered Ebola-free. To be declared Ebola-free, the countries had to have no cases for 42 days (or two 21-day incubation cycles of the virus).

## INDIA & WORLD

### Russia inks deal with HAL to manufacture 200 Kamov helicopters

Russia's Rostech State Corporation has signed one billion US dollar deal with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to manufacture 200 Kamov 226T light helicopters. These helicopters will be manufactured under make in India initiative and shall replace the ageing fleet of Cheetah and Chetak helicopters. This is the first Russian-Indian high-tech project implemented by the Indian government within the framework of the 'Make in India' programme with the help of Russia. Under this manufacturing deal Rostech State Corporation will organize in India the production of Russian Ka-226T

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and its modifications in around 200 units. It will also carry out maintenance, operation and repair of helicopters.

### Cabinet approves MoU with Singapore to manage airports

The Union Cabinet on 6 January 2016 approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Singapore for operating and maintaining the terminal building of airports at Jaipur and Ahmedabad. This is the first time the Airports Authority of India will award operation and maintenance contract to any entity for terminal building. The objective of this MoU is to establish mutual cooperation in the field of civil aviation. The MoU envisages collaboration with Singapore in areas such as traffic development, commercial development, master planning and design, training and development, cargo handling and management among others.

### India signed loan agreement with Japan to clean Mula Mutha river in Pune

The Government of India on 13 January 2016 signed a loan agreement with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for pollution abatement of River Mula-Mutha in Pune under National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) in the presence of Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in Pune. The Government of Japan has committed to provide a soft loan of 19.064 billion Yen (about Rs. 1000 crore) to Government of India for the project at an interest rate of 0.30% per annum.

### India, Japan conducted joint exercise 'Sahyog-Kaijin' off Chennai coast

Ships and aircraft of the Indian Coast Guard and the Japan Coast Guard came together to train for the 15th edition of 'Sahyog-Kaijin' joint exercise in the Bay of Bengal off the Chennai coast on 15 January 2016. This is the second time in three months a ship from the Japanese military forces is participating in a military exercise along with India. In October last year, Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force's ship FS Fuyuzuk participated in exercise 'Malabar' with ships and aircraft of the Indian and the United States navies. While India was represented by ICGS Samudra Paheredar, ICGS Sarang, ICGS Vishwast, ICGS Rajtarang, ICGS Rajkamal and a Dornier Do 226 and chetak helicopters in 'Sahyog-Kaijin XV', Japan Coast Guard's JCGS Echigo with its integral helicopter took part in the exercise.

### MoU between India and Britain for cooperation in public administration

The union cabinet on 20 January 2016 gave its ex post facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Britain for cooperation in public administration and governance reforms. The meeting of the union cabinet was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The form of co-operation will be in areas like sharing good governance practices in public administration, user led service design, reducing bureaucracy in service delivery, government process re-engineering, building and developing staff capability, public grievance redress mechanism, local government reforms, reforms towards strengthening of social security, collaboration in strategies for promotion of ethics in government, collaboration between government and industry on staff management, mechanisms for public engagement, crisis and disaster management and digital transformation of government.

## NATIONAL

### India to implement stricter emission norms from April 1, 2020

In a bid to curb vehicular pollution, the government on 6 January 2016 decided to implement stricter emission norms of Bharat Stage (BS) VI from 1 April 2020 by skipping BS-V altogether. At present, BS IV norms are followed in parts of India and by 1 April 2017, the whole of the country is scheduled to be covered under it. Government has decided to leapfrog from BSIV to BS-VI directly by 1 April 2020. Government decided to skip BS V emission norms.

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### Bypolls to 12 Assembly seats in eight States on February 13

The Election Commission on 12 January 2016 announced bypolls to 12 Assembly constituencies in eight States, including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Karnataka and Maharashtra, to be held on 13 February 2016. Muzzafarnagar, Deoband and Bikapur in U.P., Devadurga, Bidar and Hebbal in Karnataka, Khadoor Sahib in Punjab, Palghar in Maharashtra, Harlakhee in Bihar, Amarpur in Tripura, Narayankhed in Telangana and Maihar in Madhya Pradesh are the constituencies going to polls on February 13. The notification will be issued on January 20, while January 27 will be the last date of filing nominations. While candidates can withdraw from the electoral race till January 30, the polls will be held on February 13. Counting will be held on February 16.

### NHAI signs MoU with ISRO and NECTAR

On 13 January 2016 NHAI signed Memorandum of Understanding with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) under Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and North East Centre for Technology Application and Research (NECTAR) for use of spatial technology for monitoring and managing National Highways.

### Aadhar Card UIDAI Scheme has Helped Reduce Corruption : World Bank

The World Bank released its report titled 'World Development Report 2016: Digital Dividends' on January 14, 2016. As per the report although internet, mobile phones and other digital technologies are spreading fast especially in the developing countries, the anticipated effect of these services in the fields of employment generation, higher economic growth and better public services have remained below expectations. In case of India it especially noted and appreciated the Aadhar card unique identification scheme launched by the Government of India. The World Bank noted that the Aadhar scheme has helped in streamlining public services and also helped in reducing corruption in India.

### 500-strong women troops commissioned into ITBP

A trained contingent of 500 women personnel, which will be the first 'mahila' squad to be deployed in highaltitude posts along the India-China border, was on 15 January 2016 commissioned into the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) in Panchkula. The women, in the rank of constable, were inducted in the border-guarding force after 44-weeks of training in battle craft and mountain survival and will now be sent to frontier areas for final acclimatisation before being deployed at ITBP posts along the Sino-India Line of Actual Control (LAC). These 'mahila' contingents are expected to be posted by March 2016 at about 20 forward locations of the ITBP.

### For first time in 66 years, no camel contingent at Republic-Day parade

For the first time in the history of the Republic Day celebrations, the iconic Border Security Force (BSF) camel contingent will not be ambling down the Rajpath in Delhi on January 26. While the contingent is in Delhi since the last few months, it has not been included in the rehearsals. The camel contingent first became a part of the national festival celebration in 1976 after it replaced a similar squad of the Army, which had been participating in the Republic Day parade since the first such event in 1950.

## STATES

### Dress Code For Devotees Visiting Tamil Nadu Shrines From January

Devotees entering temples in Tamil Nadu will have to follow a new dress code from January 1 as several important shrines have put up notice boards highlighting this. The dress code for entering the temples was being followed on the orders of the Madras High court on December 1. According to a notice board outside the Palani temple, male devotees have been advised to wear dhoti, shirt, pyjama

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or pant and shirt while women and girls should wear saris or churidhar or 'pavadai' with half-sari. Devotees wearing lungi, bermudas, jeans and tight-leggings would not be allowed.

### Jharkhand first state to sign MoU with Centre for power scheme UDAY

Jharkhand state become first state in country to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) scheme with Union Government on 5 January 2016. In this regard a tripartite MoU was signed between the state government, Union Ministry of Power and state power distributor Jharkhand Bijli Vitaran Nigam Ltd (JBVNL). With this, the total number of states that would be joining UDAY become 15. The other states that are on board UDAY are Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu&Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. Besides, four major states — Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Odisha — have already given their in-principle approval to join UDAY.

### Kerala became first State to achieve 100% primary education

Kerala became the first state in the country to achieve 100 percent primary education. This was declared by the Vice President of India Hamid Ansari on 12 January 2016 at a special ceremony organised at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. The success of Kerala in achieving total primary education can be attributed to various initiatives undertaken by the Kerala Literacy Mission in the last two decades. Especially, the Athulyam Scheme, which was implemented in two stages, played a key role in addressing the educational needs of illiterate adults. The second stage of the scheme, namely Mission 676, targeted those between ages 15 and 50 who, for one reason or the other, dropped out of the formal education process. Prior to the Athulyam Scheme, the fourth standard equivalency programme was started in 2000 in association with local bodies. As a result, Kannur became the first district in the country to achieve total primary education in 2001.

### Maharashtra Government inks MoU with Tata Trust for skill training of youth

The Maharashtra Government and Tata Trust on 19 January 2016 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a skill training programme for the youth in the state. The programme has been undertaken under the Maharashtra Government's Kushal Maharashtra, Rojgaryukt Maharashtra initiative.

### Bihar Government announced 35% reservation for women in all govt jobs

Bihar government on 19 January 2016 announced 35% reservation to women in government jobs in the state at all levels. The decision was taken at a meeting of the state cabinet presided over by chief minister Nitish Kumar. The state government which had provided 35% reservation to women in police job extended it in all other jobs. Other important decisions approved by the cabinet included a proposal to increase entry tax on electronic items, bidi and tobacco items, ready made garments and footwear among others in the range of 5% to 12%.

## CONFERENCES

### Prime Minister inaugurated 103rd edition of the Indian Science Congress (ISC)

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 103rd edition of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) in Mysore on 3 January 2016. The event is being held at the University of Mysore from January 3 to 7 and the theme of this edition of the event is 'Science & Technology for Indigenous Development in India'. More than 15000 delegates from across India. Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) is a premier scientific organisation of India and it has been hosting the ISC since 1914. Narendra Modi calling on Indian scientists to keep the economy, environment, energy, empathy and equity at the heart of their endeavors in the interest of impactful science.

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### CII Partnership Summit 2016 concluded in Visakhapatnam

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the State Government of Andhra Pradesh presents the 22nd edition of the Partnership Summit from 10 – 12 January 2016 at APIIC Ground, Harbour Park, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Ms Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Industry, is the Chair of the Summit and the State Government of Andhra Pradesh is the 'Partner State' for this edition of the prestigious initiative.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### Israeli journalist, Palestinian pastor won Swedish rights prize

Israeli journalist Gideon Levy and Palestinian pastor Mitri Raheb on 7 January 2016 won the 2015 Olof Palme human rights prize for their "fight against occupation and violence". Levy, a journalist at the left leaning Israeli daily Haaretz, and Raheb, a preacher and pastor in the Lutheran church in Bethlehem, were honoured for their "courageous and indefatigable fight against occupation and violence, and for a future Middle East characterised by peaceful coexistence and equality for all". Levy has published articles opposing the Israeli army's operations in Gaza in December 2008-January 2009 and in July-August 2014. The Olof Palme Prize is an annual prize worth \$75,000 (69,000 euros) awarded by the Swedish labour movement. It commemorates the memory of the Nordic country's Social Democratic prime minister Olof Palme, an outspoken international human rights advocate who was assassinated in the Swedish capital in 1986. Since 1987 the award has honoured human rights defenders around the world including Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi and former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

### ISRO chairman received Reva Lifetime Achievement Award

ISRO chairman A.S. Kiran Kumar received Reva Lifetime Achievement Award. The award, carrying a purse of Rs. 1 lakh and a citation, presented to him on Founder's Day that will be held on the university's premises (Rukmini Knowledge Park, Yelahanka, Bangalore).

### EPFO bags National Award on e-Governance

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has won the National Award on e-Governance 2015-16 for launching the Universal Account Number (UAN). The UAN facility enables workers to transfer their provident fund deposits while switching jobs anywhere in India easily. The EPFO won the gold award in the 'innovative use of technology in e-governance' category and the retirement body will get a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh. The award will be presented by the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions to the EPFO in the 19th National Conference on e-governance to be held in Nagpur on January 22.

### Prime Minister conferred the Times Now Amazing Indians Awards 2016

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14 January 2016 conferred the Times Now Amazing Indians Awards 2016 to all the awardees. The awards were given in recognition of great achievements in the face of adversity.

### Oscar nominations 2016: 'Revenant' leads with 12

The 88th annual Academy Award nominations were announced on 14 January 2016 in Los Angeles. The Revenant led all films with 12 nominations, followed closely by Mad Max: Fury Road with 10. The Martian landed in third with seven nominations. The Academy chose to nominate eight films for Best Picture this year, as it did last year, and they ranged from small, quiet stories like Brooklyn to the action movie bombast of Mad Max. It's a much better lineup than 2015's.

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### SPORTS & GAMES

India beat Afghanistan 2-1 to lift SAFF Cup title for 7th time

India defeated Afghanistan 2-1 in final match held in Thiruvananthapuram on 3 January 2016 to win the SAFF Cup for the seventh time. Previously India won in 1993, 1997, 1999, 2005, 2009, 2011 and now 2015. 2015 SAFF Cup was the 11th edition of the biennial SAFF Championship and was held at Trivandrum International Stadium, Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala). The 2017 SAFF Cup will be hosted by Bangladesh.

Pranav Dhanawade Scores 1009 runs in 323 balls

Mumbai teenager Pranav Dhanawade on 5 January 2015 scripted history by becoming the first batsman ever to notch up a four-figure score by smashing an unbeaten knock of 1,009 in an inter-school tournament in Mumbai. Pranav Dhanawade, the opening batsman of Smt KC Gandhi School (Kalyan), scored an unbeaten 1009 off 323 balls, a knock which comprised 129 fours and 59 sixes against Arya Gurukul School. He batted for 395 minutes and had a strike rate of 312.38. This innings came in the HT Bhandari Cup inter-school tournament organised by the Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA).

Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis won WTA Brisbane trophy

Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis won their sixth consecutive title by lifting the WTA Brisbane trophy, in Brisbane on 9 January 2016. They defeated the German players Angelique Kerber and Andrea Petkovic 7-5, 6-1. Sania-Martina has won 26 consecutive matches and this is their sixth consecutive title. They are on course to beat the record of 28 consecutive wins in doubles set by Gigi Fernandez and Natasha Zvereva in 1994.

Nick Kyrgios, Daria Gavrilova lift Australia to Hopman Cup title

Nick Kyrgios and Daria Gavrilova had singles wins over Ukraine to lead Australia Green to the Hopman Cup, the country's first title in the mixed-team event in 17 years. Gavrilova's 6-4, 7-6 (6) victory over Elina Svitolina gave Australia a 1-0 lead before Kyrgios clinched the title with a 6-3, 6-4 win over Alexandr Dolgoplov.

Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis created world record by winning 29 matches in a row

India's Sania Mirza and her Swiss partner Martina Hingis broke a 22-year-old world record by winning their 29th women's doubles match in a row en route to their entry into the women's doubles final of the WTA Sydney International, in Sydney on 14 January 2016. They defeated the Romanian Raluca Olaru and Kazakhstan's Yaroslava Shvedova 4-6, 6-3, 10-8 in the semi-final. The Sania-Hingis duo has now surpassed the pair of Puerto Rican Gigi Fernandez and Belarus' Natasha Zvereva, who won 28 matches on the trot.

Sania Mirza, Martina Hingis Won Sydney International Title

Sania Mirza and Martina Hingis lifted their second trophy of the season as they won the WTA Sydney International defeating Caroline Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic 1-6, 7-5, 10-5 on 15 January 2016. This was their 30th win. It was the 11th title together for the Indo-Swiss pair. In 2015, they won nine titles including the year-end WTA Finals.

### ECONOMY

RBI extends deadline to exchange pre-2005 notes to June 30, 2016

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has extended the deadline for exchanging pre-2005 currency notes of various denominations by another six months to June 30, 2016. From January 1, 2016 such facility for

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exchanging pre-2005 currency notes will only be available at identified bank branches and Issue Offices of the RBI. Earlier in June 2015, RBI had set the last date for public to exchange pre-2005 banknotes notes as December 31, 2015. It is fourth time RBI has extended the deadline for exchanging pre-2005 currency notes since March 2014. Till date RBI has shredded over 164 crore pre-2005 currency notes of various denominations, including of Rs 1,000 with the face value of around Rs 21,750 crore in its regional offices.

## United Nations ushers in ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

UN on 1 January 2015 ushered in the ambitious 2030 Sustainable Development Goals that aim to end poverty, hunger and assure gender equality while building a life of dignity for all over the next 15 years. The 15-year cycle of the anti-poverty Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) came to an end with 2015 paving the way for the SDGs, an even more ambitious set of goals to banish a host of social ills by 2030. These goals were adopted unanimously by 193 Heads of State and other top leaders at a summit in September 2015.

## Reliance to set up Rs. 5,000-crore naval shipbuilding unit near Vizag

Reliance Group, led by billionaire Anil Ambani, will set up a naval ship-building facility near Visakhapatnam at a cost of Rs. 5,000 crore. It is the single biggest investment in Andhra Pradesh after its bifurcation. A memorandum of understanding to build the facility was signed between Reliance ADA Group Chairman, Anil Ambani and AP Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, at the CII Partnership Summit and Sunrise AP Investment Meet on 10 January 2016. Reliance will establish the facility at Rambilli, about 70 km from Vizag.

## Walmart to close 269 stores, lay off 16,000 employees

Retail giant Walmart Stores, Inc. on 15 January 2016 announced to close 269 stores and lay off 16,000 employees, including 6,000 of them outside the U.S. It would close its 154 stores in the U.S. and 115 others abroad. The company is shutting down 60 stores in Brazil, a market in which the world's largest retailer has made a big push in recent years. The company said it had already been able to "relocate" most of the employees affected by the store closings to other points of sale. The other 55 stores to be closed outside the United States are mostly "small, loss-making stores in other Latin American markets,".

## World Bank to fund 20 million US dollar for reconstructing Indira Gandhi Zoological Park

The World Bank decided to give an assistance of 20 million US dollar to reconstruct the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park . The park was devastated during cyclone Hudhud in October 2014 in Visakhapatnam. It is for the first time that World Bank is directly involved in a zoo.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### New planet "Wolf 1061c" close to Earth found

In a recent discovery, Australian astronomers have found the possibly nearest habitable planet near Earth. Titled as "Wolf 1061c", the red dwarf star is around 14 light years away from earth, in the constellation Ophiuchus. It has been detected by scientists at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia. The new planet is one of the three planets that are likely to be solid and rocky. One of the three planets, Wolf 1061c, exists with in the 'Goldilocks zone' at a distance from the star that is not too hot and not too cold for liquid water. This leads to the speculations of possibility of life on the planet.

### SpaceX launches reusable rocket 'Falcon 9'

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SpaceX successfully launched reusable spacecraft by making a Falcon 9 booster the first piece of an orbital rocket to land back on Earth minutes after lofting satellites towards orbit. The SpaceX Falcon 9 lifts off and then returns to a landing zone at the Cape Canaveral air force station in Florida. The two stage rocket propelled it's payload of 11 Orbcomm Inc. Satellites aloft. It was the company's first flight. SpaceX's upgraded design for it's Falcon 9 rocket worked flawlessly.

### Barak 8 Missile successfully tested

India and Israel jointly developed Long Range Surface to Air Missile (LRSAM) Barak 8 was successfully test fired from INS Kolkata. The firing trial of the LR SAM has been jointly carried out by the Indian Navy, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aerospace Industries. This missile along with the Multi-Functional Surveillance and Threat Alert Radar (MF STAR) would provide these ships the capability to neutralize aerial threats at extended ranges.

### ".cn" becomes world's largest code domain

China's country code domain '.cn' has become the world's most commonly used in the internet with 16.36 million users, surpassing Germany's '.de' domain. According to the data released on 8 January 2016 by the China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC), which manages the domain, '.cn' had 16.36 million users by the end of 2015. The '.cn' domain is also world leading in domain resolution service, security and the ratio of benign uses. It is used by all central and provincial governments in China and most telecom companies besides commercial banks. Multinationals including Apple, Microsoft, Amazon and Citibank are among those using it. China has around 670 million internet users and over 4.13 million websites, according to the official data.

### ISRO successfully launched the fifth navigation satellite IRNSS-1E

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its 33rd flight (PSLV-C31), launched IRNSS-1E, the fifth satellite of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS). The launch took place on 20 January 2016 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. IRNSS-1E is the fifth navigation satellite of the seven satellites constituting the IRNSS space segment. Its predecessors, IRNSS-1A, 1B, 1C and 1D were launched by PSLV-C22, PSLV-C24, PSLV-C26 and PSLV-C27 in July 2013, April 2014, October 2014 and March 2015 respectively. IRNSS-1E has a lift-off mass of 1425 kg. The configuration of IRNSS-1E is similar to that of IRNSS-1A, 1B, 1C and 1D. IRNSS-1E carries two types of payloads – navigation payload and ranging payload. The navigation payload of IRNSS-1E will transmit navigation service signals to the users. This payload will be operating in L5-band and S-band. A highly accurate Rubidium atomic clock is part of the navigation payload of the satellite. The ranging payload of IRNSS- 1E consists of a C-band transponder which facilitates accurate determination of the range of the satellite. IRNSS-1E also carries Corner Cube Retro Reflectors for laser ranging.

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### A). APPOINTMENTS

#### R K Mathur appointed as CIC

Former Defence Secretary Radha Krishna Mathur has been appointed as Chief Information Commissioner (CIC). He will have tenure of about three years (2017) till he attain the age of 65. He succeeds Vijai Sharma as he has retired after completion of his tenure. R K Mathur is a retired IAS officer of Tripura cadre. He had served as Defence Secretary for two years. He also had served as Secretary Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and Defence Production and Supplies.

#### Air Marshal Bhadauria takes over as Deputy Chief of Air Staff of IAF

Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria took over as Deputy Chief of the Air Staff on 1 January 2016. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and was commissioned in the IAF in June



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1980. Prior to taking over as DCAS, Air Marshal Bhadauria was Senior Air Staff Officer at Central Air Command of IAF.

Abid Ali Z. Neemuchwala appointed as CEO of Wipro

India's third largest IT exporter Wipro Limited has appointed Abid Ali Z. Neemuchwala as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Member of the Board of the company. He succeed incumbent CEO T.K. Kurien who has been elevated as the Executive Vice Chairman of the company. Prior to this appointment Neemuchwala was serving as the chief operating officer (COO) of the company since April 2015. Before joining Wipro, he was working with India's largest IT exporter Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for 23 years.

Sikri takes over as new CCI chairman

Former Gujarat cadre IAS officer Devender Kumar Sikri has taken oath as the Chairman of Competition Commission of India on 11 January 2016. Mr. Sikri, a 1975 batch IAS officer, replaces Ashok Chawla who demitted office on January 7 and will be the third chairman of the CCI. Mr. Chawla had taken over from Dhanendra Kumar, who demitted office in June 2011. The 62-year-old Mr. Sikri, who superannuated as secretary, department of justice in July 31, 2013, will have a two and-a-half year tenure (till he attains 65 years of age).

Binny Bansal appointed as CEO of Flipkart

E-commerce firm Flipkart on 11 January 2016 appointed Binny Bansal as the Chief Executive Officer and Sachin Bansal as the Executive Chairman." Sachin Bansal, CEO and co-founder of Flipkart, will be the Executive Chairman of the company and Binny Bansal, COO and co-founder of Flipkart, will be the Chief Executive Officer". In his role as the Executive Chairman, Sachin will provide strategic direction and mentor the senior leadership as also look for new investment opportunities. While, Binny as the CEO will now be responsible for operationally driving the company and be accountable for Flipkart's overall performance.

## B). RESIGNS

Blatter Resigns from FIFA Amid

After proclaiming himself "President of every body" seep blatter had announced his resignation as president of FIFA he spent 17 years at the helm of FIFA and 40 years as an employee with in soccer's International governing body.

Bobby Jindal resigns as Louisiana Governor

The governor of Louisiana in America, the Indian person Bobby Jindal resigns his post at end of his second four-year term. Bel Edwards the democratic governor in Deep South is now in that governor position Jindal is the first Indian to hold such a position.

## C). DEATHS

Veteran Communist Party leader A.B. Bardhan dead

Veteran Communist Party of India (CPI) leader and former general secretary of the party Ardhendu Bhushan Bardhan died in New Delhi on 2 January 2016. Ardhendu Bhushan Bardhan was born in Barisal, Bengal Presidency in present-day Bangladesh on 25 September 1924. Bardhan held a postgraduate degree in economics and a degree in law.A.B. Bardhan was elected as a member of the Maharashtra assembly from Nagpur in 1957.

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### Music artist David Bowie passed away

Music Legend David Bowie died on 11 January 2016 at the age of 69 following a battle with cancer. The singer released his latest album Blackstar on his birthday on January 8. His last live performance was at a New York charity concert in 2006. Blackstar, which includes just seven songs, has been well received by critics.

### Lagaan actor Rajesh Vivek dies

Actor Rajesh Vivek, mainly known for his roles in super hits like Lagaan and Swades, died due to a heart attack in Hyderabad on 14 January 2016. Vivek was first introduced by Shyam Benegal in his film Junoon (1978). Basically a theatre actor, he had also acted in popular television series like Mahabharata, Bharat Ek Khoj and Aghori. He made his mark as a villain in the beginning with films like Veerana and Joshilay, often playing roles of henchman, but later on he started doing comic and supporting roles. Some of his latest films include Bunty Aur Babli, Bhoot Uncle, What is Your Rashee, Agneepath, Son of Sardaar & Dishkiyaon. He had played the role of a dreaded dacoit in Bandit Queen.

### Bollywood filmmaker Anil Ganguly passes away

Anil Ganguly died on January 15, 2016. He was an Indian film director and screenwriter. Anil worked in Hindi cinema from 1970s to the 1990s. Ganguly was best known for Jaya Bhaduri starrer, Kora Kagaz (1974) and Tapasya (1975), both of which won the National Film Award for Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment. Ganguly other noted film was Anil Kapoor and Amrita Singh starred Saaheb (1985). Later in his career, Anil made several action films, mostly with Mithun Chakraborty. Ganguly started his career making literary adaptations with strong female roles and themes of marital discord.

### Veteran journalist Dr. Aroon Tikekar passed away

Mumbai Veteran journalist and author of 20 books in English and Marathi, Dr.Aroon Tikekar died on 19 January 2016 following respiratory complications. He was 72.Aroon Tikekar worked as a college teacher for some years.From 1991 to 2002, he worked as an editor of the Marathi newspaper Loksatta.

## D). VISITORS

### Syrian Foreign Minister visits India before peace talks

Syria's foreign minister arrived in New Delhi on 11 January 2016 for talks with his Indian counterpart, trying to build international support for President Bashar al-Assad's government before peace talks in Geneva. Peace talks between Assad's government and the Syrian opposition are due to begin on 25 January 2016 as part of an ambitious 18-month plan endorsed by the UN Security Council. Syrian Foreign Minister Walid Muallem meet Sushma Swaraj and "other government functionaries" during a three-day official visit.

### Sushma Swaraj to visit Palestine, Israel

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will visit Israel and Palestine on January 17-18 to further build on the goodwill generated by the trip of President Pranab Mukherjee to the two West Asian nations three months back.Palestine will be Ms. Swaraj's first destination where she will hold talks with leadership of the country with an aim to boost bilateral engagement and deepen mutual understanding at the political level.After completing her engagements in Palestine on January 17, Ms. Swaraj will go to Israel the same day for a two-day visit during which she will hold discussions with the Israeli leadership and review the entire gamut of India-Israel relations.

### Indian Foreign Secretary Jaishankar visit Colombo

Indian Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar on 12 January 2016 arrived in Sri Lanka to hold bilateral discussions with the island nation's leadership. Mr. Jaishankar is expected to meet Sri Lankan Prime

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Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera among other dignitaries, According to the report, during the course of his visit, Mr. Jaishankar is expected to pave the way for the India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission (ISLJC) meeting scheduled to be held in Colombo next month. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is likely to attend the ISJLC meeting.

## E). MISCELLANEOUS

### Sainthood' to Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa, a Roman Catholic religious sister and missionary, will be given Sainthood i.e. will be made a saint of the Roman Catholic Church in September 2016. Pope Francis has recognized a second miracle attributed to Mother Teresa, intercession with God. Earlier in 2003, Mother Teresa was beatified by then late John Paul. Beatification requires one miracle and is the last step before sainthood. Mother founded the Missionaries of Charity and spent 45-years serving the poor, sick, orphaned and dying on the streets of Kolkata. She won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979. Padma Shri (1962) and Bharat Ratna (1980).

### Miss Philippines crowned Miss Universe-2015

Miss Philippines Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach crowned Miss Universe 2015 at the final of 64th edition of Miss Universe held in Las Vegas, the USA. She was crowned by Miss Universe 2014 winner Paulina Vega of Columbia. Urvashi Rautela who represented India in the contest couldn't make it top 15 semi-finals round.

### Obama as most popular leader

US President Barack Obama has been named as Most Popular Leader in the World. Whereas, Indian Prime Minister occupied 7th Position in the poll participated by people of 65 countries. Obama received 59 percent votes in his favour as opposed by 29 percent unfavourable. German Chancellor Angela Merkel and British Prime Minister David Cameron were ranked as Second and Third for a score of +13 percent & +10 percent respectively. Chinese President Xi Jinping stood at 6th Position. Modi garnered 24 percent favourable and 20 percent unfavourable votes to settle with a score of +4 percent. While French President Hollande and Russian PM Vladimir Putin came 4th and 5th in the poll, Brazil President Dilma, Saudi Arabia King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud and Iran President Hassan Rouhani were at 8th, 9th and 10th Positions respectively.

### Smriti Irani inaugurated 43rd New Delhi World Book Fair

Human Resource Minister Smriti Irani on 9 January 2016 inaugurated the 43rd edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair which commenced in New Delhi with China as the guest of honour country and a theme presentation of the cultural heritage of India. The nineday fair, touted as the largest in Asia, is hosting about 30 countries in which a series of programmes including panel discussions, dramas, classical and folk dances, workshops, discussions, authors' meets, conferences, seminars and cultural programmes will be held.

### Indian-origin girl tops Mensa test in UK

A 11-year-old Indian-origin girl in the UK has achieved the top possible score of 162 on a IQ test of Mensa, becoming one of the youngest brainiest students in the country. Mumbai-born Kashmea Wahi achieved the top score of 162 out of 162, putting her in the league of scientists Albert Einstein and Steven Hawking and in the top 1 per cent of the country's brightest. Both Hawking and Einstein are thought to have an IQ of 160.

## PLACES IN NEWS

### India's biggest wildlife rescue centre in Nagpur

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India's biggest Wildlife Rescue Centre named as Gorewada Zoo and Wildlife Rescue Centre has been commissioned at Gorewada near Nagpur, Maharashtra. The centre was inaugurated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in presence of State Forest Minister Sudhir Mungantiwa. Gorewada Zoo and Wildlife Rescue Center is managed by the Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra (FDCM). Nagpur based Maharashtra Animal and Fisheries (MAF) University is also part of this centre. It has cages for herbivorous animals and would house Deer, Sambars and Nilgais. It also has two enclosures to house 10 Tigers at a time and also separate enclosure for Panthers. It also has separated enclosure for housing Pythons including Cobra, Rat Snakes and vipers. The centre also has enclosures for housing 10 small mammals like Wolf, wild Dogs, Jackal.

### NIMHANS dedicated to the nation

The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee dedicated the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore to the nation as an institute of national importance. He also inaugurated the Magneto Encephalography Research Centre and NIMHANS Heritage Museum on the occasion. NIMHANS has taken a number of initiatives such as setting up a Brain Bank, a Free Legal Aid Clinic in its outpatient bloc, Centre for Well Being, Centre for Public Health and Centre for Addiction Medicine etc. These innovations as well as the NIMHANS Community Mental Health and Rehabilitation Centre and Neuro-biology Research Centre (NRC) are successful models that could be replicated in other parts of the country.

### Terror attack at Pathankot Air Force station

Five terrorists and three security men including one Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel were killed in an attack on an air force base in Punjab's Pathankot district on 2 January 2016.

### Narendra Modi Laid Foundation Stone Of HAL'S Helicopter Facility

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3 January 2016 unveiled a plaque for the foundation stone of a new helicopter manufacturing unit of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Tumkur district in Karnataka. The government is investing over Rs 5,000 crore on this new unit. This will be the first factory in India to indigenously assemble helicopters through its own innovations and technology.

### International short film festival begins in Warangal

International Short Film Festival is scheduled to begin in Hanmakonda, Warangal on 8 January 2016. This is the first such film festival after the formation of Telangana state. Short film makers from several countries besides regional directors will take part in the three-day event. All the short films will be aired at the Kakatiya University auditorium. Maker of blockbuster movie 'Rudramadevi' director Gunasekhar and writer Thota Prasad will be felicitated on the occasion. On the second day of the event on Saturday, IT minister KT Rama Rao will preside over the proceedings. The chairman of the film festival is K Nageshwara Rao.

## ABBREVIATIONS

NIIF : National Investment and Infrastructure Fund

FDI : Foreign Direct Investment

SIDBI : Small Industries Development Bank of India

MICR : Magnetic Ink Character Recognition

PMGSY : Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

FIPB : Foreign Investment Promotion Board

TADF : Technology Acquisition & Development Fund

## Books in News

### Book on Sharad Yadav released

The book 'Sharad Yadav- Sangharsh Ke Senani, Sarvajanik, Rajkiya aur Vyaktigat Jeevan ka Safarnama' written by Manoj Krishnan was released by the Vice President Hamid Ansari at Mr Yadav's official residence. Congress President Sonia Gandhi, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and senior BJP leader L K Advani, today attended the launch.

### New book on Kargil War released

Gripping accounts from the battle front during the 1999 Kargil war between India and Pakistan to capture the magnificent Tiger Hill have been recounted in a new book which was launched at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi. Penned by Lieutenant General Mohinder Puri, the book titled 'Kargil: Turning the Tide' is a first-hand narrative of the operations of 8 Mountain Division, which was tasked to evict the enemy from the Drass-Mushkoh Sector during Operation Vijay.

### Book entitled Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian Polity in Perspective released

Book entitled Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian Polity in Perspective was released by Hamid Ansari on 12th January 2016 at Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram. Focus of the book is on Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first PM on shaping on polity of modern India. The book was edited by Prof Alexander and with contributions from eminent persons like Justice K T Thomas, Dr Rajan Kurukkal, Dr B Vivekanandan, M G Radhakrishnan and others.

## COMMITTEES

### Lodha committee proposes sweeping reforms for BCCI

Former Chief Justice of India, R.M. Lodha, submitted his report on the various aspects of reforms in the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to the Supreme Court registry on 4 January 2016. The panel headed by justice (retd) RM Lodha was appointed by the apex court last year in the wake of a sport-fixing scandal in Indian Premier League (IPL), the biggest crisis to hit the cash-rich sports body in the country. The three-member panel, which submitted a 159-page report on January 4 to the Supreme Court for ratification.

### Arvind Panagariya committee formed on Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Corridor

On 11 January 2016, a five-member high level committee headed by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya was formed to monitor the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Corridor (bullet train project) by the Union Government. The responsibility of the committee is to look into the overall operations and technical issues, Make in India component and financial outlay of the 90000 crore rupees worth project. Apart from this, the committee will also audit the project's strategic importance for India-Japan bilateral relation. Apart from the Chairman, the members of the committee are-Amitabh Kant, Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion Shantikanta Das, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs Secretary S Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary AK Mittal, Railway Board Chairman.

### Kamal Haasan, Ghosh on Shyam Benegal panel

Actor-director Kamal Haasan and film-maker Gautam Ghosh were on 14 January 2016 included in the Shyam Benegal committee set up by the Union government to look holistically into the functioning of the controversy-ridden Central Board of Film Certification, making it a six-member panel. The Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry had set up the panel on January 1 to take a relook at the functioning of the Board.

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French President declared economic emergency

On 18 January 2016, French President Francois Hollande declared a state of economic and social emergency to redefine country's economic and social model. President Francois Hollande has set out a € 2bn (£1.5bn) job creation plan in an attempt to lift France out of what he called a state of "economic emergency".

### IMPORTANT DAYS & DATES

January 9 : Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

January 10 : World Hindi Day

January 12 : National Youth Day

January 15 : National Army Day

January 18 : National Immunization Day

January 24 : National Girl Child Day

January 25 : National Tourism Day

January 26 : Republic Day

January 30 : Martyrs Day