

AWARDS & HONOURS

Two new Hindi writers Shraddha and Ghyansham Kumar Devansh were chosen for **Bharatiya Jnanpith Navlekhan Award** for the year 2016. The award is given to young authors in Hindi for their first creations.

The 74th **Golden Globe Awards** honored the best in film and American television of 2016. Meryl Streep was announced as the Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award honoree. La La Land won all seven awards for which it had been nominated, becoming the most successful film in Golden Globe Awards history and seventh overall to win each award for which it was nominated, including Best Director, Best Screenplay for Damien Chazelle and Best Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy. Winners of various awards are as follows:

- **Best Motion Picture Drama:** Moonlight
- **Best Motion Picture Musical/Comedy:** La La Land
- **Best Director in Motion Picture-Drama:** Damien Chazelle for La La Land
- **Best Actor in Motion Picture-Drama:** Casey Affleck for Manchester by the Sea
- **Best Actress in Motion Picture-Drama:** Isabelle Huppert for Elle
- **Best Actor in Motion Picture or Musical or Comedy:** Ryan Gosling for La La Land
- **Best Actress in Motion Picture Musical or Comedy:** Emma Stone for La La Land
- **Best Animated Feature Film:** Zootopia

Shankar Balasubramanian, an Indian-origin British professor of chemistry and DNA expert at Cambridge University, received a **Knighthood** along with Olympic stars Andy Murray and Mo Farah among others by Queen Elizabeth II for their contributions.

Four Indian-American scientists have been chosen among 102 researchers who will receive the **Presidential Early Career Awards for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE)** - the highest honour given by the US government to science and engineering professionals. These are: Pankaj Lal from Montclair State University (Department of Agriculture); Kaushik Chowdhury from Northeastern University (Department of Defense), Manish Arora, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (Department of Health and Human Services) and Aradhna Tripathi, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) (National Science Foundation).

BUSINESS & CORPORATE

Kalyan Krishnamurthy was named the new chief executive officer of **Flipkart** as India's largest online retailer moved cofounder Binny Bansal to a new position as group CEO, in a management reshuffle that strengthens the influence wielded by its largest investor Tiger Global and completes a process begun a year ago when cofounder Sachin Bansal ceded the top spot.

Google launched two new initiatives 'My Business' and 'Digital Unlocked' to train and help small and medium businesses (SMBs) in India capitalise on the digitisation wave faster.

Tata Consultancy Services CEO Nataraja Chandrasekaran was named the new Chairman of Tata Sons, the holding company of the \$103 billion Tata Group.

BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- The Union Cabinet gave its approval for signing of an Agreement for cooperation in the field of Agriculture and allied sectors between India and Portugal. The Agreement covers various activities in these fields which include exchange of scientific and technical information, trade in plants and plant products, exchange of information in phytosanitary issues, training programmes, seminars and visits of experts and consultants.
- The Union Cabinet approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Kenya on bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sectors.
- The Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched an IPR Enforcement Toolkit for Police. The toolkit has been jointly prepared by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). This toolkit will be a ready reckoner for police officials across the country in dealing with IP crimes, specifically Trade Marks counterfeiting and Copyrights piracy. In addition to details of offences under various laws, it provides for checklists for registering a complaint and conducting search and seizures. It also lays down general guidelines for search and seizure in case of IP crimes. This toolkit will be provided to all state police departments across the nation and will assist them in dealing with the cases relating to Trademarks and Copyrights infringements.
- The Expert Group set up to prepare Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) submitted its report to the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The expert group was headed by former Finance Secretary Sumit Bose. The Government mounted the Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) with the purpose of ranking households for receiving benefits under government programmes.
- The Ken-Betwa river linking project received formal environment, forest and tribal clearances. The project aims at addressing water needs of dry swathes in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a skill development program targeted at Indian youth seeking overseas employment to make India the Skill Capital of the World.
- To encourage people to help accident victims, the Delhi government approved 'Good Samaritan Policy' under which monetary incentive of Rs 2,000 and appreciation certificate will be given to people who help road accident victims in the national capital.
- The Union Ministry of Urban Development launched Swachh Survekshan 2017 to rank 500 cities/towns across the country on cleanliness with a population of 1 lakh and above.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first international exchange -- India INX -- at the International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) of GIFT City in Gandhinagar, saying it will enable Indian firms to compete on equal footing with offshore firms. A subsidiary of Bombay Stock Exchange, India INX is one of the world's most advanced technology platforms with a turn-around-time of 4 micro seconds which will operate for 22 hours a day, allowing international investors and NRIs to trade from anywhere across the globe. INX will trade initially in equity derivatives, currency derivatives, commodity derivatives including index and stocks. It plans to offer depository receipts and bonds later.
- The 16th meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held in New Delhi. It was chaired by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) appointed Surekha Marandi as its Executive Director (ED). RBI has 11 Executive Directors who are in charge of various departments.
- India's factory output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) registered 5.7% growth in November 2016 as against 1.9% in October 2016. It is the fastest growth recorded in more than four years. The IIP is compiled and published every month by Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. It covers 682 items comprising Manufacturing (620 items), Mining (61 items) & Electricity (1 item). The weights of the three sectors are 75.53%, 14.16%, 10.32% respectively and are on the basis of their share of GDP at factor cost during 2004-05.
- According to growth projection released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is expected to grow at a slower pace at 7.1% in 2016-17 as compared to 7.6% in 2015-16. The slowdown is chiefly due to an industrial slowdown.
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) entered into a Bilateral Advance Pricing Agreement (BAPA) with Indian subsidiary of a Japanese trading company. Recently, the CBDT also modified an existing Bilateral APA with another Indian subsidiary of a Japanese company to include rollback provisions. Thus, total three Bilateral APAs are now signed with Indian subsidiaries of Japanese companies all including rollbacks. The total number of bilateral APAs entered into by the CBDT is now eight.
- India and the United States signed a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) to collaborate in the fields of developmental activities and aid in third world countries.
- India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sri Lanka to construct 3000 rain water harvesting systems in Rin Jaffna District at a cost of 300 million Rupees (Sri Lankan).
- India and Kazakhstan signed a Protocol to amend the existing Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) between the two countries.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Former Iranian President **Akbar Rafsanjani** died at the aged of 82. He was in power between 1989 and 1997.

Antonio Guterres, former prime minister of Portugal, who also led the United Nations refugee agency, took the office as the UN secretary general. He succeeded Ban Ki-moon, whose term as UN chief expired at midnight on December 31, 2016.

Lt General **Bipin Rawat** took charge as the new Army Chief replacing General Dalbir Singh Suhag. Lt. Gen. Rawat was the Vice Chief of Army Staff. He superseded two senior most Lt Generals, Praveen Bakshi and PM Hariz as the 26th Army Chief of India.

Air Chief Marshal **Birender Singh Dhanoa** took charge as the 22nd Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force. He succeeded Arup Raha and is the third person from Sikh community to head the IAF after Arjan Singh and Dilbag Singh.

President Pranab Mukherjee appointed Prof **David R Syiemlieh** as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) as per Article 316 of Constitution.

Noted Manipur-based historian, litterateur and scholar **Gangmumei Kamei** passed away at the age of 77.

Justice **Jagdish Singh Khehar**, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court, was sworn in as the 44th Chief Justice of India by President Pranab Mukherjee. Justice Khehar will have a tenure for over seven months till August 28, 2017.

Jovenel Moise, a 48-year-old banana exporter, was elected as president of Haiti. The poorest country in the Americas, Haiti has been led by an interim president since last February. It has been blighted by political instability for decades, and is vulnerable to natural disasters. Haiti is still recovering from Hurricane Matthew, which killed up to 1,000 people in October.

Veteran actor **Om Puri** passed away at the age of 66. The recipient of two National awards and two Filmfare Awards including a Lifetime Achievement Award, Om Puri had an illustrious film career , spanning over four decades. The Padma Shri awardee, studied at the Film and Television Institute of India and at the National School of Drama. A critically acclaimed actor, Puri featured in films like 'Aardh Satya', 'Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro', 'Aakrosh', 'Mirch Masala' and many others. Puri also had a meaty and memorable role opposite Helen Mirren in Steven Spielberg's 2014 American comedy drama 'The Hundred-Foot Journey'. The acclaimed actor delivered some stellar performances in mainstream commercial Pakistani, Indian and British cinema apart from making a dent in Hollywood with his roles in 'East is East', 'City of Joy', 'Gandhi' and 'The Reluctant Fundamentalist'. He was nominated for the Best Actor BAFTA for 'East is East' in 2000. The actor also received an honorary OBE in 2004 for his contribution to British cinema.

Pakistan's former Army chief Gen. **Raheel Sharif** (retired) was appointed head of Islamic Military Alliance to Fight Terrorism (IMAF), a Saudi Arabia-led military coalition of 39 nations.

US President Donald Trump appointed young Indian-American **Raj Shah**, who played a leading role in the Republican party's anti-Clinton campaign during polls, as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Communication Director and Research Director.

Roman Herzog, who as German president was a powerful advocate of economic reforms in the 1990s after the fall of the Berlin Wall, died at the age of 82. Herzog was a member of Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union.

Tech giant Google honoured social reformer **Savitribai Phule** on the occasion of her 186th birth anniversary. Savitribai had many firsts to her credit — she was the first woman teacher of the first women's school in India and a pioneer in modern Marathi poetry. The Government of Maharashtra instituted an award in her name to honour women social reformers. Also, a stamp was released by India Post in honour of Savitribai in March 1998.

Sir **Tim Barrow**, a former envoy to Moscow with a career as a diplomat spanning three decades, was confirmed by the UK Government as the new UK ambassador to the EU.

The "last giant" of the sitar, **Ustad Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan**, passed away. The world of classical music mourned the loss of the colossus who was in the league of sitarists like Pt Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan. He belonged to the Indore gharana of Beenkars. He developed his own style called Jafferkhani baaj. Khan won the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award. In 1976, he founded the Halim Academy of Sitar.

SPORTS

The Supreme Court sacked Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President **Anurag Thakur** and BCCI secretary Ajay Shirke after they failed to implement the reforms recommended by the Justice Lodha committee.

Cristiano Ronaldo was named the world's best player at the inaugural Best Fifa Football Awards in Zurich. Real Madrid and Portugal forward Ronaldo, 31, beat Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Atletico Madrid's Antoine Griezmann to the prize. Other 2016 awardees are:

- **Best FIFA Women's Player:** Carli Lloyd (US)
- **Best FIFA Men's Coach:** Claudio Ranieri (Italy)
- **Best FIFA Women's Coach:** Silvia Neid (Germany)

The Union Sports Ministry constituted a committee to frame comprehensive **National Sports Development Code** across sports disciplines. It will be headed by Injeti Srinivas, Sports Secretary.

MISCELLANEOUS

World

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared the year 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.
- The World Braille Day was observed throughout the world on 4 January to mark the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, inventor of Braille script or Braille code.

India

- The National Youth Day was observed on 12 January to mark the birth anniversary of social reformer, philosopher and thinker Swami Vivekananda.
- The Supreme Court rejected a plea urging it to pass judgement on Jallikattu before the harvest festival of Pongal. It had also dismissed the review petition against its 2014 verdict. Jallikattu is a bull taming or bull vaulting sport played in Tamil Nadu on Mattu Pongal day as a part of Pongal celebrations.
- The World Hindi Day was observed on 10 January.
- The 20th Edition of the National Conference for e-Governance 2016-17 started in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, with the theme 'Internet of Things and e-Governance'.
- The 14th edition of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) began in Bengaluru, Karnataka, with the theme "Redefining Engagement with the Indian Diaspora".
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) announced the dates for the assembly elections in five states—Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa. There will be single phase elections in Uttarakhand, Goa and Punjab. Goa (40 Seats) and Punjab (117 Seats) will go to polls on 4 February 2017 while polling in Uttarakhand for 70 seats will be held on 15 February 2017. Uttar Pradesh will go to polls in seven phases for 403 seats on 11th February, 15th February, 19th February, 23rd February, 27th February, 4th March and on 8th March 2017. Manipur will go to polls for 60 seats in two phases on 4th and 8th March.

AWARDS & HONOURS

62nd **Filmfare Awards** ceremony, presented by the Filmfare magazine, honored the best Hindi language Indian films of 2016. Awards in some of the categories are as under:-

- **Best Actor:** Aamir Khan (Dangal)
- **Best Actress:** Alia Bhatt (Udta Punjab)
- **Best Film:** Dangal
- **Best Director:** Nitesh Tiwari (Dangal)
- **Lifetime Achievement:** Shatrughan Sinha
- **Best Debut Director:** Ashwini Iyer Tiwari (Nil Battey Sannata)

The President of India approved conferment of **Padma Awards** to 89 persons - 7 Padma Vibhushan, 7 Padma Bhushan and 75 Padma Shri Awardees. 19 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 5 persons from the category of foreigners, NRIs, PIOs and 6 Posthumous awardees. Padma Awards - one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc. 'Padma Vibhushan' is awarded for exceptional and distinguished service; 'Padma Bhushan' for distinguished service of high order and 'Padma Shri' for distinguished service in any field. The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.

Padma Vibhushan

S. No	Name	Field	State
1.	Shri K J Yesudas	Art-Music	Kerala
2.	Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev	Others-Spiritualism	Tamil Nadu
3.	Shri Sharad Pawar	Public Affairs	Maharashtra
4.	Shri Murlī Manohar Joshi	Public Affairs	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Prof. Udipi Ramachandra Rao	Science & Engineering	Karnataka
6.	Late Shri Sunder Lal Patwa (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Madhya Pradesh
7.	Late Shri PA Sangma (Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Meghalaya

Padma Bhushan

S. No.	Name	Field	State
8.	Shri Vishwa Mohan Bhatt	Art-Music	Rajasthan
9.	Prof. (Dr.) Devi Prasad Dwivedi	Literature & Education	Uttar Pradesh
10.	Shri Tehemton Udwardia	Medicine	Maharashtra
11.	Shri Ratna Sundar Maharaj	Others-Spiritualism	Gujarat
12.	Swami Niranjana Nanda Saraswati	Others-Yoga	Bihar
13.	H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (Foreigner)	Literature & Education	Thailand
14.	Late Shri Cho Ramaswamy (Posthumous)	Literature & Education – Journalism	Tamil Nadu

Padma Shri

S. No	Name	Field	State
15.	Smt. Basanti Bisht	Art-Music	Uttarakhand
16.	Shri Chemanchery Kunhiraman Nair	Art-Dance	Kerala
17.	Smt. Aruna Mohanty	Art-Dance	Odisha
18.	Smt. Bharathi Vishnuvardhan	Art-Cinema	Karnataka
19.	Shri Sadhu Meher	Art-Cinema	Odisha
20.	Shri T K Murthy	Art-Music	Tamil Nadu
21.	Shri Laishram Birendrakumar Singh	Art-Music	Manipur
22.	Shri Krishna Ram Chaudhary	Art-Music	Uttar Pradesh
23.	Smt. Baoa Devi	Art-Painting	Bihar
24.	Shri Tilak Gitai	Art-Painting	Rajasthan
25.	Dr. Prof. Aekka Yadagiri Rao	Art-Sculpture	Telangana
26.	Shri Jitendra Haripal	Art-Music	Odisha
27.	Shri Kailash Kher	Art-Music	Maharashtra
28.	Smt. Parassala B Ponnammal	Art-Music	Kerala
29.	Smt. Sukri Bommagowda	Art-Music	Karnataka
30.	Shri Mukund Nayak	Art-Music	Jharkhand
31.	Shri Purushottam Upadhyay	Art-Music	Gujarat
32.	Smt. Anuradha Paudwal	Art-Music	Maharashtra
33.	Shri Wareppa Naba Nil	Art-Theatre	Manipur
34.	Shri Tripuraneni Hanuman Chowdary	Civil Service	Telangana
35.	Shri T.K. Viswanathan	Civil Service	Haryana
36.	Shri Kanwal Sibal	Civil Service	Delhi
37.	Shri Birkha Bahadur Limboo Muringla	Literature & Education	Sikkim
38.	Smt. Eli Ahmed	Literature & Education	Assam
39.	Dr. Narendra Kohli	Literature & Education	Delhi
40.	Prof. G. Venkatasubbiah	Literature & Education	Karnataka
41.	Shri Akkitham Achyuthan Namboothiri	Literature & Education	Kerala
42.	Shri Kashi Nath Pandita	Literature & Education	Jammu & Kashmir
43.	Shri Chamu Krishna Shastry	Literature & Education	Delhi
44.	Shri Harihar Kripalu Tripathi	Literature & Education	Uttar Pradesh
45.	Shri Michel Danino	Literature & Education	Tamil Nadu
46.	Shri Punam Suri	Literature & Education	Delhi
47.	Shri VG Patel	Literature & Education	Gujarat
48.	Smt. V Koteswaramma	Literature & Education	Andhra Pradesh
49.	Shri Balbir Dutt	Literature & Education-Journalism	Jharkhand
50.	Smt. Bhawana Somaaya	Literature & Education-Journalism	Maharashtra
51.	Shri Vishnu Pandya	Literature & Education-Journalism	Gujarat
52.	Dr. Subroto Das	Medicine	Gujarat

53.	Dr. (Smt.) Bhakti Yadav	Medicine	Madhya Pradesh
54.	Dr. Mohammed Abdul Waheed	Medicine	Telangana
55.	Dr. Madan Madhav Godbole	Medicine	Uttar Pradesh
56.	Dr. Devendra Dayabhai Patel	Medicine	Gujarat
57.	Prof. Harkishan Singh	Medicine	Chandigarh
58.	Dr. Mukut Minz	Medicine	Chandigarh
59.	Shri Arun Kumar Sharma	Others-Archaeology	Chhattisgarh
60.	Shri Sanjeev Kapoor	Others-Culinary	Maharashtra
61.	Smt. Meenakshi Amma	Others-Martial Art	Kerala
62.	Shri Genabhai Dargabhai Patel	Others-Agriculture	Gujarat
63.	Shri Chandrakant Pithawa	Science & Engineering	Telangana
64.	Prof. Ajoy Kumar Ray	Science & Engineering	West Bengal
65.	Shri Chintakindi Mallesham	Science & Engineering	Andhra Pradesh
66.	Shri Jitendra Nath Goswami	Science & Engineering	Assam
67.	Shri Daripalli Ramaiah	Social Work	Telangana
68.	Shri Girish Bhardwaj	Social Work	Karnataka
69.	Shri Karimul Hak	Social Work	West Bengal
70.	Shri Bipin Ganatra	Social Work	West Bengal
71.	Smt. Nivedita Raghunath Bhide	Social work	Tamil Nadu
72.	Shri Appasaheb Dharmadhikari	Social Work	Maharashtra
73.	Baba Balbir Singh Seechewal	Social Work	Punjab
74.	Shri Virat Kohli	Sports-Cricket	Delhi
75.	Shri Shekar Naik	Sports-Cricket	Karnataka
76.	Shri Vikasa Gowda	Sports-Discus Throw	Karnataka
77.	Smt. Deepa Malik	Sports-Athletics	Haryana
78.	Shri Mariyappan Thangavelu	Sports-Athletics	Tamil Nadu
79.	Smt. Dipa Karmakar	Sports-Gymnastics	Tripura
80.	Shri P R Shreejesh	Sports-Hockey	Kerala
81.	Smt. Sakshi Malik	Sports-Wrestling	Haryana
82.	Shri Mohan Reddy Venkatrama Bodanapu	Trade & Industry	Telangana
83.	Shri Imrat Khan (NRI/PIO)	Art-Music	USA
84.	Shri Anant Agarwal (NRI/PIO)	Literature & Education	USA
85.	Shri H.R. Shah (NRI/PIO)	Literature & Education-Journalism	USA
86.	Late (Smt.) Suniti Solomon (Posthumous)	Medicine	Tamil Nadu
87.	Shri Asoke Kumar Bhattacharyya (Posthumous)	Others-Archaeology	West Bengal
88.	Dr. Mapuskar (Posthumous)	Social Work	Maharashtra
89.	Smt. Anuradha Koirala (Foreigner)	Social Work	

BUSINESS & CORPORATE

Cisco Systems Inc. agreed to acquire AppDynamics Inc. (San Francisco based) for \$3.7 billion, snapping up the fast-growing software maker just before it planned to go public. Cisco, the world's biggest maker of networking gear, will add AppDynamics' software and services that help companies to monitor and fine-tune the performance of their own business systems.

Multiplex chain operator **PVR** launched theatre on demand service 'Vkaao' and plans to add 100 screens by end of next fiscal across the country. PVR, at present operates 562 screens in 122 properties in 48 cities in India. Vkaao is an online platform that enables consumers to watch any movie of their choice at a theatre of their choice.

BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- The Union Cabinet gave its post-facto approval for launching of Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana 2017 (VPBY 2017). It is a part of Government's commitment for financial inclusion and social security. The scheme will be implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) during the current financial year to provide social security during old age and protect elderly persons aged 60 years and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions. The scheme will provide an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for ten years, with an option to opt for pension on a monthly / quarterly / half yearly and annual basis. The differential return, i.e., the difference between the return generated by LIC and the assured return of 8% per annum would be borne by Government of India as subsidy on an annual basis.
- The Union Cabinet gave its approval to ratify the Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol on containing the emission of Green House Gases (GHGs). The second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol was adopted in 2012. So far, 75 countries have ratified the Second Commitment Period. In view of the critical role played by India in securing international consensus on climate change issues, this decision further underlines India's leadership in the comity of nations committed to global cause of environmental protection and climate justice.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bill, 2017, under which the IIMs would be declared as Institutions of National Importance which will enable them to grant degrees to their students.
- The Union Cabinet approved a new scheme for promotion of Rural Housing in the country. The Government would provide interest subsidy under the scheme. Interest subsidy would be available to every rural household who is not covered under the Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana (Grameen), PMAY(G). The scheme would enable people in rural areas to construct new houses or add to their existing pucca houses to improve their dwelling units. The beneficiary who takes a loan under the scheme would be provided interest subsidy for loan amount upto Rs. 2 Lakhs. National Housing Bank would implement the scheme.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

- IndiaPost under Department of Posts (Union Ministry of Communications and Information Technology) received final payments bank licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). With this, India Post became the third entity after Bharti Airtel and Paytm to receive final payments bank licence to roll-out of banking operations commercially under the permit. Payments banks are a new model of banks conceptualised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to meet government's financial inclusion target.
- Seven new countries Lithuania, Gabon, Hungary, Indonesia, Malta, Mauritius and Russia – signed Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement for Country-by-Country Reporting (CbC MCAA). With this, the total number of signatories increased to 57 including India (signed in May 2015). CbC MCAA is a tax co-operation agreement to enable automatic sharing of country-by-country information.
- The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) was officially launched at World Economic Forum (WEF) Davos after it received \$460-million to develop vaccines against 3 emerging highly-contagious and fatal diseases. These three diseases are Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS)-coronavirus, Lassa fever, and Nipah virus.
- The Union Finance Ministry announced that the General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR) will be effective from the 1 April, 2017. GAAR seeks to prevent companies from routing transactions through other countries to avoid taxes. India will be the 17th nation in the world to have laws that aim to close tax loopholes. At present, GAAR is in force in nations like Australia, Singapore, China and the UK.
- India was ranked 79th among 176 countries in the Corruption Perception Index 2016 released by the Transparency International organisation. Its score marginally improved from 38 in 2015 to 40 in 2016. India had a score of 36 in 2012. The organisation used the World Bank data, the world economic forum and other institutions runs from zero to 100, from highly corrupt to 100. The list was topped by New Zealand and Denmark with a score of 90 each. Somalia was ranked the most corrupt country with a score of 10.
- The N.K. Singh panel submitted its report on revising the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act to Mr. Jaitley. The five-member committee – including Reserve Bank of India Governor Urjit Patel, former Finance Secretary Sumit Bose, Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian, and National Institute of Public Finance and Policy Director Rathin Roy – was constituted in May 2016 following Mr. Jaitley's announcement, in Budget 2016-17, of the creation of a panel to review the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act.
- The Steel Ministry has released new draft National Steel Policy of 2017. The policy, which envisages to more than double India's domestic steel production capacity to 300 million tonnes by 2030-31, anticipates a requirement of Rs. 10 lakh crore of fresh investments to meet that goal and expects at least 11 lakh new jobs being created in the process. The steel sector presently employs about 25 lakh people and has a capacity of little over 120 million tonnes.
- Inter-ministerial body FIPB approved six investment proposals, including that of Sanofi Synthelabo India, Star Den Media Services and Idea Cellular Infrastructure Services, envisaging foreign investments of Rs 1,186.5 crore. Of the total, Recipharm Participation BV of Netherlands alone will bring in investment of Rs 950 crore.

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its nod to the listing of five government-owned insurance companies in stock exchanges. The companies are New India Assurance, United India Insurance, Oriental Insurance, National Insurance and General Insurance. The shareholding of these PSGICs will be divested from 100% to 75% in one or more tranches over a period of time as per Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) rules and regulations.
- According to recently released Jones Lang LaSalle's City Momentum Index (CMI), six Indian cities made it to the world's 30 most dynamic places that have the ability to embrace technological change, absorb rapid population growth and strengthen global connectivity, with Bengaluru topping the chart. Cities in India, China and Vietnam, along with several in the US, head the list of world's fastest changing cities in JLL's fourth annual City Momentum Index. Other Indian cities in the list are Hyderabad at the 5th position, Pune (13), Chennai (18), Delhi (23) and Mumbai (25).
- India ranked 92nd in the latest Global Talent Competitiveness Index 2017, among the 118 countries compared, based on their ability to grow, attract and retain talent. India's ranking is worst among the five BRICS countries. China (54th), Russia (56th), South Africa (67th) and Brazil (81st). The Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent. The GTCI combines the academic research and expertise of INSEAD, Singapore's Human Capital Leadership Institute (HCLI) and The Adecco Group. The top ten countries are : Switzerland (1st), Singapore (2nd), United Kingdom (3rd), United States (4th), Sweden (5th), Australia (6th), Luxembourg (7th), Denmark (8th), Finland (9th) and Norway (10th).
- India ranked 60th among the 79 developing countries in 2017 Inclusive Development Index (IDI) released in World Economic Forum's (WEF) 'Inclusive Growth and Development Report'.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Delhi Police Commissioner and Senior IPS officer **Alok Kumar Verma** was appointed as new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation for a tenure of two years.

Anerood Jugnauth, the 86-year-old prime minister of Mauritius, resigned to hand power to his son, Pravind Jugnauth, who is the current finance minister.

Antonio Tajani was elected president of the European Parliament.

Award-winning Hollywood film producer and Wimbledon tennis player, **Ashok Amritraj** was appointed the United Nations in India Goodwill Ambassador for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Chairman and CEO of the Hyde Park Entertainment Group, Mr. Amritraj is the first Ambassador for the UN in India.

Dushyant Chautala was appointed the President of Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI). He is youngest president of apex body.

Eugene A. Cernan, the last astronaut to leave his footprints on the surface of the moon, died at the age of 82. Cernan earned several distinctions in his 13 years with NASA. He was the second American to walk in space and one of three men to have flown twice to the moon. But he's best remembered as commander of Apollo 17, the last mission to the moon in December of 1972.

Renowned Urdu poet and lyricist **Jaswant Rai Sharma**, known to the world by his pen name Naqsh Lyallpuri, died at the age of 89.

Mike Pompeo was sworn in as director of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) at a crucial time for U.S. national security as intelligence — traditionally a nonpartisan issue — has been thrust into the political arena.

On his 120th birth anniversary, the nation paid homage and respect to **Netaji Subhash Chandra**, the founder of the Indian National Army.

Former South Carolina Governor **Nikki Haley** was sworn in to be President Donald Trump's ambassador to the United Nations.

Former Punjab Chief Minister, Union Minister and Governor of Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh **Surjit Singh Barnala** died at the age of 91.

Meghalaya Governor **V Shanmuganathan** resigned over allegations of sexual harassment. The governor came under intense criticism after a section of employees of the Raj Bhavan wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Pranab Mukherjee demanding immediate removal of V Shanmuganathan for "seriously compromising" the dignity of the gubernatorial office.

President Pranab Mukherjee appointed Dr **Vijay Bhatkar**, architect of India's first supercomputer the Param series, as the chancellor of Nalanda University. Nalanda University is a non-profit, secular and self-governing international institution in Bihar, and is a revived version of the ancient Nalanda University.

China's **Zhou Youguang**, father of Pinyin writing system, died at the age of 111. Pinyin turns Chinese characters into words using letters from the Roman alphabet.

SPORTS

Cricket icon **Kapil Dev** was inducted into Legends Club 'Hall of Fame'. Dev, who led India to the emphatic World Cup victory in 1983, is considered as the country's greatest all-rounder.

NCR Punjab Royals were crowned the champions of the Patanjali Powervita Pro Wrestling League Season 2 as they triumphed over two-time finalists Haryana Hammers.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the constitution of eight members Task Force committee for preparing action plan for next three **Olympic Games** 2020, 2024 and 2028. The members of Task force are : Pulella Gopichand, Abhinav Bindra, Rajesh Kalra, Om Pathak, Viren Rasquinha, S. Baldev Singh, Prof. G.L. Khanna and Sandeep Pradhan.

Olympic silver medallist **P V Sindhu** and National champion Sameer Verma began the new season on a resounding note by winning the women's and men's singles crowns respectively at the USD 120,000 Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament.

Roger Federer won his 18th Grand Slam title by collapsing old great-rival Rafael Nadal in the Australian Open final. The 35-year old Swiss player beat Nadal to win his fifth Australian Open title.

Indian badminton ace **Saina Nehwal** notched up her first title after a career-threatening injury by claiming the Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold. This was her 23rd title overall and the first after last year's Australian Open.

Serena Williams beat sister Venus in straight sets to win her seventh Australian Open and an Open-era record 23rd Grand Slam singles title. Australia's Margaret Court, with 24, is the only player still ahead of Serena in terms of Grand Slam singles titles.

The Supreme Court appointed former Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) **Vinod Rai** as head of four-member Committee of Administrators to run Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to run the day-to-day administration of cricket body till the Lodha Committee reforms are fully implemented and elections held.

Virat Kohli was honored with Padma Shri. Besides Kohli, the seven other sportspersons named for the award were Rio Olympics bronze medallist wrestler Sakshi Malik, Paralympians Mariyappan Thangavelu and Deepa Malik, gymnast Dipa Karmakar, Indian hockey captain P R Sreejesh, discus thrower Vikas Gowda and blind cricket team captain Shekar Naik.

MISCELLANEOUS

World

- Japan successfully launched its first military communications satellite Kirameki-2 (kee-RAH-meh-kee 2) satellite.

India

- The Karnataka government announced to bring an amendment to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA), 1960 for conducting traditional sports of Kambala and bull-cart race in the State.
- According to Status of Education Report (ASER) 2016, students of Himachal Pradesh stand ahead of Kerala and all other states in terms of learning outcomes.