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Union Cabinet approves India's negotiating position adopted at Kigali conference to Montreal

December 1, 2016

- ✓ The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to the negotiating position adopted by India at the recent 28th Meeting of Parties (MoP) to the Montreal Protocol in Kigali, Rwanda. The negotiations at Kigali meet held in October 2016 were aimed at including HFCs in the list of chemicals under the Montreal Protocol.
- ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved baseline and freeze years proposal of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest (MoEFCC) over the issue of phasing down the climate-damaging refrigerants hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) as negotiated in Kigali meet.

Key Facts

- ✓ In the Kigali meet, India had successfully negotiated the baseline years within a range of 2024 to 2030 and freeze year in subsequent years for phasing down the use of HFCs. It had two set of baselines years were agreed for developing countries. India along with nine other countries will have baseline years of 2024, 2025, 2026.
- ✓ India will completely phase down of HFCs in 4 steps from 2032 onwards with cumulative reduction of 10% in 2032, 20% in 2037, 30% in 2042 and 85% in 2047 It also gives additional HCFC allowance of 65% that will be added to the Indian baseline consumption and production.
- ✓ Other developing countries including China (largest producer of HFCs in the world), South Africa and Brazil opted for 2020-22 baseline. The developed countries on the other will hand reduce use of HFCs over a 2011-13 baseline and will reduce production and consumption of HFCs by 70% in 2029.
- ✓ The freeze year for India will be 2028 and it will be with a condition that there will be a technology review in 2024/2025. India's position was mainly aimed at allowing sufficient room for growth of its domestic sectors using refrigerants.

India inks Rs 5,000 crore defence deal with US to buy 145 M777 howitzers

December 1, 2016

- ✓ India has signed government-to-government (G2G) deal with the United States (US) to buy 145 M-777 Ultra-Light Howitzers worth \$750 million under the Foreign Military Sales programme. The deal was signed at the two-day meeting of the 15th India-US Military Cooperation Group (MCG) held in New Delhi. This is the first defence deal signed by India for purchasing artillery guns since the Bofors scandal in 1980s.
- ✓ It was recently cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

NITI Aayog constitutes Chandrababu Naidu Committee to promote cashless society, digital economy

December 1, 2016

- ✓ The NITI Aayog has constituted a 13 member Committee on promotion of cashless society and digital economy. It will be headed by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. Chief Ministers of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Sikkim, Puducherry and Maharashtra representing different political parties are its members.
- ✓ **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 and Article 51 (A)** of the Constitution to contend that it was the duty of every person to show respect when the anthem was played.
- ✓ It pointed out that the national anthem was being played under unacceptable circumstances. The petitioner had sought the apex court's intervention to ensure that the protocol laid down in the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 was followed.

About National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)

- ✓ The NCBC was set up as per the NCBC Act, 1993 in pursuance to the Supreme Court judgement in the Indra Sawhney case (1992).

Composition

- ✓ It consist of five Members, comprising of a Chairperson; social scientist; two persons having special knowledge in matters relating to backward classes and Member-Secretary. Chairperson must be or has been a judge of Supreme Court or High Court.

Functions

- ✓ It examines requests for inclusion of any class of citizens as a backward class in the lists of OBCs. It also hears complaints of under-inclusion or over-inclusion of any backward class in such lists and tenders such advice to the Union Government as it deems appropriate. The advice of the NCBC is *ordinarily binding* upon the Union Government.
- ✓ So far based on recommendation of NCBC, Government has notified total of 2479 entries including its synonyms, sub-castes, etc. in Central List of OBCs in 25 States and 6 UTs.

Magnus Carlsen wins 2016 Chess Championship title

December 2, 2016

Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen of Norway has won the 2016 World Chess Championship for the third consecutive time. He retained the title after defeating Sergey Karjakin of Russia.

UNESCO includes Yoga in Intangible Cultural Heritage list

December 2, 2016

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has formally inscribed Yoga in its representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Decision in this regard was taken by the Inter-governmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The declaration describes Yoga, an ancient Indian practice as a Human Treasure

TeamIndus to launch India's first private moon mission in 2017

December 2, 2016

- ✓ TeamIndus, a private aerospace startup company is planning to send a spacecraft to the moon aboard an Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) rocket on December 28, 2017. It will be India's first private moon mission to be launched. It will be launched onboard of ISRO's workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

President presents 2nd ICCR Indologist award to Prof. Yu Long Yu

December 2, 2016

- ✓ The second Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Indologis Award for the year 2016 was awarded to Prof. Yu Long Yu of China. He was presented with this award by President Pranab Mukherjee at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

Union HRD Ministry launches Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan

December 2, 2016

- ✓ Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan (VISAKA) was launched by the Union Ministry for Human Resource Development (HRD) to make people aware about cashless economic system. It was launched by Union HRD minister Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi. It is campaign by Higher Educational institutions for digital economy.

Key Facts

- ✓ VISAKA aims to create awareness among people about digital economy and cashless modes of transactions It was launched on line with Prime Minister's appeal to youth in 'Mann Ki Baat' for creating awareness for making India digital and cashless economy. Under it, young students and faculty members will be roped to encourage and motivate people to use a digitally enabled cashless economic system for transfer of fund.

✓ About Border Security Force (BSF)

- ✓ BSF is the sentinels of Indian borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh. It came into existence on 1st December, 1965
- ✓ **Rakesh Asthana takes additional charge as Director of CBI**
- ✓ December 3, 2016
- ✓ The Union Government has given senior IPS officer Rakesh Asthana additional charge of the post of Director, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

About Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)

- ✓ CBI is the foremost investigative police agency in India. It derives power to investigate from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 It was established in 1941 as the Special Police Establishment. It was renamed to present nomenclature in 1963.
- ✓ **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- ✓ **Motto:** Industry, Impartiality, Integrity.

Hornbill Festival begins in Nagaland

December 3, 2016

- ✓ The Hornbill Festival began in the Naga Heritage village of Kisama. The festival coincides with the Statehood Day of Nagaland which is observed on December 1. It is tourism promotional extravaganza to revive, protect and preserve the richness and uniqueness of the Naga heritage. It is also called as the 'Festival of Festivals'.

UAE-based Indian girl Kehkashan Basu wins 2016 International Children's Peace Prize

December 3, 2016

- ✓ UAE based Indian environmental activist Kehkashan Basu (16) has won 2016 prestigious International Children's Peace Prize. She was bestowed with this prestigious award for her fight for climate justice and combating environmental degradation. She was presented with the award by Bangladesh's Nobel peace laureate Mohammad Yunus at a glittering ceremony held in The Hague, Netherlands.

Mercosur revokes membership of Venezuela

December 3, 2016

The South American economic bloc Mercosur has suspended Venezuela from it for violating the bloc's democratic principles and failing to meet its basic standards. The membership was revoked by the Foreign Ministers of the four founding members of Mercosur — Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and About Mercosur

- ✓ Mercosur is a sub-regional bloc of South American countries. Its purpose is to promote free trade and the fluid movement of goods, people, and currency. It was established in 1991 and its headquarters are located at Montevideo (Uruguay). It calls itself the common market of the South America.
- ✓ Paraguay.

Usain Bolt, Almaz Ayana crowned 2016 IAAF World Athlete of the year award

December 5, 2016

- ✓ Sprint king **Usain Bolt** from Jamaica has been awarded the 2016 IAAF World Athlete of the Year award in male category for sixth time. Earlier he had won it in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. He was rewarded for his blistering performance in 2016 season in which he won three gold medals (100m, 200m and 4x100m relay) at the 2016 Rio Olympics.
- ✓ Bolt had won three gold medals, each in the 100 meters, 200 meters and 4x100 meters at the Rio Olympics, repeating his feats of the 2012 London Games and in Beijing in 2008.

4 December: Navy Day

December 5, 2016

The Indian Navy Day is observed annually on 4 December to celebrate the magnificence, achievements and role of the naval force of the country.

Why Navy Day is celebrated?

- ✓ The observance of the day commemorates the launch of **Operation Trident** by the Indian Navy against Pakistan on 4th December, 1971. During the 1971 India-Pakistan war, the Indian Navy had played a significant role in the bombing of the Karachi harbour, the stronghold of the Pakistani Navy.

7th World Ayurveda Congress held in Kolkata

December 5, 2016

The 7th World Ayurveda Congress (WAC) was held from December 2 to 4, 2016 at Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Assam's Hailakandi becomes 1st district to pay cashless transactions wages

December 5, 2016

Hailakandi district of Assam has become the first district to pay wages to tea garden workers through individual bank accounts

RBI to introduce new 20 & 50 rupee currency notes

December 5, 2016

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is going to issue new currency notes of Twenty and Fifty rupees denomination in the Mahatma Gandhi Series-2005.

Stanpan Suraksha app launched to promote breastfeeding

December 5, 2016

The Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram launched 'Stanpan Suraksha' mobile application to promote breastfeeding and keep a tab on "inappropriate" promotion of baby food items. The mobile application has been developed by the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI).

6th Heart of Asia conference held in Amritsar, Punjab

December 5, 2016

- ✓ The sixth edition of 'Heart of Asia- Istanbul Process of Aghanistan' conference, an annual regional gathering of Asian and other countries was held in Amritsar, Punjab (India). It was inaugurated jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. It concluded with adaptation of **Amritsar Declaration** with its prime focus on terrorism.

✓ About Heart of Asia

HoA conference is a part of the Istanbul Process established 2011 which provides a platform to discuss an agenda of regional cooperation with Afghanistan at its centre. It seeks to provide a platform to discuss regional issues, particularly encouraging security, political, and economic

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa passes away

December 6, 2016

- ✓ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa passed away at the Apollo Hospitals, Chennai following cardiac arrest. She was 68. Jayalalithaa was one of the country's most articulate and determined political personalities and a top film actress of the 1960s and 1970s. She was famously known as Puratchi Thalaivi Amma (revolutionary leader) or Amma.

About J Jayalalithaa

- ✓ Born on 24 February 1948 at Melkote in Mandya district in then Mysore State (now Karnataka). At birth she was named Komalavalli and was renamed Jayalalithaa. She had entered into film industry when she was 16 years old. Her debut as lead actress was in a Kannada film Vennira Aadai in 1955.
- ✓ She was launched into Tamil films starring as the heroine in MGR's "Ayirathil Oruvan." Since then both have acted together in 28 films, many of them super hits. In her acting career, she had acted in more than 140 films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and English. She was also known for her dancing skills and was often referred as the uncrowned queen of Tamil cinema.
- ✓ She had entered into politics in 1982 under the mentorship of co-star and then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), the founder of the AIADMK. After death of MGR in 1987, she took charge of the party and became chief minister of Tamil Nadu for first time in 1991.

She served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for six times from 1991 to 1996 (1st time), in 2001 (2nd time), from 2002 to 2006 (3rd time), from 2011 to 2014 (4th time), 2015 to 2016 (5th time) and May 2016 to December 2016 (sixth time).

- ✓ Since 2011, Jayalithaa had launched several public welfare schemes doling out numerous freebies under the 'Brand Amma'. Some of such schemes are Amma Unavagam (canteen), Amma Water, Amma Salt. These schemes had won accolades nationally and endearing herself to the masses.
- ✓ cooperation among Afghanistan and its neighbours

India crosses \$300 billion milestone

December 6, 2016

India has received over US \$300 billion US Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) milestone between April 2000 and September 2016. The cumulative FDI inflows during the period amounted to US \$310.26 **India crosses \$300 billion milestone**

December 6, 2016

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Joint maritime exercise 'Konkan 16' between India and UK begins

December 6, 2016

- ✓ The annual bilateral maritime exercise **Konkan 16** between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy (British Navy) started in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The 2016 edition of the exercise (from 05 to 16 December 2016) will play an important chapter in the maritime interactions. It will familiarise navies of both countries with each other's planning processes and further enhance synergy and inter-operability.

Justice JS Khehar appointed as 44th Chief Justice of India

December 6, 2016

- ✓ Justice **Jagdish Singh Khehar (64)** will be the next Chief Justice of India (CJI). He will be the **44th CJI** and shall succeed Chief Justice TS Thakur who retires on January 3, 2017. Justice Khehar will be sworn in as the CJI by President Pranab Mukherjee on January 4, 2017

Dr. B R Ambedkar's birth anniversary will be observed as Water Day

December 7, 2016

- ✓ The Union Government is going to observe birth anniversary of the father of Indian Constitution B R Ambedkar (April 14) as "Water Day" in the country. It was announced by Union Minister for Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti in New Delhi.

Remote sensing satellite Resourcesat-2A successfully launched

December 7, 2016

- ✓ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched remote sensing satellite Resourcesat-2A into its dedicated orbit. It was launched onboard of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C36 from first launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. It was PSLV's 38th flight and XL version of the rocket was used. It was the 37th consecutive successful flight of the rocket.

About Resourcesat-2A

- ✓ Resourcesat-2A is a follow on mission to its predecessor remote sensing satellites Resourcesat-1 and Resourcesat-2, launched in 2003 and 2011 respectively. It is intended to continue the remote sensing data services to global users provided by its two predecessors.
- ✓ Resourcesat-2A weighs 1,235 kg and is placed into an 817 km polar sun synchronous orbit (i.e. orbiting pole-to-pole). The mission life of Resourcesat-2A is five years. It carries three payloads viz. high resolution **Linear Imaging Self Scanner (LISS-4)** camera, medium resolution **LISS-3 camera**, and coarse resolution **Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS) camera**. These three cameras of different resolution.

- ✓ These cameras will give regular micro and macro information on land and water bodies below, forests, farm lands and crop extent, coastal information, mineral deposits, rural and urban spreads besides helping in disaster management. It also carries two Solid State Recorders with a capacity of 200 Giga Bits. Each of it can store the images taken by its cameras which can be read out later to ground stations.

About PSLV

- ✓ The PSLV rocket is a four stage/engine indigenous light-lifting rocket powered by solid and liquid fuel alternatively. It has emerged as the workhorse launch vehicle of ISRO offered for launching satellites for international customers.
- ✓ Between 1994 and 2016, the PSLV has launched a total of 121 satellites, of which 42 are Indian satellites and 79 satellites are from abroad. The PSLV-XL variant of the rocket is 44.4 metres tall and weighs 3201 tonnes.
- ✓ **Union Cabinet approves MoU between India and Afghanistan on Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**
- ✓ December 8, 2016
- ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Afghanistan on cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space
- ✓ **Renowned journalist Cho S Ramaswamy passes away**
- ✓ December 8, 2016
- ✓ Veteran journalist Cho S Ramaswamy passed away in Chennai following a prolonged illness. He was 82. He was a lawyer, actor, journalist, commentator and a political interlocutor
- ✓ About Cho S Ramaswamy
- ✓ Born on October 5, 1934. He was a lawyer by training and later branched into theatre, films and finally to journalism. He has acted in 180 movies, scripted 14 and directed four. He had acted in movies along with MG Ramachandran, Jayalithaa, Kamal Hassan, Rajinikanth and others. He also has directed several movies and over 20 Tamil plays. He was also a screen play writer.

English most powerful language in the world: WEF

December 8, 2016

- ✓ English has been ranked first in the top 10 most powerful languages in the world according to the 2016 World Power Language Index (PLI). The index was published by World Economic Forum (WEF). Indian language Hindi was ranked 10th in the 2016 PLI.
- Top 10 Languages in 2016 PLI:** English (1st), Mandarin (2nd), French (3rd), Spanish (4th), Arabic (5th), Russian (6th), German (7th), Japanese (8th), Portuguese (9th) and Hindi (10th).

Triple talaq unconstitutional, violates rights of Muslim women: Allahabad high court

December 8, 2016

The Allahabad High Court has ruled that the practice of triple talaq (Talaq-e-bidat) among Muslims is **unconstitutional** and **violates the rights of women** enshrined in constitution

John Glenn, first American to Orbit Earth passes away

December 9, 2016

Former US aviator, astronaut John Glenn passed away in Columbus, Ohio, US. He was 95. He last surviving member of the Mercury Seven Mission. He was first American to orbit Earth and had circled three times earth in 1962 aboard Friendship 7 space capsule

Kerala Government launches Haritha Keralam Mission

December 9, 2016

- ✓ Kerala Government has launched Haritha Keralam Mission, a comprehensive programme for creating new sustainable development perspectives in the state. It was launched by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the state capital Thiruvananthapuram. Singer K.J. Yesudas and actor Manju Warrier are the mission ambassador.

2016 India International Science Festival held in New Delhi

December 9, 2016

- ✓ The 2016 India International Science festival (IISF) has started at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory (NPL) Campus in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh. The theme of the science festival is “*Science for the masses*”.
- ✓ **December 9: International Anti-Corruption Day**
- ✓ December 9, 2016
- ✓ The International Anti-Corruption Day (IACD) is observed annually on December 9 to raise public awareness of corruption and what people can do to fight it

Tropical Cyclonic Storm Vardah to hit Andhra Pradesh

December 9, 2016

- ✓ The tropical cyclonic storm **Vardah** over southeast Bay of Bengal is expected to hit Andhra Pradesh coast between Nellore and Kakinada. It is the third cyclonic storm of the season after Cyclone Kyant and Nada, that were formed during the Northeast Monsoon season.

India ranks 7th in 2016 Global Terrorism Index

December 9, 2016

- ✓ According to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) India was ranked 7th among 163 countries in the list of most impacted by terrorism in 2015. The fourth edition of the index was released by Sydney-based think-tank Institute for Economics & Peace. India is one of six Asian countries ranked in the top 10 nations most impacted by terrorism.
- ✓ **December 10: Human Rights Day**

Background

- ✓ The Human Rights Day was formally established at the 317th Plenary Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on 4 December 1950. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was formally adopted and proclaimed by UNGA on 10 December 1948. It was adopted as shared standard yard stick to protect human rights across the globe. It recognizes inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of mankind as the foundation of justice, freedom and peace in the world.

Rajasthan High Court scraps 5% quota for Gujjars

December 10, 2016

The Rajasthan High Court has scrapped the Rajasthan Special Backward Classes (SBC) Reservation Act, 2015 that provided 5% quota to five communities,

Union Government launches DigiShala TV channel to promote digital payments

December 10, 2016

The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched a TV channel named ‘**DigiShala**’ to promote cashless transactions

Recommendations of Ratan Watal Committee for Digital Payments

December 10, 2016

The Committee on Digital Payments headed by Ratan P. Watal has submitted its final report to the Union Finance Ministry. It was 11-member committee notified in August 2016 by the Finance Ministry

Union Government scraps import duty on wheat

December 10, 2016

- ✓ The Union Government has waived the import duty on wheat to zero from 10 per cent for an indefinite period. This move aims to improve domestic availability in the wake of rising prices and concerns about the wheat crop in 2016-17. The duty was waived because of uncertainty over the wheat output this year.
- ✓ **India, Vietnam sign Civil Nuclear deal, three other agreements**
- ✓ December 10, 2016

- ✓ India and Vietnam have signed a civil nuclear cooperation agreement. With this, Vietnam became 14th country with which India has signed the civil nuclear deal.
- ✓ **Madhya Pradesh Government launches Narmada Seva Yatra**
- ✓ December 12, 2016
- ✓ Madhya Pradesh Government has launched five months long Narmada Seva Yatra to turn the Narmada river pollution free. It was launched by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at Amarkantak

President Pranab Mukherjee launches 100 Million for 100 Million Campaign

December 12, 2016

- ✓ President Pranab Mukherjee launched a '100 Million for 100 Million' Campaign at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The campaign was conceptualized by Nobel peace prize winner Kailash Satyarthi and was organized by the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation.
- ✓ **Cancel illegal salt pans in Sambhar Lake: NGT Sambhar Salt Lake is India's largest inland salt lake.** It is located in Nagaur and Jaipur districts of Rajasthan. It is surrounded on all sides by the Aravali hills.

Gotthard Base Tunnel, world's longest rail tunnel starts regular service

December 12, 2016

The famed Gotthard Base Tunnel (GBT) has started regular commercial rail service in Switzerland. The first regular train to use GBT ferried passenger from Zurich to Lugano.

Cristiano Ronaldo wins 2016 FIFA Ballon d'Or Award

December 13, 2016

- ✓ Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo (31) from Portugal has won the prestigious 2016 FIFA Ballon d'Or Award. He has earned this title of world's best football player for fourth time. Earlier he had won the Ballon d'Or in 2008, 2013 and 2014.

About FIFA Ballon d'Or Award

- ✓ FIFA Ballon d'Or Award is annual football association award given by FIFA to the male player who has performed the best in previous calendar year. It was instituted in 2010 after France Football's Ballon d'Or and the men's FIFA World Player of the Year award were merged.

Antonio Guterres sworn in as UN Secretary General

December 13, 2016

- ✓ Former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres (67) was sworn in as the 9th UN Secretary- General. He was administered the Oath of Office by Peter Thomson, President of UN General Assembly at special plenary meeting. He succeeds Ban Ki-moon and shall have five-year term beginning January 1, 2017.

Antonio Guterres was unanimously appointed by the UN General Assembly after the 15-nation UN Security Council had approved him in October 2016

India, Indonesia sign three agreements to enhance strategic partnership

December 13, 2016

- ✓ India and Indonesia have signed three agreements in various areas to enhance strategic partnership. These agreements were signed after delegation level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting President of Indonesia Joko Widodo in New Delhi.
- ✓ **Union Government to launch National Resource Centre Vanjeevan for Tribal Livelihood**
- ✓ December 13, 2016
- ✓ The Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs is going to will launch "Vanjeevan", the National Resource Centre (NRC) for Tribal Livelihood issues in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

India becomes world's 4th largest defence spender

December 14, 2016

- ✓ According to the recently released 2016 IHS Jane's Defence Budgets report, India has become the world's fourth largest defence spender. In this edition of report published by US research firm IHS Inc, India has surpassed Russia, France, Japan and Saudi Arabia to become the world's fourth largest defence spender. Key Highlights from report United States, China, and the UK remain the top three defence spender in the world.
- ✓ **India, Russia bilateral naval exercise Indra Navy 2016 begins**
- ✓ December 14, 2016
- ✓ The ninth edition of exercise INDRA NAVY, an annual bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy began in the Bay of Bengal
- ✓ **6th Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development begins in New Delhi**
- ✓ December 14, 2016
- ✓ The sixth edition of Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) began in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Union Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu
- ✓ **Union Cabinet approves MoU between India-Kyrgyzstan on agriculture cooperation**
- ✓ December 15, 2016
- ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved memorandum of understanding (MoU) between India and Kyrgyzstan on cooperation in field of agriculture and food related industry.

Seventh Indo-Maldives joint military exercise EKUVERIN begins

December 15, 2016

- ✓ The seventh edition of India, Maldives bilateral EKUVERIN Exercise 2016 began at Kadhdhoo, Laamu Atoll, Maldives. The aim of 14 day platoon level joint military exercise is to conduct military training between armies of both countries with emphasis on amphibious & counter insurgency, counter terrorism operations.
- ✓ **Union Cabinet approves India's approach to climate change negotiations at COP22 to UNFCCC**
- ✓ December 15, 2016
- ✓ The Union Cabinet approved India's approach to Climate Change Negotiations at the 22 Conference of Parties (COP) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Marrakesh, Morocco in November 2016.

Pakistan successfully test-fires enhanced version of Babur cruise missile

December 15, 2016

- ✓ Pakistan Army has successfully test fired an enhanced version of an indigenously-designed Babur cruise missile. The missile incorporates advanced aerodynamics and avionics that can strike targets both at land and sea with high accuracy.

About Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY -NRLM)

- ✓ DAY-NRLM is a flagship rural poverty reduction program of Union Ministry of Rural Development. It launched with an objective of social mobilization, financial inclusion and sustainable livelihoods promotion. It aims at creating effective and efficient institutional platforms for rural poor by increasing household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improving access to financial services.
- ✓ One of its major focus areas is promotion of existing livelihood portfolios of the rural poor in farm and non-farm sectors.
- ✓ **PM Narendra Modi ranks 9th among world's most powerful people list of Forbes**
- ✓ December 15, 2016
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was placed at 9th position among 74 of the world's most powerful **Rank Name Designation**
 1. Vladimir Putin President of Russia
 2. Donald Trump President of US
 3. Angela Merkel Chancellor of Germany

4. Xi Jinping President of China

- ✓ people list released by the Forbes Magazine.

Union Government launches Lucky Grahak Yojana, Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojana to promote digital payments

December 15, 2016

- ✓ The Union Government has launched **Lucky Grahak Yojana** to encourage consumers and **Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojana** to encourage merchants for transition to digital payments. These award based schemes were launched by the NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog, government's policy think-tank.

Lucky Grahak Yojana

- ✓ Under it, consumers making payment through digital mode will get chance to win minimum Rs 1000 each every day or Rs 1 lakh per week. 15,000 winners will get cashback prizes of Rs 1000 each every day starting on 25 December 2016 (Christmas) and ending on 14 April 2017 (Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti).
- ✓ In addition, there will be weekly awards worth Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10,000 and Rs 5,000 for 7000 people. On last day of scheme mega prize winner award will be announced. He will get Rs. 1 crore award.

Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojana

- ✓ This scheme is for the merchants across the country. Mandatory for merchants to have POS(Point of Sale) machines for undertaking cashless transactions. Under it, merchants doing business using POS are eligible to win Rs.50000 per week from 25 December 2016 to 14 April 2017.
- ✓ 3 Mega Prizes for merchants will be of Rs 50 lakhs, 25 lakh, 12 lakh for digital transactions between 8 November 2016 to 13 April 2017. It will be announced on 14 April 2017.

e-Tourist visa extended to citizens of 161 countries: Government

December 16, 2016

The Union Government has extended the facility of e-Tourist Visa (e-TV) Scheme for citizens of 161 countries. It was announced by Tourism Minister Mahesh Sharma in a written reply to Rajya Sabha

About E-Tourist Visa Scheme

- ✓ Union Government had launched e-Tourist Visa Scheme (as Tourist Visa on Arrival scheme) on November 27, 2014. The scheme facilitates pre-authorization of Visa i.e. electronic travel authorisation is given to foreigners prior to travel after applicant registers for visa online.
- ✓ After registration applicant receives an email authorising him or her to travel to India after it has been approved. The tourist can travel with a print-out of this authorisation. The scheme aims to tap the vast tourism potential of India which still remains untapped and explored.
- ✓ **5th India-Arab partnership conference held in Muscat, Oman**
- ✓ December 16, 2016
- ✓ The fifth edition of the India-Arab Partnership Conference was held in Muscat, Oman from December 14 to 15, 2016. Theme of the conference was **'Partnership towards innovation and cooperation in IT'**

Haryana becomes first state to launch Mahila Police Volunteer initiative

December 16, 2016

- ✓ Haryana became the first state in the country to launch Mahila Police Volunteer (MPV) initiative for safety of women. It was launched by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. Mahila Police Volunteer is a joint initiative of Union Ministry of Women & Child Development and the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ✓ **Rio de Janeiro accorded UNESCO world heritage status**
- ✓ December 16, 2016
- ✓ The UN cultural body UNESCO has accorded world heritage status to Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro (nicknamed as Marvelous City). It has been registered as "Carioca Landscapes between Mountain and Sea" on the UNESCO world heritage list.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites

- ✓ The UNESCO World Heritage Sites are sites having special cultural or physical significance. The list is maintained by international World Heritage Programme administered by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. The committee comprises of 21 UNESCO member states which are elected by the General Assembly.
- ✓ Each World Heritage Site included in the list remains part of the legal territory of the state where it is located. But inclusion of sites in the list by UNESCO is in the interest of the international community to preserve each site. Presently, Italy with 50 sites is home to the greatest number of World Heritage Sites.
- ✓ **Brexit word added in Oxford English Dictionary**
- ✓ December 16, 2016
- ✓ The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has officially added word 'Brexit' in it. It is among 1,500 new words added to the OED. The OED has defined word 'Brexit'

Article 33 of the Constitution has the authority to impose restriction on the fundamental rights of Armed Forces personnel.'

Majuli set to become country's first ever carbon neutral district

December 16, 2016

Assam government has launched '**Sustainable Action for Climate Resilient Development in Majuli**' (SACReD, Majuli) to make river island Majuli country's first ever Carbon Neutral district by 2020

Rajasthan Government launches Annapurna Rasoi Scheme

December 17, 2016

- ✓ Rajasthan Government has launched Annapurna Rasoi Scheme to provide quality meal at cheap price to poor and needy on lines with Tamil Nadu Government's Amma canteens. It was launched by Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje at Jaipur Municipal Corporation campus. The tagline for the scheme is: "*Sabke liye bhojan, sabke liye sammaan (Food for all, respect for all)*".

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana comes into effect

December 17, 2016

- ✓ The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) notified along with other provisions of Taxation Laws (Second Amendment) Act, 2016 came into effect from 17 December 2016. It will remain open until March 31, 2017. PMGKY is Union Government's second income disclosure scheme (IDS) to allow tax evaders to come clean with unaccounted wealth. It provides for 50 per cent tax and surcharge on declarations of unaccounted cash deposited in banks.

Salient features of Scheme

- ✓ Declaration under it can be made by any person in respect of undisclosed income in the form of cash or deposits in an account with bank or post office or specified entity. Declarant of undisclosed income needs to pay **30% tax, 10% penalty and 33% Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Cess** on the tax, all of which add up to around 50%.
- ✓ Besides, declarant must make mandatory deposit of 25% of undisclosed income in the zerointerest **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Deposit Scheme, 2016** with lock-in period of 4 years. The income declared under it will not be included in the total income of the declarant under the Income-tax (IT) Act for any assessment year.

Besides, declarations made under it will be kept confidential and shall not be admissible as evidence under any Act (ex. Wealth-tax Act, Central Excise Act, Companies Act etc.). However, declarant will have no immunity under Criminal Acts mentioned in section 199-O of the Scheme

Asia Pacific nations adopt New Delhi Declaration for Urban Plus approach

December 17, 2016

The sixth edition of Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (APMCHUD) held in New Delhi has adopted **New Delhi declaration** to adopt Urban Plus approach

Air Marshal BS Dhanoa appointed Air Chief of IAF

December 18, 2016

The Union Government has appointed Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa as the next Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Rajiv Jain appointed as new chief of Intelligence Bureau

December 18, 2016

The Union government has appointed senior IPS officer Rajiv Jain as the new chief of Intelligence Bureau (IB). He succeeds Dineshwar Sharma and shall have two years term

About Intelligence Bureau (IB)

- ✓ IB is India's internal intelligence agency. It was recasted as the Central Intelligence Bureau in 1947 under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ✓ **Established:** 1887 by British India Government.
- ✓ **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- ✓ **Lt Gen Bipin Rawat appointed Chief of Indian Army Chief**
- ✓ December 18, 2016
- ✓ The Union Government has appointed Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat as new Chief of Army Staff (CoAS). He succeeds Army Chief General Dalbir Singh who retires on December 31, 2016

- ✓ **Anil Dhasmana appointed as new chief of Research and Analysis Wing**
- ✓ December 18, 2016
- ✓ The Union Government has appointed senior IPS officer Anil Dhasmana as new chief of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's external intelligence agency
- ✓ About Research and Analysis Wing (RAW)
- ✓ RAW is the primary foreign intelligence agency of India. It was established in 1968 following the intelligence failures of the Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistani wars

- ✓ **Jammu and Kashmir has no sovereignty: SC**
- ✓ December 18, 2016
- ✓ The Supreme Court in a landmark verdict held that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and did not enjoy sovereign status, either under its constitution or that of India

- ✓ **Union Power Ministry to launch GARV-II Mobile App to monitor rural electrification programme**
- ✓ December 19, 2016
- ✓ The Union Power Ministry is going to launch new mobile application GARV-II to provide real time data of all six lakh villages of the country.

AYUSH Ministry launches Swasthya Raksha Programme

December 19, 2016

- ✓ The Union AYUSH Ministry has launched 'Swasthya Raksha Programme' to promote health and health education in villages. The programme was initiated through Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) and Central Council for Research in Siddha (CCRS).

Scientists discover 163 new species in ecologically diverse Greater Mekong region

December 20, 2016

- ✓ Scientists have discovered as many as 163 new species in the ecologically diverse **Greater Mekong region** of the Southeast Asia. It includes 3 mammals species, 9 amphibians, 11 fish, 14 reptiles and 143 plants. These species were discovered in **Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Myanmar and Thailand**. It was revealed by World Wildlife Fund (WWF) report.

- ✓ **PM lays foundation stone of country's first Indian Institute of Skills in Kanpur**
- ✓ December 20, 2016
- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of the country's first Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh to make India the Skill Capital of the World.
- ✓ **Renowned Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar's statue unveiled in Haridwar**
- ✓ December 20, 2016
- ✓ The 12-foot-tall stone statue of renowned Tamil poet and philosopher-saint Thiruvalluvar was inaugurated at Mela Bhawan in Haridwar, Uttarakhand by Chief minister Harish Rawat

About Thiruvalluvar

- ✓ Thiruvalluvar is renowned Tamil poet and philosopher-saint believed to have lived between 3rd Century BC and 1st Century BC. This estimate is based on linguistic analysis of his writings, as there is no historical evidence for when and where he lived. It is believed that he was born either in ThirunainarKuruchi, a village in Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu or in Thiru Mylai (Mylapore) Chennai in Tamil Nadu.
- ✓ He is the author of the book '**Tirukkural** (also known as the Kural), a work on ethics. It is one of the most revered ancient literary work in Tamil Language. Tirukkural is a classic Tamil sangam literature consisting of 1330 couplets or Kurals. The book is also called as the **fifth Veda** or '**Bible of the Tamil Land**'.
- ✓ The Tamil poet Mamulanar of Sangam period has mentioned that Thiruvalluvar was the greatest Tamil scholar.

Other Statues of Thiruvalluvar

- ✓ His 133 foot tall statue at Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu), at southern tip of Indian Peninsula. There is also his statue outside the School of Oriental and African studies in Russell Square, London (United Kingdom).

India ranks 4th in 2016 Global Wind Power Installed Capacity Index

December 21, 2016

- ✓ India ranked 4th in the Global Wind Power Installed Capacity index with cumulative installed wind power generation capacity of 25,088 MW in 2015. The index was released as part Global Wind Report: Annual Market, flagship publication of the Global Wind Energy Council (GWEC).

Key facts

The index was topped by **China**, followed by **US** and **Germany**

India surpasses Britain to become world's sixth-largest economy: Forbes magazine

December 21, 2016

According to report published in Forbes magazine, India has surpassed its colonial masters United Kingdom to become world's sixth-largest economy in GDP terms for first time after nearly 150 years

Long range nuclear-capable subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay testfired

December 21, 2016

- ✓ Long range nuclear-capable subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay was testfired from the launch complex 3 of the Integrated Missile Test Range in Balasore, Odisha. The test was conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). After blasting off from launch pad, the missile took a unique trajectory in its entire path to the target.
- ✓ **Kaisa Matomaki, Maksym Radziwill win 2016 SASTRA Ramanujan award**
- ✓ December 22, 2016
- ✓ Kaisa Matomaki and Maksym Radziwill have been jointly won the 2016 SASTRA-Ramanujan award for mathematics for their 'revolutionary' collaborative work on short intervals in number theory

About SASTRA Ramanujan Prize

- ✓ It is an annual award bestowed on young mathematicians for his outstanding contributions to areas of mathematics influenced by the Srinivasa Ramanujan. It was established in 2005 by Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) University. It is named after great Indian Mathematician autodidact Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- ✓ **Criteria:** The age limit for the prize is 32 because Ramanujan had achieved so much in his brief life of 32 years. The prize is given annually to recipient at Kumbakonam which is Ramanujan's hometown.
- ✓ **2016 Sahitya Akademi Award winners**
- ✓ December 22, 2016
- ✓ The Sahitya Academy has announced the names of 24 poets and authors who will be conferred the prestigious 2016 Sahitya Akademi Award. This award has recognised premier works in 24 Indian languages that includes 8 books of poetry, 7 books of short stories, 5 books of novels, 2 books of criticism and 1 book each of essays and play

About Sahitya Akademi Award

- ✓ Sahitya Akademi Award is conferred annually on writers of outstanding works in one of the twenty-four major Indian languages (22 Scheduled Languages+ English and Rajasthani) The award consists of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and a cheque of 1 Lakh rupees.

December 22: National Mathematics Day

December 22, 2016

- ✓ The National Mathematics Day is observed every year on 22nd December to celebrate birth anniversary of great Indian autodidact Mathematician **Srinivasa Ramanujan**. This year, it is 129th birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- ✓ **China launches TanSat satellite to monitor global carbon emissions**
- ✓ December 22, 2016
- ✓ China successfully launched **TanSat**, a global carbon dioxide (CO2) monitoring satellite to understand the effects of climate change

About International Labour Organisation (ILO)

- ✓ The ILO is a United Nations agency dealing with labour issues, particularly international labour standards, social protection, and work opportunities for all. It was established in 1919 as an agency of the League of Nations and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

PM launches National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme in Kanpur

December 23, 2016

- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently launched National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) during his recent visit to Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh. The scheme aims to provide apprenticeship training to over 50 lakh youngsters in order to create more jobs. It has budgetary outlay of Rs 10000 crore.

About National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)

- ✓ NAPS is implemented by Director General of Training (DGT) under the aegis of Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). Under it, Central Government for the first time will provide financial incentives to the employers to engage actively in apprenticeship training. Central Government will also directly share 25% of the total stipend (maximum of 1,500 rupees per month per apprentice) payable to an apprentice with employers.
- ✓ In addition, it will support basic training which is considered an essential component of apprenticeship training. The Central Government will bear the 50% of the total expenditure incurred on providing basic training to an apprentice.
- ✓ All transactions including registration by employers, apprentices, registration of contract and payment to employers will be made in online mode.

Ministry of Textiles to set up Bunkar Mitra Handloom Helpline Centre

December 24, 2016

- ✓ The Union Ministry of Textiles has decided to establish a Bunkar Mitra-Handloom Helpline Centre where experts in the field of textiles will answer professional queries of weavers. This helpline initially will be provided in 7 languages viz., English, Hindi and 5 other regional languages Tamil, Telugu, Kannada Bengali and Assamese.

Urban planning kept peace in Harappa: Experts

December 24, 2016

- ✓ According to Indus Valley Civilisation expert Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, Harappa was peaceful in comparison with all other first civilisations cities because of its urban planning. The efficient water supply, proper sewage treatment and good drainage systems in Harappa were main reason for conflict avoidance.

About GST Council

- ✓ As per Article 279A of the Constitution, GST Council is joint forum of the Centre and the States.
- ✓ **Composition:** Union Finance Minister (Chairperson), Union Minister of State (MoS) incharge of Revenue of finance (Member) and Minister In-charge of taxation or finance or any other Minister nominated by each State Government (Members).

Functions: They are mention in Article 279A (4) of the Constitution. It will make recommendations on important issues related to GST, like (i) Goods and services that may be subjected or exempted from GST.

Odisha Government launches Biju Sishu Surakshya Yojana to nurture HIV positive orphan kids

December 24, 2016

The Odisha Government launched the Biju Sishu Surakshya Yojana, a scheme to nurture the orphan and HIV-infected children residing in different child care institutions and orphanages.

December 24: National Consumer Day

December 24, 2016

The National Consumer Day is observed every year in India on 24th December. On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the President

Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh chosen for 2016 Jnanpith Award

December 24, 2016

Eminent modern Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh was chosen for the prestigious Jnanpith Award for the year 2016. **About Jnanpith Award**

- ✓ Jnanpith Award is **India's highest literary honour**. Its name has been taken from Sanskrit words Jnana and Pitha which means knowledge-seat. It was instituted in 1961 by Bharatiya Jnanpith trust founded by the Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain family that owns the Times of India newspaper group. It is bestowed upon any Indian citizen who writes in any 22 official languages of India mentioned in VIII Schedule of Constitution of India and English.
- ✓ Prior to 1982, the award was only given for a single work by a writer. But after 1982, the award is given for lifetime contribution to Indian literature. The award carries cash prize of 11 lakh rupees, a citation plaque and a bronze replica of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and wisdom

016. He is the 52nd recipient of Jnanpith Award. He is sixth Bengali litterateur

6,117 Kuchipudi dancers set new Guinness World Record

December 26, 2016

- ✓ As many as 6,117 Kuchipudi dancers set a new Guinness World Record by performing together in a single event in Vijayawada district of Andhra Pradesh. The Guinness World Record adjudicated for the 12-minute "Jayamu Jayamu" item as the 'Largest Kuchipudi dance' performance.

India's first 2G Ethanol Bio-refinery to be set up in Punjab

December 26, 2016

- ✓ The foundation stone of India's first 2G (Second Generation) Ethanol Bio-refinery was laid at Tarkhanwala village in Bathinda, Punjab. Central Government Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) is setting up this project at a cost of 600 crore Rupees.

DRDO successfully flight tests Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon

December 26, 2016

- ✓ The Defence and Research Development Organization (DRDO) successfully flight tested Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft at integrated test range in Chandipur, Odisha. During the test, the captive and release trials were tracked by Radar and Telemetry ground stations at Interim Test Range during the entire duration of the flight.

India successfully test-fires nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-5

December 26, 2016

- ✓ India successfully test-fired its home-grown long range intercontinental surface-to-surface nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-5. The state-of-the-art surface-to-surface missile was test fired successfully from the launch complex 4 of the Integrated Test Range from the Abdul Kalam Wheeler Island off Odisha coast. It was the fourth developmental and second canisterised trial of the missile.

- ✓ At present India in its armoury of Agni missile series, possesses Agni-I (700 km range), Agni-II (2000 km range), Agni-3 (2,500 km range) and Agni-4 (more than 3,500 range).
- ✓ **Assam Government launches Health Insurance Scheme Atal-Amrit Abhiyan**
- ✓ December 27, 2016
- ✓ Assam Government rolled out 'Atal-Amrit Abhiyan', a health insurance scheme to provide coverage against several critical illnesses. Atal-Amrit Abhiyan aims to make quality health care affordable to every individual member of a family in the state.
- ✓ **Rajasthani writer Satya Narayan chosen for 2016 Bihari Puraskar**
- ✓ December 28, 2016
- ✓ Eminent Rajasthani litterateur **Dr Satya Narayan** was chosen for the 26th Bihari Puraskar 2016 by the K K Birla Foundation.
- ✓ **NBWL gives nod to Ken-Betwa Inter-Linking of Rivers Project**
- ✓ December 28, 2016
- ✓ The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has given its clearance for the **Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers (ILR) project**, paving the way to begin work for linking two rivers. The clearance of NBWL was required since the project requires diversion of forest land from core area of Panna Tiger Reserve

Anil Bajjal appointed as Lt Governor of Delhi

December 29, 2016

- ✓ President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed former bureaucrat Anil Bajjal (70) as the 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. He will succeed Najeeb Jung who had resigned before completion of his term and is returning to teaching profession.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- ✓ ISA was launched jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of France François Hollande in November, 2015 at Paris on the side-lines of the 21st CoP meeting of UNFCCC. It is brainchild of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is also India's first international and inter-governmental organization comprising 121 Countries.
- ✓ ISA strives to bring together more than 121 solar resource rich tropical nations lying fully or partially between two tropics for coordinated research, low cost financing and rapid deployment. Its headquarters are located in Gwal Pahari, Guragaon in Haryana. The institutional structure consists of an Assembly, a Council and a Secretariat (to be located in India).

27th meeting of Southern Zonal Council held at Thiruvananthapuram

December 29, 2016

- ✓ The 27th meeting of the Southern Zonal Council held at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala was chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh. The Southern Zonal Council consists of **Kerala, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry (UT) and Andhra Pradesh**.
- ✓ About Zonal Councils
- ✓ Zonal Councils were set up under the States Reorganization Act, 1956 (so it is not constitutional body) to foster Inter-State co-operation and co-ordination among the States. Currently, there are total five zonal councils viz. Northern, Western, Eastern, Central and Southern

Government launches Swachh Swasth Sarvatra initiative

December 29, 2016

- ✓ Union Government launched Swachh Swasth Sarvatra initiative to strengthen health centres in open defecation-free (ODF) blocks. The objective of this initiative is to strengthen community health centres in 708 ODF blocks across the country to enable them to achieve higher levels of cleanliness and hygiene.

Article 123 of Constitution: It gives legislative power to President. He can issue ordinances when Parliament is not in session (i.e. recess) if there is urgent need to have a law on some urgent public matter. The promulgated ordinance has similar effect to an act of parliament

Government meets PMUY target of 1.5 crore LPG connections

December 30, 2016

The Union Ministry for Petroleum & Natural Gas has met the 1.5-crore target for LPG connections that were to be added under the **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)** in the 2016-17 financial year. This Target was achieved within a span of less than eight months since the launch of the scheme which is implemented across 35 States/UTs

About Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- ✓ The scheme provides free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs. 1600/- per connection to an adult woman member of BPL family identified through Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data. It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May 2016 from Balia, Uttar Pradesh. PMUY is the *first welfare scheme* being implemented by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

The tagline of scheme is **Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan**. It seeks to empower women and protect their health by shifting them from traditional cooking based on unclean cooking fuels or fossil fuels to clean cooking gas. It is being implemented over three years' time frame i.e. in the FY 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 with budgetary allocation of allocated Rs, 8,000 crore announced in the Union Budget 2016

PM Narendra Modi launches UPI based mobile payment app called BHIM

December 30, 2016

- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched UPI based mobile payment application called BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) at the Digi Dhan Mela held in Talkatora stadium, New Delhi, The app is rebranded version of UPI (Unified Payment Interface) and USSD (Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) for simpler digital payments without cash.

Key Facts

BHIM is Aadhaar-based payments app developed by the National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI). The app allows easily transferring money or making a payment from your bank account using only phone number. It can work even on basic phones as it supports USSD payments

India and Singapore ink 3rd Protocol for amending DTAA

December 31, 2016

India and Singapore have signed a Third Protocol to amend DTAA (Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement) for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income. It was signed in line with India's treaty policy to prevent double non-taxation, curb