

**1 March 2017**



**1)** India's first integrated heliport was launched at which place on 28 February 2017? – **Rohini (Delhi)**

**Explanation:** Union Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju inaugurated country's first-ever integrated heliport at Rohini in north Delhi on 28 February 2017.

– The heliport has been built by Pawan Hans, a state-owned firm. The terminal building created at the heliport has the capacity of 150 passengers. In total, the integrated heliport can handle 4 hangars which have the capacity to park 16 helicopters.

– This heliport will reduce the congestion at the Delhi Airport, significantly. The heliport also can be used for disaster management and emergency medical services. It will also provide skill development programs for engineers and pilots.

**2)** According to an announcement made by Economic Affairs Secretary Shaktikanta Das on 28 February 2017, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be implemented from which date? – **1 July 2017**

**Explanation:** Economic Affairs Secretary Shaktikanta Das on 28 February 2017 announced that Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be implemented from 1 July 2017 as all states have agreed on the implementation date.

– The draft compensation bill has already been approved in the GST Council's meeting held on 18 February 2017.

– The government now plans to get the GST

Council's approval on iGST (integrated GST), cGST (central GST) and sGST (state GST) drafts at its 4-5 March 2017 meeting before the second half of the budget session of Parliament begins on 9 March 2017.

**3)** Banking operations across the country came to a halt on 28 February 2017 as 10 lakh bank employees staged a strike against the government's "anti-people banking reforms". This strike call was called by which organisation associated with bank employees? – **United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU)**

**Explanation:** The banking strike of 28 February 2017 was called by the United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), comprising of nine bank unions.

– According to bank employee associations – around 85,000 branches of commercial banks, 105,000 branches of co-operative bank and others took part in this strike. The clearance of 40 lakh cheques totalling around Rs. 22,000 crore was affected.

– However, private banks like ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and others, which are not part of the unions, continued to function normally but cheque clearances did not take place.

**4)** The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) during February 2017 urged the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to revoke the visas of *BBC*,s South Asia correspondent Justin Rowlatt and his crew in the wake of a documentary that explores the anti-poaching strategy adopted by the guards of the Kaziranga Reserve. What is the name of this controversial documentary? – **'One World: Killing for Conservation'**

**Explanation:** The documentary „One World: Killing for Conservation" explores the anti-poaching strategy adopted by the guards of the Kaziranga Reserve in Assam.

– The film claims that the guards have been given powers to shoot and kill those indulging

in poaching of rhinoceros at the World Heritage Site.

– On the other hand, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), on 27 February 2017 also advised the wildlife wing of the MEA to disallow filming permission to *BBC* in any protected areas of the country for a period of five years.

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**5)** According to media reports of February 2017, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is poised to acquire which PSU fuel marketing company? – **HPCL**

**Explanation:** As per the media reports, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) may acquire India's third-biggest fuel retailer Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) in an about Rs. 44,000 crore (\$6.6 billion) deal as part of the government's plan to create an integrated oil giant.

– The logic given for this proposed deal is that the government is looking at creating an integrated oil company and the primary idea is to merge an oil producer with a refiner.

– Accordingly, ONGC may buy all of the government's 51.11% stake in HPCL. This will have to be followed by an open offer to acquire additional 26% from other shareholders of HPCL.

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**2 March 2017**

**1)** What was the national sex ratio (at birth) during 2015-16 as was disclosed in the National Family Health Survey - 4 (NFHS-4) for 2015-16 that was unveiled by the Union Health Ministry on 28 February 2017? – **919**

**Explanation:** The sex ratio at birth (number of females per 1,000 males) improved from 914 in 2005-06 to 919 in 2015-16 at the national level over the last decade. This was disclosed in the National Family Health Survey -4 (NFHS-4) for 2015-16 unveiled by the Union Health Ministry on 28 February 2017.

– The highest sex ratio (at birth) was recorded in Kerala (1,047), followed by Meghalaya (1,009) and Chhattisgarh (977). Haryana also witnessed a significant increase from 762 to 836.

– On the other hand Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) declined from 57 to 41 per 1,000 live births between NFHS-3 (2005-06) and NFHS-4. IMR has declined substantially in almost all the states during the last decade.

– It is worth mentioning that NHFS-4 includes information from 6 lakh households, 7 lakh women and 1.3 lakh men, and for the first time provides district level estimates.

**2)** Which Member of Parliament (MP) during February 2017 moved a private bill in the Parliament that seeks to empower voters to recall MPs and MLAs? – **Varun Gandhi**

**Explanation:** BJP MP Varun Gandhi moved a private in the Parliament that seeks the provision for recalling of MPs and MLAs by voters depending on their performance.

– According to the proposals in the bill, MPs and MLAs should be recalled within two years from being elected if 75% of those who voted for them are not satisfied with their performance.

– Stating that the countries all over the world have experimented with the concept of Right to Recall, Varun Gandhi has proposed an amendment in the Representation of the People Act 1951 through his Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

– At present there is no recourse to the electorate if they are unhappy with their elected representative.



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**3)** Ajay Tyagi took over as the new Chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on 1 March 2017. He is the .....Chairman of SEBI?  
– **Ninth**

**Explanation:** Finance ministry official Ajay Tyagi on 1 March 2017 became the 9<sup>th</sup> Chairman of the capital market regulator SEBI. He took over from U.K. Sinha who served for six years, the second-longest term by any SEBI Chairman (after D.R. Mehta).

– Dr. S.A. Dave was the first Chairman of SEBI during 1988-90. He was followed by G. V. Ramakrishna (1990-94), S. S. Nadkarni (1994-95), D. R. Mehta (1995-2002), G. N. Bajpai (2002-05), M. Damodaran (2005-08), C. B. Bhave (2008-11) and U K Sinha (2011-2017).

– Tyagi has already been closely involved with the capital markets regulator, having served as additional secretary at the Finance Ministry's Economic Affairs Department since 2014, the same unit that oversees SEBI.

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**4)** In an important development, the Union Government has shifted the responsibility of promoting digital transactions in the country to which ministry from NITI Aayog? – **Ministry of IT and Electronics (MEITY)**

**Explanation:** During February 2017 the Union Government shifted the responsibility of promoting digital transactions in the country to the Ministry of IT and Electronics (MEITY) from NITI Aayog.

– This decision was taken primarily in view of the core competence of MEITY to promote digital means for various transactions. It is worth mentioning that IT Ministry is responsible for promotion of e-governance

for empowering citizens as well as promoting inclusive and sustainable growth of electronics and IT in the country.



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**5)** Who was named as the new Chief Coach of the Indian women's hockey team on 28 February 2017? – **Sjoerd Marijne**

**Explanation:** Former Dutch women's national coach Sjoerd Marijne was on 28 February 2017 appointed the chief coach of the Indian women's hockey team for the next four years. He will work with fellow Dutchman Eric Wonink, who will take charge as the analytical coach with the senior women's team.

– He has coached the Netherlands, having coached the Dutch U-21 women's side to a World Cup title as well as the Dutch senior women's side to a gold medal at the Hockey World League semifinals in 2015.

– Between 2011 and 2014, Sjoerd was the national head coach of the Netherlands under-21 men.

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**3-4 March 2017**

**1)** According to media reports of 2 March 2017 Jio Payments Bank (JPB) has received the Reserve Bank of India's final go-ahead to start operations. JPB is a payments bank joint venture between Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and which public-sector bank? – **State Bank of India (SBI)**

**Explanation:** In July 2016, RIL and SBI had signed subscription and shareholders' agreements for their payments bank venture – Jio Payments Bank (JPB). It has now received RBI's approval for payments bank license. RIL holds a 70% stake in the venture and SBI owns the rest.



– The operations of Jio Payments Bank (JPB) are slated to be commenced by the end of March 2017.

– It is worth mentioning that Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd, RIL's telecom unit, has crossed the 100-million customer mark. JPB is expected that it could offer banking services to its existing and new customers by leveraging on its retail network, merchant tie-ups, neighbourhood Jio retailers and e-tailers.

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**2)** Which place will become the second capital of Himachal Pradesh as the state Cabinet on 2 March 2017 gave its approval to the pertaining proposal? – **Dharamshala**

**Explanation:** Himachal Pradesh state cabinet on 2 March 2017 approved Dharamshala, situated in the snow-capped Dhauladhar range, as the second capital of the hill state.

– It is worth mentioning that on 19 January 2017 Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh had announced that his government was actively considering a proposal to make Dharamshala as state's winter capital.

– Shimla is the capital of Himachal Pradesh but faces some logistical problems during winters especially due to snowfall.

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**3)** The Indian Army on 2 March 2017 received an indigenous weapon locating radar (WLR) Swati, from the DRDO, for induction in the force. What is the name of this radar that has a range of 50 km? – **'Swati'**

**Explanation:** 'Swati' is the name of the indigenous weapon locating radar (WLR) that has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It was handed over by the DRDO to the Indian Army on 2 March 2017.

– Swati was first pressed into service along

the LoC during 2016. It played a major role in suppressing Pakistani fire. It has range of around 50 km and is thus capable of bringing under its coverage all artillery guns present in a large area.



**4)** Renowned Gujarati writer and playwright Taarak Mehta passed on 1 March 2017.

What was the name of this famous humour-based newspaper column on which the blockbuster Hindi TV series

"Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah" is based? – **'Duniya Ne Undha Chasma'**

**Explanation:** "Duniya Ne Undha Chasma" first appeared in Gujarati newspaper "Chitralekha" in March 1971. It looked at various contemporary issues from a different perspective.

– This column was the inspiration for SAB TV's blockbuster TV series "Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah" that was started in 2008 and is still very popular despite airing more than two thousand episodes.

– Taarak Mehta passed away on 1 March 2017 at the age of 87 years due to many age related complications.

## 5-6 March 2017

**1)** What is the name of India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based banking chatbot, the launch of which was announced by HDFC Bank on 5 March 2017? – **'Eva'**

**Explanation:** "Eva" is the name of the India's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) driven banking chatbot that is capable of answering millions of customer queries across multiple channels instantly. It was launched on 5 March 2017 by HDFC Bank.

– The term Eva stands for "Electronic Virtual Assistant". It can assimilate knowledge from

thousands of sources and provide answers in simple language in less than 0.4 seconds. According to HDFC Bank, with the launch of “Eva”, its customers can get information on its products and services instantaneously.

– In the future, “Eva” would be able to handle real banking transactions as well, which would enable HDFC Bank to offer the true power of conversational banking to its customers.

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**2)** According to an announcement made by the Union Government during February 2017, “Aadhaar” number will be made compulsory for availing the mid-day meal facility in schools across the country. This rule will come into effect from which date? – **1 July 2017**

**Explanation:** Beginning 1 July 2017, more than a 100 million school children will compulsorily need Aadhaar, the 12-digit unique identification number of India, to avail their mid-day meal.

– The Union Government has issued a gazette notification dated 28 February 2017 to effect the change. Though the direction came into effect from the date of the notification, the government gave children and their parent’s time till 30 June 2017 to get the Aadhaar in case they don’t have one so far.

– The notification exempts Assam, Meghalaya and Jammu and Kashmir from the requirement at least for now.

– Mid-day meal (MDM) is a flagship central government scheme that aims to provide some amount of nutrition to students in government schools, special training centres and Madrasas supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Central and state governments share the financial burden in the 60:40 ratio except that it is 90:10 for eight north-eastern states and three Himalayan states- Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

– As per official data, at least 10.03 crore elementary students (Class 1-8) studying in 1.15 million schools are now benefiting from

the MDM scheme that deploys 2.53 million part time workers for its implementations.



**3)** The first Indian edition of P1 Powerboat Championship, also known as “Indian Grand Prix of the Seas”, was held during March 2017 at which place? – **Mumbai**

**Explanation:** The first-ever NEXA P1 Powerboat Championship in India was held from 3 March to 5 March 2017 in Arabian Sea off the Marine Drive in South Mumbai. The event that was also billed as “Indian Grand Prix of the Seas” saw participation from champion powerboat drivers from all over the world.

– The event was won by the Baleno RS Booster Jets on 5 March 2017. It comprised of two teams and it collected 89 points overall in three races, including the grand finale. They collected the gold medal.

– The “Lloyd Dolphins” (having two teams) bagged 87 points overall to get the silver medal, while “Money on Mobile Marlins”, which also had two teams, scored 79 points to clinch the bronze.



**4)** Former three-time MP and diplomat Syed Shahabuddin passed away on 4 March 2017 at the age of 82. He was the leader of which entity that vehemently opposed the demolition of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992? – **Babri Masjid Action Committee**

**Explanation:** During his time, Syed Shahabuddin had strongly opposed the

demolition of the Babri Masjid and was the leader of the Babri Action Committee. He was also well known for his involvement in the Shah Bano case. He came to be known as a strong voice of Muslims in the country.

– He began working as a diplomat for the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), but later became a politician. He joined IFS in 1958 and served as a Vice Consul and Consul in New York from 1959-61.

– He served three terms from 1979-1996 as a MP. He was a Rajya Sabha member from Bihar during 1979-84 and a Lok Sabha member (Kishanganj) from 1985-89 and 1991-96.

## 7 March 2017

**1)** Indian Navy's aircraft carrier "INS Viraat" was decommissioned after almost 30 years of service on 6 March 2017. It was the second aircraft carrier in service and was purchased from the British Royal Navy. What was its original name? – **HMS Hermes**

**Explanation:** Earlier known as "HMS Hermes", INS Viraat was in the British Royal Navy from 1959. In the late 80s, Indian Navy purchased it at the cost of \$65 million and was re-commissioned on 12 May 1987. It was a centaur-class aircraft carrier.

– INS Viraat was the flagship of the Indian Navy before INS Vikramaditya was commissioned in 2013. On 23 July 2016, it sailed for the last time under her own power from Mumbai to Kochi, where she was dry-docked and prepared for decommissioning.

– It was the world's oldest serving aircraft carrier. It is also the second Indian aircraft carrier to be decommissioned after the INS Vikrant.

**2)** SBI on 6 March 2017 announced steep increase in the minimum balance required for maintaining savings account from 1 April 2017. What is the new stipulated monthly average balance (MAB) for various different

locations? – **Rs. 5,000 (for branches in six metros), Rs. 3,000 (in other urban areas), Rs. 2,000 (in semi-urban areas) and Rs. 1,000 (in rural areas)**

**Explanation:** India's largest commercial bank State Bank of India (SBI) has now decided to fix separate MABs for "metro", "urban", "semi-urban" and "rural" areas from the beginning of next financial year (1 April 2017).

– Savings bank account holders of SBI and its five associates (merging with it on 1 April 2017) will have to maintain the monthly balance or else they will invite a penalty ranging from Rs. 20 (rural branches) to Rs. 100 in (metro cities).

– MAB for metro branches will be Rs. 5,000 and penalty for non-maintenance of minimum balance will be between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100. For urban and semi-urban branches, the MAB has been fixed at Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 2,000 respectively.

– In case of rural branches, the minimum balance has been fixed at Rs. 1,000. Breach of MAB will attract a penalty ranging between Rs. 20 and Rs. 50.

– As of now, monthly average balance (MAB) for a savings bank account is Rs. 500 without facility of cheque book and Rs. 1,000 with cheque book across the country.



**3)** Air India during March 2017 claimed world record for undertaking the first-ever journey around the world with all-women crew. This historic flight was undertaken between which two destinations? – **New Delhi and San Francisco**

**Explanation:** In a quest to set a new world record, Air India operated a flight around the world with an all-women crew ahead of



International Women's Day. The flight (AI 173) departed on 27 February 2017 for San Francisco from New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport and returned here on 3 March 2017 after flying across the globe.

– The aircraft, a Boeing 777-200LR, flew over the Pacific on its journey (flight no. (AI 173) to San Francisco, while the return flight (flight no. AI 174) flew over the Atlantic, encircling the globe.

– Air India claimed that apart from the cockpit and cabin crew, check-in and ground handling staff, and engineers who certified the aircraft were all women. The flight was in the hands of Capt. Sunita Narula, Capt. Kshamta Bajpai, Capt. Indira Singh and Capt. Gunjan Aggarwal. The all-women cabin crew was led by Ms. Seema Baberwal and Ms. Nishrin Bandulwala.

– The airline has already applied for a Guinness World Record and Limca Book of Records for this accomplishment.



**4)** Eminent socialist leader and former Lok Sabha Speaker Rabi Ray passed away at the age of 90 on 6 March 2017. He was appointed Lok Sabha Speaker in which tumultuous year when India

witnessed the first hung parliament in its history? – **1989**

**Explanation:** Eminent socialist leader, former Union Minister and former Speaker of Lok Sabha Rabi Ray passed away after a prolonged illness on 6 March 2017 in Cuttack.

– Inspired by Ram Manohar Lohia, he had founded the Socialist Party in Odisha in 1956, and later went on to become the National Secretary of the party in 1960. He was first elected to the Lok Sabha in 1967, from the Puri parliamentary constituency.

– In 1974, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha from the State, and was made a Cabinet Minister in 1977 by the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai

– In 1989 Ray was elected to the 9<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha on a Janata Dal ticket from the Kendrapara constituency (Odisha) and amid political uncertainty, he was unanimously elected as the Speaker. He thus presided over one of the most tumultuous Houses as the Lok Sabha had witnessed hung Parliament for the first time.

## 8-9 March 2017

**1)** Which public sector bank on 7 March 2017 announced the "Work from Home" policy for its employees as at to enable them to work while at home? –

**State Bank of India (SBI)**

**Explanation:** State Bank of India (SBI) on 7 March 2017 launched a new facility to enable its employees to work from home. Under the "Work from Home" policy, SBI employees will be able to work while at home using mobile devices to address any urgent requirement they may have, that prevents their travelling to work.

– For making the "Work from Home" policy feasible, SBI will be using mobile computing technologies and shall have continuous control over all the enabled devices centrally to manage and secure the data and applications on the mobile devices.

– The use of technology and services shall be monitored through carefully designed MIS and dashboard to enable improvements and refinements.

**2)** Which entity on 7 March 2017 became the new sponsor of the Indian cricket team, replacing broadcasting giants Star India? –

**Oppo Mobiles India Private Limited**

**Explanation:** Chinese mobile manufacturing and marketing company Oppo's Indian operation – Oppo Mobiles India Private Limited became the new sponsor of the Indian cricket team. This was announced by the Board for Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) on 7 March 2017.

– Oppo’s association with BCCI will start from April 2017 for a period of five years. The team sponsor gets to have its commercial logo on the both the men’s and women’s kits.

– Star India took over as the Indian cricket team’s sponsor in 2013 from Sahara, which was declared ineligible by the Board. However, Star India had made it clear that it would not seek a renewal of its sponsorship deal.

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**3) Who became the new Mayor of Mumbai after he was officially elected for this prestigious post on 8 March 2017? – Vishwanath Mahadeshwar**

**Explanation:** Shiv Sena legislator and three-time corporator from Santacruz, Vishwanath Mahadeshwar was elected the new Mayor of Mumbai on 8 March 2017.

– A Ramnarain Ruia College graduate, Mahadeshwa was previously Principal of Raje Sambhaji Vidyalaya and Junior College in Santacruz.

– It is worth mentioning that the elections for Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) were held during February 2017. Shiv Sena emerged the single largest party, with 84 seats, while BJP followed a close second with 82.

– However, with the two parties unable to see eye-to-eye on a post-poll alliance, amid speculation and backdoor negotiations, Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis surprised everybody saying his party will stay away from the mayor race.

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**4) The Department of Industrial Policy and**

Promotion (DIPP) on 6 March 2017 notified the Trade Mark Rules 2017 to replace the pertaining rules of 2002. What is the main feature of the new Rules? – **The number of trademark application forms has been slashed to 8 from 74**

**Explanation:** To improve India’s intellectual property regime, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), on 6 March 2017 notified the Trade Mark Rules 2017. An important feature of new Rule is that there are just 8 forms under it as compared to the Rules of 2002.

– However the application fees for trademark applications has been increased to Rs.10,000 from Rs. 4,000.

– To promote e-filing of trademark applications, the fee for online filing has been kept at 10% lower at Rs. 9,000. For individuals, start-ups and small enterprises, the fee has been reduced to Rs. 4,500 from Rs. 8,000 proposed in the draft rules.

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**5) What is the name of the first-ever sports car of Tata Motors that was launched by the company at the 87<sup>th</sup> Geneva International Motor Show on 7 March 2017? – ‘Racemo’**

**Explanation:** “Racemo” is the name of the two-seater sports coupe of Tata Motors. It is the first sports car of the company and was launched at the 87<sup>th</sup> Geneva International Motor Show on 7 March 2017.

– This car is the first product launched under company’s newly introduced Tamo sub-brand. Tamo has been positioned as an



incubating centre of innovation for new technologies.

– Racemo has been touted as India’s first globally developed “phygital” car, merging the physical and digital worlds. It will bring alive connected car features such as advanced navigation, predictive maintenance, remote monitoring and over-the-air updates using Microsoft cloud-based technologies.

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**6) Reliance Capital sold its stake in digital payments firm Paytm to which Chinese entity, as announced on 7 March 2017? – Alibaba Group**

**Explanation:** In a deal reaping huge gains for the Anil Ambani-led group firm Reliance Capital (RC), RC sold its nearly 1% stake in popular digital payments firm Paytm for Rs. 275 crore to China’s Alibaba Group. It had invested Rs 10 crore for this stake in Paytm.

– The deal gives a valuation of over \$4 billion to Paytm, which is already backed by Alibaba group as a strategic investor. Earlier, Reliance Capital had said it would trim its proprietary investment portfolio as part of its plans to monetise non-core assets.

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## 10 March 2017



**1) Indian Parliament on 9 March 2017 approved the ambitious Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016 that primarily seeks to grant women working in the organised sector paid maternity leave of 26 weeks. What is the duration of maternity leave at present? – 12 weeks**

**Explanation:** The Maternity Benefit

(Amendment) Bill, 2016 was passed by Lok Sabha on 9 March 2017. Rajya Sabha had passed it in August last year. The bill grants women working in the organised sector paid maternity leave of 26 weeks, up from 12 weeks now, a decision which is expected to benefit around 1.8 million women.

– The law will apply to all establishments employing 10 or more people and the entitlement will be for the first two children. For the third child, the entitlement will be 12 weeks.

– With this, India becomes the country with the third highest maternity leave. Canada and Norway grant 50 weeks and 44 weeks respectively as paid maternity leave.



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**2) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 March 2017 inaugurated India’s longest „extradosed” cable-stayed bridge in Gujarat that is 1.4 km long. This bridge has been built at which place in Gujarat? – Bharuch**

**Explanation:** The 1.4-kilometre „extradosed” cable-stayed bridge over Narmada River in Gujarat’s Bharuch is claimed to be the longest in the country.

– This 4-lane bridge was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 March 2017. The bridge is expected to ease traffic woes on the Ahmedabad-Mumbai National Highway, considered to be one of the busiest in India.

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**3) Which Canadian funds have bought an equity stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank for Rs. 2,255 crore, as was announced on 8 March 2017? – Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and Caisse de depot et placement du Qubec**

**Explanation:** Two Canadian funds – Canada

Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) and Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec recently acquired an equity stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank for Rs. 2,255 crore, through a bulk deal.

– Executive Vice-Chairman & Managing Director Uday Kotak has pared his stake in the bank from 33.30% to 31.80%.

– With this acquisition, the shareholding of CPPIB, which held a 5.76% stake in Kotak Mahindra Bank as of December 2016, went up to 6.26%. On the other hand Caisse de depot et placement du Quebec's stake in the bank stands at 1%.

– The stake sale comes in the backdrop of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) asking the bank to bring down its promoter shareholding to 30% by 30 June 2017, 20% by 31 December 2018 and 15% by 31 March 2020.

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**4)** South Korean auto company Hyundai on 9 March 2017 announced to phase out which of its popular hatchback model in India? – **i10**

**Explanation:** Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of South Korean automaker Hyundai announced that it is phasing out the immensely popular hatchback i10 from the Indian market. The company has already stopped production of the small car, which was first introduced in 2007.

– The company is shifting its focus to more premium and modern products. It plans to introduce a total of eight products in the country in 2017-20.

– Till date, Hyundai has sold a total of 16.95 lakh units of i10 in domestic as well as global markets. It is one of the products that helped Hyundai cement its place in India.

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**5)** Indian Navy on 9 March 2017 commissioned which fast speed vessel into the service that is expected to play vital role in anti-terrorist activities? –

**INS Tillanchang**

**Explanation:** INS Tillanchang is the name of the ship belonging to the Water Jet Fast Attack Craft (WJFAC) category that was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 9 March 2017. It was commissioned by Vice Admiral Girish Luthra in Karwar, Karnataka.

– INS Tillanchang is expected to add to the firepower of the Indian Navy and play important role in anti-terrorist activities. It is equipped with a 30 mm indigenous gun and is capable of achieving speed of 65 kmph.

– The name Tillanchang is based on an island in Andaman and Nicobar. The ship has been built in Kolkata-based Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) at a cost of Rs. 80-90 crore.

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**11-15 March**



**1)** India on 11 March 2017 successfully conducted maiden test of extended-range version of supersonic cruise missile BrahMos from a defence base off Odisha coast. What is the new range of this missile? – **450 km**

**Explanation:** The extended-range BrahMos was fired from a mobile autonomous launcher (MAL) deployed in full configuration at Chandipur-based launching complex-III of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) on 11 March 2017. It took off successfully and hit the designated target meeting all mission parameters.

– The technology upgrade came after India’s full membership to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) which removed caps on the strike range of BrahMos. The range has been now enhanced from 290 km to 450 km.

– With the successful test firing, the armed forces will be empowered to knock down enemy targets far beyond 400 km.

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**2)** 12 CRPF personnel were killed in a major Maoist attack in Chhattisgarh on 11 March 2017. This attack took place in which district of the state? – **Sukma**

**Explanation:** The attack took place in the morning of 11 March 2017 near Kotacheru under Bheji police station in Sukma (Chhattisgarh), one of the worst-Maoist affected districts in the country. Maoists attacked a road opening party of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). 12 personnel were killed in the ambush.

– The Maoists also looted 10 weapons from the dead personnel in the area around 450 km away from the state capital Raipur. This was the biggest attack on para-military forces in recent months.

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**3)** South Korea’s Constitutional Court upheld the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye on 10 March 2017, removing her from office over a graft scandal. She was accused of soliciting bribes from the head of which business house? – **Samsung**

**Explanation:** Park Geun-hye became South Korea’s first democratically elected leader to be forced from office after country’s Constitutional Court upheld her impeachment on 10 March 2017.

– She was earlier impeached by the Parliament on 9 December 2016 over a graft scandal involving Korean conglomerate Samsung and for colluding with a friend Choi Soon-sil, and a former presidential aide. She was accused of soliciting bribes from the head of the Samsung Group for government favours, including backing a merger of two Samsung affiliates in 2015.

– Now a presidential election will be held in the country in 60 days. The political crisis has come at a time when rival North Korea is pushing ahead with its missile programme and tension is brewing with China over a US missile-defence system being deployed in South Korea.

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**4)** What is the name of the Indian-origin federal prosecutor of New York who was removed from his post

by President Donald Trump on 10 March 2017? – **Preet Bharara**

**Explanation:** Preet Bharara was the US Attorney in South District New York. His fame rose to prominence after pursuing high-profile corruption cases and cases against Wall Street bankers. He won a \$1.8 billion (\$1.5 billion) insider-trading case against hedge fund SAC Capital Advisors, the largest in history. SAC was forced to close down.

– But on 10 March 2017 he was included in a list of prosecutors appointed by former President Barack Obama who were asked by the Justice Department to step down. US Presidents often order appointees of the previous administration to resign but the decision to replace so many in one swoop raised eyebrows.

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**5)** Who took over as the new Chairman of the Central Water Commission (CWC) on



10 March 2017? – **Narendra Kumar**

**Explanation:** Narendra Kumar, an officer of Central Water Engineering Service (1979 batch), took over as the new Chairman of Central Water Commission (CWC). He had taken over as Member (River Management) of Central Water Commission in October 2014.

– CWC is an apex technical organization of India in the field of water resources. It is presently functioning as an attached office of Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. It is charged with the general responsibilities of initiating, coordinating in consultation of State Governments schemes for control, utilization and conservation of water resources throughout the country.

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**6)** Tata Motors entered into a long term partnership agreement with which global automobile group for joint development of products? – **Volkswagen group**

**Explanation:** Indian automobile major Tata Motors on 10 March 2017 announced that it had entered into a long term partnership agreement with the Volkswagen group and Skoda for joint development of products with the first rollout in the Indian market expected in 2019.

– The agreement was signed by CEO & MD of Tata Motors Guenter Butschek, CEO of Volkswagen AG Matthias Muller and CEO of Skoda Auto Bernhard Maier during March 2017. Under the agreement Skoda Auto will take the lead on behalf of the Volkswagen group to drive forward and work towards development of vehicle concepts in the economy segment.

**16-17 March 2017**



**1)** During March 2017 Pakistan government proposed to declare which strategic area as its fifth province, a proposal that was slammed by the Indian government? – **Gilgit-Baltistan**

**Explanation:** According to media reports of March 2017, a committee headed by Advisor of Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz had proposed giving the status of a province to Gilgit-Baltistan. The four provinces that are presently in Pakistan are – Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan.

– But the proposal was strongly opposed by the Indian government. It said that any such step would not be able to hide the illegality of Pakistan's occupation of parts of Jammu and Kashmir, which it must vacate, forthwith.

– Gilgit-Baltistan shares a geographical boundary with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and India considers it as part of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir, while Pakistan sees it as a separate from PoK.

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**2)** Who took over as the new Chief Minister of Manipur on 15 March 2017 and thus became the first-ever BJP Chief Minister of the state? – **N. Biren Singh**

**Explanation:** Nongthombam Biren Singh took over as the new Chief Minister of northeastern Indian state of Manipur on 15 March 2017 as the BJP formed a government

in alliance with small regional parties in the state. He thus replaced Congress” O. Ibobi Singh.

– Biren Singh, a former Congressman who joined the BJP only in October last year, was sworn in as Chief Minister along with his council of ministers. The BJP, which won 21 seats in the state, has claimed it has the support of 33 legislators in the 60-member Manipur assembly. It needs 31 for a majority. Congress won 28 seats but couldn’t cobble support of 3 members to gain majority.

– 4-member Naga Peoples Front (NPF) and National People’s Party (also with 4 MLAs) are main supporting factions of the government. The government is also being supported by lone Lok Janshakti Party legislator Karma Shyam and Trinamool congress leader Robindro Singh. On the other hand a Congress MLA defected to the BJP.

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**3)** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government in Goa smoothly won a crucial Supreme Court-

mandated floor test on 16 March 2017 with 22 votes in favour of it in the 40-member Assembly. Who is heading the state government as the Chief Minister? –

**Manohar Parrikar**

**Explanation:** Manohar Parrikar, who stepped down as Defence Minister, was sworn-in as the chief minister of Goa for the fourth time on 14 March 2017. The state government led by him won the crucial floor-test in the state Assembly by garnering support of 22 MLAs.

– The BJP bagged 13 seats while Congress won 17 seats in the state polls held during February 2017. When BJP went to stake claim to form the government on 12 March 2017, it claimed the support of three MLAs each of the Goa Forward Party (GFP) and the Maharashtravadi Gomantak Party (MGP),

as well as three independents. That gave the BJP 22 to the Congress party’s 17 seats.

– It is worth mentioning that BJP Chief Minister Laxmikant Parsekar had lost the Assembly elections from Mandrem constituency.

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**4)** Honda on 16 March 2017 launched which new the compact sports utility vehicle in India with which India became the first country to manufacture and launch the product? – **Honda WR-V**

**Explanation:** Honda Car India launched Honda WR-V in the Indian market on 16 March 2017 that is its first ever model in the sub-4 metre SUV segment.

– The starting price of the Honda WRV is Rs. 7.75 lakh and goes up to Rs. 9.99 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi).

– India is the first country globally, to manufacture and sell the WRV.

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**5)** On 15 March 2017, who resigned as International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman after merely eight months in office? – **Shashank Manohar**

**Explanation:** In a surprise development, Shashank Manohar on 15 March 2017 resigned as International Cricket Council (ICC) chairman, citing personal reasons. He mailed his resignation letter to ICC CEO Dave Richardson without clarifying the exact reason for this sudden move to end what was to be a two-year-tenure.

– According to highly placed sources Manohar quit, as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) seems to have gained enough ground to block the constitutional and financial reforms that were set to be passed

by the ICC at its next board meeting.

– Any reform to be passed needs 2/3rd majority, but the BCCI, in all likelihood, has managed to get Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe on its side. It is worth mentioning that in 2016 Manohar had resigned from the BCCI, citing his inability to carry out Lodha Committee reforms in toto.

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## 18-20 March 2017



**1)** Yogi Adityanath took over as the new Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on 19 March 2017. His elevation to the top post in India's largest and politically most important state raised eyebrows due to his personality as a firebrand Hindu leader. He had founded which socio-cultural organisation that often came to news? – **Hindu Yuva Vahini**

**Explanation:** 45-year old Yogi Adityanath founded Hindu Yuva Vahini in 2002, an organisation that describes itself as a socio-cultural organisation.

– Adityanath has been the hard Hindutva face of the party in the one and half decade it spent in political wilderness in the state and after the influence of former Chief Minister Kalyan Singh declined.

– On 18 March 2017 he was chosen as the Chief Minister by the BJP legislators in presence of senior leaders. He took oath as Chief Minister at the sprawling Kanshiram Smriti Upvan in capital Lucknow on 19 March 2017 along with his council of ministers. BJP UP state chief Keshav Prasad Maurya and Lucknow Mayor Dinesh Sharma were appointed as Deputy Chief Ministers. With this BJP government made its comeback in the state after 15 years.

– Yogi Adityanath became 21<sup>st</sup> Chief

Minister of the state and replaced Akhilesh Yadav.

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**2)** Who took over as the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand on 18 March 2017? – **Trivendra Singh Rawat**

**Explanation:** Former RSS pracharak (propagandist) Trivendra Singh Rawat took over as the 9<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Uttarakhand on 18 March 2017. Earlier on 17 March he was chosen as the leader of the Uttarakhand legislature party. He has been chosen from Doiwala seat in the recently held elections.

– He is currently the convener of the Modi government's flagship programme for Ganga cleanup, the "Namami Gange" programme. When Uttarakhand was carved out of Uttar Pradesh in the year 2000, Rawat was the party's Uttarakhand general secretary (organisation).

– He replaced Congress' Harish Rawat.

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**3)** Captain Amarinder Singh was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Punjab on 16 March 2017. This is Amarinder's which term as state's Chief Minister? – **Second**

**Explanation:** Amarinder Singh became the new Chief Minister of Punjab on 16 March 2017. He replaced Parkash Singh Badal, the chief of Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), whose party lost heavily to Congress party in the recently held Assembly elections.

– His first term in Punjab was in 2002-2007.

**4)** The Union Government during March 2017 approved the National Health Policy 2017 after having deferred it twice before. The policy intends to increase life expectancy at birth from 67.5 years to ..... by year 2025 – **70 years**

**Explanation:** Among the key targets of the National Health Policy 2017, the policy intends to increase life expectancy at birth from 67.5 to 70 by 2025 and reduce infant mortality rate to 28 by 2019. It also aims to reduce under five mortality to 23 by the year 2025.

– The policy proposes raising public health expenditure to 2.5% of the GDP in a time-bound manner. The 2.5% of GDP spend target for this sector would be met by 2025. The last health policy was issued 15 years ago in 2002.

– The policy advocates a progressively incremental assurance-based approach. It envisages providing larger package of assured comprehensive primary health care through the "Health and Wellness Centres" and denotes important change from very selective to comprehensive primary health care package.



**5)** Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on 18 March 2017 flagged off the first indigenously built suburban train rake in Mumbai. What is the name given to this train rake? – **'Medha'**

**Explanation:** "Medha" is the name of the first indigenously built suburban train rake that was flagged-off on the western corridor of Mumbai on 18 March 2017.

– Indian railways presently procures control circuit technology for suburban (EMU) from foreign companies such as Siemens and Bombardier and this is the first time it has been developed in India, which will bring down costs. A Medha rake, which includes train rake and the electric control circuitry, costs Rs. 43.23 crore as against a Bombardier's Rs. 44.36. The Medha will cost even less if more are ordered.

– The Western Railway (WR) has received two Medha 12-car rakes of which one was inducted in service on 18 March 2017. The rakes have been manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai.

**6)** What was India's contribution to the United Nations in 2015-16, as disclosed by the External Affairs Ministry in Lok Sabha on 15 March 2017? – **Rs. 244 crore**

**Explanation:** India's contribution to the United Nations rose 55% to Rs. 244 crore in 2015-16 compared with the previous fiscal India contributed Rs. 157 crore in 2014-15. This was disclosed by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in Lok Sabha.

– Each UN member is required to contribute to the organisation's regular and peacekeeping budgets. These obligatory contributions are calculated based on a member's relative "capacity to pay".

**7)** Steel major Posco officially scrapped the plan to set up a 12-million tonne (mt) steel mill in Paradip, Odisha as during March 2017 it wrote to the state government to surrender the land allotted for the project. Posco is a global steel manufacturing entity of which country? – **South Korea**

**Explanation:** Posco had signed an agreement with the state government in June 2005, seeking 4,004 acres of land to set up the project. The land acquisition was delayed due to agitation by the locals, which often took a violent turn. Finally, the government could acquire 2,700 acres in 2013 for the firm to set up an 8-mt steel mill in the first phase. Of this, the government managed to transfer 1,700 acres to Posco.

– But before the work could start, the central amendment in the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act in January 2015 sealed the fate of the project. The amended Act made it mandatory for Posco to go through the auction route to get captive mines, dashing its hopes of getting an iron ore mine on a preferential basis according to the agreement.

– Posco is the second big-ticket foreign direct investment (FDI) project to leave Odisha, after ArcelorMittal walked out of its project in 2013.

## 21 March 2017

**1)** The Union Government on 20 March 2017 announced its decision to merge Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) with State Bank of India (SBI). BMB, India's first bank devoted primarily to women banking, became operational in which year? – **2013**

**Explanation:** Bharatiya Mahila Bank (BMB) was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 19 November 2013 on the occasion of the 96<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

– Although initially reported as a bank exclusively for women, BMB now allows deposits to flow from everyone, but lending is made available predominantly to women.

– The government on 20 March 2017 announced its decision to merge BMB with State Bank of India (SBI) to ensure greater banking services outreach to more women at a faster pace. The decision to merge BMB with SBI has also been taken in view of the advantage of the large network of SBI among other things.

– BMB had a loan book worth Rs. 620 crore and deposit base worth Rs. 927 crore at the end of March 2016.

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**2)** The merger between which two telecom entities, as announced on 20 March 2017, will change telecom industry's pecking order and catapult it as country's largest telecom company by replacing Bharti Airtel? – **Vodafone India and Idea Cellular**

**Explanation:** A huge consolidation in India's telecom industry was ushered in on 20 March 2017 as U.K.'s Vodafone and Aditya Birla group firm Idea Cellular announced that they have kick started a mega merger deal.

– Vodafone will own 45.1% of the merged entity, after it transfers about 4.9% to promoters of Idea and/or their affiliates for Rs. 38.74 billion rupees.

– Kumarmangalam Birla will be the Chairman of merged Vodafone-Idea entity and both the companies will have equal stakes in the merged entity over a period of time.

– The combined market shares of both entities add up to 43%, making it the largest telecom firm, surpassing Bharti Airtel. The merger will create an entity with a revenue of around Rs. 77,500-80,000 crore besides eliminating duplication of spectrum and infrastructure capex.

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**3)** The trial run of India's longest road tunnel built on Jammu-Srinagar Highway was completed during March 2017. The tunnel, which will open to traffic very soon, connects which two places? – **Chenani and Nashri**

**Explanation:** The work on the 9.2 km-long twin-tube Chenani and Nashri tunnel started in lower Himalayan mountain range on 23 May 2011. It is part of Jammu-Srinagar Highway.

– Chenani-Nashri Tunnel will reduce the travel time between the two state capitals of Jammu and Srinagar by two-and-a-half hours. The road distance from Chenani and Nashri will now be 10.9 km, instead of the existing 41 km.

– It will be the first tunnel in India to be equipped with world class “integrated tunnel control system” through which ventilation, fire control, signals, communication and electrical systems will be automatically actuated. The total cost of the tunnel is Rs. 3,720 crore.



**4)** Dev Raj Sikka, who passed away on 18 March 2017, was a renowned personality associated with which field? – **Rain prediction**

**Explanation:** Dev Raj Sikka was a former Director of Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and was known as the “monsoon man” for his role in helping scientists develop better prediction systems for India's rainy season.

– Over an illustrious career as a weather scientist, Sikka became known for his work on the prediction of monsoon – notoriously

erratic in the subcontinent – and tropical meteorology, including extreme weather events.

– Sikka was honoured with the lifetime achievement award by the Indian Meteorological Society (IMD) in December 2016 in recognition of his contribution to Indian meteorology spanning over six decade.

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**5)** Chuck Berry, who passed away on 18 March 2017, was a legend associated with which field? – **Rock and roll music**

**Explanation:** Chuck Berry (Charles Edward Anderson “Chuck” Berry) was an American guitarist, singer and songwriter and one of the pioneers of rock and roll music.

– He received a lifetime achievement Grammy in 1984 and was among the first inductees to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1986. He was 90.

## 22-24 March 2017



**1)** During March 2017, the Union Government swapped the heads of which two PSU banks? – **Indian Bank and IDBI Bank**

**Explanation:** On 18 March 2017, the Union Government notified the swapping of IDBI



Bank Ltd Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kishor Piraji Kharat with Indian Bank MD & CEO Mahesh Kumar Jain.

– The swapping notification came at a time when IDBI Bank, a pioneering institution in the financial sector, has been suffering due to increase in NPAs among other issues.

– The 54-year-old Jain assumed charge as the MD and CEO of Indian Bank during November 2015. He was holding additional charge as MD & CEO from June 2015. The bank has showed improvement in various parameters including the net profit and Return on Assets (RoA) during his tenure.

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**2)** Which European capital witnessed a terror attack near its Parliament on 22 March 2017 resulting in death of four persons? – **London**

**Explanation:** British capital London was the site of a terrorist attack on 22 March 2017 when an attacker drove a vehicle into pedestrians on the iconic Westminster Bridge and a crowd of people near the Palace of Westminster. The attacker later stabbed a police officer.

– Five people – including three pedestrians on the bridge, the stabbed police officer (Keith Palmer) and the attacker – were killed in the attack. This was the worst terrorist attack in London since the 2005 bombings in which 56 people died.

– After the attack British Prime Minister Theresa May confirmed that the attacker was of British nationality and British security service MI5 had information about him. The attacker was identified as Khalid Masood, who was born as Adrian Elms in Kent. On the other hand Islamic terror group Islamic

State (IS) on 23 March 2017 claimed that the terrorist involved in the attack belonged to the organisation.

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**3)** What is India's rank in the 2016 Human Development Report (HDR) as disclosed in the report released by the UNDP on 21 March 2017? – **131**

**Explanation:** India slipped down one place from 130 to 131 among the 188 countries ranked in terms of human development. This was disclosed in the 2016 Human Development Report (HDR) that released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 21 March 2017.

– India's human development index (HDI) value stood at 0.624. It has been put in the "medium human development" category, alongside countries such as Congo, Namibia and Pakistan.

– The HDI is a measure for assessing progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and access to a decent standard of living.

The world's top three countries in HDI are Norway (0.949), Australia (0.939) and Switzerland (0.939).

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**4)** Anil Divan, who passed away on 20 March 2017, was an eminent personality associated with which field? – **Judiciary**

**Explanation:** Anil Divan was a senior advocate and was known for his reputation as a brilliant constitutional expert. In the late 1980s, Divan was one of the founders of the Centre for Public Interest Litigation, a non-

governmental organization that conducts litigation on matters of public interest. Other founder members were senior advocates including Fali Sam Nariman, Shanti Bhushan, Rajinder Sachar and Colin Gonsalves.

– Over the years, Divan had established himself as one of the nation’s foremost jurists, having appeared in a number of landmark cases in the Supreme Court of India. A believer in the independence of the judiciary, Divan had appeared in the challenge to the NJAC Act, the Oleum gas leak case, as well as in the Bhopal Gas Tragedy case in the apex court. He was also the Karnataka government’s counsel in the Cauvery disputes issue, having appeared from 1992 to 2016.

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**5)** What is the name of Samsung’s mobile payments service that was launched by the company in India during March 2017? – **“Samsung Pay”**

**Explanation:** “Samsung Pay” is the name of global electronics behemoth Samsung’s new mobile payments service that was launched in India during March 2017. It helps a consumer make payments at various retail locations by using select devices of the company.

– This payments service will facilitate the transactions by making use of the previously-selected credit or debit cards or mobile wallets.

– The card network and issuer partners for Samsung Pay include Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI Card and Standard Chartered Bank. Also, it can be integrated with Paytm as well as the government’s Unified Payments Interface.

– However, the interface is limited to a select phone range of Samsung and these include high-end devices such as Galaxy S7; Note 5; S6 edge+ and A5 and A7.

**6)** Which state won the 2017 Vijay Hazare Trophy on 20 March 2017? – **Tamil Nadu**

**Explanation:** Tamil Nadu won the Vijay Hazare Trophy for the fifth time as it defeated Bengal in the finals of the 2017 edition that was played on 20 March 2017.

– Chasing Tamil Nadu’s none-too-intimidating 217, Bengal started too cautiously, lost two wickets in the fifth over, and were always behind the asking rate. It ultimately lost the final by 37 run.

– Vijay Hazare Trophy, also known as the Ranji One Day Trophy is the limited-overs cricket domestic competition of India involving state teams from the Ranji Trophy plates. It was started in 2002–03.

## 25 March 2017

**1)** The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) on 23 March 2017 approved a proposal to provide constitutional backing to a new commission for other backward classes (OBCs). What is the name of this new commission? – **National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (NSEBC)**

**Explanation:** The National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (NSEBC) will replace the existing National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), created in response to a Supreme Court ruling in 1992.

– The proposed body (NSEBC) will examine and recommend requests for inclusion and exclusion in the list of Other Backward Classes or OBCs. It will comprise of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and three other members.

– A constitutional amendment will be required (mainly by insertion of Article 338B) for making the NSEBC a constitutional body. The pertaining bill will be introduced in Parliament. A constitutional amendment requires two-thirds approval of both houses of Parliament and subsequent ratification by 50% of the state assemblies.

– **122 out of 155 countries**

**Explanation:** India ranked at 122 out of 155 countries in the World Happiness Report 2017. The Report was published by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UNSDSN) on the eve of International Day of Happiness (20 March 2017).

– The rankings are based factors such as inequality, life expectancy, GDP per capita, public trust (i.e. a lack of corruption in government and business), and social support. Together they are used to generate a happiness score of country on a scale from 1 to 10.

– 10 happiest countries according to the Report are – Norway (1), Denmark (2), Iceland (3), Switzerland (4), Finland (5), Netherlands (6), Canada (7), New Zealand (8), Australia (9) and Sweden (10). On the other hand 5 Saddest Countries: Rwanda (151), Syria (152), Tanzania (153), Burundi (154) and Central African Republic (155).



**2)** During March 2017 Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) created history by commissioning the world's third largest hypersonic wind tunnel. This state-of-the-art facility has been established at which place? – **Thiruvananthapuram**

**Explanation:** ISRO created history by commissioning the world's third largest hypersonic wind tunnel at the Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram on 20 March 2017.

– The wind tunnel comprises of a one-metre Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and a one-metre Shock Tunnel. These facilities are the third largest in terms of size and simulation capability in the world. These facilities, named after former ISRO chairman Satish Dhawan, have been indigenously designed, developed and made in India with the support of Indian Industries.

– A wind tunnel is used to study the effects of air flowing past a solid object

– in ISRO's case, space vehicles. It will be helpful in ISRO's proposed big missions like the "Reusable Launch Vehicle" (RLV), "Two Stage to Orbit" (TSTO) rockets, air breathing propulsion systems, and the human space flight programme.



**4)** Ashokamitran, one of the most prolific contemporary writers, passed away on 23 March 2017. He was associated with which language? – **Tamil**

**Explanation:** Ashokamitran was one of the most prolific writers who played a key role in contemporary Tamil literature. He passed away at the age of 86 in Chennai on 23 March 2017.

– He was born as J. Tyagarajan in 1931 in Secundarabad and began his career as an assistant at the Gemini Studios" public relations department in Chennai and took to full-time writing in the 1960s under the pseudonym Ashokamitran.

– Ashokamitran was known for his short stories that were filled with his simple and artistic style of writing. He wrote over 200

**3)** What is India's rank in the 2017 World Happiness Report that was released during March 2017 by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UNSDSN)?



– His novel “*Thanneer*” (Water), which elaborates about the acute water crisis that loomed in Madras (now Chennai) in the late 1960s, is a critically acclaimed classic and is known for its powerful yet subtle narrative.



5) What is the name of the MP of Shiv Sena who came into news for thrashing an employee of Air India on 23 March 2017 after which airlines imposed a ban on him from flying in domestic airlines? – **Ravindra Gaikwad**

**Explanation:** Ravindra Gaikwad, the Shiv Sena Member of Parliament (MP) representing Osmanabad Lok Sabha constituency of Maharashtra, came to news after he repeatedly hit a 60-year-old Air India officer (Mr. Sukumar) with slippers after being unable to travel business class despite having insisted on boarding an all-economy flight.

– Later on 24 March 2017, Air India and the member airlines of the Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA) decided to ban the MP from flying on all our flights with immediate effect. FIA includes IndiGo, Jet Airways, SpiceJet and Go Air. This is the first such incident in the country when flight operators unanimously banned a people’s representative from availing flight facilities.

## 26-27 March 2017



1) What is the new proposed name for Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC), the apex policy-

making body for indirect taxes, as announced on 25 March 2017? – **Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC)**

**Explanation:** According to an

announcement made by the Union Government on 25 March 2017, the apex policy-making body for indirect taxes, Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) is being rechristened as the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC) in the run up to the Goods and Services Tax regime to be rolled out from 1 July 2017.

– CBIC would supervise the work of all its field formations and directorates and assist the government in policy making in relation to GST, continuing central excise levy and customs functions.

– The existing formations of central excise and service tax under the CBEC have been re-organised to implement and enforce the provisions of the proposed GST Laws.

– The CBIC will have 21 zones, 101 GST Tax payer Services Commissionerates comprising 15 sub-commissionerates, 768 Divisions, 3,969 Ranges, 49 Audit Commissionerates and 50 Appeals Commissionerates.



2) On 25 March 2017 who became the first woman combat officer to be commissioned in the 51-year history of the Border Security Force (BSF)? – **Tanushree Pareek**

**Explanation:** Tanushree Pareek created history in the annals of the BSF, the country’s largest border guarding force, as she became force’s first-ever combat officer on 25 March 2017. She was commissioned into the service on the same day.

– She also led the passing out parade of 67 trainee officers that was

reviewed by Union home minister Rajnath Singh at the Border Security Force camp at Tekanpur (MP).

– A resident of Rajasthan’s Bikaner, Tanushree is the first woman to join the force in the officer rank after she was selected in the all-India exam conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in 2014.



3) Which China-backed civil servant was on 26 March 2017 chosen to be

Hong Kong’s next leader amid accusations that Beijing is meddling

and denying the financial hub a more populist leader? – **Carrie Lam**

**Explanation:** Carrie Lam will become Hong Kong’s first female chief executive when she takes office on 1 July 2017. In the polls held on 26 March 2017, Lam won 777 votes compared with 365 for her closest rival, former financial secretary John Tsang. It is worth mentioning that polls had shown that Tsang was more popular.

– The election of Lam was protested by activists in Hong Kong. It is widely perceived that China is meddling and denying Hong Kong a more populist leader perhaps better able to defuse political tension. Around three quarters of the 1,194 members of the election committee were from the mainland (China) camp.

– Since Hong Kong returned to Chinese rule in 1997, Beijing has gradually increased control over it even though China had promised wide-ranging freedoms and autonomy not allowed on the mainland under the formula of “one country, two systems”, along with an undated promise of universal suffrage.

4) Who won the first Formula 1 Grand Prix title of the year – the Australian F1 Grand Prix on 26 March 2017? – **Sebastian Vettel**

**Explanation:** 4-time F1 champion

Ferrari’s Sebastian Vettel (Germany) beat Lewis Hamilton (Britain) of Mercedes in a straight fight on 26 March 2017 as Formula 1’s new season started at the Australian Grand Prix. Hamilton’s teammate Valtteri Bottas (Finland) finished third.

– This was Vettel’s first win since the Singapore GP in September 2015 and many F1 analysts believe that Mercedes’ domination will now be over after the introduction of faster cars.

– Force India’s Sergio Perez (Mexico) finished seventh to accumulate 6 points while his new teammate Esteban Ocon (France) finished tenth to get his first-ever F1 point in his debut race for Force India.

## 28-30 March 2017



1) India achieved which significant landmark in power sector during April 2016-February 2017 period, as was disclosed by the Union Power Ministry on 29 March 2017? – **India became a net exporter of electricity for the first time**

**Explanation:** India achieved a significant landmark as it became a net exporter of electricity during the April-February period this fiscal (2016-17) for the first time ever.

– During the current year 2016-17 (April-February), India has exported around 5,798 million units to Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar which is 213 million units more than the import of around 5,585 million units from Bhutan.

– Export to Nepal and Bangladesh increased 2.5 and 2.8 times respectively in the last

three years. Ever since the cross border trade of electricity started in mid-80s, India has been importing power from Bhutan and marginally exporting to Nepal in radial mode at 33 kV and 132 kV from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh respectively.



2) In its order of 29 March 2017, the Supreme Court ordered a ban on sale and registration of which vehicles with effect from 1 April 2017? – **BS-III fuel compliant vehicles**

**Explanation:** The Supreme Court on 29 March 2017 ordered a freeze on the registration and sale of BS-III fuel compliant vehicles from 1 April 2017, when the next level and environmentally friendly BS-IV fuel emission norms will kick in.

– It its order the apex court observed that the health of the citizen is more important than the commercial interests of the automobile industry.

– The Bench, led by Justice Madan B. Lokur, pronounced the operative part of the judgment despite pleas by vehicle manufacturers that they had a stockpile of over 8.2 lakh BS-III vehicles, which would become redundant and leave the automobile industry in doldrums.

– It is worth mentioning that BS-III (Bharat Stage III) fuel emission standard was introduced in the country in April 2005 (in NCR in 13 large cities) and was implemented nationwide in April 2010. On the other hand BS-IV standard was introduced in NCR and 13 large cities in April 2016 and comes into effect nationwide from 1 April 2017.

3) The Ministry of Information &

Broadcasting on 27 March 2017 launched an online film certification system that is expected to make the CBFC paperless and transparent. What is the name given to this ambitious system? – **E-Cinepramaan**

**Explanation:** “E-Cinepramaan” is the name of the online film certification system (OFCS) that was launched by Union Information & Broadcasting Minister Venkaiah Naidu on 27 March 2017.

– This online system is being seen as a big step towards making the Central Board for Film Certification (CBFC) paperless and transparent, enabling effective monitoring and real-time progress tracking for applicants.

– E-Cinepramaan will enable producers to track the status of their application online and would be inform them through SMSes and e-mails about any required action. The system also has inbuilt alerts to ensure that time-limits are adhered to.



4) Which Indian banker was featured in the list of world’s 30 best CEOs, published during March 2017 by American financial magazine Barron’s? – **Aditya Puri**

**Explanation:** HDFC Bank managing director Aditya Puri’s name has featured in the list of “World’s 30 Best CEOs’, published by American financial magazine Barron’s.

– According to the magazine Puri has transformed HDFC Bank from a start-up into one of the world’s highest-quality banks, generating eye-popping returns by maintaining lending standards while expanding beyond corporate loans into a full-service retail bank.





– Santosh Trophy is the prestigious national tournament of the country that was founded in 1941. Bengal has been the most successful team having won the tournament 32 times.

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**5)** During March 2017 scientists of which country started testing a new device what they call as the world’s largest “artificial sun” in an attempt to make hydrogen fuel as an emissions-free alternative fuel? – **Germany**

**Explanation:** German scientists during March 2017 initiated landmark testing on a newly developed device which is claimed to be the world” largest “Artificial Sun”. This device, called “Synlight”, is an attempt to make hydrogen fuel, an emissions-free alternative fuel that can be produced from diverse domestic energy sources.

– This “artificial sun” has been created from 149 powerful short-arc lamps and emits light about 10,000 times stronger than typical sunlight. It has been developed at the German Aerospace Center in Juelich near Cologne, Germany.

– According to the researchers, the aim of the experiment is to find novel ways of making solar fuels, including hydrogen, which is believed as an important renewable energy source in the future.

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**6)** Which state won the Santosh Trophy football tournament for 2017 on 26 March 2017? – **Bengal**

**Explanation:** Bengal lifted the Santosh Trophy for the 32<sup>nd</sup> time as it defeated Goa by 1-0 in the finals on 26 March 2017. The lone goal was scored by Manvir Singh in 119th minute. Bengal, thus, ended a six-year wait having last won the title in 2011. Goa last won it in 2009.

– Playing in front of a vociferous home crowd, five-time winners Goa tried their best and controlled the match, but ran out of steam in the extra time.

31 March 2017



1) The Civil Aviation Ministry on 30 March 2017 awarded first-ever regional flights based on a new subsidy model (UDAN) to five airlines that will expand flights to many new airports in the country. Which are the five airlines that have been included in this initiative? – **Air India, Air Deccan, SpiceJet, Air Odisha and Turbo Megha**

**Explanation:** Air India, Air Deccan, SpiceJet, Air Odisha and Turbo Megha have got rights to fly 128 routes which will require them to cap half the seats at about 50%. For 50% of the seats on every flight passengers will pay only Rs. 2500 per seat for one hour of flight. They have been included in the ambitious Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) scheme that was announced by the Union Government in 2016.

– UDAN, the regional aviation scheme which will be in operation for 10 years, envisages providing connectivity to un-served and underserved cities and towns by reviving existing airstrips and airports.

– Many of the airports included in the scheme will be served for the first time. These include airports like Shimla, Kandla, Puducherry, Bhatinda, Cooch Behar and Bilaspur among others.

2) Kanha Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh) during March 2017 became the first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot. What is the name of this mascot? – **'Bhoorsingh' (The Barasingha)**

**Explanation:** Bhoorsingh – the Barasingha (swamp deer) was officially declared the mascot of the Kanha Tiger Reserve on 29 March 2017. With this Kanha etched its name in history books as it became the first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot of its own.

– By declaring a mascot of its own, Kanha is hoping to create a better connect with its visitors, especially the younger generation. It is worth mentioning that Barasingha is often known as the uniqueness of Kanha.

– Bhoorsingh will soon feature in artwork, posters and merchandise for the park management at the Kanha Tiger Reserve.



3) The Indian Navy on 29 March 2017 decommissioned which long-range maritime patrol aircraft after its 29 years of service? – **TU 142M**

**Explanation:** TU 142M, the long-range maritime patrol aircraft, was decommissioned by the Indian Navy by Naval Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba at a special ceremony held at INS Rajali, India's premiere Naval Air Station in Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu on 29 March 2017.

– TU 142M aircraft was inducted into the Indian Navy at Dabolim in Goa from the erstwhile USSR in 1988. The aircraft subsequently shifted base permanently to INS Rajali in 1992 and became the most formidable long-range maritime patrol (LRMR) aircraft of the Indian Navy.

– The role of TU 142M will now be taken on by the newly inducted P-8I aircraft, which has proven all its systems and has been fully integrated into the operational grid of the Indian Navy.

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**4)** According to the latest Bloomberg Billionaires Index that was released on 29 March 2017, which entrepreneur leapt past Amancio Ortega and Warren Buffett to become the world's second-richest person? –

**Jeff Bezos**

**Explanation:** Amazon founder Jeff Bezos became the world's second-richest person (after Microsoft's Bill Gates) according to the latest Bloomberg Billionaires Index. He added \$1.5 billion to his fortune as Amazon.com Inc. rose \$18.32 on 29 March 2017, the day after the e-commerce giant said it plans to buy Dubai-based online retailer Souq.com. Bezos has a net worth of \$75.6 billion on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

– His net worth was thus \$700 million more than Berkshire Hathaway Inc.'s Buffett and \$1.3 billion above Ortega, the founder of Inditex S.A. and Europe's richest person.

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