

National News

IWAI instigates two vital projects on NW-2

- Inland waterways authority of India (IWAI) introduces two vital projects for National Waterway No. 2 for a section of Brahmaputra River between Bangladesh and Sadiya in Assam.
 - This will encourage environmental friendly mode of transportation for the Inland Water Transport users.
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Mahesh Kumar Singla Committee Setup to consider ST status to 6 communities of Assam

- Committee headed by Mahesh Kumar Singla has been setup to recommend modalities for granting ST status to 6 OBC communities in Assam. A report will be submitted by May 31 this year.
- The six communities in question are
 - Moran
 - Koch
 - Rajbongshi
 - Muttuck
 - Sootea
 - Tai Ahom
 - Adivasis
- If these communities are granted ST status, the state will be tribal dominated with 50% tribal population.
- Article 342 of constitution says communities are notified as ST if they have display these primitive traits:
 - Geographical isolation,
 - Distinct culture,
 - Shyness of contact,
 - Economic backwardness.

MS Swaminathan Research Chair Setup

MS Swaminathan Research Foundation has signed MOU with Kalinga Institution of Social Sciences in Bhubaneswar. The chair is named after MS Swaminathan (Father of Green Revolution in India)

MOU has been signed between Prof. MS Swaminathan and Achyuta Samanta, founder of KISS.

First to establish Research Chair in a private institute in the country

The two organizations will work on promotion of knowledge and skill empowerment for less privileged children in India.

Highlights of union Budget 2016-17

For the Union Budget of 2016-17, the 9 priority areas are:

- Agriculture and farmer welfare
- Rural sector
- Social sector
- Education skills and job creation
- Infrastructure investment
- Financial sector reforms
- Governance reforms and ease of doing business
- Fiscal discipline
- Tax reforms to reduce compliance burden

Department of Disinvestment will be renamed to Dept. of Investment and Public Asset Management. Fiscal deficit target has been retained at 3.5 GDP. There is a big boost to stocks, currency and bond markets.

- Banks
 - Banks will get Rs.25,000 crore for recapitalization of public sector banks. More resources will be raised if additional capital is needed.

- **Banking board Bureau** will be operationalized.
- **Farmers**
- **Farmers' incomes to be doubled by 2022.**
 - **Total allocation for agriculture sector** hiked to **Rs.35,984 crore**.
 - Government will spend **Rs.38,500 crore** on rural jobs programme (**MGNREGA**)
 - **19,000 crore** for rural road development scheme.
 - **20,000 crore** for irrigation scheme
- **Infrastructure:**
 - **Rs.2.21 lakh crore** for building road and rail infrastructure.
 - Proposal to levy **infrastructure cess of 1-4%**. Cars will become costlier.
 - **300 urban clusters** to be set up under **Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission**.
- **Black money:**
 - A **new amnesty scheme** for those holding unaccounted money.
 - Those declaring undisclosed income will pay **45 per cent tax**.
- **Taxation:**
 - A **one-time tax** dispute resolution for **retrospective taxation** is proposed
 - **General anti avoidance tax rule (GAAR)** will be implemented from **April 1, 2017**.
- **Vulnerable section:**
 - Disbursement under **MUDRA** increased to **Rs.1,80,000 crore**.
 - A "**Krishi Kalyan**" cess of **0.5%** has been proposed on all services effective **June 1, 2016**. This will make most of services (such as eating out, buying property) more expensive.
 - **Income tax relief for small taxpayers, more taxes for rich:**

- Those earnings **less than Rs.5 lakh PA** will get additional relief of **Rs.3,000** on income tax,
 - For income of **over Rs.1 crore** income tax has been hiked from **12 %to 15%.**
 - Pollution cess of **1% on small petrol, LPG and CNG cars; 2.5% on diesel cars of certain specifications; 4% on higher-end models.**
 - New initiative to provide **cooking gas to BPL families** with state support. **Rs2000 crore allocated for 5 years for BPL families.**
 - **LPG connections** to be provided under the **name of women members of family**
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Make in India (MII) Initiative gets a boost

Proposals in the Union Budget 2016-17 to boost the government's **Make in India** initiative.

- **100% deduction of profits for 3 out of 5 years for start-ups** started between **April 2016 and March 2019.** Minimum Alternate Tax is applicable.
 - **Foreign investors** to get '**Residency Status**' subject to certain riders. Currently, they are granted a **5 year business visa.**
 - Allocation of **1804 crore** for **Investment Promotion and Amended Technology Upgradation Fund.**
 - Modification in **Customs and Excise Duty structure** proposed to incentivize **domestic value addition.**
 - Changes proposed in **Customs and Excise Duty rates** on **certain inputs, raw materials, intermediaries/components and other goods.** Several procedures were simplified.
 - Centre to pay the **Employee Pension Scheme** contribution of **8.33%** for all **new employees** enrolling in EPFO for **first three years of their employment.**
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Indian East Coast to get 6th Doppler radar

- New Doppler radar to boost the **weather forecasting system** in the cyclone-prone eastern coast will be setup in **Gopalpur in Odisha.**

- Other radars are located in
 - Chennai
 - Kolkata
 - Machilipatnam
 - Vishakapatnam
 - Paradip
 - Radar is built by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Bharath Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL).
 - Will help to **predict weather forecasts** and help authorities to take **timely action**
 - Dopplear radar is an **observational tool for monitoring and predicting severe weather events** (cyclones, tornados) within a **300km radius**. It helps in **increasing precision of weather forecasting**.
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Twitter launches social campaign to empower women

- Study showcases **prevailing male dominance** in online and offline space.
 - Twitter has launched **#Positionofstrength** campaign to **empower women**
 - Women can raise their voice against any form of discrimination.
 - Movement already launched in **Australia and Ireland**. Will bridge **gender equality gap online in India**.
 - Measures to empower users with **tools to mute, block and report abusive behavior**. Twitter has launched its **Safety Center in Hindi**.
 - Twitter has partnered with the **FICCI Ladies' Organization** and the **Observer Research Foundation** to engage more women.
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Indo-Seychelles Joint Training 'Ex Lamitye'

- Exercise Lamitye-2016 concluded at **Victoria, Mahe Island, Seychelles**.
- **7th** in the series of **Indo-Seychelles Joint Training Exercises**
- Exercise aims to **improve interoperability** between both Armies in **jointly fighting Counter Insurgency / Counter Terrorism**.

- **Exercise Lamitye** means 'Friendship in Creole' has been undertaken between Indian Armed Forces and SPDF since 2001.
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EK Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Program to be launched

- The program will be launched to link states and districts in one annual program
 - The program will connect people through exchanges in areas of language, culture, trade, tourism and travel.
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International News

Hashim Thaci Elected As President Of Kosovo

- Hashim Thaci was foreign minister of Kosovo. He has been elected as president of Kosovo.
 - Tahci has succeeded Atifete Jahjaga in the voting held in Pristina.
 - Tahci was a guerilla leader in the conflict that led to Kosovo's independence from Serbia.
 - Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008.
 - It has been recognized by US and many EU countries.
 - It has not been recognized by Serbia and many other countries.
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Dinesh Sharma appointed chairman of Governing Council of IFAD

- Dinesh Sharma was Governor to the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)
 - He is elected as chairperson for the Governing council of IFAD for a period of two years.
 - IFAD was established in 1977
 - It works towards removing poverty and hunger in rural areas around the world.
 - India is a founder member of IFAD and a key contributor.
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Peru Declares emergency after oil spill

- A major oil pipeline burst affecting two rivers in northeast of Peru.
 - 3000 barrels of crude oil have spilled into the Chiriaco and Morona rivers.
 - These rivers are the primary water sources of the people of the region.
 - Emergency will provide humanitarian help for the affected communities.
 - Spill has stopped transportation of 6000 barrels of oil a day
 - Emergency will last for nearly 3 months in affected areas.
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Business and Economy

IFC launches first Uridishi Masala Bond

- IFC has launched the first uridishi masala bond in India.
 - It will mobilize 300 million rupees from Japanese household investors
 - Will promote private sector investment in India.
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Delhi Metro to ferry cargo on airport line from March 1

- It will be a trial based service for three months
 - Depending on public response, it will be extended.
 - This initiative is to reduce consumption of fossil fuels and lower emissions of CO2
 - The service will carry only non-perishables and merchandise of e-commerce sites.
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Science and Technology

American Astronauts return to earth after 340 days in Space

- **NASA** (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) astronaut and **Expedition 46 Commander Scott Kelly** and **Russian counterpart Mikhail Kornienko** return to earth. They landed in **eastern Kazakhstan**.
 - They spent **340 days in the International Space Station** on a mission.
 - The mission studied **effects of microgravity** on the human body.
 - This will help NASA prepare **astronauts for longer flights to Mars and beyond**.
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NASA invites India to jointly explore MARS

- India's **Mangalyaan Mission** has paved the way for **Joint Mission with NASA**. NASA has invited **ISRO** to take part in the meeting to be held in Washington.
 - NASA plans for **5-6 Mars missions**.
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Environment and Ecology

Japan to cut emissions by 80% by 2050

- Japanese government has **long-term goal** of cutting **greenhouse gas emissions** by **80% by 2050**.
 - The **international climate agreement** was held in **Paris** in **Dec 2015**.
 - Plan is compiled by **environment ministry** and **ministry of economy, trade and industry**. (METI)
 - **More renewable sources** will be introduced.
 - **Standards** to be set for **power generation efficiency** of coal-fired plants
 - **Inefficient plants** to be scrapped.
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People in News

Oscar winning actor George Kennedy passes away

- George Kennedy was America's most recognizable and versatile character actor.
 - He won the Oscar for Cool Hand Luke in 1967. He was named best supporting actor for the movie.
 - He appeared in more than 175 films
 - He was 91 years old.
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Places in News

Awards

5 Indian airports bag ASQ awards 2015

- In the category of **Best Airport by Region** (over 2 million passengers per year) – **Mumbai and New Delhi** (tie at 2nd rank).
 - **Best Airport by Size** (25 – 40 million passengers per year) – **Mumbai and New Delhi** (tie at 1st rank).
 - **Best Airport by Size** (2 – 5 million passengers per year) – **Jaipur** (1st rank) and **Lucknow** (2nd rank).
 - **Best Airport by Size** (5 – 15 million passengers per year) – **Hyderabad** (3rd rank)
 - Award will be presented during the **ACI Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly** in **Gold Coast, Australia** in **April 2016**.
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TCS awarded Global Top Employer Award

- TCS have been given the **Global Top employer** award by the Top Employer's Institute after assessment of **1072 companies** across the globe
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Indian Accent awarded the Best Restaurant of India

- Indian Accent gets **best restaurant award** for the **2nd consecutive time**.
 - It is the **only Indian restaurant** to be listed in **World's best 100 restaurants list**
 - A **branch** has been opened in **New York** recently.
 - The event was sponsored by **S.Pellegrino & Acqua panna** and award presented at Gala ceremony in **Bangkok** yesterday.
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Sataparna Mukherjee from West Bengal selected for NASA Scholarship

- **18 year old class 12th student** of West Bengal
 - Selected by **NASA** for **Goddard Internship Program** to study in **Goddard Institute of Space Studies**.
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Sports

Aaron Phangiso of South Africa suspended for illegal bowling action

- **Aaron Phangiso** has been **suspended from bowling** in domestic cricket for **illegal bowling action**
 - He is a **left-arm spinner**.
 - Phangio's action was **reported** in **South Africa's domestic 50-over semifinal**.
 - His arm extended **beyond the 15 degrees allowed**.
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Arman Ebrahim wins FMSCI Motorsports Man of the Year Trophy

- Car racer Arman Ebrahim wins FMSCI Motorsports Man of the year Trophy
 - B.I. Chandok received lifetime achievement award for his contribution to motorsports in India.
 - FMSCI is the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India.
 - It was established in 1971.
 - It is a member of the Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM)
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Rahul Sachdev won 1st all India Open Invitational Snooker Championship 2016

- The event was held in Aurangabad, Maharashtra
 - Rahul Sachdev defeated Pushpender Singh of Indian Railways in the finals.
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Warwinka Wins Dubai Tennis Championship Title

- Swiss Tennis player Stanislas Warwinka won the Dubai Tennis Championship title.
 - He defeated Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus in the final.
 - Warwinka has also won the 2014 Australian Open and 2015 French open.
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Art and Culture
