

National News

Japan says India's nuclear MoU "legally binding"

- India had committed to adhere to the **"control of nuclear material, traceability [of nuclear fuel] and consequence in case of a nuclear accident"**
 - Memorandum of understanding (MoU) on **civil nuclear cooperation with Japan** signed in **April 2015**
 - India will be **financially accountable** if it is found to be **violating the principles**.
 - MoU may also **destabilize India's established nuclear deals with Russia and France**. Previous demand for such commitments were denied.
 - The bilateral agreement **leaves out India's military nuclear program**
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Prime minister launched Kisan Suvidha mobile app

- Will **provide information on** subjects such as **weather, seeds, market prices, pesticides, fertilizers, and agriculture machinery**.
 - Developed to **help farmers by providing relevant information** to them quickly.
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Indian Air Force successfully conducted exercise Iron Fist in Pokhran

- The day and night exercise was aimed at **demonstrating IAF's combat and fire power**
 - It showcased its **commitment and capabilities in safeguarding national interests**.
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Freedom of expression does not mean call to destroy country

- Two-day national executive kept its political preoccupations, both with the **debate on nationalism** and its attempts at making up with **the Dalit community**
- Gave political resolution that **"freedom of expression and nationalism do necessarily co-exist"** but that this fundamental right **does not cover calls to destroy the country**

- The party and the government **“was accepting of political criticism of itself, but not of the nation**
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International

Agreement between the EU and Turkey to tackle the migrant crisis

- Migrants arriving in Greece will be **sent back to Turkey** if their **asylum claim is rejected**.
 - EU will resettle **Syrian migrant for each Syrian returned to Turkey**.
 - **Priority** will be given to those who have **not tried to illegally enter the EU**.
 - By June 2016, it will be mandatory for **Turkish nationals to have access to the Schengen passport-free zone**.
 - EU is to speed up the allocation of **€3 billion (\$3.3 billion)** in aid to Turkey to **help migrants’ crisis**.
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U.S. President to make historical Cuba visit

- The visit attempts to **reverse generations of U.S. attempts to cut Cuba from the outside world**
 - Obama was due to see old town Havana, hold talks with Cuban President Raul Castro on Monday, and attend a baseball game.
 - For Cubans dreaming of **escaping isolation and reinvigorating their threadbare economy**, the visit has created huge excitement.
 - Republicans and some human rights activists have also criticized Obama for dealing with Castro.
 - **Freedom in Cuba, ranging from the media to politics and economic entrepreneurship, remain highly curtailed**.
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Business and Economy

Interest rate cut to help economy

- **Economy needs lower interest rates** to become more **efficient and high deposit rates would keep it “sluggish.”**
- To **make the economy more efficient rather than sluggish**, the country has to move towards **lower interest rates in lending and deposits**.

- **Interest rates will be reset every quarter** based on a formula linked to the rate of return on government securities.
 - Returns on Public Provident Fund savings **cut from 8.7% to 8.1%** and **one year post office deposits from 8.4% to 7.1%**.
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Banks are likely to reduce interest rates on home and car loans

- Banks likely to announce revised interest rates, starting April 1, which will **lower the amount on deposits and make home and car loans cheaper.**
 - Reserve Bank of India has been urging banks to cut lending rates in line with the **reduction in policy interest rate.**
 - **Cut in small savings rate** now gives more room to banks to reduce their deposit rates.
 - Banks will shift to **Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR)** from 1 April, as directed by RBI.
 - This new **regime of loan pricing** will **replace the existing regime of Base Rate**
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Science and Technology

Fund to tackle anti-microbial resistance

- Launched by **Dept. of Biotechnology** to tackle the threat faced by India from **resistance to antimicrobial drugs**
 - This is an **India-focused seed fund.**
 - DBT has invested an initial **\$1, 00,000** in this fund.
 - Also expected to **encourage biotechnology start-ups** in the country.
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Solar for Refrigerator and air conditioner

- Chennai-based company has showed that **solar power can be used to power air conditioner and refrigerator.**
 - Possible by the use of **thin film solar panels.**
 - Company has replaced the **conventional silicon crystalline panels** with **thin film solar panels.**
 - **Energy yield of thin film is higher** than silicon panel.
 - For every 1 degree Celsius increase in temperature, the **loss in power rating is 0.5% in the case of silicon panels; it is only 0.25% with thin films.**
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Space probe New Horizons result revealed by NASA

- After a **9.5-year, three-billion-mile** journey New Horizons zipped by **Pluto on July 14 last year**.
 - NASA scientists have revealed the former “astronomer’s planet” and its “**intriguing system of small moons**” in a comprehensive set of papers describing results from last summer’s Pluto system flyby.
 - New Horizons’ **seven science instruments** collected about **50 gigabits of data** on the spacecraft’s digital recorders
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Environment & Ecology

National Green Tribunal seeks Centre’s response on ban of micro plastics

- It has sought response from the Centre on a plea seeking **ban on use of micro-plastics in cosmetic and body care products in India**
 - Their use is extremely **dangerous for aquatic life and environment**.
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People in News

Pfizer appoints Sridhar as its MD

- Sridhar has worked as the **Chief Financial Officer of the company for seven years**
 - Was appointed the **Executive Director on the Board in May 2013**.
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Honeywell appoints Suresh Senapaty as its Chairman

- Honeywell Automation India Ltd (HAIL) announced appointment of **former Wipro CFO Suresh Senapaty as its Chairman**.
 - He has been appointed as an **Additional Director (Non-Executive, Independent)** and as **Chairman of its Board of Directors**
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Awards

PM presents 2014-15 Krishi Karman Awards

- Awards were presented in two different categories viz. **Total food grain production and Individual Crops**.

- **Madhya Pradesh:** For production **greater than 10 million tonnes in Category I States.**
 - **Himachal Pradesh and Odisha:** For production between **1 and 10 million tonnes in Category II States.**
 - **Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya:** For production **less than 1 million tonnes in Category III States.**
 - **Individual Crops:** Total 5 winning states were awarded **a trophy, a citation and a monetary award of 2 crore rupees.** These states are
 - **Haryana, Assam: Rice.**
 - **Rajasthan: Wheat.**
 - **Chhattisgarh: Pulses.**
 - **West Bengal: Oil Seeds.**
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Sports

Yogeshwar Dutt gets gold medal in Asian Olympic qualification tournament

- He got the gold medal in the **65kg category for freestyle wrestling.**
 - In the final match he defeated **Katai Yeerlanbieke from China**
 - He secured an **Olympic quota place for India in 2016 Rio Olympic games.**
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Hs Prannoy wins 2016 Swiss Open Grand Prix gold Badminton title

- He defeated **Marc Zwiebler of Germany** to win the title
 - **Women's Singles Title** was won by **He Bingjiao from China** after defeating Wang Yihan
 - **Men's Doubles** was won by **Denmark pair of Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen** after defeating Chinese Taipei pair of Lee Sheng-mu and Tsai Chia-hsin
 - **Women's Doubles** was won by **Japanese pair of Shizuka Matsuo and Mami Naito** after defeating Japanese pair of Naoko Fukuman and Kurumi Yonao.
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ICC suspends Bangladesh bowlers

- International Cricket Council (ICC) has suspended **Bangladesh bowlers Taskin Ahmed and Arafat Sunny** for **bowling with an illegal action**
- The suspension is **with immediate effect.**

- Their international suspensions will also be recognized and enforced by all the members **for domestic cricket events played in their own jurisdiction.**
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Art and Culture

Sculpture of Chandesvarar found in Tamil Nadu

- Believed to belong to **10th century AD**
 - Found at **Sundaikkai village near Umaiypuram** in Tamil Nadu.
 - The sculpture was an **early Chola icon.**
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