

NATIONAL

Various MoUs and Schemes Approved by Union Cabinet

- Approval for the development of the **Phase-I of the Rs 11,420 crore Pune metro rail project**. The project will cover a length of 31.254 km and consist of two corridors.
- Approved MoU between **India and Vietnam on Cooperation in the field of IT**.
- MoU between India and Afghanistan on **cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space**.
- Approval to the reforms to **boost employment generation and exports in the Made-ups Sector**.
- MoU signed between **India and United Kingdom (UK)** in area of Ease of Doing Business in India.
- **Zero Effect Zero Defect (ZED)** certification scheme which will guide and assist MSMEs across the country in **Make in India** sectors through quality control cells

Training on Election Management for SAARC Nations Organized at IIIDEM

- Training program has been organized by **Election Commission of India** on Election Management of **SAARC Countries**, at the **India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM)** under the sponsorship of **Union Ministry of External Affairs**,
- **Aim:** to conduct free, fair, peaceful and inclusive elections in the country.
- The program aims to train officials on various aspects of election management like capacity building of stakeholders, code of conduct, voter inclusion and registration etc.

Triple Talaq is unconstitutional: Allahabad High Court

- **The Allahabad high court** on December 7, 2016, passed an order, over the Islamic practice of divorcing a woman by saying the word '**talaq**' three successive times, that it is completely "unconstitutional" and violates the rights of Muslim Women.
- No personal law board is above the Constitution. However, the **All India Muslim Personal Law Board** has questioned against the order, saying that constitution has no right to question the practices of any religion.

Haritha Keralam Mission launched in Kerala

- **Aim:** To clear and remove waste from all the water bodies in the state, ensure disposal of solid waste and removal of waste water and measures to increase the area of land under cultivation
- It is a comprehensive program for creating new development perspectives by maximum utilization of opportunities through waste management, water resources and agricultural development using organic farming.

Himachal become 18th State To Join UDAY scheme

- **Himachal Pradesh** government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with **Government of India** for operational and financial turnaround of the DISCOM under the **Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY)**
- Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) is the financial turnaround and revival package for electricity distribution companies of India (DISCOMs)

- **The scheme comprises four initiatives :**

- 1.Improving operational efficiencies of discoms
- 2.Reduction of cost of power
- 3.Reduction in interest cost of discoms and
- 4.Enforcing financial discipline on discoms through alignment with state finances.

Lifeline Express gets two new Coaches

- The **Lifeline Express**, world's first hospital train was equipped with **two new coaches** in addition to the existing five
- One coach will be used for detecting and controlling oral, breast and cervical **cancer** while other will be used for preventing stroked and providing **family health services**.
- Lifeline Express started 25 years ago in 1991, with three wooden coaches to give medical care to the remotest parts of the country. Now it has seven steel coaches.

Website of National Rail Plan, 2030

- **Aim:** to develop the Indian Railways in terms of service in travelling and freight across the country.
- National Rail Plan (NRP 2030) to have a concrete strategic planning for Railway, in consultation with all the stakeholders including State Governments, public representatives and other relevant Central Ministries.

INTERNATIONAL

Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight PK-661 crashed

- **Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), PK-661 flight** which was carrying **48 passengers** including 5 crew member and one ground engineer, **crashed** on the way to **Islamabad from Chitral**
- There have been **no survivors** from crash. 46 bodies out of 48 have been recovered.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Two Banks of Abu Dhabi to Merge as the Biggest Bank in Gulf Nation

- Stockholders of the **National Bank of Abu Dhabi and First Gulf** approved to merge into the biggest bank of all Gulf Countries with an asset of **\$ 178 billion**.
- After the merger the combined company will be named as **NBAD**.
- This merger would make the new NBAD the largest bank across Gulf Arab nations, with some \$170 billion in assets.

Coverfox inks pact with Uber for car insurance

- Online insurance broking portal **Coverfox.com** has inked an partnership with **Uber** in India to facilitate car insurance solutions for the latter's driver partners.
- Recently Uber launches app **UberFLEET** to help drivers achieve maximum performance and run fleets more efficiently

Pakistan Lifts Undeclared Ban on Import of Ginned Cotton from India

- **The Department of Plant Protection (DPP)** of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research had banned the cotton imports from India through **Wagah and Karachi port** as the shipments did not fulfil phyto- sanitary conditions.
- Due to the rising border tensions between the two neighbors, Islamabad imposed a ban on **10,000 bales** of cotton worth **USD 3.3 million** from India.
- DPP has agreed to issue permits for importing cotton from India via Wagah but the DPP has also made it clear to importers that only seed free cotton will be accepted and allowed into the country.

India to set up center of excellence at Al-Azhar University, Egypt

- To enhance cooperation in education sector between India and Egypt, Center has decided to set up a **center of Excellence in Information Technology** at the **Al-Azhar University** which is the oldest and most prestigious University of **Egypt**.
- The Government of India will pay completely for the project which will be set up in the engineering department of the Al-Azhar University and start operating early next year.

AWARDS

Donald Trump Named as TIME's Person of the Year 2016

- US President elect **Donald Trump** was chosen as the **TIME's Person of the Year 2016** on December 7, 2016, for his outstanding victory in the US election.
- According to the Time magazine's editors, the Republican president-elect had more global impact, "**for better or worse**," than any other individual across the past 12 months.

Alphabet Named Company of the year by Fortune

- Google parent Company, Alphabet has been named as the **Company Of The Year** by **Fortune magazine** in its annual **Blue Ribbon ranking**.
- The Blue Ribbon List recognizes the **best among the best companies** that have been appeared on four or more out of the **seven Fortune lists** including Fortune 500, Global 500, Best Companies to Work For, Change the World list, World's Most Admired Companies, 100 Fastest-Growing Companies, and Businessperson of the Year in a particular year.

BEML Honored with CII National Quality Award

- Bharat Earth Movers Limited Ltd (BEML) Ltd has been awarded the 'CII National Quality 2016 Award' for practicing various EFQM Models (European Foundation for Quality Management).
- BEML Limited (Bharat Earth Movers Limited), a Miniratna-Category-1' firm, was established in May 1964 as a Public Sector Undertaking and operates under three major Business: Mining & Construction, Defence and Rail & Metro.
- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment which suitable for the development of India and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

Michael Jordan Ranked Top among Highest Paid Athletes by Forbes

- **Michael Jordan**, former basketball player, has been named as the highest-paid athlete of all times by Forbes, with **\$1.7 billion total wealth**.
- Jordan was paid about **\$100 million** from Nike for endorsing the Jordan brand in 2016. Apart from this Jordan also endorsed Coca-Cola, Gatorade, McDonald's, Hanes among others.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Researchers at TIFR made discovery that challenges theory of superconductivity

- A team of researchers at the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)**, Mumbai, have discovered that **bismuth semi-metal** in bulk form becomes a **superconductor** when the temperature is lowered to **530 micro Kelvin** (about -273 degree C).
- A superconductor is a material that can **conduct electricity** with no resistance. This means no heat, sound or any other form of energy would be released from the material when it has reached "critical temperature" (T_c), or the temperature at which the material becomes superconductive.
- The discovery also provides an alternative path for the discovery of new superconducting materials totally different from the conventional superconductors.

SPORTS

PR Sreejesh Appointed as Goalkeeping Mentor of Indian Junior Hockey Team

- **Captain** of the senior **National Men's Hockey Team** and one of the finest hockey goal - keeper in the world, **PR Sreejesh** has been roped in as the **Goalkeeping Mentor** of the **India Under-21 Hockey Team**
- Sreejesh will replace **South African Dave Staniforth**, who was appointed by Hockey India to train the junior goalkeepers for a short term period of three-week for the World Cup.