

Important Current Affairs March 2017 Capsule with PDF

Awards & Honors

- SV Sunil named 2016 Player of the Year
 - India forward SV Sunil was named the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) Player of the Year for 2016 with Harmanpreet Singh chosen as the **Promising Player of the Year in the continental body's annual awards.**
 - **Sunil, regarded highly for his pace, played a vital role in India's memorable run in last year's Champions Trophy in London, where they claimed a silver for the first time.**
- President confers Padma awards
 - President Pranab Mukherjee conferred the Padma awards at a ceremony held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
 - Former Lok Sabha speaker PA Sangma (Posthumous), BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi, Nationalist Congress Party supremo Sharad Pawar and former ISRO chairman Professor UR Rao were awarded.
 - Cricketer Virat Kohli, Bollywood singer Anuradha Paudwal and many others were conferred with the award.
- Anupam Kher to receive Kala Ratan Award
 - Anupam Kher will be honoured with the Kala Ratan Award by Vice President Hamid Ansari.
 - He was honoured with the Padma Shri in 2004 and the Padma Bhushan in 2016 for his contribution in the field of cinema and arts.
 - The actor who has worked mainly in Hindi films has also appeared in acclaimed international films like Bend It Like Beckham, Bride and Prejudice.

- Bob Dylan to receive Nobel prize
 - Music icon Bob Dylan will finally receive his Nobel Literature Prize this weekend at a meeting with the Swedish Academy in Stockholm.
 - The 75-year-old kept silent for weeks after he was announced as the Nobel literature laureate in October, and snubbed a ceremony in December to receive the prize.
- KVB bags best small bank award
 - **Karur Vysya Bank has been adjudged the 'Best Small Bank for 2016'** (balance sheet size of less than ₹1-lakh crore).
 - This is the eighth award won by KVB in the current fiscal.
 - Karur Vysya Bank is an Indian private-sector bank, headquartered in Karur in Tamil Nadu.
- Rai conferred with Photography award
 - Raghu Rai was honoured with the award by information and broadcasting (I&B) minister Venkaiah Naidu at 6th National Photography Awards.
 - National Photography Awards is an annual event organized by the **ministry to "promote art, technique of photography.**
 - Rai was awarded Photographer of the Year award by the US in 1992.
- Four Indian cities in top 25 Asia list
 - Four Indian cities feature in TripAdvisor's top 25 Asia list.
 - India takes the second spot in the Asia list with four winning destinations. Thailand leads with five wins.
 - The four Indian cities that featured in the top 25 list in Asia are Goa (11), New Delhi (13), Jaipur (18) and Agra (19).
 - TripAdvisor is a global travel site offering advice from millions of travellers.
- Major Rohit Suri awarded Kirti Chakra

- Second highest **peacetime gallantry award ‘Kirti Chakra’** went to a young officer, Major Rohit Suri, who was part of the surgical strikes last year
- The Kirti Chakra is an Indian military decoration awarded for valour, courageous action or self-sacrifice away from the field of battle.
- It comes after Ashoka Chakra and before Shaurya Chakra.
- **Abel Prize 2017**
 - French mathematician Yves Meyer was today awarded the 2017 Abel Prize for his work on wavelets, a mathematical theory with applications in data compression, medical imaging and the detection of gravitational waves.
 - Last year Able Prize won by Briton Andrew Wiles for his work on solving **Fermat’s Last Theorem.**
 - It is considered by many to be a maths equivalent of the Nobel Prize.
- **Changi airport wins world's best airport**
 - Research firm SkyTrax has named Singapore's Changi Airport "World's Best Airport" for a fifth consecutive year over regional rival Hong Kong.
 - The SkyTrax World Airport Survey describes itself as a quality benchmark for the world airport industry.
 - The award is based on 13.82 million airport survey questionnaires conducted between July 2016 and February 2017.

Books and Authors

- **Clarke’s launches his autobiography**
 - Former Australia captain Michael Clarke has launched his autobiography **named ‘My Story’ in Kolkata** in the presence of former Indian cricketer Saurav Ganguly.
 - **This book was triggered by how he was affected by Phil Hughes’ death** when India were touring Australia in 2014-15

- Michael John Clarke is a former international cricketer and captain of Australia.
- **‘Number Do Lie’ book launched**
 - Former Indian cricketer Akash Chopra released book titled Numbers Do Lie, 61 Hidden Cricket Stories which takes a different look at stats.
 - The defensive opening batsman narrated about the cricket records and player **performances more lucidly that reflects player’s impact in the game** of cricket. It is based on the Impact Index analytics by Jaideep Verma, Soham Sarkhel and Nikhil Narain.

Government Policies and Schemes

- 10 percent import duty on wheat
 - Since Dec 8, there **was “zero percent import duty’ on wheat and big** corporate houses imported huge amount of wheat from Australia, Ukraine and other countries.
 - Ahead of wheat harvesting season and expected bumper crop, the central govt has imposed a 10% import duty on wheat after a gap of nearly four months.
 - Farmers said reinstatement of a 10% import duty, against their expectations of 25%.
- Aadhaar mandatory for mobile connection
 - The Department of Telecom (DoT) has sent a notice to all telecom operators that all mobile phone subscribers -prepaid and postpaid — will have to be verified using e-KYC.
 - The Telecom department has directed mobile service providers to finish the e-KYC re-verification of existing subscribers by February 6, 2018

- The telecom operators will have to re-verify its existing users through Aadhaar.
- Construction of 1cr tonne capacity silos
 - The Centre has approved construction of one crore tonne capacity silos for storage of foodgrains by the end of year 2019-20.
 - These silos will be constructed by Food Corporation of India (FCI) as well as State Governments in Public Private Partnership mode in a phased manner.
 - A silo is a structure for storing bulk materials.
 - Silos are used in agriculture to store grain.
- SWADHAR GREH SCHEME
 - Swadhar Greh Scheme targets the women victims of unfortunate circumstances who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity.
 - The Scheme envisages providing shelter, food, clothing and health as well as economic and social security for the women victims of difficult circumstances.
 - The implementing agencies are mainly NGOs.
- VAHAN and SARATHI to Curb Corruption
 - **The Provisions regarding issue of learner's licence and driving licence are** contained in Chapter II of Motor Vehicles Act, 1988(MV Act) and Chapter II of Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989(CMVRs).
 - The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has introduced online based citizen centric application VAHAN 4.0 and SARATHI 4.0 under digitization to ease out the processes and curb corruption.
- Science Cities Set Up by Min. of Culture
 - The following Science Cities have been set up by Ministry of Culture through National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), an Autonomous

Organisation under the Ministry of Culture- (i) Science City, Kolkata (ii) Regional Science City, Lucknow

- The Science Cities Scheme provides for setting up of Science Cities in all the states of the country subject to availability of funds for this purpose.
- Mahila Coir Yojana
 - The Coir Board is implementing Mahila Coir Yojana (MCY) exclusively for empowering women in the country by giving training and distribution of coir processing equipments.
 - This is a 100% women oriented programme intended to provide self employment to the rural women artisans in coir producing regions.
 - The training under MCY are conducted through all training centres of the Board.
- Aadhaar mandatory for crop insurance
 - The Maharashtra govt has made Aadhaar mandatory to farmers for availing crop insurance schemes from the next Kharif season.
 - State Agriculture Dept. said farmers will now have to link bank account with the Aadhaar number before June this year to avail crop insurance schemes.
 - It added that the scheme is applicable to food grain and horticulture sectors.
- USTTAD Scheme
 - It was launched by Min. of Minority Affairs in Varanasi, UP in order to improve degrading conditions of Banaras Saree weavers who belong to minority communities.
 - The Scheme aims at upgrading Skills and Training of minority communities by preservation of traditional ancestral Arts and Crafts.
 - It is fully funded by Union Govt and Min. of Minority Affairs is nodal agency in implementing it.

- Vikalp Scheme
 - Named 'Vikalp' or alternative, the scheme aims to utilise vacant berths in many premier trains including Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto etc. in all major routes.
 - On April 1, the Indian Railways is launching a new scheme under which passengers put on waiting lists can get confirmed berths in the next alternative train.
 - Passengers will not be charged anything extra for the difference of fare.

Days and Events

- World Environment Conference
 - The government on argued for a plan for sustainable development balancing the need to protect the environment and continued growth at the third World Conference on Environment organized by the NGT in New Delhi.
 - The Government of India has recently set a target for renewable energy generation of 175 Gigawatt by 2022.
 - By 2030, 40% of our installed capacity will be based on non-fossil fuel.
- Indian Science Congress
 - Osmania University will host the 105th edition of the Indian Science Congress during January 3-7, 2018.
 - **The conference will be on the theme 'Science and Technology - Reaching the Unreached'.**
 - This will be the sixth time the university will be hosing the conference.
 - The congress will be meeting in Hyderabad for the seventh time.
- World Tuberculosis Day- 24 March

- World Tuberculosis Day, observed on March 24 each year, is designed to build public awareness about the global epidemic of tuberculosis (TB) and efforts to eliminate the disease.
- The theme of this year's **World TB Day** is **"Unite to End TB"**.
- India has the highest number of tuberculosis (TB) patients globally, about 25% of all cases.
- **World Water Day**
 - World Water Day is an annual event celebrated on 22 March.
 - The day focuses attention on the importance of universal access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in developing countries.
 - Each year, UN-Water highlights one aspect of the importance of freshwater, through a theme selected for the day.
 - Theme for 2017 is **'-Why waste water?'**.
- **Navroz 2017**
 - The Parsi community is celebrating Navroz on March 20.
 - The festival marks the first day of the first month in the Iranian calendar.
 - Navroz is the day of the vernal equinox i.e. day and night are of approximately equal duration all over the planet.
 - It usually occurs on 21 March or the previous or following day (depending on the region).
- **International Diamond Conference**
 - PM Narendra Modi addressed the International Diamond Conference in Mumbai.
 - This conference was a part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council of India.
 - **The conference on the theme of "Mines to Market 2017", brings together miners, diamond companies, experts, retailers, bankers and analysts from across the globe.**

- 3-Day International Buddhist Conference
 - The 3-Day International Buddhist Conference has begun in Rajgir, Bihar
 - Over 350 delegates from 35 countries are participating in the conference that included a discussion on women in Buddhism.
 - The speakers discussed female leadership, gender discrimination and same sex marriages in Taiwan.
- Conference "Universities of The Future"
 - The President of India, will visit Haryana (Sonapat) on March 18, 2017 where he will inaugurate a 3-day international conference on the **theme of "Universities of the Future: Knowledge, Innovation and Responsibility" at O. P. Jindal Global University (JGU).**
 - The Conference seeks to examine the future of the Indian universities in the twenty first century and will have thirteen thematic panels.
- Commonwealth Day
 - Commonwealth Day is the annual celebration of the Commonwealth of Nations held on the second Monday in March.
 - It is marked by a multi-faith service in Abbey, normally attended by Queen Elizabeth II as Head of the Commonwealth along with the Commonwealth Secretary-General and Commonwealth High Commissioners in London.
 - The theme of 2017 commonwealth day is "A Peace-building Commonwealth".
- International Vision Zero Conference
 - The international conference on the VISION ZERO and its relevance to Occupational Safety and Health, is being organized from 15th to 17th, March 2017 in New Delhi.
 - The conference aims to focus on the Occupational Safety and Health issues and challenges in the Manufacturing, Construction and Mining sector.
 - The conference will provide a forum for promoting safety and health at work.

Committees and Recommendation

- Madhukar Gupta Committee Report
 - The Committee constituted under the Shri Madhukar Gupta, has submitted its report to the Govt to strengthen border protection and address vulnerabilities in fencing along the Indo-Pakistan border.
 - The Committee has given its recommendations broadly on the issues of Threats and Border Protection, assessment of force level, deployment on the border, infrastructure and technology issues.
- Government Panel for migrants
 - A Government appointed Panel has recommended necessary legal and policy framework to protect the interests of the migrants in the country.
 - **The 'Working Group on Migration' set by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation** in 2015 who submitted their Report to the Government recently.
 - The 18-member Working Group headed by Shri Partha Mukhopadhyay.

Person in News

- Vanaja N Sarna appointed CBEC chief
 - Senior bureaucrat Vanaja N Sarna was appointed as chairperson of Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC).
 - Sarna, a 1980 batch officer of Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise), is at present member in the CBEC, an apex policy making body for indirect taxes.

- She will take over charge from incumbent Najib Shah who completes his term this month-end.
- Girl swims from Sea Link to Gateway
 - Gauri Singhvi, 14-year-old girl became the first girl to explore the route from Sea Link near Worli Koliwada to the Gateway of India.
 - She completed the 36 km long distance route in 6 hours and 30 minutes.
 - Singh is a resident of Udaipur and a class 8th student. From her childhood, she started swimming and wanted to swim in the international channel, and therefore eyed the Arabian Sea.
- Beasley to head UN World Food Program
 - Former South Carolina Gov. David Beasley has been appointed to head the U.N. World Food Program
 - Beasley is a supporter of President Donald Trump who was recommended for the job by U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley
 - He will replace another American, Etharin Cousin, who has been the WFP executive director since 2012
- **BSF's first woman combat officer**
 - **Tanushree Pareek, a resident of Rajasthan's Bikaner who became the first woman combat officer to be commissioned by the Border Security Force.**
 - The Border Security Force is the primary Border guarding force of India. It is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of the Union of India.
 - BSF is a Union Government Agency under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Bhattacharya among top 50 leaders
 - SBI chief Arundhati Bhattacharya has been ranked 26th in the Fortune's top 50 greatest leaders.
 - She is the only Indian corporate leader in the list.
 - By this, Arundhati Bhattacharya becomes the only Indian corporate leader to be featured in the list

- Bhattacharya is the first-ever woman to chair the country's largest lender.
- Litterateur Thiagarajan passes away
 - A noted Tamil litterateur, Thiagarajan, popularly known as Asokamitran passed away in Chennai last night after a brief illness.
 - A well known novelist and essayist, Ashokamitran was noted for his subtlety and refreshing creativity in expression.
 - His work "Appavin Snegithargal", a collection of short stories won him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1996.
- Upendra as Director General of ISA
 - Govt decided to appoint Mr. Upendra Tripathy, as the Interim Director General (IDG) of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) on a full time basis.
 - ISA was launched on 30th November, 2015 as a coalition of the solar resource rich countries jointly by PM Modi and Mr. Francois Hollande, President of France in the Paris Climate Conference or CoP21.
- Madhabi Puri Buch appointed as SEBI Member
 - Madhabi Puri Buch was appointed as a Whole-Time Member of capital markets regulator SEBI.
 - She is founder-director of Agora Advisory Pvt Ltd and currently at the New Development Bank in Shanghai, China.
 - Buch has been appointed to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) post for a period of three years, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.
- Jason Kothari as CEO of Freecharge
 - Snapdeal has appointed Jason Kothari to the position of Chief Executive Officer of its digital payments subsidiary Freecharge.
 - Kothari's appointment to the role comes a month after former Freecharge CEO Govind Rajan quit the company.

- Snapdeal's investment of \$20 million in Freecharge will ensure the company has enough working capital in the near future.
- Poet and writer Chinu Modi passed away
 - Noted Gujarati poet and ghazal writer Chinu Modi passed away in Ahmedabad.
 - Chinu Modi has made a great contribution to Gujarati literature with his poetry, plays, novels and stories.
 - Chinu Modi has written over 50 books of poetry, drama, novel, stories, critics, biography, collection, songs and translation.
 - Chinu Modi had received Sahitya Academy award in 2014.

International Affairs

- Montenegro welcomes US NATO approval
 - Montenegro officials welcomed the US Senate's decision to ratify its entry into NATO, calling it a great step for the tiny Balkan nation.
 - Montenegro is set to become NATO's 29th member following the Senate's overwhelming ratification.
 - Russia has been accused by Montenegro of trying to stage an election day coup in October to try to keep the country out of the alliance.
- Tropical Cyclone Debbie
 - Residents of Australia's northeast coast begin evacuating low-lying areas ahead of powerful cyclone.
 - Aus Bureau of Meteorology said that the cyclone Debbie was expected to cross the Queensland state coast along a sparsely populated 100-km stretch early Tuesday.
 - cyclone was expected to intensify from a category 2 storm on Mond to a category 4 storm with wind gusts of up to 260 km/hour
- American Hindu Coalition (AHC)

- An organisation launched by a group of influential American Hindus, most of them of Indian descent, aspires to emerge as a political platform for all Hindus in the country regardless of their ethnic origin.
- The American Hindu Coalition (AHC) will be formally inaugurated in May but the group has launched a website and started raising funds online and from selected donors.
- 2017 healthiest country index
 - Bloomberg released its 2017 World Health Index today and the world's healthiest country may come as a bit of a surprise.
 - Italy, the land known for pasta, pizza and wine has been named the healthiest country by the index.
 - The index graded 163 countries based on variables such as life expectancy, causes of death and health risks such as high blood pressure, malnutrition etc.
- Germany to use voice recognition
 - Germany is to begin testing new voice recognition software that can tell which country migrants without documentation come from.
 - The Federal Office for Migrants and Refugees said the automated new system would begin within 2 weeks.
 - The new software is similar to the voice authentication technology used by banks and insurance companies and is capable of differentiating between dialects.
- River granted same rights as human being
 - In a world-first a New Zealand Whanganui river has been granted the same legal rights as a human being.
 - **The local Māori tribe of Whanganui in the North Island has fought for the recognition of their river -the third-largest in New Zealand.**

- The new status of the river means if someone abused or harmed it the law now sees no differentiation between harming the tribe or harming the river.
- Bangladesh declares Mar 25 'Genocide Day'
 - **Bangladesh's unanimously adopted a resolution declaring March 25 as Genocide Day**, in remembrance of the atrocities carried out by the Pakistani Army in the night of March 25, 1971.
 - The Pakistan Army swooped on unarmed civilians on the night of March 25, 1971, to crush the Bengali rebellion
 - **'Operation Searchlight' began in** the first hours of March 25, in Dhaka.
- Pakistan set to conduct national census
 - Pakistan is set to conduct its first national census in 19 years for which it will deploy nearly 200,000 troops.
 - First phase will start from March 15 and conclude on April 15. After a ten-day gap the second phase will start from April 25 and conclude on May 25.
 - Islamabad last conducted a census in 1998, which recorded a national population of approximately 180 million at that time.
- Worst humanitarian crisis since 1945
 - The world faces the largest humanitarian crisis since the end of the second world war with more than 20 million people in 4 countries facing starvation and famine, UN has warned.
 - He urged an immediate injection of funds for Yemen, South Sudan, Somalia and northeast Nigeria.
 - Largest humanitarian crisis was in Yemen.
- Yellow fever
 - **Rio de Janeiro has said it plans to vaccinate the state's entire population** against yellow fever in response to an outbreak that has killed at least 113 people around Brazil.

- Yellow fever is an acute viral disease. It is spread primarily by *Aedes aegypti*, a type of mosquito found throughout the tropics and subtropics.
- The virus is an RNA virus of the genus *Flavivirus*

National Affairs

- Online Film Certification System
 - Information and Broadcasting Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu launched the Online Film Certification System of the Central Board of Film Certification.
 - **He said the initiative was on the lines of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** vision of ease-of-doing business and digital India, making the entire process transparent and efficient.
 - The new system uses email, QR code and text messages for any updates.
- J&K government approves smart city proposals
 - A committee of the Jammu and Kashmir government has approved the Smart City Proposals for the twin cities of Jammu and Srinagar for submission to the Centre.
 - Considering the vulnerability of the cities to multiple hazards, the calamities like floods and earthquakes, risk preparedness and risk **response have received special focus in the SCPs' proposal.**
- India's second tallest flag post
 - Kolhapur will soon get a 300-foot flag post to fly the tricolour, which **would the "second tallest" flag pole in the country.**
 - A 360-foot high flag post, said to be the country's tallest, was inaugurated on March 6 at the Indo-Pak Attari Border.
 - Chief Minister of Maharashtra is likely to attend the flag hoisting ceremony on May 1, the foundation day of Maharashtra state.

- Mining banned in Uttarakhand
 - The Uttarakhand High Court ordered a complete ban on mining activities in the State for four months.
 - The move comes 4 days after a forest worker was allegedly killed in Ramnagar while he was chasing the mining mafia.
 - The court directed the State government to refrain from granting any fresh licence, mining lease, reconnaissance or prospecting licence till the committee submitted its report.
- Shortest, widest Highway in the world
 - Haryana would soon have the widest and shortest National Highway (NH) in the world with 16 lanes in a 3-km stretch.
 - Detailed Project Report (DPR) of the proposed elevated National Highway, costing around Rs 700 crore.
 - The three kilometre road with 16 lanes will be built on the Sohna Road in Gurgaon.
 - It will be the shortest and widest National Highway in the world
- First Body for complaints against cops
 - Maharashtra became the first state to set up the State Police Complaints Authority (SPCA).
 - People can approach the SPCA office to lodge complaints against police personnel for any alleged abuse of power,
 - The authority is headed by a retired high court judge and comprises retired IPS and IAS officers.
- India's first vertical garden
 - Emulating China and Italy's vertical forests, Bengaluru got its first vertical garden, which it hopes will help in curbing pollution and in beautifying the city.
 - An NGO, installed the first vertical garden in the city on one of the pillars of the Hosur Road flyover.

- An automated drip irrigation system has been installed that will water these saplings every day.
- India, Pakistan to review Miyar project
 - India and Pakistan agreed on redesigning the Miyar Hydroelectric project, at the end of two-day talks of Indus Water Commissioners in Islamabad
 - They raised concern over 1000 MW Pakul Dul on Chenab, 120 MW Miyar, located across Miyar Nalla which is a right bank main tributary of River Chenab and the 43 MW Lower Kalnai hydro project on Lower Kalnai Nalla, a tributary of river Chenab.
- **India's 1st carbon neutral district**
 - Assam CM **launched initiatives to develop Majuli as India's 1st** carbon neutral district and as a biodiversity heritage.
 - **CM launched "Forests are Lives" campaign to celebrate the importance of Assam's rich forest and biodiversity and urged people of the state to take a pledge to conserve its biodiversity to make a pollution free state.**
 - Majuli is the biggest river island in the world.
- Asia's longest bidirectional road tunnel
 - PM Modi will dedicate to the nation, Asia's longest bi-directional road tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on the 2nd of next month.
 - The nearly 11-km long state-of-the-art tunnel will cut down travel time between Jammu and Srinagar by 2 hours.
 - The road distance from Chenani and Nashri will now be 10.9 km, instead of the existing 41 km

Business and Economy

- FSSAI comes under CAG scanner

- In a first, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) is doing a comprehensive performance audit of the FSSAI.
- The audit **comes against the backdrop of the food regulator's controversial** decision to ban manufacturing and sales of Maggi noodles.
- **CAG's audit is looking at issues such as how FSSAI fixes standards,** finalizes regulations etc.
- SBI launches 'Unnati' credit card
 - With aim to achieve the government's vision of Cashless India, State Bank of India's credit card venture SBI Card launched its new credit card 'SBI Card Unnati' which will have 0 annual fee for the first 4 years of its subscription
 - The SBI Card Unnati will be offered to all SBI customers including Jan Dhan account holders, through 20,000 plus SBI branches across India
- Syndicate Bank opens 40 Ananya branches
 - Syndicate Bank has digitally inaugurated 40 Ananya transformed branches.
 - Project Ananya is a two-year large-scale transformation project **undertaken by the bank to provide customers with 'best in class' services** while improving and modernising the whole bank.
 - The bank also launched its first micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) hub in Bengaluru.
- ESIC launches mobile clinics
 - ESIC (Employees State Insurance Corporation) has launched mobile clinics in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, becoming the first ones in the country to do so.
 - Each clinic will have a vehicle with a doctor, pharmacist, attendant, driver and the necessary equipment and medicines.
 - The vehicle will visit two locations in a day for three hours each and conduct basic investigations.

- Paytm to become member of ASCI
 - Paytm is set to be member of the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI).
 - The move is significant because advertising violations by e-commerce companies, which are big spenders on television, print and digital media, have been on the rise in recent years.
 - ASCI members include key advertisers from various sectors, such as fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), media, auto and telecom.
- First PSU general insurer to launch IPO
 - General Insurance Corp. likely to be the 1st PSU insurer to tap the capital market as the finance ministry has started scouting for merchant bankers to manage its IPO.
 - Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has set the ball rolling for listing of GIC Re.
 - The govt holds 100% stake in GIC Re, which provides reinsurance support to 54 general and life insurance companies.
- SEBI bans Reliance equity for one year
 - Securities and Exchange Board of India has banned Reliance Industries and 12 other entities from equity derivatives trading for one year.
 - The case relates to alleged fraudulent trading in the futures and options (F&O) space in the securities of RIL's erstwhile listed subsidiary Reliance Petroleum Ltd.
 - SEBI was established in the year 1988 and given statutory powers through the SEBI Act, 1992.
- Tata Capital launches app 'myLoan'
 - Financial services company Tata Capital launched a mobile app to extend its personal loans offering to young and mobile savvy audience.

- The app - 'myLoan' is a social profile based personal loan mobile application.
- The app offers personal loans up to a maximum of 15 lakh.
- Tata Capital is a non-banking financial company that undertakes fund- and fee-based activities in the financial sector.
- **Airtel acquires Tikona's 4G**
 - The ongoing consolidation in the telecom space has forced Tikona Digital Networks to sell its 4G spectrum to Airtel seven years after acquiring it.
 - Though both companies declined to share the financial details, investment banking sources pegged the deal at around ₹1,600 crore.
 - The deal, which is expected to be completed in 60 days, includes 350 telecom towers owned by Tikona.
- **World Bank signs US\$100 million credit agreement**
 - The World Bank has signed a \$100 million credit agreement with the Centre and Uttarakhand in New Delhi to improve quality of health care services in the state.
 - WB said that most public health facilities in mountainous areas of are unable to function optimally.
 - The project also aims to reduce the financial risk for its citizens and make affordable, quality health care available to all.

India and World

- **87th on energy architecture performance**
 - India has marginally improved its position to 87th place on a global energy architecture performance index, but ranks among the worst for pollution.
 - Switzerland topped the annual list released by Geneva - based World Economic Forum (WEF) and was followed by Norway, Sweden, Denmark and France in the top five.

- India's rank improved three places from 90th last year.
- India ranked 131 in human development
 - India has been ranked 131st among 188 countries in the UN Development Programme (UNDP)'s 2016 'Human Development.
 - It is third among South Asian countries (behind Sri Lanka and Maldives) and comes under the medium human development category.
 - **The improvement in India's HDI value is second among BRICS countries** with China recording the highest improvement of 48 percent.
- India at 122 in world happiness report
 - **India ranked a lowly 122 on a list of the world's happiest countries**, dropping four slots from last year and coming behind China, Pakistan and Nepal.
 - Norway ranks as the happiest country in the world, according to The World Happiness Report 2017.
 - The World Happiness Report is a measure of happiness published by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.
- Revive IPI pipeline
 - India should consider reviving the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) gas pipeline following easing of sanctions on Tehran, a Parliamentary panel has said.
 - India had almost abandoned the IPI pipeline in 2008 following the US sanctions against Iran over its suspected nuclear programme and has instead pursued a rival line from Turkmenistan, passing through Afghanistan and Pakistan (TAPI pipeline).
- Hinduja are wealthiest Asians in UK
 - NRI businessmen Hinduja have retained their position as the richest Asians in the UK in 2017 with an estimated wealth of 19 billion pounds according to an annual ranking of the richest Asians in Britain.

- Steel tycoon Lakshmi N Mittals secured the second place with a fortune of 12.6 billion pounds.
- Britain's 101 wealthiest Asians are collectively worth 69.9 billion pounds.
- WEF's 2017 young global leaders list
 - Indians, including Paytm Founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar and Shruti Shibulal of The Tamara Hospitality, have made it to the World Economic Forum's 100 Young Global Leaders list.
 - There were 5 Indian out of 9 global leaders from South Asia.
 - Each year, the WEF selects 100 young leaders, under the age of 40, who are tackling the world's most complex challenges with innovative approaches.
- India joins WHO call to end TB by 2030
 - India joins WHO call to end TB by 2030 in South East Asian.
 - India among other countries in the South East Asian Region, which bear half of the global tuberculosis burden, signed a 'call for action' and pledged to scale up measures to end the disease by 2030.
 - The global targets seek to reduce TB mortality by 90 per cent and incidence by 80 per cent by 2030.
- India at 148th in number of women MPs
 - World ranking of the no. of women parliamentarians that placed India at number 148.
 - The rankings of all 193 UN member countries released by the Inter Parliamentary Union and UN Women showed that women made up 11.8% of the LS where 64 were elected to the 542 member house and 11% of the RS with 27 of the 245 members.
 - India ranked 88 in the number of women Minister, with 5 or 18.5% in the cabinet.
- Hyderabad best city in living standards

- Hyderabad for the 3rd year in a row has emerged as the best city in terms of living standards among Indian cities.
- Vienna has been ranked at the top globally in a list by consultancy firm Mercer.
- The Mercer Quality of Living Survey ranks 221 cities from Vienna to Baghdad on quality of life.
- The National Capital for the straight year hit the lowest score among Indian cities.
- Entry of India, Pak into SCO will help
 - Admission of India and Pak into the Beijing-led Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) security grouping will contribute to security and stability in the region.
 - India and Pak signed the memorandum of obligations on 24th June 2016 at Tashkent, thereby starting the formal process of joining the SCO as full members.
 - They are expected to become full members by the next meeting at Astana in 2017.

Science and Technology

- Sands of Titan are electrically charged
 - The particles that cover the surface of Saturn's largest moon, Titan, are "electrically charged", show results of an experiment.
 - The findings, published in the journal Nature Geoscience.
 - To test particle flow under Titan-like conditions, the researchers built a small experiment in a modified pressure vessel in their Georgia Tech lab.
- **'Snake robot' can crawl into your gut**

- Scientists have developed a tiny, ingestible 3D-printed snake-like robot that can navigate through the small intestines, and could one day be used to visualise the digestive system in real time.
- The robot, called SAW, moves in a wave-like motion and can travel through the extremely squishy environment of the small intestine.
- It was developed at Ben-Gurion University, Israel.
- Indian Neutrino Observatory
 - The Government intends to set up the India-based Neutrino Observatory in West Bodi Hills, Theni District of Tamil Nadu.
 - The project is awaiting a clearance from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board.
 - The project is held up because of the long overdue Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board clearance. Presently the TNPCB has formed a committee of experts to advise it for further course of action.
- NASA-ISRO to work on NISAR
 - ISRO & NASA are jointly working on the development of Dual Frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar Imaging Satellite named as NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar.
 - The data obtained from this satellite will be useful for a variety of application, which include natural resources mapping and monitoring etc.
 - The data obtained is not meant for building climate resilience.
- SpaceX launches first recycled rocket
 - SpaceX has launched its first recycled rocket, the biggest leap yet in its bid to drive down costs and speed up flights.
 - The Falcon 9 blasted off from Florida's Kennedy Space Center hoisting a broadcasting satellite into the early evening clear sky on the historic rocket reflight.
 - It was the first time SpaceX founder tried to fly a booster that soared before on an orbital mission.

- ISRO sends 4 teams to Antarctica
 - ISRO on March 29 joined the 36th scientific mission to Antarctica, organised by the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research
 - This year, four teams from ISRO—one team from Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad and one team each from the National Remote Sensing Centre, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun and the Space Physics Laboratory, Thiruvananthapuram—are participating
- National Conference on Down Syndrome
 - **Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment inaugurated a “National Conference on Down Syndrome” in New Delhi.**
 - Down Syndrome is a chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and learning disabilities.
 - Delayed development and behavioural problems are often reported in children with Down Syndrome.
 - Persons with Down Syndrome have 47 chromosomes as compared to 46 in majority of people.
- World's largest artificial Sun rises
 - Germany isn't exactly famous for its sunshine, so to help with the country's commitment to investigating renewable energy, the German Space Center (DLR) has constructed the world's largest artificial Sun.
 - In addition to solar-generated hydrogen, DLR sees Synlight has having other applications, including studies of how materials age under extreme UV rays.
- GRAPES-3 Telescope upgraded
 - The **GRAPES-3 experiment** at **TIFR's Cosmic Ray Laboratory** in Ootacamund is getting upgraded.
 - The telescope made news last year when it detected the effect of a solar storm that hit the earth in June 2015.

- The upgrade will play a major role in getting precise information about the **propagation of storms in 'the last million miles' (from the L-1 point)** of their journey from the Sun to the earth.
- ISRO commissions two facilities at VSSC
 - ISRO commissioned two facilities- a Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and Shock Tunnel- at the VSSC at Thiruvananthapuram as part of its continuous and concerted efforts to minimize cost of access to space.
 - The 1 meter Hypersonic Wind Tunnel and 1 meter Shock Tunnel have been established with a wide spectrum of simulation capabilities in terms of Mach number, Reynolds number and re-entry velocities.

Art and Culture

- 'Namami Brahmaputra' festival
 - 'Namami Brahmaputra', the biggest ever river festival in India, was held in Assam on March 31.
 - The festival had took place across 21 districts of Assam from March 31 to April 4.
 - President Pranab Mukherjee had inaugurate the festival on the banks of the river, which is considered country's only male river.
- Inclusion of Cities in World Heritage
 - Five Indian cities have been included in the Tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, namely, Historic City of Ahmadabad, Delhi-A Heritage City, Jaipur City, Rajasthan, Ekamra Kshetra - The Temple City, Bhubaneswar and the Victorian & Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai.
 - All the required information for tentative list proposals has already been submitted to UNESCO World Heritage Centre.
- Ugadi Festival

- Ugadi is the New Year's Day for the people of the Telugu and Kannada communities in India.
- It falls on a different day every year because the Hindu calendar is a lunisolar calendar.
- This holiday is one of the most auspicious days for Telugus and Kannadigas.
- The Saka calendar begins with the month of Chaitra (March–April) and Ugadi marks the first day of the new year.
- Pawan Hans to launch its "Delhi Darshan"
 - National chopper operator Pawan Hans is set to launch its "Delhi Darshan" rides from 1st April.
 - At the inauguration of its first helipad in North Delhi's Rohini area, company announced the roll out of Delhi Darshan rides.
 - Through this ride the visitors can experience the breathtaking beauty through aerial view of Pritampura Tower, Majnu Ka Tila, Red Fort, Rajghat, Akshardham Temple.
- **Reviving Assam's ancient ink**
 - By unravelling the science behind Assam's ancient herbal ink 'mahi', researchers are planning to recreate the lost techniques of manuscript writing.
 - **The technique involves extracting 'mahi' using cow urine from a cocktail of fruit pulp and tree bark such as haritaki, amla etc -often infused with the blood of eels or catfish.**
 - Rust from iron tools or nails was added for an intense black hue.
- World heritage status for Sankaram
 - The Buddhist Heritage sites at Salihundam (Srikakulam) and Sankaram near Anakapalle in Visakhapatnam, in addition to Lepakshi (Anantapur)

and the Nagarjunakonda International Museum (Guntur) are likely to find a place in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

- ASI, New Delhi, sought a proposal from its Hyderabad unit, for sending it to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre for tentative listing.
- Cultural festival 'India by the Nile'
 - In Egypt, the mega cultural festival 'India by the Nile' got off to a colourful start at the foot of the Pyramids in Cairo, showcasing joint handicraft exhibition of India and Egypt.
 - The event is a special moment as this year India celebrate 70 years of independence and also 70 years of its diplomatic relations with Egypt.
 - The Handicraft Exhibition which runs from 8-14 March.
- Bharatnatyam dance performance at UN
 - Classical danseuse and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, Aishwarya R Dhanush, will give a Bharatanatyam performance at the UN on International Women's Day.
 - The invitees include those from the 190-member countries and top Indian diplomats.
 - Aishwarya, also a filmmaker, said her hour-long performance at the UN headquarters in New York was scheduled on March 8.
- Kurukh, an endangered tribal language
 - Kurukh, an endangered tribal language of the Dravidian family, is set to get a new lease of life in West Bengal.
 - It is spoken by the Oraon tribal community.
 - Government taking steps for the recognition of the Kurukh language of the Oraon community who live in Dooars
 - Jharkhand has recognised Kurukh as a language, and students can write their school final examination in its script.
- UK-India Year of Culture 2017 launched

- The UK-India Year of Culture 2017 was launched on 27 February 2017 at Buckingham Palace to mark a year-long celebration of the strong relationship shared between the UK & India.
- Queen Elizabeth II hosted a gala event to mark the launch.
- Indian celebrities such as Anoushka Shankar, Gurinder Chadha & Shiamak Davar arrived.
- **There was an Indian dance performance entitled 'Ekam' in the reception**

Sports

- Messi banned from next four matches
 - Argentina forward Lionel Messi has been banned from their next 4 competitive internationals starting with the World Cup's qualifier in Bolivia for swearing at a match official.
 - Five- times world player of the year will play in only one of Argentina's remaining five World Cup qualifiers.
 - FIFA said Messi had directed insulting words at an assistant referee during the 1-0 win over Chile.
- Kolkata to host FIFA U-17 WC finals
 - The iconic Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata will host the final match of the FIFA U-17 World Cup match.
 - The final of the 24-team event, the first big FIFA tournament to be held in the country, will be on October 28. The two semifinals will be hosted by Guwahati and Navi Mumbai.
 - The FIFA U-17 World Cup is the world championship of association football for male players under the age of 17.
- R Ashwin receives Garfield Sobers Trophy

- R Ashwin received Garfield Sobers Trophy for being named the ICC Cricketer of the Year as well as the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year.
- He is the third Indian, and the 12th player overall to win the award. He was presented the honour by Kapil Dev.
- During the voting period, which ran from 14th Sept 2015 to 20th Sept 2016 he took 48 wickets and scored 336 runs & also claimed 27 wickets in 19 T20Is.
- Bhubaneswar to host men's hockey final
 - Bhubaneswar will host the men's hockey World League Final, 2018 World Cup.
 - It will host the **Men's Hockey World League Final in December this year and the men's World Cup in 2018.**
 - The Kalinga Stadium in the Orissa capital was confirmed as host after the state government signed a deal with FIH to sponsor the two events.
- Srinath- India's 46th Grandmaster
 - Chennai's Srinath Narayanan is set to become India's 46th Grandmaster after he defeated Spanish GM David Anton Guijarro at the ongoing Sharjah Masters 2017 chess tournament.
 - He became India's youngest FIDE-rated player in 2002 when he was just eight.
 - He finished as joint winner in the U-12 World Championship in 2005 in France.
 - Srinath became an International Master at the age of 14.
- Stadium set to develop as per FIFA norms
 - The Bakshi Stadium in Srinagar is all set to be developed as a modern football facility as per FIFA norms at an estimated cost of Rs 48 crore.
 - Bakshi stadium will be developed according to the norms of world governing body FIFA, in 12 working months.

- Bakhshi Stadium is a stadium in Srinagar, India. It is mainly used for football matches.
- 18 medals in Olympics World Winter Games
 - **India's special athletes continue to make India proud by winning 18** medals so far in the ongoing 2017 Olympics World Winter Games in Austria.
 - The medal tally includes 6 gold, 4 silver and 8 bronze.
 - The team of 89 differently-abled sports persons of the Special Olympics Bharat (SOB) is participating in the competition.
 - Over 2600 athletes from 105 nations are taking part in the event.
- ISSF World Cup: Ankur Mittal wins gold
 - Marksman Ankur Mittal has delivered India's nine-member contingent its first medal at the International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup (Shot Gun) in Acapulco, Mexico by shooting gold in the men's double trap.
 - Mittal, who won silver at last month's ISSF World Cup in New Delhi, beat the gold medalist at that event, Australian James Willet, on day three of the competition.
- Vidya wins silver in Women world Snooker
 - India's Vidya Pillai produced a spirited performance before settling for silver in the World Women Snooker Championship in Singapore.
 - Vidya defeated by Ng On Yee (Hong Kong) in the final,
 - Vidya settled for silver, securing the first international medal for India in 2017.
- Pujara plays India's longest innings
 - 525 Balls faced by Cheteshwar Pujara - the most by an India batsman in a Test innings (where balls faced is known).
 - The previous record was Rahul Dravid's 495 deliveries for his career-best 270 in Rawalpindi in 2004.

- Pujara is only the fourth batsman to face over 500 balls against Australia. Wally Hammond did it three times.

Polity

- **Govt merges ‘autonomous’ tribunals**

- The government has merged several powerful administrative tribunals and assumed powers to appoint and remove their chiefs.
- The Central Administrative Tribunal has been established for adjudication of disputes with respect to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services.
- This was done in pursuance of the amendment of Constitution of India by Articles 323A.

- **NSEBC As Constitutional Body**

- Union cabinet has approved setting up of National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes replacing the National Commission for Backward Classes.
- The approval was given for amending the Constitution and inserting A-338B for setting up the new commission.
- National Commission for Backward Classes is an Indian statutory body under the Min. of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- **Amendments to the NABARD Act, 1981**

- Union Cabinet has approved Amendments to the NABARD Act, 1981.
- Transfer of 0.4 per cent. equity of RBI in NABARD amounting to Rs. 20 crores to the Government of India.
- The proposed amendments in NABARD Act, include, certain other amendments including changes in long title and certain Sections to bring Medium Enterprises and Handlooms in **NABARD’s mandate**.

- **Comptroller and Auditor General**

- The Comptroller and Auditor General is an authority, established by the Constitution under Constitution of India/Part V - Chapter V/Sub-part 7B/Article 148
- The CAG is mentioned in the Constitution of India under Article 148 – 151.
- The CAG is ranked 9th and enjoys the same status as a judge of Supreme Court of India in Indian order of precedence.
- Kharage set to become next PAC Chairman
 - The Congress floor leader in Lok Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge is all set to become the next chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC).
 - Kharge will succeed his party colleague K V Thomas.
 - The chair of the PAC is given to an MP of the main Opposition party.
 - It is reconstituted every year with a strength of not more than 22 members, of which 15 are from Lok Sabha and 7 from Rajya Sabha.
- Highest number of Women MLAs in UP
 - The 17th Uttar Pradesh legislative assembly will have a record 38 women MLAs.
 - This is a record for UP since 1947.
 - All political parties put together only 96 tickets were given to women candidates.
 - The BJP had given the highest number of tickets to women. Of 43 women candidates who were given tickets by the Bharatiya Janata Party, 32 won the election.
- Chief Justice appointed in four High Courts
 - Chief Justice (CJ) for High Court (HC) in Kerala, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Jharkhand were appointed on March 10.
 - Hemant Gupta has been appointed CJ of MP High Court.
 - Acting CJ of Jharkhand High Court P K Mohanty has been appointed the ‘regular’ CJ there.

- Justice Navniti Prasad appointed CJ of Kerala HC while Justice T B Radhakrishnan, has been made CJ of Chhattisgarh HC.
- Lok Sabha passes Maternity Bill
 - **Women in India's organised sector workforce will get paid maternity leave** of up to 26 weeks, up from the existing 12 weeks, under the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Bill, 2016, that was passed in the Lok Sabha
 - The law will help 1.8 million women in the organised sector.
- Centre amends Right To Education rules
 - The HRD Min. has amended the rules under the RTE Act to make it compulsory for all state govt. to codify expected levels of learning which students in Classes I to VIII should achieve in different subjects.
 - This is the first time that learning indicators will be used in India to assess children.
 - The amendment of Rule 23 (2) to this notification, applicable to all states, except J&K.
- Specified Bank Notes Act
 - The government has notified the law that makes holding of more than 10 scrapped notes punishable with a minimum fine of Rs 10,000.
 - The Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Act, 2017, was passed by Parliament last month.
 - The law, signed by President Pranab Mukherjee on February 27, also provides for a minimum fine Rs 50,000 for false declaration by persons who were abroad.

Environment

- Kanha tiger reserve gets official mascot
 - Kanha has become the first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot — Bhoorsingh the Barasingha, a swamp deer.

- The Kanha tiger reserve, spread over Mandla and Balaghat districts, is the only place in the world where the species exists.
- The mascot aims to present the hard ground swamp deer as the spirit of the reserve and spread awareness to save it from possible extinction.
- Mining banned in Uttarakhand
 - The Uttarakhand High Court ordered a complete ban on mining activities in the State for four months.
 - The move comes 4 days after a forest worker was allegedly killed in Ramnagar while he was chasing the mining mafia.
 - The court directed the State government to refrain from granting any fresh license, mining lease, reconnaissance or prospecting license till the committee submitted its report.
- Kandi road project
 - The Uttarakhand government will ensure that the wildlife at Corbett National Park is not harmed with the construction of the Kandi road which passes through it.
 - The Kandi road project will reduce the distance between Garhwal and Kumaon by around 70 km.
 - The Supreme Court had ordered the Public Works Department of the Uttarakhand government to prepare a new alignment of the project.
- Earth Hour 2017
 - Earth Hour is the **world's largest movement for the environment**, organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
 - The event is held annually encouraging individuals, communities, households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. towards the end of March.
 - In 2017, it will be held from 8:30 pm and 9: 30 pm on Saturday, March 25.
- World's 1st fluorescent frog discovered

- The world's 1st fluorescent frog has been discovered in the Amazon basin in Argentina.
- In normal light the frog appears to have a dull, mottled brown-green skin with red dots, but under UV light it glows a bright fluorescent green.
- Fluorescence- the ability to absorb light at short wavelengths and re-emit it at longer wavelengths- is uncommon in creatures that live on land.
- 25000 years old Ostriches found
 - Though it is native to Africa, several geologists and archaeologists have over the time found ostrich egg shell pieces in India, mostly in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
 - A DNA study of some partly fossilised ostrich egg shells was recently conducted at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology.
 - The carbon dating to determine the age shows that they are at least 25,000 years old,”
- New hydrocarbon exploration policy
 - India has announced a new hydrocarbon exploration licensing policy which offers single license to explore oil and gas resources.
 - Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy or HELP, the new policy also gives the investors the much needed freedom in pricing and marketing for crude oil and natural gas.
 - The new policy will make India a business and investor friendly destination.
- 'Operation Thunder Bird'
 - 'Operation Thunder Bird' is the code name for Interpol's multi-national and multi-species enforcement operation in India.
 - The operation brought about a unanimous approach by the state enforcement agencies in the fight against wildlife crime in the country.
 - Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has convened a species specific operation on turtles, code named 'Operation Save Kurma' from Dec15 to Jan30.

- Government's **biotech innovation centre**
 - The government's nodal funding agency for the biotech industry, the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), will house its regional entrepreneurship centre at Bengaluru-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP), a biotechnology innovation incubator.
 - "BIRAC's Regional Entrepreneurship Centre's (BREC) aim is to increase portfolio through partnerships.
- WG: 57000 sq km as eco. sensitive
 - The government has finally notified nearly 57,000 square km area in the Western Ghats region as ecologically sensitive area (ESA).
 - The 56,825 square km of land is spread over six states of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
 - The notification covers an area that is slightly less than the 59,940 sq km of area identified by a committee headed by K Kasturirangan in 2013.

Defence

- First Landing Craft Utility commissioned
 - The first ship of a new class of Landing Craft Utility (LCU) vessels has been commissioned.
 - The LCU Mark IV ship, named L 51, has been built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited in Kolkata.
 - The craft is designed for amphibious operations jointly carried out by the Navy and the Army to ensure maritime security.
- FM clears military reforms proposal
 - Union FM Arun Jaitley, who got the additional charge of the defence ministry, has given the green light to widespread military reforms.

- The reforms are based on a report by the Lt General (ret) DB Shekatkar committee, which made recommendations on enhancing the combat potential of India's all 3 armed forces.
 - A major recommendation is that the defence budget should be 2.5% to 3% of the GDP.
- Fire at Jabalpur ordnance factory
 - A series of loud explosions and a massive fire in the Ordnance Factory at Khamaria in Jabalpur caused scare among people on March 25.
 - Ordnance Factories Board consisting of the Indian Ordnance Factories is an industrial organisation, functioning under the Department of Defence Production of Ministry of Defence, GOI.
 - OFB is the world's largest government-operated production organisation.
- Navy gets three naval systems from DRDO
 - Defence Minister handed over three naval systems, developed by premier defence research organisation DRDO to the navy.
 - The naval systems, given to Indian Navy, are USHUS-II submarine sonar, directing gear for hull-mounted sonar array, and inertial navigation system for ship applications.
 - Sonars detect objects on or under the water.
- US is India's top arms supplier
 - **Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence reveals in a new report** released on Thu **that the US has been India's biggest supplier of weapons** platforms over the past 3 yrs.
 - It is followed by Russia, Israel and France in that order.
 - Non-official think tanks and non-proliferation groups like the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute publish annual assessments of global arms transfers.
- INS Tillanchang commissioned

- INS Tillanchang, a water jet fast attack craft (WJFAC) was commissioned into the Indian Navy at Karwar, Karnataka.
- INS Tillanchang is the third ship of four follow-on WJFAC built by the Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Kolkata.
- The first two ships of the class, IN ships Tarmugli and Tihayu were commissioned in 2016 and are based at Vishakapatnam.
- Military exercise 'Surya Kiran-XI'
 - A joint military exercise SURYA KIRAN-XI between India and Nepal will begin today in Pithoragarh area of Uttarakhand.
 - This is a battalion level joint exercise between the two armies.
 - The Surya Kiran series of exercises are being conducted biannually, alternatively in India and Nepal.
- INS Viraat retires
 - **INS Viraat, the world's oldest aircraft carrier in active service will be decommissioned today with a ceremonial send-off in Mumbai.**
 - INS Viraat was commissioned in Indian Navy in 1987, before that the historic ship served Royal British Navy for 27 long years.
 - It was built in 1943, during the Second World War.
 - It's nickname is 'Grand old lady'.
- DRDO signs deal with JSHL
 - DRDO has signed a technology transfer agreement with Jindal Stainless (Hisar) Limited (JSHL) for manufacturing High Nitrogen Steel.
 - The agreement was signed between between the Defence Metallurgical Research Laboratory and JSHL.
 - High Nitrogen Steel has higher ballistic strength than normal steel and currently India largely depends on imports.
- AI Nagah-II 2017

- The armies of India and Oman are scheduled to conduct their second bilateral exercise, Al Nagah-II 2017, in March with a focus on counter-terrorism.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote bilateral Army-to-Army relations and enhance interoperability while exchanging skills and experiences.
- **The navies are holding the bilateral maritime exercises called 'Naseem Al Bahr' since 1993.**

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