

– Current Affairs –

December 2016

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Railway Starts Giving Free Accidental Insurance Cover for Booking Railway Ticket Online

- i. In order to promote Digital Transaction after demonetization of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000 currency note, the Indian Railways has started to give free accidental insurance cover to the passengers who booked their tickets through online mode, from December 10, 2016.
- ii. According to Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) the passengers having confirmed or RAC (Reserved Against Cancellation) tickets would be covered under this scheme.
- iii. The move was implemented after, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced a free accident insurance cover of Rs 10 lakh for passengers who buy railway tickets online, to promote the cashless transaction.
- iv. Earlier in September 2016, an optional insurance scheme was launched by the IRCTC on a pilot basis for one year, which provided an insurance cover of about Rs. 10 lakh for booking online ticket by paying 92 paise.
- v. Under the scheme, Rs. 10 lakh was given to beneficiary in case of the death of the passenger, along with Rs 10,000 for transportation of mortal remains.
- vi. Passenger was entitled to get Rs. 10 lakh in case he gets permanently disabled, Rs 7.5 lakh in case of partial disability, while Rs 2 lakh for the hospitalization expense.

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India offers tsunami warning system to SCS countries

India has offered tsunami early warning-system to South China Sea (SCS) countries like Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines as part of soft-diplomacy. India already provides earthquake and tsunami-warning alerts to several countries in the Indian Ocean neighbourhood, as do Japan and Australia. Tsunami early warning-system Developed by scientists at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS). It warns concerned authorities of any large earthquake in the Ocean and threat it poses. Uses mathematical model to estimate if an earthquake in India's oceanic neighbourhood can result in a tsunami.

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Madhya Pradesh CM Launches Five Months Long Narmada Seva Yatra at Amarkantak

- i. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched Narmada Seva Yatra at Amarkantak on December 11, 2016.
- ii. The five months long Yatra which will continue till May 11, 2017 aims to turn the Narmada river pollution free.
- iii. The Narmada Seva Yatra will cover more than 1,900 kilometres in 16 districts and create awareness about the conservation of the river.
- iv. Various campaigns will be held every week during the yatra and the Chief Minister will join the campaign and active participation of public and society will be ensured in it.
- v. All the villages along the river will have Narmada Seva Samiti to take various corrective actions on measures to be undertaken for its preservation.
- vi. Trees will be planted along the banks of the Narmada and sewage water will be treated before it flows into the river.

Rajiv Gandhi airport achieves carbon neutral status

A. The Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), Hyderabad has achieved carbon neutral status. It is the first in the Asia-Pacific region in the 5-15 million passengers per annum category to attain this status. Earlier in September 2016 GMR Group-led Delhi Airport had become the first airport in Asia-Pacific to achieve carbon neutral status among all categories.

When is the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development celebrated?

- A. December 2
- B. December 5
- C. December 1
- D. November 30

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B. December 5

Explanation:

International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development is observed every year on December 5 since 1985 to show volunteers contributions at the international, national and local levels in order to get the Millennium Development Goals. 2016 theme :Global Applause – give volunteers a hand

Who is the winner of the UK Turner prize 2016 ?

- A.Anthea Hamilton
- B.Josephine Pryde
- C.Michael Dean
- D.Helen Marten

Answer & Explanation

Answer – D.Helen Marten

Explanation:

31 year old UK artist Helen Marten was named as the winner of the 2016 Turner prize. He received award with £25,000 prize by the writer Ben Okri at a ceremony at London’s Tate Britain gallery

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Which instant messaging service has launched the world’s first chat operating system which allows developers to build customised apps, bots and integrations on the messenger?

- A.Google+Hangouts(Gtalk)
- B.Jabber
- C.Spark
- D.Flock

Answer & Explanation

Answer – D.Flock

Explanation:

A free instant messaging service for work and business environments, Flock has launched world’s first chat operating system”FlockOS” by Bhavin Turakhia, Flock CEO on December 20, 2016. Developers can build apps by using Flock OS that provide a tightly integrated experience by using widgets. This OS provides setup slash commands, providing an additional option for users to interact with the app.

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Who has been named as the Captain of Cricket Australia’s ODI team of the year 2016?

- A.Virat Kohli
- B.Steve Smith
- C.M.S. Dhoni

D.AB de Villiers

Answer & Explanation

Answer – A.Virat Kohli

Explanation:

Indian Test cricket captain Virat Kohli has been named as the captain of Cricket Australia's ODI team of the year. He was preferred over Australian captain Steve Smith. Recently he was also named the captain of ICC's ODI team of the year. Out of 10 ODI matches played by Virat Kohli in 2016, he scored a score of 45+ in 8 matches and has an average of greater than 90 in successful run chase for India.

Name the US National Football Player and Heisman Trophy Winner who died in Colorado, US on December 6, 2016 at the age of 47?

A.Winston Reid

B.Cam Newton

C.Rashaan Salaam

D.Hassan Bashir

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Rashaan Salaam

Explanation:

US National Football Player Rashaan Salaam found dead in Colorado, US on December 6, 2016. He was 42. Salaam has won the U.S. college football's highest honor Heisman Trophy in 1994.

To regulate the pet shops the Environment ministry on December 16, 2016, announced the notification of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2016. Who is the Union Environment Minister?

A.J P Nadda

B.Anil Madhav Dave

C.Anant Geete

D.Prakash Javedkar

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Anil Madhav Dave

Explanation:

The Union Environment minister, Anil Madhav Dave, on December 16, 2016, announced the notification of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2016. The aim of the rule is to regulate the pet shops across the country and prevent cruelty against animals kept in such pet shops.

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Pakistan will host Davis Cup tie against Iran in Islamabad in 2017. Davis cup is given for?

A.Badminton

B.Cricket

C.Tennis

D.Footabll

Answer & Explanation

Answer -C Tennis

Explanation:

International Tennis Federation (ITF) has given its approval to host a Davis Cup tie against Iran in Islamabad in February 3-5, 2017 announced by Pakistan Tennis Federation secretary Khalid.

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The Foundation Stone of Char Dham Highway Development Project was laid by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on December 27 in Uttarakhand.What is the total outlay of the project?

A.Rs. 11,000

B.Rs. 12,000

C.Rs. 15,000

D.Rs. 17,000

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Rs. 12000

Explanation:

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Char Dham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna in Uttarakhand's Dehradun on December 27, 2016. The Chardham Mahamarg Vikas Pariyojna, or the Chardham Highway Development Project, is an ambitious initiative to improve connectivity to the Char Dham (Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath) pilgrimage centres in the Himalayas.The total cost of the project is estimated to be Rs. 12000. The entire project is likely to be completed by 2018.

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Which Electronic Commerce Company has launched a Startup Programme 'Launchpad' in India to support Indian startups?

- A.Snapdeal
- B.Amazon
- C.Jabong
- D.Myntra

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Amazon

Explanation: An electronic commerce company Amazon launched it's startup programme 'Launchpad' in India to support Indian startups and scale up their business. Launchpad will help startups launch, market, and distribute their products to Amazon customers across India and around the world via a dedicated store.

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Which among the following institutions have been selected for the Digital India Silver Award under Most Innovative Citizen Engagement category?

- A.Mumbai Western Railway
- B.Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation
- C.Municipal Corporation of Delhi
- D.South East Central Railway

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation

Explanation:

The Coimbatore City Municipal Corporation(CCMC) in Tamil Nadu has been selected for Digital India Silver Award instituted by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in the category of "Most Innovative Citizen Engagement" The corporation was chosen for installing and implementing free WiFi Scheme in its various offices.

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China successfully launched two High-Resolution Remote Sensing Satellites on December 28, 2016 from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre to get high quality commercial images. Name the satellite.

- A.SuperResol-101/02

B.HighResol-1 01/02

C.SuperView-1 01/02

D.HighView-1 01/02

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.SuperView-1 01/02

Explanation:

China successfully launched two High-Resolution Remote Sensing Satellites on December 28, 2016 from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre in Shanxi Province to get commercial images. The satellites, SuperView-1 01/02, blasted off on Long March 2D rocket. They are able to provide commercial images at 0.5-meter resolution.

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Who has been appointed as the new Chief of Army Staff?

A.Lt Gen S K Sinha

B.Praveen Bakshi

C.Bipin Rawat

D.Gen A S Vaidya

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Bipin Rawat

Explanation:

Government on December 17, 2016, decided to appoint Lieutenant general Bipin Rawat as the new chief of Army Staff. Rawat will succeed General Dalbir Singh. Lt Gen Bipin Rawat is currently serving as Vice Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army from 01 September 2016.

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To conduct fair, peaceful and inclusive elections, the Election Commission of India has organized a training program for SAARC Countries from December 5 to December 15 which is being held in which place?

A.New Delhi

B.Ahemdabad

C.Mumbai

D.Pune

Answer & Explanation

Answer – A.New Delhi

Explanation:

A 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), New Delhi, under the sponsorship of Union Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Aim: to conduct free, fair, peaceful and inclusive elections in the country. The training program started on December 5, 2016 and will continue till December 15, 2016.

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BHEL has commissioned the first unit of the 4×30 MW Pulichintala Hydroelectric project (HEP) on December 1, 2016 in which district of Andhra Pradesh ?

A.Adilabad

B.Guntur

C.Warangal

D.Chennur

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Guntur

Explanation:

New Delhi based BHEL has commissioned the first unit of the 4×30 MW Pulichintala Hydroelectric project (HEP) on December 1, 2016 in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh on the river Krishna.

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Social Networking Service Twitter has recently partnered with which bank to provide an advanced customer service in real time?

A.HDFC Bank

B.ICICI Bank

C.Yes Bank

D.RBL Bank

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.ICICI Bank

Explanation:

Social Networking Service Twitter and Mumbai based ICICI Bank announced a partnership to enable customers with direct online response to their queries and feedback in real-time. With this ICICI Bank become the first bank in India to implement the Twitter based customer services @ICICIBank_Care.

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Name the Indian Boxing Champion who retained his WBO-Asia Pacific Super Middleweight title on December 17 by defeating Francis Cheka.

- A. Vijender Singh
- B. Shiva Thapa
- C. Akhil Kumar
- D. Manoj Kumar

Answer & Explanation

Answer – A. Vijender Singh

Explanation:

Indian boxing star Vijender Singh defeated former world champion Tanzania's Francis Cheka to retain WBO-Asia Pacific Super Middleweight title in New Delhi on December 17, 2016. On July 7, 2016 Singh defeated Australian Kerry Hope to win WBO Asia Pacific Super Middleweight title.

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Punjab Launches its Ambitious Amphibian Bus 'Harike Cruise'

- i. The Punjab government launched first of its kind, amphibious bus project "Harike Cruise" at the Harike wetland near Amritsar on December 12, 2016, almost after two years of announcing the launch.
 - ii. The bus was launched by the Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal who took the inaugural ride with sister Praneet Kaur Kairon and other officials including media.
 - iii. The vehicle, which can run both on land and water, was imported from Swedish automobile company Scania and was reassembled in Goa before being brought to Harike.
 - iv. The overall cost of the bus has is about Rs 11 crore.
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ISRO signs deal for first privately built satellite

The Indian Space Research Organisation has signed an agreement with a consortium of six companies to deliver India's first industry-built satellite by late 2017. The agreement was signed between M Annadurai, Director of ISRO Satellite Centre (ISAC) and the consortium lead Alpha Design

Technologies P Ltd. ISAC assembles India's satellites for communication, remote sensing and navigation. It is for the first time that ISRO outsourced the construction of entire satellite.

Rajya Sabha Clears Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2014

- i. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, 2014, which aims at securing and enhancing the rights and entitlements of disabled persons was passed with amendments in the Rajya Sabha on December 14, 2016.
 - ii. The bill will replace the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995.
 - iii. The amended Bill also complies with the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was signed by India in 2007.
 - iv. The legislation was drafted on the basis of the recommendations of the Sudha Kaul Committee, under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Bill was introduced by the Union minister for social justice and empowerment Mallikarjun Kharge.
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India, Russia bilateral naval exercise Indra Navy 2016 begins

The ninth edition of exercise INDRA NAVY, an annual bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy began in the Bay of Bengal. The primary aim of exercise INDRA NAVY-16 is to increase inter-operability amongst the two navies and develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations.

Assam to Make Majuli Country's First Carbon Neutral District

- i. Assam government has initiated a project on December 14, 2016, to make river island Majuli the country's first ever Carbon Neutral district by 2020.
 - ii. The project titled 'Sustainable Action for Climate Resilient Development in Majuli' (SACReD, Majuli) was initiated by Assam's department of Environment and Forest and was launched by Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Biodiversity and Climate) A K Johari at Majuli.
 - iii. The aim of the project is to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
 - iv. Initially the carbon neutral agenda will focus on mitigation through forestry activities and biodiversity conservation, followed by other interventions over the next three years.
 - v. The project will be designed and implemented in partnership with other departments of the district for which a district level committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner has been constituted.
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Indo-Russian Bilateral Naval Exercise Indra Navy- 2016 begins

The 9th edition of Indra Navy exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Navy began on 14 December 2016 in the Bay of Bengal. This annual bilateral maritime exercise will continue till 21 December 2016. The main aim of this exercise is to enhance the interoperability between the two navies and develop the common understanding of maritime security operations. The first edition of this maritime exercise between India and Russia was first held in 2003.

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World's highest bridge opens in China:

The World's highest bridge opened to traffic in China, connecting two south western provinces and reducing travel time in the region by three quarters. The 4400-foot long Beipanjiang bridge has a height equivalent to a 200-story building, which makes it the world's highest bridge down to the ground or water surface. Construction on the bridge spanning the Beipanjiang Valley began in 2013. It was taken nearly 3 years.

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Centre releases special stamp on freedom fighters & Hardayal Municipal Heritage Public Library

Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare Smt Anupriya Patel released the few new postage stamps in New Delhi on December 26, 2016

The New Postage stamps were

- i. Special Cover on freedom fighter "Shri Gaya Prasad Katiyar"
 - ii. A set of eight Commemorative Postage Stamps on "Personalities Series: Bihar" . The eight personalities are Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, Karpoori Thakur, Dashrath Manjhi, Vidyapati , Kailashpati Mishra, Kunwar Singh, Phanishwar Nath Renu and Sri Krishna Sinha
 - iii. Stamp on "Hardayal Municipal Heritage Public Library".
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Govt meets PUMY target of 1.5 crore LPG connections:

The Union Govt has been able to achieve the full year's target of providing 1.5 crore LPG connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PUMY) with eight months. According to the Ministry of petroleum & Natural gas statement, the top five states with maximum connections are UP (46 lakh), West Bengal (19 lakh), Bihar (19 lakh), MP (17 lakh) and Rajasthan (14 lakh). These constitutes nearly 75 percent of the total connections released.

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India's TeamIndus has decided to share its spacecraft with which country to carry its rovers to travel to the moon for the Gogle Lunar XPRIZE?

A.Britain

B.Japan

C.France

D.Russia

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Japan

Explanation:

Bengaluru-based TeamIndus has announced an agreement to carry Japanese team Hakuto's robotic rover in the Google Lunar XPRIZE, to the moon aboard TeamIndus spacecraft in late 2017. This is a first-of-its-kind collaboration of two private space enterprises competing in the Google Lunar XPRIZE. The TeamIndus spacecraft, in addition to the Japanese rover, will also be carrying its own indigenously designed and developed robotic rover, ECA (Ek Chhoti si Asha).

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In order to mop up extra liquidity from the system in view of demonetisation, the Government and the Reserve Bank on December 2, 2016 has sharply raised the Market Stabilisation Scheme (MSS) from Rs 30,000 crore to Rs. _____?

A.Rs. 6 lakh crore

B.Rs. 10 lakh crore

C.Rs. 1 lakh crore

D.Rs. 5 lakh crore

Answer & Explanation

Answer – A.Rs. 6 lakh crore

Explanation:

In order to manage the extra liquidity from the system after the demonetisation, government and the Reserve Bank of India has sharply raised the Market Stabilisation Scheme (MSS) ceiling to Rs. 6 lakh crore from Rs. 30,000 crore on December 2, 2016.

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Which bank has launched an agricultural investment credit scheme in Rajasthan on December 31, 2016 to help farmers double their income?

A.United Bank of India

B.Bank of Baroda

C.Union Bank of India

D.Bank of Maharashtra

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Bank of Baroda

Explanation:

Indian state-owned banking and financial services company Bank of Baroda has launched an agricultural investment credit for the farmers in Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan on December 31, 2016.
Aim :To help the farmers in doubling their income by the year 2022

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Haryana Organises Country's First Digi Dhan Mela to spread digital literacy

- i .In order to promote cashless economy, the state government of Haryana organized the country's first Digi Dhan Mela in the Gurugram, Haryana on December 26, 2016 post demonitization.
 - ii. The centre has planned to organise as many as 100 such melas throughout the country up to April 14, 2017 for educating the people.
 - iii .The mela inspired the people to go for digital and cashless transactions. Everything in the mela was cashless, ranging from food courts, E-Thelas, cultural events among others.
 - iv. During the mela, banking accounts of more than 3,000 people were opened and about 7,000 persons were imparted training about digital payments. Lucky Grahak Yojana Awards were also announced in the mela.
 - v. Government of India has launched two schemes namely – Lucky Grahak Yojana & Digi Dhan Vyapar Yojana for consumers and merchants respectively wef from December 25th, 2016 to promote digital payments in the country.
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Anil Bajjal appointed as Lt. Governor of Delhi:

Former home secretary Anil Bajjal will takeover as New Delhi Lt. Governor replacing Najeeb Jung. President Pranab Mukherjee on 29th December accepted Delhi's Lt. Governor Najeeb Jung's resignation and appointed Anil Bajjal as his successor. Bajjal, a 1969 batch IAS officer of te Union Territories cadre, was removed as Union Home Secretary when the UPA Govt assumed power in May, 2004.

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Uttar Pradesh CM lays the Foundation Stone of Film Television and Liberal Arts Institute

- i.Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav, laid the foundation stone for Film Television and Liberal Arts Institute on December 27 in Lucknow.

ii. A token amount of Rs 10 crore has been allotted by the state government for the institute and 14 acres has been allotted for the institute under Awadh Vihar Yojna near Lucknow Haat on Shaheed Path.

iii. To promote the shooting of films in the state, the Chief Minister also distributed Rs 9.41 crore to film industry people.

iv. CM Akhilesh Yadav highlighted the various developmental projects taken during his rule including Lucknow metro and Lucknow-Agra Expressway and claimed his government is committed for the development of the state.

v. Present on the foundation ceremony were veteran Bollywood actress Jaya Bachchan, her son Abhishek Bachchan, film director Anurag Kashyap and Bhojpuri actor Ravi Kishen among others.

PayTM launches 100 members "Merchant Helpdesk":

PayTM 26th December announced a 100-member merchant help desk to educate merchants across India. Digital payments company and on line market place plat from payTM has constituted a 100-member merchant help desk to address concerns on delay in payments. The company has earmarked Rs. 50 crore towards this initiative to educate merchants on digital payments.

4-Day World Bhojpuri Conference begins in Varanasi

i. The four-day World Bhojpuri Conference began in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh on December 29, 2016 and will continue till January 1, 2017. High Commissioner of Mauritius to India, Jagdishwar Goburdhun informed that participants from over 18 countries are participating in the conference.

ii. The Conference has been organised at a private school in Badalapur where a large number of Bhojpuri speakers residing in different parts of the world will deliberate over culture, religion, language and business among other issues.

iii. Aim: To strengthen the links of the people of Indian-origin, who once belonged to the Bhojpuri-speaking belt in India and had migrated to different parts of the world.

iv .A museum would also be set up along with a library and a committee hall for the preservation and promotion of the language.

v. During the conference, a 'Bhojpuri Ratna' award and 'World Bhojpuri Karmayogi' award will be conferred on over 25 people including Mauritius Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh, Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das, BJP MP and Bhojpuri actor Manoj Tiwari, Bollywood actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shatrughan Sinha and other personalities.

Environmental Tax law passed by China:

China has passed a law that living tones on pollution, but ignores carbon dioxide, one of the major contributors to global warming, according to the web site of the country's highest legislative body. Polluters will be charged for contributing to air, water and noise pollution, according to a copy of the legislation on the NPC's official website. The Environmental Tax Law will come into effect on January 1, 2018. The crisis also spurred a call by chinese president Xi Jumping for the country to develop clean energy sources in order to reduce smong, xinhua reported.

Suresh Prabhu Inaugurates Series of Railway Projects in Andhra Pradesh

- i. The State Government of Andhra Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Indian Railways on December 30, 2016, for setting up a Joint Venture for taking up major Rail Projects in the state.
 - ii. The programme was attended by Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu through a video link from New Delhi while Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, Union Civil Aviation Minister P Ashok Gajapati Raju and others.
 - iii. As a part of the occasion, the Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu laid the foundation stone for the railway project Nadikudi-Srikalahasti line via Video conference.
 - iv. The Railways has decided to extend, for six months, the 10% rebate in basic fare on the vacant berths or seats in the reserved class of all other trains after preparation of the first chart.
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Advani wins National ltitle is 6-red snooker:

Sixteen-time world champion Pankaj Advani has ended the year on a high by bagging the National title in 6-red snooker, the shorter format of the game. Starting off as the favorite, Advani lived up to the expectations and reclaimed the title, which he had won during the inaugural edition in Bengaluru in 2010. In the final Advani prevailed over local youngster.

Sikkim Adjudged India's First Fully Organic State In 2016

- i. Sikkim has emerges as the India's first fully organic state by converting around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land into sustainable cultivation.
- ii. Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally certified Fully Organic State Status to Sikkim at a sustainable agriculture conference in Gangtok earlier in 2016.
- iii. Around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land has been gradually converted to certified organic land by implementing organic practices and principles as per guidelines laid down in National Programme for Organic Production.

iv. Organic cultivation is free of chemical pesticides and chemical fertilisers to maintain a balance with ecosystems. Sustainable farming also helps in building the soil health resulting in sustainable increased crop production.

v. Organic Farming will also boost the tourism industry in the tiny landlocked Himalayan state of Sikkim.

vi. Besides, Sikkim was conferred with the overall best state in education in June. Kanchenjunga National Park in West Sikkim was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site by the world heritage site committee on July 17. The state was also adjudged as the cleanest state in India by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) in September, while in October, Sikkim was adjudged the cleanest tourist destination in the country by the Ministry of Tourism.

Brexit word added in Oxford English Dictionary

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) has officially added word 'Brexit' in it. It is among 1,500 new words added to the OED. The OED has defined word 'Brexit' as "the (proposed) withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, and the political process associated with it". Another popular new coinage is the word 'YouTubers' was also added in OED. It has been defined as "frequent user of the video-sharing website YouTube, especially someone who produces and appears in videos on the site."

Government announces Second Income Declaration Scheme 'PM Garib Kalyan Yojana'

i. The government on December 16, 2017, announced a second income disclosure scheme named 'The Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana' to give another chance to tax evaders to come clean after paying 50% tax on depositing junk currencies in bank account.

ii. Revenue Secretary Hasmukh Adhia informed that the new scheme includes stricter rules and will start from December 17 and will run till March 31, 2017.

iii. The scheme will allow people to deposit money in their accounts by paying 50 per cent of the total amount. Out of the 50% tax paid, 30 per cent will be used as tax, 10 per cent as penalty and 33 per cent of the taxed amount that is 10 per cent as Garib Kalyan Cess.

Union Government issues Notification of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2016

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has issued the draft notification for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Pet Shop) Rules, 2016 to regulate pet shops. The objective of these proposed new rules is to make pet shops accountable and to prevent cruelty inflicted on animals kept in such pet shops.

Center Plans to Deploy Zila Swachh Bharat Preraks to Boost Swachh Bharat mission

i. In a move to boost Swachh Bharat mission started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central government has planned to deploy around 600 "young professionals" in each district of India.

ii. The professionals will be called "Zila Swachh Bharat Preraks (ZSBPs)". They will be responsible to provide their technical and management support to the respective districts collectors among other authorities to implement the goals by coordinating the various sanitation-related activities in the district.

iii. The ZSBPs would also ensure integration of the youth in the mission to bring in fresh ideas, energy and enthusiasm to the Mission and hence accelerate the progress of achieving an Open Defecation Free (ODF) India.

iv. The joint announcement was made in the presence of the Union Minister, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Narendra Singh Tomar and the Chairman, Tata Trusts, Ratan Tata.

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NASA successfully launches 8 mini-satellites for hurricane forecasting

The NASA has successfully launched constellation of eight mini-satellites as part Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System (CYGNSS) into space to improve hurricane forecasting. These satellites were air launched by aerospace company Orbital ATK onboard of Pegasus rocket fired from plane at height of 12km. NASA had opted for air launch rather than traditional rocket liftoff from the ground, to cut costs.

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First Cyber Crime Police Station inaugurated in Himachal Pradesh

i. Himachal Pradesh CM Virbhadra Singh inaugurated the state's first Cyber Crime Police Station was inaugurated at the state police headquarters, Shimla.

ii. Objective: To deal with increasing incidents of crime in cyberspace.

iii. It will register and probe cyber crimes such as hacking of government web sites and its data, online fraud and cyber terrorism.

Keyfacts:

◆ India's first cyber crime police station was inaugurated at the cod headquarters in Bangalore

◆ Maharashtra become first state to launch cyber police stations in all districts.

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Puerto Rico's Stephanie Del Valle crowned Miss World 2016

Puerto Rico's 19-year-old Stephanie Del Valle has been crowned as the Miss World 2016 at an event held in Maryland, US. Miss Dominican Republic Yaritza Miguelina Reyes Ramirez was the first runner-up. Notably, Valle is the second Puerto Rican to hold the title after Wilnelia Merced won it in 1975. India's Priyadarshini Chatterjee also reached the top 20.

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With which banks, Indian Railways has asked help to install point of sale (POS) machines at the railway ticket counter to make daily transaction and cash management easier.

A.SBI, ICICI Bank

B.Bank of Baroda, ICICI Bank

C.SBI, Yes Bank

D.Union Bank, HDFC Bank

Answer & Explanation

Answer – A SBI, ICICI Bank

Explanation:

Indian Railways has taken steps to make railway travel bookings digital and asked the State Bank of India and ICICI Bank among others to provide around 15,000 point of sale (PoS) machines at reservation counters to make cash management easier.

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What percent of stake was approved for the disinvestment of Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd.by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on December 15, 2016?

A.75%

B.90%

C.100%

D.55%

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.100%

Explanation:

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on December 15, 2016, announced the approval of the recommendation for the disinvestment of 100 percent stake of state-owned helicopter services provider Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd., based in New Delhi. The Centre will entirely exit from Pawan Hans, Hindustan Newsprint, Ferro Scrap Nigam and Central Electronics, among others.

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=====

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee on 30th December, 2016 approved the promulgation of the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016. Which among the given options is true regarding the approved Ordinance?

- i. Ordinance aims to extinguish the liability of the Reserve Bank of India and the Government of India towards the demonetized Bank Notes
- ii. Holding demonetized notes after 31st of March 2017 will be offence and attract a fine of Rs. 10,000 or 5 times the cash held, whichever is higher.
- iii. Indian citizens still with possession of demonetized notes can deposit to RBI till June 30, 2017 while Non-Resident Indians can deposit such notes till March 31, 2017.

- A. Only i & ii
- B. Only i & iii
- C. Only ii & iii
- D. All i, ii, iii

Answer & Explanation

Answer – A. Only i & ii

Explanation:

The President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee approved the promulgation of the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016 on 30th December, 2016. The Ordinance aims to extinguish the liability of the Reserve Bank of India and the Government of India towards the demonetized Bank Notes. According to the Ordinance, holding of old 1,000 and 500 rupee notes after 31st of March 2017 will be considered as an offence and attract a fine of Rs. 10,000 or 5 times the cash held, whichever is higher. Indian citizens still having the possession of old currency can deposit the notes at the specified offices of RBI till March 31, 2017 While Non-Resident Indians can deposit such notes in their possession till June 30, 2017.

=====

Which bank has tied with ride hailing service provider Ola to provide cash-on-demand at customers doorstep?

- A. ICICI Bank
- B. HDFC Bank
- C. Yes Bank
- D. Axis Bank

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Yes Bank

Explanation:

Maharashtra based YES Bank has partnered with Indian online transportation network company Ola to provide cash-on-demand at customer's doorstep. Customers can use the Ola app to book a cab for 'cash at their doorsteps'. A special "YES Bank" icon will be visible on the Ola App from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. customers can swipe their debit cards to withdraw an amount of up to Rs.2,000 per card. Customers no need to book the cab ride to avail this service.

=====

Which among the following sports has been derecognized as a sport by the center due to its wide dimensions, making it difficult to conduct competitions?

A.Cheerleading

B.Aerobics

C.Yoga

D.Gymnastics

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Yoga

Explanation: 15 months after Yoga was declared as a sport in India in September 2015 with the approval from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), the decision has been reversed and has been once again derecognized as a sport. The sports ministry communicated to all the National Sports Federations and the Sports Authority of India (SAI) that "Yoga can't be termed as a sport."

=====

Name the famous American surgeon and the inventor of Heimlich maneuver who died of massive heart attack complications at 96 in Cincinnati on December 17.

A.Edward patrick

B.Henry Heimlich

C.William Heimlich

D.George Peterson

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Henry Heimlich

Explanation:

Dr Henry Heimlich, who became famous in the 1970s for creating the Heimlich maneuver, technique to save choking victims, passed away at Christ Hospital in Cincinnati on December 17, 2016. He was

96. He suffered massive heart attack in his home in Hyde Park, Cincinnati on December 12 and died of complications on December 17.

=====

Balasaheb Vikhe Patil who died recently in Maharashtra at the age of 84 was associated with which field?

A.Actor

B.Physician

C.Scientist

D.Politics

Answer & Explanation

Answer – D.Politics

Explanation:

Former Union Minister and Congress leader Eknathrao alias 'Balasaheb' Vikhe Patil passed away in Maharashtra. He was 84. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil was first elected into the Lok Sabha in 1971 from Ahmednagar district and continued to represent Kopergaon Lok Sabha constituency for the next 20 years. He was a president of Maharashtra Samajwadi Congress during 1977-79.

=====

Government Considers Merging Cyber and Telecom Appellate Tribunal

i. The Center is planning to merge Cyber Appellate Tribunal (CyAT) with the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) to avoid identical functions.

ii. There are 36 tribunals functioning in the country dealing with subjects such as income tax, electricity, consumer protection, company laws and railway accidents. The government is seeking to reduce the number of tribunals from 36 to 18 as most of these bodies perform "identical functions".

iii. The Department of Legal Affairs in the Law ministry will be the nodal agency for administration of various tribunals. Currently, the tribunals are handled by various ministries.

iv. CyAT settles matters related to information technology. TDSAT resolves disputes and dispose of appeals with a view to protect the interests of service providers and consumers of the telecom sector to promote and ensure orderly growth of the telecom sector.

=====

Noted economist saumitra Chaudhuri passed away

1. Noted economist and former member of erst while planning commission saumitra Chaudhuri passed away due to lung cancer, He was 62.

2. He was appointed member of the planning commission in June 2009 and was one of the longest serving members of the planning commission.

3. He also had served as chairman of the committee for formulation of All Industry Rates of Duty Draw back. (2005 – 06 to 2009 – 10) in the Union Ministry of Finance.

=====

World Confluence of Humanity, Power and Spirituality Held in New Delhi

i. The ninth edition of World Confluence of Humanity, Power and Spirituality, organised by ASSOCHAM in association with Srei Foundation and Times Foundation was held in New Delhi from December 16- December 17, 2016.

ii. The theme of the convention was “Sach Bharat: Spirituality at Work”

iii. Aim of the confluence was to spread an idea and principles of Humanity, Power and Spirituality among the people to inculcate the right sense of attitude, devotion to work, unified cooperation in work, faith in self and others, peace and harmony, fearlessness.

iv. The Confluence was inaugurated in the presence of Hon’ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee, ASSOCHAM President Mr. Sunil Kanoria, Srei Foundation Chairman Dr. Hari Prasad Kanoria and Chairman, Times Foundation, Smt. Indu Jain,.

v. Distinguished industrialists, business leaders, noted politicians and achievers from various walks of society came together on this platform.

About World Confluence of Humanity, Power and Spirituality

◆ World Confluence of Humanity, Power and Spirituality is being conducted annually since 2010 to spread the message of inter-faith peace and harmony, to ignite the human spirit, and to harness the potential of human beings towards selfless service.

◆ The Confluence of Humanity, first of its kind in the world, seeks to spread the words of Lord Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, the words of Jesus Christ, and also the sayings of Islam through the speeches by the different enlightened leaders. This Confluence seeks in believing unity in diversity.

=====

Union HRD Ministry launches Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan

Union HRD Minister launches ‘Vittiya Saksharata Abhiyan’ to use the network of Centrally-run educational institutions for propagating the benefits of digital mode of payment in wake of the government’s demonetisation move. It was launched by Union HRD minister Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi. It is a campaign by Higher Educational institutions for digital economy. VISAKA aims to create awareness among people about digital economy and cashless modes of transactions. It was launched on line with Prime Minister’s appeal to youth in ‘Mann Ki Baat’ for creating awareness for making India digital and cashless economy. Under it, young students and faculty members will be roped to

encourage and motivate people to use a digitally enabled cashless economic system for transfer of fund.

UP Government Flags off Trial Run of Lucknow Metro Service

- i. The opening ceremony of the Uttar Pradesh government's Lucknow Metro Service was held at Transport Nagar Metro depot, near Amausi airport in Lucknow, on December 1, 2016.
- ii. The trial run of the metro was flagged off up to 8.5 km stretch Charbagh station by Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav and his father Mulayam Singh Yadav.
- iii. Top Lucknow Metro Rail Corporation (LMRC) officers were closely monitoring the test runs of the newly-acquired gleaming silver and red-ribbon coaches on the 700-metre track inside its state-of-the-art Transport Nagar Metro Depot.
- iv. However, (LMRC) officers announced that the metro train service will be available to service Lucknow people in 2017 and March 26,2017 will be the date of commencement of the Metro Train service in Lucknow..
- v. Lucknow metro service, a 23-kms long North-South corridor having 21 stations, will add to the city's infrastructure after Gomti Riverfront Development and Agra-Lucknow Expressway.

UAE-based Indian girl Kehkashan Basu wins 2016 International Children's Peace Prize

UAE based Indian environmental activist Kehkashan Basu (16) has won 2016 prestigious International Children's Peace Prize. She was bestowed with this prestigious award for her fight for climate justice and combating environmental degradation. She was presented with the award by Bangladesh's Nobel peace laureate Mohammad Yunus at a glittering ceremony held in The Hague, Netherlands.

Dhasai Becomes The First Cashless Village In Maharashtra

- i. Dhasai village in Thane district of Maharashtra has become the first "cashless village" in the state on December 2, 2016 following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal for cashless transaction.
- ii. All payments in the village are being done through plastic money. Traders, vegetable and fruit vendors and others providing goods and services in Dhasai are using swipe machines for cashless transactions.
- iii. Dhasai, in Murbad taluka, around 70 km from Mumbai, has a population of around 10,000. Around 60 nearby small villages depend on Dhasai for trade and their daily needs.
- iv. State finance minister Sudhir Mungantiwar distributed 150 Point of Sale (PoS) machines to the local traders. Maharashtra Government has planned to transform the state into a cashless state by the end of March 2017.

- v. The initiative to make this village cashless was taken by Bank of Baroda in collaboration with NGO Veer Savarkar Pratishthan. The NGO trained the villagers in using digital methods of transactions.
- vi. Mungantiwar marked the beginning of the cashless transaction in the village by using his debit card to purchase rice.

Hailakhandi first in Assam to pay tea workers via bank account

Hailakandi has become the first district in Assam to pay wages to tea garden workers through individual bank accounts before the December 15 deadline set by the state government for cashless transactions to the plantation workers. At least 504 workers of Burnie Braes tea estate received their wages through bank accounts and the payment was made through five Banking Correspondents (CSPs) of Assam Gramin Vikash Bank. Such payments were possible due to the effort of district Deputy Commissioner Moley Bora, who held a series of meetings with bankers, tea garden managements and mobile service providers.

2016 Tripitak Sutrapath Mahotasava begin in Bihar

- i. The 10-days Tripitak Sutrapath Mahotasava has begin at Bodhgaya in Bihar on December 2, 2016. It will end on December 11, 2016.
- ii. Over three thousand Buddhist from many countries are participating in this festival.
- iii. They will pay special puja to Lord Buddha for world peace.

Bihar :

- ◆ Festival : Chhath, Sarhul and Karam

Star Screen Awards 2016

The 23rd edition of the annual film awards show, Star Screen Awards, was held at Mumbai on 4th December 2016. The main attraction of the awards show was Salman Khan and Shah Rukh Khan hosting the event. Shoojit Sircar's critically-acclaimed Pink bagged as many as four awards, including for the Best Film, at the 23rd Star Screen Awards 2016. While megastar Amitabh Bachchan received the Best Actor award for the film, Aditya Bannerji got the Best Editing award and Ritesh Shah got the Best Dialogue award for Pink.

Hailakandi District in Assam becomes first to Pay Wages to Tea workers via Bank Account

- i. Hailakandi has become the first district in Assam to pay wages to Tea Garden Workers through individual bank accounts before the December 15 deadline set by the state government for cashless transactions to the plantation workers.

ii. Following demonetisation of Rs 500 and 1000 currency notes from November 9, Assam government had set December 15 as the deadline for cashless transactions to tea plantation workers.

iii. At least 504 workers of Burnie Braes Tea Estate received their wages through bank accounts and the payment was made through five Banking Correspondents (CSPs) of Assam Gramin Vikash Bank.

iv. Such payments were possible due to the effort of district Deputy Commissioner Moloy Bora, who held a series of meetings with bankers, tea garden managements and mobile service providers.

=====

NITI Aayog to provide Rs 5 lakh per district

To encourage each district in the country to take the digitization route without fear, the NITI Aayog will be immediately transferring Rs.5 lakh to every one of them as seed money to kick start this drive. A letter has been written to district collector, commissioners and magistrates in this regard by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, who is also member of the committee to promote cashless payments. For availing the incentive, the district collector, commissioner or magistrates would have ensure that individuals transiting to digital payment mode should do at least two successful transactions by any of the five methods. These five modes are – unified payment interface (UPI), Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD), Aadhaar Enabled Payments, e-wallets and Rupay debit/credit/prepaid cards.

=====

Finance Ministry Mandates All Government Departments to Make Electronic Payments above Rs 5000

i. The Finance Ministry made it mandatory on December 5, 2016 for all Government Departments to make Electronic Payments to suppliers, contractors or institutions if the order value exceeds Rs 5,000, to give a boost to Digital Payment System.

ii. To attain the goal of complete digitization of government payments, the ministry has lowered the amount for making such payments from Rs 10,000 to Rs 5,000.

iii. Ministry of Finance has directed all the ministries and departments to ensure implementation of the same with immediate effect.

iv. The Finance Ministry has instructed PSU and private banks to waive the transaction cost for all payments made through debit cards.

=====

How much amount has been approved by the Union Cabinet, to provide Central Assistance to 36,384 displaced families from Pakistan occupied areas of Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) and Chhamb under the Prime Minister's Development Package for Jammu & Kashmir 2015 ?

A.Rs. 3600 crore

B.Rs. 2150 crore

C.Rs. 4500 crore

D.Rs. 2000 crore

Answer & Explanation

Answer – D.Rs. 2000 crore

Explanation:

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved a Central Assistance of Rs. 2000 crore for 36,384 displaced families from Pakistan occupied areas of Jammu & Kashmir (POJK) and Chhamb based on an announcement of Prime Minister's Development Package for Jammu & Kashmir-2015 in November, 2015. Rs. 5.5 lakh cash benefit per family will be disburseD.

=====

Which Indian state has emerged as the first state to adopt the Mahila Police Volunteer initiative on December 14, 2016?

A.Punjab

B.Rajasthan

C.Haryana

D.Gujarat

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Haryana

Explanation:

Haryana on December 14, 2016 adopted the Mahila Police Volunteer initiative which is a joint initiative with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. It became the first state to adopt the scheme in two of its districts namely Karnal and Mahindergarh. A Mahila Police Volunteer will serve as a public-police interface in order to fight crime against women. She will be tasked with reporting incidences of violence against women such as domestic violence, child marriage, dowry harassment and violence faced by women in public spaces.

=====

Which Board has given its final clearance for the Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers (ILR) project to meet the water needs of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh?

A.Intellectual property Appellate Board (IPAB)

B.National Tiger Conservation Authority

C.National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

D.National Institute of Animal Welfare

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)

Explanation:

The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) on December 26 gave its approval for the Ken-Betwa inter-linking of rivers (ILR) project which will benefit Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in terms of meeting irrigation, drinking water and electricity needs of people across six districts in the two states. The project worth Rs 9,000 crore had got the Union Cabinet clearance in July 2014 but work could not begin since it required clearance from the NBWL who were opposing the project citing its impact on tiger reserve and wildlife sanctuaries.

=====

The Centre has proposed to amend the Inter-State Water Disputes Act to set up a single Tribunal to adjudicate all Inter-State River Water Disputes. When was the Act enacted?

A.1952

B.1941

C.1956

D.1959

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.1956

Explanation:

The Centre has planned to set up a single, permanent Tribunal to adjudicate all Inter-State River Water Disputes, subsuming existing tribunals, to resolve grievances of states in a speedy manner. The government has also proposed to amend the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956. It directs to form benches to look into disputes as and when required which would cease to exist once the disputes are resolved.

=====

India has signed a Third Protocol DTAA amendment Bill with which country on December 30, 2016?

A.Germany

B.Austria

C.Singapore

D.France

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Singapore

Explanation:

India and Singapore signed a Third Protocol on December 30, 2016, for amending the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income. The decision follows India's treaty policy to prevent double non-taxation, curb revenue loss and check the menace of black money through automatic exchange of information.

=====

Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal who have been chosen for the 2016 'Asian of the Year' by Straits Times of Singapore are the co-founders of which Electronic-Commerce Company?

- A. Amazon
- B. Flipkart
- C. Snapdeal
- D. E-Bay

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B. Flipkart

Explanation:

Flipkart founders Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal have been chosen for the 2016 'Asian of the Year' by Straits Times of Singapore as part of a group called the 'The Disruptors'.

=====

Name the Former international hockey umpire and veteran administrator, who passed away on December 2, 2016 in Mumbai due to old age.

- A. Phulel Singh Sujlana
- B. Gurjeet Singh Selopal
- C. Raghu Prasad
- D. Dilbar Singh Sandhu

Answer & Explanation

Answer -A Phulel Singh Sujlana

Explanation:

Former international hockey umpire and veteran administrator, Phulel Singh Sujlana, passed away on December 2, 2016 in Mumbai due to old age.

=====

How many countries have signed an Open Skies Agreement with India at the International Civil Aviation Negotiations (ICAN), 2016 which was held in Nassau, Bahamas?

A.11

B.9

C.12

D.6

Answer & Explanation

Answer – D.6

Explanation:

India has signed an Open Skies Agreement with six countries at the International Civil Aviation Negotiations (ICAN), 2016 which were held in Nassau, Bahamas from December 5-9, 2016. Open Skies Agreement was signed with Jamaica, Guyana, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Sri Lanka to allows unlimited number of flights to six metro airports namely Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai.

=====

9th World Confluence of Humanity, power and spirituality held in New Delhi

1. The ninth edition of world confluence of Humanity, power and spirituality Organised by ASSOCHAM in Association with Srei Foundation and Times Foundation, introduced a fresh culture of spirituality @ work.
2. Through its brand sach Bharat, inspiring distinguished industrialists, business leaders, industry catains and noted politicians to imbibe spirituality at their respective work places and lives.

=====

The fifth edition of the Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) to be hosted by India in 2017.

- i. IT and Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on December 20, 2016, informed that India has been selected to host the fifth edition of the Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) in 2017.
- ii. The conference is likely to be held in last quarter of 2017. Over 100 countries are expected to participate in it with ministerial level delegations.
- iii. The opportunity to host the conference comes as a recognition to India's emerging role as big cyber power accelerated by Digital India which has gained international fame.
- iv. GCCS will deliberate on issues related to promotion of cooperation in cyberspace, norms for responsible behavior in cyberspace and to enhance cyber capacity building.

v. The first edition of GCCS was hosted by UK in 2011 followed by Budapest in 2012. South Korea hosted the third edition in 2013 and the Netherlands in 2015.

Japan successfully launches solid fuel rocket:

1. Japan's space agency has announced successfully launched a 26- metre lng rocket named Epsilon-2, which put a satellite that helps study radiation belts in orbit.
 2. Epsilon – 2 is part of a new generation of solid propellant rockets, which can reduce launch costs up to one – third.
 3. reduction in cost can allow countries to put more communications and weather satellites in space.
-

Maharashtra Government announces Separate Ministry for OBC

- i. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis while addressing the concluding-session of Kunbi Mahotsav at Shahapur in the Thane district of the state on December 20, announced that a separate ministry would be created for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) which would be headed by an independent minister.
 - ii. CM also announced to allocate Rs 200 crore funds for gravity-based water supply projects to fulfil the need of the town and surrounding areas.
 - iii. For this the government would prepare a policy under which villages giving land for dam projects would be entitled to get water from that particular project.
 - iv. Fadnavis also directed Thane Zilla Parishad to prepare a tourist circuit plan for Shahapur and Murbad talukas and assured maximum funds for development.
 - v. Besides, the state government has also come up with a target of planting 50 crore saplings in next three years (July 2019) in order to increase the green cover across the state.
-

Delhi named India's most well-read city of 2016:

1. Delhi has emerged as the country's most well – read city in the fourth consecutive year.
 2. Bengaluru and Mumbai taking the second and third spot, according to Annual Reading Trends Report 2016 by Amazon.
 3. For the first time Karnal, Vadodara, Patna made it to the top 20 cities, having bought more books than cities like Coimbatore, Visakhapatnam and Lucknow this year.
-

Odisha Government launches Biju Sishu Surakshya Yojana for HIV+ orphan children

i. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on December 22, launched “Biju Sishu Suraksha Yojana” for care and protection of HIV positive orphan children in the state.

Important aspects of the scheme

ii. Under the scheme, the children would get financial support from the state

government for their studies till higher secondary along with Rs. 20,000 reward after passing higher secondary.

iii. State government would provide Rs. 7,000 to Rs 40,000 for technical education to the beneficiary to meet the expenses like admission and tuition fee, study material and other related expenses

iv. The scheme also includes scholarship to 3 meritorious students every year in each district.

v. The state will bear the cost of marriage in case the beneficiary is a girl. Rs 1,000 per year would also be deposited in the Sukanya Samridhi Account of the girl child till she attains the age of 18 years.

vi. Apart from this, the scheme provides for one time token assistance of Rs 50,000 for girls and Rs 40,000 for boys on completion of 18 and 21 years respectively to facilitate marriage ceremony.

Biju Suraksha Yojana launches in Odisha:

Odisha Govt launched the Biju Suraksha Yojana, a scheme to nurture the Orphan and HIV infected children residing in different child care institutions and Orphanages. The main aim of the scheme is to facilitate care and protection act and supplement for providing additional resources and complementary moralities to the existing centrally sponsored schemes. On Dec 24th, 2016 Odisha CM. Naveen Patnaik launched the scheme.

Karnataka Government has removed restriction on night shift for women

i. The state government of Karnataka has removed restrictions on allowing women to work in night shifts in all sectors in a move to provide equal opportunities for women in all sectors.

ii. Currently, women are allowed to be employed in night shifts only in IT and ITES sectors. The present labour regulations don't allow employers to deploy women on work between 8 pm and 6 am. However, the government made an exemption to IT and ITES companies in 2003 responding to a demand from the IT sector.

iii. The Shops and Commercial Establishments Act, 1961 and the Factories Act 1948 have been amended to make provision for women to work in night shift.

iv. However, the employment of women in night shift will be subjected to several conditions such as written consent, provision of separate lockers, first priority in pick-up and drop, among others to ensure their safety, security and privacy needs.

v. There are about four lakh business units in Karnataka, and the amendments, if passed through, will benefit companies in sectors such as manufacturing, biotechnology and retail.

vi. Since the Factories Act is an Act of Parliament, Karnataka will send the amendment for Presidential assent.

=====
Government launches Smart Consumer mobile App & OCMC:

The Union Govt, has launched Smart Consumer mobile App and an online consumer Mediation Centre (OCMC) to provide speedy redressal of consumer grievances. A part from this, a help line 14404 was also launched for consumer related grievances on the occasion of National Consumer Day 24th December.

=====
India's first 2G Ethanol Bio-refinery set up in Punjab

i. The Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), a Central Government Public Sector Undertaking, is setting up India's first 2G (Second Generation) ethanol bio-refinery at village Tarkhanwala in Bathinda, Punjab.

ii. The foundation stone laying ceremony for the project was held on December 25, 2016 by the Minister of Food Processing Industries, Smt. Harsimarat Kaur Badal jointly with the Minister of State (I/C) Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, and Deputy Chief Minister of Punjab, Sardar Sukhbir Singh Badal.

iii. The purpose of the bio-refinery is to encourage production of Second Generation (2G) Ethanol from agricultural residues.

iv. The approximate investment of the project is estimated to be Rs 600 Crores.

=====
MoES launches Winter Fog Experiment 2016-17

The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has launched Winter Fog Experiment (WIFEX 2016-17) to study presence of extended periods of fog in northern parts of the country. It is an intensive ground-based measurement to understand different physical and chemical features of Fog will be conducted at Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), Delhi.

=====
British and Indian Navy Exercise 'KONKAN-2016' begin at Mumbai

The 12 day annual bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy KONKAN 16 began on December 5, 2016 at Mumbai. The exercise will be conducted in two phases at Mumbai and Goa.

i. Phase 1 : 05 – 09 Dec 16 at Mumbai

It would be a Command Planning exercise involving the two navies

ii. Phase 2:12 – 16 Dec 16 at Goa

It is a LIVE EXERCISE (LIVEX), which involves interaction between the IN Marine Commandos (MARCOs) and the Royal Marines.

iii. This exercise will provide valuable opportunity for both navies to interact and cooperate in the field of Maritime Security Operations.

Union Cabinet approves Pune Metro Rail Project Phase – 1

The Union Cabinet has approved the development of Phase – 1 of the Pune Metro Rail Corridor Project. It will be covering a length of 31.254 km comprising with two corridors Corridor-1 (Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation to Swargate) and Corridor-2 (Vanaz to Ramwadi). The project is scheduled to be completed in five years from the date of start of work as per the Detailed Project Report (DPR). The Project will be implemented by Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Limited (MAHA-METRO). The total completion cost of the metro rail corridor will be Rs.11,420 crore. MAHA-METRO will be a 50:50 jointly owned company of Union Government and Maharashtra Government.

PETROTECH 2016 Conference Inaugurated by PM Modi in New Delhi

i. PETROTECH-2016, the 12th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition was held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi from December 4 to 7, 2016.

ii. The Petrotech 2016 main Conference was inaugurated by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi at Vigyan Bhawan on December 5, 2016.

iii. Theme of the conference: "Hydrocarbons to fuel the future – Choices & Challenges".

iv. The conclusion of the Petrotech-2016 on December 7, 2016, was marked by signing 11 MoUs for different purpose.

Triple Talaq is unconstitutional and no personal law board is above the Constitution: Allahabad High Court

i. 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.

ii. The High Court Judge, Justice Suneet Kumar gave the judgment while hearing a petition filed by a woman who claimed that her husband divorced her without mutual consent.

iii. Justice Kumar added, 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.

iv. Even in Supreme Court, several women have filed a petition to abolish the tripletalaq practice.

Union Government launches DigiShala TV channel to promote digital payments

The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched a TV channel named 'DigiShala' to promote cashless transactions. The channel was launched as part of the 'Digidhan' campaign which aims to spread awareness about digital transactions. DigiShala is dedicated 24*7 and 365 days free-to-air TV channel to inform citizens about digital payment ecosystem, benefits and processes. It is a satellite channel managed by Doordarshan (DD). It will be broadcasted nationally on DD Free Dish DTH service. It will be available through GSAT15 (DD Direct DTH), 93.5 degree East, Receive frequency: 11590 Mhz.

Uttarakhand High Court to Ban Liquor in State from next Fiscal Year

i. Uttarakhand High Court on December 8, 2016 directed the State Government to impose complete ban on liquor in three districts namely, Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli, where Chardham is located, from next financial year.

ii. Aim: to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living in the society

iii. A bench of Judges, Justice Rajiv Sharma and Justice Alok Singh gave these orders after a petition was signed against a bar which was operating without licence in Haridwar district.

iv. The High Court also ordered ban on liquor and tobacco products within 5 kms of Sikh shrines located in Uttarakhand namely Nanakmata, Reetha Sahib and Hemkund Sahib.

v. High Court also ordered to ensure no liquor shop operated within one kilometer from all the educational institutions, hospitals and religious places in the State from next fiscal year.

vi. The state government has been directed to issue a notification regarding the ban within one week.

Uttarakhand

◆ Chief Minister: Harish Rawat

◆ Governor: K. K. Paul

3 Indian origin teenagers bag \$1 lakh US scholarship

Three Indian-origin teenagers have won scholarship worth \$ 1 lakh for their innovative research in 17th annual Siemens Math, Science and Technology Competition. Identical twin sisters Shriya and

Adhya won the competition for their project on Novel Approach to Schizophrenia Diagnosis. Vineet Edupuganti, won the top individual award for developing an ingestible battery.

=====

Who has been honored with the Global Agriculture Leadership Award 2016 by ICFA on December 15, 2016?

A.Mukesh Ambani

B.Natarajan Chandrasekaran

C.Ratan Tata

D.Anil Ambani

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Ratan Tata

Explanation:

The Global Agriculture Leadership Award 2016 was awarded to Tata Sons interim Chairman Ratan Tata by pioneer of India's Green Revolution M.S. Swaminathan in Mumbai by Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) on December 15, 2016. The award was presented for his transformational role in scaling Tata Group as the globally admired group during his stint of two decades as Chairman.

=====

What is the new ATM withdrawal limit set by the Reserve Bank of India to be applicable from January 1, 2017?

A.Rs. 3000

B.Rs. 5000

C.Rs. 4500

D.Rs. 5500

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Rs. 4500

Explanation:

RBI has relaxed the daily ATM withdrawal limit to Rs 4500 from the limit of Rs 2500. The new limit would be applicable from January 1, 2017. However, the weekly withdrawal limit of Rs 24,000 remains unchanged. The Reserve Bank of India has also asked banks to ensure that disbursements on ATMs should predominantly be in the denomination of Rs 500.

=====

Name the health insurance scheme launched by Andhra Pradesh Government in partnership with Tata Trust in Vijaywada to provide health insurance to all the people of the city including new born from December 1, 2016 to November 30, 2017.

A.Jeevan Aarogya Program

B.Health For All

C.Swastha Kutambham

D.Sehat Bima

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C. Swastha Kutambham

Explanation:

AP government with Tata Trusts has launched a health insurance scheme, Swastha Kutumbham in Vijayawada which became India's first constituency to have health insurance for all people include new born for a year from December 1, 2016 to November 30, 2017. Under this insurance scheme every individual has to pay Rs 1 per day or Rs 120 per month per family as premium.

=====

Which is the capital city of Qatar ?

A.Abu Dhabi

B.Doha

C.Dubai

D.Manama

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Doha

Explanation :

Capital: Doha and Currency: Qatari riyal

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The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has on December 7, 2016, relaxed the 2 Factor Authentication norms for online transactions up to Rs. _____ to boost small value online transactions and promote government's digital payment program.

A.Rs. 5000

B.Rs. 2000

C.Rs. 7000

D.Rs. 2500

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.Rs. 2000

Explanation:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has relaxed the 2 Factor Authentication (AFA) norms on December 7, 2016, for online transactions up to Rs. 2,000 to save time transaction time of customers and also promote government's digital payment program.

=====

K N Jagannatha Varma who died on December 20 at the age of 77 was associated to which field?

A.Politician

B.Surgeon

C.Actor

D.Poet

Answer & Explanation

Answer – C.Actor

Explanation:

Veteran Malayalam Film and Television actor K N Jagannatha Varma passed away at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala on December 20, 2016. He was 77. Varma was well known for his Malayalam films in 1978 with 'Mattoly' and had acted memorable roles in over 500 films.

=====

Which Bank has launched Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) on November 30, 2016 to disburse micro-finance loan amounts directly in Aadhaar-enabled bank accounts to promote cashless loan disbursements

A.ICICI Bank

B.RBL Bank

C.AXIS Bank

D.YES Bank

Answer & Explanation

Answer – B.RBL Bank

Explanation:

Maharashtra based private sector lender RBL Bank has launched Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) on November 30, 2016, for small ticket micro-finance loan disbursements. It has been developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) mainly to process government subsidies or direct benefit transfer (DBT) to various government scheme beneficiaries.

Name the former editor-in-chief of Times Now who has launched his own new venture named Republic.

- A. Arnab Goswami
- B. Rahul Shivshankar
- C. Markandey Katju
- D. Abhinandan Sekhri

Answer & Explanation

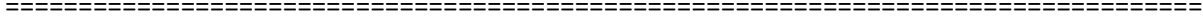
Answer – A. Arnab Goswami

Explanation:

Noted television journalist and talk show host Arnab Goswami announced the launch of his 'new venture' called 'Republic', on December 15, 2016, a month after resigning as editor-in-chief of Times Now. At a conference held at the 10th anniversary of IEEMA (Indian Electronic Equipment Manufacturer's Association), the apex body for the power equipment industry, Swamy informed that Republic will be launched on 26 January, 2017.

India and Vietnam Signs Civil Nuclear Pact Along With Three Other Agreements

- i. India and Vietnam signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (N-Pact) in New Delhi on December 9, 2016, in the presence of Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan and President of Vietnam's National Assembly Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan.
- ii. The MoU was signed by Sekhar Basu, Secretary of Department of Atomic Energy and Pham Cong Tac, Deputy Minister of Science and Technology of Vietnam to strengthen the bi-lateral cooperation between the two countries.
- iii. Three other agreements were also signed between the two countries.
 - 1. Enhance aviation links,
 - 2. Jointly work in the area of energy efficiency
 - 3. Promotion of parliamentary cooperation.



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