

India ranks 136 in press freedom



India slipped three places in the 2017 world press freedom rankings to 136th among 180 countries, the dismal performance blamed on “Modi’s nationalism” and growing “self-censorship” in the mainstream media.

- In the index released on Wednesday, India was ranked just three places above Pakistan and was one notch below violence-torn Palestine.
- India’s neighbours Bhutan and Nepal were placed at 84th and 100th rank, respectively.
- The report mentioned that journalists were increasingly targets of online smear campaigns and threats.
- The watchdog was also critical of a social media and internet gag in Kashmir and said that in the absence of any “protective mechanism, coverage of sensitive regions continued to be “very difficult”.
- Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark took the first four positions in the rankings. The United States was at the 43rd position.
- Large swathes of sub-Saharan Africa, including dictator-ruled Zimbabwe, performed better than India.

PayTM launches feature to digitally buy and sell gold



Payments app Paytm on 27 April 2017 launched „Digital Gold” on its platform to allow customers to buy and sell gold through electronic platform.

- This first wealth management product was launched in partnership with gold refiner MMTC-PAMP. It offers a real-time international pricing mechanism for the customers.
- Using Paytm mobile wallets, consumers can purchase 24K 999.9 purity gold online and store it in MMTC-PAMP’s secure vaults free of charge.
- Customers can buy and sell gold either by money (starting Re 1) or by weight (starting 0.1 gram).
- Customers can even request for their gold to be delivered at their homes in the form of minted coins.
- Moreover, if the consumer wants to sell the gold, MMTC-PAMP will buy the gold back from them and the money will be transferred to the user’s bank account.

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4th National Standards Conclave



Department of Commerce, Government of India in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) and other knowledge partners is organizing the 4th National Standards Conclave on 1-2 May 2017 at New Delhi.

- The objective of the two day Conclave is to bring awareness and prepare Industries, Central Government Ministries, State Governments, regulatory/standards setting and conformity assessment bodies on the growing importance of “Standards” in the changing scenario of global trade.
- The Standards Conclave is being held in the backdrop of diminishing importance of tariffs and rising influence of standards and regulation both in goods and services trade.
- It must be recognized that the days of differential standards – low for domestic market and high for exports - are over and if the Indian industry has to survive and thrive, it has to adopt global standards.
- The Ministries/ regulators/ state governments have to also realize that their initiatives and schemes have to be built around global standards if they have to succeed in their objectives.

Signing of Tripartite MOU for broadband services to Post Offices



A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding has been signed today among BBNL, Department of Posts and BSNL for providing broadband connectivity of BharatNet to Post Offices in rural areas.

- The MoU signed under the chairmanship of Minister of Communications Shri Manoj Sinha is the first tri-partite agreement to provide broadband connectivity to about 1.3 lakh, post offices in rural areas and 25,000 sub-post offices for high speed internet connectivity to the rural masses.
- Speaking on the occasion, Shri Sinha said that the first phase of connecting about one lakh Gram Panchayats is nearing its completion and in the remaining one and a half lakh Gram Panchayats 100 mbps broadband connectivity will be completed by December, 2018.
- In reply to a question, the Minister said that BharatNet is one of the 9 pillars of realising the Prime Minister’s vision of Digital India.

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‘Oorja’ –CAPFs Under -19 Football Talent Hunt Tournament-2017 begins in Goa from Monday



India is hosting FIFA Under – 19 World Cup in October this year. The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has called for the support of not only children, but also parents to encourage boys and girls to play football and develop both skill and fitness.

- The tournament will be a milestone event in many ways, but perhaps most lasting aspect will be Mission XI Million, which is a grassroots programme designed to encourage children to play this popular game.
- Keeping in view of the appeal of the Prime Minister, the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) have been tasked to conduct „Oorja“, - CAPFs Under-19 Football Talent Hunt Tournament – 2017.
- CAPFs will be jointly organizing the tournament under the aegis of All India Police Sports Control Board throughout the country from May 1-15, 2017.
- The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is tasked to conduct the tournament for the States of Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Goa and the Union Territories of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu.
- In Goa, CISF is organizing the Oorja – 2017 for Boys and Girls under the age of 19 from May 1-10, 2017.
- Opening Ceremony is scheduled on May 1, 2017 at Bambolim Football stadium, Goa in which Governor of Goa, Smt. Mridula Sinha will be the Chief Guest.

Nita Ambani made Member of IOC's Olympic Channel Commission



Nita Ambani in April 2017 was made a member of two important commissions of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) governing body.

- Ambani was made as a member of the prestigious Olympic Channel and Olympic Education Commission. She replaced International Paralympic Committee President Philip Craven to be one of the 16 members of the Olympic Channel Commission headed by United States Olympic Committee Chairman Lawrence Francis Probst.
- Ambani already holds the distinction of being India's first woman IOC member. She was elected as an individual member of International Olympic Committee in the year 2016. She will serve the position till she turns 70.

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- On the other hand, the International Olympic Committee also announced the composition of 26 commissions for the year 2017. The composition of the IOC commissions for 2017 has seen a 70 per cent increase in female participation since September 2013.

Actor Vinod Khanna passes away



Veteran actor Vinod Khanna passed away on 27 April 2017 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. He was 70.

- Khanna was reportedly battling with cancer for years.
- Born on 6 October 1946 in Peshawar, Vinod Khanna acted in lead roles in many superhit Bollywood movies.
- He is best remembered for his performance in films like Mere Apne, Mera Gaon Mera Desh, Gaddaar, Jail Yatra, Kuchhe Dhaage, Amar Akbar Anthony, Rajput, Qurbani, Dayavan, and others.
- He was popularly hailed as one of the most handsome lead actors ever in Bollywood, along with Dharmendra, Rajesh Khanna and Shammi Kapoor.
- He made his debut in Bollywood in the year 1968. He first acted in small second lead roles or negative roles.
- At the peak of his film career in 1982, he temporarily quit the film industry to follow his spiritual guru Osho Rajneesh.

Oscar winning director Jonathan Demme passes away



Jonathan Demme, the Oscar-winning director of *The Silence of the Lambs*, passed away on 26 April 2017. He was 73.

- The cause of Demme's death is said to be esophageal cancer.
- Born on 22 February 1944, Robert Jonathan Demme was an American film director, producer, and screenwriter.
- He started his career into feature film working with film producer Roger Corman, co-writing and producing *Angels Hard as They Come* and *The Hot Box*.
- He then moved on to directing three films for Corman's studio New World Pictures.
- In 1977, he directed the comedy film *Handle with Care* for Paramount Pictures. The film was well received by critics.
- He rose to prominence in the 1980s with his comedy films *Melvin and Howard*, *Swing Shift*, *Something Wild*.
- He is best known for directing the movie *The Silence of the Lambs*, for which he won the Academy Award for Best Director.
- It was one of only three films to win all the major categories, Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor and Best Actress.

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BHARAT SCHOOL OF BANKING APRIL 28 CURRENT AFFAIRS