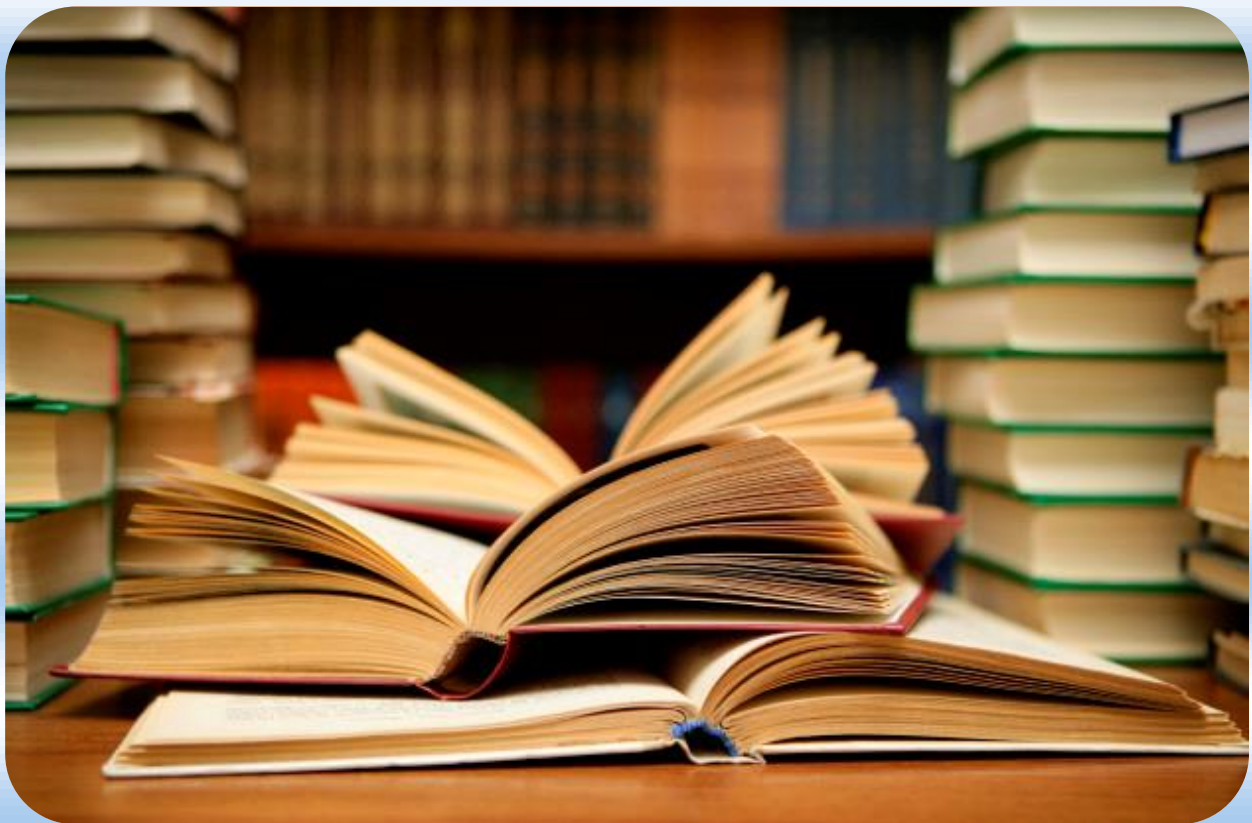


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



FEBRUARY-2018

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Highlights of union budget 2018-19

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the general budget 2018-19 in Parliament on Thursday. Budget was guided by mission to strengthen agriculture, rural development, health, education, employment, MSME and infrastructure sectors. Government said that a series of structural reforms will propel India among the fastest growing economies of the world. Country firmly on course to achieve over 8% growth as manufacturing, services and exports back on good growth path.

India ranks 42nd in 2017 Global Democracy Index

New Delhi: India has slipped to 42nd place on an annual Global Democracy Index amid "rise of conservative religious ideologies" and increase in vigilantism and violence against minorities as well as other dissenting voices. While Norway has again topped the list, followed by Iceland and Sweden, compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), India has moved down from 32nd place last year and remains classified among "flawed democracies". The index ranks 165 independent states and two territories on the basis of five categories: electoral process.

N Chandrasekaran Task force constituted to study AI application in military

The Department of Defence Production on Friday constituted a task force headed by Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran to study use of artificial intelligence, which it said has potential to provide military superiority apart from driving technology-driven economic growth. On Thursday, in his speech for Union Budget 2018-19, finance minister Arun Jaitley said that the Centre's think-tank Niti Aayog will initiate a national programme to direct the government's efforts in the areas of artificial intelligence, including research and development of its applications.

Government to launch KUSUM scheme to encourage farmers for solar farming

Power Minister R K Singh today announced a Rs 48,000-crore KUSUM scheme to incentivise farmers to run solar farm water pumps and also use their barren land for generating solar power. "We have another scheme which was announced in the Budget is KUSUM... The proposal has been appraised by different committees like committee of secretaries. Now it has been approved by the EFC (Expenditure Finance Committee) and the Cabinet. It will be launched next fiscal," Singh said. The minister said that the previous scheme of KUSUM (Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthaan Maha Abhiyaan) was also very popular and states are on board for this also for direct benefit transfer of subsidy to farmers' account.

Sudeep Lakhtakia took charge as new Director General of NSG

Sudeep Lakhtakia on Thursday took charge as the Director General (DG) of National Security Guard (NSG). He replaced S P Singh, who retired on January 31. Lakhtakia was serving as a Special DG in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) headquarters here. The NSG is a special force unit under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). It was raised in 1984, following Operation Blue Star and the assassination of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Exam Warriors: Book written by Narendra Modi released

With 25 pithy mantras, advice to parents and teachers, and a set of useful yoga asans, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has done what perhaps no other head of a country has done -- prepare students to face examinations without the accompanying stress. Exam Warriors, written by Modi, and published by Penguin Random House will be released on Saturday in the capital. In January 2017, in an episode of Mann Ki Baat.

Government to ban cryptocurrencies from its payments system

NEW DELHI: India is planning steps to ensure cryptocurrencies are illegal within its payments system, while at the same time appointing a regulator to oversee unregulated exchanges that trade in "crypto assets," a finance ministry official said on Monday. A panel set by the government to look into issues relating to cryptocurrencies is expected to submit its report in the current fiscal year, ending on March 31, S C Garg, Economic Affairs Secretary, told a private news channel.

Government launches Start-up-India ranking framework

Three new tools for States and Union Territories for ranking of startups in the country were launched by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry at a function in New Delhi on Tuesday. The tools are: the State and Union Territory Startup Ranking Framework, the Compendium of Good Practices for Promoting Startups in India and the Startup India Kit. These will act as catalysts to help the Startup India initiative to drive India's economic growth.

THE World Rankings 2018: More Indian Universities in Asia's Top 200

Although no Indian institution figured among the top 25 universities in Asia, the country managed to increase its representation in the list of 350 Asian varsities released by Times Higher Education (THE) on Tuesday. India claimed 42 places, up from 33 last year, with 12 new entrants. The top-most Indian centre of higher learning was the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, at the 29th place. Two newcomers from the country — the Indian School of Mines at the 141st position and the Banaras Hindu University at a joint 194th — made it to the top 200.

Pay as You Use Tolling: NHAI to launch Pilot Project on Delhi-Mumbai Highway

With the aim to execute "pay as you use" tolling in India, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will start a pilot project on the Delhi-Mumbai Highway to study and implement the ability of the system in the country. The project to be run for one year involves implementing a satellite-based electronic toll collection system running on GPS/GSM technology for around 500 commercial vehicles on the Delhi-Mumbai National Highway.

Nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile successfully test fired

BALASORE (ODISHA): India today successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile as part of a user trial by the Army from a test range in Odisha, Defence sources said. The trial of the surface-to-surface missile, which has a strike range of 350 km, was carried out from a mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur near here at around 11.35 am, they said.

Chandrashekar Kambar elected as President of Sahitya Akademi

Kannada litterateur Chandrashekar Kambar has been elected as president of the Sahitya Akademi in the election held for the post on Monday. Hindi poet Madhav Koushik has been elected as vice-president. Prof. Kambar is the third Kannada writer to head the country's premier literary institution, after Vinayak Krishna Gokak (1983) and U.R. Ananthamurthy (1993). According to sources in the Akademi, Prof. Kambar secured 56 votes, while his nearest contender and Odia writer Prathiba Ray got 29 votes.

India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual released

NEW DELHI: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Monday released country's first ever Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) which will guide road engineers and policy makers about road expansion. The manual known as 'Indo-HCM' has been developed by CSIR-CRRI on the basis of an extensive, country-wide study of the traffic characteristics on different categories of roads like single lane, two-lane, multi-lane urban roads, inter-urban highways.

President hosts LPG Panchayat at Rashtrapati Bhavan

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday hosted the LPG Panchayat at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The LPG Panchayat was organised by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas with an aim to provide a platform for LPG consumers to interact with each other, promote mutual learning and share experiences, read an official note. Each LPG Panchayat has about 100 LPG customers coming together, near their living areas, to discuss safe and sustainable usage of LPG, its benefits and the link between clean fuel for cooking and women's empowerment, it added.

India's first radio festival held in Delhi

New Delhi [India], Feb.15 (ANI): India's first radio festival will be held in Delhi on Thursday. The festival is being organised by the International of Women in Radio and Television, in collaboration with UNESCO. The festival will include live performances, an exhibition, and slotted panel discussions. The radio festival is being held to mark World Radio Day 2018, which was on Tuesday, i.e. February 13. The event will touch on the 2018's theme of World Radio Day.

40 Indian languages heading towards extinction

More than 40 languages or dialects in India are considered to be endangered and are believed to be heading towards extinction as only a few thousand people speak them, officials said. According to a report of the Census Directorate, there are 22 scheduled languages and 100 non-scheduled languages in the country, which are spoken by a large number of people — one lakh or more. However, there are 42 languages which are spoken by less than 10,000 people.

Crèche facility to come up at Parliament House

NEW DELHI: The parliament house will soon have a crèche on its premises for women employees who may want to bring their small children to the day care facility. This is seen as an attempt to make way for an “inclusive and supportive work environment” for women employees at the parliament house. In a letter dated March 29, 2017, minister for women and child development, Maneka Gandhi apprised Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan.

N Gopalswami Committee to select top 20 educational institutes of eminence

NEW DELHI: A panel headed by a former CEC and comprising top international and Indian academicians will shortlist India's best higher educational institutions which will then be primed to have a shot at international glory. The University Grants Commission announced on Tuesday the four-member empowered expert committee (EEC) which is being entrusted to conduct the appraisal of the applications for shortlisting the 20 institutions of eminence (IoE). N Gopalswami, the former chief election commissioner of India.

India ranks 81st in Corruption Perception Index 2017

India has been ranked 81st in the global corruption perception index for 2017, released by Transparency International, which named the country among the “worst offenders” in terms of graft and press freedom in the Asia Pacific region. The index, which ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, placed India at the 81st place. In the 2016 India was in the 79th place among 176 countries. The index uses a scale of 0 to.

UIDAI launches Blue coloured Bal Aadhaar

UIDAI or the Unique Identification Authority of India, on Monday morning, introduced a 'Baal Aadhaar' card. This blue-coloured card will be given to children below the age of five years. To get a Baal Aadhaar, no biometric details will be needed. UIDAI had made this announcement through a series of tweets on its official handle. "A child below 5 years of age gets a blue in coloured Aadhaar known as Baal Aadhaar. When the child becomes 5 yr old.

Prime Minister launches Amma two-wheeler scheme in Tamil Nadu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday kickstarted the subsidised Amma two-wheeler scheme meant for working women, on the occasion of former Chief Minister Jayalithaa's 70th birth anniversary. As part of the scheme, every beneficiary will be given 50% of the cost of a two-wheeler or a grant of ₹25,000. Each year, one lakh working women would be covered. As a mark of the commencement of the scheme.

SRIJAN idea competition for 635 Stations Development launched at MyGov portal

In a bid to redevelop over 600 major railway stations across the nation, an idea competition 'SRIJAN' (Station Rejuvenation through Joint Action) has been launched at MyGov portal since January 26, 2018, by Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Limited (IRSDC). All stakeholders like railway passengers, architects, urban planners, engineers are allowed to send their ideas and the last date to submit the entries is March 26, 2018. The Railway Ministry said that the winners.

Government to set up National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts at IIT Chennai

Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) has signed a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with the Union Shipping Ministry for establishing the National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts (NTPWC). NTPWC will work to modernise Indian ports and fast-track waterways under the Centre's Sagarmala project, an initiative for port-led infrastructure. Laying the foundation for NTPWC, Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari.

Government to launch GOBAR-Dhan Yojana

During his monthly address on Mann Ki Baat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the newly-launched GOBAR-Dhan scheme would make the farmers more self-reliant apart from converting 'waste to energy.' So what is the GOBAR-Dhan Yojana? The Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) scheme was first announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley during his budget speech on February 1. According to Jaitley, the scheme would focus on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost.

Government appoints IIFT, ICAI, NICMAR to improve World Bank's 'Doing Business' ranking

Commerce and industry ministry has appointed four institutes, including IIFT and ICAI, to interact with stakeholders and suggest measures to push India's ranking in ease of doing business index, an official said. The National Institute of Construction Management and Research (NICMAR), the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

28th February: National Science Day

You might be aware that 28th February is celebrated as National Science Day in India but do you know why and for what the day is celebrated as National Science Day. I am also sure you must have heard about celebrated Indian Scientist Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman. On this day in 1928, he discovered a phenomenon of scattering of photons which was later known as 'Raman Effect' after his name. After two years in 1930.

Punjab Government bans sale of 20 insecticides

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh today approved a ban on the sale of Endosulfan and 19 other insecticides reported to be harmful for human beings as well as from the environmental sustainability and economic viability aspects. Acting on the recommendations of the Registration Committee, Punjab Agricultural University (PAU), and the Punjab State Farmers' Commission (PSFC), the chief minister, who also holds the agriculture portfolio, gave his nod to the ban, to be effective from February 1.

UP investors summit 2018

LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh government will host a grand investor's summit in February 2018. President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be special invitees to the event which aims at engaging over 5000 delegate companies including Tata, Birla, Ambani, Adani among others. Prime ministers of Nepal, Mauritius and ambassadors from 20 countries and NRI business organisations would also be invited to the summit which aims at boosting investment.

Haryana opens four subsidised canteens under Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana

The Haryana government on Saturday launched four canteens which will serve subsidised and healthy food to the poor. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched the food canteens at Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar, and Yamunanagar via videoconferencing from Chandigarh. The canteens have been set up under the 'Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana' to provide healthy, nutritious and hygienic food at only Rs 10 per meal to all poor and needy, a state government spokesman said.

Maharashtra Government to launch Asmita Yojana to provide affordable sanitary pads

At a time when attempts are being made to remove the taboo associated with the topic of menstrual hygiene with increased awareness, the Maharashtra government is all set to roll out its "Asmita Yojana" on the International Women's Day next month. Under the scheme, girls in Zilla Parishad schools will get a sanitary napkin packet at Rs 5 while rural women can avail it at a subsidised rate of Rs 24 and Rs 29. The scheme, catering to girl students and women.

NPCI allows Whatsapp to beta test its payments service with limited users

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) said it has allowed WhatsApp to beta test its payments service with limited user base of one million and low transaction limit. WhatsApp payment service will rival the likes of Paytm, whose founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma has been critical of the Facebook-owned company and has even alleged that the US firm was getting unfair advantage.

Mumbai 12th richest city globally: Report

India's financial capital Mumbai, with a total wealth of \$950 billion, has been named among the top 15 wealthiest cities globally, while New York topped the list, says a report. According to a report by New World Wealth, the economic hub of India is the 12th wealthiest city, followed by Toronto with a total wealth of \$944 billion, Frankfurt (14th, \$912 billion) and Paris (15th, \$860 billion).

India ranks 44 in US Chamber's Intellectual Property Index

A US lobby group which ranks countries on the basis of its intellectual property friendliness to innovation based global corporations has improved India's position in its current year's ranking. The Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce stated that India ranked 44th of 50 economies - a jump from 43rd of 45 economies one year ago - improving its performance both in relative and absolute terms in its annual International IP Index.

Airtel, Huawei successfully conduct India's first 5G network trial

Telecom Major Bharti Airtel and equipment maker Huawei said on Friday that they have conducted India's first 5G network trial achieving over 3 gigabit per second data speed. Huawei said in a statement that both the companies "have successfully conducted India's first 5G network trial under a test set up". The trial was conducted at Airtel's network experience centre in Manesar, Gurgaon, it said. "This is small but a very significant step in our journey towards 5G. The promise of 5G is endless, it will be a game changer and, it will change the way we live, work Director Networks, Bharti Airtel said.

Abhilasha Kumari sworn in as first women Chief Justice of Manipur HC

Justice Abhilasha Kumari on Friday was sworn in as the Chief Justice of Manipur High Court. Manipur Governor Najma Heptulla administered the oath ceremony. Justice Kumari, who was transferred from the Gujarat High Court, was elevated on Tuesday. Justice Kumari, a resident of Himachal Pradesh, is the daughter of former state chief minister Virbhadra Singh. An alumnus of the Delhi University.

Neelam Kapoor appointed as Director General of Sports Authority of India

NEW DELHI: Senior-most Indian Information Service officer Neelam Kapoor, who had served as UPA government's spokesperson, was appointed director general of Sports Authority of India (SAI). The 1982 batch IIS officer is at present the Principal Director General of the Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved her appointment to the post till her superannuation, ie July 31, 2019.

Shesh Anand Madhukar honoured with Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award

Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar, who has been working extensively for the development of the language, was honoured with this year's Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award on Wednesday. The second writer of Magahi language to be given the award, Madhukar was conferred the award, comprising a Rs 1 lakh cheque and a memento, by Sahitya Akademi President Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari.

India wins Under-19 World Cup 2018

NEW DELHI: Hopes were high from an India Under-19 team captained by teenage wonder Prithvi Shaw and coached by Rahul Dravid when it left India for New Zealand to contest the 2018 ICC U-19 World Cup. Five matches later, India U-19s are unbeaten and into Saturday's final against Australia U-19s at Mount Maunganui. India's run to the final of the tournament has been stunning, with success coming from all quarters in what has been a very well-rounded performance

32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela held in Haryana

The annual 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela will be held at Surajkund in Haryana's Faridabad district from February 2 to 18, a Minister said on Saturday. Uttar Pradesh will be the theme state this year at Surajkund, adjoining Delhi. Tourism Minister Ram Bilas Sharma said that the Mela's focus will be on safety and security of children. "There will be zero tolerance towards child rights violations." At least 20 countries and all states of India will participate. He said child-friendly procedures will be adopted at the event, including setting up child-friendly space.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

NHRC retains its 'A' status of accreditation with GANHRI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has retained its 'A' status of accreditation with the United Nations (UN) mandated Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in Geneva for the fourth consecutive term of five years. GANHRI, formerly known as the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions, is a global network of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) - administrative bodies set up to promote, protect and monitor human rights in a given country.

Scientists for first time grow human eggs to full maturity in laboratory

Scientists have succeeded for the first time in growing human eggs in a laboratory from the earliest stages in ovarian tissue all the way to full maturity — a scientific step that had previously been taken in mice. Publishing their result in the journal *Molecular Human Reproduction* on Friday, scientists from Britain and the United States said it could one day help in developing regenerative medicine therapies and new infertility treatments.

KP Sharma Oli sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister

KATHMANDU: KP Sharma Oli was on Thursday sworn in as Nepal's prime minister for the second time, weeks after his Left alliance with former Maoist rebels swept the historic parliamentary polls, kindling hopes for much-needed political stability in the Himalayan nation. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to 65-year-old Oli at a function held at President's Office, Shital Niwas, in Maharajgunj. He is the 41st prime minister of Nepal.

Cyril Ramaphosa sworn in as new President of South Africa

Cyril Ramaphosa has taken over as president of South Africa, immediately vowing to fight corruption in a direct reference to accusations levelled against his predecessor, Jacob Zuma. Ramaphosa's appointment as head of state came less than 16 hours after his rival Zuma resigned, having defiantly refused to leave office for days. Within minutes of the result of a parliamentary vote being announced in Cape Town, Ramaphosa said he would move to tackle endemic graft in South Africa. "Issues to do with corruption, issues of how we can straighten out our state-owned enterprises.

Indian engineer Vikas Sathaye part of team awarded Sci-Tech Oscar

MUMBAI: An engineer raised in Mumbai, Vikas Sathaye, was part of the team that bagged the scientific and engineering award at the Oscars 2018 Scientific and Technical Awards on Saturday. The four-member team was honoured at the Beverly Hills ceremony "for the concept, design, engineering and implementation of the Shotover K1 Camera System", which the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences describes.

Odisha wins Geospatial World Excellence Award 2018

Odisha has bagged Geospatial World Excellence Award-2018 for successful IT application on tracking of mineral production, dispatch and value accrued on real time basis through its i3MS website based software. The Award was given by Union Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences and Technology, YS Chowdry in the Geospatial World Forum Meeting held at Hyderabad recently.

PM Modi lays foundation stone of first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi

ABU DHABI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will tomorrow witness the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the first Hindu temple in the capital of the UAE, home to over three million people of Indian origin. Temple Committee members presented the temple literature to Modi, who arrived here tonight, and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. "This will be the first stone temple to be built in Abu Dhabi off Dubai-Abu Dhabi highway.

Venezuela, Libya Lose UNGA Vote for third time in 3 Years

UNITED NATIONS — Venezuela and Libya have been suspended from voting in the U.N. General Assembly for the third time in three years because of millions of dollars in unpaid dues to the world body. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres informed the General Assembly in late January that 14 countries including Venezuela and Libya were in arrears, and Assembly spokesman Brenden Varma confirmed Tuesday that Venezuela.

Saudi Arabia allows women to open their own businesses without male consent

Women in Saudi Arabia can now open their own businesses without the consent of a husband or male relative, as the kingdom pushes to expand a fast-growing private sector. The policy change, announced by the Saudi government on Thursday, also marks a major step away from the strict guardianship system that has ruled the country for decades. "Women can now launch their own businesses and benefit from [governmental] e-services without having to prove consent from a guardian," the ministry of commerce and investment said on its website.

Pakistan to deploy troops in Saudi Arabia

Pakistan will deploy troops in Saudi Arabia under an existing security pact even though the Parliament had voted in 2015 not to send soldiers to the kingdom for fears that they would become involved in the Yemen conflict. In an apparent reversal of that decision after a visit to Saudi Arabia by Pakistan Army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa, the army announced that troops will be sent to Saudi Arabia but they would remain within the kingdom.

Petro: Venezuela becomes first country to launch virtual currency

Cash-strapped Venezuela on Tuesday became the first country to launch its own version of bitcoin, a move President Nicolas Maduro celebrated as putting his country on the world's technological forefront. In its first hours on the market, the so-called 'petro' racked in \$735 million worth in purchases, Mr. Maduro said without providing details. The petro is backed by Venezuela's crude oil reserves.

China elected as vice chair of FATF

TWO DAYS after Beijing lifted its objection to put Pakistan in the grey listing at the Financial Action Task Force, India on Sunday congratulated China for becoming the vice chair of the global body, which is mandated to combat terror financing, and hoped Beijing would "uphold and support" the objective of the watchdog in a balanced and objective way. On Friday, the FATF placed Pakistan under monitoring in its International Cooperation Review Group until June 2018 for compliance of Anti-Money Laundering.

Jacob Zuma resigns as South Africa's President

Jacob Zuma, the president of South Africa, has resigned after days of defying orders from the ruling African National Congress to leave office and on the eve of a no-confidence vote in parliament. In a televised address to the nation late on Wednesday, the 75-year-old said he was a disciplined member of the ANC, to which he had dedicated his life. "I fear no motion of no confidence or impeachment ... I will continue to serve the people of South Africa.

February 13: World Radio Day

Radio is the mass medium reaching the widest audience in the world. It is also recognized as a powerful communication tool and a low cost medium. Radio is specifically suited to reach remote communities and vulnerable people: the illiterate, the disabled, women, youth and the poor, while offering a platform to intervene in the public debate, irrespective of people's educational level. Furthermore, radio has a strong and specific role in emergency communication and disaster relief.

Prince Charles launches education impact bond for India

Britain's Prince Charles has launched a new 10-million-dollar Development Impact Bond (DIB) to help improve education for over 200,000 children in India. The DIB, the largest bond of its type in South Asia, is the latest fundraising initiative by the British Asian Trust (BAT), set up by the royal 10 years ago to fight poverty in South Asia. "We are launching a 10-million-dollar Development Impact Bond that will improve education for more than 200,000 children in India,".

