

'Earth Hour' 2017: 25 March

2017 Earth Hour was observed worldwide on 25 March 2017.

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

The event is held annually encouraging individuals, communities, households and businesses to turn off their non-essential lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007.

Conference on 'Make in India' held in Houston

A first-ever conference was held bringing together various constituencies that have an interest in India and discussing the latest developments and the best practices of doing business in India.

The two-day Houston India Conference was hosted by Asia Society Texas Center .

The theme of the Conference is 'Make in India -The Inside Story'.

The central focus of the conference is to provide a collaboration platform and share today's India story with the audience in Texas who are interested in investing in India.

Pawan Hans to start 'Dilli Darshan' chopper rides at Rs 2,500

National chopper operator Pawan Hans is set to launch its "Delhi Darshan" rides from next month with a 10-minute sortie costing Rs 2,499 per person.

Besides, the state-owned aviation firm will also offer a 20-minute helicopter ride for Rs 4,999.

The company's Chairman and Managing Director, B P Sharma, had at the inauguration of its first heliport in north Delhi's Rohini area announced the roll out of these services from April 1.

CBEC to be as Renamed CBIC

The apex policy making a body for indirect taxes, CBEC is being rechristened as the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs (CBIC) in the run up to the Goods and Services Tax regime to be rolled out from July 1.

The CBIC will have 21 zones, 101 GST Tax payer Services Commissionerates comprising 15 sub-Commissionerates, 768 Divisions, 3,969 Ranges, 49 Audit Commissionerates and 50 Appeals Commissionerates.

Osmania University to host 105th Indian Science Congress

Osmania University will host the 105th edition of the Indian Science Congress during January 3-7, 2018.

Achyuta Samanta, General President of the Indian Science Congress Association, (ISCA) and founder of Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT), Bhubaneswar, said the conference will be on the theme 'Science and Technology - Reaching the Unreached'.

Five universities, including KIIT, had vied to host the event.

President of India inaugurates 'World Conference on Environment'

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the 'World Conference on Environment' organized by the National Green Tribunal in New Delhi on March 25, 2017.

The President said recent studies and systematic reviews indicate that environmental factors are responsible for an estimated 24% of the global burden of disease in terms of healthy life years lost and 23 % of all deaths.

Children are the worst sufferers of the adverse impact of environmental diseases and die due to diarrhoea, malaria and respiratory diseases – all of which are environment related.

19% of the deaths caused by Cancer worldwide are attributed to carcinogens that unmindful industrialization produces.

Thaawarchand Gehlot inaugurates 'National Conference on Down Syndrome'

Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment inaugurated a "National Conference on Down Syndrome" in New Delhi.

Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and learning disabilities.

Delayed development and behavioural problems are often reported in children with Down syndrome.

Persons with Down Syndrome have 47 chromosomes as compared to 46 in majority of people. This one Extra chromosome causes its own impact and slows down learning process.

BSF gets first woman combat officer after 51 years

Tanushree Pareek has become the first woman combat officer to be commissioned in the 51-year history of the BSF, the country's largest border guarding force.

She will now be posted to command a unit along the India-Pakistan border in Punjab.

A resident of Rajasthan's Bikaner, she is the first woman to join the force in the officer rank after she was selected in the all-India exam conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in 2014.

Shashank Manohar to remain ICC chairman

Eight days after he stepped down as independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), Shashank Manohar has agreed to defer his decision following an ICC Board resolution to request him to remain in post was passed with overwhelming support. Earlier, the 59-year-old had stressed that his decision to retire as ICC chairman was because of personal reasons and not due to the aftermath of the Supreme Court's January verdict on how Indian cricket should be run.

PM announces number of measures for welfare of farmers, small traders, women & senior citizens

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced two housing schemes, tax incentives for small traders, interest rebate for farmers and monetary assistance for pregnant women.

(1) Bonanza for Home Buyers

In a big relief to home buyers, New Schemes under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana were announced. Now get 4 % interest relief on home loan upto 9 lakh rupees. And 3 % cut for home loan upto 12 lakh rupees.

(2) Subvention on Home Improvements

In rural areas, now you can get 3 % interest relief on loan of upto 2 lakh rupees for the construction, renovation and expansion of home.

(3) Big relief to Farmers

Govt to pay interest for 60 days on loans taken by farmers for rabi season from district cooperative banks and primary societies.

(4) Fund to NABARD doubled

Additional fund of 20,000 crore given to NABARD to give loans to farmers.

(5) Kisan Credit Cards to become RUPAY

3 crore Kisan Credit Cards will be transformed to RuPay credit cards. Farmers had to go to banks to withdraw money. It will help farmers to sell and buy.

(6) Big boost to MSME sector

For small entrepreneurs, credit guarantee raised from Rs 1 crore to Rs 2 crore. Loans by non-banking financial companies will also be covered in this. Shopkeepers and small businessmen will get more loans because of this.

(7) Relief to small traders

For small businesses, cash credit limit raised to 25 per cent from 20 per cent. Working capital increased to 30 % from the current 20% if the transaction is done via digital mode.

(8) Big push to less cash Economy

In a bid to promote less cash economy, PM says small traders and businesses with a turnover of up to Rs 2 crore, 6% tax will be levied instead of 8% if they accept payments through banking and digital means.

(9) Scheme for pregnant women

For pregnant women, a national scheme launched. Would be Mothers will get Rs. 6,000 for their delivery, vaccination, and nutritious meals. This will be transferred straight to their account. This will help in saving lives of mothers and new born kids.

(10) Relief to senior citizens

Senior citizens will be assured 8 per cent interest on their deposits up to Rs 7.5 lakh. Now for the senior citizens the interest rate shall remain fixed at 8 percent for next 10 years.

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has lauded Prime Minister Modi's announcements for enhancing economic activities and welfare measures.

World Theatre Day – March 27

World Theatre Day was initiated 1961 by the International Theatre Institute. It is celebrated annually on the 27th March by ITI centers and international theatre community. Various national and international theatre events are organized to mark this occasion. In honour of World Theatre Day 55th Celebration, the annual International Message will be given by French Theatre and movie actress Isabelle Huppert.

Randeep Guleria appointed as Director of AIIMS, New Delhi

The Renowned Pulmonologist Randeep Guleria recently appointed as the Director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The appointment was made by the Appointment Committee of Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Dr. Guleria has been appointed as Director, AIIMS for five years. Dr. Guleria was succeeded Dr. MC Mishra.

India Be comes Third largest in Domestic Air Traffic

India which is rising high in the field of aviation now attained a still higher position by pushing Japan back, achieving a 3rd spot in domestic air traffic behind USA and China. USA topped with 719 million passengers and followed by China 436 million passengers. India attained 3rd spot with 100 million passengers in 2016. India pushed back Japan which had only 97 million passengers last year.

Sebastian Vettel beats Lewis Hamilton in Australian Grand Prix

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel beat mercedes driven Lewis Hamilton to win the 2017 F1 Rolex Australian Grand Prix. It was held on 26 March 2017, at Albert Park in Melbourne. Besides, Mercedes's Valtteri Bottas completed the podium at third position, This is the vettel's 43rd race victory of his career and first victory since the 2015 singapore Grand Prix with a gap of Just 9.9 to runner-up Hamilton.

Pawan Hans ties up with HAL to train Helicopter Pilots

State run Pawan Hans has tied up with public sector helicopter maker Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to train Helicopter Pilots. This is first in the country as there is no training facility for chopper pilots. The company presently depends on defence pilots to operate its fleet of 46 helicopters. Its is the biggest dealing to Pawan Hans Company

Chandrakala as Swachh Bharat Mission Director

District Magistrate and collector of Meerut, B. Chandrakala had served as district magistrate in various Uttarpradesh cities prior to her current posting. She was highly praised for her work in the state. She has now become the Director of "Swachh Bharat Mission" and deputy secretary, Ministry of Drinking water and sanitation She is well-known for taking tough stand against corrupt practices.

Railways to set up Wi-Fi Kiosks at 500 railway stations

Aiming to provide will set up WiFi hotspot kiosks at about 500 stations. Named "Railwire Saathi". The WiFi Kiosks will enable people to use services like e-commerce, online bankings, e-ticketing for train and bus services among other. Railtel, the telecom arm of Indian Railways, would execute the scheme all over the country.

Conference on "Make in India" held in houston

First ever conference was held here bringing together various constituencies that have an interest in India and discussing the latest developments and the best practices of doing business in India. The two day Houston India Conference was hosted by Asia

Society Texas Center. The Theme of the conference is “Make in India – The Inside Story”. Texas has Vibrant Indian has American population that has contributed immensely to the understanding between our two countries across business, academia, the sciences.

BSF gets first Woman Field Officer in Tanushree Pareek

The Border Security Force (BSF) on 25 March 2017 received its first woman field officer after a convocation Ceremony conducted in the BSF academy at Tekanpur in Madhya Pradesh Gwalior Tanushree Pareek, a resident of Rajasthan, She led the passing out parade at the BSF Academy as the first woman field officer. Pareek started training last year in a 52 – week Assistant Commandant training programme with the 40th batch of the BSF academy.

Union Government to launch Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana

Union Govt, is going to launch Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) scheme for providing physical aids and assisted living devices for senior citizens belonging to BPL category. It will be launched in Nellore District, Andhra Pradesh on 1st April, 2017. The physical aids and assisted living devices for senior citizens will be distributed in camp mode and the scheme will be implemented through the sole implementing agency, Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)

World’s Largest Capstone Discovered in Telangana

A capstone in the shape of a human body was excavated at Narmeta Village, Siddipet District by Telangana State Department of Archaeology and Museums. This is the largest capstone ever discovered by the department in its 100-year history. It was excavated near an ancient human burial site and is said to be at least 2,750 years old. DNA testing will also be done by the archaeologists to trace the prehistoric date of the humans buried in the ground.

Free WIFI for students in Bihar

The Bihar government has been launched an ambitious programme to provide free WiFi facilities in colleges and universities. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar formally launched free WiFi facilities for students on the occasion of Bihar Diwas celebrations. The objective is to provide free WiFi facility to help youths to move ahead in life and to become digital smart.

ISRO sends four teams to 36th Expedition to Antarctica

The Indian space Research Organisation (ISRO) in March 2017 has sent four teams to 36th Expedition to Antarctica. The teams were installs takes on ice for Differential Global Positioning system (DGPS) to validate the glacier surface velocity. One team is from space applications center and the second team is from National remote Sensing

Center. The third and fourth teams belongs to IRS Dehradun and space physics Laboratory.

Raghu Rai conferred with Lifetime Achievement Award

Photojournalist Raghu Rai was conferred with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the information and broadcasting (I & B) ministry for his remarkable contribution to the field. Rai was honoured with the award by I&B minister M. Venkaiah Naidu at 6th National Photography Awards in New Delhi. National Photography Awards is an annual event organised by the ministry to “Promote art, technique of Photography”.

Six Indian Americans Named for 2017 Ellis Island Medal of Honour

Six Indian Americans individuals have been nominated among a total of 88 recipients for the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honour, the highest civilian award in the US for immigrants. Besides, a Pakistani – American Dr. Adil Haider has also been named for the Prestigious Award. The 2017 recipients will be honoured on May 13, 2017 at an event on Ellis Island in New York. The were Indra Nooyi, Fareed Zakaria, Dinesh Paliwal, Dr. Annapoorna, Yashvant Patel, Mohan H Patel.

India’s Longest Road Tunnel in J&K National Highways

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will Inaugurate India’s longest road tunnel, built on the Jammu – Srinagar National Highway, on April 2. This Chenani – Nashri tunnel on JK highway will cut short the distance between Jammu and Srinagar by nearly 30 km. The work on the 9.2 km long twin – tube tunnel, which is a part of a 286 km long four lane project on highway, started on May 23, 2011 in lower Himalayan Mountain Range.

Upendra Tripathy appointed as Director of ISA

The former secretary at Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Upendra was appointed as the full time Interim Director General (IDG) of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched on November 30, 2015 as a coalition of the solar resource rich countries jointly by Indian PM Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande in the Presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon.

Taliban Captures Southern Afghan city of Sangin

The Taliban has captured the crucial city of Sangin in southern Afghanistan after a year-long battle. Afghan forces have made a tactical retreat from the center of Sangin. The fall of sangin came amid the insurgents year-long push to expand their foot print in the Taliban heartland of Helmand Province. It signals growing strength of Taliban in Afghanistan.

NRIs can exchange defunct notes up to June 30: RBI

I. Reserve Bank last night came out with conditions for exchange of defunct notes for those, including non-resident Indians, who failed to do so till 30th December 2016, the last day for depositing the invalid currency notes in banks. Resident Indian citizens who were abroad from November 9th to December 30th can avail this facility up to March 31st, 2017 and NRI citizens, who were abroad during this period, can exchange their defunct notes up to June 30th, 2017.

II. While there is no monetary limit for exchange for the eligible resident Indians, the limit for NRIs will be as per the relevant FEMA Regulations 25,000 rupees per person.

Justice Mian Saqib Nisar appointed as Chief Justice of Pak

I. Justice Mian Saqib Nisar has taken oath as the 25th Chief Justice of Pakistan. The oath was administered by the country's President Mamnoon Hussain at the President House. The event was attended by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other dignitaries. Justice Nisar has replaced Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali who retired after serving as Chief Justice for 15 since his appointment in September 2015.

Sikkim became India's first fully organic state in 2016

I. Sikkim has emerged as the India's first fully organic state by converting around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land into sustainable cultivation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally certified Fully Organic State Status to Sikkim at a sustainable agriculture conference in Gangtok earlier in 2016.

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

British-Indian Professor Shankar Balasubramanian Receives Knighthood

I. Shankar Balasubramanian, an Indian- origin British professor of chemistry and DNA expert at Cambridge University, has received a Knighthood along with Olympic stars Andy Murray and Mo Farah among others by Queen Elizabeth II for their contributions.

II. Balasubramanian, 50, Herchel Smith Professor of Medicinal Chemistry at Cambridge University, has been recognised for his work as a co-inventor of Next Generation DNA sequencing, described as the most transformational advance in biology and medicine for decades.

Bengaluru gets India's first vertical garden

Emulating China and Italy vertical forests, Bengaluru get its first vertical garden, which it hopes will help in curbing pollution and in beautifying the city. An NGO, installed the first vertical garden in the city on one of the pillars of the Hosur Road flyover. The garden boasts of around 3500 saplings of more than 10 species. An automated drip irrigation system has been installed that will water these saplings every day.**Navy Successfully test fired Barak missile from INS Vikramaditya**

The Indian Navy successfully test fired the short-range Barak surface-to-air missile from the Air Craft carrier INS Vikramaditya. During the firing carried out in the Arabian Sea, the missile was fired against a live low flying high speed target. The Indian Navy officials confirmed that Barak engaged and destroyed the target successfully.

Berlin Scientists Created the World's Largest Artificial Sun

Scientists of Berlin in Germany are flipping the switch on what's being described as the world's largest artificial sun. The giant honeycomb like structure, known as the "Sunlight" experiment uses 149 large spot light found in cinema projectors to simulate sunlight. They will focus the huge array of xenon short arc lamps on a single 20-by-20 centimeter spot. It will be able to produce the equivalent of 10,000 times the amount of solar radiation that would normally shine on the same sized surface

Ravish Kumar bags Kuldip Nayar Journalism Award

Ravish Kumar was honoured with the first Kuldip Nayar Journalism Award, for his contributions in World Journalism. Eminent TV Journalist was conferred with an award plaque along with a cash amount of Rs.1lakh. Kuldip Nayar Journalism award was set up to honour those working in vernacular media and will be awarded every year.

5th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav in North East Region

The Ministry of Culture Organizing the 5th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (RSM) 2017 from March 23 to 31 in the Northern Region of India. The nine days cultural festival will be inaugurated at Parade Ground, Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh on March 23,2017 by the Governor of Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh Shri Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya. The festival showcases the spectacular diversity of India, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Gujarat to Bengal through folk, tribal and classical art forms.

Noted Tamil Writer Ashokamitran passes away

Noted Tamil writer Thiagarajan, passed away on 23 March 2017 following a brief illness in Chennai. He was 85. He was popularly known as Ashokamitran. A well known novelist and essayist, Ashokamitran was noted for his subtlety and refreshing creativity in expression. Many of his works have been translated into a number of languages such as English, Hindi, Malayalam, Telugu and some European languages.

Ankur Mittal bags Gold in ISSF World Cup Mexico

Indian shooter Ankur Mittal won the gold medal at the International shooting sport Federation (ISSF) shotgun World Cup in the men's double trap event at Acapulco, Mexico on March 23, 2017. Mittal beats Australia's James Willett with a score of 75 out of 80 while Willett managed 73. With this, India got its first medal of the competition where it has sent a nine member squad.

Frenchmen Yves Meyer wins 2017 Abel Prize

Yves Meyer, a French mathematician, was honoured with the 2017 Abel Prize, given by Norwegian Academy of Science and letters, on March 21, 2017 at a ceremony in Oslo, Norway. The 77 years old man was honoured the prestigious award for his contribution in the development of the mathematical theory of wavelets. Yves will receive 6 million Norwegian Krone (600000 pounds) cash award from His Majesty King Harald V at an award ceremony in Oslo, on 23 May 2017.

India Bags 8 Medals in IPC Athletics Grand Prix 2017

The 9th edition of Fazza International IPC Athletics Grand Prix Competition began in Dubai, UAE on March 20, 2017 and concluded on March 23, 2017. During the course of event Indian Para Athletics won total 8 medals including 3 Gold, 1 Silver and 4 Bronze, with this India has been ranked 7th among 48 participating countries in terms of medal tally.

World Tuberculosis Day – 24 March

Every year, on 24 March, TB Alert Joins hundreds of other Organisations around the World in raising awareness of TB. World TB Day Marks the day in 1882, when Robert Koch (Scientist) identified the bacteria that cause tuberculosis. World wide, nine million people get sick with TB annually. The theme of World Tuberculosis Day 2017 is "Unite to end TB leave no one behind".

Ed Sheeran to receive "Songwriters Hall of Fame 2017"

The 26 year old English Singer, song writer and record producer Ed Sheeran from UK will be honoured with the Songwriters Hall of Fame's 2017 Hal David Starlight Award. Sheeran will receive the award at the 48th Annual Induction and Awards Dinner on June 15, 2017 in New York. His natural talent as a singer, songwriter, guitarist and song producer has brought him well-deserved success.

Five Indian Cities included in World Heritage List

The Union Govt recently informed that five Indian Cities were included in the Tentative List of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. The Information was given by the Union Minister of state for Cultural and Tourism (Independent Charge) Dr. Mahesh Sharmain. The list of five Indian cities are Ahmedabad, Delhi, Jaipur, Bhubaneswar and Mumbai.

World Bank Signs US \$ 100 million credit agreement with centre, Uttarakhand

The World Bank has signed a 100 million US dollar credit agreement with the Center and Uttarakhand in New Delhi on 23 March 2017. To improve Quality of health care services in all 13 districts of the Uttarakhand. The most public health facilities in the middle and upper mountainous areas of Uttarakhand are Unable to function optimally.