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Finance and Banking

IndusInd Bank and Dynamics introduce India's first battery-powered interactive Payment Cards

- IndusInd Bank and Dynamics Inc. at the 2018 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) announced plans to introduce the first battery-powered, interactive payment cards to the Indian market in 2018.
- The new IndusInd Bank card from Dynamics has multiple buttons that let the consumers use a single card to pay in multiple ways. With a touch of a button consumers can select credit, points or monthly instalments as payment option. A different colour light will activate based on the selected payment option.
- The solution requires no changes to the payment infrastructure or merchant systems. A consumer can pay using points or instalment anywhere MasterCard is accepted.
- As part of the relationship, Dynamics will establish a personalization and card fulfilment facility in India.
- The Consumer Technology Association (CTA) recognized IndusInd Bank and Dynamics with four CES Innovation awards including the Best of Innovation Award for Security and honoree awards for Computers, Embedded Technologies, and Technologies for a Better World. This marks the first time in history an Indian Bank has been awarded the consumer electronics industry's most prestigious award.

PNB ties up with NSFDC for assisting SC families

- Punjab National Bank (PNB) and National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) have tied up to provide financial assistance for economic empowerment of persons belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) families living below Double Poverty Line (DPL).
- A Memorandum of Agreement to this effect was signed by B.M.Padha, Corporate General Manager , Priority Sector & Financial Inclusion Division, PNB and Devanand, General Manager, NSFDC.
- Under this tie-up, PNB would act as a channelising agent for the loan schemes of NSFDC. Concessional finance and skill training grants would be provided to unemployed SC persons living below Double Poverty Line, according to a PNB release.

Peru records highest export sales to India among Asian markets

- South American country Peru generated its highest export sales to India during January- October 2017 with shipments totalling USD 1.57 billion, as compared to other Asian economies like China, South Korea, Japan and the UAE.

- According to the country's Exports and Tourism Promotion Board, Peruvian sales to Asian markets went from USD 10.53 billion (January-October 2016) to USD 15.59 billion in the same period last year.
- The target markets included China, South Korea, India, Japan, the UAE, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and Malaysia.
- Also, Indian importers have shown a growing interest in Peruvian avocados, leading to a steady increase in its consumption since 2016, it said.
- In 2015, Peru became the second largest exporter of table grapes- Red Globe variety- to India, a position it holds even today. These grapes are typically available in Indian supermarkets between December and April every year.
- Peru's exports to India also include gold, silver, copper, Sacha Inchi, Quinoa, Camu Camu, among others.

India and states

Pratyush, India's first multi-petaflops supercomputer launched

- On 8 January India took a major step ahead in upgrading computing capacity in the area of weather forecasting and climate monitoring. Union Minister for Earth Sciences Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a supercomputer system at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) in Pune, taking its total high-performance computing (HPC) power to as high as 6.8 Petaflop.
- With this, India will now occupy the fourth position, next only to the United Kingdom, Japan and USA in terms of a dedicated capacity for HPC resources for weather and climate purposes. The UK leads with a capacity of 20.4 Petaflop, followed by Japan with 20 Petaflop and USA with 10.7 Petaflop. India had till now occupied the eighth position with a capacity of 1 Petaflop. With the new system, it has now jumped over Korea (4.8 Petaflop), France (4.4 Petaflop) and China (2.6 Petaflop). A petaflop is the ability of a computer to execute one quadrillion floating point operations per second (FLOPS).
- The augmentation in the computing capacity would result in major improvements in various services offered by institutions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences for weather, climate and ocean state forecasts. The new supercomputer has been named 'Pratyush'.
- Dedicating the supercomputer set up at a cost of Rs. 450 crore, Dr Harsh Vardhan, said the improvement in the computing capacity would go a long way in delivering various societal applications committed by MoES. It will also give a major fillip to research activities not only in MoES but also in academic institutions working on earth science-related issues.

Bhopal Becomes The First Railway Station In India To Install Sanitary Napkin Vending Machine

- In a first, Bhopal's main railway station—Bhopal Junction—has installed an automated sanitary pad dispenser. The machine, appropriately named Happy Nari, was set up on 1 January, 2018.
- Identifying the need to provide hygiene products for women at the station, the Railway Women Welfare Association of Bhopal joined hands with a local NGO Arushi. For easy access and visibility,

the dispenser was installed on Platform one near the women's waiting room. Anjali Thakur, the eldest grade IV worker at the station, cut the ribbon and inserted a Rs5 coin to withdraw two sanitary napkins.

- The dispenser has the capacity to hold 75 pads at any given time, and is refilled by a trained employee at the station. On the first day, over 600 pads were purchased, and the machine was refilled nine times. Over the period of three days, the number of pads bought went up to 2,000. The extraordinary response from women highlighted the need of a sanitary napkin dispenser at the station and other public places.
- The Railways Women's Welfare Association will bear the costs of maintaining the machine, and treat the project as a pilot test. If the venture proves to be successful, they plan to expand the service to other platforms at Bhopal Junction and Habibganj railway station.

18th All India Whips' Conference: Union Government proposes rolling out e-Sansad and e-Vidhan

- The 18th All India Whips' Conference was inaugurated by Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Chemicals & Fertilizers Ananth Kumar on 8 January 2018 in Udaipur, Rajasthan. The conference will conclude on 9 January 2018.
- Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia was the Chief Guest for the Inaugural Session of the Conference.
- During this two-day conference, Kumar will consider rolling out e-Sansad in Parliament and e-Vidhan in State Legislatures with an aim to digitize and make their functioning paperless.
- The Whips' Conference also aims to deliberate recommendations for smooth and efficient working of Parliament and the State Legislatures in the light of the experience gained by the Whips.
- The Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs will then forward these recommendations to the State Chief Ministers; Ministers-in-charge of Department of Parliamentary Affairs in the State Governments; Presiding Officers of the State Legislatures and all the invitees to the conference.

e-Sansad and e-Vidhan

- e-Sansad and e-Vidhan are mission mode projects of Union Government under Digital India initiative to make the functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures paperless.
- Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) is the Nodal Ministry for implementation of both the projects.
- According to the agenda prepared by MoPA, these projects will make the functioning of Parliament and State Legislatures participative, responsive, transparent, productive and more accountable to the public and make the entire Legislative process more efficient.

Indian Railways to deploy "Drone" cameras to enhance safety and efficiency in train operations

- The Indian Railways has decided to deploy "Drone" cameras (UAV/NETRA) for various railway activities especially maintenance of tracks, project monitoring and other railway infrastructure.
- All the zonal Railways have been directed to procure such cameras. This is in-line with Railways' desire to use technology to enhance safety and efficiency in train operations.

- This decision is taken to help railways in various activities especially project monitoring and maintenance of tracks and other railway infrastructure.
- “Drone” cameras shall be deployed to carry out monitoring activities of rescue and relief operation, the progress of important works, project monitoring, conditions of the track and inspection related activities.
- It shall also be used to assess preparedness of Non-Interlocking (NI) works, to identify scrap and also for aerial survey of station yards and crowd management during fairs and melas.
- Drone camera will be instrumental in providing real-time inputs related to safety and maintenance of tracks and other railway infrastructure.
- Under this initiative, West Central Railways with headquarter at Jabalpur (M.P) has become the first Zonal Railway to procure “Drone” cameras in Indian Railways.

Delhi govt launches common card for bus, metro rides

- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal today launched a common card for rides on public buses and the metro, terming it a big step in the city's transport sector.
- Delhi is the first city in the country to have a common mobility card, which can at present be used on 200 DTC and 50 cluster buses plying on different routes, apart from metro trains.
- The buses of DTC's Raj Ghat Depot-I and Rohini Depot-I plying on different routes and those of Cluster scheme's BBM depot-II will have the facility as of now.
- The card, which will function like a debit card, will be operational in all DTC and cluster buses from April 1. The city has around 3,900 DTC and over 1,600 cluster buses.
- Earlier, the Delhi government and the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) agreed to authorise the metro smart card to be used as common mobility card for paying fares in DTC and cluster buses.
- The Reserve Bank of India gave approval to the DMRC in February, 2017 for operating its pre-paid instrument called PPI-MTS (Prepaid Instrument Mass Transit System) for this purpose. The DMRC smart card is the first to get authorization under this category, said a government official.

BSES launches rooftop solar single-point for apartment complexes

- In an initiative to promote clean energy, BSES, one of Delhi's two electricity distribution companies (discoms), on Sunday launched the country's first solar rooftop consumer aggregation programme for residential buildings to provide the installations at a single point for the entire apartment complex.
- The sister discom BSES Rajdhani Power Ltd's (BRPL) "Solar City Initiative", designed to maximise rooftop solar power use in south and west Delhi, was launched at an event here by Delhi Power Minister Satyendar Jain.
- In the first phase of the programme, around 150 residential societies will be targeted in the Dwarka area.
- Listing the benefits for consumers, the discom said a 1 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) rooftop system is expected to generate 4-5 kilowatt hours (kwh) of electricity per day, which corresponds to an

average monthly saving on bills of about Rs 750 for a period of 25 years for single-point delivery consumers.

Centre releases Rs. 20 cr for Defence Innovation Centre in Coimbatore

- The Ministry of Defence has announced release of Rs. 20 crore to the Coimbatore District Small Industries' Association (Codissia) for setting up a Defence Innovation Centre. Making this announcement, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said MSME units and start-ups engaged in manufacture of components for the defence sector could use the centre for conduct of tests and trials.
- Responding to the announcement, Codissia President Sundaram said the association would utilise the grant for establishment of the Centre and aid more Codissians get into making components for the defence sector.

Appointments

A R Rahman becomes Sikkim's brand ambassador

- Music composer A R Rahman became the brand ambassador of Sikkim on Monday. The declaration was made by Sikkim chief minister Pawan Kumar Chamling who felicitated the legendary music composer during an inauguration of the 11-day Sikkim Red Panda Winter Carnival at Palzor Stadium in Gangtok on Monday. The declaration was greeted by a huge applause.
- Sikkim hopes that Rahman's appointment as the brand ambassador would give a huge fillip to the tourism of the state – one of the prime contributors to the economy of the hill state – and hope to leverage Rahman's global outreach to increase tourist footfalls in the state. Despite Gorkhaland agitation in neighbouring Darjeeling Hills, Sikkim witnessed approximately 12 lakh tourist footfalls in 2017, a significant rise from 7.5 lakh domestic and 62,000 foreign tourist footfalls in 2016.
- The winter carnival too is aimed at boosting tourism in the state and has music, dance, adventure sports and exhibition of organic food products of the state events lined up for the 11 days of the festival. Besides Rahman, Priyanka Chopra will be visiting Sikkim in April for the premiere of her home production 'Pahuna-The Little Visitors' that was entirely shot and is based in the Himalayan state.

Dilip Asbe appointed MD & CEO of NPCI

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an umbrella organisation for retail payment systems in India, has appointed Dilip Asbe as Managing Director and CEO of the organisation.
- Prior to this, Asbe was CEO-in-charge of NPCI.
- Asbe was appointed CEO-in-charge in August last year. He had come in place of AP Hota, whose term as MD and CEO had ended on August 10 last year.

- Asbe has been in the NPCI since its inception and has played a pivotal role in designing, building, operationalising and managing large-scale payment processing platforms like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), India’s home-grown card network RuPay, and several other initiatives.

Awards and Honors

Nitish Kumar to receive 1st Mufti M Sayeed Award for Probity in Public Life

- Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has been selected for the 1st Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Award for Probity in Public Life. He will be conferred the award at an official function of Jammu & Kashmir government to be held at Jammu on Monday.
- Nitish on Sunday left for Delhi from where he will flew to Jammu on Monday to receive the award.
- The award was constituted recently by the Jammu and Kashmir government to commemorate the death anniversary of PDP founder and two-time J&K chief minister Sayeed who died on January 7, 2016 after nearly a week-long hospitalization in New Delhi. Sayeed was father of J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti.
- Jammu and Kashmir Governor NN Vohra will preside over the event at General Zorawar Singh Auditorium in Jammu and also present the award to Bihar CM.

75th Annual Golden Globe Awards announced

- The 75th Annual Golden Globe Awards were announced on 7 January 2018, honouring the best Motion Pictures and American Television of 2017. The award ceremony was organized at Beverly Hills, California, United States (US).
- This year, 'The Shape of Water' received the most nominations of show with seven, while 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' and 'Big Little Lies' both won the most awards with four each.

List of winners of the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards: Motion Pictures

Category	Awardees
Best Motion Picture Drama	Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
Best Motion Picture Musical/Comedy	Lady Bird
Best Director in Motion Picture-Drama	Guillermo del Toro (The Shape of Water)
Best Foreign Language Film	In the Fade (Germany/France)

Cecil B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award	Oprah Winfrey
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List of winners of the 75th annual Golden Globe Awards: Television

Category	Awardees
Best television series, drama	'The Handmaid's Tale', Hulu
Actress in a television series, drama	Elisabeth Moss in 'The Handmaid's Tale'
Actor in a television series, drama	Sterling K. Brown in 'This Is Us'

World

SpaceX launches Secret Zuma Mission for US Government

- Private spaceflight company SpaceX on 7 January 2018 launched the secret Zuma Mission for the United States government. SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket launched the secret Zuma spacecraft from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida.
- SpaceX' live webcast did not show video coverage of the Zuma spacecraft after it separated from the first stage of the rocket, but confirmed that the payload was well on its way to low-Earth orbit.
- Zuma mission remains a secret as its nature or purpose and the agency behind it remains a mystery.
- The Zuma mission was originally supposed to be launched in mid-November 2017, but was postponed so that the SpaceX could take a closer look at potential problems with the payload-fairing or the nose cone part of the rocket that protects the payload.

World's largest Ice Festival at China's Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival

- The 34th Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival and the third China International Ice and Snow Tourism Summit officially opened on Friday in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.
- The festival mainly features ice and snow-themed scenic spots such as the world's largest ice and snow park and a snow sculpture art expo as well as diverse ice and snow sports and entertainments.

- The China International Ice and Snow Tourism Summit released a Chinese ice and snow tourism consumers big data report. According to a China Tourism Academy study on the top ten Chinese ice and snow tourism cities and ice and snow festivals between 2016 and 2017, the city of Harbin and the 33rd Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival both topped the lists.

Sports

Wriddhiman Saha Breaks MS Dhoni's Record, Becomes First Indian Wicket-Keeper to Affect 10 Dismissals in a Test Match

- On day four of the first Test between South Africa and India, Wriddhiman Saha took four catches to complete ten dismissals in the match. With it, Saha has gone past former India captain MS Dhoni's record of nine dismissals in a Test match. Dhoni achieved the feat against Australia in 2014.
- Saha, who took five catches during South Africa's first innings, added five more in the second innings. Four of these catches came in the first session of day four. Indian bowlers produced an impressive pace bowling to dismiss South Africa cheaply in their second innings.
- Meanwhile, Saha was once again impressive behind the stumps and caught almost everything whatever came his way. With these ten catches, Saha's career dismissals now read 75 catches and 10 stumping in 32 Tests.