

News 1 - Fukuoka and Doha to host Swimming World Championships.



The International Swimming Federation (FINA) declared that Fukuoka (Japan) will host the 2021 World Aquatics Championships for the second time. Doha, the capital of Qatar, will host the 2023 edition. The decision was made at the FINA executive committee voting in Budapest, Hungary on January 31, 2016. The 2017 championship will be held in Budapest, while the 2019 event will be held in Gwangju of South Korea.

News 2 - India, Afghanistan make a deal for visa-free travel by diplomats.



India and Afghanistan have made a deal for visa-free travel by the diplomats of the two countries on February 01, 2016. The pact was signed when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with top Afghan officials. The meeting involved various discussions on the matters of major bilateral and regional issues, such as security cooperation. India has also approved the development projects it is carrying out in Afghanistan.

The third phase of development project includes 92 small-scale projects. India has also granted three multi-purpose Mi-35 helicopters to Afghanistan to fight against terrorism. The prime minister has committed a fund of \$2 billion for the reconstruction.

News 3 - WHO Declares Zika Virus as a Global Emergency.



The premier health and wellness body, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a global emergency for the Zika virus on February 01, 2016. The organization had a meeting for an emergency in which independent experts assessed the outbreak after a suspicious link was found between Zika's arrival in Brazil in 2015.

This was followed by a sudden increase in the headcounts of babies born. The babies affected by Zika Virus are found to have abnormally small heads.

News 4 - Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement is signed by Pacific Rim Nations.



US-led Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement has been signed by the 12 Pacific Rim Countries in New Zealand on February 04, 2016. The New Zealand Prime Minister, John Key and US Trade Representative, Mike Froman led the deal at Auckland's Skycity Convention Centre.

The 12 nations in this partnership are Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States of America and Vietnam. Cumulatively, 40% of the world economy is accounted for by these nations.

News 5 - 35,000 Syrian Refugees Assemble at the Turkish border.



More than 35,000 Syrian refugees congregated on February 07, 2016 along the Turkish border of Kilis after escaping the war-ravaged country.

The Governor of Kilis has already announced that the Turkish government would provide aid to the migrants in case of an "extraordinary crisis." Turkey has allowed about 3 million refugees, including 2.5 million Syrians in its country.

News 6 - Thailand Kicks-Off Largest Multilateral Military Exercise in Asia-Pacific.



Cobra Gold 2016, the largest multilateral exercise in Asia-Pacific started at the Royal Thai Marine Corps Headquarters,

which is based in Bangkok, Thailand on February 09, 2016.

Around 8,500 soldiers from seven participating nations, namely, Thailand, U.S.A, Japan, South Korea, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia took part in the 11-day exercise.

News 7 - NATO signs agreement with EU on Cyber Defence Cooperation.



The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) signed an agreement on February 11, 2016 to improve cooperation in the area of cyber defence co-operation.

NATO Secretary-General, Jens Stoltenberg termed this as an example of the two organizations based in Brussels joining forces to contain contemporary forms of hybrid warfare.

News 8 - US Imposes Sanctions on North Korea.



US President Barack Obama signed a law imposing sanctions on North Korea on February 19, 2016. These sanctions were taken over the nation's nuclear program and the cyber-hacking incidents.

North Korea has tested a long-range rocket, considered a test of banned missile technology and did its fourth underground nuclear test as well.

News 9 - South Korea to build \$50m IT park in Pakistan.



To improve its ties with Pakistan, South Korea will build a \$50-million IT park in Islamabad, the nation's capital. It was announced on February 18, 2016.

The South Korean Ambassador, Song Jong-Hwan told that Korea will provide \$50 million for the establishment.

News 10 - E-Tourist Visa Scheme extended to 37 more countries.





The Union Government announced on February 27, 2016 that it has extended e-Tourist Visa Scheme to 37 more countries. With this, the total count of countries under this scheme will become 150.

The new 37 countries included in e-Tourist Visa scheme are Albania, Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Brunei, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, and Greece.

Others are Guinea, Iceland, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Moldova, Namibia, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Swaziland, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Trinidad & Tobago, Zambia and Zimbabwe.