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## Monthly GK Mania

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **TS Vineeth Bhatt: 'Best astrologer of world'.**

June 2017 showered 'Best astrologer of the world' award at Hyderabad based astrologer and numerologist TS Vineeth Bhatt at the 'Russian-Indian economic dialogue' round-table meet in Moscow. The 37 year old astrologer belongs to Kerala and has been serving as personal astrologer to ministers, ambassadors, senators worldwide. Three generations of his family have been practising astrology.

### **MEA & NIFT witnessed appointments.**

June 2017 added new appointees in Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT). Senior diplomat and a 1981-batch officer of Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Vijay Keshav Gokhale got appointed as secretary in MEA by The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet. Currently he is India's envoy to China. Earlier he had been the High Commissioner of India to Malaysia as well as the Ambassador of India to Germany. And Shri Rajesh V. Shah has succeeded Shri Chetan Chauhan as the new Chairperson of NIFT under the National Institute of Fashion Technology Act, 2006. He will serve on this post till March 2019.

### **The Dawn of GST is just few hours away.....**

The midnight of 30th June is all set to launch India's single biggest tax reform, Goods and Services Tax across the nation. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new tax regime at a function in Central Hall of the Parliament. The seven decade old state and central levies viz. excise, service tax and VAT will experience a major shift. The impending GST is expected to unify nation's 2 trillion dollar economy and 1.3 billion people into a common market. It is worth recollecting here that President Pranab Mukherjee in year 2011 moved the Constitution Amendment Bill for bringing GST when he was serving the nation as its finance minister under UPA government. Although the GST Council framed the rules and tax rates with consensus of all the States and all political parties yet it has become a big controversial issue and Congress, Left, RJP, SP and TMC have decided to boycott the mega event to protest against hardship being caused to small and medium enterprises and traders. Still the inevitable GST is on its marks.

### **Bharat Gaurav is whispering 'Dhanraj Pillay'!**

On 1st August the former Indian hockey captain, Dhanraj Pillay will be honored with East Bengal football club's highest honour 'Bharat Gaurav' for his outstanding contribution to Indian hockey. Pillay is manager of the Indian national hockey team as well as a member of the ad hoc committee of Indian Hockey Federation, which took shape after the suspension of Kanwar Pal Singh Gill. The chosen one is one of India's best hockey players and has represented India at Olympics, World Cups, Champions Trophy and Asian Games in his 15 year long career. The man has made 339 appearances for the national team and scored 170 goals. He also played for clubs in Malaysia, France, England and Germany. In year 2000 Government of India honored him with Padma Shri. Besides Pillay, former Indian footballers, Syed Nayeemuddin and Subhas Bhowmick will also get the Lifetime Achievement Awards at the function.

### **Retirement age of Arunachal Pradesh employees climbed to 60 years.**

On 25th June the Arunachal Pradesh government announced an increase in the retirement age of regular state government employees to 60 years which will come into effect from 1st January 2018. There are various categories of employees who are already enjoying the benefit of retirement age of 60 years so in order to do away with differential retirement age for the regular employees serving under the same government, the state government decided to implement the retirement age of such employees from current 58 years to 60 years.

### **Rajiv Gauba : The Next Union Home Secretary.**

on 21st June the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) gave nod to many appointments that created a major top-level bureaucratic reshuffle. Under this 1982 batch IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre and Urban Development Secretary, Rajiv Gauba has been appointed as the next Union Home Secretary. He will take place of Rajiv Mehrishi after 30th August 2017. Besides him, several other secretaries got appointed in various other Union Government Departments viz. Durga Shanker Mishra (Urban Development Secretary), N K Sinha (Information and Broadcasting Secretary), Ajay Mittal (DoPT secretary), C Garg (Department of Economic Affairs Secretary), Aruna Sundararajan (Telecom Secretary), Ajay Prakash Sawhney (MeitY Secretary), Yudhvir Singh Malik (Road, Transport and Highways Secretary), Deepak Kumar (Chairman of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)), Ajay Kumar Bhalla (Power Secretary), Avinash Kumar Srivastava (Secretary of Department of Consumer Affairs), Rajeev Kapoor (Secretary of the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals), Ravi Kant (Shipping Secretary), Sanjeevane Kuttty (Secretary of Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare in Defense Ministry) and Arun Kumar Panda (Secretary in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises).

### **Father of India's nuclear fusion transited orbit of life.**

June 2017 Padma Shri Prof Predhiman Krishan Kaw passed away. He was father of India's nuclear fusion reactor research programme and founder director of Institute for Plasma Research (IPR), Gandhinagar. It is by virtue of IPR, India became one of the seven member entities which are building the world's largest fusion experiment worth 14 billion US dollar International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER). The deceased was the first chairman of the ITER Council Science and Technology Advisory Committee and led the committee's deliberations from year 2007 to 2009. In year 2015 he had received the Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar Prize for "outstanding contributions" in the field of plasma physics.

### **ISRO to launch earth-observation Cartosat-2E and 30 nanosatellites.**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is all set to launch an earth-observation satellite, named Cartosat-2E on 23rd June 2017. Apart from the Cartosat-2E, 30 other nano-satellites, both national and international, will be transported by the PSLV. Out of the 30 nano-satellites, 29 will be of foreign origin and one will be of India. The 29 nano-satellites will be from 14 countries such as Austria, Belgium, Britain, Chile, Czech Republic, Finland,

France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and the US. The total weight of the 31 satellites would be 955 kg. This will be the seventeenth flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration.

### **Mangalyaan completed 1000 days in orbit.**

On 19th June 2017, Mars Orbiter, 'Mangalyaan' projected under ISRO's maiden interplanetary mission completed 1000 Earth days in its orbit. It was launched on 5th November 2013 via PSLV-C25 and it entered the Martian orbit on 24th September 2014 in its very first attempt. It is worth knowing that 1000 Earth days are equivalent to 973.25 Mars Sols (Martian Solar day). The Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) is credited with many laurels like cost-effectiveness, economical mass-budget, a short period of realisation, and miniaturisation of five heterogeneous science payloads. The satellite has produced more than 715 images so far. It experienced a 'blackout' period as a result of solar conjunction from 2nd June 2015 to 2nd July 2015 and a 'whiteout' period from 18th May to 30th May 2016 when the Earth came between the Sun and Mars and too much solar radiations blocked its communication with the Earth. The MOM is still pink in health as per latest information of ISRO.

### **Tamil Nadu turned on free education for Transgenders.**

On 15th June Government of Tamil Nadu announced free education for transgenders in all the institutions affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (MSU). Besides this, construction of separate restrooms for the third gender in all the institutions under MSU and provision of reservations for a member of the transgenders in several undergraduate (UG) and post-graduate (PG) courses in MSU affiliated colleges has been announced. Transgender activist and founder of Sahodari Foundation Kalki Subramaniam expressed pleasure saying "Education is the only hope for transsexual people to become free of social discrimination". However the activist was unhappy about the prospect of separate restroom calling it a mark of discrimination against the community.

### **Tata Motors appoints Girish Wagh as Commercial Vehicle Business Head.**

On 13th June Automobile major Tata Motors appointed Girish Wagh as the head of its Commercial Vehicle Business Unit. He has taken place of Ravindra Pisharody who was the Director of TaTa Motors' associated companies and Executive Director (Commercial Vehicles). Headquartered in Mumbai, Tata Motors Limited is an Indian multinational automotive manufacturing company which manufactures passenger cars, trucks, vans, coaches, buses, sports cars, construction equipment and military vehicles. The company has its units in Jamshedpur, Pantnagar, Lucknow, Sanand, Dharwad, and Pune in India, as well as in Argentina, South Africa, Great Britain and Thailand. Its principal subsidiaries purchased the English premium car maker Jaguar Land Rover and the South Korean commercial vehicle manufacturer Tata Daewoo. Natarajan Chandrasekaran is the current Chairman of the company since 17 January 2017.

### **ISRO is envisaging new era of satellite launching system.**

In June 2017 Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) disclosed information about its new ongoing project of Electric Propulsion (EP) system for introducing cost effective satellite launch. This Electric Propulsion system converts solar energy into electrical energy which in turn is utilized for changing velocity of a satellite in space.

This technology was initially used as a technology demonstrator in Geostationary Communication satellite (GSAT-9) or the South Asia Satellite.

#### **NITI Aayog conceived program SATH.**

In June 2017 NITI Aayog started a program 'SATH' i.e. 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human capital' with the State Governments. The program envisages transformation in the education and health sectors. NITI along with McKinsey & Company and IPE Global consortium, which were chosen via a competitive bidding process will together implement this program. It is meant to cater the need expressed by many states for technical support from NITI. It aims to identify and build three future 'role model' states for health systems. The three model states will be selected in a three-stage process viz. expression of interest, presentations by the states and assessment of commitment to health sector reforms.

#### **Rays Future Energy welcomed its new CEO 'Rahul Mishra'.**

In June 2017 the new company, Rays Future Energy appointed Rahul Mishra as its new CEO to focus on distributed solar generation including rooftop solutions, energy storage, e- vehicles & associated infrastructure and solar energy based products. Prior to this appointment the appointee was found working with Nereus Capital, a private equity fund that aimed at investing in the Indian renewable energy sector. He has also worked for setting up operations of GE Energy Financial Services (EFS) in India and South East Asia region

#### **K G Karmakar & Gauri Shankar will direct IPPB.**

On 8th June the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet gave nod to appointment of K G Karmakar and Gauri Shankar as Independent Directors of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB). And Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued orders for the same. The duo will rule over IPPB for upcoming three years. It is worth knowing that the IPPB has been incorporated as a public sector bank under the Department of Posts with 100 % equity of the government of India.

#### **Copyrights Office welcomed its new Registrar Hoshiar Singh.**

On 7th June 1994 batch officer of the Indian Telecom Services, Hoshiar Singh got appointed as Registrar of Copyrights for upcoming five years. Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) gave nod to his appointment. Under umbrella of Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, the Office of Copyrights protects the music and film industry and addresses its concerns. Working under the superintendence and directions of the government, Hoshiar Singh will handle the ropes of Office of Copyrights. The Office of Copyrights was created under Section 9 of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957.

#### **Pending cases caused emergence of Nyaya Mitras.**

On 6th June Union Law and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad announced the upcoming appointment of Nyaya Mitras for addressing pending cases in the lower courts for the last 10 in an inaugural function of Tele Law Service through Common Service Centers at the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court. The retired judges will be appointed as Nyaya Mitras to expedite more than 750,000 pending cases across

the nation and will offer assistance to litigants who are suffering due to delay in trial. Besides this the newly inaugurated common service centres promised 300 kinds of services to the common people. On this occasion the Union Minister also made an appeal to the Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) working at these centres to make themselves dependable for poor people.

### **The flow of Kalinga Literary Awards.....On 6th June**

Author Anand Neelakantan, Odia poet Haraprasad Das and writer Paramita Satpathy were chosen for Kalinga International Literary Award, Kalinga Literary Youth Award and Kalinga Karubaki Award respectively. These awards will be presented to them during the upcoming Kalinga Literary Festival 2017 from 10th June to 12th June 2017 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Around 200 celebrities from across the globe will attend this festival which will be celebrated on the 'Literature for Peace and Harmony' theme. Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will inaugurate this fourth edition of Kalinga Literary Festival.

### **NSDC & Bird Academy will give wings to unemployed youth.**

In June 2017 National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Bird Academy have inked an MoU to train more than 30 thousand unemployed youth from across the nation in the aviation and aerospace sectors. The duo will establish training centres and centres of excellence in Chandigarh, Delhi, Cochin, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Goa and other locations for increasing employability of youth. It is worth recalling here that Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) have jointly launched the Skill Management and Accreditation of Training Centres (SMART).

### **Bharat Gaurav Award will be seen travelling towards Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar.**

9th June will add Bharat Gaurav Award to cabinet of trophies of Filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar for his path-breaking films. NRI community of US will confer this award upon the leading Indian director at the United Nations Hall, New York. Prior to this he became proud recipient of the Padma Shri, National Awards for Best Feature Film and Best Director for Page 3 and Traffic Signal respectively. Spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Late Kalpana Chawla, Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak (brain behind Sulabh Shauchalayas in the country), Acharya Lokesh Muni and many other prominent personalities will experience the shower of awards on this occasion.

### **Prasar Bharati got a new CEO.**

On 2nd June India's largest public broadcasting agency appointed Shashi Shekhar Vempati as its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for upcoming five years. Three member committee headed by Vice President M Hamid Ansari recommended his name for the post. Flashback reveals that the appointee is an alumnus of IIT Bombay and holds more than 20 years of experience in corporate management, technology consulting and digital media. He has two patents in his name viz. Real Time Business Event Monitoring, Tracking and Execution Architecture and System; and Method for Monitoring and Management of Inventory of Products and Assets in Real Time. For more than 10 years he worked in Infosys as a Product Strategist and Digital Innovator in North America. Apart from this he has penned books like Broadcasting Technologies in India, National Digital Security Architecture in India, Creating

a Global Media Platform out of India and many more. Before this appointment he was a Part Time Member of the Prasar Bharati Board.

### **IIT Kharagpur looked into medical technology.**

Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur developed a technology named as “AmbuSens” with which the doctors will have a preview of upcoming case of the approaching patient towards hospital in ambulance itself. The innovation permits wireless monitoring of many physiological parameters viz. ECG, heart-rate, temperature and blood-pressure which can be fitted in an ambulance to ensure an effective remote monitoring of patient’s condition. The system can keep the patient's data confidential while simultaneously using the analytic and computing power of cloud computing. The web interface of the AmbuSens system will provide a user friendly graphical interface for doctors and paramedics alike with data visualisation tools such as real-time ECG graph rendering which can be accessed from internet-enabled laptops, tablets and smartphones. The credit for this new technology goes to the SWAN lab of the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) of the institute.

### **Sanjiv Singh made entry in Indian Oil Corporation.**

On 1st June Sanjiv Singh got appointed as new chairman of Indian Oil Corporation. The Chemical Engineer from IIT-Roorkee has succeeded B Ashok. Prior to this, Singh worked in capacities of Executive Director of Paradip Refinery Project as well as head of IOC’s Panipat Refinery before becoming a director. He will serve India’s largest oil refining and marketing company for upcoming three-years. It is worth knowing that IOC is also the nation’s biggest company by

### **The Dadasaheb Phalke award laughed at Kapil Sharma.**

As per report of DNA Kapil Sharma got chosen for Dadasaheb Phalke award for year 2017 for his extraordinary comedy skills. Before this, Kapil received award in year 2014. Besides him Priyanka Chopra, Vivek Oberoi, Gulshan Grover were also awarded the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke award under various categories.

### **Double Helical National Health Award 2017 throbbled for Dr Sushil.**

On 1st June Double Helical, India’s leading health magazine, has acknowledged renowned cardiologist and social worker, Dr Sushil Kumar Sharma with the Double Helical National Health Award in the category of Excellence for his Cardiology Services. The establishment of Intervention Programme in GMC, Jammu is the credential of the awardee. Besides this he has performed more than 10,000 simple and complex procedures.

### **IIT Kharagpur showed a new way of making biofuel.**

As per statement of Dr Rintu Banerjee, Professor of Department of Agricultural and Food Engineering, the team of researchers at IIT Kharagpur have developed a new technology which will revolutionize the manufacturing of biofuel which will make the process cheaper, quicker and pollution-free. The new 'soil-to-soil' technology of making the biofuel will lead to 2g bioethanol production from several naturally available lignocellulosic components. Lignocellulose refers to plant dry matter (biomass). As per the new process, the requisite chemical treatment for degrading the lignin will be replaced by enzymatic reaction which will account for pollution free

production of biofuel. Lignin is a complex organic polymer deposited in the cell walls of many plants which lends woody quality to plants.

#### **I&B Ministry welcomed Narendra Kumar Sinha.**

On 30th June 1980-batch IAS officer from Bihar, Narendra Kumar Sinha got appointed as Secretary in Information & Broadcasting Ministry. He has succeeded Ajay Mittal. Past reveals that the appointee earned post graduate in Electrical Engineering from IISc, Bangalore, MBA from Southern Cross University, Australia and is a Fellow of Institution of Engineers (India). Prior to this appointment he has served on many key positions in both State and Central government offices viz. Union Ministry of Culture, Information Technology Department, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development. Apart from this he has been an active participant in several workshops, symposiums and public functions to connect with experts, stakeholders and the general public to explain to them government schemes and have their feedback on government policies and social issues. He has also travelled across national and international boundaries as government delegate for numerous national and international meetings and negotiations.

#### **RK Pachnanda: Director-General of Indo-Tibetan Border Police.**

30th June 2017 lifted former Calcutta Police Commissioner RK Pachnanda to designation of Director-General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). He has succeeded Krishna Chaudhary and with that the rope of the baton of the about 90000 mountain warfare-trained force has come in his hands. He is a 1983 batch IPS officer of Bengal cadre who holds rare distinction of working in all the major central paramilitary forces and organisations viz. The CRPF, the CISF, the BSF, the Special Protection Group (SPG), the CBI and the NDRF. It is worth knowing that the ITBP guards the 3488 km border with China that passes across five states like Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **Achal Kumar Jyoti: The next Chief Election Commissioner.**

On 4th July Achal Kumar Jyoti got appointed as the next Chief Election Commissioner. Law ministry has appointed him as the 21st Head of the Election Commission who will succeed Nasim Zaidi on 6th July 2017. This 1975-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer has been the Chief Secretary of Gujarat, Gujarat vigilance commissioner, the secretary in the industry, revenue and water supply departments in the state, the chairman of the Kandla Port Trust and the Managing Director of the Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd (SSNNL). In the recent past the appointee had joined the three-member poll panel as an election commissioner on 8th May 2015 and will grace the office till 17th January 2018. It is worth knowing here that the new man is 64 years old now and the term of a Chief Election Commissioner or Election Commissioner is six years or until the person reaches the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. So after a year the government is expected make a new appointment for post of Election Commissioner and probably Om Prakash Rawat is the potential candidate lying in wait.

#### **EPFO join hands with five banks.**



Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has signed an agreement with five banks for collection of provident dues and to make retirement payments. The tie-ups with Bank of Baroda, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank will help EPFO save around Rs 125 crore a year and expedite its investments as well as payment of benefits to its members. Employers having bank account in these banks can now deposit Provident Fund dues directly in EPFO's account using internet banking in real time basis instead of going through the aggregator mode.

**Sanjay Gupta appointed as the Chairman of Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Amritsar.** Sanjay Gupta, the CEO of Jagran Prakashan Ltd has been appointed as the new Chairman of the society and Board of Governors of the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Amritsar for a period of five years. Presently, he is the editor in Chief of Dainik Jagran. Earlier, he also served as a member on the board of governors of IIM Lucknow and of Motilal Nehru Institute of Technology, Allahabad.

**Sanjiv Goenka : New Chairman of IIT Kharagpur.**

On July 2017, Sanjiv Goenka has been appointed as the chairman of the Board of Governors at the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur for the period of three years. At present, he is serving as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Woodlands Medical Centre Ltd., a premier hospital located in Kolkata. In 2009 - 10 he also became the President of the All India Management Association (AIMA).

**Unprivileged will become privileged!**

In July 2017 Telangana government has announced opening of India's first university in Hyderabad only for Dalit students. The proposed university is likely to get manifested by 2018 under Telangana government's policy of free education for students of the weaker sections from kindergarten to postgraduate level. Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TSWREIS) which runs nearly 268 residential institutions for Dalit students from class 5 to under-graduate level is the brain behind this upcoming university.

**BCCI witnesses new appointments.**

On 11th July Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) made some new appointments in BCCI. Ravi Shastri has been made the new chief coach of the Indian cricket team till ICC World Cup 2019, former fast bowler Zaheer Khan has become the new bowling coach for upcoming two years. Former Indian Captain Rahul Dravid got appointed as batting consultant for specific overseas tours. It is worth recollecting here that Ravi Shastri who had been the Director of the Indian cricket team from 2014 till 2016 T20 World Cup has succeeded Anil Kumble who resigned from the post after the ICC Champions Trophy 2017.

**NABARD completed its 36 years!**

On 12th July 2017 the apex development bank, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) celebrated its 36th Foundation Day. NABARD was set up on the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee on 12th July 1982 as per Act 61,1981 of Parliament. Headquartered in Mumbai, NABARD deals in

financial inclusion policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in country.

### **‘Separate flag for separate state’ will that be the destiny of India ?**

In July 2017 Karnataka government constituted a nine-member committee headed by Principal Secretary, Department of Kannada and Culture, explore the possibility of “designing a separate flag for Karnataka and providing it a statutory standing.” Secretaries to the Departments of Personnel and Administrative Services, Home, Law and Parliamentary Affairs, president of Kannada Sahitya Parishat, chairman of Kannada Development Authority, vice-chancellor of Kannada University, Hampi, and Director of Department of Kannada and Culture are the members of this committee.

### **New AIIMS is rising in Gorakhpur.**

On 13th July Government of Uttar Pradesh inked Memorandum of Understanding with the Centre to establish AIIMS in Gorakhpur. The proposed hospital will have 750 free beds and the estimated cost of the project will be 1,750 crore rupees. The OPD and the trauma centres will become operational in this AIIMS by 2018 and 2020 respectively.

### **India’s first TISC is dawning.**

On 13th July Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) inked an Institutional agreement with the Punjab State Council of Science and Technology (PSCST) for establishment of India’s first Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) at Patent Information Centre of Punjab. Under World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), TISC will stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) system in country to foster creativity and innovation. It will encourage entrepreneurship and enhance social, economic and cultural development by setting up a network of TISCs in India. Moreover in upcoming years Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) is planning to set up TISCs in Universities, State Science Councils, R&D institutions etc. that will give an impetus to knowledge sharing, sharing of best practices among the TISCs, capacity building, generation and commercialization of IPs.

### **Gujarat will bear India’s first high-speed rail training centre.**

In July 2017 announcements of country’s first high-speed rail training centre at Gandhinagar got aired. This awaited centre will provide advanced training modules on cutting edge technologies. The proposed centre will get manifested over railway land measuring 4,400 metres at an estimated cost of Rs 600 crore. This training centre will become operational by 2020 and India’s first bullet train is likely to hit the track by 2023.

### **Social Boycott has become a punishable offence.**

In July 2017 social boycott was declared a punishable offence and Maharashtra became the first state of India to frame a law against it. Late Narendra Dabholkar was the man behind this law who was shot dead. The President of India signed a Maharashtra legislature named “Maharashtra Prohibition of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2016” and transformed it into a law. The virgin law advocates action

against extra-judicial bodies like jat (caste) and community panchayats, and prescribes a maximum punishment of 3 years of imprisonment or a fine up to Rs 1 lakh or both. The abetment of the offence also attracts the same fate.

**‘Saraswati’ chose to appear before Indian eye.**

In July 2017 Indian astronomers made a significant discovery of supercluster of galaxies in the direction of constellation Pisces. They named this supercluster of 43 galaxies as ‘Saraswati’. With mass equivalent to 20 million billion suns, it is 4 billion light years away from Earth. Saraswati extends over a scale of 600 million light years. The team of scientists involved in this discovery was led by Joydeep Bagchi and the other team members include scientists from Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA), Pune; the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Pune; Newman College in Thodupuzha in Kerala and National Institute of Technology, Jamshedpur. It is worth knowing that our Earth is part of the Milky Way galaxy and it is part of a supercluster called the Laniakea Supercluster.

**Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj became President of Ramakrishna Math.**

On 17th July Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj got elected as the 16th President of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. The seat of the president which had been vacant since 18th June 2017 has eventually got filled. He has succeeded Swami Atmasthanandaji Maharaj. Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj belongs to Tamil Nadu. He became Trustee of the Ramakrishna Math and member of the Governing Body of the Ramakrishna Mission in year 1983. In April 1995 he became Assistant Secretary in Ramakrishna Math and later in 1997 he became General Secretary of the organisation. Ramakrishna Mission is a registered society in which monks of Ramakrishna Math and devotees conduct various social services across the nation.

**Tata Motors gave way to India’s first Bio-Methane Bus.**

On 17th July India’s largest Commercial Vehicles manufacturer, Tata Motors unveiled country’s first Bio-CNG (bio-methane) bus at Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas’s ‘Urja Utsav’, the Bio-energy programme. Currently the LCV, ICV & MCV buses can procure the new bio-methane engines (5.7 SGI & 3.8 SGI). Bio-methane is produced out of bio-degradable materials like kitchen waste. The natural degradation process of waste products leads to production of gas which escapes into the atmosphere unused. For the biomethane bus the resultant biogas has been trapped and used in engines. The alternate fuel technology will contribute Government of India’s Smart City initiative. It is good for knowledge that Tata Motors has pioneered the introduction of natural gas vehicles (CNG) in India. It is being credited for introducing various technologies in CNG like gas injection technology, skip fire, plug type coils, long life spark plugs and longer oil drain intervals.

**Lok Sabha made (IIIT-PPP) Bill 2017 pass.**

On 19th July Lok Sabha approved Indian Institute of Information Technology Public Private Partnership Bill 2017 via voice vote. The approved bill seeks statutory status for the fifteen Indian Institutes of Information Technology in Public Private Partnership and proclaims them as Institutions of National Importance. The Bill authorizes these institutions to grant degrees to their students in the academic courses conducted by them. The privileged institutions will be able to use the nomenclature of Bachelor of Technology (BTech) or Master of Technology

(MTech) or PhD degree as issued by a University or Institution of National Importance.

**Milk & Milk Products welcomed quality mark logo.**

On 20th July Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh launched National Dairy Development Board's (NDDB) quality mark logo for milk and milk products to signify safe and quality milk and milk products from dairy cooperatives. This launch was aimed at providing brand identity and a competitive edge to dairy cooperatives. The move will fetch process improvement in the entire value chain from producer to the consumers to ensure availability of quality milk and milk products. This new quality mark will be valid for three years.

**Radio broadcasting celebrated 90 years of its completion.**

On 23rd July 2017 Radio broadcasting completed its 90 years. On 23rd July 1927 first ever radio broadcast was aired from the Bombay Station by a private company named the Indian Broadcasting Company. On 8th of June, 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Service got transformed into All India Radio with the motto "Bahujan Hitaya Bahujan Sukhaya". And since then AIR has been informing, educating and entertaining the masses. Currently under India's largest public broadcasting agency, Prasar Bharati, All India Radio, enjoys the distinction of being one of the major broadcasting organizations in the world. AIR's home service has 420 stations across the country, covering 92% area of India and 99.19% of the total population. AIR originates programming in 23 languages and 146 dialects.

**FSSAI bans stapler pins in tea bags from January 2018**

FSSAI bans stapler pins in tea bags from January 2018. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on 24 July 2017 banned the use of stapler pins in tea bags. The decision is effective from 1 January 2018. The FSSAI has deemed the use of stapler pins in tea bag a serious health hazard. The move is expected to affect the fast growing packaged tea business in the country.

**Loknath Behra became DGP of Kerala.**

28th June the Director of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption Bureau, Loknath Behra has been appointed as Director General of Police (DGP) of Kerala. The Pinarayi Vijayan-led Kerala government confirmed this appointment of the 1985 batch Kerala cadre IPS officer. He will succeed incumbent TP Senkumar who will retire as the state DGP on 30th June 2017. It is worth recalling here that initially the Kerala government had removed TP Senkumar from this post on account of the delay in investigation in the Jisha murder case and the Puttingal fire tragedy but later the Apex court ordered the government of Kerala to reinstate him as DGP of the state.

**Founder of pharma giant-Lupin passed away.**

Desh Bandhu Gupta, founder and chairman of Indian pharma major Lupin Ltd has passed away on 26th June 2017 at the age of 79 years. He started his career as an associate professor at Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS), Pilani in Rajasthan. After that, he founded Lupin in 1968 with a capital of just Rs. 5,000, which he borrowed from his wife Manju; the staff comprised a peon-cum-packer and a part-time typist. Under his leadership, Lupin grew from being a domestic Indian pharmaceutical company

to a global pharmaceutical major worth of Rs. 17,119-crore across 100 countries.

**The 7th Asian Awards applauded Intellectap CEO Nisha Dutt.**

In June 2017 Chief Executive Officer of Hyderabad-based Intellectap has been conferred the “Social Entrepreneur of the Year” award at The 7th Asian Awards in London. Intellectap which targets social capital and impacts the underserved communities became globally acknowledged enterprise under her leadership. She has been wedding technology to challenges of healthcare, financial services, incubation and conceptualising programs like Innovations Labs and Credit-tree. The Asian Awards are annual awards instituted by businessman and philanthropist, Paul Sagoo via his Lemon Group Company. These awards are bestowed in 14 categories. Prior to her Ratan Tata, Amitabh Bachchan, Shahrukh Khan and singers Asha Bhosle and Zayn Malik and many others were honored with the Asian awards.

**Rajesh Kotecha: Special Secretary in Ayush Ministry.**

On 20 June 2017, Ayurvedic Physician, Rajesh Kotecha has been appointed as special secretary in Ayush Ministry. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment for the period of three years on the contract basis. Currently, he is the chief consultant of Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic, Jaipur.

**Passport office of Cochin awarded best passport office for the year 2016-17.**

Regional Passport Office of Cochin has clinched the award for the best passport office in India for the year 2016-17. This is for the fourth consecutive year that RPO of Cochin is selected for the Passport Seva Puraskar instituted by the Ministry of External Affairs. This year, RPO of Cochin had a score of 9.85 out of 10, which is highest among all passport offices in India. In this category, Jalandhar with 9.75 and Ahmedabad with 9.30 scores are at second and third position respectively.

**Shyama Sanju emerged as the most beautiful transgender of Kerala.**

In June midweek Kerala organized its first beauty contest for transgenders, ‘Queen of Dhwayah’ at CIAL Convention Centre in Nedumbassery, where Shyama Sanju achieved the first spot and was crowned by the renowned actress Madhoo. Dancer Jaz D'souza and stage actress Harini Chandana were the first and second runner-up respectively. It is worth knowing that Sanju is also the first person to receive the state government scholarship for transgender persons. Government of Kerala is doing a lot for upliftment of transgender community.

**PN Bhagwati said goodbye to the court of life.**

On 15th June former Chief Justice of India PN Bhagwati in New Delhi at the age of 95 years. The deceased was a pioneer of Judicial Activism in India for introducing the concept of Public Interest Litigations(PIL)s. He was the 17th Chief Justice of India who served the post from July 1985 to December 1986. He had been the Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court and entered in the Apex Court Supreme Court in July 1973. He handled prominent cases

like Maneka Gandhi passport impounding case and the Minerva Mill which led to the 42nd Constitutional amendment.

**Maharashtra conceived India's first canal top solar PV system.**

In June 2017 State-run power giant NTPC has energised 150 kWp canal top solar PV System on cooling water (CW) channel inside power station campus at its 2,320 MW, Mouda Thermal Power Project, near Nagpur in Maharashtra. In this new Solar PV system, side walls of CW channels have been used as load bearing structure which significantly reduced cost of civil and mounting structure. The system is equipped with many other unique beneficial features such as land and water conservation due to reduced evaporation, increased PV generation due to cooling and reduction in dirt etc.

**‘Project Jal Sanchay’ of Bihar collected National Award.**

On 19th June at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, Union Ministry of Rural development will confer the National award for excellence to Nalanda district of south-central Bihar under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP). The district has adopted a water conservation model, ‘Project Jal Sanchay’. This project was launched as an administrative initiative to address prevalent water crisis of the region but soon it took form of a mass movement. The project led to renovation of traditional Aahar-Pyne irrigation system and traditional water bodies, creation of check dams, rainwater harvest, and a sound water conservation system. The project orchestrated modern day techniques and technologies with traditional knowledge for a holistic approach to the problem of water conservation. The project turned into a big success and positively influenced availability of water and farm production in the the region.

**God of Cricket will enjoy fatherhood in UN campaign ‘Super Dads’.**

On 7th June master blaster Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar joined the United Nations campaign/initiative titled ‘Super Dads’ which is part of a larger campaign called #EarlyMomentsMatter. It is a UNICEF initiative that underlines the significant role played by fathers in children’s early development. The initiative is meant to highlight the importance of love, play, protection and good nutrition for the healthy development of young children’s brains. Mahershala Ali, the All Blacks, Daniel Cormier, Lewis Hamilton, Hugh Jackman, Thalía and Chris Weidman are other participants of this ‘Super Dads’ campaign. Under this campaign UNICEF has invited families to post photos and videos of what it takes to be ‘super dads,’ using the hashtag #EarlyMomentsMatter on their Instagram and Twitter accounts from 6th June to 18 June (Father’s day) and UNICEF will select the most heart-warming, humorous, and imaginative photo and video submissions among them to post them on the organisation’s own digital platforms.

**NSE introduced an international exchange.**

In June 2017 the leading stock market, National Stock Exchange (NSE) has begun its international exchange 'NSE IFSC Clearing Corporations Ltd.' in the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City ( GIFT). The new entity will remain operational for a longer period than NSE during a trading day. It is meant to clear and settle all the trades. Many products from the currency, commodity and equity segments are likely to get listed on the new exchange which may also trigger other innovative products as per Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) regulations. Recently SEBI has issued norms permitting international exchanges to remain vibrant for 23 hours in GIFT and settle trades at least twice a day. In December 2016 NSE coupled with Association of National Exchanges Members of India (ANMI) and displayed preview of the products, membership schemes and technology solutions for its upcoming international exchange.

### **Madhya Pradesh came on record!**

On 2nd July Madhya Pradesh scripted a record of planting 6 Crore saplings in 12 hours. This massive plantation drive was operated in 24 districts of Narmada basin in time period of just 12 hours. The three crore saplings were arranged from the forest department, while the remaining three crore were provided by other departments and private nurseries on this occasion. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan also participated in this event and invoked people to plant trees on special occasions of their lives. Before Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh held the record of planting five crore saplings in 24-hours in July 2016.

### **NABARD completed its 36 years!**

On 12th July 2017 the apex development bank, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) celebrated its 36th Foundation Day. NABARD was set up on the recommendations of B.Sivaraman Committee on 12th July 1982 as per Act 61,1981 of Parliament. Headquartered in Mumbai, NABARD deals in financial inclusion policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in country.

### **Former Sikkim CM said goodbye to cabinet of life.**

On 16th July the former chief minister of Sikkim, Nar Bahadur Bhandari passed away at the age of 77 in Delhi. He worked as a government school teacher before beginning his political career. He founded Sikkim Janata Parishad in 1977. In 1979 he came to power as the Chief Minister of Sikkim for the first time. In 1984, he constituted a new party known as Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP) after dissolution of the Sikkim Janata Parishad. In 1985 as well as in 1989, he again became Chief Minister of the state on the ticket of SSP. He worked as the President of SSP till his end. He was the first Gorkha to hold the office of a Chief Minister in the history of Indian Polity.

### **6 Indian hotels enjoyed place of prominence in World's Best Hotels list.**

In July 2017 in survey of Travel + Leisure magazine, the World's 100 Best Hotels list accommodated six Indian hotels. Among the six chosen Indian hotels five are located in princely state of Rajasthan and one of UP is located

in Agra. The Oberoi Vanyavilas in Ranthambore was ranked at 16th position, Leela Palace in Udaipur was spotted on 34th position, Rambagh Palace, a Taj Hotel in Jaipur took 43rd position, Oberoi Rajvilas in Jaipur grabbed 68th position, Oberoi Amarvilas in Agra occupied 69th position and Oberoi Udaivilas in Udaipur stood at 84th position. As per the US-based magazine specifications, the hotels were ranked on basis of the available facilities, location, service, food, and overall value plus the hotels were classified as City or Resort based on their locations and amenities.

### **WPC Excellence Award slipped on Indian Oil!**

In July 2017 Leading oil marketing company Indian Oil captured World Petroleum Congress Award for its innovative and ground-breaking INDMAX technology at 22nd edition of the World Petroleum Congress in Istanbul. The former Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Energy and Industry of Qatar, Abdullah bin Hamad Al Attiyah conferred this award upon Sanjiv Singh, Chairman, IndianOil and SSV Ramakumar, Director (R&D). The company developed LPG by the INDMAX technology which is highly suitable for heavy crude oil contaminated with metals. Besides this, Indian Oil also slided the top honours for the unsurpassed scale of implementation of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). Indian Oil had led the distribution of deposit-free LPG connections to below-poverty-line families.

### **Bicentenary Celebration of Paika Rebellion of Odisha has begun.**

On 20th July Pranab Mukherjee did the inaugural ceremony of Bicentenary Celebration of Paika Rebellion of Odisha which was organized by Union Ministry of Culture. The Paika Rebellion was an armed rebellion against the British East India Company's rule in Odisha in 1817. Under leadership of Bakshi Jagabandhu, the Paikas who were traditional landed militia of Odisha worked as warriors and were charged with policing functions during peacetime. It was a National War waged by ordinary people at the grassroots level for upholding the rights of the Odia people and sovereignty of Odisha. The Paikas projected Lord Jagannath as the symbol of Odia unity. The Britishers arrested the rebellions and awarded sentences of death, transportation and long-term imprisonment to them 200 years ago.

### **ESMA & SEBI made agreement for info exchange on CCPs.**

In July 2017 European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) and Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) inked Memorandum of Understanding under umbrella of the European Markets Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR) for exchanging information about Central Counterparties (CCPs). Central counterparties are establishments that look after clearing and settlement activities. The MoU permits cooperation arrangements viz. the exchange of information regarding Central Counterparties (CCPs) which are established and authorised or recognised in India by SEBI and which have applied for EU recognition under EMIR. It should be noted that EMIR arranges agreements of a cooperation arrangement between ESMA and the relevant non-EU authorities, whose legal and supervisory framework for CCPs have been deemed equivalent to EMIR by the European Commission. And signing of MoU is one of the significant conditions for recognition of third country CCPs by ESMA under EMIR



### **GoDaddy appoints Nikhil Arora as VP :**

GoDaddy has announced the appointment of Nikhil Arora as Vice President and Managing Director for its India operations. Arora will lead corporate strategy, business development and customer experience for GoDaddy in the country.

### **Nation celebrates Kargil Vijay Diwas .**

The country celebrated the 18th Anniversary of 'Kargil Vijay Diwas' on 26 July. At Drass War memorial, in Jammu and Kashmir the celebrations were started on Monday during which various programs have been arranged. Last Sunday Kargil Parakram Rally has been organized at India Gate . On this day in 1999, the Indian Army successfully took control of posts at a treacherous high altitude and glaciated terrain across the Himalayas in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir, after fighting for 60 days. More than 500 soldiers from Indian Armed Forces sacrificed their lives during the war. Four Param Vir Chakras, nine Maha Vir Chakras, 53 Vir Chakras and other medals had been awarded to felicitate the Kargil War heroes.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

### **Krishna R Urs has become US Ambassador to Peru.**

June 2017 made Indian-American, Krishna R Urs as the new US Ambassador to Peru. His three decade long experience of State Department service in which he earned extensive policy experience in the Andean region of South America makes him suitable for this latest appointment. He had been an American diplomat since 1986. He has also rendered his service at seven US embassies and has worked in capacity of senior leadership positions in Washington, DC. Prior to this appointment his latest designation was Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Madrid.

### **USIBC Global Leadership Awards went to Adi Godrej & Andrew Liveris.**

On 28th June 2017 the US-India Business Council Global Leadership Awards were conferred upon Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej and Dow Chemical CEO Andrew Liveries for their contribution in integrating India in the global supply chain at the USIBCs annual gala. The duo integrated India in the global supply chain by enhancing core values like manufacturing and innovation.

### **June won Confidence vote for May!**

On 30th June British Prime Minister, Theresa May won her first major test as the Prime Minister of a minority government in the United Kingdom in form of 'confidence vote' or legislative programme known as the 'Queen's Speech' in the parliament. She received 323 votes in favour of this legislative plan and 309 against it in the 650-seat parliament. For this victory May had struck a deal with the small ultra-conservative Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and its 10 MPs at Westminster and agreed for funding a package worth a billion pounds for DUP's projects in Northern Ireland as part of the deal. On the other hand the Opposition tried hard to test May's power in

the House of Commons. They forwarded two amendments. The first one was about access to abortions for women from Northern Ireland on the British mainland, funded by the National Health Service (NHS) but they lost it just by 26 votes and the second one was about continued single market and customs union membership of the European Union after Brexit which was also disapproved in the British Parliament proclaiming confident stance of Theresa May.

**Mihai Tudose : Prime Minister of Romania.**

June last week brought Social Democrat Mihai Tudose in power as Romanian President Klaus Iohannis appointed him as the Prime Minister of Romania. The appointee will have to form a new government in period of 10 days. He will succeed Sorin Grindeanu who suffered dismissal by a motion of no confidence adopted in Parliament by his own party. Tudose is a Romanian politician, deputy in the Parliament of Romania, Minister of Economy in the ousted Grindeanu Cabinet and the Prime Minister-designate of Romania.

**27th June 2017 brought 50th anniversary of ATM!**

Entire globe celebrated 50th Birthday of World's First Automated Teller Machine (ATM) on 27th June. On this occasion a British bank decorated the cashpoint in gold, added a commemorative plaque and unfolded a red carpet in front for its users. The ATM was the brainchild of John Shepherd-Baron and Barclays Bank installed the first ATM at their Enfield branch in north London on 27th June, 1967. And an English actor Reg Varney of the British TV comedy show "On The Buses" was the first person to withdraw cash from the new machine. At present there are around 3 million cash machines across the globe and among them 70,000 cash machines are in the UK alone which dispensed 175 billion pounds in 2016. The world's most northerly ATM machine is at Longyearbyen, Svalbard, Norway and the most southerly ATM machine is located at the McMurdo station at the South Pole.

**Bhumika Sharma won Miss World Bodybuilding title.**

21-year-old Bhumika Sharma has won the Miss World Bodybuilding title. Dehradun girl made India proud after acing all the important rounds. She earned maximum number of points in body posing, individual posing and fall category. She also won the gold medal at the world championship which was held in Venice last week. The championship comprised 50 contestants from around the world and Sharma was one of the 27 Indians to rock the tournament.

**China launched fastest bullet train 'Fuxing'.**

On 26th June 2017, China has launched its first self-developed "next-generation" bullet train "Fuxing" with a maximum speed of 400 Km per hour. The train was launched on the country's busiest Beijing-Shanghai line. A CR400AF model train was flagged off from Beijing South Railway Station towards Shanghai. It took near about five hours and 45 minutes to reach Shanghai. On its way, it stopped at 10 stations, including Jinan, Shandong province and Tianjin.

**The unknown has now become known.**

In June 2017 Gordon Shepherd, an Aeronomer from the York University in Toronto in Canada, published a study related to 'Bright Nights' in the journal, Geophysical Research Letters. On a clear, moonless night when waves in the upper atmosphere converge over specific locations on the Earth, it amplifies naturally causing airglow, a faint light in the dark night sky termed as 'Bright Night'. Airglow happens from emissions of different colours of light from chemical reactions in the upper atmosphere. The green portion of airglow occurs when light from the sun splits the molecular oxygen into individual oxygen atoms. And when these atoms recombine, they emit the excess energy as photons in the green part of the visible light spectrum, giving the sky a greenish hue. The Bright nights were noticed in 1783, 1908 and 1916 earlier and since that time scientists were trying to find out the cause of this event which has now become clear. Bright night is an annual event that happens at a specific location and Scientists observed it with satellite instrument, 'Wind Imaging Interferometer (WINDII)' of NASA's Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite .

**PETA Award got lured by Sonam's Rheson.**

On 22nd June actress Sonam Kapoor and her sister Rhea Kapoor's Fashion label 'Rheson' was chosen for Compassionate Business Award 2017 from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India. Fashion label 'Rheson' belongs to line of bags made exclusively of vegan materials. Rheson company was acknowledged for promotion of cruelty-free fashion. It offers optimum quality fashion wear and accessories made of vegan materials, without harming animals. In past the actress has been advocating ban on classroom dissection for university life-science and zoology students across the nation.

**Ferrari hitched 2017 International Engine of the Year award.**

In June 2017 Ferrari's 3.9-litre V8 from the 488 GTB has won the 2017 International Engine of the Year award for the second consecutive year. The twin-turbo 3.9-litre V8 of Ferrari won over Porsche's 3.0-litre six-cylinder turbo and with this victory Ferrari's V8 joined the row of four other powertrains viz. BMW M's V10, BMW's 3.0-litre twin-turbo six, Volkswagen's 1.4-litre 'Twincharged' TSI and Ford's 1.0-litre EcoBoost that won this award earlier.

**Kenneth Juster: The next US Ambassador to India.**

On 21st June top aide of US President Donald Trump and Senior White House official, Kenneth Juster has got appointed as the next American Ambassador to India. The man is presently serving in capacity of Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs and Deputy Director of the National Economic Council in the White House. The appointee is a lawyer from Harvard and he is being credited for launching High Technology Cooperation Group to promote trade in sensitive dual-use goods and technology when he was serving as Deputy Secretary of commerce in President George W Bush's administration. He was also one of the main architects of the 'Next Steps in Strategic Partnership' initiative between India and US which formed the foundation for the landmark civil nuclear agreement between the two countries in year 2008. He has succeeded Richard Verma, the first Indian-American to head this position.

**Saudi Arabia's King Salman appointed his son as a Crown Prince.**

On 20 June 2017, Saudi Arabia's King Salman has appointed his 31-year-old son Mohammed bin Salman as crown prince, replacing his nephew, Mohammed bin Nayef, as first in line to the throne. Apart from this, Mohammed bin Salman was also named as a deputy prime minister and maintains his post as minister of defence. 57-year-old Prince Mohammed bin Nayef has also been removed from his role as head of domestic security.

#### **NASA's Kepler space telescope spots 219 Exoplanets.**

NASA's Kepler space telescope has spotted 219 new exoplanets, 10 of which may be about the same size and temperature as Earth, boosting their chances of hosting life. Now, the new data brings 4034 celestial entities among which 2334 have been identified as exoplanets and rest could be planets.

#### **John Bew became recipient of 2017 Orwell Prize.**

In June 2017 John Bew was presented Britain's most prestigious prize, Orwell Prize for his book "Citizen Clem" (Quercus), an extraordinary biography of former UK Prime Minister and the founder of the NHS, Clement Attlee. Bew got £3000 (A\$5547) as Orwell Prize. Orwell Foundation presents this award annually to a book that comes closest to the George Orwell's ambition "to make political writing into an art". Besides him, the Orwell prize for journalism went to Fintan O'Toole of The Irish Times for his commentary on the ramifications of Brexit and the Orwell prize for Exposing Britain's Social Evils was awarded to Felicity Lawrence for revealing how criminal gangs were forcing migrants to work for them in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.

#### **Australia began online visitor visa applications for Indians.**

On 16th June the Australian High Commission and Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection announced beginning of online visitor visa applications for all Indians from 1st July 2017. This option of online applications via the department's ImmiAccount portal will be accessible 24/7 through which electronic payment of the visa application charge and the ability to check the status of applications lodged online will become easier. The form on this portal can also be filled by any third party like a family member in India or in Australia, a travel agent or a contracted visa application centre with due permission from the applicant. In July-March 2017 Australia witnessed more than 265,000 Indian visitor arrivals which is 15.4% more in comparison to July-March 2016 and this became a reason for this move as per the acting Australian High Commissioner to India, Chris Elstoft.

#### **Father of German reunification crossed fence of life.**

On 16th June Former German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl died at the age 87 in the western state of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. He was Germany's longest serving post-war chancellor from 1982 to 1998 and was also known as Father of German reunification for he brought together the East and West Germany cracking the Berlin Wall. He introduced the euro currency by convincing sceptical Germans to forsake their cherished deutschemark. He manifested the eurozone by rowing the Maastricht Treaty for European unity.

#### **First X-ray Space Telescope of China witnessed space.**

On 15th June China launched its first X-ray Space Telescope, 'Insight' to study black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts through Long March-4B rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China's Gobi Desert. The 2.5-tonne Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT) is meant to observe magnetic fields and the interiors of pulsars and better understand the evolution of black holes. The HXMT is equipped with three x-ray telescopes observing at energies ranging from 20 to 200 kilo-electron volts and an instrument to monitor the space environment. It will orbit 550 kilometres above the planet for upcoming 4 years and will perform an all-sky survey for discovering x-ray sources.

**Ana Brnabic will be the first gay prime minister of Serbia.**

In June 2017 President Aleksandar Vucic aired announcement appointment of first gay prime minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabic. Prior to this Ms Brnabic has worked in capacity of public administration and local government minister. It is worth knowing that her appointment into government in year 2016 was hailed by human rights groups as historic for the country whose gay community faced discrimination, harassment and violence. She is 41-year-old and a former "businesswoman of the year" in Serbia. She earned her education in UK and US. She speaks both English and Russian. With this appointment She will become not only the first open gay PM of the conservative Balkan state, but also the first woman in that post.

**'Vision Jet' sparked in US sky.**

In June 2017 United States of America launched the World's smallest and cheapest private jet named 'Vision Jet' which has the potential of carrying five adults up to 1,150 miles at 28,000 feet. The jet has become talk of the town for being the first private jet having a single engine that can be conveniently operated by a single pilot, thus keeping production and maintenance costs low for the users. The jet has the potential of flying with a speed of 345 mph and has an operating altitude of 28,000 feet.

**The top Spanish award got lured by US novelist.**

In June 2017 US novelist Richard Ford, scripted the top Spanish award in his name for his novels as Independence Day and The Lay of the Land. Ford bagged 50,000 euro as the 2016 Princess of Asturias award for literature. 'A Piece of My Heart' was the first novel of Ford which he wrote in 1976. With this award Richard has joined the row of US writer Philip Roth, playwright Arthur Miller and the Irish novelist John Banville who also received this award in past.

**Wal-Mart shone at the top Fortune 500 List.**

June 2017 popped up annual list of America's top 500 companies courtesy Fortune magazine. The combined total revenue of all 500 companies for this year climbed \$12.1 trillion, 65 % of the U.S. GDP. Walmart topped the list for the fifth consecutive year in a row with \$485.9 billion revenue. Berkshire Hathaway (with Revenue \$223.6 billion), Apple (with Revenue \$215.6 billion), ExxonMobil (with Revenue \$205 billion) and McKesson (with Revenue \$192.5 billion) stood at second, third, fourth and fifth position respectively.

### **Spain's Princess of Asturias Award chose Polish poet.**

On 8th June Polish poet Adam Zagajewski won Princess of Asturias Award for Literature. He received a statue by Spanish artist Joan Miró, a diploma, an insignia and 50000 euros as award. His resolute stance in defence of freedom and the search for beauty, works of great human depth and fine aesthetic sensibility was acknowledged through this award. Zagajewski belongs to 'Generation of New Wave'. He joined a dissident group 'Teraz' in 1970s and created two of the most iconic slogans for the New Wave movements 'Powiedz prawde' (Tell the truth) and 'Mow Wprost' (Speak up). He is known for his poetry collections "Tremor" (1985), "The Canvas" (1990), "Mysticism for Beginners" (1997), and "World Without End: New and Selected Poems" (2002) and essays like "Solidarity, Solitude" (1986), "Two Cities" (1991) and "A Defence of Ardor" (2002).

### **Montenegro emerged as 29th member of NATO.**

In June first week Balkan country, Montenegro joined North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as its 29th Member. Srdjan Darmanovic, Foreign Minister of Montenegro submitted the official accession papers in a ceremony at the US State Department. This move was censured by Russia. In this context Secretary-General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg stated that the alliance will be beneficial for Montenegro which was once a part of Yugoslavia. History says that in year 2006 European country, Yugoslavia splitted into Serbia and Montenegro. Population of Montenegro is 620,000. Filip Vujanovic and Dusko Markovic are the current President and Prime Minister of Montenegro respectively.

### **Mongolia's first university satellite echoed in Space.**

In June 2017 the first university satellite of Mongolia, "Mazaalai" got launched via SpaceX Falcon9 Rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, United States. The satellite borrowed its name from the Mongolian endangered Gobi bear, Mazaalai. It has been designed, made and owned by a team of young scholars of the National University of Mongolia (NUM) in collaboration with young scholars and students from participating nations like Ghana, Japan, Bangladesh and Nigeria. It is the second satellite of Mongolia after the Mongol Sat-1 which was sent into space on April 19th.

### **'KELT-9b', the hottest planet cum star of Universe!**

As per the 5th June publication of the journal Nature astronomers of Ohio State University, USA discovered hottest giant planet 'KELT-9b'. It is indeed an exoplanet that is hotter than the most of the stars. Its dayside temperature is more than 4,300 degrees Celsius and it is 3777 degrees Celsius on the dark side. KELT-9b is 2.8 times more massive than Jupiter. Kelt-9b planet was discovered via its shadow in the constellation of Cygnus which is 650 light years away from Earth. Astronomers employed two robotic telescopes viz. Kilodegree Extremely Little Telescope (KELT) in Arizona and Sutherland to the north of Cape Town in South Africa for this discovery. It is interesting to learn that temperature of Sun is 5504.85 degrees Celsius.

### **World's oldest emoji discovered :**

A team of Turkish and Italian archaeologists have found a pitcher in a burial chamber on the Turkish-Syrian border. It was used for a sweet sherbet-like drink, and dates back to 1700 BC. The site depicts the era of the Hittites, an ancient civilisation and empire that is believed to have existed in the north-central Anatolian region. The ancient 3700-year-old smiley jug will be displayed at the nearby Gaziantep Museum of Archaeology.

### **Germany legalized same-sex marriage.**

In June 2017 the bill concerning same sex marriage won the will of German Parliament. The reform received support of 393, opposition of 226 while four abstained from voting. The reform granted the couples full marital rights and permitted them to adopt children. It is worth registering here that Chancellor Angela Merkel's political opponents were strongly in favour of this law.

### **Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor stepped in HKSAR.**

On 1st July 2017 a devout Catholic and a student of sociology Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor took oath as the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in presence of President Xi Jinping. With this, she has become Hong Kong's fifth Chief Executive since 1997 and the first female to hold this post. The lady has vowed to serve China and Hong Kong and will uphold the Basic Law, the territory's mini-constitution. She is expected to unify the Chinese-ruled city which is falling apart on account of Beijing's growing interference in its affairs despite being promised a high degree of autonomy. She will have to revitalize the economy and subside growing social inequalities and high property prices.

### **Happy Independence Day United States of America!**

4th July is being celebrated as Independence Day across America. In 1776 a Declaration of US Independence was signed after which New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia constituted the United States of America. On 4th July 1777, US secured independence from the British Empire after the Revolutionary war which began due to the imposition of British laws and taxes. Around 13 gunshots were fired in salute - one for each of the original American colonies. But till 1791 the day did not bear its present name "Independence Day". In year 1870 it was made an unpaid holiday for federal employees, and then in year 1938 US Congress eventually made it the paid holiday.

### **Son has taken place of father!**

In July 2017 a new 2,000 Syrian Lira (\$3.9) bank note with the face of President Bashar Assad has come into circulation. Prior to this the Syrian currency carried images of historic icons or pictures of his father, Hafez Assad. It is worth knowing that the President Bashar occupied place on currency note after 17 long years of his service. The government chose his appearance on currency for encouraging military against the armed rebellion across the nation.

### **'Torture' has become a punishable offence in Italy.**

On 5th July parliament of Italy passed a bill declaring torture a crime under national law. Law defines 'Torture' as intense physical suffering or psychological trauma verifiably caused by violence, grave threats or cruel actions. The bill gathered approval of 198 out of 337 lawmakers. Anybody found guilty of this offence will be subjected to four to ten years of imprisonment. It is worth recollecting here that Rome inked the UN Convention against Torture in year 1984 but had never transferred it into national legislation.

**Saima Wazed Hossain: WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in South Asia.**

On 6th July World Health Organization appointed Saima Wazed Hossain got appointed as the WHO's Goodwill Ambassador for Autism in the South-East Asia region for upcoming two years. The appointed lady is a globally renowned champion for the cause of autism spectrum disorder and in April this year she presented 'Thimphu Declaration' on autism and other neurodevelopmental disorders at an international conference in Bhutan. Now as WHO Goodwill Ambassador, she will be promoting the Thimphu declaration which stresses on integrating the needs of autism affected people into national health and socioeconomic development plans. In context to Autism it is worth knowing that it is a lifelong disability that affects brain functioning and if it goes untreated then it can cause significant impairment in exercising of an individual's human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is disheartening to learn that there are around 160 cases of Autism in a population of 10000 worldwide and among them victims of the disease belonging to low and middle income nations are deprived of medical attention and requisite care.

**Sandeep Chakravorty: New York Consul General.**

In July 2017 the Indian Ambassador to Peru, Sandeep Chakravorty got appointed as the New York Consul General. He is the 1996 Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer who succeeded Riva Ganguly Das. Prior to his Ambassadorship to Peru and Bolivia, he was India's Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka. He has also worked as Press Relations Officer in the Ministry of External Affairs of India.

**The Presidency of Mongolia laid red carpet for Khaltmaa Battulga.**

July 2017 Presidential elections spelled victory for the 54 year old martial arts star Khaltmaa Battulga. The real estate tycoon received 50.7% while his opponent Mieygombo Enkhbold trailed with some 41% of votes. Past shows that the thinly populated country located between China and Russia witnessed mining boom in year 2011 which made Mongolia world's fastest-growing economy, with GDP surging by 17.5% but in August 2016 the collapse of commodity prices brought the Mongolian economy radically down. So the revival of the dying economy is the foremost goal of the new President.

**German Caves saw UNESCO's World heritage list.**

In July 2017 six caves in south-western Germany's Swabia Jura region, which are said to be home of world's oldest art have got included in UNESCO's World Heritage list. They are among the earliest known dwelling places



of modern humans in Europe. The caves accommodate a mammoth, a horse head, a water bird, and two statues of a lion man that highlight the origins of human artistic development.

### **First vaccine for STD is in the syringe.**

In July 2017 Researchers of the University of Auckland, New Zealand created first vaccine for sexually transmitted disease gonorrhoea. It is disheartening to learn that around 78 million people become victim of this STD every year which causes infertility. It is interesting to learn that scientists originally developed the vaccine to stop an outbreak of meningitis B, which was given to about a million adolescents in New Zealand that came out to be an unexpected prevention for gonorrhoea. The vaccine proved to be a success as it reduced 31% cases of gonorrhoea according to sexual health clinics.

### **Iran Air welcomed its first female CEO.**

In July 2017 National airline of Iran, 'Iran Air' scripted history by appointing first female CEO, Farzaneh Sharafbani since the time of its establishment. The airline had come into existence in 1940s. Currently Iran Air is undergoing revamping process. It has struck billion-dollar deals with Boeing and Airbus to purchase scores of passenger planes. 44 year old Farzaneh Sharafbani is the transport minister who earned a PhD in aerospace engineering and had earlier served on the board of Iran Air. President Hassan Rouhani's administration made her appointment.

### **Malta made way for same-sex marriage.**

In July 2017 the Roman Catholic Mediterranean island, Malta legalized same-sex marriage via voting and became 24th nation to do so. With this the promise of Muscat's campaign of Prime Minister Joseph has got fulfilled. Maltese lawmakers not only legalized this type of wedding but also replaced words like "husband," "wife," "mother" and "father" from the Marriage Act with the gender-neutral words like "spouse," "parent who gave birth" and "parent who did not give birth".

### **Lilly Singh: UNICEF's Global Goodwill Ambassador.**

On 15th July Indian-origin Canadian YouTube star, Lilly Singh became UNICEF's Global Goodwill Ambassador. The vlogger, comedian, writer and actress started her own YouTube channel "IISuperwomanII" in October 2010 and since then her videos have attracted more than 2 billion views, and around 11.9 million subscribers. As a goodwill ambassador she will use her channel to display the UNICEF's work and will encourage millions of her followers to work for children's rights. It is worth remembering among her accomplishments that in year 2016 she was ranked 3rd on the Forbes list of the world's highest paid YouTube stars and in year 2017 she was ranked 1st on Forbes Top Influencers List in entertainment category.

### **The Brightest Submillimetre Galaxy got telescoped.**

As per July 2017 publication of Astrophysical Journal Letters, scientists came across a galaxy which is 1000 times brighter than Milky Way. As per the researchers, it is the brightest of the submillimeter galaxies, a class of ultraluminous infrared galaxies. The galaxy is said to have a high rate of star formation. It is creating stars at a rate

of 1000 solar masses per year, compared to the Milky Way, which is forming stars at a rate of some twice a solar mass per year. Scientists used Gran Telescopio Canarias (GTC) telescope of Spain for studying its nature and properties spectroscopically. They combined the data bases of NASA's WISE satellite and European Space Agency's Planck satellite for labelling it as the brightest submillimetre galaxy.

### **NASA Langley Research Centre turned 100. On 17th July**

NASA Langley Research Centre celebrated 100 years of its establishment. NASA's Langley is being credited for revolutionizing the way astronauts fly, explore space and study Earth. So far it has manifested more than 40 high-tech wind tunnels and supporting infrastructure. On its 100th anniversary, Langley, NASA released a 45-minute documentary that looked back into the time. Under umbrella of National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory was set up near Hampton, Virginia on 17th July 1917 with the purpose of solving fundamental problems of flight. Langley engineers devised technologies for safer, higher and faster air travel. Better propellers, all-metal airplanes, new kinds of helicopters which are faster-than-sound flight are some of the groundbreaking achievements of this aeronautical research centre. It introduced concepts to decrease drag, weight, fuel consumption, emissions and lessen noise. It is worth knowing that by 1958, NACA turned into NASA, and Langley's accomplishments climbed from air into space leading to development of rockets, spacecrafts, satellites and led to numerous space expeditions.

### **World's first Laser Weapons System was put to test.**

On 19th July the United States Navy succeeded in testing globe's first Laser Weapons System (LaWS). The LaWS has been deployed aboard the USS Ponce amphibious transport ship to attack Persian Gulf. And with its addition, USS Ponce has become the first ship in the world to get deployed with such an advanced weapons system. The LaWS is equipped with multiple unique features viz. It can move at the speed of light in an invisible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is silent weapon system which is versatile and it can be used against variety of targets, regardless of whether they are airborne or surface or ground-based. The total expenditure of constructing the weapon is about \$40 million.

### **Singapore Airlines is world's best airline!**

In July 2017 the Travel + Leisure (T+L) magazine rated Singapore Airlines as the best airline in the world. It was followed by Emirates, Qatar Airways, Cathay Pacific, Japan Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, Air New Zealand, Korean Air, All Nippon Airways (ANA) and Eva Air in the top ten international airline list. It is worth registering that Singapore Airlines Limited is the flag carrier of Singapore with its hub located at Singapore Changi Airport. It began its journey from October 1st, 1972. It has three subsidiaries viz. SilkAir, Scoot and Tigerair. Singapore Airlines will be flying the world's longest flight between Singapore and New York in year 2018.

### **John R Bass will be Trump's envoy to Afghanistan.**

On 20th July US President Donald Trump chose the current US ambassador to Turkey, John R Bass as his representative to Afghanistan. Bass is a career foreign service official since 1988, who was born and raised in upstate New York. The chosen envoy has previously served as the US envoy to Georgia. This was Trump's first

nomination for a South Asian country. The President will soon nominate his envoys for India and Pakistan, the two crucial South Asian countries.

### **Davies became Chair of UK India Business Council.**

On 20th July leading market entry advisory and advocacy consultancy, UK India Business Council (UKIBC) appointed Lord Mervyn Davies as their new chairperson. He will succeed Patricia Hewitt on 1st September 2017 for upcoming three years. UKIBC looks into UK & India trade opportunity. The appointee has been chairman of many key organizations viz. Corsair Capital, a private equity firm specialising in financial services, the Royal Academy of Arts Trustees, the Garden Bridge Trust and the Standard Chartered. He has also served as the Senior Independent Director of Diageo and the Senior Adviser to Teneo. He had also been the UK Minister for Trade, Investment, Small Business and Infrastructure from January 2008 to May 2010.

### **Fortune 500 list of the world's biggest corporations is out.**

On 22nd July the latest Fortune 500 list of the world's biggest corporations was issued in which Walmart topped the global ranking in terms of revenue with \$482,130 million. It was followed by State Grid (revenue of \$329,601 million) and China National Petroleum (\$299,271 million) at the second and third place respectively. This Fortune list also accommodated seven Indian companies viz. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) at 161st; Reliance Industries (RIL) at 215th; Tata Motors at 226th; SBI at 232nd; Bharat Petroleum at 358th; Hindustan Petroleum at 367th and Oil and Natural Gas, Corporation (ONGC) at 426th position.

### **Toronto International Film Festival is waiting for Priyanka.**

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) will honour actress Priyanka Chopra at its 42nd edition in upcoming September for her activism. In the gala at Bell Lightbox the Bollywood icon will share insights of her career with festival artistic director Cameron Bailey. After giving Bollywood hits like "Mary Kom", "What's Your Raashee" etc., she stormed into Hollywood with "Baywatch". She had also accompanied "Selma" director Ava DuVernay and fellow actors James Franco and Ben Richardson in panel of jury for a TIFF competition in 2016. Currently the Indian eve also gives time to Unicef as a goodwill ambassador. The Toronto International Film Festival will begin from 7th September and will continue upto 17th September.

### **32 year old Microsoft Paint is taking its last breath.**

On 24th July Microsoft announced the impending termination of the long-standing basic graphics editing program, 'Microsoft Paint' which came into existence 32 years ago along with the very first version of Windows 1.0 in year 1985. The fading feature began its life as 1-bit monochrome licensed version of ZSoft's PC Paintbrush and it was good enough for scribbling something using mouse or for making a quick cut and paste job. Until 1998 Paint was limited to the bitmap (BMP) and PCX formats. The most recent version of Paint was introduced with Windows 7 but still it lagged behind in comparison to other free alternative viz. the third-party Paint.NET. In April, Microsoft introduced the new Paint 3D, which is installed alongside traditional Paint that has 3D image making tools as well as some basic 2D image editing. But it is not an updation of original Paint. Now Microsoft is on its marks to introduce Windows 10 update, called the Autumn Creators Update, with a variety of new features.

The long-standing stalwart of the Windows, Microsoft Paint will eventually get removed like a favourite piece of old furniture from childhood home

## **Sports News**

### **T-20 rankings are on the board.**

ICC Twenty20 rankings of June 2017 proclaimed Indian skipper Virat Kohli as the top batsman while Aaron Finch of Australia and Kane Williamson of New Zealand were spotted on second and third spots respectively. Pakistan's Imad Wasim became number-one T20 bowler while Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah stood at second spot. Bangladesh's star player Shakib Al Hasan led the all rounder chart, followed by Glenn Maxwell and Mohammad Nabi. In the team rankings, New Zealand emerged as top team trailed by England at second position.

### **Kidambi Srikanth clinches 2017 Australian Open Men's Singles title.**

On 25th June 2017, Kidambi Srikanth has won the 2017 Australian Open Men's Singles title. He defeated Olympic champion Chen Long by 22-20, 21-16 to clinch the title. This is Srikanth's second consecutive Super Series title after he won the Indonesia Open Super Series crown. The Badminton Association of India (BAI) has announced a cash prize of Rs 5 Lakh for Srikanth after he lifted this title. On the other hand, Japan's Nozomi Okuhara has won the Women's Singles title.

### **India won six medals in first ever BRICS Games.**

On 19th June Wushu(Chinese martial art) competition of the first ever BRICS Games got concluded in Guangzhou, China in which India bagged 6 medals. M. Gyandas and Anjul Namdev coined one gold each. The two silver medals travelled via Bidheswari Devi and Toshibala; L. Sanatgombhi Chanu and Sajjan Lama hitched bronze medals for India in the Wushu competition. The decision of this first edition of BRICS Games which began on 17th June was taken at the 8th BRICS summit which took place in Goa in October 2016 and around 300 athletes from Brazil, China, India, Russia and South Africa participated in men's basketball, women's volleyball and Wushu. China will host the 9th BRICS summit of September 2017 in the coastal city of Xiamen in Fujian province.

### **Indian triumph in Asian Junior Wrestling Championships.**

On 16th June India won five medals, including a gold, in the 2017 Asian Junior Wrestling Championships in Taiwan. In female category India's female wrestlers bagged three medals. Puja won gold in the women's 51 kilogram freestyle category, Sonu coined silver medal in the 44 kilogram category and Manu took bronze medal in the 59 kilogram division. Two medals popped via male wrestlers in greco-roman division. Satish clinched a silver in the 120 kilogram greco-roman style and Manish won a bronze in the 50 kilogram category.

### **Yuvraj scripted a new record on his name.**

On 15th June Indian cricket player Yuvraj Singh became the fifth Indian to play 300 One Day Internationals. Yuvraj Singh began his ODI in the year 2000 and scored 8500 runs and picked 100 wickets. Prior to him 4 men viz. Mohammed Azharuddin, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, and Rahul Dravid obtained this pride. Past says

in year 2012, Yuvraj earned the Arjuna Award i.e. India's second highest sporting award by the Government of India and in year 2014, he was awarded the Padma Shri, India's fourth highest civilian honour.

### **Archery World Cup unfolded bronze for India.**

In the second week of June team of Divya Dhayal from Pune and Abhishek Verma won bronze medal at the Archery World Cup, held at Antalya, Turkey. They defeated Italy by 154-153. In the compound team events Indian compound men and compound women teams had also reached semifinals, but both the teams stood fourth and missed the medal.

### **French Open 2017 smiled at New Zealand.**

In June 2017 Professional tennis player, Michael Venus of New Zealand along with Ryan Harrison of America won men's doubles title in French Open 2017. The pair outplayed the team of Santiago Gonzalez of Mexico and American Donald Young by 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in the final at Roland Garros. This turned out to be a significant moment for New Zealand as it made 'Michael Venus', New Zealand's first Grand Slam champion since 1974. Before him 43 years ago another New Zealand player, Onny Parun along with an Australian Dick Crealy had won the men's doubles title in Paris.

### **Canadian Grand Prix made its way to Lewis Hamilton.**

June 2017 drove the Canadian Grand Prix to Lewis Hamilton for the sixth time at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve. Lewis led his team-mate Valtteri Bottas home in the first one-two for Mercedes this season. The Ferraris of Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen had tough time in this event as they finished in fourth and seventh place respectively. Hamilton is all set for facing the next round in Azerbaijan which will take place on 25th June.

### **ISSF World Cup glittered gold for the Golden Bird!**

On 12th June India's Jitu Rai and Heena Sidhu played together to bag the gold medal in mixed team 10m air pistol event of the ISSF World Cup. They defeated Russia by 7-6 in the final in Gabala, Azerbaijan. France also defeated Iran by an identical score and won the bronze medal in the event. Earlier the Indian duo failed in men's single and women's single final of 10m air pistol event and stood at 12th and 9th positions respectively. It is worth knowing that 430 athletes from 45 nations are participating in the events for medals in the ongoing World Cup.

### **India claimed semifinal of Hockey World League.**

On 15th June India defeated Scotland by 4-1 in their opening Pool B match in the men's event in London. Captain Chris Grassick scored a goal in the beginning of the game and then Indian players Akashdeep Singh and Harmanpreet Singh scored one goal each in reply in the second half of the game. England won over China by 2-0 and is riding on top in Pool A.

### **Cheers for Wimbledon Tennis Championships' 140 years!**

On 3rd July the world's oldest tennis tournament celebrated its 140th anniversary. Wimbledon is one of the four Grand Slam tennis tournaments which is played on grass courts. The first championship was held in year 1877

and since then it became the most coveted annual tournament. It is a 14-day long tournament which begins on a Monday and ends on a Sunday. Participants dressed in white, bow to the Prince of Wales or Her Majesty the Queen if they grace the tournament with their presence. The game is played with yellow tennis balls which were introduced in 1986. It is worth registering here that so far Roger Federer is the only player who succeeded in reaching 10 consecutive finals at the tournament and Novak Djokovic is the only man who has defeated Roger thrice in the Wimbledon final. Martina Navratilova has won the tournament's women's singles title 9 times. On 3rd July Wimbledon Tennis Championships 2017 began in which world number one Andy Murray defeated Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan in a straight set in Men's Singles. In women's singles, world number two Simona Halep and Venus Williams crossed round one with easy victories.

### **FIA Formula 3 European Championship got hitched by an Indian.**

In July first week Jehan Daruvala became the first Indian driver to claim the FIA Formula 3 European Championship after winning Race 3 at the Nuremberg circuit. He is just an 18 year old Mumbai driver who won this championship. Before him 18 years ago India's first Formula 1 driver, Narain Karthikeyan did this feat by claiming the British F3 Championship.

### **West Indies outplayed India by 9 wickets.**

On 9th July West Indies won the one-off T20 International played at Kingston in Jamaica by 9 wickets. India lost the toss and was called to bat first. It made 190 for 6 in the stipulated Twenty overs in which Dinesh Karthik emerged as the top scorer with 48 runs while skipper Virat Kohli contributed 39 runs. Chasing the target of 191, West Indies overhauled the target in 18.3 overs, by scoring 194 runs at loss of one wicket. Evin Lewis was the top scorer with an unbeaten 125 while Marlon Samuels was not out on 36. Chris Gayle got out for 18 runs.

### **India scripted history in the Asian Athletics Championships.**

India has topped the medal tally for first time in the history of the Asian Athletics Championships which concluded on 9th July 2017 in Bhubaneswar, India. It won 29 medals which included 12 gold, 5 silver and 12 bronze. China ended this edition on second spot with of 8 gold, 7 silver, 5 bronze. Kazakhstan grabbed third position with 4 gold, 2 silver, 2 bronze and Iran stood fourth with 4 gold and 1 bronze. Prior to this India was seen at its best in the 1985 Jakarta edition of this game where it had won 22 medals viz. 10 gold, 5 silver and 7 bronze.

### **ICC Test bowlers' rankings are on the table.**

On 10th July ICC Test bowlers' rankings got released in Dubai in which Indian spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Ravichandran Ashwin continued to occupy the top two positions. Jadeja was spotted first with 898 points, while Ashwin grabbed the second spot with 865 points. In the all-rounders chart, Jadeja succeeded in maintaining his second position while Ashwin stood third. In batting chart Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli and K L Rahul stood at fourth, fifth and ninth positions respectively.

### **Atthaya Thitikul: youngest LET winner.**

On 9th July Thai Champion, Atthaya Thitikul won Ladies European Tour in the inaugural Ladies European Thailand championship at the Phoenix Gold Golf and Country Club in Chinburi. The 14 years, 4 months and 19 days old Thai Champion defeated Ana Menendez of Mexico by two strokes and became the youngest winner on the Ladies European Tour. The new champion has cracked the record of previously top-ranked Lydia Ko, who at age of 14 years and 8 months won her first professional event at the New South Wales Open in year 2012.

**Wimbledon blazed at exit of Murray.**

On 12th July American Sam Querrey knocked defending champion Andy Murray by 3-6, 6-4, 6-7, 6-1, 6-1 in Men's Singles quarter-final. Besides him top contender and second seed Novak Djokovic also suffered defeat at hands of Tomas Berdych and took exit from the championship. On the other hand 18-time Grand Slam winner Roger Federer outplayed Canadian Milos Raonic in three sets 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 and entered 12th Wimbledon semi-final.

**World Para Athletics Championships showered gold on Sundar.**

In July 2017 India's Sundar Singh Gurjar has won gold in the men's javelin throw with a personal best of 60.36 metre in 2017 World Para Athletics Championships which took place in London. Dinesh Priyantha Herath of Sri Lanka stood second with 57.93 metre and the defending champion Guo Chunliang of China was spotted third with a season's best 56.14 metre. In context to Sundar it is worth knowing that he was disqualified for reporting at the registration desk late by only a minute because he failed to understand the accent of the announcers.

**FINA Short Course is all set to take course along Kazan and Budapest.**

On 17th July the International Swimming Federation (FINA) made announcements about 2022 and 2024 FINA Short Course World Swimming Championships in a meeting at Budapest, the venue of the 2017 World Aquatics Championships. The 2022 Championships will take place in the Russian city of Kazan and the 2024 Championships will sail in the Hungarian city Budapest. The upcoming 2018 Short Course Swimming Championships will be held in the Chinese city of Hangzhou. In context to FINA it is worth remembering that based in Lausanne, Switzerland, it is acknowledged by International Olympic Committee (IOC) for administering international competition in water sports. FINA oversees competition in five aquatics sports viz. swimming, diving, synchronized swimming, water polo, and open water swimming.

**Sudan Football Association is free from fetters of FIFA ban.**

In July 2017 FIFA lifted the previously imposed ban on Sudan Football Association. But this good news showed procrastination in coming their way as the country club won't be able to participate in this season's African club competition. Flashback says Sudan was suspended by FIFA for government interference in the country's football after they suspended the entire Sudanese Football Association board of directors. Al Merriekh and Al Hilal were disqualified from the Champions League and Al Hilal Obeid was removed from the Confederation Cup after the ban.

### **H S Prannoy emerged as US Open Grand Prix Gold badminton title winner.**

On 23rd July Indian Shuttler H S Prannoy outplayed his compatriot Parupalli Kashyap and scripted the US Open Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament title on his name at Anaheim, California. He defeated Kashyap by 21-15, 20-22, 21-12. This was the second time in this season that two Indians competed for the title at international badminton. Prior to this, in April, K Srikanth and B Sai Praneeth had played in the finals of Singapore Open in which Sai Praneeth claimed his maiden Super Series title. In the women's singles of the tournament, Japanese Aya Ohori outshone Michelle Li of Canada in the final.

### **Kylie Masse wins backstroke world gold.**

Kylie Masse of Canada stormed to women's 100m backstroke gold in a new world-record time at the world aquatics championships in Budapest. The 21-year-old clocked 58.10 seconds, breaking Gemma Spofforth's previous mark of 58.12 seconds from the 2009 championships. Kathleen Baker of the United States took silver, at 0.48 seconds back, while Emily Seebohm of Australia brushed off a cold to claim bronze, 0.49 seconds behind.

### **29th June emerged overhead as International Day of the Tropics.**

The 2017 International Day of the Tropics was observed worldwide to focus on the specific challenges like climate change, deforestation, logging, urbanisation and demographic changes faced by tropical areas and the far-reaching implications of the issues affecting the world's tropical zone. On this day the people across the globe shared tropical stories to celebrate the language, cultural plus bio diversity and potential of the Tropics. United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to celebrate this day in year 2016 to commemorate the 'State of the Tropics Report' which was launched by Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on 29 June 2014. It is worth knowing that globe's 40% area falls between the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn.

### **Sharjah: World Book Capital 2019.**

Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova announced Sharjah, as 'the World Book Capital' for year 2019. It has been chosen for its innovative, comprehensive and inclusive nature of the application on the recommendation of the Advisory Committee that met at the Headquarters of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) at La Haye. The programme has come with a slogan 'Read - you are in Sharjah' and it aims at six themes viz. inclusivity, reading, heritage, outreach, publishing and children.

### **25th June surfed as Day of the Seafarer.**

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) celebrated 'Day of the Seafarer (DotS)' on 'Seafarers Matter' theme on 25th June 2017. On this occasion ports and seafarer centres shared and showcased best practices in seafarer support and welfare, and organised special activities for seafarers who make unique contribution to international seaborne trade and civil society as a whole. The 2010 Diplomatic Conference in Manila adopted a resolution to set up this day.

### **The crown of 2017 Femina Miss India World glared at Manushi Chhillar!**



25th June became a red letter day for Haryana Beauty, Manushi Chhillar who won the 2017 Femina Miss India World pageant at Yash Raj Studios in Mumbai. Miss World 2016 Stephanie Del Valle crowned Manushi who is an alumna of Bhagat Phool Singh Government Medical College. In this 54th edition of this contest Sana Dua from Jammu and Kashmir and Priyanka Kumari from Bihar emerged as first and the second runner-up respectively. The bigwigs of the fashion and film industry like Arjun Rampal, Manish Malhotra, Illeana D' Cruz, Bipasha Basu, Abhishek Kapoor, Vidyut Jammwal and Miss World 2016 Stephanie Del Valle were in the panel of judges.

### **21st June buzzed as World Music Day.**

In 1982, France was the nation that pioneered this celebration which later became a global celebration. The day marks beginning of summer solstice, i.e., the longest day of the year in the North hemisphere. American artiste Joel Cohen was the brain behind celebration of summer solstice. He proposed this idea in year 1976. On this day musicians from all genres and all ages, gather together to perform at several public places without any profit or lucrative motive.

### **Italian fashion legend Carla Fendi outwalked life.**

On 19th June 79 year old Italian fashion legend, Carla Fendi died in Rome. Carla was one of the five Italian sisters at the helm of the iconic Italian label of 'baguette' bags. It is worth getting familiar with 'Fendi' here which is an Italian luxury fashion house, launched in Rome in year 1925 by Adele and Edoardo Fendi with specialities of fur and leather goods, shoes, fragrances, accessories etc. Since 1946, the five sisters Paola, Anna, Franca, Carla and Alda entered the company and with passage of time their logo of two F's, one of them upside-down and backwards, became an internationally recognised symbol for luxury.

### **Tata Group coupled with Lockheed Martin for F-16 fighter jets.**

On 19th June American aerospace giant Lockheed Martin have signed an unprecedented deal with Tata Group to produce, operate and export the combat-proven F-16 fighters in India during the Paris Air show among Tata Advanced Systems Ltd, TASL, and Lockheed Martin. This deal will cater Indian Air Force's single-engine fighter needs. Besides this, Lockheed has decided to shift its Fort Worth, Texas plant to India without directly affecting American jobs. It will boost new job opportunities in India as well as in US.

### **19 June: International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict.**

The United Nations General Assembly observed this day on "Preventing Sexual Violence Crimes through Justice and Deterrence" theme. On 19th June 2008, the UN General Assembly adopted Security Council resolution 1820 (2008), in which the Council censured sexual violence as a tactic of war and an impediment to peacebuilding. The day is meant to raise awareness of the need to end the conflict-related sexual violence, to honour the victims and survivors of sexual violence worldwide and to pay tribute to all those who lost their lives for the eradication of these crimes.

### **United Nations Economic and Social Council re-welcomed India for another term.**

On 15th June the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) again chose India for another three-year term on the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). India received 183 votes to render its services on the 36-member UN body that directs sustainable development policies and coordinates the activities of many UN units and organisations that work for development in social and economic issues. Japan received the highest number of votes viz. 185 votes, for the three seats from the Asia-Pacific region, and the Philippines got 182 votes. India will resume its seat in upcoming January 2018 when its current term ends. The United Nations Economic and Social Council is among the 6 principal organs of the United Nations which looks after coordination of the economic and social work of 15 UN specialised agencies, their functional commissions and five regional commissions.

### **Once upon a time there existed a company “Yahoo”.....**

On 13th June Verizon (VZ, Tech30) officially acquired Yahoo's (YHOO, Tech30) in \$4.48 billion (nearly ₹29,000 crore) ending its more than two decade old identity as an independent company. Yahoo Internet operations will get integrated with AOL to form a new digital media company called ‘Oath’, which will include brand like Huffington Post. After this acquisition Yahoo CEO Marissa Mayer has resigned. She will receive a \$23 million severance package, as per an earlier company filing. ‘Oath’ will be administered by former AOL CEO Tim Armstrong. Verizon wishes to compete with Facebook and Google for online advertising via ‘Oath’. After this the remains of Yahoo will be rechristened as ‘Altaba Inc.’ which will act as a holding company for Yahoo's large stake in Alibaba, the Chinese e-commerce company.

### **Indian stars dazzled as the World's Highest-Paid Celebrities!**

Forbes magazine released ‘World’s Highest-Paid Celebrities’ list on 12th June in which Bollywood actors Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan and Akshay Kumar too occupied places. With his earnings of \$38 million, Shah Rukh Khan stood at 65th spot. Salman Khan was spotted at 71st position with earnings of \$37 million and Akshay Kumar occupied 80th rank with earnings of \$35.5 million.

### **Indo- Russia joint venture introduced World's first hybrid 'aeroboat'.**

On 6th June Russia displayed the world's first hybrid "aeroboat" which can travel on land, water, snow and sand that has been built by an Indo-Russian joint venture in Moscow at a start-ups event organised by Russia's state-run Skolkovo Foundation. The innovation is on purpose of accessing difficult terrain, like flooded or marshy areas where regular boats fail to navigate the way through shallow water, patches of dry land or by marine vegetation.

### **6th June rushed as Russian Language Day.**

United Nations observed the 2017 Russian Language Day on 6th June to maintain the equality of all six official UN languages viz. English, Arabic, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and French. UN Department of Public Information adopted resolution for observation these days of languages. The purpose of the days of the UN languages is to create awareness of the history, culture and the development of each of the six official UN languages among the staff of the Organization. The UN Russian Language Day coincided with the birth anniversary of a Russian poet

and the father of modern Russian literature, Aleksandr Pushkin. He came in limelight through his drama, 'Boris Godunov'.

**French politician crossed fence of life.**

In June 2017 iconic European feminist politician, Simone Veil passed away at the age of 89. The deceased was a French politician and women's rights champion who played an instrumental role in legalising abortion in the 1970s. The French lawyer and politician worked as Minister of Health under Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of the European Parliament and had also been a member of the Constitutional Council of France. She was among 40 immortals of the Académie Française in year 2010.

**2nd July : World Sports Journalists Day.**

Globe celebrated the day which was instituted in 1994 by International Sports Press Association or Association Internationale de la Presse Sportive (AIPS) to mark the 70th anniversary of its foundation. AIPS was founded on July 2, 1924 at the time of the Summer Olympics in Paris. It has continental sub-associations and national associations. Several giant sports federations like International Olympic Committee, FIFA, IAAF and others are partners of AIPS. "Sports journalism" is a form of writing that reports on sporting topics, it is a significant element of any news media organization.

**India became fourth largest foreign investor into UK.**

According to the official figures, India has become the fourth-largest foreign investor in the UK. Investing in 577 projects, US remains on the top. China is at second place with 160 projects, while France is at third position with 131 projects.

**7th July: Global Forgiveness Day.**

Global Forgiveness Day is observed on 7th July 2017 across the world. It is a day to forgive, and a day to be forgiven! The day was instituted in 1994 by the Christian Embassy of Christ's Ambassadors. Research shows that people who forgive are more happier and healthier than those who hold resentments. Forgiveness is the renunciation or cessation of resentment, indignation or anger.

**12th July passed as 'Malala Day'.**

Entire globe celebrated this day to honor Pakistani child activist Malala Yousafzai who fought for education of girls at a very tender age. Malala was born on 12th July 1997 in Mingora, Pakistan and on her 16th birthday United Nations instituted this day as 'Malala Day'. Malala was shot in head and neck by the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) on 9th October 2012 for advocating girls' right to education and speaking against Taliban.

**17th July got caught as International Criminal Justice Day.**

On 17th July 1998 the Rome Statute on, the founding treaty of the ICC, which encourages protection of people from genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression was adopted. To mark anniversary of this event 17th July is celebrated as Day of International Criminal Justice. On this day all those who wish to support justice, promote victims' rights, and help prevent crimes that threaten the peace, security and well-being of the globe experience unison.

**Enlightened nation is lighting abroad !**

On 18th July India launched solar project with state-of-the-art technology to electrify the remote village of Agaween in Egypt. The project has begun its walk in the Western Desert in Matrouh Governorate, near the Libyan border. India's Ambassador to Egypt Sanjay Bhattacharyya and Major General Alla Fathi Abou Zeid, Governor of Matrouh together conducted the inaugural ceremony. This Solar Electrification Project is an off-grid system that is ideal for remote locations. The Egyptian Government provided the location and the Indian government is providing all the requisite solar panels and sub-systems, machinery, equipment and technical support, as well as training for technicians for this project. This highlights India's technical capabilities, especially in renewable energy. The project is likely to yield total output of 8.8 kilowatt for 40 houses, a school, a mosque and a community centre in the chosen village.

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