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Monthly GK Mania

NATIONAL NEWS

Word “MLA” got erased from Vaghela’s dictionary.

On 16th August Former Gujarat Chief Minister and former leader of Congress legislative party Shankersinh Vaghela resigned from the Legislative Assembly. He handed his resignation to the Speaker Ramanlal Vora in presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel. It is worth recalling that Mr. Vaghela had announced his resignation from Congress party in July 2017. He informed media that he is neither going to retire from the politics, nor going to join any political party.

Vishal Sikka witnessed promotion.

18th August spelled promotion of CEO and MD of Infosys, Vishal Sikka as the Executive Vice Chairman of the company. Vishal resigned from the post of CEO and MD to climb the ladder of success in India's second largest IT services major Infosys. Currently U.B. Pravin Rao has got appointed as interim-managing director and chief executive. Infosys founders and board discussed governance issues and huge salary package offered to CEO Vishal Sikka and COO Pravin Rao at length and after that Vishal resigned to get promoted. It is worth recalling here that the company had appointed Ravi Venkatesan as co-chairman in April.

100% placement in IIIT Hyderabad.

In August 2017 The International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-Hyderabad) registered 100% placement and the average salary touched figure of Rs 18.8 lakh. Around 473 students graduated, with a record number of 84 research students, including 16 PhDs as per the 16th convocation ceremony of the organization. According to institute’s disclosure in a press release “The BTech graduates received job offers with average salaries for various programmes ranging between Rs 13.4 lakh and Rs 18.8 lakh per annum. Our students are among the most sought after by the technology and product industry. IIIT-Hyderabad graduates from the masters programmes in IT received job offers from leading companies with for various programmes ranging between Rs 14 lakh and Rs 17.7 lakh per annum.” On this occasion Gautam Vepa, B.Tech in Computer Science and Engineering was honored with the gold medal for academic excellence.

Photographer S Paul took exit from picture of life.

On 16th August, the veteran photographer S Paul breathed last at the age of 88 years. B&W Magazine of US described him as ‘The Henry Cartier-Bresson of India’. The deceased was a self-taught photographer who discovered his passion for the art during his teenage. He began working for The Indian Express in the 1960s and got retired in 1989. His pictures were chosen for publication in renowned British publications like Amateur Photographer, Miniature Camera and Miniature Camera World. He was the first Indian to win the Nikon International Photo Contest and get profiled by The British Journal of Photography. Interestingly His birthday coincided with the World Photography Day.

Marg ERP emerged as Best Start-Up in Skill Development.

In August 2017 ASSOCHAM acknowledged country’s fastest growing integrated business management and inventory application software provider, ‘Marg ERP’ as the Best Start-Up in Skill Development. The applauded startup has been actively involved in the government’s Skill India Program. Union Minister of State for Skill Development, Mr Rajiv Pratap Rudy Marg ERP presented this award for establishing 500 academies across the country and training personnel in software inventory and accounting. This award is meant to honor and recognize catalytic role of companies in implementing skill development and training programs.

India's first Partition Museum witnessed inauguration.

In August 2017 a new museum on the Partition of the Indian subcontinent was inaugurated in the red-brick Town Hall building in the North Indian border city of Amritsar. This is the first time a venue has been created to mark India's independence and to focus on the stories of survivors of the chaotic and bloody history of the nation. The museum displays photographs, newspaper clippings and donated personal items that show India's struggle for freedom from colonial rule. The price of the museum tickets are Rs 10 for Indians and Rs 150 for foreigners.

MyFASTag & FASTag Partner appeared in corridors of NHAI.

On 17th August the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) gave way to mobile Apps 'MyFASTag' and 'FASTag Partner' for easy procurement of FASTags for Electronic Toll Collection. The launched apps are on purpose of simplifying the process of purchase and recharge of FASTags with a click of a mobile button. Before diving deep into the features of these apps, it is good to learn that FASTag is a perfect solution for a hassle free trip on national highways. It enables automatic deduction of toll charges and lets the passenger pass via the toll plaza without stopping for the cash transaction. FASTag is linked to a prepaid account from which the applicable toll amount is deducted. The tag employs Radio-frequency Identification (RFID) technology and is affixed on the vehicle's windscreen after the tag account is active. Coming back to the apps in question, it is worth knowing that MyFASTag app is a consumer app that can be used for purchase or recharge FASTags and it can keep track of transactions and help in online grievance redressal. And FASTag Partner is a merchant app meant to help agencies viz. Common Services Centre (CSC), banking partners and vehicle dealers to sell and enroll FASTag; activate the dormant RFID tags of cars and convert the RFID tags into FASTag. Moreover, NHAI has now begun an online sale of FASTags and offline sale via CSC near toll plazas. Both the apps can be downloaded on Android and iOS systems from playstore.

Sanjiv Gupta cheered promotion in General Motors India.

On 17th August the Chief Financial Officer of General Motors India, Sanjiv Gupta got promoted as President and Managing Director (MD) of the company. He will succeed Kaher Kazem on 1st September 2017, who has now been appointed as the President and CEO of General Motors Korea. It is worth knowing that Sanjiv Gupta has long been an integral part of the company since 2003. He has also worked in Auto Financing, Business Planning, Corporate Finance and Financial Planning in the US and Canada.

IIT entrance exam is bound to get online. On 20th August policy-making body on IIT admissions, The Joint Admission Board (JAB) aired announcement of the online conduction of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) from year 2018 onwards. In this context it is worth knowing that earlier Union Human Resource Development Ministry had begun the online initiative as a doorway to the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) via option of taking the JEE-Mains online. JEE-Mains is the entrance examination meant for admission to engineering courses across the nation.

India's first World Peace University knocked in MIT, Pune.

August 2017 led to manifestation of India's first World Peace University in MIT, Pune. Chief minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated this first of its kind university in India. The auspicious occasion was graced by Dr Michael Nobel, Dr Ragnunath Mashelkar, Padma Vibhushan and world famous scientist, Dr Vijay Bhatkar, Padma and chancellor, Nalanda University, Gagan Narang, Indian shooter and Olympic medal

winner, Dr Madhav Gadgil, renowned environmentalist and Dr Jabbar Patel, film producer and director, spiritual head of Sadhu Vaswani Mission, 99-year-old Dada J P Vaswani and several others. The inaugural ceremony straight away led to 'Global Summit Science and Spirituality for World Peace' which encompassed issues of national and international importance connected to education. The Summit discussed about employing education for paving path for peace and harmony in the world.

15 medical outlets of AMRIT Deendayal are in pipeline.

On 21st August Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda promised beginning of 15 medical outlets of Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) Deendayal in Himachal Pradesh, Assam, UP & Punjab. It is worth knowing here that AMRIT Deendayal Pharmacy is the flagship programme of Government of India meant to provide different kind of medicines and equipments on economic rates to the patients. It offers discount up to 60 % on MRP to the patients. The flagship programme is on wheels since November 2015 and 84 outlets have been opened in 18 states so far. The flagship programme created huge buzz by saving around 170 crore rupees of nearly 33 lakh patients.

Who was PVRK Prasad?

21st August fetched news of Retired IAS Officer PVRK Prasad's demise in Hyderabad. The 77 year old died of cardiac arrest. He was information advisor to former Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. As an IAS Officer of Andhra Pradesh Cadre, he worked in both Central and state governments. He had penned many popular books in Telugu.

Minority community became privileged community.

In August 2017 the Minister of State for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced 40% reservation for girls at planned schools and higher education institutes for minorities. As per the announcement 100 Navodaya-type schools and 5 higher education institutes in minority concentrated areas of the country will soon appear in pipeline. There are 6 notified minority communities in India like Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis and Jains. There exists a government-funded agency, Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) specifically for muslims which is bent upon empowering minority communities via education sector. The government will soon give way to 211 schools, 25 community colleges and the five institutes under multi-sectoral development programme (MsDP) for next academic section which will function on lines of Kendriya Vidyalaya or Navodaya Vidyalaya.

Passport procedures are getting online!

Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi aired announcement about the upcoming changes in procurement procedure of passport on 20th August in New Delhi. Centre is planning to link the passport procedure with the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems, (CCTNS) as a result from next year onwards there will be online verification of Passport applicants instead of physical Police verification. Under this hand-held devices will be employed to upload applicant's address and other details on to the network which will minimise contact with police and save time in the passport procurement process. Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched Digital Police portal on 20th August which integrates the nation's 15,398 police stations online and permits citizens to report crime and request antecedents verification online under the CCTNS project.

Whom did the court hear ?

On 22nd August the Apex Court granted a plea filed by six students who sought a direction to the state government to organize counselling for the medical seats completely on the basis of the merit list of National

Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) marks. A bench, headed by Justice Dipak Misra of the Apex Court ordered Tamil Nadu government to begin counselling for admissions for MBBS and BDS seats based on the NEET merit list and conclude the process by the 4th of September. It is worth recalling here that prior to this decision, the government of Tamil Nadu extended an ordinance to the Central Ministries of Law, Health and Human Resources Development pleading exemption from NEET for medical admission as this year the number of students who cleared the qualifying test NEET in the state is very low. But the Centre disapproved the ordinance and after that Apex court gave this verdict asking the Medical Council Of India and the state government to find a balanced solution to deal with the interests of state board students and those who cleared NEET.

Words “Talaq Talaq Talaq” went beyond audible range.

On 22nd August the 5-member constitutional bench of Apex Court dismissed 1400 years’ old “talaq-e-biddat” practice of chanting instant triple talaq for divorce in Muslim religion terming it as unconstitutional, illegal, void and denied its existence in Article 25 of Constitution. In 3:2 majority judgment of the Apex Court some judges held that triple talaq is against the basic tenets of Quran and therefore it is unacceptable. While some others were of opinion that the practice is violative of the constitution and therefore it must be struck down. However, the other formats of divorce viz. “Talaq-e-ahsan” and “Talaq-e-hasan” formats will still be in practice. This decision of the Supreme court was embraced by All India Muslim Women Personal Law Board and All India Shia Personal Law Board applauding it as victory of Islamic women in the nation. The decision is sure to trigger dawn of new era of dignity and equality for Muslim women. It is worth knowing that this case is known as “Shayara Bano versus the Union of India” as Shayara Bano of Kashipur (Uttarakhand) was the first petitioner in the case that made Supreme Court precipitate this verdict. She had filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the apex court in year 2016, seeking a ban on the practice of instantaneous divorce after abrupt dissolution of her 14-year-marriage in October 2015. Later other women from different parts of the country joined her.

Chennai's SRM University lived a moment of pride.

In August 2017, Indian student Dacharla Panduranga Rohith of Chennai's SRM University made Nano Missile for Indian Army and local police for fighting terrorism. He developed 1 cm nano missile which can fly by burning the red phosphorus, and hit the target at 3 metres distance. This prototype of the missile proved its worth in presence of Assistant Commissioner of Police Ramapuram in Chennai and its video has been sent to World Records of India for registration. The final year Computer Science Engineering student, Rohith of SRM University is presently working on the changing the fuel to supply more momentum to the missile so it can hit targets at longer distances. The missile is evidence of his penchant towards flight technologies.

The company found the cofounder back!!!

24th August tethered Nandan Nilekani back to Infosys in form of non executive chairman of the company. The long lost man had been one of the cofounders and former chief executive of Infosys. Respecting his desire to stay away from official roles the board of infosys has absorbed him as non-executive, non-independent chairman of the company. Nilekani co-founded Infosys 36 years back at the age of 26 and had left the company in year 2009 to join the UPA-II government as chairman of the UIDAI (Aadhar). He is the architect of Aadhaar. Discerning need of the moment and the exits of former CEO Vishal Sikka, directors Jeffery S Lehman and John Etchemendy, Chairman of the board, R Seshasayee and co-chair Ravi Venkatesan, Nandan Nilekani has accepted this new appointment in the old company.

India willed patent for pneumonia vaccine in Pfizer's name.

In August 2017 India granted American pharmaceutical corporation, Pfizer Inc. a patent for its pneumonia vaccine Prevnar 13 against the wish of health group Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). This group had filed a "patent opposition" to prevent Pfizer from getting a patent on its PCV 13. And now with this move other manufacturers in India may get blocked from supplying this vaccine to the needy as per warning of MSF. It is worth learning that Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) is meant to prevent pneumococcal pneumonia disease caused by 13 Streptococcus pneumoniae strains and presently there are three types of PCVs with brand names Prevnar, Synflorix and Prevnar 13 in the global market.

TRAI entered into a contract with MCMC.

In August 2017, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has signed a pact with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission(MCMC) for bilateral cooperation in telecom and broadcasting regulation. The Letter of Intent promises exchange of information and regulatory best practices between the two nations. TRAI chairman RS Sharma and MCMC chairman Halim Shafie signed this pact. Further the two telecom regulators are planning to undertake joint capacity building exercises in telecom and broadcasting regulation.

The Apex Court solved "Right to Privacy" puzzle.

On 24th August, the Apex Court came up with a big and most awaited decision about existence of Right to Privacy among list of fundamental rights. It came up with answer "YES" as in article 21 of the Indian Constitution "Right to Privacy" is one of the fundamental rights. The Apex Court ruled that "Right to Privacy" is an integral part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty. And as Right to Privacy is ingrained in Right to Liberty which itself is a fundamental right therefore it is impossible to separate Right to privacy and fundamental rights. This unanimous decision of the nine judge bench of Justices Khehar, J Chelameswar, S A Bobde, R K Agrawal, R F Nariman, A M Sapre, D Y Chandrachud, Sanjay K Kaul and S Abdul Nazeer of Apex Court has brought existence of 'Aadhar' in jeopardy which forces citizens to share a sample of their fingerprints and their iris scan. This verdict of the Apex court has made the previous judgments of eight-judge bench in MP Sharma's case and a six-judge bench judgment in Kharak Singh's case, null and void that cropped from distinction between privacy and fundamental right. This decision of Apex Court went contrary to expectations of Centre as well which still refuses to see "Right to Privacy" in light of Fundamental rights and argues to specify various connotations of Privacy under different aspects of liberties. It is worth remembering here that in year 2012 the question about the constitutional status of right to privacy was raised for first time by retired HC judge KS Puttaswamy, who challenged the UPA government's decision to introduce the biometric data-enabled Aadhaar ID for citizens. Then some other petitioners viz. first Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Magsaysay awardee Shanta Sinha, feminist researcher Kalyani Sen Menon, and others also got stuck on the same question and referred it to a five-judge Constitution bench on August 11, 2015. All this has made the entire concept and linkage of Aadhaar for various services a "food to thought" which will be soon churned in future debates.

Nation's first Videsh Bhavan peeped from Mumbai.

On 24th August External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj inaugurated the country's first Videsh Bhavan at the Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai. The purpose of this Videsh Bhawan was to bring four offices of MEA viz. Regional Passport Office, Protector of Emigrants office, Branch Secretariat and Regional Office of ICCR at one place to simplify life of Indians who go abroad for employment, education, business and tourism. It is worth

knowing that government is planning to raise Videsh Bhawans in different state capitals which will be cost effective and will improve efficiency of services across 90-plus RPOs and PoEs of the country.

Raghuram penned “I Do What I Do: On Reform, Rhetoric & Resolve”.

August 2017 unveiled latest book of Raghuram Rajan with title “I Do What I Do: On Reform, Rhetoric & Resolve”. It is a collection of essays and speeches during his term as RBI head. The book also covers issues like tolerance and link between political freedom and prosperity. It is an exciting book that follows the Crests and troughs experienced by head of Central bank. Rajan has included most of the comments and speeches he came across during his tenure. Rajan entered RBI as its 23rd Governor on 5th September 2013, and at that time the rupee was in free fall, inflation was high and exchange reserves were falling.

Scientific Excellence Award chose Prof Digambar Behera.

In August 2017 Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik conferred the Biju Patnaik Award for Scientific Excellence for the year 2016 upon Prof Digambar Behera. The awardee is a senior professor and Head, Department of Pulmonary Medicine, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) in Chandigarh. Odisha Bigyan Academy(OBA) arranges this Biju Patnaik award annually to acknowledge the outstanding research contribution in science and technology, during the five years preceding year of award.

ICAI & ICA Nepal are all set to thrust Chartered Accountancy. In August 2017, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) CA Nilesh S. Vikamsey has inked the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CA Prakash Jung Thapa, the President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal (ICAN) in the presence of Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba at New Delhi for setup of mutual co-operation for the advancement of accounting knowledge. This MoU is said to be a milestone for professional and intellectual development in the field of Accountancy for benefit of both ICAI and ICAN. It is worth knowing here that ICAI played an instrumental role in creation of ICAN and development of its systems and procedures relating to examination, technical and administrative areas in year 1997 under ‘Nepal Chartered Accountants Act, 1997’. It is interesting to learn that ICAI has 273 thousand members and more than 800 thousand students across the globe.

Justice Dipak Misra: 45th Chief Justice of India.

On 28th August Justice Dipak Misra became the 45th Chief Justice of India (CJI). His oath was administered by President Ram Nath Kovind. He has succeeded Chief Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar and will serve on this post till 2nd October 2018. Justice Dipak Misra is the third Justice from Odisha to assume charge as the Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Justices Ranganath Misra and G B Pattanaik were the other two who got the opportunity to become CJI. The timeline of Justice Dipak Misra’s career says that he was enrolled as an advocate in year 1977 and practiced in Constitutional, Civil, Criminal, Revenue, Service and Sales Tax matters in the Orissa High Court. He became an Additional Judge of the Orissa High Court in 1996. After that he entered the Madhya Pradesh High Court and became a permanent Judge in December 1997. In 2009 he became Chief Justice of Patna High Court. In 2010, he entered Delhi High Court as the Chief Justice. And year 2011 pulled him in the Apex Court.

Justice has prevailed..... “20 years of imprisonment” for Ram Rahim.

On 28th August, Special CBI judge Jagdeep Singh in a special CBI court awarded 20 years of rigorous imprisonment to Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh for raping two sadhvis in the Dera

complex in Sirsa in year 2002. The judge sentenced 10 years of imprisonment for each of the rapes which would run consecutively, not concurrently. Apart from this Jagdeep Singh also slapped a fine of Rs 30 lakh on Gurmeet that will be divided between the two rape victims who maintained their statements for the past 15 years despite intense pressure from various quarters. After August 25th hearing there had been a widespread violence and arson in Panchkula in which 38 people lost their lives. Seeing the gravity and sensitivity of the situation the special CBI court was set up inside the Rohtak jail. In context to the case it is worth remembering here that it came in light for the first time in the Punjab and Haryana High Court in year 2002 via an anonymous letter which was transferred to CBI. And on December 12th, 2002 the rape case was registered against the Dera head.

National Sports Day greeted sportingly on 29th August.

The entire nation celebrated 112th birth anniversary of hockey legend Dhyani Chand who was born on 29th August 1905. On this day the much awaited and previously announced sports awards viz. Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Arjuna Award and Dronacharya Awards speeded towards their destinations from Rashtrapati bhavan. Several programs were conducted across the length and breadth of the nation to celebrate this day.

The Messenger keeps appearing until the message is taken!

The quote has been proven by Supreme Court's fresh decision in which it has rejected Madhya Pradesh government's plea that challenged the MP High Court's August 24th decision on admission of non-domicile candidates in which it directed the state to start the the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) counselling process afresh. On 29th August the Apex Court has directed the state to 'redraw' the merit list and complete the admission process within 10 days. Following the Apex Court's decision, Madhya Pradesh government has cancelled NEET counselling and admissions to MBBS and BDS courses in private and government medical and dental colleges of the state. There are around 313 students whose domicile status is hanging under the cloud. A fresh counselling process would start from August 31st. Students can check the details of schedule on MP Online portal and DME website. There are about 3,000 MBBS and BDS seats in private and government medical and dental colleges. It is worth recalling here that last year, in September, the Apex Court had cancelled the Madhya Pradesh government's NEET counselling conducted during 2016-17 for admission to undergraduate private medical colleges as the state government failed to comply with the Centre's notification while conducting the counselling for the colleges.

Government jobs of UP have begun to bypass interview.

On 29th August the government of Uttar Pradesh has announced its decision of ending the process of conducting interview for selection of candidates for the government jobs in all the non-gazetted posts of Group B, C and D categories. As per the new directive, if any department finds interview mandatory for a certain post, it can send a proposal for the same to the Personnel department.

IRNSS-1H conquered the sky!

ISRO launched The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS)-1H from the Second Launch Pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh via PSLV-C39 rocket on 31st August. This satellite is a back-up navigation satellite for IRNSS-1A and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has named it as 'NavIC' that implies Navigation with Indian Constellation. It has been developed at par with US-based GPS that renders services like terrestrial and marine navigation, disaster management, vehicle tracking and fleet management, navigation aide for hikers and travellers, visual and voice navigation for drivers. The satellite is meant to guide fishermen towards potential fishing areas, indicate weather conditions, high waves etc.; help

merchant ships in their navigation, search and rescue operations; help passengers to traverse distances on roads, enable transport operators to track their vehicles; help railways in tracking trains and report case of unmanned level crossing.

Puneet Chhatwal: MD & CEO of Tata group's IHCL.

In August 2017, European hotel chain, Steinberger Hotels AG's chief executive, Puneet Chhatwal has been appointed as Managing Director and CEO of Tata group hospitality firm 'Indian Hotels Company Ltd (IHCL)'. He will succeed incumbent Rakesh Sarna from 30th September onwards. The appointee is presently an active member of executive board of Duetsche Hospitality/Steinberger Hotels AG.

The Bombay Stock Exchange has reanchored Ashish Chauhan.

In August 2017, The Bombay Stock Exchange has approved another 5-year term of CEO for Ashish Chauhan. The man will continue to be on the post for second term as well which begins from November 2, 2017, to November 1, 2022. Ashish as CEO has steered a strong turnaround and a highly- successful initial public offering (IPO) of the bourse, a stock market of Europe with strong business expansion.

Saraswati Samman acknowledged Mahabaleshwar Sail.

In August 2017 Konkani author Mahabaleshwar Sail became proud recipient of the prestigious literary award, "Saraswati Samman" for year 2016. His work "Hawthan" about lives of the potter community in Goa has won him this acclamation. He has got cash prize of Rs.15 lakh. The awardee has been a soldier of 1965 war as well as a part of a UN peace keeping mission later. The Saraswati Samman is an annual award that was instituted in year 1991 by the K. K. Birla Foundation and it is being given for acknowledging outstanding prose or poetry literary works in any of the 22 Indian languages listed in Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India.

Benefits of OBC reservations will reflect in PSUs, Banks & Insurance companies.

On 30th August Union Cabinet Agreed on equivalence of posts in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), Banks, Insurance companies for claiming benefit of OBC reservations. The approval came after 24 long years. It ensures benefit of OBC reservations for young employees who are serving in lower categories in PSUs and other institutions. It is to prevent treatment of children of OBC category individuals in senior positions as non Creamy Layer by virtue of wrong interpretation of income standards. Flashback shows in 1992 the Apex Court directed the Union Government to specify the basis for exclusion of socially and economically advanced persons from Other Backward Classes. In February 1993 Union Government via constitution of an Expert Committee obeyed the Apex court by specifying the criteria for identification of socially advanced persons among OBCs as the Creamy Layer. After that the DoPT issued an Office Memorandum (OM) on exclusion of the Creamy Layer which spoke of six categories for identifying Creamy Layer viz. Constitutional/Statutory post; Group 'A' and Group 'B' Officers of Government, employees of PSUs and Statutory bodies, universities; Colonel and above in armed forces and equivalent in paramilitary forces; Professionals like Doctors, Lawyers, Management Consultants, Engineers, etc. ; Property owners with agricultural holdings or vacant land or buildings and Income tax assessee. It is worth recalling here that seeing the increase in the Consumer Price Index, the cabinet also approved the increase in the Creamy Layer ceiling of OBCs from Rs 6 lakh per annum to Rs 8 lakh per annum. These steps of government are likely to ensure greater representation of OBCs in educational institutions and jobs.

AICTE is strangling 800 engineering colleges.....

On 1st September the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) announced the closure of 800 engineering colleges on account of low quality facilities and less admissions. As per prescription of AICTE the colleges that lack proper infrastructure and report less than 30% admissions for five consecutive years will suffer closure. There are around 150 colleges which suffer this fate every year due to stricter AICTE rules. As per website, AICTE has given nod to the progressive closure of more than 410 colleges across nation, from 2014-15 to 2017-18. Among them Twenty institutions are in Karnataka. Telangana, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh have the maximum number of colleges which have sought progressive closure. It is disheartening to learn that private engineering colleges which fail to comply with AICTE norms either seek progressive closure and ultimately shut down or turn into polytechnics or science and arts colleges.

Cabinet has witnessed reshuffle.

3rd September stormed reshuffle in Cabinet which changed portfolios of 32 ministers and added nine new ministers. Minister of State for Commerce, Nirmala Sitharaman has become Defence Minister and with that she has become the first woman after Indira Gandhi to hold this post. Minister of Coal, Piyush Goyal has been given extra responsibility of Railway Ministry and former Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu has been given charge of Union Minister of Commerce. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore has become Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and former Sports Minister, Vijay Goel has been made incharge of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and Statistics & Programme Implementation. Former Minister of Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation, Uma Bharti became Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Nitin Gadkari has been given additional responsibility of Ministry of Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation along with Union Transport Ministry. Dharmendra Pradhan will see Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship along with Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Muqtar Abbas Naqvi has been promoted as Cabinet Minister and he will also continue to mind the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The list of nine new Ministers who have joined the cabinet includes names of Hardeep Puri (Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs), Raj Kumar Singh (Minister of Power and Minister of New and Renewable Energy), KJ Alphons (Minister of Tourism and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY)), Gajendra Singh Shekhawat (Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare), Shiv Pratap Shukla (Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance), Ashwini Kumar Choubey (Minister of State in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare), Satya Pal Singh (Minister of State in the Ministry of Human Resource Development and Minister of State in the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation), Virendra Kumar (Minister of State in the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Minister of State in the Ministry of Minority Affairs) and Anant Kumar Hegde (Minister of State in the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship). The Cabinet was seen saying goodbye to Rajiv Pratap Rudy (MoS Independent Charge of Skill Development), Sanjiv Balyan (Minister of State of Water Resources), Kalraj Mishra (Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises), Bandaru Dattatreya (Labour Ministry), Faggan Singh Kulaste (Minister of State of Health) and Mahendra Nath Pandey (Minister of State of Human Resource Development). In this third reshuffle of cabinet under Prime Minister Modi there are now 76 ministers in the Council of Ministers.

National Nutrition Week is rolling across the nation.

India is celebrating the National Nutrition Week which begun from 1st September and will continue upto 7th September. "Optimal Infant & Young Child Feeding Practices: Better Child Health" is the theme for this

celebration. It has come as an annual event to enforce awareness on the importance of nutrition which affects development, productivity and economic growth. Every Year on this day the Food and Nutrition Board of Ministry of Women & Child Development via its 43 Community Food and Nutrition Extension Units (CFNEUs) which are located in 30 States/UTs, in collaboration with concerned Department of the State/UT Governments, National Institutions, NGOs and conduct State/UT Level Workshops, Orientation Training of Fields Functionaries, Awareness Generation Camps and Community meetings during the week on the specified theme.

Odisha Welcomed the fourth Government Medical College in Koraput.

On 4th September Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the fourth Government Medical College of Odisha, “Shaheed Laxman Nayak Medical College and Hospital” at Koraput in southern Odisha. The 100-seat medical college, will witness the beginning of its academic session from this year. Spanning across 52 acres of land and built at an estimated cost of Rs 192 crore, the medical college acquired its final form within two years. Among 100 sanctioned seats, 15 seats are under the all India quota and the remaining 85 seats are under the state quota. The three other pre existing government medical colleges of Odisha are SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur and VSSS Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla. All these collectively have 650 MBBS seats. Besides this, on 6th September the chief minister is about to dedicate the Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College at Baripada in Mayurbhanj district. Two more medical colleges in Balasore and Balangir are on the other side of horizon.

National Nutrition Strategy stepped in via NITI Aayog.

On 5th September NITI Aayog gave way to the National Nutrition Strategy which will address nutritional needs to create Kuposhan Mukh Bharat. Dr M S Swaminathan, Leader of the Green Revolution, and Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, Dr Rajiv Kumar together launched this Nutrition Strategy in New Delhi. The program will converge four proximate determinants of nutrition viz. food, health services, income and water. It will enable states to opt strategic choices, via decentralized planning and local innovation, with accountability for nutrition outcomes. In India around 20% of children under five years of age suffer from acute malnutrition.

Sultan Ahmed passed away from cabinet of life.

On 5th September former Union Minister & Trinamool MP Sultan Ahmed died of cardiac arrest at age of 64 in Kolkata. He was elected as MP to the 15th Lok Sabha from Uluberia constituency on a Trinamool Congress ticket and worked as the Union Minister of State for Tourism during the UPA regime. It is really disheartening to learn that the deceased was one of the prime accused in the Narada TV sting operation case and was subjected to investigation by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The flames of Gauri Lankesh’s murder are heating up the air.

Senior journalist-turned-activist, Gauri Lankesh was murdered outside her residence in Rajarajeshwarinagar, West Bengaluru on 5th September. She was just 55. She was a renowned vocal critic of hardline Hindutva and growing communalism in India. She had published a controversial story called ‘Darodege Illida BJPgaru’ (‘BJP men involved in criminal activities’) in 2008. She blamed BJP’s Shivnath Bhat, Venkatesh Mestri, and Umesh Dushi of swindling Rs 1 lakh from a jeweller in it. She was convicted in two defamation cases in November 2016 for the same. The judicial magistrate’s court in Hubballi, Karnataka, convicted and sentenced Lankesh to six months’ imprisonment along with a fine of Rs 10,000.

Expert Task Force on Employment & Exports appeared in NITI Aayog's corridor.

On 6th September NITI Aayog has constituted an Expert Task Force to provide momentum to job creation by enhancing India's exports. NITI Aayog Vice Chairman, Dr Rajiv Kumar is the chief of this force. CEO, NITI Aayog, Secretaries of Departments of Commerce, Industrial Policy and Promotion, Economic Affairs and Textiles as well as leading economists and industry experts are the members of this force. As per the present scenario a majority of workers are still employed in low-productivity, low-wage jobs in small and micro enterprises and for this the panel will give suggestions on sector-specific policy interventions in significant employment sectors and measures to enhance trade in services with high employment potential. The recommendations of this force will address India's unemployment issues. The force is expected to submit its report by November 2017.

PLuS Alliance Prize 2017 allied to N R Narayana Murthy & Veena Sahajwalla.

On 3rd September PLuS Alliance's bestowed the 2017 PLuS Alliance Prize to Infosys co-founder N R Narayana Murthy and scientist Veena Sahajwalla. Both of them were acknowledged with USD 50000 as cash prize for the development and implementation of innovative solutions for addressing significant global issues. Murthy lured this award for Global Leadership while Sahajwalla mesmerized it via Research Innovation of her project 'The new science of green manufacturing'. It is worth knowing that launched in February 2016, the PLuS Alliance is an international collaboration between Arizona State University, King's College London and UNSW Sydney. It enables research-led solutions to global challenges while expanding access to world-class learning.

Viveck Goenka : The new Chairman of PTI.

On 7th September Viveck Goenka became the Chairman of Press Trust of India (PTI). Goenka has succeeded Riyad Mathew of the Malayala Manorama group. Viveck Goenka is an engineer and a wildlife photographer who has served in various capacities viz. Council Member of Audit Bureau of Circulation; Chairman and Managing Director of the Express Group, which publishes The Indian Express, Financial Express, Marathi daily Loksatta, Hindi daily Jansatta and various news websites; Director of Indian Newspaper Society (INS); member of Advertising Association's India chapter. Twelve years ago, he had instituted Excellence in Journalism Awards via doorway of non-profit Ramnath Goenka Foundation.

India's first hyperloop chose Andhra Pradesh for its appearance.

Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) inked an agreement with American research firm, Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HTT) for building India's first hyperloop between Vijayawada and Amaravati. This proposed connector will reduce the journey time between Vijayawada and Amaravati to a 5-minute ride. This inked Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is first of its kind in India. The project will get accomplished through Public Private Partnership model via private investors' funding. The new project will fetch 2,500 jobs and will equip the region with its ultra-high-speed transportation.

'Eva' wooed India's heart!

In September 2017 HDFC Bank's Electronic Virtual Assistant 'Eva' became India's smartest chatbot. This Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based chatbot 'Eva' came via courtesy of Bengaluru-based Senseforth AI Research and it succeeded in addressing more than 2.7 million customer queries in period of six months. With that it became India's largest banking chatbot. Currently Eva is looking into 50,000 plus semantic variations for numerous banking related intents. It tracks and analyses everyday customer issues. Looking at the success of Eva, State Bank of India (SBI) is also planning to launch its own intelligent chat assistant 'Sia' to reply customer questions regarding home loans, education loans, car loans, personal loans, recurring deposit, term deposit, etc.

India conceived Nestle's first food safety institute.

On 6th September Food Safety Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) inaugurated first Nestle Food Safety Institute in Manesar town of Gurgaon, Haryana. This institute will be an integral part of Nestle R&D Centre India and Nestle Research Center in Lausanne, Switzerland and it will have courses on food safety management systems, testing methods, and regulatory standards to train the industry people along with officials of the various state food safety authorities. Nestle had set up a similar food safety institute in China four years ago. It is worth recalling here that in June 2015 FSSAI had ordered withdrawal of all nine variants of Nestle's Maggi instant noodles from the market, terming them "unsafe and hazardous" for human consumption and later after passing the tests the sales were restored from November 2015.

Inder Jit Singh: The new Chairperson of NACWC.

On 7th September 1985-batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre, Inder Jit Singh got appointed as Chairperson of National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC). Currently he is also serving in capacity of Additional Secretary of Cabinet Secretariat. NACWC came into existence on 29th April 2017 as an office of the Cabinet Secretariat under the Chemical Weapons Convention. The NACWC having a chairperson along with the Joint Secretary in NACWC, DG of Directorate of Revenue and Intelligence and Joint Secretary of the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals as its directors, plays the role of national focal point for establishing effective bond with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and other State Parties on matters relating to the Convention.

Maharatna status has begun to travel towards Bharat Petroleum. In September 2017, a panel headed by the Cabinet secretary decide to confer 'Maharatna' status upon the State-run Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL). Currently this oil marketing company is a Navratna firm.

It is worth knowing here that the Maharatna and Navaratna state-owned companies operate in strategic fields like coal, petroleum, steel, heavy engineering, power supply, telecommunications and transportation services. BPCL complies with all the conditions prescribed under government rules that makes it eligible for Maharatna status. It is already under Navratna list and has registered an average turnover of Rs 25,000 crore, net worth of Rs 15,000 crore and annual net profit after tax of Rs 5,000 crore in the last three years. It also has vital global operations.

India's first water ATM was tapped in Hyderabad.

Home Minister Naina Narasimha Reddy inaugurated the first water ATM for clean and safe drinking water in Hyderabad. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) and a global NGO, Safe Water Network have made contribution in this initiative of government. The water supplied by Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) is subjected to a six-step treatment process for purification. The water ATM is connected to other water ATMs through cloud-based technology for real time monitoring and analysis of operational parameters to minimise the downtime. The initiative has come out of the pipeline via support of USAID under the Urban Wash Alliance Partnership and it is being funded by Honeywell India. Government is planning to install 50 ATMs in the first phase.

'Nag' got pulled out of DRDO's hat.

On 9th September DRDO's third-gen anti-tank missile 'Nag' completed successful tests at Pokhran Range. It is a native missile which was put to test in deserts of Rajasthan, marking completion of development trials. The

defence ministry applauded this accomplishment by saying, “The ATGM Nag missile has successfully hit both the targets under different ranges and conditions with very high accuracy as desired by the armed forces. With this successful flight trial, the complete functionality of Nag ATGM along with launcher system NAMICA has been established and marked the successful completion of development trials of Nag missile.”

Traditional Bonderam festival furlled in Goa.

On 9th September Bonderam festival greeted the Divar Island of Goa. The word “Bonderam” originated from the involvement of flags. It is a famous monsoon festival of Goa which begins with flags accompanied with brass band. During the Portuguese rule in Goa there were frequent disputes between two sections of the Divar village over property issues. Portuguese resolved these issues through demarcation of boundaries with flags. The festival has come as a memoir to the protest by the local villagers against the Portuguese while trying to resolve the property ownership disputes.

India’s first advanced Homoeopathy Virology laboratory inaugurated in Kolkata.

On 12th September 2017, the Union Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Shri Shripad Yesso Naik has inaugurated India’s first advanced Homoeopathy Virology laboratory at Dr. Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute for Homoeopathy in Kolkata, West Bengal. The laboratory has been established to develop new drugs and technologies in Homoeopathy to combat emerging challenges of viral diseases. The laboratory, established at the cost of Rs. 8 crore is the only one of its kind in India for conducting basic and fundamental research in Homoeopathy for viral diseases like influenza, Japanese encephalitis, dengue, chikungunya and swine flu.

First Lifetime Achievement Award to Prakash Padukone.

On 12th September 2017, Prakash Padukone, the renowned Indian Badminton player and the only Indian male to be ranked as the world no. 1 in Badminton has been selected for the first Lifetime Achievement Award by Badminton Association of India (BAI). He has been selected for the award for his outstanding contribution in Badminton. The award carries the cash prize of Rs 10 lakh and a citation. Prakash Padukone had won the 1980 All England, besides bagging a bronze at the 1983 World Championship in Copenhagen. He also won the gold medal in the 1978 Commonwealth Games. He has also been honored with the Arjuna award in 1972 and the Padma Shri in 1982

Ramakant Khandelwal : New Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of PAYBACK India.

Ramakant Khandelwal has been appointed as the new Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) of PAYBACK India. He will help to drive the growing business operations of PAYBACK in the Indian market. He joined the PAYBACK in year 2010, as part of the core management team. He has 18 years experience in sales and marketing. He also worked in ICICI Bank and Eveready Industries. He succeeds Gautam Kaushik.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Trump made law for expansion of college assistance. On 16th August American President Trump autographed updated veterans' education bill that marked the largest expansion of college assistance for military veterans in a decade. Under this law the Forever GI act immediately removed a 15-year time limit on the use of GI benefits. The law increased financial assistance for thousands serving in the National Guard and Reserve, building on a 2008 law that guaranteed veterans a full-ride scholarship to any in-state public university, or a similar cash amount to attend private colleges. According to the statement of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin the new law fetches benefit to Purple Heart recipients whose injuries forced them to forsake the service. And the benefits can also now be transferred to the eligible dependent of service members who got killed in the line of duty.

Damselfly have joined the row to immortalize the name of Sir David Attenborough.

On 16th August 2017 as per the publication of the Journal of Systematic Palaeontology, a species of 100 million years old damselfly got discovered in Hukawng Valley of Kachin Province in Myanmar and have been named after Sir David Attenborough. This discovered species of ancient damselfly belong to a group known as shadowdamsels and it has been named as "Mesosticta davidattenboroughi". Sir David Attenborough was duly acknowledged with this move on his 90th Birthday for his long-standing appreciation of dragonflies. It is worth knowing that prior to this a carnivorous plant, a butterfly, a tiny spider, a Peruvian frog and a Namibian lizard were also named after this living legend.

A new Sea route appeared between Qatar and Pakistan.

In August 2017 Qatar gave way to a new direct route between the country's Hamad Port and Pakistan's port of Karachi. Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt imposed blockade of land, air and sea on Qatar for financing extremist groups and allying with the Gulf Arab state's arch-foe Iran. The new sea route is said to be a "fast and secure" corridor for importers and exporters, with transit time of about six to eight days from Qatar to Karachi.

The 'missing link' got found.

According to August publication of journal, Biology Letters, Southern Chile unveiled the missing link in dinosaur evolution in form of Chilesaurus which existed during the late Jurassic period, about 150 million years ago. It is a significant link between plant-eating herbivores and carnivores dinosaur groups. The species speaks on how the meat-eating, bipedal dinosaurs, evolved into the herbivorous, long-necked ornithischians. Researchers of the University of Cambridge and the Natural History Museum in the United Kingdom analysed a comprehensive dataset of more than 450 anatomical characteristics of early dinosaurs for confirming this fact.

World Humanitarian Day hailed on 19th August.

World Humanitarian Day is celebrated annually to pay tribute to help workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service and also to rally support to victims under crisis worldwide. This year entire globe celebrated the day with #NotATarget theme in which UN Secretary General António Guterres, appealed for protection of innocent civilians who are forced to run away or hide due to conflicts and wars that rage now and then across the world. Several families get displaced and children get deprived of regular education. The World Humanitarian Day 2017 united many humanitarian partners to ensure that civilians caught in conflict are #NotATarget.

Nature is under recreation!

As per August 2017 publication of 'The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology', researchers of the University of Western Australia and Tohoku University Hospital in Japan have developed artificial womb to save extremely premature babies. They succeeded in creating an artificial womb and incubated healthy baby lambs for a week. In this breakthrough scientists employed ex- vivo uterine environment (EVE) therapy in which they used high-tech amniotic fluid bath in combination with an artificial placenta. Researchers are looking forward to develop an advanced technology which may become an effective treatment strategy for extremely preterm infants born at the border of viability (22-23 weeks) as at this gestational stage, the lungs are often too structurally and functionally under-developed for the baby to breathe easily and if an alternative means of gas exchange for the foetus gets successfully developed then the lives of those babies whose lungs are too immature to breathe properly will be saved.

Sohail Mahmood :Pakistan's new High Commissioner to India.

On 16th August Sohail Mahmood took charge at the Indian High Commission as Pakistan's High Commissioner to India. He has succeeded career diplomat Abdul Basit, who worked as the country's envoy for four years. Sohail Mahmood is a seasoned diplomat who has rich experience in the diplomatic service. He had served as the Ambassador of Pakistan to Thailand from 2009-2013 and has played key role in several Pakistani missions abroad including Washington and New York.

Jerry Lewis bade goodbye to laughter of life.

On 20th August US comedian passed away at the age of 91 in Las Vegas. The deceased made his debut appearance on stage at the age of five years. He was one of Hollywood's most successful comedians. In 10-year partnership with Dean Martin, he appeared in 16 films and achieved huge box office success. He was among the the highest-paid actors in Hollywood, who gave hits like The Bell Boy, Cinderella and The Nutty Professor. His other notable successes included The King of Comedy in 1983, in which he was a talk show host stalked by Robert de Niro. He also hosted a long-running telethon which raised many millions of dollars for muscular dystrophy. The White House statement read as "Jerry lived the American Dream - he truly loved his country, and his country loved him back," In 1984 he received the Legion of Honour, France's highest award.

A Treat to Eyes: Day turning into Night !!!

21st August made United States of America witness total solar eclipse that turned day into night. The awesome phenomenon happened as the moon blotted out the sun in the first full-blown solar eclipse to sweep America from coast to coast in nearly a century. The sudden transition of day into night led to drop in temperature. Nature also responded to this wonderful change as birds got quietened, crickets began to chirp and the stars appeared in the middle of the day as the line of darkness raced 2,600 miles (4,200 kilometers) across the continent in about 90 minutes. In Boise city of Idaho, the sun was more than 99% blocked. The rest of North America witnessed partial eclipse.

A Medical breakthrough: US succeeds in eclipsing Sepsis in newborn babies.

US-based doctor, Dr Pinaki Panigrahi devised an inexpensive prevention technique against 'sepsis' which is said to be a life-threatening illness caused by infant's body response to an infection. Sepsis is mainly caused by bacterial infections and it is triggered by infections like pneumonia, kidney infection blood infection and abdominal infection. In this dis-ease all of a sudden baby becomes inactive. It stops crying and breastfeeding. In

early infancy this results in one million annual deaths across the world. For this the researcher cum pediatrician along with his team at the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health found that feeding babies with probiotic bacteria dramatically reduces the risk of sepsis in newborns. This simple technique has come as major breakthrough study and it is going to be an inexpensive treatment for saving hundreds of thousands of newborns from clutches of Sepsis.

World’s smallest surgical robot is all set to enter OT.

In August 2017 British scientists created world’s smallest surgical robot named “Versius” to perform laparoscopic procedures viz. hernia repairs, colorectal operations, and prostate and ear, nose and throat surgery. A team of 100 scientists and engineers using low-cost technology developed this robot which is of the same size as a human arm and has four wrist joints, giving the surgeon the requisite level of freedom to operate on the patient from the desired angle. The robot is destined to get controlled by a surgeon at a console directed by a 3D screen in the operating theatre. It is worth registering here that the engineers employed electronics from mobile phones to make robot think and process information.

South Africa harboured the first regional centre of New Development Bank.

August 2017 gave India and other BRICS nations opportunity to raise first regional centre of the New Development Bank in Johannesburg, South Africa. This multilateral development bank has an initial authorised capital of USD 100 billion. In this context it is worth remembering that idea of this set up was proposed by India at the 4th BRICS summit in year 2012.

US denies non-immigrant visas in Russia for straight nine days.

Washington has put on hold the issuance of all non-immigrant visas in Russia for nine days starting from 23rd August 2017. Under this suspension all scheduled appointments for visa applicants has been cancelled. The visa operations are likely to come on wheels from 1st of September. The seed of suspension lies in past when Russia slashed the US diplomatic staff in the country from 755 employees to 455, it is the same number Moscow has in the United States in a retaliatory move against new sanctions approved by the US congress.

23rd August: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition.

23rd August marked the anniversary of Haitian Revolution which was a big turning point in human history across the globe. The day recalls 1791 insurrection of enslaved men and women in the western part of the island of Santo Domingo, which is now known as Haiti. This revolution led to their freedom and independence in year 1804. UNESCO Executive Board instituted this International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition via adoption of Resolution 29 C/40. The first celebration of this day took place on 23rd August 1998.

2017 Porter Fund Literary Prize anchored Padma.

Indian American Arkansas novelist and playwright Padma Viswanathan became recipient of the 2017 Porter Fund Literary Prize for fiction. She welcomed this prize worth \$2000 for accomplishing a substantial and impressive body of work. She succeeded in luring Arkansas’ most lucrative and prestigious literary award.

CMO Asia Excellence award paved its way to Paynear Solution.

In August 2017 Hyderabad startup “Paynear Solution” won award in ‘Best Use of Mobile Technology in Financial Services in Asia’ category. This was the eighth edition of CMO Asia Excellence awards which took

place in Singapore. This startup got the award on account of its innovative use of technology to help the flawless processing of omni-channel transactions across platforms.

The Awe of another Russian diplomat's demise is whirling in the air!

On 23rd August Russian Ambassador to Sudan, Migayas Shirinskiy passed away in Khartoum, capital of Sudan. Although he died of cardiac arrest while swimming in a pool yet his death carries a tinge of suspicion of the possible assassination attempt. Migayas, the dead man graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) and served the diplomatic positions at Russia's embassies in Yemen, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Rwanda. In 2013 he was appointed as Russian Ambassador to Sudan. Though there is no evidence to suggest anything suspicious about his death, yet he is the latest in a long line of Russian emissaries to die in the recent past. It is worth knowing here that since the beginning of 2017, four Russian diplomats have died in different nations. On 9th January a senior diplomat at the Russian embassy in Greece was found dead on the floor of his apartment. Two weeks after that the Russian ambassador to India, Alexander Kadakin, died after a brief illness. In February, Russia's ambassador to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, died of an apparent heart attack.

Gender-neutral passports are on the way via Canadian Courtesy.

On 24th August government of Canada aired announcement about issuance of gender neutral passports for citizens who fail to identify with a particular gender. The gender neutral passports will have option "X" and citizens will be expected to add an "observation" to their passports stating their sex should be "identified as 'X'", indicating it as unspecified. The decision will come in effect from 31st August 2017. In this context the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Minister of Canada, Ahmed Hussen was heard saying "By introducing an 'X' gender designation in our government-issued documents, we are taking an important step towards advancing equality for all Canadians regardless of gender identity or expression."

Australia Business Week in India (ABWI) is ready to roll.

Australian Trade and Investment Commission will organize the second Australia Business Week in India (ABWI) from 28th August to 1st September 2017. The week will focus on strengthening the collaboration between the two countries in agri-business and food, higher education and research and smart cities and infrastructure, Trade, Tourism and Investment. The week will see more than 50 business events across New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bhopal, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. The first ABWI took place in year 2015 which generated business worth millions of dollars. As per an officially released statement "India is Australia's ninth largest partner with two-way trade and services of Australian dollars 20.7 billion and it is the fifth largest export market, with total exports of Australian dollars 11.1 billion. Total Indian investment in Australia is near Australian dollars 13.5 billion (up from Australian dollars 600 million in 2006), while total investment in India is over Australian dollars 10.3 billion."

Researchers broke new way to treat AIDS.

As per August 2017 publication of the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Researchers at the University of Southern California (USC) have come across a new variant within the previously identified family of proteins in HIV, called "Delta 20". It is an immune system protein that suppresses the most damaging HIV strains, X4, by preventing the virus from infecting cells. In context to AIDS, it is worth knowing that HIV can be classified into R5 and X4 virus strains. R5 viruses are related with primary infection, while X4 viruses make appearance in later stages of HIV disease among half of HIV carriers. When doctors detect the X4 strain in

a patient, it signals that the patient's HIV infection has progressed to a fatal stage. And the new study under light of the newly discovered immune protein shows a way to suppress X4 strain. This research is the first crucial step to direct the body's own immune system to eliminate the disease. And this method differs from the more traditional method of targeting viruses that may eventually become resistant to specific medical therapies.

Lost were meant to be found.....

August 2017 has brought 150 unique letters written by mathematician Alan Turing in light. These were the long lost correspondence of early 1949 which were recovered from an old filing cabinet at University of Manchester by one of its professors, Jim Miles, in the United Kingdom after 30 years. The letters have contents about Artificial Intelligence (AI), Turing's ground-breaking research in areas viz. AI, computing and mathematics and some important lectures from some of America's most famous universities viz. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

A big "NO" echoed for gold and silver import from South Korea.

In August 2017 Indian government prohibited import of gold and silver items from South Korea. Publication of a notice from the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) in the Union Commerce Ministry read, "Imports from South Korea of articles of jewellery and parts thereof, of precious metal or of metal clad with precious metal, articles of goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares and parts thereof and coins are restricted." Government took this move to curb a sudden rise in inbound shipments of precious metals from this country. In order to import the prohibited items, importers will now have to obtain a license from the DGFT from South Korea. India is the world's second biggest gold consumer after China and it is worth knowing that between 1st July to 3rd August 2017 alone, gold imports from South Korea climbed to USD 338.6 million. The import in 2016-17 stood at USD 70.46 million.

International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances forced its way on 30th August.

On 21st December 2010 United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 65/209 for institution of this day and in year 2011 this day was observed for the first time. Through this day the UN intends to express its deep concern about the people who are arrested, detained or abducted against their will by officials of various branches or levels of Government or by organized groups/ private individuals acting on behalf of or with the support of the Government. Moreover the abducting or detaining authority denies to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the people concerned and steals their liberty, which places such unfortunate people outside the protection of the law. It is disheartening to learn that such enforced disappearances spells violation of many economic, social and cultural rights viz. the right to protection and assistance to the family; the right to an adequate standard of living; the right to health and the right to education of both the victims as well as their families.

Digital education programme for media visited via courtesy of Twitter.

In August 2017 Twitter has rolled digital education programme, "#TweetToTheTop" for media agency professionals in five nations of Asia Pacific viz. India, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia. Eleven agencies from global media and advertising networks including Dentsu, GroupM, IPG and Omnicom are active participants of this initiative. The programme is on purpose of attracting hundreds of young media planners and executives from the five markets to display their best work using Twitter solutions.

Tomokazu Harimoto stole the news headlines.....

On 29th August 14 year old Japanese table tennis player, Tomokazu Harimoto became the youngest player to book ITTF men's singles tournament on his name. Harimoto defeated 36 year old German Timo Boll in the Czech Open final. With this victory Harimoto has cracked the record of China's Yu Ziyang, who at age of 16 years and 30 days scripted the 2014 Japan Open in his name.

Indian Ocean Conference has begun to flow in Colombo. On August 31st the two-day Indian Ocean Conference has started in Colombo, Srilanka. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj is participating in this conference. Sri Lankan prime minister and president are the chief orators of this conference. A Delhi-based think tank, 'Foundation' along with research and study centres like RSIS, Singapore, and NIFS, Colombo are jointly hosting this event on "peace, progress and prosperity" theme. It is the second Indian Ocean Conference as the previous conference took place in Singapore last year in partnership with think tanks from Singapore, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Uranium bank radiated from Kazakhstan.

In August 2017 the U.N. global nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency seeded a uranium bank in Kazakhstan. It is a \$150-million facility meant to discourage new nations from enriching the nuclear fuel. It is a Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank in the city of Oskemen, in eastern Kazakhstan, which has around 90 tonnes stock of the fuel that is sufficient to power a large city for three years. The LEU Bank will serve as a last-resort for procurement of LEU for the manufacture of fuel for nuclear power plants. It is worth knowing that in past Russia also started a similar bank but this one in Kazakhstan is the first one fully owned and operated by the global nuclear watchdog.

Biggest X-ray laser gun is on verge of appearance.

In September 2017 the biggest X-ray laser gun of earth, European X-ray Free Electron Laser (XFEL) will be on wheels. This international project of 11 participating nations viz. Germany, Denmark, Hungary, Italy, France, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland will shoot 27000 laser pulses per second. It is 1.5 billion-euro laser which will replace "FLASH" in Germany. This laser has been developed by approval of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research under the provision that it should be financed as a European project.

Lebanon welcomed its first animal protection law.

In August 2017 Lebanese President Michel Aoun autographed first animal welfare bill of Lebanon into law. This law guarantees protection of domestic and wild animals against abuse. The law pronounces strict rules in context to domestic pets, regulations for zoos and pet shops. It denies abusing pets or owning wild or endangered animals in the Mediterranean country. There is provision of heavy fine and imprisonment in case of violation of the law. Tunisia, Qatar and other nations in the Middle East also have animal welfare legislation.

UNESCO chose Ahmedabad of Gujarat as India's 1st World Heritage City.

On 1st September United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) formally accorded Ahmedabad, the status of India's first World Heritage City. UNESCO Director General, Irina Bokova handed over the concerned certificate to Chief Minister Vijay Rupani. Ahmedabad was chosen among 250 cities for this coveted status. UNESCO saw Ahmedabad as "a symbol of intercultural dialogue and unity in diversity. A city that boasts life, culture, and joy everyday with its extravagant lifestyle. A symbol of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence." India secured the nomination for Ahmedabad on UNESCO's World Heritage list

during the 41st Session of World Heritage Committee on 8th July. The honour makes the walled city of Ahmedabad the first city in India, and the third in Asia, to be on this privileged list.

Oklahoma congressman: the next administrator of NASA.

On 1st September US President Trump nominated Oklahoma congressman Jim Bridenstine to lead NASA. He is a pilot in the US Navy Reserve and a former executive director of the Tulsa Air and Space Museum and Planetarium. He came in Congress in year 2012 and presently serves on House Armed Services Committee and the Science, Space and Technology Committee. After approval of Senate, Trump is envisaging Jim's role in human exploration of Mars to NASA's mission. NASA is aiming for astronauts on Mars sometime in the 2030s.

Kymriah: The First gene-altering leukemia treatment.

The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) approved a new leukemia treatment, called Kymriah. The treatment has come to offer some patients a second chance after failure of first-line drugs. Kymriah is chimeric antigen receptor T-cell therapy (CAR-T) that enables the cells to recognize and kill the source of the cancer. Each dose of Kymriah contains patient's own immune cells, which are sent to a lab to get genetically modified using a virus. Once the cells are modified, they are infused back into the patient to kill the cancer cells. The treatment is meant for patients up to 25 years of age with B-cell precursor Acute Lymphoblastic Leukaemia (ALL) that is refractory or in second or later relapse. It is worth knowing that the acute lymphoblastic leukaemia is a cancer of the bone marrow and blood, in which the body makes abnormal lymphocytes.

Joseph Yuvaraj Pillay is back in the role of President.

On 1st September Indian-origin civil servant Joseph Yuvaraj Pillay became Interim President of Singapore. He has succeeded Tony Tan Keng Yam who completed his six-year term on 31st August 2017. Currently he is working as the Chairman of the Council of Presidential Advisers (CPA). In context to Singapore law, when the office of President is vacant, the first in line to exercise its powers is the CPA Chairman followed by the Speaker of Parliament. It is worth registering here that this man has been constantly affiliated to Presidency in past. He has been the acting President every time the president goes on an overseas trip. He acted as President in May 2017, when Tony Tan Keng got engaged in Europe tour. Pillay has served for more than 60 such stints, the longest among them was of 16 days in April and May of 2007, when then president S R Nathan visited Africa.

The Poet signed off the poem of Life!

On 3rd September Pulitzer-Prize winning poet, John Ashbery passed away at the age of 90 years in Hudson, New York. The deceased won a triple crown of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle prize for his 1975 collection, "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror". He was an eminent American poet who possessed an excellent command over language and American verse from his pen soared to baffling heights. He was one of the few poets who were highly exalted in their lifetimes. It is interesting to note that Ashbery was the first living poet to have a volume published by the Library of America dedicated exclusively to his work.

International Day of Charity chirped on 5th September.

Entire globe observed this International Day of Charity in memory of Nobel Peace Prize winner Mother Teresa who died on 5th September 1997 at 87. Born as Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in year 1910, she came to India in 1928 and founded the order of Missionaries of Charity in Kolkota (Calcutta) in 1950. Pope Francis conferred her the

status of 'Saint' on 4th September 2016. The United Nations General Assembly instituted International Day of Charity via adoption of resolution A/RES/67/105.

Syria cracked the hard nut of IS siege of Deir al-Zour.

On 5th September Syrian military succeeded in breaking a siege of the eastern city of Deir al-Zour, which was surrounded for 3 long years by so-called Islamic State. The troops had joined up with forces at the Brigade 137 base on the outskirts of city. President Bashar al-Assad applauded the soldiers for their steadfastness in confronting the mightiest terrorist organisations of the earth. It is worth knowing that around 93,000 civilians were trapped in an enclave on the western bank of the River Euphrates since 2015. They managed to survive by virtue of military relief flights and air drops of aid by the UN. In February 2016, the World Food Programme began sending high-altitude air drops there to deliver food aid which saved people from dying because of malnutrition. In August 2017, 300 missions had delivered around 6,000 tonnes of aid.

The Echo of FIFA U-17 World Cup song vibrated in the air !

On 4th September the FIFA Under-17 World Cup football tournament got its official song. The song "Kar Ke Dikhla De Goal" came via courtesy of Local Organising Committee and Sony Pictures Networks India in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It has been written by Amitabh Bhattacharya and is composed by Pritam. The song featured a host of music artists like Sunidhi Chauhan, Babul Supriyo, Shaan, Papon, Mika, Neeti Mohan along with a rap performance by actor Abhishek Bachchan. The 17th edition of FIFA U-17 World Cup will be held from 6th to 28th October in India. The U17 national teams of the member associations of FIFA will play the final of this international men's youth football championship at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on 28 October 2017.

'Artificial leaf for real fuel', the new height of innovation.

As per the publication of an online open-access journal 'Scientific Reports', team of researchers under leadership of Chinnakonda S Gopinath of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-National Chemical Laboratory in Pune developed an ultra-thin artificial leaf that absorbs sunlight to generate hydrogen fuel from water which is similar to an actual plant leaf. The innovation consists of semiconductor device with an area of 23 sq cm to simulate the natural leaf system. When the visible light strikes the semiconductor, electrons move in one direction and generate electric current. The produced current immediately splits water into hydrogen. This device has potential of producing 6 litres of hydrogen fuel per hour. It does not need any external voltage and performs better than existing solar cells. In this way scientists have succeeded in another way of extracting 'Hydrogen' which is believed to be one of the cleanest forms of fuel.

The 2017 UNESCO Prize for Girls' and Women's Education are out!

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) honored two organizations from Peru and Thailand with UNESCO Girls' and Women's Education Prize 2017 on 5th September. UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova conferred the awards to the Development and Education Programme for Daughters and Communities Centre in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region (DEPDC/GMS) in Thailand for its project entitled "Education and Life Skills Training Programme to Help Stateless Children and Women Migrating from Shan State to Thailand" and Mini Academy of Science and Technology (MaCTec) Peru for its "Mobile MaCTec Bus Labs/Mini Academy of Science and Technology" project. Each of the two organisations received the prize money of USD 50000 at an official ceremony held in Xiamen, People's Republic of China.

These awards were instituted in year 2015 by the UNESCO's Executive Board. They are funded by the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Weird cause and its weird effects!

As per the latest publication of International Journal of Astrobiology, Solar storms caused mass beachings of sperm whales in German, Dutch, French and British shores between January and February 2016. During Solar storm the Sun emitted huge bursts of energy in the form of solar flares and coronal mass ejections which directed a stream of electrical charges and magnetic fields toward the Earth at a speed of about three million miles per hour. Solar storm stroke the Earth in areas close to the Arctic Circle creating the world's magnetic field shift by 460 km that interfered with the Sperm whales' sense of orientation in the North Sea where they failed to navigate finding its environment unnatural due to the magnetic field shift. The misleading signals from magnetic shifts ultimately led to the mass bleaching.

The top secret space shuttle came via SpaceX.

On 7th September SpaceX gave way to the US air force's super-secret space shuttle from Kennedy space center in Florida. The spacecraft is a technology testing mini-shuttle with potential of spending years in orbit. It is a crewless aircraft that made Falcon rocket its escort. This was the first time SpaceX has given lift to an experimental minishuttle. It is worth knowing here that the previous missions relied on United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rockets.

Strongest Solar Flares sparked through NASA's eyes.

On 6th September NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) captured the images of two significant Solar Flares emitted by Sun. Among them the first flare has been classified as an X2.2 flare and the second is an X9.3 flare. This X9.3 flare is the largest flare in the current solar cycle which started in December 2008. Both the flares are heading towards phase of the solar cycle called "Solar Minimum" in which the eruptions from the sun will be increasingly rare and intense. Though these harmful radiations of flares cannot trespass Earth's atmosphere to physically affect humans yet these flares are intense enough to disturb that layer of atmosphere where GPS and communications signals travel. These flares are said to be the strongest flares registered in 12 years.

Johnson & Johnson is acknowledging fatherhood.

On 7th September Johnson & Johnson India introduced eight weeks of paid paternity leaves during the first year to the new fathers. In this context chief of Human Resources, Johnson & Johnson India said "Enhanced benefits make us attractive towards Millennials and GenZs, who are critical to our future workforce." It is worth registering here that as per the Indian Labour law, mothers are sanctioned 26 weeks of maternity leave but still there is no provision for paternity leave for private sector employees. Headquartered in New Brunswick, New Jersey, Johnson & Johnson is American multinational medical devices, pharmaceutical and consumer packaged goods manufacturing company with 250 subsidiary companies across 60 countries.

Stories of US Open Championships.

On 9th September American Sloane Stephens defeated Keys by 6-3, 6-0 in the finals and booked US Open women's singles title on her name. Stephens has brought immense improvement in her game as just six weeks ago she held 957th rank and now she holds 83rd rank. After winning this title she has become the fifth unseeded woman to win a major title in the Open era. Rafael Nadal will play his 23rd major final with South Africa's Kevin Anderson who is making his debut in US Open men's singles final late tonight. Rafael is bidding for a

16th Grand Slam title tonight. Besides them the Swiss-Taiwanese pair of Martina Hingis and Chan Yung-Jan will confront Lucie Hradecká and Kateřina Siniaková of Czech Republic in the women's doubles tonight.

Blood succeeded in pulling blood across international boundaries.

On 7th September the three judges of San Francisco-based 9th Circuit Court of US permitted entrance of extended family members of US citizens from six majority-Muslim nations viz. Somalia, Libya, Sudan, Iran, Syria and Yemen in US. Immigrants from these nations were instructed by the Supreme Court in June that visitors from their home countries would be banned unless they shared a bona fide relationship to people or entities in the US. But now the federal appeals court rejected the Trump administration's limited view of who is allowed into the United States under the president's travel ban. The 9th Circuit Court allowed grandparents, cousins and similarly close relations of people in the US saying, "Stated simply, the government does not offer a persuasive explanation for why a mother-in-law is clearly a bona fide relationship, in the Supreme Court's prior reasoning, but a grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, or cousin is not."

UAE witnessed manifestation of Second Indian Workers' Resource Centre.

On 10th September Indian Ambassador in UAE Navdeep Singh Suri inaugurated the second Indian Workers' Resource Centre (IWRC) at Sharjah in UAE. The centre is meant to provide support and counseling to blue collared workers, who frequently confront issues involving salaries, fake employment visas or job offers or even matters pertaining to registration of marriages etc. The IWRC will serve the Indian Community on legal, personal and financial matters free of charge. On this occasion a toll free number 800 INDIA or 80046342 with multi lingual facility has been given life to serve 24x7. The first IWRC was opened in Dubai in year 2010.

International Day for South-South Cooperation 2017 observed across the world.

The International Day for South-South Cooperation was observed globally on 12th September 2017 by United Nations (UN). The day celebrates the economic, social and political developments made in recent years by the regions and countries in the south. It also spotlight the United Nation's efforts to work on technical cooperation among developing countries. South-South cooperation is a broad framework of collaboration among countries of the South in the political, economic, social, cultural, environmental and technical domains.

Peter Thomson: First Special Envoy for Oceans.

On 12th September 2017 United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres has appointed Peter Thomson, the outgoing president of the UN General Assembly as the first Special Envoy for the Oceans. The Thomson's appointment was announced by UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric. Thomson had played an important role in the first-ever UN conference on oceans, which was held in June 2017. The conference saw 193 UN member states issue an urgent call for action to reverse the decline in the health and productivity of the world's oceans.

Gay rights activist Edith Windsor has passed away.

Gay rights activist Edith Windsor, whose same-sex marriage fight led to a landmark US ruling has passed away on 12th September 2017 at the age of 88 years. Windsor's Supreme Court case struck down the Defense of Marriage Act in 2013, granting same-sex married couples federal recognition for the first time. She had sued the US Government after being ordered to pay USD 363053 in federal estate tax after her previous wife, Thea Spyer, died. She had claimed that the provision of the law, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman prevented her from getting a tax deduction due to married couples and was unconstitutional.

Sports News

India finished European Hockey tour on high note.

On 16th August India signed off European tour on high registering victory over Austria in Amstelveen. In its 5th and last game of the tour, India hitched the match against the Austrians with 4-3. Speaking about the pace of the match flashback showed 1-1 till the end of 2nd quarter. In the 3rd quarter, India posted two goals in quick succession to take a 3-1 lead which was briskly followed by Austrians who scored two goals to equalise at 3-3. But in final 10 seconds of the match Chinglen Kangujam scored for India to pull off a sensational win. In the big picture, India had lost first two matches to Belgium but won the other two against the Netherlands earlier in this European tour.

2017 National Sports Awards rocked the ground.

The Union Government announced the names of sports awardees who will be honored on 29th August at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. The highest sporting honour of India, Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna 2017 that entitles cash prize of Rupees 7.5 lakh will go to Devendra (Para Athlete) and Sardar Singh (Hockey) for their spectacular and most outstanding performance in the field of sports over a period of four years at international level. Sports coaching honour of India, the Dronacharya Award will pave its way to Late Dr. R. Gandhi (Athletics) and Heera Nand Kataria (Kabaddi) for their consistent outstanding and meritorious work that enabled sportspersons to excel in international events over a period of four years. The same award worth cash prize of Rupees 5 lakh for the lifetime contribution in coaching for producing "outstanding sportspersons" over a period of 20 years or more is ready to come in possession of G.S.S.V. Prasad (Badminton), Brij Bhushan Mohanty (Boxing), P.A. Raphel (Hockey), Sanjoy Chakraverthy (Shooting) and Roshan Lal (Wrestling). 2017 Arjuna Awards carrying a cash prize of Rupees 5 lakh, for outstanding achievement in National sports will target V.J. Surekha (Archery), Khushbir Kaur (Athletics), Arokia Rajiv (Athletics), Prasanthi Singh (Basketball), Laishram Debendro Singh (Boxing), Cheteshwar Pujara (Cricket), Harmanpreet Kaur (Cricket), Oinam Bembem Devi (Football), S.S.P. Chawrasia (Golf), S.V. Sunil (Hockey), Jasvir Singh (Kabaddi), P. N. Prakash (Shooting), A. Amalraj (Table Tennis), Saketh Myneni (Tennis), Satyawart Kadian (Wrestling), Mariyappan (Para-Athlete) and Varun Singh Bhati (Para-Athlete). Lifetime achievement sporting honour of India, 2017 Dhyan Chand Award, worth Rupees 5 lakh cash will travel towards Bhupender Singh (Athletics), Syed Shahid Hakim (Football) and Sumarai Tete (Hockey) for their contributions to sport both during their active sporting career and after retirement.

Barefoot footballer Ahmed Khan left the ground of life.

On 27th August 2017 India's oldest football Olympian Ahmed Khan died at the age of 90 years. The deceased was part of the famous 'barefoot' football squad that made its debut in Olympic football at the 1948 London Games. He came from Bengaluru's well known football family and started his professional career with his father Mehmood 'Baba' Khan. He joined Bangalore Muslims team later. He scripted Rovers Cup of year 1948 on his name. He played for East Bengal for 10 years and was an integral part of Kolkata Giants that formed part of 'Pancha Pandavas' viz. Sale, Dhanaraj, Appa Rao and Venkatesh. He represented India in 1948 and 1952 Olympics and coined gold for the country in 1951 Asian Games in Delhi. The English nicknamed him as 'Snake Charmer' for his flawless control over the ball.

Gaurav Bidhuri: the fourth Indian boxer in World Championship.

On 29th August, Indian boxer Gaurav Bidhuri made a wildcard entry in the Asian Boxing Confederation. The man defeated Tunisian boxer Bilel Mhamdi in the bantamweight quarterfinals to make the last-four stage. The lucky one has now entered the semifinals of the bantamweight (56kg) category in Hamburg. His entrance has assured a medal for India in the 2017 World Boxing Championship. He will confront 19-year-old American Duke Ragan in the semifinal on 31st August. Gaurav is son of a national level boxer, Dharmendra Bidhuri. Prior to him the other three Indians who had managed to reach this stage were Shiva Thapa (2015), Vikas Krishan (2011) and Vijender Singh (2009).

Real Madrid claimed 2017 Spanish Super Cup.

On 16th August, Real Madrid defeated Barcelona by 2-0 for winning the 31st edition of the tournament, 2017 Spanish Super Cup title. It is worth registering here that this football club of Spain sealed this victory without its star footballer Cristiano Ronaldo who is suffering a five-game ban. Past says that the football club was recognised as the FIFA Club of the 20th Century in December 2000, and received the FIFA Centennial Order of Merit in May 2004.

Material wealth of the materialistic world!

Serena Williams basked as the the highest-paid female athlete in the 2017 Forbes list of the highest-paid female athletes. The Tennis player earned around \$27 million between June 2016 and June 2017 as per the released report. The player also attracts revenue from her multitude of endorsements viz. Nike, Intel, Beats by Dre and JPMorgan Chase. Players Angelique Kerber (tennis) with \$12,6 million; Danica Patrick (motor racing) with \$12,2 million; Ronda Rousey (UFC) with \$11 million and Venus Williams (tennis)with \$10,5 million followed her on the list at second, third, fourth and fifth spots respectively.

Junior Shotgun World Cup created bronze for India.

On 21st August Shapath Bharadwaj won bronze medal for India in the double trap event of Junior Shotgun World Cup. The 15-year old from Meerut, shot a 48 to clinch bronze. Briton James Dedman coined gold medal and silver chose to accompany Finland's Miki Ylonen. This was India's first medal in the competition. Besides this Lakshay Sheoran and Manisha Keer also teamed up to claim a bronze in the mixed team trap competition at the ISSF Junior Shotgun World Cup in Porpetto, Italy on 20th August.

Pakistan resumes Hockey after eight long years.

As per 24th August announcements of International Hockey Federation (FIH), Pakistan has qualified for Men's Hockey World Cup 2018. Pakistan was a record World Cup winner in past but the eight year eclipse made it miss the 2014 World Cup in The Hague, the Netherlands, and their dark period spelled non-qualification for the 2016 Rio Olympics. Presently Pakistan holds 14th rank in the FIH Hero world rankings and it grabbed 7th spot in the Hockey World League (HWL) Semi-Final in London. The results of Rabobank EuroHockey Championship in Amsterdam, proclaimed that all four of the semi-finalists of Pakistan have already qualified for the World Cup via the Hockey World League route. The anxious past record holders will appear in the the World Cup which will take place in the east Indian city of Bhubaneswar from November 28th to December 16th.

Messi became the first player to score 350 goals!

Argentine professional footballer, Lionel Andrés "Leo" Messi who plays as a forward for Spanish club FC Barcelona became the first player to score 350 goals in August 26th match between Barcelona and Alaves. In this match Lionel Messi recovered from missing a penalty, to score twice to fetch victory for Barcelona against Alaves by 2-0. 10 minutes after the break, Messi netted his 350th goal. He has played 384 games in the league so far.

Dhyan Chand Award chose to go with brand ambassador for Jharkhand hockey.

On 29th August Former Indian Women's Hockey captain Sumurai Tete became the first woman from Jharkhand to win the prestigious national award, Dhyan Chand Award. Chief Minister Raghubar Das appointed Sumrai Tete as the brand ambassador for Jharkhand hockey. The woman belongs to Simdega which is famous as Jharkhand's hockey nursery. It was under her captaincy India won Commonwealth Games hockey silver at Melbourne in 2006. She was part of the team when Indian women won the gold medal in the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth games.

The 100 stumping feat of Dhoni is echoing in the air!

On 3rd September, Former Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni came on records for becoming the first wicketkeeper in world to reach 100 stumpings in One Day Internationals. He achieved this feat by dismissing Sri Lankan batsman Akila Dananjaya in his 301st ODI in Colombo. The record creator has taken 281 catches apart from scoring 9,657 runs so far. He has also played 90 Tests and 77 T20 Internationals. In 90 Tests, Dhoni has taken 256 catches and did 38 stumpings. In T20 Internationals, he has taken 43 catches and did 23 stumpings.

Martina Hingis, Chan Yung-Jan won US Open women's doubles title.

On 10th September Switzerland's Martina Hingis and Taiwan's Chan Yung-Jan clinched the US Open women's doubles after defeating Lucie Hradecka and Katerina Siniakova by 6-3 6-2. The victory projected Hingis's career grand-slam tally to 25 which includes 5 singles titles, 13 doubles and 7 mixed doubles. This was the maiden grand slam title for Chan.

CURRENT AFFAIRS TESTS

- Which of the following nations got its first animal protection law in August 2017?
(a) Syria (b) Jordan (c) Egypt
(d) Lebanon (e) Saudi Arabia
- _____ author, Mahabaleshwar Sail was honored with the Saraswati Samman for 2016.
(a) Konkani (b) Punjabi (c) Bengali,
(d) Marathi (e) Hindi
- Samurai Tete became the first _____ woman to book the 2017 Dhyan Chand Award on her name in August 2017.
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Jharkhand
(d) Bihar (e) Gujarat
- In August 2017 _____ surgeon, Dr KR Balakrishnan was awarded FICCI Special Jury Award(d)
(a) Brain (b) Cardiac (c) Kidney
(d) Liver (e) Stomach
- Who among the following became Bridgestone India's Brand Ambassador in August 2017?
(a) Saina Nehwal (b) P.V. Sindhu (c) Srikant Kidambi
(d) Jwala Gutta (e) Ashwini Ponnappa
- RK Raghavan became Indian High Commissioner to _____.
(a) Syria (b) Israel (c) Turkey
(d) Iran (e) Cyprus
- ISRO Launched which of the following satellites in August 2017?
(a) IRNSS - 1 B (b) IRNSS - 1 C (c) IRNSS - 1 D
(d) IRNSS - 1 E (e) IRNSS - 1 H
- India signed agreement with which of the following countries for zebu cattle genomics?
(a) Brazil (b) Peru (c) Colombia
(d) Bolivia (e) Argentina
- Which of the following was awarded Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar for its 'Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent' (IDCO) program in August 2017?
(a) Hockey Citizen Group (b) Reliance Foundation (c) Reserve Bank of India
(d) Usha School of Athletics (e) None of the above
- Which of the following nation is about to launch waterproof BlackBerry phone?
(a) Japan (b) America (c) China
(d) Germany (e) Russia

11. Rajiv Kumar took charge as the new _____ of NITI Aayog.
(a) Chairman (b) Managing Director (c) Vice-Chairman
(d) Director (e) Chief Executive Officer
12. Anita Karwal has been appointed as the _____ of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).
(a) Vice- Chairman (b) Chairperson (c) Managing Director
(d) Director (e) Chief Executive Officer
13. Which among the following countries hosted the 2017 International Hindu Conference (IHC)?
(a) Indonesia (b) Bhutan (c) Malaysia
(d) India (e) Nepal
14. The world's highest sandcastle has been built in which among the following countries?
(a) Japan (b) France (c) Germany
(d) South Africa (e) China
15. Kenneth I. Juster has been appointed as the next U.S. ambassador to _____.
(a) Germany (b) Russia (c) Brazil
(d) India (e) Japan
16. Which among the following state governments has launched an online Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS)?
(a) Rajasthan (b) Punjab (c) Goa
(d) Manipur (e) Assam
17. India and _____ have inked agreements for the technical cooperation in the field of Railways.
(a) Malaysia (b) Switzerland (c) Nepal
(d) Bhutan (e) Japan
18. J.Y. Pillay has been appointed as the acting President of _____.
(a) Malaysia (b) Myanmar (c) Indonesia
(d) Singapore (e) Japan
19. Who has been appointed as the new Railway Minister?
(a) Hardeep Puri (b) Nirmala Sitharaman (c) Dharmendra Pradhan
(d) Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (e) Piyush Goyal
20. Who has been appointed as the new Defence Minister of India?
(a) Dharmendra Pradhan (b) Nirmala Sitharaman (c) Virendra Kumar
(d) Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi (e) Ashwini Kumar Choubey

ANSWERS

- 1.(d) **Lebanon** translated its first animal welfare bill into law for protection of domestic and wild animals. It has strict rules in context to domestic pets, owning wild or endangered animals, zoos, pet shops.
- 2.(a) **Konkani** author Mahabaleshwar Sail was honored with the Saraswati Samman for 2016 for award winning work “Hawthan” that describes the lives of the potter community in Goa.
- 3.(c) Samuraj Tete became the first **Jharkhand** woman to book the 2017 Dhyani Chand Award on her name in August 2017. She is the former captain of Indian Women’s Hockey team under whom India won silver medal in 2006 Commonwealth Games of Melbourne.
- 4.(b) In August 2017 **cardiac** surgeon, Dr KR Balakrishnan was awarded FICCI Special Jury Award for his contribution in Healthcare
- 5.(b) **P.V. Sindhu** became Bridgestone India's Brand Ambassador in August 2017. Bridgestone India is a Worldwide Olympic Partner as well as a subsidiary of the world’s largest tyre and rubber company.
- 6.(e) RK Raghavan became Indian High Commissioner to **Cyprus**. He was CBI director from January 1999 to April 2001.
- 7.(e) ISRO Launched Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System **IRNSS - 1H** via PSLV-C39 in August 2017.
- 8.(a) India signed agreement with **Brazil** for cooperation in the fields of zebu cattle genomics and Assisted Reproductive Technologies.
- 9.(b) **The Reliance Foundation** was awarded Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar for its ‘Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent’ (IDCO) program in August 2017.
- 10.(c) China’s TCL Corporation will launch waterproof BlackBerry phone in October 2017.
- 11.(c) Rajiv Kumar took charge as the new **Vice-Chairman** of NITI Aayog. He replaced Arvind Panagariya. He was also a member of the National Security Advisory Board between 2006 and 2008.
- 12.(b) Anita Karwal, a Gujarat-cadre IAS officer, has been appointed as the **Chairperson** of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). She replaced Rajesh Kumar Chaturvedi. Currently, she is the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD).
- 13.(e) The three-day International Hindu Conference (IHC) was started in Kathmandu, **Nepal** with the theme of ‘Emerging spiritualism: Renaissance of Hinduism’ on August 31, 2017. The main aim of the conference is to make Kathmandu the global capital of Hinduism.
- 14.(c) The world’s highest sandcastle 54.72 feet (16.68 metres) tall has recently been built in the Duisburg of **Germany**. A German travel operator organized the construction of the mammoth sandcastle, bringing in 3,500 tons of sand over the past three and a half weeks to the site at a former steelworks in the inland city. It takes the title from a 14.84-metre sandcastle built early this year in India by sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik.

- 15.(d)** Kenneth I. Juster, deputy director of the National Economic Council at the White House has been appointed as the next U.S. ambassador to **India**.
- 16.(c)** **Goa** government has launched an online Public Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) at the state secretariat. It is a single window online portal for citizens to register grievances towards any state government department.
- 17.(b)** India and **Switzerland** have inked two agreements for technical cooperation in the field of Railways. The main aim of this agreements is to cooperate in the areas of traction rolling stock, EMU and Train sets, traction propulsion equipments, freight and passenger cars, etc.
- 18.(d)** J.Y. Pillay, Indian-origin veteran civil servant has been appointed as the acting President of **Singapore**. He replaces Tony Tan Keng Yam.
- 19.(e)** **Piyush Goyal** has been appointed as the new Railway Minister of India. He succeeded Suresh Prabhu, who has become the new Union Minister of Commerce and Industry. He resigned from the post after a series of train accidents in August 2017.
- 20.(b)** **Nirmala Sitharaman** has been appointed as the new Defence Minister of India. Prior to this, she was handling the portfolio of Minister of State for Commerce. She is the second woman to hold the post since former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.