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Monthly GK Mania

NATIONAL NEWS

Chhattisgarh hosted country's first Tribal Entrepreneurship Summit.

On 14th November India's 1st Tribal Entrepreneurship Summit started in Dantewada district in the Bastar region of Chhattisgarh. NITI Aayog in partnership with the government of United States of America organized this event. It is a part of 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit being held in India. It is meant to provide a platform for the tribal youth and address the issues faced by the tribal community in practical and progressive ways. Under tribal-centric sustainable and inclusive development, the summit will promote the spirit of entrepreneurship among tribal youth.

India's first-ever 'Air Dispensary' will fly in Northeastern sky.

On 12th November the Union Ministry of Development of Northeast (DoNER) announced establishment of the nation's first-ever helicopter based 'Air Dispensary' after discussion with Aviation Sector and helicopter service/Pawan Hans. The Union Ministry of Development of Northeast (DoNER) has already granted Rs 25 crore as part of the initial funding for this project. The helicopter will be based at Imphal in Manipur and Shillong in Meghalaya. Three twin-engine helicopters well equipped with essential equipments and paramedical staff will be employed for this purpose on six routes of chosen locations. If the project meets success then it will encompass other hill states which have difficult terrains like Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh

West Bengal won the Rosgulla strife.

On 14th November Chennai-based Registry tagged 'Rosgulla' with Geographical Indications (GI) of West Bengal and with that the long bitter battle between West Bengal and Odisha saw an end. So now it has been confirmed that one of India's signature sweets, 'Rosgulla' has its origin in West Bengal and not in Odisha. It is worth recalling here that the GI registration of the sweet has been an apple of discord between Bengal and Odisha since 2015. It is believed that Naveen Chandra Das, the famous sweets maker of Bengal, invented Rosgulla before the year 1868 while Odisha had claimed that 600 years ago they had Rosgulla as Lord Jagannath's bhog Kheer Mohan.

Union Government put forth National Power Portal.

On 14th November Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy, RK Singh, launched the National Power Portal (NPP) <http://npp.gov.in>. for dissemination of power sector information. Ministry of Power (MoP), Central Electricity Authority (CEA), PFC for Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), REC for Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY), other power sector utilities in government as well as private sector and other government organizations are stakeholders of NPP. This NPP is meant to facilitate online data capture and input from generation, transmission and distribution utilities. Apart from this the NPP Dashboard will also act as the single point interface for all previously launched power sector Apps viz. TARANG, UJALA, VIDYUT PRAVAH, GARV, URJA, MERIT.

RBI Governor entered BIS.

On 15th November RBI Governor Urjit Patel got appointed in the Financial Stability Institute Advisory Board. It is a board of Bank of International Settlement (BIS). Bank for International Settlements is an international financial organisation of 60 member central banks across the globe. The Financial Stability Institute (FSI) of the BIS helps financial sector authorities of world in empowering their financial systems. FSI has recently implemented a new strategy for closer interaction with central banks and financial supervisory agencies.

Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces 2017.

On 14th November the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba released 'Joint Training Doctrine Indian Armed Forces 2017'. This doctrine is a sort of foundation and knowledge base from which Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee will issue specific directives and strategies to the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) and Service HQs. The Doctrine aims at promotion of synergy and integration via joint training at macro-level, fundamentals, objectives, joint structures, planning etc. amongst Army, Navy and Airforce for enhanced efficiency and optimum utilisation of resources.

National Child Awards 2017 chirped in New Delhi.

On 14th November President Ram Nath Kovind bestowed National Child Awards for acknowledging exceptional abilities and outstanding achievements in the fields of innovation, scholastic achievements, sports, arts, culture, social service and music at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. 16 children became recipients of these awards and among them one child received a gold medal plus cash prize of Rs 20000 and a certificate/citation while 15 children received silver medal along with cash prize of Rs 10000 and a certificate/citation. Besides this, the awardees were also given a book voucher worth Rs 10,000 (gold medalist) and Rs 3,000 (silver medalist). The list of awardees includes Master Akash Manoj of Tamil Nadu who got gold medal for Innovation and 15 silver medalist were Master Shahil Dey of Assam for Sports (Chess); Master Shresth Agrawal of Chattisgarh for Innovation; Master Nishant Abhangi of Gujarat for Academics; Master Jaysheel Buddhadeo of Haryana for Music; Kumari Zaira Wasim of Jammu and Kashmir for Art; Kumari Nikhiya Shamsher of Karnataka for Social Service; Master Swasthik Padma of Karnataka for Innovation; Master Floyd Emmanuel Libera of Kerala for Music; Master Rishabh Garg of Madhya Pradesh for Innovation; Master Jaisal Shah of Maharashtra for Sports (Chess); Kumari Labdhi Surana of Rajasthan for Sports (Roller Skating); Master Krishna Pandit of Uttar Pradesh for Innovation; Kumari Saniya Subash of Andaman and Nicobar Island for Sports (Martial Art); Master Aryan Chopra of Delhi for Sports (Chess) and Kumari Kashish of Delhi for Theatre.

Plastic water bottles got bottled offstage at offices of Maharashtra.

On 16th November Government of Maharashtra banned the use of plastic water bottles in its offices including the state secretariat. Maharashtra Environment Minister Ramdas Kadam aired instructions to the officials in a time-bound manner. The instruction will get implemented from Gudhi Padva this year. The state will give thrust to use of paper and cloth bags made by women self help groups. The local body authority has also been authorised to take action against those who will use plastic.

December 2018 will ensure bio-toilet installation in Indian Railways.

According to information conveyed by Ravindra Gupta, a member of Railways Ministry at an event organised in Bonn, Germany on 15th November, the target of installing bio-toilets in all the coaches of Indian Railways has been extended to December 2018. The shared information underlines Indian Railways' efforts towards a low-carbon pathway and overall sustainable mobility initiatives in the Indian transport sector. The ministry in action is further planning to tap renewable sources to track the net de-carbonisation. It is worth knowing here that 19th November is celebrated worldwide as 'World Toilet Day' and its theme for this year will be 'Wastewater'.

Paytm dated ICICI Bank for short term instant digital credit.

On 17th November Digital payments major Paytm collaborated with ICICI Bank to jointly launch 'Paytm-ICICI Bank Postpaid' for flawless access of interest-free short-term digital credit. Now millions of Paytm customers will get access to instant credit for the first time for everyday use-cases- viz. Flights, movies,

physical goods, bill payments etc. Paytm-ICICI Bank Postpaid is a digital credit account with instant activation with no transaction, joining or hidden administration fees. It is based on a new Big Data based algorithm by ICICI Bank for real-time credit assessment of customers. Based on the credit-score of the customer, the bank will provide upto 45 days interest-free credit limit which ranges from Rs. 3,000 to Rs 10,000, extendable upto Rs. 20,000 based on the repayment history.

INS Sarvekshak & Tanzanian Navy joined hands for Joint Hydrographic Survey.

On 15th November INS Sarvekshak, a hydrographic survey ship of Southern Naval Command reached Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on 15th November for conducting Joint Hydrographic Survey along with the Tanzanian Navy. This survey is on purpose of boosting bilateral relations among friendly foreign nations and navies of the Indian ocean region. The ship will do pioneer survey of Pemba Island which will include detailed surveys of Port of Weshu and Kiuyo and Pemba Channel in Tanzania and then it will proceed to Port Louis in Mauritius for survey of Grand Port.

India celebrated Indira Gandhi centenary on 19th November.

The Iron Lady of India, Indira Gandhi was born on 19th November, 1917. She served as Prime Minister of India from January 1966 to March 1977 and from January 14th, 1980 till her death in 1984 and with that she became the second longest-serving Prime Minister after her father Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Her controversial decision of declaration of emergency in India and her leadership during the 1971 war with Pakistan brought her in limelight. The Iron Lady had strong and assertive command over the government. She firmly shielded India from international pressure especially from USA and US president Richard Nixon condemned her for that but she remained unperturbed. On occasion of her centenary celebration former PM Manmohan Singh and Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi paid her rich tributes at 'Shakti sthal' and Indira Gandhi Memorial trust organised photographic exhibition on her extraordinary life at 1, Safdarjung road, her erstwhile residence in New Delhi which is now home to the Indira Gandhi Memorial Museum. Even the Russian government also paid tribute to the Iron lady by issuing commemorative postal stamp on her name.

Anand Rajeshwar Baiwar: The New SEBI Executive Director.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has chosen Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the 1990 batch, Anand Rajeshwar Baiwar as its new executive director in November. The appointee has earned graduate degree in engineering as well as law. He has done Post Graduate Diploma in Management from IIM, Bangalore. He is a chartered financial analyst from ICFAI, Hyderabad and was an income tax commissioner in Kolkata in past. On this post he will keep an eye over the investigation department and division of foreign portfolio investors and custodians.

IIT Kharagpur alumnus peeped from 2017 World's Top 50 Thinkers window.

In November 2017 global ranking of management thinkers, 'Thinkers50' ranked IIT Kharagpur alumnus, Subir Chowdhury among world's top 50 thinkers for year 2017. Subir Chowdhury is a leading quality expert who authored nationally and internationally acclaimed best sellers like 'Six Sigma philosophy' and 'The Difference: When Good Enough Isn't Enough (Crown Business, 2017)'. He has also founded the Subir Chowdhury School of Quality and Reliability at IIT Kharagpur which is the first of its kind in Asia, for all IIT students who wish academic training in the concepts of quality assurance. Besides these, he has also introduced an app to propagate the thought "Quality is Everyone's Business" which promotes understanding of how quality creates impact on all levels of business function and public policy. Presently the quality guru is enjoying chairmanship and CEO post of ASI Consulting Group, LLC.

Nabaneeta Dev Sen bagged Big Little Book Award.

On 19th November Popular Bengali writer Nabaneeta Dev Sen was chosen for Big Little Book Award in 'Author in Bengali language' category. This was the second edition of Big Little Book Award which acknowledges authors and illustrators who have contributed to children's literature that carry global appeal and are contextual in nature. This is Parag initiative of Tata Trusts to encourage children's literature. Thikana, Sabda Pare Tapurtupur, Urala, Naba-Nita are some of the renowned works of author Nabaneeta who has encompassed wide range of human emotions in her compositions since last 30 years. Besides her, Proiti Roy received the honour in the illustrator category for her fairy tale books.

Manik Banerjee scripted IMF award in his name.

Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) bestowed 'Lifetime Achievement Award' to Veteran journalist Manik Banerjee for his achievements in mountaineering over a period of 40 years. The awardee is an acclaimed mountaineer who made significant contribution in promotion of mountaineering and allied adventure activities in several media besides his service in spreading the spirit of adventure activities among the under privileged. He is former sports journalist.

Justice Bhagwati Prasad signed off the court of life.

On 19th November former chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court Bhagwati Prasad died at the age of 68 years. The brief illness of low blood pressure complication became reason for his departure. The deceased was the chairperson of the Gujarat State Human Rights Commission (GSHRC) and had been the judge in the Rajasthan and Gujarat high courts. He belonged to Hanumangarh, Rajasthan. He got appointed as a judge of the Rajasthan High Court in year 1996 and joined Gujarat High Court on February 7th, 2008, before witnessing elevation as the chief justice of the Jharkhand High Court on August 22, 2010.

Prof. Quarraisha Abdool Karim appointed as a UNAIDS Ambassador.

On 21st November, acclaimed South African Indian-origin Professor Quarraisha Abdool Karim has been appointed as the UNAIDS Special Ambassador for Adolescents and HIV. She is one of the world's leading AIDS researchers who made pioneering contributions in understanding the HIV epidemic among youth especially young women. As a UNAIDS special ambassador, She will focus on adolescents and HIV along with engaging young women in science. She is also a member of the UNAIDS Scientific Expert Panel and Scientific Adviser to the Executive Director of UNAIDS. Last month, Abdool Karim and her husband Professor Salim Abdool Karim received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Institute for Human Virology (IHV) in Baltimore, US.

India and Philippines signed an agreement on cooperation in customs matters.

On 22nd November, Union cabinet has approved the signing and ratifying of an agreement between India and Philippines on cooperation and mutual assistance in matters of customs. This agreement will assist in the exchange of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of Custom offences. The agreement is also expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the two nations. The pact will enter into force after the mandatory national legal requirements gets fulfilled by both countries.

Rahul Rawail: New acting Chairperson of IFFI.

On 22nd November, Veteran director Rahul Rawail has been appointed as the acting chairperson of International Film Festival of India (IFFI). He succeeded Sujoy Ghosh. Ghosh stepped down as the jury chief of Indian Panorama section after Malayalam movie S Durga and Marathi film Nude were removed

from the festival. IFFI 2017 has started in Goa from 20th November and the event is likely to get graced by celebrities like Shahid Kapoor, Sridevi etc.

Salary and Pension revised for Supreme Court and High Court judges.

On 22nd November, the Union Cabinet has approved the revision in the salaries, gratuity, allowances, pension of the Judges and retired Judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts. The revision in salaries and allowances will pave the way for necessary amendments in the two laws such as Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1958 and High Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act, 1954. The increase in the salary and allowances will benefit 31 Judges of Supreme Court of India (including the CJI) and 1079 Judges and Chief Justices of High Courts. Near about 2500 retired Judges will also be benefited through the revision of pension and gratuity etc.

The local language walked into compulsory curriculum.

On 22nd November Telangana made Telugu compulsory from first standard to Intermediate from next academic year. CBSE and ICSE schools will follow it religiously. Deputy Chief Minister K. Srihari will see its execution and he has suggested the officials to implement Telugu as an easy, interesting and scoring subject at all levels. Currently 1,370 schools of Telangana are sailing without Telugu as a subject so next academic session will be the best time to introduce the language in curriculum. For this committees will be constituted at State and District level to supervise implementation of Telugu as compulsory subject.

Ira Joshi : Doordarshan News Director General.

On 23rd November the Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB), Ira Joshi has been appointed as the Director General(DG) of Doordarshan News by the information and broadcasting (I&B) ministry. The appointee has succeeded DG Veena Jain who got retired in August 2017. In past she has served as the additional director general at the publications division and Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP). Besides her I&B ministry has also appointed Ghanshyam Goel as the Director General of DAVP. It is worth knowing here that Doordarshan which came into existence on 15th September 1959 was founded by the Government of India, owned by the Broadcasting Ministry of India and is one of two divisions of Prasar Bharati.

Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs Scheme shall stay.

On 23rd November Union Cabinet gave nod to continuation of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) Scheme for upcoming three financial years from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The continuation of scheme foresees stature of National importance for IICA. The training programs, research activities and projects of the Institute will transform it into engine of growth for increased economic activity. Apart from this, the Cabinet has sanctioned Grants-in-aid of Rs 18 crore to the Institute. It is worth knowing that IICA is a repository of data and knowledge that helps in rational decision-making for the policy makers, regulators and other stakeholders serving in areas related to the corporate sector. IICA provides services to stakeholders in the field of corporate laws, corporate governance, CSR, accounting standards, investor education, etc.

Five Indian films has set out for ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal.

In the ongoing International Film Festival of India (IFFI) total nine movies have been nominated for this year's International Council for Film, Television (ICFT) and Audio-visual Communication UNESCO Gandhi Medal. Among them five movies viz. Kshitij - A Horizon, Manusangada, Poorna, Railway Children and Take-Off are from India. The remaining four foreign films are Khibula of Germany, France and Georgia, Amok from Poland, The Last Painting from Taiwan and Women of the Weeping River - a joint production of

the US and UK. The ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal which was instituted in year 1994 will embrace the movie that best reflects Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of peace, tolerance and nonviolence.

Qaumi Ekta Week concluded on 25th November.

The "Qaumi Ekta Week" or National Integration Week was celebrated across India from the 19th November to 25th November, 2017. It reinforced the spirit of Communal Harmony and National Integration. It underlined the significance of inherent strength and resilience of India and reaffirmed the age old traditions and faith in the values like tolerance, co-existence and brotherhood in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society. Each day of this week was celebrated under special titles viz. November 19th was celebrated as National Integration Day; November 20th was observed as Welfare of Minorities Day; November 21st laid Linguistic Harmony Day; November 22nd knocked as Weaker Sections Day; November 23rd cheered as Cultural Unity Day ; November 24th waved as Women's Day and November 25th came as Conservation Day.

Exercise 'DANX-17' rolled on the ground.

In November 2017 Andaman & Nicobar Command exercised 'Defence of Andaman & Nicobar Islands Exercise (DANX-17)'. The five day exercise validated process and drills of all the Command forces that aimed at defending Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Accretional forces from the main land engaged Special Forces, fighters, Naval ships and heavy lift transport aircraft in this exercise. The exercise involved activities like fighter ops, night para jumps at sea, slithering of troops from helicopters and amphibious landings of troops by ships.

Aditya L-1 Mission is on the horizon!

In November 2017 , the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced the launch of its first solar mission Aditya-L1 in year 2019. This will be India's first dedicated mission to study the Photosphere (soft and hard X-ray), Chromosphere (UV) and corona (Visible and NIR) of Sun. For this ISRO will place 1500-kg heavy class Aditya-L1 satellite into halo orbit around Lagrangian point L1, a point between Sun and Earth which is at a distance of about 1.5 million km from earth. The satellite will carry payloads viz. Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), Solar Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT), Aditya Solar wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX), Plasma Analyser Package for Aditya (PAPA), Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS) and High Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HELIOS) for this study.

N Sambasiva Rao: The New DGP of Andhra Pradesh.

Indian Police Service (IPS) Officer of 1984 batch, N Sambasiva Rao got appointed as the Director-General of Police (DGP) of Andhra Pradesh in November 2017. It is worth knowing in this context that Union Home Ministry had rejected his candidature on earlier occasions, as Rao has been holding the DGP's post as "full additional charge" since 23rd July 2016, while his actual position was DGP (Coordination). He will retire on 31st December 2017. However, with this recent appointment, he may work on the post for a full two-year term as per the state law.

Shaktikanta Das became India's G 20 Sherpa.

On 28th November former Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs, Shaktikanta Das got chosen as India's G 20 Sherpa till December 31st, 2018 for the Development Track of the G20. Former Niti Aayog vice-chairman, Arvind Panagariya recommended his name for G 20 Sherpa. Panagariya had also been India's Sherpa for the G20 talks in September 2015. Sherpas are representatives of leaders of G20 member nations who coordinate on the agenda of the summit. It is worth knowing here that the G20 is a central forum for

international cooperation on economic and financial issues. The G20 involves governments and the central bank governors from Australia, Argentina, Brazil, China, Canada, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, and the European Union.

15th Finance Commission took birth!

On 27th November the Union Government under clause (1) of article 280 of the Indian Constitution, constituted the 15th Finance Commission under the chairmanship of former bureaucrat, NK Singh. Former Secretary to Union Government, Shaktikanta Das and Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University, Anoop Singh are its members. Chairman of Bandhan Bank, Ashok Lahiri and Member of NITI Aayog, Ramesh Chand are its part time members and Arvind Mehta is the Secretary to the Commission. The Commission came into existence for making recommendations for five years commencing on 1 April 2020.

Snehlata Shrivastava: First Woman Secretary General of Lok Sabha.

Lok Sabha appointed Snehlata Shrivastava as the first woman secretary general of the Lok Sabha. She will succeed Anup Mishra from 1st December 2017 till 30th November, 2018. She has worked in capacity of joint secretary in the law ministry and has served in the finance ministry as well. Besides her, another lady Rama Devi enjoys the privilege of being the first woman secretary general of the Rajya Sabha.

IIM-Shillong magnetized ‘Steel-a-thon 2017’.

On 27th November Indian Institute of Management, Shillong (IIMS) won the annual business challenge competition, ‘Steel-a-thon 2017’ organized by Tata Steel in Kolkata. The champions received cash prize of Rs 2,50,000, a trophy and a certificate. IIM Indore emerged as first runner-up and JBIMS Mumbai and SIBM Pune jointly clinched second runners up position. The first and the second runners-up teams got cash prizes of Rs 1,50,000 and Rs. 1,00,000, respectively along with certificates. This was the 4th edition of this event that witnessed more than 1,600 teams from 16 B-schools that presented their business case solutions related to corporate and digital strategy, human resource management, marketing and sales, supply chain and logistics in front of a jury comprising senior management of Tata Steel headed by Peeyush Gupta, vice-president (steel marketing and sales). Gupta addressed the occasion saying, “Steel-a-thon provides students with a unique opportunity to work on real-life business problems over a three-month period while pursuing studies.” The platform encourages out-of-the-box thinking and plays a key role in a student’s professional life.

The Lady Barrister will grace Supreme Court’s library.

On 30th November the Apex Court decided to place a coloured portrait of woman lawyer, Kapila Hingorani in one of its libraries for the first time in its 67-year history. With this she has become the first female lawyer to sparkle among images of male judicial luminaries viz. MC Setalvad, C. K. Daphtary and RK Jain in the court’s second library. She was the first Indian woman to graduate from Cardiff Law School in Britain and was the first lawyer to file a public interest litigation (PIL) in the top court in 1979. Known with the name of ‘Mother of PIL’, she made a remarkable career in 6 long decades. She died in 2013 at the age of 86 years.

India-UK Joint Military Exercise, ‘Ajeya Warrior’.

The third joint military training exercise between India and UK began on 1st December and it will continue upto 14th December at the Mahajan Field Firing Range in Rajasthan. 120 personnel from the 20th Battalion of Rajputana Rifles which is expert in counter-terrorism operations and the 1st Battalion of Royal Anglian Regiment of the Royal British Army that has been into combat operations across Afghanistan and Iraq, are

participants of this exercise to build and encourage bilateral relations and enhance interoperability via sharing experiences. The first exercise between the two nations took place in 2013 at Belgaum, Karnataka and the second exercise in 2015 when Indian Army contingent paid visit to the United Kingdom.

Nagaland cheered its 54th birthday.

1st December 2017 came as the 54th Statehood day of Nagaland. This day coincided with the beginning of 10 day long 18th Hornbill festival of this state which will keep Naga Heritage Village of Kisama vibrant with festive mood. The pageantry of 10 days of this Hornbill fest will be the perfect showcase of rich Naga culture and traditions, preserved over the years in the form of music, dance and food. This so called 'Festival of Festivals', Hornbill festival has been christened after the Indian hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes. The festival will have wide range of attractions viz. traditional Naga Morungs exhibition and the sale of arts and crafts, herbal medicine stalls, flower shows and sales, food stalls, cultural medley like songs and dances, fashion shows, the Miss Nagaland beauty contest, traditional archery, Naga wrestling, native games, and musical concert.

Former CJI Justice Adarsh Sein signed off Court of Life.

On 1st December, former Chief Justice of India, Justice Adarsh Sein Anand took his last breath. He was the 29th Chief Justice of India who had served from October 1998 to October 2001. He also worked in capacity of Chairman of National Human Rights Commission from February 2003 to April 2007. The deceased was well known for his judgments concerning public interest. He had set example while serving as the chairman of National Legal Services Authority. He had taken effective steps to establish Lok Adalats in every district of India.

Salil S Parekh: New CEO & MD of Infosys.

On 2nd December, Salil S Parekh has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Infosys. Parekh, who will take over on 2nd January 2018 for a period of five years, was a member of the Group Executive Board at French firm Capgemini. He will succeed U B Pravin Rao, who took over as the Infosys's interim CEO and managing director in August 2017.

46th Navy Day observed all over the India.

46th Indian Navy Day was celebrated on 4th December 2017. The day is observed every year to celebrate the achievements and role of the naval force in the country. To celebrate this day, 20 innovations were shortlisted for central evaluation. These innovations range from innovative repairs to complex system modules to development of new techniques to save money, time and manpower. Innovations by Indian Naval Ships 'Kuthar' and 'Vikramaditya' were selected as the winner and runner-up respectively in the 'Operational Units' category. While, innovations by the Weapons Electronic Systems Engineering Establishment and Naval Aircraft Yard, Kochi were selected as the winner and runner-up respectively in the 'Shore Establishments' category.

World's first IT campus for differently-abled appeared in Telangana.

On 2nd December the state government of Telangana 2017 inked an agreement with Vindhya E-Infomedia Private Limited to establish the world's first Information and Technology (IT) campus for differently-abled persons in Hyderabad. The campus under conception will generate employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. It will be well equipped with all the facilities including Training, Residential facility and Delivery centres that will cater needs of both domestic and international clients. This campus will give

differently-abled people a much-deserved opportunity of living life with dignity and self-respect. It is good to learn that Vindhya E-Infomedia Private Limited is a pioneer in creating an inclusive workplace for differently-abled people.

New Record cheered on Virat Kohli's name!

On 3rd December the Indian skipper, Virat Kohli achieved a new milestone by scoring his sixth double century, the highest as a captain. With this, he surpassed West Indies great Brian Lara, who held this record previously with five double tons in Tests. The accomplishment came just a day after becoming the first captain to register a hat-trick of centuries in a three-match series. With a sixth double hundred, Kohli has also tied Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag for the most 200-plus scores for India in Tests. It is worth recalling here that Tendulkar had six double centuries, Sehwag had scored four double and two triple hundreds.

Assam gave way to the 6th International Tourism Mart 2017.

On 5th December Governor of Assam, Jagdish Mukhi inaugurated the 6th International Tourism Mart 2017 in Guwahati, Assam. Ministry of Tourism in association with the North Eastern States organized this mart which started from 5th December and will continue till 7th December. Assam Chief Minister, Sarbanand Sonowal and Union Tourism minister (I/C) K J Alphons attended the inaugural ceremony along with other dignitaries from the Central Ministries and the North Eastern States. The aim of this ongoing mart is to underline India's 'Act East Policy', blossoming ties with ASEAN and the larger East Asia region, which accommodates world's rapidly growing economies and India's emerging tourism markets. The event is witnessing participation of 66 foreign delegates including stakeholders and media persons from 29 nations across the globe and 50 domestic stakeholders in Tourism sector and 103 sellers from north eastern states.

6th December : Death anniversary of Father of Indian Constitution.

India paid tribute to Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar who died on 6th December 1956. Every year, this day is observed as Mahaparinirvan Diwas. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment organized events at Babasaheb's Statue at Parliament House Lawns in New Delhi. It is worth remembering that it was Dr Ambedkar who rendered social vision, economic vision, constitutional vision to the nation and determined the fundamental values for running Indian society and nation. Dr Ambedkar was cremated in Chaitya Bhoomi.

AICTE sketched broad curve on technical aspirants' profile.

According to news captured by Hindustan Times, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) made publication of complete list of fees mandatory on websites of Technical institutes plus it has also strictly prohibited them from charging students for any other costs aside from those that are fixed by the state/fee regulatory committee. The institutes found guilty of violating the norms will have to pay a fine that will have the amount being twice the total fee collected per student. The excess amount collected will also have to be refunded to the student. In addition to this, the sanctioned intake of the institute will also be cut down. The institute can also lose its permit to operate along with its approval for the programme or course. Besides these, the AICTE will also suspend approval for NRI and supernumerary seats given to such institution for one academic year. Also, according to the new rules, no institute will be able to name itself a way that the abbreviated form of the name matches the country's premier institutes like IIM, IIT, IISc, NIT or government bodies such as AICTE, UGC, MHRD, GoI etc.

Musician Adithyan went on mute mode.

Noted South Indian music director, Adithyan, who died of kidney problem in Hyderabad met his last rites on 7th December. The deceased musician was known for his numbers in films like super hit gangster flick Amaran, besides Seevalaperi Pandi, in the early 90s. He has scored music for several Telugu and Malayalam movies and besides these, he also hosted a culinary show in a popular Tamil TV channel.

Cut-off marks won't see the barber in later stages!

In December 2017 Allahabad High Court in one of its verdicts on recruitment process prohibited further cutting of cut-off marks for reserved category in later stages of recruitment process for filling the unfilled vacancies. The court has dismissed a petition filed by Bhuvnesh Pachauri, who belonged the "Dependents of Freedom Fighters" (General) category. He had applied for the post of junior engineer (Civil) in response to 469 vacancies advertised on 3rd October 2013 by Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam. He took the written test, participated in recruitment process and later challenged select list and requested further lowering of cut-off marks for reserved category for filling vacant posts.

Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) welcomed India.

On 8th December India became 42nd member of elite multilateral export control regime 'Wassenaar Arrangement'. This most coveted membership will pave way for India in the NSG. Though India is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), yet the WA membership would enhance India's credentials in the field of non-proliferation and will help it in acquisition of critical technologies. It is worth knowing that after its civil nuclear deal with the US, India has been trying to get into export control regimes like NSG, MTCR, Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement that regulate the conventional, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and technologies. The Wassenaar Arrangement plays a key role in encouraging transparency and greater responsibility in transfer of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies. For this, its member nations need to ensure that transfer of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine these goals. It aims to prevent acquisition of these items by terrorists.

Demise of Veteran journalist Batuk Gathani.

On 10th December veteran journalist and foreign correspondent for Indian and international news organisations, Bhupendra Bachulal Gathani died at the age of 82. The deceased served 'The Hindu' and 'Frontline' from Europe for many years had also worked in capacity of president of the Indian Journalists Association for several years. He mainly covered issues concerning India's relations with the European Union from Brussels and numerous defining events in Africa and Europe.

New dates for 8000 Patwari aspirants.

The Professional Examination Board (PEB) of Madhya Pradesh, Vyapam will conduct a fresh examination for over 8,000 aspirants who missed the online test held for the post of Patwari on December 9th due to a technical issue. The information regarding new dates, exam centres will be put out on PEB website. It is worth knowing that around 10,20,000 candidates are appearing for this tests to fill 9500 posts of Patwaris in Madhya Pradesh.

Compact launcher is under turbulence in ISRO's pipeline.

In December 2017 Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced the development of a compact launcher for small satellites. The launcher in making will be capable of placing 500-600 kg satellites in orbits close to the Earth. ISRO's rocket development node, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre has conceived this project and it is being nourished with rocket technology. Its low advanced electronics requirement is shaping

it into cost effective launcher which would tremendously cut the launch fee that customers would have to pay in future. It is worth learning here that it involves more than 300 engineers and about 40 days to assemble a PSLV and in its comparison this small launcher will be all set in space of just three days by a small team that would make a huge difference in the market.

21 medals in the 10th Asian Championship for India!

On 11th December India added four more medals to their kitty on the final day of the 10th Asian Championship to finish with a total haul of 21 medals over four days, which includes six gold, eight silver and seven bronze. Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker booked berths in 2018 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) by winning a gold and a silver each in 10m Rifle/Pistol at Wako City of Japan. Chaudhary conquered both the individual as well as the Team gold in the men's 10m Air Pistol Youth event, while Bhaker coined a silver in the women's 10m Air Pistol Youth.

Rahul Gandhi, the new Congress president.....

On 11th December Rahul Gandhi got elected as President of Congress Party. He will take charge on 16th December. The 47-year-old leader will take over the reins of the party from his mother and current president, Sonia Gandhi, who held the position for 19 long years. According to the All India Congress Committee's returning officer for the election, Mullappally Ramachandran, there were 89 nominations for this post and among them Rahul was chosen unopposed. Before this, Rahul was serving as party's vice-president since January 2013.

The Race of 'Institutes of Eminence' is on.

In December 2017 Human Resources Development ministry green flagged the race of 'Institutes of Eminence'. The government's year 2016 plan of creating 20 world class universities in India which will include 10 each from the private and public space had kick started this race. So far the HRD ministry had received numerous applications from several best-known Indian universities and colleges viz. Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jadavpur University, Goa University, Mangalore University and many more. The IITs of Madras, Delhi, Bombay, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Guwahati and Roorkee are also there in this race. From the private sector, OP Jindal Global University, Ashoka University, Manipal University and Amity University have also applied for status of eminence. It is a point to get noted that the chosen private institutes will not be eligible for government funding once they receive the coveted tag. The UGC has already notified the UGC (Institutions of Eminence Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2017, for private institutions and UGC (Declaration of Government Educational Institutions as Institutions of Eminence) Guidelines, 2017, for public ones. The final 20 institutes with the status of eminence will be entitled to greater autonomy to start new courses, set fees, admit foreign students, hire foreign faculty, and collaborate with foreign educational institutions without waiting for government's approval.

14th December 2017 is knocking as 27th National Energy Conservation Day.

On 14th December 27th National Energy Conservation Day will be celebrated in New Delhi in which Hon'ble President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, will preside as the Chief Guest. On this occasion the President will confer National Energy Conservation Awards upon industries that have demonstrated measurable reductions in their energy use as part of the National Energy Conservation Awards Programme and National Painting Competition Prizes to children, between 4th and 9th standards, in benign presence of Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Raj Kumar Singh. Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power, will organize this event. BEE helps in developing policies and strategies to reduce the energy demands by promoting widespread adoption of energy efficiency measures.

Government has fixed the glitter of sovereign Gold bond rate.

In December 2017 Government of India has fixed Rs 2,890 per gram as the price of new series of sovereign gold bonds. After consulting the Reserve Bank, it has decided to offer a discount of Rs 50 per gram to investors applying online and making payments digitally. The Bonds will soon get issued after the prescribed subscription period. Under this scheme, the bonds are denominated in units of one gram of gold and multiples thereof. Minimum investment in the bonds is one gram, with a maximum limit of 500 grams per person, per financial year . It is worth recalling here that earlier, government had floated Series III of Sovereign Gold Bonds 2017-18, for the period from 9th October 2017 to 27th December 2017 with subscription period Monday to Wednesday every week.

Submarine Kalvari made its way in Indian Navy.

After 120 days of extensive sea trials and tests, the first of the six Scorpene-class submarines, INS Kalvari eventually came in Indian Navy on 14th December. Shipbuilder Mazagon Dock Limited handed over this submarine to Indian Navy. It is well equipped with superior stealth features like advanced acoustic silencing techniques, low radiated noise levels, hydro-dynamically optimised shape and the ability to launch a crippling attack on the enemy using precision guided weapons. The prime minister unveiled its plaque at the commissioning ceremony in presence of Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba, Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, Flag Officer Commanding of the Western Naval Command, and top defence officials.

DCI & NHAI inked MoU to facilitate supply of sand.

On 12th December the Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to enable the availability of sand for highway construction work. Under this agreement the business intermediaries will ship and store the sand at various ports in India and market it across the nation and the NHAI will facilitate the whole process by displaying the availability of sand at various stockyards at the ports. The Dredging Corporation of India will conduct dredging operations at different locations in South East Asia, generating large volumes of sand.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China rowed World's First All-Electric Ship.

On 14th November World's First All-Electric Ship floated in Guangzhou in South China's Guangdong Province. It is 600 tonnes heavy 70.5-metre-long ship that does not require fossil fuel for its operation. Equipped with 26-tonne lithium battery, it has the potential of travelling 80 km with 2000-tonnes cargo after a two-hour charge. It has been built by Guangzhou Shipyard International Company Ltd. It can acquire maximum speed of 12.8 km per hour.

700 billion dollars defense policy bill won US House's approval.

On 14th November US House of Representatives approved 700 billion dollars defense policy bill. The Republican-controlled House voted 356-70 for the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). This Act authorizes the level of defense expenditure and determines defense policies. It is worth knowing that the 2018 NDAA authorizes 634 billion dollars in base defense spending like purchase of weapons and paying the troops. Besides this, NDAA also has provisions of increasing troop levels by more than 16,000. The defense policy bill will achieve status of law if it gets autograph of president Trump.

48th International Film Festival of India looked for Sujoy Ghosh.

On 14th November Filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh resigned from post of Jury Head of the Indian Panorama of the 48th International Film Festival of India (IIFI). His resignation popped when two films "Sexy Durga" and "Nude" were excluded from the final list of films. Instead of Nude, the Hindi movie Pihu by Vinod Kapri was finalised as the opening film of the festival. Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting also prohibited the entry of these two films in the final list. Malayalam film 'Sexy Durga' is about the reality of a misogynistic society and it captures many encounters of a couple running away in the night and 'Nude' is a Marathi movie of National Award winning director Ravi Jadhav which explores the life and conflicts of a nude model at an art school.

Will H-1B visa holders ever smile under Trump's administration ???

On 15th November Congressional committee voted to increase minimum salary of H-1B visa holders. The House Judiciary Committee of USA approved Protect and Grow American Jobs Act (HR 170) for increasing salary of H-1B visa holders from 60 thousand to 90 thousand US Dollars. The bad part of the news is that it spells some new restrictions on the work visa which is bound to affect IT professionals from India. The bill stops H-1B dependent employers from replacing American workers with H-1B employees. It has also lengthened the no-layoff policy for H-1B dependent employers and their client companies for as long an H-1B employee works at the company, which implies they cannot layoff equivalent US workers. However, the H-1B dependent employers will be exempted from the requirement of recruiting US workers first.

16 November: The International Day for Tolerance.

Globe celebrated International Day for Tolerance with an aim to discourage negative perceptions and attitudes towards refugees and migrants and to strengthen the social contract among host nations and communities and refugees and migrants. The day also reinforces United Nations' commitment to strengthen tolerance in the world by fostering mutual understanding among various cultures and people. In this context UN has also launched a new campaign called 'Together' to encourage tolerance, respect and dignity across the world.

16th November : World Philosophy Day 2017.

Third Thursday of November got celebrated worldwide as World Philosophy Day with an aim to create public awareness about significance of philosophy and its critical use in addressing global issues. UNESCO instituted the day in year 2005 to highlight the importance of philosophy teaching for future generations. Further, the day encourages academic exchange of philosophical analysis, research and studies on major contemporary issues to respond more effectively to the uprising challenges.

Miss International 2017 crown increased Indonesian beauty's beauty.

21-year-old Indonesia's Kevin Lilliana lured crown of Miss International 2017 in third week of November at Tokyo Dome City Hall. There were 68 contestants for this pageant. Kevin succeeded Kylie Verzosa of the Philippines who wore this crown in year 2016. The new Miss International will now work for promotion of world peace and cultural exchanges. Chanelle Wilhelmina Maria of Curacao was adjudged as First runner-up and Diana Macarena Croce Garcia of Venezuela became Second runner-up in the contest.

Leonardo Da Vinci's Christ painting got wooed in record USD 450 million.

On 15th November Christie's auction house sold Italian Renaissance painter Leonardo da Vinci's painting of Christ for a record USD 450 million in an auction. This sale has broken all the previous records of artworks sold or auctioned so far. This 26-inch-tall painting displays Christ dressed in Renaissance-style robes, his right hand is raised in blessing and his left hand holds a crystal sphere. This painting is also popularly known as 'Salvator Mundi' or 'Savior of the World'. Before this it was Pablo Picasso's painting 'Women of Algiers (Version O)' that attracted highest amount worth USD 179.4 million in May 2015. In this reference it is worth knowing that the highest known selling price for any artwork was USD 300 million for Willem de Kooning's painting 'Interchange'.

Drug with sensor eventually proved sense to US senses.

The United States of America green flagged the First Pill with Digital Tracking Device, 'Abilify MyCite' for ailments like schizophrenia, acute treatment of manic, bipolar disorders and depression in adults. Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd of Japan developed this drug and won approval of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) long back in 2002 and then Proteus Digital of California, made the ingestible sensor which got approved for marketing in 2012. Now FDA has approved this green-lighting new medication as the first drug in the United States with a digital ingestion tracking system to ensure the intake of this prescribed medicine by patients struggling with mental illness. The drug comes with a wearable patch. Proteus Ingestible sensor when reaches stomach gets activated and communicates with the patch then the wearable patch transmits the information to a mobile application so that patients, their family members and physicians track the ingestion of the medication on their smartphones.

Moody elevated India's mood.

In November 2017 the US credit rating agency Moody upgraded India's sovereign rating from lowest investment grade of Baa3 to Baa2. India witnessed this upgradation after 14 long years on account of its wide-ranging programme of economic and institutional reforms. The implemented reforms have strengthened the government's purpose of upgrading the business climate, stimulating foreign and domestic investment, enhancing productivity, and ultimately fostering strong and sustainable growth. As per Moody India's initiatives to support SMEs and exporters will raise GDP growth to 7.5% in 2018 and although the high Indian debt burden remains a constraint on the country's credit profile yet its longer-term growth potential is remarkably higher than most other Baa-rated sovereign economies.

20th November came as Universal Children's Day.

The General Assembly adopted a resolution 836(IX) of 14th December 1954 for instituting 20th November as Universal Children's Day. The day got observed worldwide on '2017: It's a #KidsTakeOver' theme for promoting the ideals and objectives of the Charter and the welfare of the children of the world. The widely approved international human rights' Convention or charter, includes a number of children's rights viz. the right to life, to health, to education and to play, as well as the right to family life. The convention also advocates protection of children from violence, discrimination etc. UNICEF celebrated the day by inviting children from across the globe to voice their support for millions of their friends and kin who are unprotected and uprooted.

48th IFFI bloomed in Goa.

48th International Film Festival of India began on 20th November in Panaji, Goa. Shah Rukh Khan inaugurated this festival and Iranian filmmaker Majid Majidi's 'Beyond the clouds' was the opening film of the festival and it is worth knowing that it was entirely made in India. In this festival, 'Personality of The Year' award will be conferred upon Amitabh Bachchan and Canadian filmmaker Atom Egoyan will receive lifetime achievement award. It is worth registering that Canada will be the focus country this year and it will be presenting a package of its 8 best recent films. The nine-day festival will witness 200 films from more than 80 countries. 26 feature films and 16 non-feature films of different languages, regions and cultures will be screened in the Indian Panorama Section of the festival.

IMBAX clouded Meghalaya.

On 20th November India-Myanmar Bilateral Army Exercise (IMBAX) started at the Joint Warfare Centre at Umroi near Shillong in Meghalaya. This exercise envisages creation of closer ties with armies of the neighbouring nations. The six-day training exercise will train the officers of Myanmar Army in several United Nations Peacekeeping roles and tasks.

NASA sent JPSS-1 in space.

On 18th November NASA launched advanced satellite Joint Polar Satellite System-1 (JPSS-1) via United Launch Alliance Delta II rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California for improved weather forecast. The projected satellite is highly advanced polar-orbiting satellite to improve weather forecasts for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). It is the first satellite in a series of four such satellites in collaborative programme between NOAA and NASA. This satellite will be re-christened as 'NOAA-20' when it will reach its final destination. It will predict a hurricane's track and will help agencies engaged in post-storm recovery by visualizing storm damage and the geographic extent of power outages. It will also improve recognition of climate patterns that affect the weather such as El Nino and La Nina.

42nd International Congress of Military Medicine came in session!

On 19th November Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) under the aegis of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) organized the 42nd World Congress of the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM) on 'Military Medicine in Transition: Looking Ahead' theme. India is hosting this five day for the first time. The congress is witnessing participation of top Indian scientific institutions, Union Ministry of Health, the United Nations and the International Committee of Red Cross. The event has aggregated around 350-400 foreign delegates from 80 nations and 300 Indian delegates on one platform. The event will behold 26 thematic sessions on Terrain Specific Military Medical Support, Health Protection and Promotion in the Military Environment, Combat Medical Support, and Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief.

International Seminar on Indian Space Programme opened eyes in Delhi.

On 20th November International Seminar on Indian Space Programme 'Trends and Opportunities for Industry' got inaugurated in Delhi. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Antrix Corporation Limited (the commercial arm of ISRO) along with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) were the organizers of this two day seminar. The seminar shaped up rational framework where Indian Space Sector will see expansion in the domestic and global opportunities via enhanced partnerships and collaborations. Besides this the seminar also brought the achievements and major milestones of Indian Space Sector in limelight. The seminar had sessions on Space Industry Ecosystem: Role and Opportunities for Industry, Leveraging Public-Private Partnership for Indian Space Programs, Capacity building and talent management and panel discussion on role of industry in Indian Space Program.

Zimbabwe laid red carpet for its new President 'Emmerson Mnangagwa'.

On 24th November Emmerson Mnangagwa took oath as President of Zimbabwe at the national sports stadium on the outskirts of Harare before thousands of supporters, dignitaries and foreign diplomats. The ruling ZANU-PF party had nominated him to fill the vacancy left by expelled President Robert Mugabe. The new President has vowed to create jobs amidst this democratic storm. It is worth registering here that Mnangagwa was one of Mugabe's closest allies and Vice President of the South African country and when Mugabe sacked him from post of Vice President, Military came in action to dismiss Mugabe from post of President and now the dislodged Vice President has been lodged as the President of the nation.

Jon Hendricks signed off lyrics of life.

On 23rd November Pioneering jazz singer and lyricist Jon Hendricks died at age of 96 years in New York, United States. The late jazz singer cum lyricist came in limelight in the 1950s and '60s along with Dave Lambert and Annie Ross. He composed the lyrics to existing Basie songs, and the trio recorded their own voices in layers instead of employing backup singers as a result their "Sing a Song of Basie," won accolade for its use of vocalese, in which the voices mimicked the instrumental parts. Although many experimented with vocalese prior to Hendricks, yet the recognition of the father of the spirited singing style waited for him. After 1962, he pursued a solo career in London and worked as a jazz critic in San Francisco and released many solo albums.

World's fastest Supersonic Cruise Missile Brahmos was put to test!

On 22nd November World's fastest Supersonic Cruise Missile 'Brahmos' was successfully flight-tested from the Indian Air Force's (IAF) frontline fighter aircraft Sukhoi-30MKI for the first time. The 2.5 ton heavy Cruise Missile with top speed of Mach 2.8 is meant to boost the IAF's air combat operations capability. Built by BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited, this world class weapon can be launched from Land, Sea and Air. It is a joint venture of the Russia and India.

25th November entered as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

'Leave no one behind: end violence against women and girls' is the theme for the celebration this year. The day has opened a 16 day long campaign to oppose gender-based violence from 25th November to 10th December, which is the Human Rights Day. The campaign targets public awareness and mobilisation of people everywhere to bring about change to create a world free from violence for all women and girls especially of the most marginalized crowd viz. refugees, migrants, minorities, local people and population that have been victim of conflict and natural disasters. The UN General Assembly adopted resolution for institution of this day on 20th December 1993. On 25th November 1960 three Mirabal sisters who were political activists in the Dominican Republic were brutally assassinated on the orders of Dominican ruler Rafael Trujillo.

Shakti Bhatt prize chose to become Sri Lankan author's strength.

On 24th November Sri Lankan author Anuk Arudpragasam scripted the Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize 2017 in his name for his novel 'The Story of a Brief Marriage'. The winning novel portrays the civil war in Sri Lanka. The protagonists of the novel piece together strategies of survival. This novel was chosen from 47 titles submitted for consideration this year and panel of judges comprising Kamila Shamsie, Rohini Mohan and Margaret Mascarenhas unanimously chose it for the award. Besides this, the novel has also wooed the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2017 in recent past.

World's First Artificial Intelligence Politician, 'SAM'.

In November 2017 New Zealand presented World's First Artificial Intelligence Politician 'SAM'. Nick Gerritsen, entrepreneur of New Zealand gave birth to 'SAM' which is conversant in local issues like policies about housing, education and immigration. Facebook Messenger is its tutor that keeps SAM well informed with facts and opinions. SAM can prove helpful in culturing political and cultural divisions in many countries.

Google became reason of developers' giggle.

In November 2017 Google partnered with technology learning platforms, Pluralsight and Udacity, to offer scholarships to 1,30,000 tech developers and students of India. The scholarships will give Indian tech developers an access to advanced learning curriculum which will ensure their employability in emerging technologies viz. Mobile and Web Development, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual and Augmented Reality and Cloud Platforms. According to Ishan Gupta, Managing Director, Udacity India, "The Scholarship program would have two phases. The first phase would have free access to our courses in mobile and web development along with mentorship and community support. The top 1000 students earn an additional 6-month scholarship to our Mobile and Web Developer Nanodegree programs, which includes mentorship, community support and expert project reviews." Besides this, candidates will also gain access to Pluralsight IQ where their skills will be measured and tested.

Echo of Global University Employability Ranking 2017.

Times Higher Education put forth Global University Employability Ranking 2017 for 150 universities and institutions worldwide to precipitate 'work-ready graduates'. California Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Columbia University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Cambridge, Boston University, Stanford University, Technical University of Munich, University of Tokyo and Yale University comprised the top ten list. Among Indian institutions, IISc succeeded in grabbing 29th rank, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD) took 145th spot and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) achieved 148th rank. As per the survey of recruiters and industry professionals, India needs to work on imparting digital skills to its graduates.

Karen Pierce: UK's first female ambassador to the UN.

On 27th November Foreign office political director Karen Pierce got appointed as the first female UK ambassador to the UN. After joining the office in January, she will succeed 18 different male postwar UK permanent representatives at the UN in New York. The first female appointee on this most prestigious post in the British diplomatic service since the UN's formation in 1945, has earlier represented the UK in a wide variety of roles. She has been invited in several functions hosted by organisations like the UN and the World Trade Organisation. The woman is a trailblazer for other women who joined FCO in 1981.

3rd ICCR Distinguished Indologist award winner, 'Hiroshi Marui'.

On 27th November President Ram Nath Kovind bestowed 3rd Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Distinguished Indologist award to Japanese Professor Hiroshi Marui for his exemplary contribution to

Indology. Veteran Professor dedicated four long decades in academic study of the history, cultures, languages and literature of India in which he explored Indian philosophy and Buddhist Studies. Besides this, he has been the President of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies. Many of his publications on several subjects of the world are considered as a final authority. The ICCR Distinguished Indologist award acknowledges all the scholarly works of past and present that squeeze the deeper essence of Indian thought and expression.

WISE Initiative of US-India Business Council.

On 27th November at the occasion of USIBC's Road to GES event 'Creating the Foundations of Innovation', the US-India Business Council (USIBC) started 'Women for Women Innovators, Social Leaders & Entrepreneurs' (WISE) Initiative for Women Entrepreneurs in India. Country Head of Intel India, Nivruti Rai ; CMD of Biocon Limited, Kiran Mazumdar Shaw; Chairman of IBM India, Vanitha Narayanan; MD of Kalaari Capital, Vani Kola, and Producer of Girl Rising Campaign, Amita Vyas will grace WISE with their leadership. WISE will offer mentoring, and development opportunities for women entrepreneurs to increase women's participation in growing Indian economy. It will engage multiple stakeholders to encourage a policy environment, training opportunities and career assistance for women entrepreneurs. Besides this Nisha Desai Biswal got appointed as President of US-India Business Council. It is worth knowing that USIBC is the premier business advocacy organization made of 350 top-tier US and Indian companies which acts as a direct link between businesses and government leaders to strengthen ties between the two nations.

1st December : World AIDS Day.

World observed this day on 'Right to health' theme to create public awareness and preventive measures about pandemic disease, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) which is caused because of infection of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). According to the World Health Organization (WHO) there are around 36.7 million patients of HIV and for this it will ensure the patients' access to safe, effective and affordable quality medicines which includes diagnostics and other health commodities under the slogan "Everybody counts". Government organizations, NGOs, civil society and other health organizations organized many activities for observation of this day. In India a talk show, an exhibition and cultural performances were organised at JLN Stadium in New Delhi that underlined the critical milestones achieved in the last three decades in response to HIV in the country.

Victoria granted legal permit to Euthanasia.

On November 30th Victoria became the first Australian State to legalise assisted dying. After 100 hours of fiery debate, the lawmakers eventually voted in favor of permitting terminally ill patients the right to request a lethal drug to end their lives from June 2019. This permission is for terminally ill people above 18 years of age with less than six months to live. Before requesting for Euthanasia, the terminally ill patient has to prove his or her sound mental health and deteriorated body condition via checkups of multiple doctors and then only the patient will be allowed to embrace the chosen death.

2018 Global Entrepreneurship Index is out!

On 29th November Global Entrepreneurship Development Institute (GEDI) laid Global Entrepreneurship Index for year 2018. United States, Switzerland, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia comprised the top five list. India grabbed 68th position in this index among 137 nations. Last year India was at 69th spot. The GEI score indicates overall entrepreneurship attitude. It is worth knowing that GEDI is a policy development organisation that expands economic opportunities for individuals, communities and nations.

Preet Didbal: First Sikh Woman Mayor of USA.

On 1st December, Preet Didbal got elected as the first Sikh woman Mayor of Yuba city in California in the United States. She will take oath on 5th December. She was elected to Yuba City Council in year 2014 and is presently acting as Vice Mayor. The Sutter-Yuba region accommodates one of the largest Sikh communities in the country. Among the other Sikh mayors across USA, Ravi Bhalla was elected earlier as mayor of Hoboken, New Jersey.

Venezuela unveils new virtual currency.

On 4th December 2017, the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro has announced the creation of a new virtual currency in a bid to ease the country's economic crisis. The economy of the country has been impacted heavily by falling oil revenue and plummeting value of its existing currency, the bolivar. As per the President, the new crypto-currency - Petro - would allow the country to advance in issues of monetary sovereignty, to make financial transactions and overcome the financial blockade. Venezuela's economic crisis is mainly triggered by a fall in crude oil prices and a drop in oil production. Petroleum is its main source of hard currency.

Miss Korea Jenny Kim wins Miss Supranational 2017 title.

On 2nd December 2017, Miss Korea Jenny Kim has won the Miss Supranational 2017 title at the gala event, which was held in Poland's Spa Resort of Krynica- Zdroj. In the event, Columbia's Tica Martinez and Romania's Bianca Tirsin were adjudged first and the second runner-up respectively. Puerto Rico's Larissa Santiago was the fourth runner-up. Altogether 65 contestants from across the globe participated in the prestigious pageant with Jenny Kim emerging victorious.

5th December: World Soil Day.

The day got observed across the world on 'Caring for the Planet starts from the Ground' theme. The day spread messages on the significance of soil quality for food security, healthy ecosystems and human well-being. Every year the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations organize national and local events for this celebration.

US & South Korea's biggest combined air exercise.

On 4th December US and South Korea launched their biggest-ever combined air force exercise. In this exercise hundreds of aircraft including two dozen stealth jets started training and US Air Force EA-18G Growler fighter jet prepared to land at the Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek. About 12,000 US military personnel are participating in this exercise and in total 230 aircrafts will be flying at eight US and South Korean military installations in the South. B-1B bombers will also join these aerial drills. This war game has come a week after North Korea test-fired its most powerful missile ever, an ICBM that may be able to target the eastern seaboard of the United States.

ISA has put on intergovernmental organisation attire.

On 6th December International Solar Alliance (ISA) has become a treaty-based international intergovernmental organisation. According to Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister, R K Singh, around 45 nations have already signed the ISA treaty and 15 have ratified it till November 30th, 2017 and many more are in process of joining this major international body headquartered in India. The ISA was jointly launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the then-French President Francois Hollande on the sidelines of the UNFCCC Conference of Parties 21 (CoP21) in Paris with an aim of accelerating development and deployment of solar energy globally. ISA seeks to mobilise the requisite investments of more than USD 1,000 billion by 2030 for the massive deployment of affordable solar energy and to make way for future solar generation, storage and good technologies for catering nations' individual needs.

US stepped out of United Nations' Global Compact On Migration.

On 3rd December the United States of America declared withdrawal from United Nations' Global Compact on Migration that aimed at upholding the rights of refugees, as it refused to ring with the administrative policies of President Donald Trump. In September 2016, USA was among 193 members of the UN General Assembly that unanimously adopted this non-binding political declaration for Refugees and Migrants, pledging to uphold the rights of refugees, helping them resettle and ensuring their access to education and jobs. But now USA has back stepped from the pact in order to improve the handling of migrant and refugee situations in the country. However, the country would continue to extend its "generosity" in supporting migrants and refugees worldwide, but the decisions on immigration policies will always be made by Americans and Americans alone as per US Ambassador Nikki Haley.

2017 Person of the Year award broke silence by choosing 'The Silence Breakers'.

The Hollywood abuse "Silence Breakers" have been awarded Time magazine's '2017 Person of the Year'. This award goes to the person or group that has had the most influence on the year's news for better or worse. Through this award the Time's editors granted accolade to those people who showed courage of sharing their stories of sexual abuse. The magazine's editor in chief, Edward Felsenthal acknowledged women who began to come forward to accuse powerful men of sexual harassment and assault and converted this drive in a movement '#MeToo'.

7th December flied as International Civil Aviation Day.

7 December got celebrated as International Civil Aviation Day on 'Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind' theme. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) council has chosen this theme for a period of four years from 2015 to 2018. The day tried its best to generate and reinforce global awareness of the significance of international civil aviation in the social and economic development of States. The ICAO has also begun a campaign to assist States in implementing ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) to ensure reliable air transport and address safety, security and emissions-related issues. It is worth knowing that in 1944, participants from 54 nations gathered in Chicago, USA and inked the Convention on International Civil Aviation, which is also popularly known as the 'Chicago Convention'.

Mona Lisa is in genes!

Scientists of California Institute of Technology, USA developed world's smallest copy of Italian polymath Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting 'Mona Lisa' using DNA. This creation proved that DNA which is best known for encoding the genetic information of living things, is also an excellent chemical building block. Researchers developed software that took Mona Lisa's image and divided it up into small square sections, and determined the requisite DNA sequences to make up those squares. After this they selectively attached DNA Molecules to create a raised pattern and wet-lab protocols which got read by a liquid-handling robot that automatically mixed the DNA strands together. In this way scientists also created life-sized portrait of a bacterium and a bacterium-sized portrait of a rooster.

Mohamad Al Jounde: Children's Peace Prize 2017 Winner.

Mohamad Al Jounde is a 16-year-old Syrian who won the prize in Hague for his efforts to ensure the rights of Syrian refugee children. Malala Yousafzai conferred this prize upon him. He has established a school together with his family in a Lebanese refugee camp that currently provides education to 200 children. He was heard saying, "School is not only a place where you can learn how to write and read, it is also a place where you can make friends and memories, learn about new people and teach other people about yourself. School is a place where you can become who you are, where you can express yourself freely and discuss your ideas with your peers and teachers."

Ballon d'Or 2017 award rolled on Cristiano Ronaldo's name.

On 7th December Cristiano Ronaldo won Ballon d'Or 2017 award and with this, he has joined the row of Lionel Messi who conquered five Ballon d'Or awards apiece. 32 year old Ronaldo had won this award earlier in 2008, 2013, 2014 and 2016. The Real Madrid forward was announced the winner of France Football's prestigious award at a ceremony in Paris.

Mohammed bin Salman: Winner of TIME's 2017 Reader Poll.

In first week of December, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman, conquered TIME's Person of the Year 2017 online reader poll. He enjoyed an edge over world leaders, industry titans, entertainers and activists in voting. He won 24% votes and people around the world who shared their experiences with sexual assault and harassment as part of the #MeToo movement received 6% votes. The former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, special counsel Robert Mueller and the Dreamers grabbed third spot by winning 5% votes.

9th December : International Anti-Corruption Day.

Globe observed International Anti-Corruption Day 2017 on 'United against corruption for development, peace and security' theme. This year United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have begun a joint global campaign to analyse effects of corruption on education, health, justice, democracy, prosperity and development. It is disheartening to learn that every year bribes worth USD 1 trillion are given while an estimated USD 2.6 trillion are stolen through corruption, which is a sum equivalent to more than 5 % of the global GDP. The UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption on 31st October 2003 to combat and prevent corruption.

Hambantota port has become China's asset.

On 9th December Sri Lanka made official handover of the southern seaport of Hambantota to China on a 99-year lease. This lease is in accordance to repay the \$8 billion loan that island nation owes to China. This deal will lead to enhancement of economic activities leading to promotion of tourism. Two Chinese firms, namely Hambantota International Port Group (HIPG) and Hambantota International Port Services (HIPS) managed by the China Merchants Port Holdings Company (CMPort) and the Sri Lanka Ports Authority will be the owners of this port. Apart from this, the SriLankan government has granted large tax concessions to the Chinese firms.

'Mt Hope' the new hope of glory for British Antarctic Territory.

In December 2017 cartographers surveying Antarctica, discovered 'Mt Hope', 3,239 meters above sea level as the tallest mountain in the British Antarctic Territory (BAT). The discovery crossed their way when they were doing survey to revise planning maps for pilots operating in Antarctica. Prior to Mt. Hope, Mt Jackson with the height 3,184 meters was considered as the tallest mountain in this territory. Mt Hope is 55 meters taller than Mt Jackson. It is worth remembering that Mt Vinson remains the highest mountain in Antarctica standing at 4,892 meters.

12th December : Universal Health Coverage Day.

The day is observed annually to commemorate the first unanimous United Nations resolution which invoked nations to provide affordable, quality healthcare to every person, everywhere. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) implies that everyone can access the quality health services they need without financial hardship. It is one of the new Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations. On eve of Universal Health Coverage Day 2017, the Union Government of India launched 'Labour Room Quality Improvement

Initiative' (LaQshya) to improve the quality of care in Labour rooms for neonatal survival in government Medical Colleges (MCs) and Community Health Centres (CHCs). Government has also put out operational Guidelines for Obstetric High Dependency Units and Intensive Care Units. In addition to this, a safe delivery application 'mHealth' has also been started which has Clinical Instruction films on vital obstetric procedures for health workers for management of normal and complicated deliveries.

Japan peeps in US-led moon station project.

On 12th December Japanese cabinet approved the plan of joining US-led moon station project. The project is about building a new space station in the moon's orbit to prevent space radiation. Japan has revised the roadmap of its basic space policy and urges to contribute to this U.S.-led project through this roadmap. The Japanese government is planning to make available the data which it owns like the satellite images to private enterprises for the free charge which would eventually lead to the creation of new business. This project is expected to get completed by the second half of 2020. Through this project Japan would send its astronauts to the lunar surface in cooperation with Washington.

What does world's newest island say?

According to this week's presentation of NASA's studies on the island at a meeting of the American Geophysical Union in New Orleans, the latest erected Tongan island carries clues to how life potentially developed on Mars. This island is also known as Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai, which got formed from a Pacific Ocean submarine volcano about 65 km northwest of the Tongan capital Nuku'alofa erupted in late December 2014. According to Jim Garvin, the chief scientist at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Mars had many similar volcanic islands that appeared to have been surrounded by water when they were created. Examining how life came into existence on the Tongan island could help scientists understand origin of life on Mars. Islands like Tongan island having lakes and small seas filling depressions, persistent surface waters might have produced the conditions necessary for microbial life on Mars two or three billion years ago.

The climbing interest rates of US Federal Reserve.

In December 2017 the US Federal Reserve raised its interest rates by 0.25% again in its two-day meeting in Washington. This is the third rate rise this year. Fed further expects three more increases in rates next year, unchanged from its previous forecast. The Fed is eyeing a range of 1.25% to 1.5% for its benchmark rate. The officials of Fed believe that the interest rates are on track to exceed 2% in year 2018. This move marks a further retreat from the ultra-low rates that were put in place during the financial crisis to encourage the economic activity.

Dhammapiya, the new secretary general of Intl Buddhist.

In December 2017 Buddhist monk Dhammapiya from Tripura got elected as the new secretary general of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC). This decision was taken in the second general assembly of the IBC where more than 150 international participants took part in voting. Besides the new secretary general, a governing board was also elected with representatives from Mongolia, Australia, Mexico, Bhutan, Uganda and other nations from across the globe. It is worth knowing that IBC is a global Buddhist forum for preservation and development of heritage sites of the religion in India and other parts of the world. Dalai Lama addressed this congregation through video.

Sports News

Badminton, Para Badminton Worlds are ready to bask in Basel nets.

On 24th November the Badminton World Federation (BWF) elected Basel, city of Switzerland to jointly host the Badminton and Para Badminton World Championships in the 2019 edition of the Para event. The two tournaments will run together for the first time and by defeating Tokyo in elections, Basel has become the first city of Switzerland to jointly host the two tournaments. These tournaments will conclude before Para Badminton makes its Paralympic Games debut at Tokyo 2020. There will be 14 medal events in badminton at the 2020 Paralympic Games.

Gopi coined gold in Asian Marathon Championship.

On 26th November Gopi Thonakal won gold medal in the 16th edition of Asian Marathon Championship by finishing the race in 2 hours 15 minutes and 48 seconds. Andrey Petrov of Uzbekistan clinched silver with a timing of 2 hours 15 minutes 51 seconds while Byambalev Tseveenravdan of Mongolia managed to attract bronze by clocking 2 hours 16 minutes 14 seconds. With this win Gopi has become the first Indian man to conquer this event since formation of separate Asian Marathon championships. Prior to him Asha Agarwal did this feat for India after winning women's title when this event was part of the biennial Asian Track & Field Championships.

World will see Women weightlifters from Iran!

In November 2017 Iranian women got permission of participation in international weightlifting championships. The President of the Iran Weightlifting Federation took this decision after establishing the Iran Weightlifting Federation Women's Committee. The federation's chief added further that the women weightlifters can compete wearing special clothes for Muslim athletes. Attila Adamfi, Director General of the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) applauded this move of Iran. Here it is worth knowing that Iran has one of the world's strongest weightlifting cultures and Iranian Male weightlifters have lifted eight Olympic gold medals so far.

BWF Para-Badminton World Championships tossed 10 medals for India.

November 2017 showered 10 medals on Indian contingent at BWF Para-Badminton World Championships in Korea. India coined two gold, two silver and six bronze medals in this world championship. Parul Parmar outshone Thailand's Wannaphatdee Kamtam by 21-8, 21-17 in the finals of the women's singles Standing Lower (SL3) and bagged gold medal. Parmar also coupled with Japan's Akiko Sugino to win the gold in the women's doubles (SL 3-4) after defeating Chinese pair of Cheng Hefang and MA Huihui by 21-16 21-19 in the summit clash. Tarun Dhillon and Manoj Sarkar emerged as silver medal winners in the men's singles (SL 4) and (SL 3) respectively. Bronze medalists and the different events in which they participated were Raj Kumar and Rakesh Pandey in MD SU 5 ; Raja Magotra and Ruhi Satish Shingade in XD SS 6 ; Indian Umesh Vikram Kumar and Thailand's Chawarat K in MD SL 3-4 ; Raja Magotra and Mark Joseph Dharmai in MD SS 6 ; Manasi Joshi in WS SL 3 and Pramod Bhagat in MS SL 3.

G Sathiyam: Gold medalist of Spanish Open Table Tennis.

On 27th November Indian table tennis player G. Sathiyam won gold medal after defeating Japan's Kazuhiro Yoshimura in the men's singles final of the 2017 ITTF Challenge Spanish Open in Almeria. This was Sathiyam's second major title as he had clinched his first gold medal two years ago in the ITTF World Tour Belgium Open. This was also the second ITTF Challenge Series title conquered by an Indian this year after Soumyajit Ghosh defeated compatriot Anthony Amalraj in the Chile Open final a few months back.

Five more Russians got prohibited from Olympics.

On 27th November the International Olympic Committee (IOC) banned five more Russian competitors from the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, for life on account of anti-doping rule violations. Among them are names of gold medalists Dmitrii Trunenkov and Aleksei Negodailo, members of four-man bobsleigh team, biathlon relay silver medallists, Yana Romanova and Olga Vilukhina, silver medalist in the 7.5 km event. With this the total number of Russian athletes suspended from the Games for life became 19.

First edition of Indian Sports Honours came hopping.

On 27th November, Mumbai witnessed rain of the first edition of Indian Sports Honours (ISH) via courtesy of India skipper Virat Kohli and Sanjiv Goenka who envisaged the development of Indian sports. Ace shuttler Kidambi Srikanth got the 'Sportsman of the Year award' for booking four Super Series titles on his name in year 2017 and Olympic silver medallist PV Sindhu won the 'Sportswoman of the Year award' in the individual sport category. Ravichandran Ashwin, won 'Sportsman of the Year award' for becoming the fastest bowler to reach 'Club 300' in Test cricket, while in women's cricket team, skipper Mithali Raj was awarded 'Sportswoman of the Year award' in the Team Sport category. The Indian Women's Cricket Team, which ended as runners-up in the ICC Women's World Cup was adjudged as the 'Team of the Year'.

Arrows of Asian Championships displayed Rainbows of medals for India!

On 30th November Indian archers won 3 gold, 4 silver & 2 bronze medals at Asian Archery Championships in Dhaka. Besides that, the tournament also served as the precursor to 2018 Youth Olympics in which two Indians booked quota places. For this, Himani Kumari, 15-year-old girl from Haryana defeated her Mongolian opponent Bayasgalan Badamjuani by 7-1 in the recurve cadet bronze play-off to bag the quota. Prior to her in an all-Indian cadet recurve final, 14-year-old Akash of Haryana defeated Dhiraj Bommadevara of Andhra Pradesh by 6-4 to reserve a berth in the boy's quota for the Youth Olympics.

Deepika Kumari wins bronze medal at Indoor Archery World Cup 2017.

On 3rd December 2017, Deepika Kumari of India has won the bronze medal at the Indoor Archery World Cup 2017. The third-seeded Deepika defeated the 13th seeded Sayana Tsyrempilova of Russia 7-3 in the women's recurve bronze play-off. Korean second seed Kim Surin shattered the former world number one's gold medal dream with a thrilling 6-5 win in the shoot-off and Deepika had to settle for third place. Her medal is however, the only one India managed to grab at the tournament, as other Indian archers crashed out early from the tournament.

Russia shall stay away from waters of 2018 Winter Olympics.

International Olympic Committee suspended Russian Olympic Committee from participating in 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea in upcoming February on account of their proven doping activity during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi. However, they will be invited to compete at the 2018 Winter Olympics, but their anthem won't be played, their flag won't feel the breeze and none of the medals won by them would be accrued toward an overall Russian medal count. It is worth knowing here that President Vladimir Putin had invested around \$50 billion in international sport competitions to boost national pride. Around 11 of 33 medals that Russia won in Sochi have been snatched away from it as a result of doping violations.

The Final draw for 2018 World Cup.

December 2017 decided destiny of national football teams of 32 countries across the globe via final draw for the 2018 FIFA World Cup that took place at the State Kremlin Palace in the Russian capital of Moscow. The

21st FIFA World Cup will begin from 14th June and will continue till 15th July 2018 at 12 stadiums in 11 Russian cities. The host country, Russia sought place in Group A with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Uruguay. Russia will play Saudi Arabia in the opening match of the tournament on 14th June 2018. The 2010 World Cup winners, Spain was placed in Group B with Cristiano Ronaldo and European champions Portugal. Lionel Messi and Argentina will take on the likes of Croatia, Nigeria and Iceland in Group D. It is worth registering that Iceland is the smallest country to ever play at the World Cup, will now play with the two-time champions Argentina on 16th June at Spartak Stadium in Moscow. The five-time champions, Brazil was grouped with Switzerland, Costa Rica, and Serbia in Group E, while defending champions Germany will confront Mexico, Sweden, and South Korea in Group F.

India succeeded in luring South Asian Regional Badminton Team Championship.

On 5th December India won its first-ever South Asian Regional Badminton Team Championship against Nepal in Guwahati, Assam. It outshone Nepal by 3-0. It is good to learn that the Indian team reached the final without losing a single match. First, Aryaman Tandon defeated Nepal's Dipesh Dhami by 21-9, 21-15 in the boys' singles competition and India's lead was further doubled with Ashmita Chaliha's straight win of 21-9, 21-6 over Rashila Maharjan in the girls' singles event. In the boy's doubles event, the pair of Arintap Dasgupta and Krishna Prasad defeated the Nepalese duo of Dipesh Dhami and Nabin Shrestha.

India- Sri Lanka three-Test series turned on India's name.

On 6th December India scored victory in the three-Test series against Sri Lanka by 1-0, after the final Test between the duo ended in a draw at the Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in New Delhi. Sri Lanka made 299 at the loss of 5 wickets on the fifth and final day. Skipper Virat Kohli became Man of the Match and Man of the Series for his two double centuries. India had declared their second innings at 246 for 5, posting the target of 410 runs for SriLankans. Chasing the target to level the series, Sri Lanka finished on 299 for 5 to secure their second draw of the series. Dhananjaya de Silva emerged as top-scorer from the Sri Lankan squad with a defiant 119 runs, while for Indian side, Ravindra Jadeja finished with the figures of three for 81.

Hockey World League final rolled in Australia's court.

On 10th December Australia defeated Argentina by 2-1 to win gold in Hockey World League final. Blake Govers and Jeremy Hayward scored two goals for Australia while Agustin Bugallo scored one goal for Rio Olympics champions, Argentina at Kalinga Stadium of Bhubaneswar. Earlier on this day India outshone Germany by 2-1 in the third-fourth place classification match of this tournament to win the bronze medal. India had also won the bronze in the last edition of this tournament which took place in Raipur in year 2015.

World Para Swimming Championship surged gold for Kanchanmala.

On 7th December Amravati's Kanchanmala, who is a regular swimmer of Aqua Sports Club, Nagpur, became the first Indian to win gold at World Para Swimming Championship in 200 meters medley event in S-11 category in Mexico. Kanchanmala is Nagpur's visually impaired swimmer who works in Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Besides this, she was the fifth fastest in 100 meters breaststroke and backstroke. The 26-year-old swimmer was selected in the Indian squad on the basis of her excellent performance at the IDM Berlin Para Swimming Championship which took place in July at Berlin, Germany where she coined a silver medal in 200m individual medley. Kanchanmala qualified for the World Championships in Mexico after she conquered the qualifying mark in 100m Freestyle (1:34:00), 100m Backstroke (1:41:00), 100m Breaststroke (2:01:00) and a silver 200m Individual Medley (3:03:00) against top para-athletes in Berlin.

10th Asian Championship: Rai & Sindhu's chill time!

On 10th December Pistol aces, Jitu Rai and Heena Sidhu bagged medals at 10th Asian Championship 10m Rifle/Pistol in Wako City, Japan. Jitu clinched an individual bronze in the men's 10m Air Pistol, which also helped the Indian team of Shahzar Rizvi and Omkar Singh besides Jitu, to coin the team's gold medal in the event. Heena won an individual bronze in the women's 10m Air Pistol and her combined efforts along with teammates Shri Nivetha Paramantham and Harveen Srao, made the team clinch a silver medal. Besides them, Anmol Jain also added another individual bronze medal for the country in the junior men's 10m Air Pistol and the team comprising Anmol, Gaurav Rana and Abhishek Arya won silver in the event. Having won 11 medals on the first two days of the competition, India's medal count now stands at 4 gold, 6 silver and 7 bronze for a total of 17 medals so far.

Shubhankar Sharma : The youngest Indian golfer to win on European Tour.

In December 2017, 21-year-old Shubhankar Sharma from Chandigarh became the youngest Indian golfer to conquer Joburg Open title on European Tour. Besides this, he has become the fifth Indian who performed this feat. With this he has joined the row of Arjun Atwal, Jeev Milkha Singh, SSP Chowrasia and Anirban Lahiri who were the previous Indian winners on European Tour. The old record of this young golfer reveals that he turned into professional after winning the All India Amateur Golf Championship in year 2013 when he was just 17-year-old schoolboy. He got recorded for five wins on the PGTI and has been regular on the Asian tour since 2015. It is worth knowing that the Joburg Open is the largest full field tri-sanctioned event of the European, Asian and South African Sunshine Tours with 240 players playing on two golf courses.

Rohit Sharma, Man with 3 ODI double centuries.

13th December became a red letter day in life of Indian batsman Rohit Sharma, who scripted a new history in one-day internationals (ODI). In India's second ODI against Sri Lanka in Mohali, Punjab, he scored 208 runs in mere 153 balls, which was studded with 13 fours and 12 sixes and made India post a mammoth score of 394/4 in 50 overs. By scoring this double century the ace batsman became the first batsman in the history of cricket to score three double centuries in one-day internationals (ODI). Rohit Sharma's individual score card reveals that earlier also he scored two double centuries in ODIs. His first-ever double century '209 runs' in ODI was against Australia in Bengaluru in 2013 and the second double century '264 runs' greeted his bat in November 2014 at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

The 2021 ICC Champions Trophy chose hospitality of India.

On 11th December in a Special General Meeting the Board of Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed that India will host the 2021 ICC Champions Trophy and the 2023 ODI World Cup. India will be hosting this World Cup on its own for the first time. On previous three occasions viz. 1987, 1996 and 2011, India co-hosted this event along with Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It is worth knowing that in 2011 India became the first host nation to win the World Cup. Besides this, BCCI also aired the announcement about India's hosting of the newly-promoted Test side Afghanistan for their first-ever Test match. The dates of this historic test will soon be announced. India will also host 81 matches across all the three formats from 2019 to 2023 according to the new Future Tours Programme (FTP).

CURRENT AFFAIRS TESTS

- Who has been appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Air India?
(a) Rituraj Singh (b) Pradeep Singh Kharola (c) Rajiv Bansal
(d) Ashwani Lohani (e) Pradeep Gupta
- Who has become the first woman secretary general of the Lok Sabha?
(a) Aruna Sundararajan (b) Smita Sabharwal
(c) Durga Shakti Nagpal (d) Snehlata Shrivastava (e) Sushmita Shrivastava
- Which team has won the "Team of the Year" title at the first edition of Indian Sports Honours?
(a) Indian Men's Cricket Team
(b) Indian Women's Cricket Team
(c) Indian Blind Cricket Team
(d) Indian Kabaddi Team
(e) Indian Women's Hockey Team
- Which among the following players has won "Sportsman of the Year" award at the first edition of Indian Sports Honours (ISH-2017)?
(a) Shikhar Dhawan (b) Virat Kohli
(c) Kidambi Srikanth (d) Pankaj Advani (e) Rohit Sharma
- The scientists of which country have developed the world's first artificial intelligence politician "SAM"?
(a) Japan (b) South Africa
(c) New Zealand (d) France (e) Russia
- Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters of _____ has won Miss Universe 2017 Title.
(a) Colombia (b) South Africa
(c) Jamaica (d) France (e) Angola
- Who has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Chandigarh Literary Society?
(a) Vikram Seth (b) Ruskin Bond
(c) Kiran Desai (d) R. K. Narayan (e) None of these
- In November 2017, which among the following countries has allowed women weightlifters to compete internationally?
(a) Iran (b) Saudi Arabia
(c) Israel (d) Pakistan (e) Algeria
- Who has become the first Indian man to win gold medal in Asian Marathon Championship?
(a) Arun Bhardwaj (b) Ashok Nath
(c) Gopi Thonakal (d) Ram Singh Yadav (e) None of these
- Constitution Day is celebrated every year on _____ .
(a) 23rd November (b) 22nd November
(c) 24th November (d) 26th November (e) 27th November

11. Who has won gold medal in the Asian Archery Championship 2017?
(a) Abhishek Verma (b) Limba Ram
(c) Jayant Talukdar (d) Satyadev Prasad (e) None of these
12. Khaled el-Balshy, famous Journalist of _____ has won the Nelson Mandela Innovation Award 2017.
(a) Italy (b) Russia
(c) Egypt (d) England (e) Australia
13. What is the rank of India in the Global Entrepreneurship Index of 2018?
(a) 66th (b) 65th
(c) 68th (d) 69th (e) 67th
14. Which word has been announced as the Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year 2017?
(a) Inauguration (b) Megalomania
(c) Populism (d) Nepotism (e) None of these
15. The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed every year on _____.
(a) 30th November (b) 1st December
(c) 2nd December (d) 3rd December (e) 4th December
16. Who has won the Miss Supranational 2017 title?
(a) Tica Martinez (b) Bianca Tirsin
(c) Larissa Santiago (d) Jenny Kim (e) None of these
17. In December 2017, who has been appointed as the Global Goodwill Ambassador for UN Environment?
(a) Charli XCX (b) Ellie Goulding
(c) Jarvis Cocker (d) Annie Lennox (e) None of these
18. In December 2017, who broke Brian Lara's record for most double centuries scored by a Test captain?
(a) Michael Clarke (b) Graeme Smith
(c) Don Bradman (d) Virat Kohli (e) None of these
19. Who has won the 67th edition of the Miss World Pageant contest?
(a) Andrea Meza (b) Stephanie Hill
(c) Manushi Chhillar (d) Laura Lehmann (e) None of these
20. Who has been appointed as the first female UK Ambassador to United Nations ?
(a) Anne Warburton (b) Cicely Mayhew
(c) Karen Pierce (d) Sally Axworthy (e) None of these

ANSWERS

- 1.(b) Pradeep Singh Kharola, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Karnataka cadre, has been appointed as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Air India. He will replace Rajiv Bansal. Currently, Kharola is the Managing Director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd.
- 2.(d) Snehlata Shrivastava, a 1982 batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, has become the first woman secretary general of the Lok Sabha. She will succeed Anup Mishra. Her tenure will end on 30 November, 2018. She also worked as a Joint Secretary in the law ministry.
- 3.(b) Indian Women's Cricket Team has won the "Team of the Year" title at the first edition of Indian Sports Honours. Besides this, Indian women's Cricket team captain, Mithali Raj has won the "Sportswoman of the Year" awards in the team sport category.
- 4.(c) Famous badminton player, Kidambi Srikanth has won the "Sportsman of the Year" award in the individual sports category at the first edition of Indian Sports Honours (ISH-2017). Besides this, Olympic silver medalist, P.V. Sindhu has won "Sportswoman of the Year" award in the individual sports category.
- 5.(c) The scientists from New Zealand have developed the world's first artificial intelligence politician "SAM" that can answer a person's queries regarding local issues such as policies about housing, education and immigration.
- 6.(b) Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters of South Africa has won Miss Universe 2017 Title. In the event, Colombia's Laura Gonzalez and Jamaica's Davina Bennett were the first and second runner-up respectively.
- 7.(b) Renowned author and Padma Bhushan Awardee, Ruskin Bond has been honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Chandigarh Literary Society for his outstanding contribution in the field of literature. He was conferred with the award comprising a citation and the cash prize of Rs 2 lakh.
- 8.(a) In November 2017, Iran has allowed women weightlifters to compete internationally. Women weightlifters can compete after wearing special clothes for Muslim athletes.
- 9.(c) Gopi Thonakal has become the first Indian man to win gold medal in Asian Marathon Championship. In the event of 2017, Andrey Petrov of Uzbekistan and Byambalev Tseveenravdan of Mongolia won silver and bronze medal respectively.
- 10.(d) Constitution Day is celebrated every year on 26th November to commemorate the adoption of Constitution of India. On this day in 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted the Constitution of India, and it came into effect on 26 January 1950.
- 11.(a) Famous archer, Abhishek Verma has won gold medal in the Asian Archery Championship 2017. In the final match, he defeated Kim Jongho of Korea.
12. (c) Khaled el-Balshy, famous Journalist of Egypt has won the Nelson Mandela Innovation Award 2017. He will receive the Individual Activist award.

- 13.(c) India has been ranked at 68th spot on the Global Entrepreneurship Index of 2018. Last year, India was at the 69th position. The list was prepared for 137 countries in the world. The list was topped by United States and followed by Switzerland, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, Denmark, Iceland, etc.
- 14.(c) The word 'populism' has been announced as Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year 2017. The dictionary defined populism as "political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want".
- 15.(d) The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed every year on 3rd December. It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life. The theme for the year 2017 is "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all".
- 16.(d) Miss Korea Jenny Kim has won Miss Supranational 2017 title in Poland. Tica Martinez of Colombia and Bianca Tirsin of Romania were the first and second runner-up respectively.
- 17.(b) British singer-songwriter, Ellie Goulding has been appointed as the Global Goodwill Ambassador for UN Environment, joining the fight to save the lives and habitats of people and animals by cleaning up our air and seas, fighting climate change and protecting species.
- 18.(d) Indian Cricket team captain, Virat Kohli surpasses Brian Lara for Most Double centuries as Captain. With a sixth double hundred, Kohli has also tied Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag for the most 200-plus scores for India in Tests.
- 19.(c) Manushi Chhillar of India has won the 67th edition of the Miss World Pageant at the Sanya City Arena in China. Andrea Meza, who is Miss Mexico was the first runner-up and Stephanie Hill from England was the second runner-up. Around 118 women all over the world participated in this beauty pageant.
- 20.(c) Karen Pierce has been appointed as the first female UK ambassador to the United Nations (UN). She succeeded Matthew Rycroft. Pierce had previously served as Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in New York.