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Monthly GK Mania

NATIONAL NEWS

Jitesh Singh Deo: Peter England Mr India 2017.

On 14th December Jitesh Singh Deo of Lucknow conquered Peter England Mr India 2017 title at a gala event held in Mumbai. He emerged as winner among 15 men from across the nation. In this contest Abhi Khajuria grabbed Peter England Mr India 1st Runner-Up position and Pavan Rao was selected to grace Peter England Mr India 2nd Runner-Up position. Besides them, Prathamesh Maulingkar clinched the title of Peter England Mr India Supranational 2017. Well-toned and intelligent aspiring actor, Jitesh attended the City Montessori School, Lucknow, and earned his graduation from Indraprastha Engineering College. He loves traveling and swimming, and 'Be the change you want to see in the world' is motto of his life. He will now represent India at Mr World 2020.

Management programme of IIM Bangalore managed a rank in top 25 of QS Masters!

In December 2017 Post graduate programme in Management (PGP) of Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore got listed among the top 25 in the QS Masters in Management Ranking 2018. Alumni outcomes, employability, class and faculty diversity, thought leadership, and value for money were the parameters on which B schools of 29 different nations were judged and ranked. It is worth registering that efforts towards empowering IIMB's research and teaching have paid handsome dividends by creating impact and upgrading the management school's international reputation.

India's First Social Audit Law echoed from Meghalaya.

On 16th December Meghalaya became the first state to launch 'The Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2017' in India. This will bring on wheels a law that makes social audit of government programmes and schemes a part of government practice. Chief Minister Mukul Sangma launched it in Shillong. The law permits citizens' participation in the planning of development, selection of beneficiaries, concurrent monitoring of programmes, redressal of grievances and audit of works, services and programmes on yearly basis. This law will bridge the information gap between officers and people regarding expenditure of money and will red flag the red tapist behaviour of government officials.

Moortidevi Award 2017 reflected portrait of Joy Goswami.

On 16th December eminent Bengali poet Joy Goswami got honoured with the 31st Moortidevi Award for the year 2017. With this, he has become the first Bengali poet to receive this award. His poetry collection 'Du Dondo Phowara Matro', which is an autobiographical account of the poet's life featuring his close ones including a pet cat, fetched this award to him. It is worth learning here that Joy is one of the most powerful poets in the post-Jibanananda Das era of Bengali poetry who raises his voice against violence, war and genocide through his poetry. Besides this, around fifty publications including several collections of his critical essays as well as a novel in verse have seen the print. His cabinet of trophies displays Kendriya and Bangla Sahitya Akademi Awards, Ananda Purashkar, and the first Tata Literature Live Poet Laureate Award. Bharatiya Jnanpith, a literary and research organisation presents Moortidevi Award every year to writers for their "contemplative and perceptive work".

ATL Community Day vibrated in NITI Aayog's corridor.

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission launched the Atal Tinkering Lab's Community Day in the national capital on Friday, 15th December, 2017. The day marked the Community Drive initiative in which 25 young Mentors interacted with more than 200 students who are not enrolled in the formal education system. The purpose of this initiative is to equip these children with the same educational tools as the students in Atal Tinkering Labs to enable them to become problem solvers. The initiative engaged NGOs that work with disabled children, working children, and girls from the weaker sections of society.

The Trumpet of BJP blown in Gujarat & Himachal Pradesh.

On 18th December results of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections were declared in which BJP won the maximum seats. In Gujarat elections BJP won 99 seats; Congress won 77 seats; Bharatiya Tribal Party got 1 seat and Independents won 3 seats. Here Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, Deputy CM Nitin Patel, Congress leader Paresh Dhanani and Independent candidate Jignesh Mevani were the prominent winners. In Himachal Pradesh assembly elections BJP won 44 seats; Congress got 20 seats; Communist Party of India (Marxist) won 1 seat and Independents won 2 seats. Chief Ministerial candidate Prem Kumar Dhumal got defeated. It is worth registering here that the Bharatiya Janata Party won the Gujarat assembly elections for a record sixth straight time and swept the polls in Himachal Pradesh by finishing just short of two-third majority. According to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the consecutive victory of BJP in the recent elections indicates public's strong support for politics of good governance and development.

NESIDS won cabinet's consent.

In December 2017 the Union Cabinet approved the introduction of a new Central Sector Scheme - 'North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme' (NESIDS). The scheme is on purpose of bridging the gaps in the creation of infrastructure in specified sectors till March 2020 and the Central government would be providing funds for the same. The social sectors of education and health, water supply, power, connectivity and the projects related to tourism will see the high tide under gravity of this scheme. Besides this, the Cabinet also gave nod to the continuation of the existing Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) scheme till March 2020 which will get funded by both centre and state in a ratio of 90: 10 with the total outlay being Rs 5300 crore. The scheme is aimed at enabling speedy completion of the ongoing projects.

Ladakh cheered Losar Festival.

19th December concluded the 15-day long pageantry of Losar Festival that marked the beginning of the New year in Ladakh. During the festival, the Ladakhi Buddhists made a religious offering before their deities in the domestic shrines and the Gompas. The festivity witnessed medley of cultural events and ancient rituals that staged battle between the good and the evil. It is worth remembering here that the Losar festival dates back to pre-Buddhist Bon era in Tibet during the tenure of the ninth Tibetan king, Pude Gungyal.

First Smita Patil Memorial Award rode towards Rekha.

On 17th December First Smita Patil Memorial Award made its way to Legendary actress Rekha for her unforgettable contribution in the Indian cinema. The overwhelmed Rekha outpoured "This award signifies the excellence of her (Smita Patil's) craft, which includes her acting abilities, dancing abilities or her ability to be fearless in front of the camera or in choosing her roles or the way she could just live that moment and make a statement on-screen with her beautiful eyes without saying a single word. I am not saying this because I have won an award in her name. It is because I feel she had far more finesse and was brilliant as an actor. I realized this thing 30 years ago when I decided to watch all her films. Today, I can say that she was far more better actress than me and than anybody else." This award was given in honour of late actress Smita Patil, who dazzled in Indian cinema during 80s. Arth, Manthan, Bhumika, Mirch Masala, Nazrana, Avam and Thikana were the films which radiated with her brilliance.

India's First National Rail And Transportation University whistled at Vadodara.

On 20th December, the Union Cabinet gave nod to the Ministry of Railways' initiative of establishment of the first ever National Rail and Transport University (NRTU) in Vadodara. The proposed university will hone the skill of Railways' human resources and build capability which will lead to the transformation of rail and transport sector towards New India. The university will take birth as a Deemed to Be University under

'de novo' category as per the UGC [Institutions Deemed to be Universities] Regulations, 2016 and the labor room for the same will get ready by April 2018 to begin the first academic program in July 2018. Ministry of Railways will also form a Company under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 for managing this proposed university which is expected to have 3000 full time students. The university will support 'Startup India' and 'Skill India' by channelizing technology, delivering knowledge, fostering entrepreneurship and generating large scale employment opportunities.

Cabinet heard call of Consumer Protection Bill.

On 20th December Cabinet gave its consent to the new Consumer Protection Bill that seeks to set up an authority to safeguard consumers' rights and has provisions for penalty and jail terms in case of adulteration and misleading ads by companies. Besides companies, even the celebrities endorsing misleading ads are also liable for fine and ban of up to three years. The consumer affairs ministry introduced this bill. The bill advocates penalty worth Rs 10 lakh on celebrities and penalty upto Rs 50 lakh on manufacturers and companies.

Indian Institutes of Management Bill, 2017 received consent of Indian Parliament.

On 19th December the upper house of Parliament gave nod to Indian Institutes of Management Bill, 2017 that extends greater autonomy to IIMs and for this director will be chosen for each IIM Board. The Indian Institutes of Management will be able to grant degrees instead of post-graduate diplomas, as before this, the fellowships of the IIMs were not regarded as Ph.D.s, which forced students to complete their diplomas and go abroad if they wanted to earn a doctoral degree. The bill has broadened the scope of research in the IIMs. Besides these, the bill has granted the status of national importance to 20 IIMs. It has promised administrative, academic and financial autonomy to these B-Schools.

India-Oman Naseem-Al-Bahr Exercise was on surf.

On 20th December Indian and Oman Navy conducted the joint naval exercise 'Naseem-Al-Bahr' which is also known as 'Sea Breeze'. Indian Naval Ships Trikand and Teg and Indian Navy submarine along with versatile long range maritime aircraft P8I from India and Al Rasikh, Khassab, Al Mubashir and Al Bushra of Royal Navy of Oman ships took part in the 11th edition of this biennial event. This year marked 24 years of bilateral exercises between the two navies which began with signing of a 1953 Indo-Oman Treaty of friendship, Navigation and Commerce. This was the first treaty between India and an Arab country.

Festivity of 351st birth anniversary of Guru Govind Singh.

On 22nd December the celebrations of 351st birth anniversary of the tenth Guru of Sikhs, Guru Govind Singh, started in Patna, Bihar. Those following the original Nanakshahi calendar will observe the anniversary on 5th January 2018, while others will celebrate the occasion on 25th December 2017. Bihar government and Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee arranged three-day Prakash Parv at the Takhat Harimandir Saheb, birth place of Guru Govind Singh at Patna. So far around 50,000 devotees from Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan aggregated for the Akhand Path, Shabad Kirtan and other religious rituals and 4 lakh more are expected to join on the main day of celebration.

Union Government mirrored Darpan for rural postal services.

On 21st December Union Minister of Communications, Manoj Sinha green flagged "Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India"(Darpan) project to upgrade the quality of service and add value to services for rural customers. The estimated expenditure of this project is of Rs 1400 crore which is meant to provide a low power technology solution to enable all 1.29 Lakhs Branch Post Offices (BOs) to improve the

level of services that are being offered to rural customers across all the states. The Project will bring the IT modernized Department of Posts under rural reach and will enable BOs to increase traffic of all financial remittances, savings accounts, Rural Postal Life Insurance, and Cash Certificates.

The word 'skill' has become impetus of Government of India.

In December 2017 Indian government entered into MoUs for skill development in the country. In recent past the Skill Development Ministry inked MoU with Maruti Suzuki India Limited to impart skill training to youth of the nation in New Delhi. Under the Skill India Mission, the MoU envisages enhanced employment potential related to automobile and manufacturing industry to youth. The Indian automobile manufacturer under contract, will also conduct National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) approved courses like Manufacturing, Automotive Service & Repair, Automotive Body Repair and Automotive Paint Repair at pan-India locations, leveraging the facilities and services available at ITIs, regional training centers, training centers of training partners, vendors and dealers associated with it. Besides this, India also inked US\$ 125 million financing agreement with World Bank for 'Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement Operation (STRIVE)' Project. The agreement will ensure improved Performance of Industrial Training Institutes; increased capacities of State Governments to Support Industrial Training Institutes and Apprenticeship Training; improved Teaching and Learning and improved and Broadened Apprenticeship Training.

25th December hailed as Good Governance Day.

Like every year the Good Governance Day which was instituted on 25th December 2014 got celebrated to honor former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birthday. The day fostered awareness among the people about accountability in government; enhanced the welfare and betterment of the people by standardizing the government functioning and made it highly effective for the citizens of the nation and last but not least ensured implementation of the good and effective policies. The day was declared as working day for the government officials. It is worth recalling here that the honored was earlier felicitated with India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna on 23rd December 2014.

Hospitality of Indian Women's Cricket team in 2018 ODI series saw confirmation.

On 25th December the BCCI confirmed that Indian Women's cricket team will host the 2018 ODIs and T20 International series as part of the ICC Women's Championship. India will first host Australia from 12th to 18th March 2018 and then England in April 2018 with a tri-series T20Is in between. The press release of the BCCI read as "The England Women's Cricket Team that will tour India in March 2018 to take part in the T20I Tri-Series featuring Indian Women and Australian Women will also play a three-match ODI series as part of a bilateral agreement between the two Boards. The ODI series between Indian Women and England Women will be played after the completion of the T20I series." It is worth recalling here that India will confront England on the home ground after 2010, besides their rendezvous in February 2013 during the Women's World Cup.

Lakshadweep has given way to India's First Runway on 'Sea Bridge'.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) announced construction of India's First Runway on 'Sea Bridge' in Agatti Airport of Lakshadweep. The project will get completed at an estimated cost of Rs 1,500 crore. The proposed runway will be long enough for operation of ATR-72 aircraft that run with load penalty and carry maximum 50 passengers with 15 kg of luggage. The runway is likely to bring down the fares as well.

Bengaluru, the city with its own logo!

On 24th December Bengaluru became the first city to get its own logo with tagline 'Bengaluru – Be U' (be you) that signifies Bengaluru's cosmopolitan culture, a sense of belonging, 480-year history and futuristic outlook. The logo was unveiled at Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru in the presence of Bengaluru development minister K J George, Gandhinagar MLA Dinesh Gundu Rao, Shantinagar MLA NA Haris, and Bengaluru mayor R Sampath Raj. According to the IT-BT and tourism minister, Priyank Kharge, the logo would enhance tourism in Karnataka. The logo has rolling font which was devised by bankers-turned-designers Rushi Patel and M Venkateswara Rao, founders of Nammur, a design firm. 'B' and 'E', the first two letters, and the last, 'U', of Bengaluru are in red that highlight the tagline 'Be U'. The seventh and eighth letters ('U' and 'R') look like the vowel, oo, in Kannada.

Prof Dhirendra Pal Singh : The New UGC chairman.

In December 2017, University Grants Commission appointed Director of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Prof Dhirendra Pal Singh as the new chairperson of UGC for upcoming five years. He has succeeded Prof Ved Prakash who got retired in April 2017. He has rich professional experience of 34 years in different aspects of educational planning and administration, institution building, teaching and training, international cooperation, and R&D. He has worked in different capacities in different institutions viz. Banaras Hindu University, Dr Hari Singh Gour University, Sagar and Devi Ahilya University, Indore.

IIT Roorkee's professor magnetized innovation award for cancer research. Pranita P Sarangi, a professor of Biotechnology at IIT, Roorkee won 2017 Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award for her scientific achievements and proposed work in the field of cancer immunology. It is related to protecting the body from the development of cancers. Her work fetched her grant up to Rs 50 lakh and a cash award prize of Rs 1 lakh per year during the project period. Speaking about her achievement, the awardee outpoured, "This is a highly prestigious scheme from the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology to identify and nurture outstanding young scientists with innovative ideas to pursue research in frontier areas of biotechnology."

Bravo! He mastered his Master's degree in his 90ssss.....

A 98-year-old man, Raj Kumar Vaish was felicitated with a Masters degree in economics by Governor of Meghalaya, Ganga Prasad at the 12th annual convocation of Nalanda Open University of Patna on 26th December. With this, he has become the oldest student to receive the degree. He had enrolled in MA (Economics) in year 2015. The university will preserve his notebooks as a source of inspiration for the coming generations. Vaish completed his graduation from Agra University in year 1938 and earned a degree in LLB in 1940, but did not pursue post-graduation after getting a job as a 'law officer' with Christian Mica Industry at Koderma (which is now in Jharkhand). He got retired as a general manager from the company in the early 1980s.

Lok Sabha passes the 'Talaq' Bill.

On 28th December Lok Sabha gave nod to a Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 that criminalises the practice of instant triple talaq among Muslims. The lower house has supported the August 2017 verdict of Apex Court declaring instant triple talaq practice as "null and void", unconstitutional and arbitrary. Prepared by an inter-ministerial group headed by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, the bill proclaims instant triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat illegal and void, be it in any form- spoken form, in writing or by electronic means such as email, SMS and WhatsApp or in any other manner whatsoever. The bill makes declaration of talaq a cognizable and non-bailable offence and any Muslim husband declaring talaq via 'talaq-e-biddat' will be entitled to three year imprisonment and will be charged penalty for the forbidden act.

Besides this, to ensure gender justice and gender equality of married Muslim women, the bill entitles the divorcee Muslim woman for custody of her minor children as well as subsistence allowance for herself and her minor children.

“The Way I See It — a Gauri Lankesh Reader” made way to bookstores.

In December 2017, book containing selected writings by late journalist Gauri Lankesh “ The Way I See It: a Gauri Lankesh Reader” was launched at the Mumbai Press Club. Writer and sociologist Chandan Gowda edited this book which is made of six sections that feature Lankesh’s early reportage in various publications and selected articles in Kannada language.

31 satellites in one go is on ISRO’s mind!

On 29th December Indian Space Research Organisation, ISRO announced launch of 31 satellites in a single mission on Polar rocket (PSLV-C40) on 10th January 2018 from the spaceport in Andhra Pradesh's Sriharikota. The rocket will carry 28 nano satellites from foreign countries viz. Finland and US plus one micro and nano satellite from India along with one Cartosat satellite. Among all these satellites, India's Cartosat-2 series earth observation spacecraft would be this mission's main payload.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017 greeted Lok Sabha.

On 28th December the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was introduced in Lok Sabha to bar those with non-performing accounts from bidding to purchase insolvent companies or their assets. The bill prevents wilful defaulters, promoters or management of the company having non-performing debt for over a year, and disqualified directors from submitting a resolution plan in case of defaults. A penalty of minimum Rs 1 lakh and maximum Rs 2 crore has been proposed for infringing any of the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

Skill development training centres skimmed over Assam.

On 28th December the Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal, launched skill development training centres at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati. The Department of Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship organized the inaugural ceremony. Assam is brimming with youth power and skill development training centres would bolster economic foundation of the state by equipping it with skilled manpower. For this, the state government has already inked MoU with Singapore Government for establishment of skill development centre having international standards in one of its cities, Mangaldoi. The proposed centre would impart training to around 10000 youth of the state. In addition to this, Assam government would also be erecting foreign language learning centres in the state, as a part of its effort to open new job opportunities for the youth abroad. The state is looking forward to train around 1.5 lakh youth on various trades before 31st March 2018.

The Knot of Allahabad Bank & NeSL became apparent.

On 30th December Allahabad Bank and National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) entered into an agreement for utilizing the NeSL's Information Utility Services envisaged under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016. Most banks are reeling under NPA pressure, especially in large value accounts and this step would play key role in minimizing the resolution period in NCLT referred cases and can help banks advance towards paperless documentation process. It is worth knowing that government owned NeSL is the first Information Utility entity registered by Insolvency and bankruptcy Board of India under IBBI (IU) Regulations, 2017.

Vineet Chowdhary : The New Chief secretary to Himachal.

On 30th December 1982 batch IAS officer of Himachal cadre, Vineet Chowdhary got appointed as chief secretary to the Himachal government. He has succeeded Vidya Charan Pharka, who was appointed chief secretary on 1st June 2016, superseding six senior IAS officers viz. Deepak Shanan, Ajay Mittal, Vineet Chowdhary, Upma Chowdhary, Bharti Sihag and A R Sihag who had proceeded on leave under protest. Besides Chowdhary, senior advocate Ashok Sharma got appointed as Advocate General to the government.

Om Prakash Singh became the New Director General of Police of UP.

On 31st December Principal Secretary (Home) Arvind Kumar made announcement of appointment of 1983 IPS officer, OP Singh as Director General of UP Police. He has replaced Sul Khan Singh whose term met an end on Sunday. Singh, is currently serving in capacity of the director general of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). The appointee is an alumnus of St. Xavier's College and Delhi University. He earned a Master Degree in Political Science along with an M.Phil degree from Madras University. In 1983 he joined Indian Police Service and addressed issues of internal security, crime investigation, law & order, intelligence and managed mega events like Kumbh Mela at Allahabad. In past he was awarded Indian Police Medal for Gallantry, Indian Police Medal for Distinguished Services and Indian Police Medal for Meritorious Services and many more for his outstanding service.

Karnataka will enjoy FAME-India scheme.

On 1st January Karnataka government aired announcement of obtaining electric vehicles under the Centre's FAME-India scheme. Karnataka will receive 40 electric buses, 100 four wheelers and 500 three wheelers along with establishment of charging infrastructure across the city of Bengaluru. It is worth knowing that under the scheme, a subsidy is provided to an extent of 60 % of the purchase cost for electric buses, Rs 1.24 lakh for every Electric four wheeler and Rs 61,000 for every electric three-wheeler by the central government.

NABARD (Amendment) Bill, 2017 got consent of Parliament.

On 2nd January Rajya Sabha approved the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill, 2017 which will amend the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981. NABARD is related to provision and regulation of amenities like credit for agricultural and industrial development in the rural areas. It is worth knowing that presently Central government is holding 99.6 % share of the bank and the rest is with RBI. The bill permits central government to increase the authorised capital of the Bank from Rs. 5,000 crore to Rs. 30,000 crore.

Prominent Urdu poet Anwar Jalalpuri signed off the poetry of life.

On 2nd January eminent Urdu poet Anwar Jalalpuri died at the King George Medical College hospital, Lucknow. The deceased was credited for translating Bhagwad Geeta into Urdu. 'Rahraw se Rahnuma tak', 'Urdu Shayri Mein Geetanjali' and 'Urdu Shayri mein Geeta' were some of the masterpiece writings of the 71-year-old poet.

Rajinder Khanna: The New Deputy NSA.

On 2nd January the former chief of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Rajinder Khanna got appointed as the Deputy National Security Adviser. He will assist National Security Advisor Ajit Doval on this post. He has succeeded Arvind Gupta who got retired in August 2017. This appointment was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The employment has been done on contractual basis. The appointee is 1978-batch IPS officer who had worked in RAW for a

fixed two year period from December 2014 and has led many counter-terrorism operations while working with RAW. He is an expert in dealing with Pakistan and Islamic terrorism. Before this appointment he was the Officer on Special Duty (Neighbourhood Studies) in the National Security Council Secretariat, that is an apex body that looks into all internal and external security-related matters.

Bilaspur will be blessed with AIIMS.

On 3rd January Under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), Union Cabinet gave nod to establishment of AIIMS in Bilaspur, Himachal Pradesh. The cost of this project is Rs 1351 crore. It will be a hospital with 750 beds and trauma centre facilities and 20 Super-Speciality Departments including 15 Operation Theatres. It will also have an AYUSH department with 30 beds. It will have a Medical college that will induct 100 MBBS students every year. It will also have a Nursing college with a maximum enrolment of 60 B.Sc. (Nursing) students per year. The purpose of this establishment is provision of Super Speciality health care to the population and creation of a large pool of doctors and other health workers in the region.

Non-English medium schools have attracted attention of Maharashtra.

On 4th January the Education Minister of Maharashtra, Vinod Tawde announced establishment of education board for non-English medium schools. At a function in Sindhudurg district, he was heard saying, "The government has decided to form an international education board to prepare syllabus for non-English medium schools. In the first phase, 100 selected Marathi schools will function according to the new syllabus." Apart from this, the Minister is planning to free teachers from clutches of non-teaching tasks like surveys, Census and election duty.

Four new balsam species swayed in Arunachal Pradesh.

As per publication in the international journals Phytotaxa and Webbia, researchers from the University of Calicut in Kerala discovered four new species of balsam in Arunachal Pradesh. The discovery came their way during an expedition to the Eastern Himalayas which they carried out under the Department of Science and Technology and the International Association for Plant Taxonomy, Slovakia. The discovered entities are commonly known as jewel weeds because of their diverse colour of the flowers. It is interesting to learn that these balsams which were found widespread across the Eastern Himalayas and the Western Ghats, Sri Lanka, South East Asia, Africa and Madagascar, belong to genus 'Impatiens' that signify the impatient nature of the fruits which explode suddenly when touched. Among them Impatiens Haridasanii have small pure yellow flowers and hairy leaves; Impatiens pseudocitrina have bright yellow flowers with small red spots on the throat and a long spur at the back; Impatiens nilalohitae have a height of more than one metre and has dark purple flowers with pale yellow throat and green stalk and Impatiens roingensis have white flowers with yellow patch on the mouth and hooked spur. Besides these, the researchers happened to rediscover another species, 'Impatiens agastyamalayensis' from the Western Ghats after a gap of more than a century.

UIDAI ensured Aadhaar security.

On 5th January Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) dismissed reports that stated availability of Aadhaar data at cost of Rs 500 for misusers. UIDAI declared that Aadhaar system is secure and any misuse can be traced as it maintains complete log of several functions. It is worth knowing that the "search facility" is available only for grievance redressal to designated personnel and State government officials to help residents, that too only upon entering their Aadhaar number. Even the grievance redressal search facility also provides only limited access to name and other details and has no access to biometric details. It is worth knowing that the Aadhaar data remains fully safe secure with highest encryption at UIDAI and mere display

of demographic information cannot be misused without biometrics. Aadhaar number is not a secret number, as it is shared with authorised agencies whenever an Aadhaar holder wants to avail a service or benefit of government welfare schemes. So mere availability of Aadhaar number will not be a security threat or will not lead to financial or any other fraud. UIDAI had launched mAadhaar app for syncing Aadhaar data on mobile phone.

Lok Sabha permitted salary hike of judges.

On 4th January Lok Sabha approved the bill that advocated hike of the salaries of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts which is in line with the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission. The bill proposes to increase the salary of the Chief Justice of India to ₹ 2.80 lakh a month, and that of judges of the Supreme Court and Chief Justices of High Courts to ₹ 2.5 lakh a month and ₹ 2.25 lakh a month for Judges of High Courts. Once it gets converted into a law then it will be considered from January 1, 2016.

Rs 2,420 crore arms procurement contracts met green signal.

In January 2018 Defence Ministry gave nod to arms procurement contracts worth Rs 2,420 crore for Navy and Army. Under this approval the purchase of P-8I Training Solution and Low-Intensity Conflict Electronic Warfare System (LICEWS) from Boeing will be done. P-8I Aircraft are well equipped for long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in support of broad area, maritime and littoral operations. The aircrafts are capable of thrusting a punitive response and maintaining a watch over India's immediate and extended areas of interest. And the Low-Intensity Conflict Electronic Warfare System will empower the Indian Army with upgraded communications infrastructure to deal effectively with advanced communication systems being used by terrorist groups.

PG Programme for Executives greeted IIM Rohtak.

On 6th January Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Rohtak introduced a new one year Postgraduate Programme for Executives (ePGPx). The registration for the same is available till 1st March. Candidates with at least 5 years of managerial/ entrepreneurial/professional experience will be eligible for the programme. The programme will be on wheels via online and offline sessions through state of the art Online Learning Platform. Equipped with excellent program design and latest management curriculum, the programme eyes to impart practical knowledge and personalized learning with a focus on intensive, multi-functional view on leadership. The course will span over 625 hours to encourage participants to reflect, analyse, critique, innovate and eventually learn the intricate aspects of the present day businesses with case based pedagogy.

Rs 10 banknote in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series.....

On 5th January the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched Rs 10 banknote in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series. Under Governor Urjit R. Patel's autograph, it bears motif of Sun Temple, Konark on the reverse, depicting the country's cultural heritage. The Chocolate Brown colored note has dimension of 63 mm x 123 mm. The front side of note features portrait of Mahatma Gandhi at the centre; denominational numeral ₹ 10 in Devanagari; Number panel with numerals growing from small to big on the top left side and bottom right side; Windowed demetalized security thread with inscriptions 'भारत' and RBI; Guarantee Clause, Governor's signature with Promise Clause and RBI emblem towards right of Mahatma Gandhi portrait and Ashoka Pillar emblem on the right. Features of Reverse (Back) side show Year of printing of the note on the left; Swachh Bharat logo with slogan; Language panel and Denominational numeral ₹ 10 in Devanagari.

'Women Start Up Programme' buzzed in IIM Bangalore's corridor.

On 8th January IIM Bangalore introduced online Training programme, 'Women Start Up Programme' for 12000 Aspiring Entrepreneurs. NS Raghavan Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (NSRCEL) at IIMB has begun this programme with financial assistance of Goldman Sachs and the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India. Budding women entrepreneurs will be trained via five week long "Do Your Venture" Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) which will begin in January and will continue upto March. After completion of this course, 300 aspirants will be selected for classroom learning on communication and customer interaction. Among them, 100 will be trained on developing a business plan, understanding costing and pricing, sales and marketing, and working on negotiation skills. They will also be given chance of networking opportunities with successful women entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, IIMB students, and Goldman Sachs professionals.

World Champion powerlifter was disempowered to death.

On 7th January World Champion Powerlifter Saksham Yadav along with four other national-level powerlifters lost breath in car accident on the Delhi-Panipat National Highway-1 near the Delhi-Haryana border. Saksham Yadav had won a gold medal for India in the 2017 world championships.

Footprints of French honour will trail behind Soumitra Chattopadhyay.

Bengali theatre actor Soumitra Chattopadhyay will be honored with French honour, 'Legion of Honour' in the upcoming 42nd International Kolkata Book Fair which will begin from 30th January and will conclude on 11th February 2018. French Ambassador Alexandre Ziegler made announcement of this award which will be conferred by the French culture and communication minister Francoise Nyssen in Kolkata. The legendary film and theatre actor has worked in Satyajit Ray's iconic films like Apur Sansar, Abhijan, Charulata, Aranyer Din Ratri and Sonar Kella and was a recipient of Dadasaheb Phalke Award in past.

May there be 85% pictorial warning on tobacco products.

On 8th January the Apex Court stayed the Karnataka High Court order against 85% pictorial warning on tobacco products as 'health of a citizen has primacy' and large section of the population is still uneducated. Bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and justice A M Khanwilkar and justice D Y Chandrachud stressed on the significance of public health and the harmful effects of tobacco products. The decision came in reply of an appeal filed by a non-government organisation, Health for Millions Trust, that sought an interim stay on the high court ruling, which directed reduction of the size of the pictorial warning on tobacco products from 85% to 40%. The flash back shows that on 15th December 2017 the Karnataka high court had struck down the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2014 saying they were unconstitutional, as they violated fundamental rights like the right to equality and the right to trade.

The Race Against The Time Has Begun!

On 9th January the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has started the correction process for the Joint Entrance Exam (JEE) Main 2018. The correction facility has walked in as the last opportunity to correct any existing flaws in registered details of applicants. Candidates can make the requisite correction in their application forms till 22nd January via jeemain.nic.in. They will be required to do the payment of an additional fee through credit/debit card/Ewallet (SBI buddy/Paytm) or through e-challan by cash, during the online correction. However, the fee can be paid till 23rd January. Candidates need to note here that the mode of examination cannot be changed. The JEE Main exam is scheduled to be conducted on 8th April through pen and paper mode and 15th April and 16th April for computer based test mode.

K Sivan, the new ISRO chairman.

On 10th January Eminent scientist K Sivan popularly known as The 'Rocket Man' got appointed as the chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). He has succeeded AS Kiran Kumar. The appointee is credited for development of the PSLV rocket for sending 104 satellites in a single mission, development of cryogenic engines for India's space programme, designing a software called Sitara, which ISRO uses for simulating trajectories of its rockets and many more. Previously he was serving as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram. In 1980 he graduated from Madras Institute of Technology in aeronautical engineering and earned Master of Engineering in Aerospace engineering from IISc, Bangalore in 1982 after that he did his PhD in Aerospace engineering from IIT Bombay in year 2006. He was well acknowledged with several awards for his outstanding work in past.

Breeze of free treatment for Hepatitis C will soon intoxicate the air.

On 9th January Health Ministry announced beginning of a National Programme for Control of Viral Hepatitis from the 2018-19 financial year, for which a budget of Rs 600 crore for the next three years has been approved. Under this programme an anti-viral treatment that costs \$63,000-94,000 for the full course in the US and Europe will be provided free at all government health establishments. It is worth knowing that Hepatitis C is caused by a blood-borne virus which attacks liver. It could spread through use of injectable drugs, unsafe injection practices, unsafe health care, and transfusion of unscreened blood and blood products. There is no known vaccine for Hepatitis C. According to World Health Organization a huge number of people get infected with Hepatitis C, develop cirrhosis of the liver or liver cancer, which are responsible for a bulk of the 3,99,000 Hepatitis C deaths annually across the globe. Sofosbuvir is the recommended drug under the new WHO treatment guidelines for Hepatitis C.

108 Years Old Monorail is on wheels.

In January 2018 National Rail Museum of Chanakyapuri in New Delhi has decided to run 108 years old monorail which was used by Maharaja of Patiala on every thursday. This monorail hauled by steam locomotives is one of its kind across the globe. It is worth knowing that this National Rail Museum was formally inaugurated on the 1st of February, 1977. It is one-of-its-kind museum in Asia that has an interesting collection of history, heritage, romance, nostalgia, fun, leisure and entertainment, all at one place.

The old monk drunk rum of death.

In January 2018 the founder of the legendary dark rum, 'Old Monk', Brigadier (Retd) Kapil Mohan died of cardiac arrest at age of 88 in Ghaziabad's Mohan Nagar. He was chairman of Mohan Meakins Breweries. It is worth knowing that he was a Padma Shri awardee who was a teetotaler and his much-recognised and distinctive square bottle of rum 'Old Monk' has been evoking nostalgia for generations of rum-loving Indians. Solan No.1, and Golden Eagle were his other famous brands. Besides spirits, Mohan Meakin dealt in malt houses, glass factories, breakfast food, fruit products and juices, malt extract factories, cold storages and engineering works.

12 January: National Youth Day.

Nation celebrated 155th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day on 12th January 2018. On this occasion a five day National Youth Festival on 'Sankalp Se Siddhi' theme in Greater Noida got inaugurated in which Culture Minister, Dr. Mahesh Sharma was the guest of honor. The aim behind this celebration was to propagate the ideas and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda who was one of the greatest social reformers, thinkers, and philosophers of India. He had introduced Indian philosophies of Vedanta and

yoga to the western world. His speech at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in year 1893 brought him in limelight.

He was the chief disciple of the 19th-century Indian mystic Ramakrishna and founder of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission. In the late 19th century Hinduism succeeded in achieving the stature of major world religion on account of his efforts.

'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' Ranking is in pipeline.

In January 2018 conference, Niti Aayog proclaimed that it will provide 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' rankings to 115 aspirational districts. The ranking will be given on 10 parameters like nutrition, education and health etc. It will create a dashboard which will display the change in ranking of districts on continuous basis by the end of March 2018. The government is planning to sanction more than 12 lakh houses in 115 backward districts identified for development in 18 months under a housing scheme. It is worth knowing that presently 6.32 lakh houses have been sanctioned under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) for these districts.

CAREER FLITE

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Siwach, ABC's best youth boxer!

On 13th December World youth champion Sachin Siwach got adjudged as Asian Boxing Confederation's best youth boxer of the year . The champion won 36.2 % votes in the online poll of the continental body. He had won the world title last year and claimed a silver medal in the Asian youth championship this year, besides a gold at the Youth Commonwealth Games. Besides him, another Indian Lenny D'Gama became the Best Asian International Technical Official with 45.5% online poll. D'Gama officiated at the ASBC Asian Confederation junior boxing championships in Puerto Princesa and also in the Asian Women's boxing championships in Ho Chi Minh City.

Sri Lanka became 163rd nation to embrace landmine ban treaty.

On 15th December Sri Lanka became the 163rd nation to assent to the anti-personnel mine ban convention. The treaty advocates prohibition of the use, production, stockpiling, and transfer of anti-personnel mines. The nations that ratified this treaty require to wipe out all stockpiled anti-personnel mines under their possession or jurisdiction, not later than 4-years after their consent to this treaty. This Mine Ban Treaty is also known as Ottawa Treaty which came into force on 18th September 1997. Austria will chair and host the 16th meeting of the states parties to the treaty in Vienna during the period of December 18-21, 2017. It is worth knowing that India, Nepal and Pakistan are the nations which are not yet part of this treaty.

Gabon has begun to enjoy 'polio-free' stature.

On 16th December the World Health Organisation has declared Gabon a "polio-free country" on account of lack of new reported or suspected cases in the central African country. Gabon's Health Minister, Denise Mekam'ne Edzidzie made an appeal, "continue to immunise children and prevent a resurgence of this disease". It is worth knowing that Polio is a highly-infectious viral disease which mainly affects young children and can result in permanent paralysis and immunisation is the sole way of warding it off. But it is disheartening to know that Afghanistan and Pakistan are still striving in its clutches.

'Space climate observatory', the next item on Paris climate agreement menu.

In December 2017 the heads of world space agencies have proposed the creation of a climate observatory to combine acquired data and share it with scientists worldwide. The proposed Space Climate Observatory will act as a hub between space agencies and the international scientific community. In this summit, the nations discussed climate monitoring from space, role of satellites in studying and gaining new insights into climate change in order to mitigate its effects and help societies devise coping strategies. It is worth knowing that over half of the 50 essential climate variables could be measured only from space. Besides these, greenhouse gases, water resource management and the use of satellites during natural disasters were the other topics that attracted summit's attention.

18th December took refuge as International Migrants Day.

Globe observed International Migrants Day on "Safe Migration in a World on the Move" theme. The day aimed at creating awareness about the protection and safety of the migrants as in this new era of crisis and complexity, challenges and difficulties, international migration needs enhanced cooperation and collective action among countries and regions. As per a survey the total number of international migrants has climbed from an estimated 175 million in year 2000 to 244 million in year 2015. Around two thirds of all international migrants live in Europe or Asia. And one in every ten migrants is below 15 years of age. The United Nations General Assembly adopted New York Declaration on 19th September 2016, for refugees and

migrants. This declaration made way for the adoption of two new global compacts in 2018 viz. Global Compact on Refugees and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Miss India USA 2017, 'Shree Saini'.

18th December ended on a high note for Shree Saini, a resident of Washington state, who got crowned as Miss India USA 2017. The 21-year-old beauty has her roots in Punjab. Currently she is studying in University of Washington. She wishes to weed out human trafficking and work towards promoting the significance of emotional well-being in the society. Prachi Singh, a 22-year-old medical student from Connecticut was adjudged as the first runner-up, while North Carolina's Fareena was declared as the second runner-up at Miss India USA 2017 pageant. Besides this contest, Mrs India USA 2017 was also held in which cancer surgeon, Kavita Malhotra Pattani from Florida became Mrs India USA 2017. Prerna was the first runner-up while Ishwarya was proclaimed as the second runner-up for this title. Apart from these, Miss Teen India USA 2017 also took place in which 17 year old Swapna Mannam from New Jersey became Miss Teen India USA 2017. Simran emerged as the first runner-up and Kritika was declared as the second runner-up. These contests were kick started by New York-based eminent Indian Americans Dharmatma Saran and Neelam Saran, under the banner of India Festival Committee 36 years ago and Miss India USA is the longest running Indian pageant outside India.

First global news network 'TicToc' ticked via Bloomberg Media and Twitter.

On 18th December a mobile-first global news network named 'TicToc' came via collaboration of Bloomberg Media and Twitter. Eyeing mobile-first news consumers, it has been launched for a fast and credible modern news experience with the coverage focusing on general interest news worldwide. The virgin network features a mixture of live video and reporting from Bloomberg journalists across the globe, as well as the breaking news content from consumers, curated and verified by Bloomberg editors with a real-time distillation of the related conversation on Twitter. This 24-hour news network has seven sponsors on board viz. AT&T Business, Goldman Sachs, CA Technologies, CME Group, INFINITI, SAS, and TD Ameritrade.

Andrej Babis : The New Prime Minister of Czech.

December 2017 brought billionaire businessman Andrej Babis in power. He got appointed as the Prime Minister of Czech. Past says that Babis formed a party 'ANO' in 2011 to oppose corruption of the time; keep the budget in shape; boost infrastructure investments and public sector wages and secure the EU's external border against illegal migration. In October 2017, ANO received 29.6% votes and came into power on 13th December with a pledge to combat against migration and to increase efficiency of the state. Currently, ANO has 78 seats in the 200-seat lower house but lacks support of the other eight parties

Presidency of Chile rechose Sebastián Piñera for the second time.

On 18th December a conservative billionaire and former president, Sebastián Piñera won Chile's presidential election. He defeated Left-winger, Alejandro Guillier. Sebastián received more than 54% votes and returned to the presidency after a four-year gap. He had governed the country from 2010 to 2014, when he ended twenty years of uninterrupted centre-left rule. He promised to lower taxes for reblooming of economy.

20th December : International Human Solidarity Day.

This day was celebrated worldwide with an aim of creating public awareness about the significance of solidarity and encouraging ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals that include poverty eradication. Solidarity is unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group and the United Nations General

Assembly identified it as one of the fundamental values of international relations in the 21st Century via resolution 60/209 where those who either suffer or benefit least deserve help from those who benefit most. On 20th December the United Nations General Assembly created a World Solidarity Fund as a trust fund for United Nations Development Programme.

France will punctuate oil and gas production with a full stop.

On 19th December the parliament of France passed a final vote to prohibit exploration and production of oil and natural gas by 2040 within the country and its overseas territories. As per the approved law the existing drilling permits will not be renewed anymore and no new exploration licenses will be granted. With this, France has become the first nation in the world to ban any new oil exploration and extraction licenses. However, it is symbolic since oil and gas produced in France accounts for just 1% of domestic consumption. The rest is imported. This ban has come to wean the French economy from fossil fuels and to fulfill France's commitments under the Paris climate agreement to control global warming

Solar Power, the bone of contention between India and USA.

20th December re-ignited the ember of solar power dispute between major economies of India and USA that thrive to dominate the renewable energy sector. USA has raised the issue that India has failed to comply with a World Trade Organisation (WTO) norms on solar power and will report the matter to WTO's dispute settlement body (DSB) next month. History reveals that India inaugurated its national solar programme in year 2011 with an aim to ease chronic energy shortages in Asia's third-largest economy without creating pollution. But the United States grumbled at it saying the programme was discriminatory and US solar exports to India had fallen by 90% from 2011. India had violated the trade rules by recommending solar power developers to employ Indian-made cells and modules. It is worth knowing that such "local content" requirements are banned because they discriminate in favour of domestic firms and are against foreign competitors.

Singaporean got captured as National Geographic Photographer of the Year 2017.

On 21st December National Geographic conferred the 2017 National Geographic Nature Photographer of the Year award upon Jayaprakash Joghee Bojan of Singapore in the wildlife photography category. The awardee pursued 10,000 dollars for his photo titled "Face to face in a river in Borneo." The clicked picture portrays an orangutan crossing Sekoyner river in Indonesia's Tanjung Puting National Park. These pictures will be featured in the upcoming issue of National Geographic magazine. It is worth knowing that the photographer stepped into five-foot deep water which was home to freshwater crocodiles and clicked the award-winning image. Besides him, Karim Iliya of Haiku, Hawaii got first prize in the Landscapes category for a photo from Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Jim Obester of Vancouver, Wash., clinched first place in the Underwater category for a photo of an anemone and Todd Kennedy of New South Wales, Australia, won place in the Aerials category for a photo of a rock pool in Sydney at high tide.

UK, the Best Country for Business !

On 19th December Forbes released its 2018 annual rankings in which UK emerged as the 'Best Country for Business' despite of the impending Brexit-related damage. The country has climbed up from fifth position of last year to first position this year. The ranking of around 153 nations was done on 15 parameters including property rights, innovation, taxes and red tape. UK was found to be in top 25 nations in each of the metrics except for political risk. The nation scored fourth position in technological readiness and third spot in the size and education of its workforce. As per Forbes' Kurt Badenhausen, "Some UK companies are holding off

on investments to see how Brexit effects trade relations, and growth is forecast to slow in 2018, but Britain's business climate remains attractive."

Holkar stadium once again became India's ground of cheer.

On 22nd December India once again posted victory on Holkar stadium of Indore, Madhya Pradesh against Sri Lanka in the second T20 International. India outshone Sri Lanka by 88 runs and with this, it has taken to unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. India batted first and posted a target of 261 runs for the island nation. Sri Lankan innings came to an end with 172 runs in 17.2 overs. The day turned out to be a red letter day not only for the country but also for Skipper Rohit Sharma, who achieved many milestones with his contribution of 118 runs which became the highest individual score for India in T20. In the beginning of Indian innings Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul were responsible for a stand of 165 runs which turned out to be the highest for India for any wicket in T20 matches. His 35 ball hundred was joint fastest century in Twenty20, the other being of David Miller of South Africa. Besides these, Rohit also became the first Indian captain to score a century in T-20. He also became the first Indian player to hit 10 or more sixes in both ODIs and T20s. Having done all this, Rohit Sharma was to receive Man Of the Match title. From Sri Lankan squad, Kusal Perera made 77 runs and India's Yuzvendra Chahal took four wickets. The Third and Final T20 will be played tomorrow at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai at 7 pm.

The Return of Guatemala embassy to Jerusalem rang true to Trump's plan.

On 25th December Guatemala's president, Jimmy Morales followed the lead of Donald Trump and announced his plans to move his country's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. With this announcement, the Central American nation has become the first country to do so. It is worth knowing that it was Guatemala that supported the creation of the State of Israel and Guatemala along with the United States, Israel and six smaller nations voted against a United Nations resolution to condemn US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel on Thursday last week. According to Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu the move is likely to get followed by other nations, who will move their embassy to Jerusalem in the wake of Trump's decision.

Land exploration satellite tore the Chinese sky.

On 23rd December China projected a land exploration satellite into a preset orbit for remote sensing operations from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi desert, northwest China's Gansu Province via Long march-2D rocket. The satellite is on purpose of remote sensing exploration of land resources and conduction of electromagnetic probes and other experiments. This was the 259th mission of the Long March rocket series. It is worth learning here that the rockets of this series are named after the Long March of Chinese communist history.

Sudan will conceive Russia's nuclear power plant.

In December 2017 Russia inked an agreement with Sudan to build a nuclear power plant in the nation. Rusatom Overseas, a branch of Rosatom and Sudan's electricity ministry in Khartoum, the capital city of Sudan autographed the document for the same as per the Russian nuclear agency Rosatom's information. The development of nuclear technology will address Sudan's energy security problem. The agreement happened after a high level meeting between Vladimir Putin and his Sudanese counterpart Sudanese President Bashir who was in wanted list of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2009 and 2010 for being involved in genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity related to the conflict in Darfur, which took 300,000 lives.

What made Belgium script news headlines of Arab Country ?

On 26th December European country Belgium appointed Dominique Mineur as first female envoy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. With this, Belgium has become the first country to appoint first female ambassador to the conservative nation and Dominique who is currently serving as the ambassador to the United Arab Emirates has also become the first female ambassador to Saudi Arabia. After this feat, the Ministry of foreign affairs of Belgium is planning to place female ambassador in Tehran. It is worth knowing here that Saudi Arabia was ranked at 138th position out of 144 countries in the 2017 Global Gender Gap. Although the country has begun to grant liberty to veiled gender in many fields yet the constriction persists in context to employment, travel, marriage and divorce. The delicate gender still cannot mix freely with robust gender and work with them.

What does the economy report say ?

In December 2017, Executive Chairman of UK's leading specialist economics consultancy, the Centre for Economics and Business Research, Douglas McWilliams predicted in a report that India will overtake France and the UK and will become world's fifth largest economy in 2018 in terms of dollar. And China is likely to overtake the United States of America on number one position by 2032. On the other hand, Britain that presently seems to lag behind France, will for sure overtake France as the Brexit's effects on Britain's economy will be less than feared by 2020. On account of its low oil prices and its too much reliance on energy sector, Russia is likely to fall from 11th spot to 17th spot by 2032.

Sri Lanka became even for Kumar's 'Against All Odds'.

In December 2017, Chief of Communications at the Rourkela Steel Plant, Ramendra Kumar's latest book 'Against All Odds' saw its first overseas release at the function in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Besides this, the Sinhala translation of his book 'Dilemma and other stories' also got released. On this occasion, Writers and Publishers of Sri Lanka honored Ramendra Kumar for his contribution to children's literature and his stories enjoyed place of privilege in Sri Lankan text books which were distributed to more than 10,000 schools across the country. It is worth knowing that Kumar is an award-winning writer who authored 32 books and his writings have been translated into 14 Indian and 13 foreign languages in India and abroad.

India's first pod taxi shall obey US safety.

On 27th December, The five-member committee on technical and safety standards of India's first pod taxi project or Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) opened doors for fresh proposals for strictest safety prescribed norms of United States. In this context, the committee recommended issuance of new EOI (expression of interest) incorporating automated people mover (APM) standards and specifications in US, along with other general safety parameters with recommendations of NITI Aayog. This project will be taken up on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) basis on PPP (Public-Private Partnership) basis. This project is for a 12.3-km stretch from Delhi-Haryana border on NH 8 (near Ambience Mall) to Badshahpur via Rajiv Chowk, IFFCO and Sohna Road.

Forbes 2017 top-grossing actors' list is out!

On 28th December Vin Diesel, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Gal Gadot emerged as top grossing stars of 2017 Forbes. American actor Mark Sinclair, better known by his stage name Vin Diesel earned \$1.6 billion in global ticket sales via "The Fate of the Furious". Dwayne Douglas Johnson, also known by his ring name The Rock, is an American actor and professional wrestler appeared on number 2nd position with \$1.5 billion.

Israeli actress and model, Gal Gadot boosted her earning for a total of \$1.4 billion at the box office by her appearance in "Justice League."

Bob Givens gave up on life!

In December 2017 the animator best known for his redesign of Bugs Bunny, died of acute respiratory failure at the age of 99 in Burbank, California. In his career of 60 years he worked as animator in companies like Disney, Warner Bros, and Hanna-Barbera. Givens created cartoon characters like Tom & Jerry, Daffy Duck, Alvin and the Chipmunks and Popeye. Donald Duck and Snow White cartoons were his initial creations when he began working in Disney in year 1937. He joined Warner Bros in year 1940 where his redesign of Bugs Bunny character which was the lead character of the Looney Tunes franchise brought him in limelight in the industry. He had also brought his skills to TV advertising, animating cartoon insects for Raid bug-killer commercials.

Nepal said no for Indo-Nepal Joint Scientific Exercise !

Under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the 250-year-old institute, the Survey of India extended proposal of 'Indo-Nepal Joint Scientific Exercise' to Nepal which got refused on 29th December. In this Indo-Nepal Joint Scientific Exercise, India wanted to jointly re-measure the world's highest peak, Mt Everest which experienced massive earthquake in year 2015. Though Nepal refused the proposal yet it has requested India to provide the levelling data and China for the gravity data which are crucial for determination of the height of Mt Everest. It is worth recalling here that India became the first country to have confirmed the height of Mt Everest and ascertain it as the highest peak in the world in year 1855 when Sir George Everest was the leader of the Surveyor General of India. In 1956 also India carried the same mission of measurement of this peak. Past gives witness of China's measurement exercise of this peak in 1975 as well as in 2005.

China's first photovoltaic highway made appearance.

On 28th December World's first photovoltaic highway got tested in eastern Chinese city of Jinan, Shandong province. This highway has been manifested to transfer energy to electric vehicles passing on top of them. The construction can produce 817.2 KW of power and is likely to generate 1 million KW hours of electricity each year. The electricity produced via this highway will be connected to China's national power grid. China constructed this two kilometres long special section that has three layers using its home grown technology. The bottom is an insulator to prevent moisture from getting in the middle layer which has the photovoltaic devices like solar panels, wireless charging systems for electric vehicles and other sensors for drones and the top is protective, made from transparent concrete. It is worth knowing that the photovoltaic highway is meant for generating solar energy, lighting, improving the operation of autonomous cars, and monitoring the condition of the road. France was the first country to build the world's first photovoltaic highway fitted with solar panels in year 2016. After France, China became the second country to build a photovoltaic highway.

World's largest human genome research project descended in China.

On 28th December China launched the world's largest human genome research project to record the genetic makeup of one lakh people for preparing precision medicines for the future. The project will involve collecting, sequencing gene samples, gathering the data and sharing the findings. Under this, the genetic data of Han ethnic majority people and nine other ethnic minority groups with a population of more than five million across the country will be collected. Hereditary information of around 25,000 human genes will be

decoded. According to former deputy head of the Beijing Institute of Genomics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Yu Juna, a "health contrast" pool will be created by detecting the genetic links between health and sickness.

Israel jumped out from UNESCO's membership.

On 30th December Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced withdrawal of Israel's membership from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the grounds that the body had become "a theatre of the absurd". Israel filed the notice for the same as UNESCO criticised Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem and granted full membership to Palestine in year 2011. UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay regretted over the matter saying, "A member of UNESCO since 1949, Israel has a rightful place inside the United Nations agency that is dedicated to education, culture and science." It is worth knowing that Israel has nine sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List, including the White City of Tel Aviv, the Incense Route along desert cities in the Negev, and the sites of human evolution at Mount Carmel. Israel has sought to establish a permanent observer mission to UNESCO which will officially cease membership as of December 31, 2018.

The Elephants Took a Sigh of Relief !!!

World's biggest consumer of ivory products, China has locked its Legal Ivory Trade on 31st December 2017. China had pledged to ban complete buying and selling of ivory in year 2015. The eventual implementation of the decision has spelled an end of all the domestic trade in ivory via government-licensed carving factories and ivory retailers. It is worth knowing that the trade forced yearly slaughter of some 30,000 African elephants by poachers. Intricate carvings, trinkets, chopsticks, and many other items were made from Ivory. In this context Gao Yufang, a Ph.D. student in conservation biology and cultural anthropology at Yale University commented, "The Chinese government's ban on its domestic ivory trade sends a message to the general public in China that the life of elephants is more important than the ivory carving culture." An international ivory trade ban came into effect in year 1990 and U.S. implemented ivory ban from June 2016 after taking a joint pledge with China in year 2015.

"Buy American, Hire American" has come as new fire for firing H-1B visa holders.....

Trump administration is looking into a new "Buy American, Hire American" proposal that intends to end the provision of granting extensions to H-1B visa holders whose applications for permanent residency (Green Card) had been accepted. The proposal is flaming in robe of an internal memo on the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)'s table that oversees citizenship and immigration. The proposal gives power of discretion to USCIS officials to decide on extensions to be given to H-1B holders waiting for Green Card and the idea is to create a sort of 'self-deportation' of hundreds of thousands of Indian tech workers in the United States for opening up those jobs for Americans. The proposal if gets implemented is likely to affect around 500,000 to 750,000 Indian H-1B visa holders. It is worth knowing that an H-1B visa is granted for three years, with the provision of extension after which visa holders return to their countries. If approved for Green Card, they wait in the US using extensions.

Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga: The New Prime Minister of Mali.

Mali's President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita appointed ex-defence and foreign minister, Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga as Prime Minister of Mali. He has succeeded Abdoulaye Idrissa. The new government will be the fifth to serve under Keita since his election in 2013. It is worth knowing that the new Prime Minister belongs to Gao in Mali's north which Islamist militants use as launchpad for attacking soldiers, U.N. peacekeepers and civilians.

Turkey's 'Bird Language' chirped in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List.

On 3rd January the unusual but efficient 'whistle' language of villagers of remote and mountainous region in the district of Canakci in Giresun province of northern Turkey made entry into UNESCO's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Around 10,000 people of this region use this highly-developed, high-pitch system of communication with more than 400 words and phrases for interaction. UNESCO has recognized this "bird or whistle language" of Black Sea villagers as an endangered part of world heritage. However, the custodians of this tradition do organize an annual Bird Language Festival and have also made this bird language a part of the primary school curriculum since 2014. It is worth knowing that whistling as a language, dates back to 500 years when the Ottoman Empire was in power. Back then, the whistle language was widespread in the Black Sea regions. The whistle language has been breathing through the ages across Spain's Canary Islands, Mexico and Greek villages.

UN Security Council welcomed Six countries.

On 2nd January UN Security Council began a new two-year term for Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Peru, Poland and the Netherlands as six non-permanent members of the UN Security Council at the UN headquarters in New York. The ambassadors representing the council's six new member countries placed their flags among this body of nine other members. With this the UN Security Council has now 15 members having 3 women and 12 men, which includes five viz. Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States with permanent seats who have the power to veto resolutions. It is also worth remembering that six countries viz. Egypt, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay had left the Security Council.

Sri Lankan novelist signed off novel of life.

On 4th January Ambalavaner Sivanandan, novelist and intellectual giant of Sri Lanka died at 94. He penned a novel 'When Memory Dies' which fetched him the 1998 Commonwealth Writers' Prize in the 'Best First Book category for Europe and South Asia'. The deceased was also director emeritus of London's Institute of Race Relations. He published scholarly articles on race, class and imperialism in 'Race & Class'. Sivanandan had also built the library on race relations in 2006 which moved to the University of Warwick Library, where it is today known as the Sivanandan Collection.

Pakistan is suffering 1 billion security suspension at hands of USA.

On 5th January the United States denied 1 billion US dollar security assistance to Pakistan over militant groups. Pakistan will have to take decisive action against terror groups, including the Afghan Taliban and the Haqqani Network for getting this amount. Pakistan is harbouring these groups. It is worth knowing that the prominent among the suspended amount include 255 million dollars in Foreign Military Funding for the fiscal year 2016 as mandated by the Congress. Besides this, the Department of Defense has suspended the entire 900 million dollar of the Coalition Support Fund money to Pakistan for the fiscal year 2017. In addition to this, Pakistan will be under USA surveillance for severe violations of religious freedom. For this USA has created a Special Watch List category under the Frank R Wolf International Religious Freedom Act of 2016.

Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy tied India & Sri Lanka.

As per the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Naik, India and Sri Lanka inked MoU on Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy. It will promote regulation of teaching, practice, drugs and drugless therapies, traditional medicine and homeopathy. The requisite funding will be done from the existing allocated budget under AYUSH Ministry's Central Sector Scheme for the promotion of International Cooperation in AYUSH.

Chocolate might become a dream by 2050.

In January 2018 scientists revealed the impending extinction of Chocolate on account of expected disappearance of cacao plant by 2050 due to increasing global warming. The cacao tree, requires heavy rainfall for growth. They can only grow within a narrow strip of rainforest roughly 20 degrees north and south of the equator, where temperature, rain, and humidity all stay relatively constant throughout the year. But the increasing global temperatures and drier weather conditions are posing threat to the survival of this plant. It is worth knowing that more than half of the world's chocolate comes from just two West African countries viz. Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. The scientists from the University of California in collaboration with the food and candy company, Mars are trying to devise an alternative 'CRISPR' to evolve crops that can survive these environmental challenges. CRISPR is gene-editing technology which leads to clusters of regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats. Through CRISPR, DNA sequences are altered and genes are modified for removing genetic defects.

GOLD & ICON on ionosphere expedition.

On 5th January NASA announced to employ two missions viz. the Global-scale Observations of the Limb and Disk (GOLD) and Ionospheric Connection Explorer (ICON) for exploring ionosphere that carries radio signals which guide airplanes, ships and Global Positioning System satellites. NASA will launch GOLD in January 2018 and ICON little later to have a better understanding of ionosphere 96 km above Earth's surface. ICON will be placed in low-Earth orbit, at 560 km above Earth, like a close-up camera while GOLD will be placed in a geostationary orbit over the Western Hemisphere, about 35,398 km above the planet's surface to get full-disk view of the ionosphere. The two missions will identify reasons for changes in the upper atmosphere during hurricanes and geomagnetic storms.

The record setting astronaut quit record of life!

On 5th January John Young, who created record in space by walking on the moon and later commanded the first space shuttle flight died of pneumonia at 87 in Houston, Texas. The deceased was the only agency astronaut who entered into space as part of the Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs, and was the first to fly into space six times. He was the ninth man to walk on the Moon. It is worth learning that counting his takeoff from the Moon in year 1972 as commander of Apollo 16, his blastoff tally stood at seven, for decades a world record. He also penned a memoir, "Forever Young."

Karen Bradley: The New Northern Ireland minister.

On 8th January British Prime Minister Theresa May appointed Karen Bradley as the new Northern Ireland minister. She has taken place of James Brokenshire. The 47 year old British Conservative Party politician has headed the government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, where she was best known for adopting a tough stance over Rupert Murdoch's bid to buy all of broadcaster Sky. It is worth remembering here that Northern Ireland has been without a regional government for almost a year.

SpaceX spaced secret US government spacecraft into space !

On 7th January USA launched its secret government spacecraft, ' Zuma', the EchoStar 105/SES-11 satellite on Falcon 9 rocket via its space company SpaceX. It was launched into orbit from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida after which Falcon 9 landed back to base. Zuma is said to be on a secret mission which marked South African-born American entrepreneur and businessman, Elon Musk's company's first mission in 2018. It is worth knowing that multimillionaire Elon Reeve Musk founded SpaceX company in year 2002. SpaceX made 18 successful launches last year that turned out to be the highest in any calendar year. SpaceX is now preparing to launch its biggest rocket 'Falcon Heavy' in near future.

USCIS offered moment of respite for H-1B visa holders!

On 9th January, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) overruled the regulatory change proposed by Trump administration under 'Buy American, Hire American' campaign that forced H-1B visa holders to leave the United States. The officials condemned the proposal defining it adverse to the talent-based immigration system goals. In addition to this they proclaimed that proposal would harm the US business, economy and the country. The USCIS changed the interpretation of Section 104 C of the American Competitiveness in the 21st Century Act (AC21) statute that states that USCIS may grant the extensions. It provides for H-1B extensions beyond the 6 year limit. The decision fetched sigh of relief to 7,50,000 Indians who otherwise would have suffered deportation. The trade association of Indian information technology, National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) warned earlier that any disruptive move on the visa front would be detrimental for both India and the US.

Germany has opted to miss the carbon emission goal.

In January 2018 Germany proclaimed that it won't be able to achieve the climate change goal of reducing carbon emission till 2020. The chancellor Angela Merkel and her party made this announcement as despite of a booming renewable sector, Germany still gets 39% of its power from coal so attaining the target of lowering the emissions by 40% by 2020 from 1990 levels by about 5% seems to be a hard nut to crack. Although a cross-party commission has been set up to create a phase-out plan for the dirty fuel, yet it remains a politically charged subject.

English got bashed out from Primary schools of Iran!

In January 2018 Iran banned the teaching of English language in primary schools under apprehension of 'western cultural invasion'. Head of the state-run high education council, Mehdi Navid-Adham remarked "Teaching English in government and non-government primary schools in the official curriculum is against laws and regulations. The assumption is that in primary education the groundwork for the Iranian culture of the students is laid." However, the teaching of English is permissible in middle school in Iran, at the ages of 12 to 14. In context to the imposed ban, the Islamic leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei added, "That does not mean opposition to learning a foreign language, but this is the promotion of a foreign culture in the country and among children, young adults and youths."

Harjinder Singh :The Chef de Mission for 23rd Winter Olympic Games.

On 10th January General Secretary in the Ice Hockey Association of India got appointed as Chef de Mission of Indian squad for 23rd Winter Olympic Games which will take place in Pyeongchang, South Korea in February 2018. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) confirmed this appointment. In context to hosting of 2018 Winter Olympics, it is worth knowing that Pyeongchang, South Korea was chosen as the host city in the 123rd Session of International Olympic Committee in Durban, South Africa. Munich in Germany and Annecy in France were the contenders for the same.

New Zealand Unveiled Extinct Giant Burrowing Bat Fossil.

On 11th January international team of scientists claimed to have found the fossilised remains of a giant burrowing bat that lived 16 to 19 million years ago near St Bathans in Central Otago New Zealand. The discovered fossil is estimated to be three times the size of an average modern bat and it is said to be from bat super-family that existed in the southern landmasses of Australia, New Zealand, South America and possibly Antarctica as per the study of author Sue Hand from the University of New South Wales. Its large specialised teeth suggest that it ate plant food as well as small vertebrates. The bat has been named as "Vulcanops jennyworthyae" after team member Jenny Worthy, who discovered the fossils, and Vulcan is the Roman god of fire.

SPORTS NEWS

Commonwealth Wrestling Championship glittered gold for India.

On 17th December Double Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar and another Olympic bronze medalist of the 2016 Rio Games, Sakshi Malik coined one gold medal each at the Commonwealth Wrestling Championships in Johannesburg, South Africa. Sushil outshone New Zealand's Akash Khullar with a pinfall in the final of the 74kg freestyle category and Sakshi defeated New Zealand's Tayla Tuahine Ford by 13-2 in the final of the 62 kg women's freestyle category. Besides them, the other gold medals winners in the freestyle category for India were Utkarsh Kale (57kg), Sharvan (61kg), Bajrang (65kg), Amit Dhankar (70kg), Jitender (79kg), Deepak (86kg), Somveer (92kg), Rubaljeet Singh (97kg) and Hitender (125kg).

Roger Federer : BBC Overseas Sports Personality of the Year.

On 16th December Swiss Tennis star, Roger Federer got selected for BBC Overseas Sports Personality of the Year. He grabbed this title for a record fourth time for winning two Grand Slam Titles this year. Prior to this, he clinched the same title in 2004, 2006 and 2007. American football quarterback for the New England Patriots of the National Football League, Tom Brady ; para-athlete Tatyana McFadden ; track and field standout Sally Pearson, and darts player Michael van Gerwen were his competitors for the title this year. He followed his great rival Rafael Nadal at world No. 2 rank. Before him, Muhammad Ali and Usain Bolt have each won this title thrice.

Mo Farah: BBC Sports Personality of the Year 2017.

On 19th December Sir Mohamed Muktar Jama, "Mo" Farah, Britain's most successful-ever distance runner scripted BBC Sports Personality of the Year for 2017 in his name. He took the prize home after receiving 83,524 votes. It is worth knowing in his context that in a third successive World Championships 10,000m gold medal was the highlight of a year in which Farah managed a world 5,000m silver, missing out on a fifth major championships distance double in a row. Besides him, Sunderland fan and club mascot Bradley Lowery got Helen Rollason Award; Former heptathlon champion Dame Jessica Ennis-Hill won Lifetime Achievement; Tennis player Roger Federer clinched Overseas Sports Personality of the Year title and England women's cricket team won Team of the Year title.

2018 Hockey World Cup will look for Indian umpires!

On 20th December the International Hockey Federation (FIH) selected India's Raghu Prasad and Javed Shaikh for the panel of umpires for 2018 Hockey World Cup which will take place in Bhubaneswar. As per the aired announcements, around 25 officials of both the genders from 19 nations from all five continents will officiate at this prestigious event that is slated to occur at the Kalinga Stadium from 28th November 2018 to 16th December 2018.

The Biggest T-20 win for India!

On 20th December India recorded its biggest T-20 win after defeating Sri Lanka by 93 runs in the first match of the 3-game series at Cuttack. India batted first and posted 180 for 3 by virtue of Lokesh Rahul's 61 runs and MS Dhoni and Manish Pandey's partnership of 68-runs. After this the entire team of Sri Lanka was sent back to pavilion at 87 runs in 16 overs. Yuzvendra Chahal took 4 wickets and Hardik Pandya took 3. Chahal emerged as Man of the Match.

Announcements of ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year.

On 21st December ICC announced ICC Women's ODI Cricket Team of the Year in which Indian captain Mithali Raj and left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht got selected. Besides them, Harmanpreet Kaur also made place in the chosen team from Indian squad. England's Heather Knight has been made captain for 50-over match and Stafanie Taylor of the West Indies got appointed as skipper of T20 team. ICC analysed performances of players from 21st September 2016 to date. It is worth registering here that Bisht is the only cricketer to feature in both the ODI and T20 teams of the year.

'Association of Indian Football Coaches' took birth on Indian ground.

Having received recognition from All India Football Federation (AIFF), 'Association of Indian Football Coaches (AIFC)' came into existence at the Andheri Sports Complex in Mumbai on 27th December. It is a platform supported by SportingLions Foundation for education, training, development and welfare of the coaches. It will assist AIFF in conducting AFC coaching license courses, refresher courses and work for coach education for development of players in various leagues and grassroots tournaments. The head of the Youth and Grassroots development wing of the ISL outfit, Mumbai City FC, Dinesh Nair; former Indian captain and Arjuna awardee, I M Vijayan; former international player Derrick Pereira; Mohun Bagan head coach, Sanjoy Sen and assistant coach and technical director of Kerala Blasters, Thangboi Singto are board members of the AIFC.

National Shooting Championship smiled at Jitu Rai.

On 29th December ace Indian shooter, Jitu Rai not only won Men's 50m pistol national title but also created a new record score of 233 at the 61st National Shooting Championships in Thiruvananthapuram. Rai also earned the team gold in the event combining with Jai and Omprakash Mitheral for a total of 1658 after defeating Team Air Force that managed a total of 1626. In this championship, Navy man Omkar Singh shot 222.4 in the finals and Jitu's army teammate Jai Singh secured bronze with 198.4. Arjun Singh Cheema of Punjab emerged as winner of the junior men's 50-metre pistol event.

Indian golfer Shiv Kapur sipped Royal Cup at Pattaya.

On 31st December Indian golfer Shiv Kapur won his third Asian Tour title of 2017 in form of the Royal Cup at Pattaya. Kapur won the see-saw battle as he shot four-under 67 to finish at 14-under, while Thailand's Prom Meesawat (70) ended at 13-under. It is worth knowing that 35-year-old Kapur, had just one win in almost 11 years till April this year, has now won three times in last eight months. Besides him, Gaganjeet Bhullar became sole third at 11-under 273, while Khalin Joshi emerged as sole sixth at 8-under 276. Jyoti Randhawa finished tied 41st at one-over 285.

Saucer of 2017 Globe Soccer Awards made its annual landing.

On 30th December the 8th edition of Globe Soccer Awards 2017 were announced to honour the excellence in football in Dubai. In this annual event Real Madrid magnetized several awards in various categories. Spain Real Madrid became Best Club of the Year; Portuguese footballer, Cristiano Ronaldo of Real Madrid was adjudged as Best Player of the Year 2017; France Zinedine Zidane of Real Madrid got Best Coach of the Year title; Spain La Liga lured Best League Of The Year title; Germany Felix Brych became Best Referee of the Year; Italy Marcelo Lippi clinched Coach Career Award; Argentina Héctor Cúper (Egypt) became Best Arab National Team Coach; Saudi Arabia got Best Arab National Team award; Portugal Jorge Mendes received Best Agent of the Year award; Russia Vadim Vasilyev (AS Monaco) commanded Football Executive of the Year award; Spain Ferran Soriano sported the Sport Business Award and Argentina Diego Simeone (Atlético Madrid) attracted Master Coach Special award.

Simona Halep conquered Shenzhen Open.

In January 2018 World number one, Romanian tennis player Simona Halep World number six, Ukrainian tennis player Elina Svitolina continued their preparations for the Australian Open with contrasting tournament wins. Simona Halep defeated Czech tennis player Katerina Siniakova by 6-1 2-6 6-0 at the Shenzhen Open in China. Elina Svitolina outshone Belarusian tennis player Aliaksandra Sasnovich by 6-2 6-1 to claim her first WTA title of the year at the Brisbane International.

Khelo India logo has taken the ground.

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Colonel Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore introduced the Khelo India logo at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium for upcoming Khelo India School Games which will start from 31st January. The three-stroke Khelo India logo came via courtesy of Ogilvy India, and it offers flexibility in adapting to numerous pictorial forms. SGFI and the National sports federations will organize Khelo India with a purpose of achieving the twin objectives of mass participation and promotion of excellence in sports.

National cricket tournaments are waiting to embrace Bihar!

On 5th January the apex court of India cleared coast for re-entry of Bihar state cricket team in the Ranji Trophy and other national-level cricket tournaments this year. In year 2000 Bihar Cricket Association (BCA) lost its full membership in BCCI as a result Bihar was barred from participating in BCCI-organised tournaments at the national level and in its place Jharkhand was inducted as full member of BCCI. Now after 17 long years, bench of Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud ordered Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to permit the state to participate in domestic cricket championships "in the interest of the game".

Philippe Coutinho: The new addition of Barcelona squad.

In January 2018 Barcelona inducted Brazilian midfielder, Philippe Coutinho as the 'new Barcelona player' that turned out to be the second most expensive transfer from Liverpool football club. Coutinho joined the Liverpool football club in January 2013 and scored 41 goals in 152 Premier League appearances, including seven in 14 matches this season. While inking an agreement for Coutinho, Barcelona have spent around 142 million pounds (\$193 million) making him the second most expensive transfer after Paris Saint-Germain spent 200 million pounds on Neymar. The amount is the highest Barca have ever paid for a player.

CURRENT AFFAIRS TESTS

1. Who has clinched the World Rapid Chess Championship 2017?
(a) Vladimir Fedoseev (b) Magnus Carlsen
(c) Viswanathan Anand (d) Peter Leko (e) None of these
2. George Weah has been elected as the new President of _____.
(a) Laos (b) Latvia
(c) Lebanon (d) Liberia (e) Lithuania
3. Which among the following has launched the India's first bitcoin trading application?
(a) Pluto Exchange (b) Bitcoin Exchange
(c) Venus Exchange (d) Uranus Exchange (e) None of these
4. In December 2017, which among the following countries has successfully tested its first Photovoltaic road ?
(a) Japan (b) Germany
(c) India (d) Russia (e) China
5. Who has been selected for the prestigious Harivaranam award 2017?
(a) S.P. Balasubrahmanyam (b) K.S. Chitra
(c) M.Jayachandran (d) K.J. Yesudas (e) None of these
6. As per latest government notification, the interest rate applicable on small savings schemes for a period of one year has been reduced to _____ percent for January-March quarter.
(a) 6.5% (b) 6.7%
(c) 6.8% (d) 6.6% (e) 6.4%
7. In December 2017, which country has test-fired AAD Supersonic Interceptor Missile?
(a) Japan (b) China
(c) Pakistan (d) Russia (e) India
8. Who has been appointed as the new Director General (Investigation) in National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)?
(a) Manish Shanker Sharma (b) Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat
(c) Gurbachan Singh (d) Asra Garg (e) None of these
9. In December 2017, which among the following planes has got the Commercial Flight Nod?
(a) MiG-29 (b) Sukhoi Su-30
(c) Mirage 2000 (d) Dornier 228 (e) None of these
10. Who has been appointed as the new Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)?
(a) Jitendra Singh (b) Abhay
(c) Dineshwar Sharma (d) R.R. Bhatnagar (e) None of these
11. In December 2017, which among the following banks has Nod to Start India's 1st Foreign-Owned ARC ?
(a) Reserve Bank of India (b) Dena Bank (c) Canara Bank
(d) State Bank of India (e) Punjab National Bank

12. In December 2017, which bank has signed an agreement with state-run National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) for utilizing the latter's Information Utility Services?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) Allahabad Bank
(c) Bank of India (d) Bank of Baroda (e) Yes Bank
13. The 74th anniversary of First Flag Hoisting Day has celebrated in Andaman and Nicobar Islands on _____.
(a) 31st December 2017 (b) 30th December 2017
(c) 29th December 2017 (d) 28th December 2017
(e) 27th December 2017
14. Which among the following countries has launched the World's Largest Human Genome Research Project?
(a) Japan (b) China (c) India
(d) Russia (e) Singapore
15. In January 2018, which among the following countries introduced the VAT (value added tax) for the first time ?
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) United Arab Emirates
(c) Iraq (d) Both a) and b) (e) Both a) and c)
16. In December 2017, Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of _____.
(a) Georgia (b) Greece
(c) Mali (d) Jamaica (e) Libya
17. In January 2018, Vijay Keshav Gokhale has been appointed as the new _____ of India.
(a) Foreign Secretary (b) Finance Secretary
(c) Chief Secretary (d) Cabinet Secretary (e) None of these
18. In December 2017, Which country withdraws from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)?
(a) Austria (b) Albania
(c) Angola (d) Israel (e) Afghanistan
19. Anwar Jalalpur, Prominent Urdu poet of _____ has passed away in January 2018.
(a) Rajasthan (b) Tamil Nadu
(c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh (e) Arunachal Pradesh
20. GAIL India Ltd has commissioned the country's second-largest rooftop solar power plant in _____.
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Himachal Pradesh
(c) Uttar Pradesh (d) West Bengal (e) Odisha

ANSWERS

- 1.(c)** India's ace chess player, Viswanathan Anand has won the World Rapid Chess Championship 2017. In the final match, he defeated Vladimir Fedoseev of Russia by 2-0. The 48-year-old Anand has thus claimed his first rapid world title since 2003. Besides this, the women's title was won by China's Ju Wenjun.
- 2.(d)** Ex-football superstar George Weah has been elected as the new president of Liberia after beating Vice President Joseph Boakai in a runoff with 61.5% of the vote. He will succeed Ellen Johnson.
- 3.(a)** Cryptocurrency dealer 'Pluto Exchange' has announced the launch of India's first mobile application for transacting in virtual currencies. This app offers a solution to the coordination problem between payment processors, financial gateways and banks. The app would also allowed a range of transactions, including payments, remittances, business-to-business commerce, supply chain finance, asset management and trading.
- 4.(e)** In December 2017, China has successfully tested its first photovoltaic (Solar) highway based on home-grown technology. With this, China became the second country in the world to construct a photovoltaic highway. The highway is constructed using solar panels which have a thin sheet of transparent concrete on top of them, protecting the surface.
- 5.(b)** Veteran singer, K.S. Chitra has been selected for the prestigious Harivaranam award 2017. She has been selected for the award in recognition of her contribution to propagate the spirit of secularism, equanimity and universal brotherhood. The award carrying a cash prize of Rs one lakh, citation and plaque.
- 6.(d)** The interest rate on the small savings schemes has been lowered to 6.6 % for the fourth quarter of the fiscal (January-March) as compared to 6.8 % in the October-December.
- 7.(e)** In December 2017, India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed Advanced Air Defence (AAD) supersonic interceptor missile, capable of destroying any incoming ballistic missile at low altitude, from a test range in Odisha.
- 8.(c)** Gurbachan Singh, 1984 batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Odisha cadre, has been appointed as the new Director General (Investigation) in National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Currently, he is working as a Special Director in Intelligence Bureau.
- 9.(d)** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has allowed Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)-manufactured Dornier 228 to be used for civilian flights. Till now, this 19-seater aircraft has been used by defence forces and is the first plane to be made in the country for commercial flights.
- 10.(b)** Abhay, the senior IPS officer has been appointed as the new Director General (DG) of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). Currently, he is working in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). He succeeded R.R. Bhatnagar.
- 11.(a)** US buyout giant KKR & Co has become the first foreign investor to fully own an asset reconstruction company (ARC) in India as it received approval from the Reserve Bank of India.

- 12.(b)** In December 2017, Allahabad Bank has signed an agreement with state-run National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) for utilizing the latter's Information Utility Services envisaged under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- 13.(b)** The 74th anniversary of First Flag Hoisting Day has celebrated in Andaman and Nicobar Islands on 30th December 2017. On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated veteran Islanders who were members of Indian National Army and Indian Independence League.
- 14.(b)** The world's largest human genome research project of 100,000 people was launched by China to document their genetic makeup for a study that aims to help generate the precision medicines of the future.
- 15.(d)** Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates introduced the VAT (value added tax) for the first time on 1 January 2018. These are the first two countries in the Gulf which have introduced the VAT system. The move is a 5% tax that will be levied on most goods and services to increase revenue. According to estimate the taxation system will enable both the nations to raise as much as \$21 billion in the year 2018.
- 16.(c)** Mali President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has appointed Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, a former defence and foreign minister and intelligence chief, as the new Prime Minister of Mali.
- 17.(a)** In January 2018, Vijay Keshav Gokhale has been appointed as the new Foreign Secretary of India. He has succeeded S.Jaishankar. Prior to this, Gokhale served as Indian Ambassador to China, Germany and as Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia.
- 18.(d)** In December 2017, Israel has filed notice to withdraw from the UNESCO alongside the United States. Israel was the member of UNESCO since 1949. Both Israel and the US have filed its own withdrawal notice in October 2017.
- 19.(c)** Anwar Jalalpuri, famous Urdu poet of Uttar Pradesh has passed away in January 2018 at the age of 71 years. He is best known for his translation of shlokas of Bhagwat Gita into Urdu verses. He was the recipient of Uttar Pradesh's Yash Bharti award.
- 20. (c)** GAIL India Ltd has commissioned the country's second-largest rooftop solar power plant in Uttar Pradesh. The company has installed a 5.76 MWp (Megawatt peak) solar plant at its petrochemical complex at Pata in Uttar Pradesh. The plant over the roofs of warehouses covers a total area of 65,000 square meters.