

# Current Affair Capsule January 2017

## Awards and Honours

### Iris Mittenaaere becomes Miss Universe

Iris Mittenaaere, a dental surgery student from Lille in the north of France, beat 85 of the world's most beautiful women at the event in the Philippines scheduled for primetime viewing in the United States.

Mittenaaere, 24, edged out Miss Haiti, the first runner-up, and Miss Colombia the second runner-up.

### Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards - 2016

The President of India has approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards for the year 2016.

These awards are given for meritorious act of humane nature in saving the life of a person.

The award is given in three categories, namely, Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak.

### Baba Seechewal gets Padma Shri

Environmentalist BABA Balbir Singh Seechewal, a native of Seechewal village in Jalandhar district, was conferred the Padma Shri.

He was awarded for social service and rejuvenating the 165-km-long rivulet.

Earlier, too, he was chosen among top 30 activists from across the world as Heroes of the Environment by Time magazine.

### Cultivator awarded Padma Shri

Genabhai Patel, a 52-year-old differently-abled pomegranate farmer from Banaskantha district of Gujarat, who is selected for Padma Shri for his distinguished work in the field of agriculture.

He is among the seven Padma Award winners from Gujarat.

#### Soldier's widow receives Ashok Chakra

President Pranab Mukherjee posthumously awarded Ashok Chakra to Havildar Hangpan Dada, who was killed near in J&K in May last year while fighting terrorists.

**Dada's sobbing widow Chasen Lowang received highest peacetime military award** from the President for valour, courageous action and self-sacrifice.

#### National Entrepreneurship Awards 2016

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE) has **instituted the "National Entrepreneurship Awards" to encourage a culture of entrepreneurship** across the country.

The first Award Ceremony will take place on 30th January 2017 which constitute awards in 11 categories. Award will be presented annually.

#### Jammu and Kashmir tops the list

Jammu and Kashmir police walked away with the highest number of police medals for gallantry this year, with its personnel bagging 32 of the total 100 awards announced.

No person was awarded the President's Police Medal for Gallantry (PPMG) this year with the government failing to find any deserving case.

- 777 police medals were announced on Republic Day eve this year.

## Books and Authors

Historian Prof Gangmumei Kamei Dies

Noted Manipur-based historian, litterateur and scholar Gangmumei Kamei passed away.

He was currently a member of the North Eastern Council (NEC).

He was specialised in the history of the North-eastern region, and more particularly of Manipur.

His most well-known books are: A History of Modern Manipur, A History of Manipur: Pre-colonial Period, On History and Historiography of Manipur.

## Business and Economy

FGII ties up with Bank of Maharashtra

- o Future Generali India Insurance Company announced an agency tie-up with Bank of Maharashtra for bancassurance.

Currently bancassurance accounts for 5% of Future Generali's total business. It has tie-up with over 100 banks across the country.

Vodafone-Idea merger

**Vodafone Plc, the British telecom company has confirmed “ongoing talks”** of merger with Aditya Birla Group-owned telecom operator Idea Cellular, to cushion itself against a price war with Reliance Jio.

The merger would make the joint entity the largest telecom operator of the country, with 43% revenue market share.

Vodafone will hold a sizeable share in the merged entity.

Hubali to have largest Incubator

Indian-American entrepreneur, philanthropist and venture capitalist

**Gururaj Deshpande has decided to launch India’s largest startup** incubation centre at Hubballi, Karnataka

The new incubator centre would be spread over an area of 85000 sq ft and will be built at a cost of 30 cr.

It will be ready by September 2017.

### **1st North East Investors' Summit in Shillong**

The Union Textiles Minister Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the 1st **North East Investors' Summit in Shillong.**

It is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Textiles and the Ministry of DoNER, at the State Convention Centre.

Summit is an attempt to promote the rich textiles of NER said Union Textiles Minister

### Telangana govt signs MoU with Aquitaine

The Telangana govt signed a MoU with French Aero campus Aquitaine to set up a world-class aero skills academy in the city in collaboration with academia and industry of the state

The MoU was signed between Jerome Verschave, General Manager, Aerocampus and Jayesh Ranjan, Secretary IT, Telangana

### Kyocera introduces washable smartphone

Japan-based **Kyocera has introduced a new "rafre" washable smartphone** that features resistance to hot water and a touchscreen that be can be used **even when the user's hands are wet or when wearing gloves.**

The product will be available from March 2017 in Japan and will be offered in three colours — pale pink, clear white and light blue.

The smartphone is a successor to the original DIGNO rafre.

### India Post gets payments bank licence

India Post has received payments bank licence from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to start rollout of banking operations commercially under the permit.

India Post Payments Bank is the third entity to receive payments bank permit after Bharti Airtel and Paytm.

Payments banks can accept deposits up to Rs 1 lakh per account from individuals and small businesses.

Centre says GAAR effective from April 1

The government has announced that the General Anti Avoidance Rule will be effective from 1st April.

GAAR seeks to prevent companies from routing transactions through other countries to avoid taxes. India will be the 17th nation to implement the law.

It seeks to give the IT department powers to scrutinize transactions structured in such a way as to deliberately avoid paying tax in India.

Fiscal deficit for FY16 was 4.31% : CAG

**The CAG has estimated the Centre's fiscal deficit in FY16 to be Rs 53,146 crore higher than estimated in the Budget.**

**According to India's top auditor, fiscal deficit stood at 4.31 per cent of the GDP in FY16 versus the provisional actuals of 3.9 per cent.**

The gap was Rs 97,452 crore in FY09. Although difference has since narrowed and become negligible in FY14, it is again looking up.

Weakest anti-money laundering mechanism

**Cooperative banks have the "weakest" anti-money laundering and combating terrorist financing mechanisms, with their staff having no knowledge regarding "usefulness" of suspicious transaction report, analysis report collated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has said.**

**Out of the six officially valid documents (OVD), only two i.e Aadhaar and PAN card can be verified," it observed.**

FRBM panel to relax 2017-18 Fiscal Deficit

- The government panel set up to review the working of Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, is expected to relax the fiscal deficit target to 3-3.5 per cent of GDP for 2017-18

N K Singh Committee would build cyclicity in setting fiscal deficit projections by switching to a target range (3-3.5 per cent) from a point target of 3 per cent.

#### Swiss Re gets IRDAI approval

Swiss Re is among the first five foreign companies to obtain a licence to sell reinsurance in India.

**Swiss Re's newly licensed entity, Swiss Reinsurance Company, India**

Branch, will begin its operation from February 1.

Swiss Re will be able to operate in India and offer both non-life and life and health reinsurance solutions directly to clients and brokers in the country.

#### Cashless transactions over 5 centuries

Cashless transactions may be the latest buzzword in the country's economic arena, but in a small hamlet about 32 km from Guwahati, members of Assam's Tiwa tribe meet every year to carry out an unique trade fair where the dealings are totally cashless

Popularly known as the Junbeel Mela the fair is held beside a large natural water body shaped like a crescent moon

#### Kwality Signs MoU with Bank of Baroda

Kwality Ltd has signed an MoU with Bank of Baroda to provide Rs.4000 cr loans to 1 lakh farmers out of the established networks from whom the company procures milk

The MoU aims to provide financial assistance to improve socio-economic lives of farmers and encourage them towards digitization.

Kwality has a network of about 3.25 lakh across about 4500 villages in UP, Haryana and Rajasthan.

India's 1st international stock exchange

Modi inaugurated India's first international exchange 'India INX' at International Financial Services Centre in GIFT in Gandhinagar.

INX, the wholly-owned subsidiary of the BSE will trade in equity derivatives, currency derivatives, commodity derivatives including Index and Stocks.

The exchange will create new standards in quality of service and speed of transactions in different time zones.

### **HDFC Bank to deploy humanoid 'Ira' soon**



The private lender HDFC Bank launched what it claimed to be the first **'humanoid' in the domestic banking space.**

It is looking to partner with start-ups having technological solutions for rural operations.

The bank showcased human-sized robot Ira, developed in association with Kochi-based Asimov Robotics, and said it will be deployed at a city branch within a fortnight.

India receives \$130 bn FDI in 2.5 years

With the government taking steps to improve business climate, total FDI inflows in the last 2.5 years have touched USD 130 billion, PM Modi said. Modi, while addressing investors at the Vibrant Gujarat summit here, also said that 'Make in India' initiative has become the "biggest brand" that the country has ever had.

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Krishnamurthy to be Flipkart's New CEO



Kalyan Krishnamurthy has been named the new chief executive officer of Flipkart.

Krishnamurthy — a former executive in the New-York based investment firm will be responsible for Flipkart's profit and losses.

**Flipkart's other co-** founder Sachin Bansal will remain as the executive chairman.

Tiger Global owns about 35% stake in Flipkart, which was last valued at \$15 billion.

#### FPIs Net Outflow at \$ 3bn in 2016

Foreign funds has pulled out more than 3 billion dollars, from the Indian capital markets in 2016.

Foreign Portfolio Investors have purchased stocks worth about 20,566 crore rupees, in 2016, but sold bonds to the tune of more than 43,646 crore rupees.

- o It resulted in net outflows of 23,080 cr rupees.

The overall net outflow has made 2016 the worst year for Indian capital markets since 2008.

#### Centre Clears 26% Strategic Sale in BEML

**The Cabinet has given an 'in-principal' approval for strategic disinvestment of 26 per cent equity shares in BEML Ltd. out of government's shareholding of 54.03 per cent.**

At the current market pricing of ₹999.50 a share, 26 per cent stake of BEML could fetch the exchequer over ₹1,000 crore.

After the strategic sale, government stake in the PSU would come down to 28.03 per cent.

#### RBI arm to Test Blockchain Tech



Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), an arm of RBI, is set to test blockchain technology to support framework for digital transactions.

- o The arm will soon roll-out pilots to develop applications for banks to adopt blockchain.

The institute also plans to build a small digital currency model using blockchain.

Blockchain promises tamper-proof ledger building.

#### UCO Bank Launches Suvidha Prepaid Card

UCO Bank has launched its UCO Suvidha (e) Prepaid Card.

- o The card is a hassle-free alternative to cash, which can be used for cash withdrawals, purchase at Points of Sale (POS) or, over the Internet.

**The bank's own customers as well as walk-in** customers can avail of the card from all branches of the bank.

The prepaid card offers the flexibility to load/ reload amount as & when required.

#### SBI Launches Hybrid Home Loan

SBI's new loan offer Hamara Ghar introduced a hybrid loan product which allows customers to tie up a fixed-rate loan for the initial 2 years.

Customers would be able to avail of home loans up to Rs30 lakh at a fixed rate of 8.55% for the first two years, which would later be readjusted to a floating rate.

For women, the home loan rate has been fixed at 8.5% for the first two years.

#### Karnataka Bank Launches KBL Suraksha

Karnataka Bank has launched a campaign to promote a group personal accident insurance scheme for savings bank account-holders, '**KBL Suraksha**'.

- o KBL Suraksha provides coverage against all types of accidental deaths. All savings bank account-holders of the bank in the age group of 18-70 years can subscribe to this scheme.

The bank expects a significant increase in new savings bank accounts.

#### Yes Bank, Gupshup Launch Chatbot

Yes Bank partnered with Silicon Valley-based bot platform Gupshup to launch an artificial intelligence-**powered banking chatbot 'YES mPower'**.

- o It will instantly give information about loan products.
- o The YES mPower bot is available through Facebook Messenger. With YES mPower, customers can get information on loan products like personal loans, auto loans, gold loans & loan against securities

#### Google CEO Announces Digital Unlocked

Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced Digital Unlocked, a plan to help small & medium enterprises in India understand how online works & go digital.

The online training comprises 90 training videos as well as an eight-hour classroom training along with FICCI.

- o SMEs will need to register on the Digital Unlocked website.

The search giant has planned 5000 workshops in 40 cities across India.

#### SBI Launches App for Prob. Officers

SBI Chairman has launched a digital platform & mobile app powered by **Manipal Global Education Services' (MaGE) EduNxt Platform**.

**The SBI's analytics dashboard app acts as a digital mentor to Probationary Officers & Trainee Officers.**

- The intuitive mobile app provides a learning dashboard for the learner. The Officers can stay connected on the mobile app with all the latest developments.

#### IBM India names Karan Bajwa as MD

Technology giant IBM said it has appointed Karan Bajwa Managing Director of its India operations.

- He succeeds Vanitha Narayana, who has been elevated as Chairman of IBM India.

Bajwa joined IBM last year as Executive for Strategy and Transformation in the Asia Pacific region.

**Previously, he was Microsoft India's managing director.**

#### BoB Launch Agriculture Investment Scheme

Bank of Baroda has launched an agricultural investment credit for the farmers of Rajasthan.

- The first loan has been disbursed in Sri Ganganagar.

Under the **scheme, farmers can avail of loan from the bank's branches for construction of farm ponds, installation of solar pumps and for any other viable agriculture activities.**

Bank will help the farmers in doubling their income by the year 2022.

#### Modi Announces New Housing Schemes

PM Modi has announced new schemes to provide subsidised housing for the poor.

- Housing for the rural poor will be increased by 33%.

For home loans of up to 9 lakhs, the underprivileged will get a 4% interest benefit.

For home loans of up to 12 lakhs, they will get a three per cent interest benefit.

In villages, will get loans of up to 2 lakh, with a three per cent interest relief.

#### PM Announces Crop Loan Benefits

PM Modi announced that government will bear interest for 60 days on crop loans taken by farmers from district cooperative banks & primary societies for sowing operations this Rabi season.

**Modi also announced that the 3 crore 'Kisan Credit Cards' would be converted to RuPay Card within three months.**

Nabard will be given an additional Rs 20,000 crore to finance district cooperative banks &

#### Govt Doubles Credit Guarantee Limit

The government doubled the credit guarantee limit for small and medium businesses to Rs. 2 crore.

- It aims to give a boost to the small entrepreneurs and job creation.
- Government underwrites loans given by banks to small businesses through a trust.
- So far, loans were covered upto one crore rupees.

**MSME sector provides bulk of employment, accounts for 45% of India's manufacturing.**

## Days and Events

### **Martyrs' Day 2017**

Martyrs' Day is celebrated on 30 January every year to pay tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary.

**In India, several days are declared as Martyrs' Day (Shaheed Diwas) in the honour of those who laid their lives for the nation.**

**January 30 is considered as Martyr's Day as it marks the assassination of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.**

Gandhi was killed in 1948 by Nathuram Godse.

World Leprosy day observed

World Leprosy Day is observed internationally on January 30 or its nearest Sunday to increase the public awareness of the Leprosy or Hansen's Disease

The day was initiated in 1954 by French philanthropist and writer, Raoul Follereau, as a way to raise global awareness of this

The date for World Leprosy Day was chosen to coincide with the **anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination**

Brahmaputra Literary Festival Begins

The 3 day long Brahmaputra Literary festival began in Guwahati, Assam on Jan 28. The festival has been by the State Government jointly with the National Book Trust.

The festival would see the participation of about 150 authors from 10 countries.

The event was inaugurated by the Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar in presence of Assam Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal.

**'Bharat Parv' Festival at Red Fort**

**Bharat Parv, a national festival showcasing the country's diverse culture, cuisines, handicrafts and catch glimpses of a progressive India was inaugurated by Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture at Red Fort, Delhi.**

Bharat Parv event is being organized by the GOI at the Red Fort, Delhi from 26th to 31st January 2017, as part of the Republic Day 2017 Celebrations.

### **Niti Aayog's ATL mission**

Niti Aayog will organise a two-day event next month for schools that have been selected to set up Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) aimed at inculcating a culture of scientific innovation into the young minds. The event will be held on February 20-21.

Under the programme, Niti Aayog has targeted to set up a total of 500 such labs across the country in select schools.

### **National Voters' Day**



"Elections are celebrations of democracy. They communicate the will of the people, which is supreme in a democracy," PM said.

The ECI will celebrate the seventh National Voters' Day across the country today, for enhancing the participation of the citizens in the electoral process.

January 25 is marked as the foundation day of the Election Commission, which came into being in 1950.

### **National Girl Child Day**

The National Girl Child Day will be celebrated on 24 January at a special function organized by the Ministry of Women & Child Development in New Delhi.

The occasion shall be marked by release of The National Plan of Action for Children 2016.

The occasion will be marked by felicitating 10 districts under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme for their exemplary performance.

### **Netaji's 120th birth anniversary**

Subhash Chandra Bose on his 120th birth anniversary, PM Narendra Modi made files related to the freedom fighter available on the Internet.

Over the course of one year, the government has released files related to Netaji Bose in a step by step process.

He also said that he was honoured that the government were able to declassify the files pertaining to Netaji Bose following popular demand.

#### Thousands witness Teppotsavam

On the banks of Godavari in Bhadrachalam a multitude of devotees **witnessed the colourful ‘Teppotsavam’ (float festival) amid royal opulence** in the famous pilgrim centre.

**CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao’s wife and other family members were among those who watched the spectacular ‘celestial boat ride’.**

The processional idols of Lord Rama and his consort Sita, made five circular rounds in the river.

#### International Kite Festival Begins

The international Kite festival started in Ahmedabad at Sabarmati River Front.

- o Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani inaugurated the festival.

About 51 kite fliers from 8 different states while more than 100 kite fliers from 31 countries are participating in this week-long mega event.

Kites with different shapes, shades and colors are the main attraction.

#### 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Begins

PM Modi inaugurates the 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Bengaluru.

Visiting Prime Minister of Portugal Antonio Costa is the chief guest of the event.

The theme of this year's PBD is "Redefining engagement with Indian diaspora".



Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has been held traditionally on 9th Jan every year to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi as a Pravasi from South Africa to India.

### Jaipur Int. Film Festival Begins

The ninth edition of Jaipur International Film Festival (JIFF) began in Jaipur.

- This year's Life Time Achievement Award was presented to internationally acclaimed cine-visionary Ramesh Prasad.
- The event aims to promote emerging directors, as well as encourage exchange of knowledge, information, ideas and culture.
- The festival will witness participation by 250 filmmakers and artistes.

## Persons in News

### Father of Pac-Man passes away

**Masaya Nakamura, the “Father of Pac-Man” who founded the Japanese video game company behind the hit creature-gobbling game, has died. He was of 91 years.**

- Nakamura, founded Namco, part of Bandai Namco, in 1955.

It started out as just two mechanical horse rides on a department store rooftop but went on to pioneer game arcades and amusement parks.

### Russian envoy Alexander Kadakin died

Russian Ambassador Alexander Kadakin, a Hindi-speaking career diplomat who **was considered a “great friend” of India, died at a hospital here on Thursday after a brief illness.**

- He was 67.

Serving as the Ambassador here since 2009, Kadakin was credited with playing a significant role in promotion of relations between India and Russia.

### **World's first trillionaire**

Microsoft founder **Bill Gates** will be world's first trillionaire in the next 25 years.

According to research firm Oxfam International, the world would get its first trillionaire in the next 25 years.

**A report by Oxfam International said that considering that Bill Gates' fortune is growing at 11% per year since 2009, he could become the world's first trillionaire soon.**

### **PM Congratulates Mr. Pravind Jugnauth**

The PM Modi congratulate Mr. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth on his assumption of office as the PM of Mauritius.

The Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Jugnauth affirmed their shared commitment to further strengthen the time-tested and unique relationship between India and Mauritius.

### **Viral V Acharya takes charge as RBI DG**

Acharya who joined the RBI on January 20 with a three year-term is expected to give crucial inputs for the forthcoming monetary policy scheduled on February 8.

New York University Economics Professor Viral V Acharya, considered an expert in credit risk.

He will also be part of the six-member Monetary Policy Committee of the RBI.

### **Foreign Secretary get extension**

Jaishankar is the first Foreign secretary, since the post became a fixed two-year-term position in 2009, to get an extension.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal for extension in service of Dr S Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary for a further period of one year.

Secretary (Economic Affairs) Shaktikanta Das has also been given an extension for another three months.

Mridangam vidwan honoured

**Noted mridangam vidwan Tiruchi Sankaran was honoured with ‘TCM Lifetime Achievement’ award at a function organised by Trichy Carnatic Musicians**

K Natarajan, Head of Programmes, All India Radio, Tiruchi station, presented the award which is instituted by the Trichy Carnatic Musicians. He had been honoured with awards by Sangeet Natak Akademi and **received ‘Sangita Kalanidhi’ title**

Gionee Signs Kohli as Brand Ambassador

Mobile handset brand Gionee has roped in Indian test captain Virat Kohli as the brand ambassador.

**The announcement of Kohli’s appointment was made alongside the announcement of Gionee clocking 1.2 crore customers in India.**

- o Gionee has two manufacturing units in India.

It is continuously beefing up its brand and marketing initiatives with the aim to grow as much as 2.5 times in 2017.

Portugal Father of Democracy Soares Dies

Ex-Portuguese President Mario Soares, regarded as a father of the country's democracy, has passed away.

- o He was founder of Portugal's Socialist party.

He was president from 1986 to 1996 after serving as foreign minister & prime minister, and later became a European lawmaker.

He played a key role after the 1974 Carnation Revolution, a military coup that put an end to 48 years of Salazar rule.

#### Sitar Maestro Abdul Halim Jaffer Dies

Noted sitar player Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan has passed away.

- He was a recipient of Padma bhushan & Sangeet Natak Academic awards. He was the last survivor of the Sitar Trinity that comprised Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan
- During his music career spanning over six decades, Khan played the sitar for various films, including Mughal-E-Azam, Kohinoor, Goonj Uthi Shehnai among others.

#### David Syiemlieh is the New UPSC Chairman

David R Syiemlieh has been appointed as the Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).

- Syiemlieh is from Meghalaya and was a UPSC member.

He will remain the head of the organisation till his retirement on January 21, 2018 or till further orders.

He will take over from Alka Sirohi, a former IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre.

#### Bipin Rawat, Dhanoa Assume Charge

General Bipin Rawat assumed charge as India's new army chief.

Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa took over as the new chief of the Indian Air Force.

They succeed General Dalbir Singh and Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha respectively.

- The new appointments were announced on December 16 by the government.  
Chief of Naval staff Admiral Sunil Lanba will head the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

## Sports

### T20 World Cup for the Blind-2017

PM conveys his best wishes all the participants of T20 World Cup for the Blind-2017.

- The T20 World Cup will showcase quality sporting talent among the players & will popularise cricket among blind persons.
- The matches will be played at Delhi, Mumbai, Faridabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Kochi, Anantapur, Ahmadabad, Indore, Bhubaneswar with the finals being played in Bengaluru.

### PV Sindhu wins Syed Modi championship

P.V. Sindhu has won the \$120000 Syed Modi International badminton championship

Sindhu had come close to winning the trophy in 2014, but suffered a loss against compatriot Saina Nehwal

The tournament was the 2nd grand prix's badminton tournament of the 2017 BWF Grand Prix Gold and Grand Prix.

The tournament was held at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium in Lucknow from Jan 24-29

### Federer grabs 18th Grand Slam title

Federer won his Men's singles final match at the Australian Open, Melbourne, against Spain's Rafael Nadal.

As the Fed and Rafa met up on Sunday in Melbourne for the 35th time in a glorious rivalry which has seen 9 Grand Slam finals now, the Swiss belied his past record against his Spaniard nemesis and bagged his 18th Grand Slam title and 5th Australian Open trophy.

#### Oldest woman to reach Aus Open semifinal

Venus Williams, 36, becomes oldest Grand Slam semi finalist in 23 years. This is Venus Williams first semi final at the Australian Open in 14 years. Venus Williams continued her astonishing late-career revival by felling Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4 7-6(3) on Tuesday.

#### Saina wins Malaysia badminton title



- Saina Nehwal is back to her winning ways after recovering from a career-threatening knee injury suffered during Rio Olympics.
  - The Indian badminton ace beat Thailand teenager Pornpawee Chochuwong 22-20, 22-20 in the final of the Malaysia Masters Grand
- Doubts were raised on Saina's future after her early exit from Rio.**

#### Mahrez is African Footballer of the Year

Algeria forward Riyad Mahrez has won the Confederation of African Football's player of the year award.

He was chosen ahead of 2015 winner Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang of Borussia Dortmund and Liverpool's Sadio Mane.

- Arsenal and Nigeria forward Alex Iwobi won the young player award. Sixteen players have won African football most prestigious individual award since its inauguration in 1992.

#### David Warner Achieves Rare Test Feat

Australia David Warner became the fifth batsman to hit a century before lunch on the opening day of a Test match against Pakistan.

He reached three figures off 78 balls as the Australia took control of the third Test match.

He was out for 113 and became the first batsman to hit a century in the opening session of a Test in Australia.

He reached his hundred four minutes before lunch.

### Cyclist Robert Marchand Sets New Record

Super senior citizen Robert Marchand has set a new world record in cycling at 105 years.

- o The Frenchman set the record for a man of that age to ride 22.547 kilometres in one hour.

He broke the record set by himself five years ago for a person aged over 100 pedalling the furthest distance in an hour.

The current men's hour record is held by the UK's Bradley Wiggins - 54.526km.

### India Win SAFF Women's Championship

India defeated Bangladesh by 3-1 to win their fourth consecutive South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Football Championship title in Siliguri.

In the process, the Indian eves are now unbeaten in 19 matches having won 18 and drawn one.

- o This was Bangladesh's maiden final appearance in the championship. For India, the goals were scored by Dangmei Grace, Sasmita Malik and Indumathi.

### Nadal Wins Mubadala Tennis Championships

Spanish tennis veteran Rafael Nadal defeated Belgian David Goffin 6-4, 7-6 to win the Mubadala World Tennis Championships.

- o Nadal defeated his opponent David Goffin with 6-4, 7-6 in the finals.



He reached the Abu Dhabi Finals by beating Tomas Berdych in the quarter-final and Milos Raonic in the semi-final.

adal who received a cash prize of \$250,000.

### Somdev Devvarman Announces Retirement

India's star singles player Somdev Devvarman announced his retirement from professional tennis.

- Somdev touched a career-high rank of number 62 in 2011. He has two runners-up finishes on the ATP World Tour as his best performances on the Tour.
- He made the finals of Chennai and Johannesburg ATP events.
- Somdev also won Singles and Doubles medals in Asian Games and Commonwealth Games.

## Defence

### Reliance bags contract from Defence

Reliance Defence has signed a contract with the Ministry of Defence for the design and construction of 14 Fast Patrol Vessels for the Indian Coast Guard valued at Rs 916 cr.

These ships are medium range, high speed vessels, and primarily used for patrol within the exclusive economic zone, costal surveillance, and anti-smuggling, anti-piracy, search and rescue operations.

### TROPEX 17 begins

The **Indian Navy's Annual Theatre Readiness Operational Exercise** (TROPEX) 2017 is being conducted off the Western Seaboard.

The month long exercise will see participation of ships & aircraft of both the Western & Eastern Naval Command & also assets from the Indian Air Force, Indian Army & the Indian Coast Guard.

The last edition was conducted in January 2015.

#### Successful test of Guided Pinaka rocket

India on Tuesday conducted the second successful test of the Guided Pinaka rocket from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) launch pad at Chandipur in Odisha.

On January 12, the first test flight of the improved version was conducted by the DRDO.

According to sources, the range of the rocket has increased from 40 to 70km with an improved accuracy from 500m to 50m

#### Mobile App for Merchant Navy Officers

The Maritime Union of India (MUI) has launched android based mobile app named MUI.

**It is the country's oldest union representing Indian Merchant Navy Officers since 1939.**

The app is aimed at connecting the maritime fraternity across the country to facilitate and enable Indian merchant navy officers to share knowledge and other things related to their profession.

#### Agni IV Test-Fired Successfully

India successfully test fired the Agni IV nuclear capable ballistic missile that has a range of up to 4,000 km.

**The test comes within a week of the successful test firing of India's most lethal Agni V missile.**

The Agni IV missile that is propelled by composite rocket motor technology.

The missile is reportedly equipped with state-of-the-art avionics V-12 fifth generation On-Board Computer.

## International Affairs

NASA marks 50 years of Apollo 1 fire

**NASA on Friday marked the 50th anniversary of its moon program's fatal Apollo launchpad fire with the first public display of the scorched hatch that trapped three astronauts inside their spaceship during a routine pre-launch test.**

**NASA astronauts Virgil "Gus" Grissom, Edward White and Roger Chaffee** died when thick smoke filled the crew module of the Apollo 1 capsule on Jan. 27, 1967.

Gambia's new President Adama Barrow

Gambia's President Adama Barrow has returned to the country to assume power days after his predecessor Yahya Jammeh left to go into exile. ◦ President Barrow's plane touched down at Banjul airport.

Mr Barrow, who has been in neighbouring Senegal, won elections in December.

However a handover was stalled when Mr Jammeh, Gambia's president of 22 years, refused to step aside.

World Government Summit

A global summit on governance is being organised in Dubai from February 12-14. It will hold 3 forums to explore global researches in happiness, climate change & Arab youth.

7 world and international organisations the IMF, the UN, UNESCO, WB, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development & World Economic Forum will participate in the event.

More than 150 countries will be taking part.

#### New Ghanaian President Sworn In

Nana Akufo-Addo has been sworn in as Ghana's new president after beating John Mahama in last month's election.

Mr Akufo-Addo's inauguration represents the latest peaceful handover of power in Ghana.

He said he would reduce taxes to boost the economy, adding that Ghana was now "opened for business again".

His main promise was to build a factory in each of Ghana's more than 200 districts.

#### Nepal to have Constitution amendment

Nepal's SC said, "Judiciary could not bar the Legislative from using its wisdom in the formulation of legislation, on the basis of the principle of separation of powers."

- Issues like change in demarcation of provinces, citizenship, language & making the Constitution more inclusive are incorporated in the amendment.

CJ Sushila Karki & Justice Ishwor Prasad Khatriwada gave this ruling.

#### China Flags Off First Train to London

China has launched its first freight train to London over 12000 km away as part of efforts to improve trade.

The train departed from Yiwu, Zhejiang Province & will pass through Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium & France before arriving in London. The journey will take 18 days.

London is the 15th city in Europe added to China-Europe freight train services.

### Guterres Takes Charge as UN Sect-General

Antonio Guterres took charge as the 9th UN Secretary General.

- He succeeded Ban Ki-moon as the world's top diplomat.
- **He served as Portugal's prime minister between 1995 & 2002.**

He was the UN High Commissioner for Refugees from June 2005 to Dec 2015.

The new UN chief said ,let us make 2017 a year for peace in which all citizens, governments, leaders strive to overcome our differences.

### Pakistan's New Chief Justice Takes Oath

Justice Mian Saqib Nisar took oath of office as Pakistan's 25th Chief Justice.

- He replaced Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali who retired after superannuation.

Pakistan's President Mamnoon Hussain administered oath to the new Chief Justice of Supreme Court.

He is the senior-most judge and in April this year he served as acting CJ in the absence of Chief Justice Jamali who had gone abroad.

## National Affairs

### CCS among top 100 think tanks

The Centre for Civil Society (CCS) has been ranked among the top 100 think tanks globally.

It is as per the Global Go To Think Tank Index Report 2016 released annually by the Lauder Institute of Pennsylvania University, U.S.

Nine other Indian institutes figured among the top 175 for the year 2016.

**The CCS is ranked 80 which is one lower than last year's rank.**

Summons might be served through email

A key amendment in the law could soon result in summons being serviced in civil matters through email, cutting through layers of red tape and delays, top sources in the ministry of law and justice said.

Currently, a summon is served in accordance with the rules under Order V of the Civil Procedure Code of 1908 that governs the functioning of civil courts in India.

Govt launches film heritage mission

The information and broadcasting ministry launched a film condition assessment project.

Under this almost 1.32 lakh film reels at National Film Archive of India will be assessed and preserved for future use.

The project marks the beginning of National Film Heritage Mission, an initiative by the government of India.

Solar parks to come up in Ladakh

The Jammu and Kashmir govt has signed an MoU with the Centre for the development of two mega solar parks in Ladakh with a total capacity of 7500 MW.

The State Government has signed MoU with the Centre for the development of 2 Mega Solar Parks of 5000 MW capacity in Leh district & 2500 MW capacity in Kargil district.

President appoints Governors

President Pranab Mukherjee appointed Banwarilal Purohit, the Governor of Assam to execute the functions of the Governor of Meghalaya & Arunachal Pradesh.

He also appointed P. B. Acharya, the Governor of Nagaland to discharge functions as the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.

#### WB sees highest no. of police injuries

The Bureau of Police Research and Development released its report on police injuries

- Out of the 1623 police personnel injured in the country by riotous mobs in 2015, 641 (39.5%) are from West Bengal, Kerala came second.
- The statistics also reveal that of the total of 34 persons killed in police firing across the country, only 4 were from West Bengal.

#### India sees increase in tourist arrivals

- India registered an 11% increase in foreign tourist arrivals in 2016 over 2015, with as many as 9 million tourists visiting the country.

**During a session on 'Partnering with diaspora to accelerate tourism in India', Vinod Zutshi, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, said this was way above the projected 4.5% growth.**

This also resulted in a 15% growth in income from FTAs, he said.

#### Naidu Inaugurates Conf. for e-Governance

Information and Broadcasting Minister Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 2-day National Conference for e-Governance in Visakhapatnam.

- The theme of this year's conference is 'Internet of Things and e-Governance'.
- The conference is an opportunity for the public and private sectors to discuss best practices related to e-Governance.
- Three books have been released on the 1st day of the conference.

#### Modi Inaugurates Global Trade Show 2017

- PM Modi formally inaugurated the Vibrant Gujarat Global Trade show at Gandhinagar.



More than 1500 representatives of about 80 countries in the world have participated in the trade show.

The trade show has different pavilions of various sectors like automotive, pharmaceutical, agro, bio technology and among others.

This year special emphasis has been on start ups, women entrepreneurs & MSME.

### Maharashtra Govt Launches Largest WiFi Service

**Maharashtra government has launched India's largest public WiFi service** called 'MumbaiWifi'.

- Under the current phase, hotspots were installed at 500 locations.

These include tourist destinations like Gateway of India, Churchgate, CST along with slum clusters and public places.

In Phase II, expected to launch by May 1, the hotspots will be installed at the remaining 700 locations.

### BMC Launches Toilet Locator Mobile App

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has a mobile application to locate toilets in Mumbai.

- **"Mumbai Toilet Locator" was launched by municipal commissioner Ajoy Mehta.**

The civic body has connected over 800 pay-and-use toilets across the city on "Mumbai Toilet Locator" through GPS.

The easy-to-use application is meant for android phones.

### PM Announces Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yoj.

PM Modi launched Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana, a skill development program targeted at Indian youth seeking overseas employment

It was launched after inauguration of 14th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas convention in Bengaluru

It will be implemented by the National Skill Development Corporation, for this purpose, NSDC will leverage various MoUs it signed between 2011 and 2015 with different countries

#### Dangal Becomes Bollywood Highest Grosser

**Aamir Khan's Dangal has overtaken his previous film PK to become the highest-grossing Hindi film in history with Rs 345 cr**

- o The film, is based on life of Haryanvi wrestler Mahavir Singh Phogat.

The list of top earners included Aamir's PK & Salman Khan's Bajrangi Bhaijaan & Sultaan.

The overall revenue of PK was Rs 340.8 crore, while Salman's films netted Rs 316 cr & Rs 300.4 cr respectively.

#### 4th Assam Int. Agri-Horti Show Begins

Fourth Assam International Agri-Horiculture show has begun in Guwahati.

- o It was inaugurated by state CM Sarbananda Sonowal.
- o Nearly 600 farmers of Assam will be trained on doubling farmers' income, more crop per drop and agri-preneurship development.

Over 200 organizations from across the country have taken part in the show.

Business meet, exhibitions , discussion are also being organised.

#### Two day Assam Biotech Conclave Begins

The two day Assam Biotech Conclave began in Guwahati.

CM Sarbanand Sonowal inaugurated the conclave in presence of Science and Technology minister Keshab Mahanta.

The conclave will create business and partnering opportunities for its stakeholders and to showcase the facilities and opportunities offered by Guwahati Biotech Park.

Several MoUs have been signed as a part of the conclave.

#### Govt Launches IPR Enforcement Toolkit

The Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Enforcement Toolkit for Police.

The toolkit has been prepared by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management & FICCI.

This toolkit will be a ready reckoner for police in dealing with IP crimes, specifically Trade Marks counterfeiting & Copyrights piracy.

It provides for checklists for registering a complaint.

#### Govt Launches Swachh Bharat Survekshan

The Union Ministry of Urban Development launched Swachh Survekshan 2017 to rank 500 cities/towns across the country on cleanliness with a population of 1 lakh and above

- o The survey will be conducted by Quality Council of India.

It will judge cities on the basis of data provided by Municipal bodies, data collected through direct observations & independent assessment & citizen feedbacks.

#### Azure Commissions Solar Power Project

Azure Power, a leading solar power producer in India, has commissioned the largest (150 MW) solar power project in north India, in the state of Punjab.

For this project, Azure Power had signed a solar power implementation agreement with Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA) under its Solar Policy Phase III.

The 150MW solar power plant represents a portfolio of three projects of 50MW each.

#### 104th Indian Science Congress inaugurated

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the five-day 104th Indian Science Congress at the Srinivasa Auditorium in Sri Venkateswara University in Tirupati.

Modi told the audience that "Science must meet rising aspirations of people. Our infrastructure and social welfare ministries must make use of science.

By 2030 India will be among top three countries in science and technology," PM Modi added.

#### Justice JS Khehar sworn in as CJI

Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar was sworn in as the Chief Justice of India.

- Khehar was administered the oath of office by President Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
  - He succeeded Justice Tirath Singh Thakur.
- Khehar is the 44th CJI and also the first Sikh to hold the apex office. He would have a tenure of little over seven months.

#### India Opens First School for Transgender

**India's first transgender school opened in Kochi, Kerala.**

The school, named Sahaj International, was inaugurated by transgender activist, writer and actor **Kalki Subramaniam** at **Thrikkakara in Kerala's Ernakulam** district.

This alternative learning centre works in collaboration with National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

- The school is the first of its kind in the country.

## India and World

India 79 in Corruption Perception Index

- o India has been ranked 79th out of 176 countries in the recently released Corruption Perception Index for the year 2016 by the Berlin-based corruption watchdog Transparency International
- o New Zealand & Denmark were ranked 1st, while Somalia ranks last. In this edition of list, India has marginally improved its ranking index for 2016 by 2 points from 38 score in 2015

NSG commandos, Tejas debut in parade

**For the first time in the history of Republic Day celebrations, the 'black cat' commandos of the elite counter-terror force NSG march down Rajpath on Republic Day.**

- o The indigenously developed light combat aircraft, Tejas, set a record.

**India's 68th Republic Day was celebrated in the presence of the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as the chief guest.**

CRS cannot air political programmes

Community Radio stations would not be allowed to broadcast any programmes, which relate to news and current affairs or otherwise political in nature.

These are some of the components of an order issued by the I&B ministry which adds new clauses in the guidelines for Community Radio.

The maximum duration of such limited advertising will be restricted to seven minutes per hour.

India gets sign language dictionary

The central government is currently working on curating a first of its kind Indian Sign Language dictionary, which is expected to be released in March.

**The book 'An Introduction to Indian Sign Languages' was written by Madan Vasishtha in 1980**

The book contains 6000 English and Hindi words compiled in sign languages. The project is commissioned by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

## Government Policies & Schemes

- Limits on age and attempts for NEET
  - The Central government has decided to introduce an age limit for medical aspirants taking the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET).
  - The age limit for those aiming at 15% all-India quota seats has been set to 25 years whereas those from reserved categories will be able to take the test till they turn 30 years old.
  - But the number of attempts for each candidate will be three only.
- Commerce Ministry launches online tool
  - The Commerce Ministry launched an online system for rubber growers which would help them in reducing the cost of production and enhancing productivity.
  - Rubber Soil Information System (RubSIS) is an online system for recommending application of appropriate mix of fertilisers depending upon their soil nature.
  - It was launched by Commerce and Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here.
- Programme of 5 non-communicable diseases
  - The Union Health Ministry will roll out a massive screening and control programme next month of 5 common non-communicable diseases, which account for over 60% of all mortality in India
  - In the 1st phase, the population based screening component will be rolled out in 100 districts in 32 states & UTs with about 1000 sub-centres
  - The 5 NCDS include hypertension, diabetes & cancers
- Aadhaar Mandatory for MGNREGA Work

- From April 1, people living in rural areas need to have Aadhaar under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.
- People will be required to give proof of possession of Aadhaar or undergo the enrolment process till March 31, 2017.
- The govt has invoked Section 7 of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act 2016 for the purpose.
- Govt Launched 'Bunkar Mitra' Helpline
  - Textile Minister Smriti Irani has launched a Bunkar Mitra-Handloom Helpline Centre where professional queries of weavers will be answered by the experts in the field.
  - This helpline can be accessed by dialing the toll free number 1800-208-9988.
  - Initially it will provide information in 7 languages.
  - These are Hindi, English, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada, Bengali and Assamese.
- Disabled may get 5% quota in colleges
  - The govt will finalise the rules regarding the recently passed Disabilities Bill by Apr 14 which will allow disabled persons to avail 5% reservation in higher education institutions & 3-4% in govt jobs.
  - According to the bill specially abled persons with benchmark disability between 6-18 years will get free education.
  - Under the Act, the government has increased the types of disabilities from 7 to 21
- Union Budget may be advanced by a month
  - The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs recommended holding of the Budget Session from 31 Jan when the govt is likely to table the Economy Survey followed by the Union Budget on 1 Feb.
  - The first part of the Budget Session will run till 9 Feb.
  - The Budget Session is being advanced as the government wants early allocation of funds for various schemes- from 1 April.



## Environment

- **'ET-like' insect species discovered**
  - Scientists have discovered a 100-million-year-old insect species with a **triangular head and 'ET-like' appearance preserved in amber in Myanmar.**
  - There are about one million described species of insects, and millions more still to be discovered, but every species of insect on Earth has been placed in only 31 existing orders.
- Doha amendments of Kyoto protocol
  - It requires ratification from a total of 144 of the 192 parties of the Kyoto Protocol to become operational.
  - India is expected to announce ratification of Doha amendments to the Kyoto Protocol on Tuesday.
  - The Doha amend., made in 2012, had extended the legal obligation of developed countries to take targeted GHG's emission cuts until 2020, the year Kyoto Protocol is now scheduled to expire.

## Art & Culture

- Hyderabad Lit Fest
  - Celebrating creativity in all its forms, the seventh edition of Hyderabad Literary Festival-HLF 2017 – will open at Hyderabad on Friday.
  - The three-day festival is being organised by Hyderabad Literary Trust at Hyderabad Public School in association with the Telangana government.
  - **Philippines is the 'Guest Nation' at HLF 2017 and will showcase its** literature, art and culture.
- Himachal tableau to make a comeback
  - After a gap of three years , the tableau of Himachal Pradesh will make a comeback on Republic Day parade in New Delhi.
  - The tableau will present the traditional art form of Himachal Pradesh — the Chamba Rumal.

- Chamba Rumal is the finest specimen of pahari art form that flourished in Chamba town of Himachal Pradesh in the 18th century.

