



# MONTHLY NEWS DIGEST

JANUARY 2017

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**68th Republic Day**

Hong Kong withdraws  
**visa-free facility for Indians**

74<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**Golden Globe Awards announced**

Election Commission announces  
**schedule for Assembly elections in five states**

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## Evening News Digest, 1 January 2017

### US sanctions 7 Pakistani entities associated with country's missile programme

- The United States (US) Department of Commerce has put sanctions on seven Pakistani entities by adding them to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) list.
- These entities associated with Pakistan's missile programme were found to be acting contrary to the national security or foreign policy interests of the US.
- These entities are Ahad International, Air Weapons Complex, Engineering Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Maritime Technology Complex National Engineering and Scientific Commission, New Auto Engineering and Universal Tooling Services.

### Kush Bhagat wins 3 gold medals at 1st Western Asia Chess Championship

- Mumbai chess prodigy Kush Bhagat created history as he went on to win all the 3 gold medals on offer at the 1<sup>st</sup> Western Asia Chess Championship. The championship was held in Al Ain Chess Club, United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- Bhagat won all the three categories - rapid, blitz and standard - and achieved the feat of being the only Indian to bag all the crowns in the competition.
- He is a second standard student of the NSS Hill Spring International School and is a trainee of the Mumbai Chess Academy.

### Pakistan's oldest living Test player Imtiaz Ahmed passes away

- Imtiaz Ahmed, Pakistan's oldest living Test player, passed away in Lahore at the age of 89 following a protracted illness.
- He was also the part of the Pakistan's team that first toured India for a Test match in 1952-53. With his death, now former batsman Waqar Hasan is the lone Test player left from that team.
- He played 41 Tests as wicketkeeper-batsman, scoring 2079 runs that included 209 against New Zealand in 1955 at Goddard stadium in Lahore.

### British-Indian Shankar Balasubramanian conferred Knighthood

- Shankar Balasubramanian, an Indian-origin British professor of chemistry and DNA expert at Cambridge University, received a Knighthood by Queen Elizabeth II for his contributions.
- He has been recognised for his work as a co-inventor of Next Generation DNA sequencing. The invention has been described as spawning an entirely new discipline of Bioinformatics.
- Next Generation DNA Sequencing is now known as Solexa sequencing. This allows an individual genome to be sequenced in a day or two at a cost of less than 1,000 pounds as compared to previous DNA sequencing that took years and cost billions.

### India's TeamIndus partners with Japan's Hakuto to share ride to moon

- Indian private aerospace startup company TeamIndus has signed a commercial agreement with Japanese team Hakuto to carry its four-wheeled lunar rover to the Moon's surface.
- The partnership is first-of-its-kind collaboration of two private space enterprises competing in the US \$25 million Google Lunar XPRIZE (GLXP).
- As a result, TeamIndus's robotic rover ECA (Ek Chhoti si Asha) along with Japanese Hakuto's 4 kg robotic rover will be launched aboard ISRO's PSLV rocket on December 28, 2017.
- Team Indus is supported by industry players including Ratan Tata (Tata Group), Nandan Nilekani (Infosys), Sachin Bansal and Binny Bansal (Flipkart) and Venu Srinivasan (TVS Group) among others.
- The GLXP announced in 2007 encourages private-funded entities to land on the Moon and rove on its surface for at least half a kilometre.

Online

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## Morning News Digest, 2 January 2017

### Scientists develops first Biological Pacemaker using Human Stem Cells

- Scientists from Canada have developed the first functional pacemaker cells using human pluripotent stem cells.
- The cells can regulate heart beats with electrical impulses. It paves the way for alternate biological pacemaker therapy. These cells can be coaxed in 21 days to develop into pacemaker cells.
- For this purpose researchers had used developmental-biology approach to establish a specific protocol for generating pacemaker cells.
- It will help to generate pacemaker cells that would help in understanding disorders in pacemaker cells, and provide a cell source for developing a biological pacemaker.

### Former MPCM Sunderlal Patwa passes away in Bhopal

- Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and senior BJP leader Sunderlal Patwa passed away at the age of 92.
- For first time he was appointed CM for a brief period of two months in 1980 and for second term from 1990 to 1992.
- He is considered as political mentor of incumbent Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

### Assam CM launches Atal-Amrit Abhiyan

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal recently launched the 'Atal-Amrit Abhiyan' in Guwahati. Rs 200 crore has been kept aside for this scheme.
- Atal-Amrit Abhiyan is a health assurance scheme which will give comprehensive coverage for six diseases and cover all individual eligible families with an annual income below Rs 5 lakh.
- Under its six categories of diseases are 437 ailments relating to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, kidney diseases, neo-natal diseases, neurological conditions and burns. Coverage under the scheme will be up to Rs 2 lakh annually for critical health care costs.

### Nepal-China Joint Exercise Pratikaar-1 to be held

- Nepal and China will hold their first ever joint military exercise. It will be held on February 10, 2017 and is named as Pratikaar-1.
- It will focus on training Nepali soldiers in dealing with hostage scenarios involving international terror groups.
- General Rajendra Chhetri, Nepal's Chief of Army Staff, visited Beijing in March 2016 when both sides had resolved to strengthen military ties.

### Virat Kohli leads Lord's Cricket Ground list of top 20 players of 2016

- Indian Test skipper Virat Kohli claimed the top spot in the list of top 20 players of 2016 prepared by Lord's Cricket Ground. He topped the list following his sensational run in 2016 across all the formats of the game.
- Virat brought an end to his perfect year with Player of the Series award in the recently concluded Test series with England.
- Englishman Jonny Bairstow followed the Indian Test captain while ICC No.1 Test bowler Ravichandran Ashwin came in third ahead of Sri Lankan spin wizard Rangana Herath.

Online 

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### **BJP forms Government in Arunachal Pradesh with Pema Khandu as Chief Minister**

- The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is all set to form government in Arunachal Pradesh with Pema Khandu as Chief Minister, who will be appointed as CM of the state for third term.
- The high voltage drama unfolded after 33 out of 43 members of Peoples' Party of Arunachal (PPA), an alliance partner of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), led by Pema Khandu, joined BJP.
- Earlier, PPA President Kahfa Bengia had temporarily suspended Khandu, his deputy Chowna Mein and five legislators from the primary membership of the party for alleged anti-party activities. He selected Takam Pario as the new chief minister of the state.
- For the first time, Khandu served the state as CM from July 17, 2016 to September 16, 2016 from Indian National Congress. Following this, he led the state from September 16, 2016 to December 31, 2016 from People's Party of Arunachal (PPA).
- This is the second time BJP has come to power in Arunachal. Last time was in 2003 when under almost similar circumstances Gegong Apang took away MLAs from Congress and formed a BJP government.

### **Anil Khosla appointed as AOC-in-C Eastern Air command**

- Air Marshal Anil Khosla took over as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C) Eastern Air Command. He replaced Chandrasekharan Harikumar.
- He is the recipient of Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM), Vayu Sena Medal (VSM) and has been commended by the Chief of Air Staff (CAS). He is credited with over 4000 hours of accident free flying mainly on different variants of Jaguar, Mig-21 and Kiran aircraft.
- The Eastern Air Command is one of the five operational commands of the Indian Air Force. Currently, it is headquartered in Shillong, Meghalaya. It was established in 1958.

### **C Harikumar takes over as AOC-IN-C, Western Air Command**

- Air Marshal Chandrasekharan Harikumar took over as AOC-in-C, Western Air Command (WAC). He replaced S S Deo.
- He was awarded CAS commendation in Oct 1997, Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) in Jan 2005, Vayu Sena Medal (VSM) in Jan 2011 and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) in Jan 2016.
- The Western Air Command (WAC) is the regional command of Indian Air Force headquartered in New Delhi. It is the largest and most important Air Command of the IAF.

### **Agni-IV missile test-fired from Abdul Kalam Island**

- India's strategic, ballistic missile, Agni-IV, was flight-tested from a road-mobile launcher on the Abdul Kalam Island (earlier called Wheeler Island), off Damra village on the Odisha coast.
- Agni-IV is the fourth in the Agni series of missiles which was earlier known as Agni II prime. It is a two-stage, surface-to-surface missile that is 20 metres long and weighs 17 tonnes.
- It can carry a one-tonne nuclear warhead over a distance of 4,000 km. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has designed and developed the missile.

### **Indian-origin Shaikh Rafik Mohammed appointed as Major General of Kyrgyzstan**

- An Indian-origin Saudi-based entrepreneur Shaikh Rafik Mohammed has been appointed Major General of Kyrgyzstan by Taalaibek Omuraliev, Defence Minister of Kyrgyzstan.
- He hails from Kerala and also holds Kyrgyzstan nationality. He is also the Chairman of Gammon Group (UAE and Saudi Arabia).
- He worked as an adviser to the former President Kurmanbek Saliyevich Bakiyev from 2005 to 2010.

## Morning News Digest, 3 January 2017

### **Tyrus Wong, animator behind Disney classic 'Bambi' passed away**

- Tyrus Wong, the artist whose paintings served as a visual inspiration for Disney classic *Bambi*, died at the age of 106.
- He was a Chinese-born American artist. He worked for Disney and Warner Brothers, including being the lead artist on Disney's 1942 film *Bambi*.
- *Bambi* is a 1942 American animated drama film directed by David Hand (supervising a team of sequence directors), produced by Walt Disney and based on the book *Bambi, A Life in the Woods* by Austrian author Felix Salten.

### **British government to launch new one-pound coin by March 2017**

- The British government will launch a new one pound coin at the end of March 2017 and scrap the current one by October 2017.
- The new coin would become legal tender on March 28, 2017 and the new coin would be produced by the Royal Mint in Wales. A total of 1.5 billion coins will be issued in the first minting.
- It has a distinctive 12-sided shape, recognizable even by touch and it is made of two metals, the outer ring is gold-coloured (nickel-brass) and the inner ring is silver-coloured (nickel-plated alloy).

### **Somdev Devvarman announces retirement from professional tennis**

- Indian tennis player Somdev Devvarman announced his retirement from professional tennis.
- He is still the only Indian singles player to have come close to an ATP title – reaching the finals of the 2009 Chennai Open and 2011 South Africa Open – since Leander Paes won a tour event in the United States in 1998.
- In 2010, he won the gold medal in the men's singles event of XIXth Commonwealth Games in New Delhi. In 2011, he received the Arjuna Award for his tennis successes.

### **Ricky Ponting named Australia's assistant Twenty20 coach for Sri Lanka series**

- Cricket Australia has appointed former Test skipper Ricky Ponting as an assistant coach to the Australia Twenty20 international squad for February 2017 series against Sri Lanka.
- In his new role, he will work alongside the interim head coach Justin Langer and interim assistant coach Jason Gillespie during the three T20 internationals.
- He also had captained Australian cricket team in the first two editions of the ICC World T20 in 2007 and 2009. He also coached the Mumbai Indians to the Indian Premier League title.

### **Prof. David R. Syiemlieh appointed Chairman of UPSC**

- Prof. David R. Syiemlieh was appointed as the chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) by the President Pranab Mukherjee. He replaced Alka Sirohi.
- He is the second person from Meghalaya after Rose Bathew Kharbuli to become UPSC chairman. Kharbuli was the first woman chairperson of the commission in the 1980s.
- Article 316 of the Indian Constitution provides for the appointment and term of office of the UPSC chairman and its member. A member of a UPSC shall hold office for a term of six years from the date on which he enters upon his office or until he attains the age of sixty five years.

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## Evening News Digest, 3 January 2017

### India, Sri Lanka issues Joint Press Communique on Fishermen issue

- India and Sri Lanka held Ministerial level talks on fishermen issues in Colombo. It was led by Radha Mohan Singh, Indian Agriculture minister and Mahinda Amaraweera, Sri Lankan Minister for Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Development.
- Both sides agreed to setting up of a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to immediately expedite the release and handing over of fishermen in each other's custody on completion of respective legal and procedural formalities.
- It was decided to intensify cooperation on patrolling and to institute periodic interaction between the Coast Guard of the two countries.
- An agreement was also signed to ensure that there was no physical harm or loss of life while apprehending fishermen by Navy and Coast Guard of the two countries.
- It was agreed to explore the possibility of introducing effective tracking systems for the fishing vessels and making the use of on board communication equipment mandatory.

### Output of 8 Core Industries grows 4.9% in November 2016

- The output of India's eight infrastructure industries in November 2016 increased by 4.9 percent, as compared to the same month of 2015. This owes to higher production of coal, oil, steel and electricity.
- However, the Index of Eight Core Industries (ECI) growth slowed down sequentially, as compared to the rate of 6.6 percent logged in October 2016.
- Eight core industries are Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity.

### Air Marshal SB Deo takes over as Vice Chief of the Air Staff

- Air Marshal S B Deo took over as Vice-Chief of Air Staff. He replaced Air Marshal B S Dhanoa.
- He was awarded Param Vishisht Seva Medal, Ati Vishisht Seva Medal, Vayu Sena Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal and ADC by the President of India.
- Earlier, Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa took over as the Chief of Air Staff following retirement of Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha on December 31, 2016.

### Trash Skimmers to be introduced in 6 Cities for Surface Cleaning Of Ganga

- Under National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), trash skimmers for surface cleaning of Ganga will be introduced in six cities namely Rishikesh, Haridwar, Garh Mukhteshwar, Sahibganj, Kolkata and Navdweep.
- Urban Local Bodies will be the nodal agency to monitor this work. State Programme Management Groups (SPMGs) and Collectorate office will be supervising these works.
- Namami Gange programme was launched as a mission to achieve the target of cleaning river Ganga in an effective manner with the unceasing involvement of all stakeholders, especially five major Ganga basin States – Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal.

### Injeti Srinivas Committee constituted to suggest improvements to Sports Code

- Union Sports Minister Vijay Goel constituted a committee to suggest improvements in the National Sports Code and functioning of National Sports Federations.
- Headed by Injeti Srinivas, Secretary (Sports), the committee will suggest improvements in the National Sports Development Code and functioning of Sports Federations etc. The committee will give its report by early February 2017.
- National Sports Development Code contains all guidelines issued by the Government of India from time to time to promote good governance in the management of sports development, including sporting excellence, in the country. Toward this end, the Government had issued comprehensive guidelines in the past in 1975, 1988, 1997, 2001, 2011 in pursuance of successive National Sports Policies.

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## Morning News Digest, 4 January 2017

### 104th Indian Science Congress inaugurated in Tirupati

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the five-day 104th Indian Science Congress at the Srinivasa Auditorium in Sri Venkateswara University in Tirupati. The focal theme is 'Science and Technology for National Development'.
- It is the second time that Tirupati is hosting the Indian Science Congress, the first being in 1983 when the 70th ISC was held.
- He also visited Lord Sri Venkateswara Temple atop Tirumala hill in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. The Temple is dedicated to Lord Sri Venkateswara, an incarnation of Vishnu.

### Consumer Affairs Ministry says Service Charges in restaurants not mandatory

- Consumer Affairs Ministry, headed by Ram Vilas Paswan, announced that restaurants billing 'service charges' in addition to taxes is optional and the consumer has discretion to pay 'service charge' or not.
- Moreover, it advised the Hotels and Restaurants to disseminate information through display the aforementioned notice at the appropriate place in the hotels and restaurants. The Ministry also asked states to sensitise companies, hotels and restaurants regarding the provisions of the Consumer Protection Act.
- The Consumer Protection Act, 1986 provides for the protection of interests of consumers and for that purpose it makes provision for the establishment of consumer councils and other authorities for the settlement of consumers' disputes and for matters connected therewith.

### Nepal SC gives nod for Constitution amendment bill

- Nepal's Supreme Court has given its approval to government to go ahead with a crucial Constitution amendment bill to accommodate the demands of the agitating Madhesi and ethnic groups.
- It held that the judiciary cannot bar legislature from using its wisdom in the formulation of legislation, on the basis of the principle of separation of powers.
- The Constitution amendment bill seeks to resolve issues related to citizenship and boundary demarcation issues among others.

### Finland becomes first European country to pay a basic monthly income to unemployed

- Finland has become the first country in Europe to pay its unemployed citizens a basic monthly income, amounting to 560 euros (\$587).
- It is appropriated with no reporting requirements on how they spend it. This is a social experiment from which it is hoped to cut government red tape, reduce poverty and boost employment.
- The unemployment rate of Finland, a nation of 5.5 million, stood at 8.1% in November with some 213,000 people without a job — unchanged from the previous year.

### Table tennis Olympic champion Li Xiaoxia announces retirement

- China's table tennis Grand Slam champion Li Xiaoxia announced her retirement through social media in Beijing.
- Li helped China win the team gold medal at the Rio Olympic Games in 2016 when she also finished runner-up in the singles event.
- Li is the eighth table tennis Grand Slam winner in history with singles crowns from the 2008 World Cup, 2012 London Olympics and 2013 world championships. She also has multiple doubles and teams world titles to her name.

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### Andhra Pradesh Government launches NTR Arogya Raksha Scheme

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu launched NTR Arogya Raksha Scheme in Vijayawada. This is a Universal Health Coverage (UHC) scheme named after the former chief minister of the state Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao (NTR).
- The scheme intends to provide the universal health insurance cover to every individual in a family Above Poverty Line (APL) at a payment of premium Rs. 1200 per annum.
- It provides coverage for 1044 diseases under secondary and tertiary care through 432 government and private hospitals. It offers up to Rs. 2 lakh health insurance cover and free treatment. One can register for the scheme at any of the Mee Seva centres till February 2017.
- Conditionally, it offers medical insurance to those who were not covered under any of the existing health schemes of the state government.

### SC sacked BCCI President Anurag Thakur and Secretary Ajay Shirke

- The Supreme Court (SC) ordered to remove Anurag Thakur from the post of BCCI President over not complying with court orders. It also removed Ajay Shirke from the post of BCCI Secretary.
- It quoted that the BCCI and state board officials failed to implement the reforms suggested by SC-appointed Justice (retired) RM Lodha panel to bring transparency and accountability in the cricket body.
- SC also issued show cause notices to Anurag and Ajay, asking why contempt and perjury proceedings be not initiated against them. In a July 2016 order by the court, most of BCCI office bearers were ineligible to carry on administration and the Lodha panel had asked the court to remove them.

### Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar sworn-in as 44th Chief Justice of India

- Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar was sworn in as the 44th Chief Justice of India. He will replace Chief Justice T.S. Thakur.
- Justice Khehar will be the first Chief Justice from the Sikh community. He will have a tenure for over seven months till August 28, 2017.
- Earlier, he led the Constitution Bench which scrapped the government's National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) law. He also headed the bench which had set aside the imposition of President's Rule in Arunachal Pradesh in January 2016.

### Trump nominates Robert Lighthizer as US trade representative

- U.S. President-elect Donald Trump named veteran steel industry trade lawyer Robert Lighthizer as US trade representative. He will replace Michael Froman.
- He is a former deputy U.S. trade representative during the Ronald Reagan administration, where he helped to stem the tide of imports from Japan in the 1980s with threats of quotas and punitive tariffs.
- The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) is responsible for developing and recommending trade policy to the president of the United States, conducting trade negotiations and coordinating trade policy within the government.

### 5 Indian-Americans took oath as members of the US Congress

- Five Indian Americans took oath as members of the US Congress creating history for a minority ethnic community that comprises just one percent of the US population. They are Kamala Harris, Ami Bera, Ro Khanna, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Tulsi Gabbard.
- Notably, Raja is only the second US lawmaker after Tulsi Gabbard from Hawaii to take the oath on Gita. Gabbard was the first ever Hindu to be elected to the US Congress in 2016.
- Before Ami, it was Dalip Singh Saundh, who exactly 60-years ago became the first Indian American to be elected as a member of the US Congress.

## Morning News Digest, 5 January 2016

### Election Commission announces schedule for Assembly elections in five states

- Election Commission of India has announced poll dates for assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa.
- The schedule for five states are as follows:
  - Goa and Punjab: February 4, 2017
  - Uttarakhand: February 15, 2017
  - Manipur: March 4-8, 2017 (in two phases)
  - Uttar Pradesh: February 11, 15, 19, 23, 27 and March 4, 8, 2017 (in seven phases)
- In total in 2017 seven states are going to conduct Legislative assembly elections. They are Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Goa, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.
- EC also laid out directives before the polls. These are as follows:
  - The limit for expenses for candidates is Rs 28 lakh for UP, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Rs 20 lakh for Manipur and Goa.
  - EC will focus on paid news. Press Council of India will help the commission in detection of paid news
  - There will be strict expenditure monitor mechanism to curb black money
  - Model code of conduct comes into effect
  - All five states to go into elections at one go

### EU lifts 3-year ban on import of some vegetables from India

- The European Union (EU) has lifted its three-year ban on import of some vegetables from India.
- Earlier in May 2014, a ban was imposed by the European Commission on import of mangoes, bitter gourd, eggplant, snake gourd, taro leaves, bitter gourd, and aubergines from India.
- The ban was imposed on the grounds of interceptions of harmful organisms leading to fears on account of bio-security of the region. In January 2016, EU had lifted the ban on import of mangoes.

### Jovenel Moise elected President of Haiti

- Haitian businessman Jovenel Moise was declared the official winner of November 2016 presidential elections in the impoverished Caribbean nation. He will replace the Acting President Jocelerme Privert.
- Moise, who represents Bald Heads Party (PHTK), won with 55.6% of votes cast in the November 20 election. His closest rival Jude Celestin came second with 19.5% votes. Jovenel and Celestin are followed by Jean-Charles Moise and Maryse Narcisse who have secured 11.04% and 8.99% votes respectively.
- Moise is the founder of Haitian Energy Company SA, which is mainly into solar and wind power. In 2012, he also founded Agritrans SA and helped create Haiti's first agricultural free trade zone.

### Paul Ryan re-elected as US House Speaker

- The Wisconsin congressman Paul Ryan was re-elected speaker of the House of Representatives. The Republican Ryan was first elected speaker in October 2015, after his predecessor John Boehner retired.
- The speaker is simultaneously the House's presiding officer, leader of the body's majority party, and the institution's administrative head.

### Government announces safety audit for all mines in country

- The government announced safety audit for all 418 mines in the country. The announcement followed one of the worst open cast mine disaster that happened in Rajmahal in Jharkhand's Godda district, killing at least 18 people.
- The audit would be carried out by the director-general, mining safety on a priority basis based on the size of the mines. First 58 large mines of the country would be covered where annual composite overburden production is between one to five million cubic metres.
- In this regard, experts from several research institutes including Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research will be sought.

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क्रॉनिकल

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## Evening News Digest, 5 January 2017

### MoU between India and Portugal in the field of agriculture and allied sectors

- Union Cabinet approved the signing of an Agreement for cooperation in the field of Agriculture and allied sectors between India and Portugal. It shall remain in force for a period of five years.
- The Agreement covers various activities in these fields which include exchange of scientific and technical information, trade in plants and plant products, exchange of information in phytosanitary issues, training programmes, seminars and visits of experts and consultants.

### MoU between India and Uruguay on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters

- Union Cabinet approved signing and ratifying an Agreement between India and Uruguay regarding Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters.
- The Agreement will help in the availability of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of Customs offences. It is also expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the countries.
- Uruguay is an important trading partner of India among members of the MERCOSUR, a trading block in Latin America. India signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with the MERCOSUR which came into effect from June 1, 2009.

### IPR Enforcement Toolkit for Police launched

- Union Commerce & Industry Minister Nirjala Sitharaman launched an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Enforcement Toolkit for Police.
- It has been jointly prepared by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- It will be a ready reckoner for police officials across the country in dealing with Intellectual Property (IP) crimes. It provides for checklists for registering a complaint and conducting search and seizures.

### CBDT signs three more Advance Pricing Agreements

- Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) signed three more Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs) pertaining to the Engineering Goods and Shipping sectors. With this, the total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT reaches 120, which now includes 7 bilateral APAs and 113 Unilateral APAs.
- The international transactions covered in these agreements include Intra-group Services and Support Services.
- The APA Scheme was introduced in the Income-tax Act in 2012 and the "Rollback" provisions were introduced in 2014. It provides certainty to taxpayers in the domain of transfer pricing by specifying the methods of pricing and setting the prices of international transactions in advance.

### Government issues notification of 'Indian Skill Development Service'

- To improve the skills of the people in the country further, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has issued notification on setting up of Indian Skill Development Services (ISDS). The Union has set a target to skill 500 million people by the year 2022.
- ISDS will be a Group 'A' service where induction will take place through Indian Engineering Service Examination conducted by UPSC.
- This has been created for Training Directorate of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. With this, the skill ecosystem is expected to get strengthened and modernised in line with the current scientific and industrial development in the country.

## Morning News Digest, 6 January 2017

### UK diplomat Sir Tim Barrow appointed ambassador to EU

- The United Kingdom (UK) senior diplomat Sir Tim Barrow has been appointed as the ambassador to European Union (EU). He has replaced Sir Ivan Rogers.
- Barrow was the UK ambassador to Moscow until 2015 and in March 2016 succeeded Sir Simon Gass as political director at the Foreign Office.
- He has extensive European experience and acted as first secretary at UK Representative.

### Scientists find particular region of brain reacts differently to stimuli in autism

- A pool of Dublin scientists led by Dr. Joshua Henk Balsters, a neurologist with ETH Zürich, have found that a particular region of the brain reacts differently to stimuli in those with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
- In ASD patients, the scientists found that the gyrus of the anterior cingulate cortex in brain plays a complex role in social interaction, affecting emotional intelligence and social cognition.
- The gyrus signals to the rest of the brain when another person is surprised by something unexpected. It is called a "social prediction error" and it is essential to basic human interaction.
- These findings could be useful in devising new therapies for those afflicted with ASD and help discover more effective treatments for autism.

### Mahendra Singh Dhoni steps down as captain of T-20 & ODI format of cricket

- Mahendra Singh Dhoni resigned as India's cricket captain. He was currently leading the Indian team in ODIs and T20 internationals. Earlier, he retired from Tests in December 2014 in Australia.
- Dhoni was named captain of Indian cricket team in 2007. After Ricky Ponting and Stephen Fleming, Dhoni has played the third highest number of ODIs as skipper. Till date, he has played 283 ODIs and 199 of them as captain.
- He played 73 T20 internationals and in the shorter formats of the game was considered as one of the best finishers of the game. Of the 73 T20s, Dhoni led India in 72 of them, a world record.

### India wins SAFF women's Championship 2016 for 4th consecutive time

- India defeated Bangladesh 3-1 to win SAFF Women's Football Championship 2016 title for the fourth consecutive term at the Kanchenjunga Stadium in Siliguri, West Bengal.
- It was the fourth edition of the biennial international women's football championship contested by the national teams of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF). This was the first time India had hosted the SAFF Women's Championship.
- Sabitra Bhandari with 12 goals was nominated as Top scorer of the championship.

### MoU signed between India and Kenya in the field of agriculture and allied sectors

- Union Cabinet has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Kenya on bilateral cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sectors. It shall remain valid for a period of five years.
- It covers various activities in these fields which include agricultural research, animal husbandry and dairy, livestock and fisheries horticulture, natural resource management, post-harvest management and marketing, soil and conservation.
- Earlier in July 2016, both signed seven agreements in several fields including defence and standardisation, expertise sharing and mutual trade between Bureau of Indian Standards and Bureau of Kenya Standards.

Online 

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## Evening News Digest, 6 January 2017

### Japan to assist Chennai, Ahmedabad and Varanasi for Smart Cities

- Japan has decided to be associated with Smart Cities Mission to develop Chennai, Ahmedabad and Varanasi as smart cities.
- Smart Cities Mission is an urban renewal and retrofitting program to develop 109 cities (initially 100 cities) across the country making them citizen friendly and sustainable. It was launched by PM Narendra Modi in 2015 with a funding of Rs. 98000 crore.
- Till date, leading countries have come forward to be associated with development of 15 smart cities. These include:
  - United States Trade Development Agency (USTDA) – Visakhapatnam, Ajmer and Allahabad,
  - United Kingdom (UK) - Pune, Amaravati (Andhra Pradesh) and Indore
  - France - Chandigarh, Puducherry and Nagpur and
  - Germany – Bhubaneswar, Coimbatore and Kochi

### Centre imposes anti-dumping duty on Bangladesh, Nepal jute products

- Centre has imposed an anti-dumping duty on imports of jute and its products from Bangladesh and Nepal to protect the domestic industry. This imposition is for five years. The duty ranges from 6.30 US dollars to 351.72 US dollars per tonne.
- Also, import restrictive levy has been imposed on jute yarn, twine, Hessian fabric and jute sacking bags in all forms and specifications.
- An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value.

### Island Tourism Festival 2017 commences in Andaman & Nicobar

- The Island Tourism Festival commenced at Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar islands. It was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor of UT, Jagdish Mukhi.
- This festival is the annual cultural event organized for promotion of tourism and entertainment for islanders. Small programmes as part of festival are also organized in other places like Wimberlygunj, Wandoor, Neil, Havelock, Rangat, Mayabunder, Diglipur, Hut Bay, Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Campbell Bay etc.
- It is a ten day event, performed by the cultural troupes from mainland that will help the Islanders renew their cultural ties with mainland India.

### AP announces Rs. 100 cr. for the first Nobel laureate from State

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has announced a Rs 100 crore prize for any scientist from Andhra Pradesh who wins Nobel Prize.
- The decision was announced on the sidelines of Indian Children's Science Congress at Sri Padmavathi Women's University at Tirupati on the sidelines of 104th Indian Science Congress.
- Naidu also laid foundation stone for a Rs 1,500-crore science museum to be set up in 200-acre campus at Alipiri, the foothills of Tirumala.

### Veteran actor Om Puri passed away at the age of 66

- Veteran actor Om Puri passed away at the age of 66. He died due to a severe cardiac arrest.
- He was awarded Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of India, in 1990; and in 2004, was made an honorary Officer of the Order of the British Empire.
- He was born in Ambala, Punjab on October 18, 1950. He made his film debut with the 1976 Marathi film "Ghashiram Kotwal". His last film was 'Mirzya' in 2016. 'Actor in Law' will be his upcoming Pakistani Film Debut in 2017.
- He won two National Awards for "Arohan" and "Ardh Satya". Nandita C Puri wrote his biography titled "Unlikely Hero Om Puri".

Online

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## Evening News Digest, 6 January 2017

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Online

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## Morning News Digest, 7 January 2017

### Jeanette Epps set to become first African-American astronaut to fly to ISS

- The NASA astronaut Jeanette Epps is set to become the first African-American crew member to board the International Space Station (ISS) when she flies to the orbital post in May 2018.
- Along with Epps, NASA also assigned veteran American Andrew Feustel for the mission.
- Feustel will serve as a flight engineer on Expedition 55 and later as commander of Expedition 56. Epps will join Feustel as a flight engineer on Expedition 56 and remain on board for Expedition 57.

### Rare comet C/2016 U1 NEOWISE will be visible from Earth for first time: NASA

- A rare comet named C/2016 U1 NEOWISE discovered by NASA scientists will be visible using just binoculars to skywatchers on Earth for the first time.
- This comet will be visible in the southeastern sky shortly before dawn from the northern hemisphere during the first week of 2017.
- It is moving farther south each day and it will reach its closest point to the Sun, inside the orbit of Mercury, on January 14, before heading back out to the outer reaches of the solar system for an orbit lasting thousands of years.
- NEOWISE is the asteroid—and—comet—hunting portion of the Wide—Field Infrared Survey Explorer (WISE) mission.

### China launches world's longest bullet train

- China launched its longest bullet train “Shangri-la of the World” from Kunming, capital of south-west China’s Yunnan Province to Beijing.
- With this launch, China expanded its high speed train network to about 20,000 km connecting almost all provinces. The train’s name highlights the world famous resort in Shangri-la of Yunnan, a name first appearing in British novelist James Hilton’s Lost Horizon.
- China plans to increase the mileage to 45,000 km by 2030. According to the white paper, titled Development of China’s Transport, China would increase the length of high-speed railways in service to 30,000 km from the present 20000 kms by 2020 linking more than 80 percent of its big cities.

### Indonesia suspends military cooperation with Australia

- Indonesia has suspended military cooperation with Australia for an indefinite period, after training materials deemed offensive were found at an Australian army centre.
- This suspension will only apply to language classes at Special Forces facilities.
- Military ties between the countries were cut after an Indonesian officer complained about "insulting" training posters at the Special Air Service's Campbell Barracks in Perth.

### Earth-like snow, ice features found on Pluto

- NASA Scientists have found evidence of Earth-like snow and ice feature called ‘Penitentes’ on Pluto, using a model similar to what meteorologists use to forecast weather on our planet and a computer simulation of the physics of evaporating ices.
- Formed by erosion, ‘Penitentes’ are bowl-shaped depressions with spires around the edge, and are several metres high.
- The finding was published in the journal Nature.

online 

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## Evening News Digest, 7 January 2017

### Road ministry to launch e-challan, m-parivahan apps

- The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, headed by Nitin Gadkari is set to launch two mobile apps namely 'e-challan' and 'm-parivahan'. These apps will provide a comprehensive digital solution for enforcement of traffic rules.
- 'e-challan' app will help traffic police in enforcement of transport laws and is integrated with the Vahan and Sarathi applications. It will help in improving transparency by connecting all stakeholders through a common system and ensuring data integrity.
- 'm-parivahan' is a citizen-centric app that will facilitate access to various transport-related services. It will provide a virtual driving licence and registration certificates through back-end connection to the transport national register.

### 14th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas convention begins in Bengaluru

- The 14th edition of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) convention began in Bengaluru. It is a three-day event which started with the Youth PBD, the theme of which is 'Role of Diaspora Youth in the Transformation of India'.
- The main convention will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 8, 2017 and Chief Guest of the event will be Prime Minister of Portugal Dr Antonio Costa.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas has been held traditionally on 9th January every year to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi as a Pravasi from South Africa to India.

### New Delhi World Book Fair 2017 commences

- World Book Fair, the largest event of its kind in the country, began on January 7, 2017 and will conclude January 15, 2017 in New Delhi. The theme for this year's event is 'Manushi', which will focus on writings on and by women.
- Organised by National Book Trust (NBT), it is the 44th edition of the book fair that will be inaugurated by Mahendra Nath Pandey, Minister of State for Human Resource Development (Higher Education).
- It will promote the rich Indian heritage through music and dance performances and is expected to host 1,500 participants from across India, including over 50 foreign exhibitors.

### Israel cuts \$6 million in UN funding over anti-settlement vote

- Israel suspended about \$6 million in funding to the United Nations to protest a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution demanding an end to settlements in the West Bank.
- The cut in funding is the first in a series of retaliatory measures that the Israeli mission said would be taken at the United Nations after the new US administration takes office.
- Earlier in December 2016, the UNSC had adopted the resolution after the United States refrained from using a veto to block the measure in a break from its usual practice of shielding its Middle East ally.

### South African President Zuma backs Western Sahara independence

- South African President Jacob Zuma held talks in Pretoria with the leader of Western Sahara's Polisario Front independence movement, in a show of support for the territory's struggle against Morocco.
- Morocco quit the African Union more than 30 years ago when Western Sahara, known as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), was accepted as a member. But Morocco is now lobbying to return to the AU.
- Morocco annexed Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony, in 1975 and since then it has been insisting that the sparsely-populated desert region is an integral part of the kingdom, despite UN resolutions to hold a referendum on self-determination.

Online

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### Delhi Government approves Fourth Phase of Delhi Metro

- Delhi government approved the fourth phase of Delhi Metro, which features six corridors with a total 72 new stations. It is targeted to be completed by 2021.
- With its completion, the total length of the metro corridor in the city will cross the 450-km mark. The cost of this extension project is Rs. 50000 crore and targets to add over 8 lakh riders. It measures 103-km-long, of which 67 km to be elevated and rest underground.
- The proposed corridors are Rithala - Narela (21.73 km) Inderlok - Indraprastha (12.58 km), Tughlakabad - Aerocity (20.20 km), Lajpat Nagar - Saket G-Block (7.96 km), Janakpuri (west) - RK Ashram (28.92 km) and Mukundpur-Maujpur (12.54 km). It will take the Delhi Metro's network to the outer areas of the national capital and make the airport more accessible.

### Black rice gains popularity in Assam

- A variety of Black rice or purple rice recently has gained popularity in Assam. It was recently sown by the local farmers for the first time in Barak Valley.
- It is also known as world super food because of its high nutrition value, unique texture and intriguing nutty flavor. It is known for its powerful disease-fighting antioxidants and also contains dietary fiber, anti-inflammatory properties.
- It has the ability to help stop the development of diabetes, cancer, heart disease and even weight gain.

### RBI to Give Nepal 1 Billion Rupees in Rs 100 Notes to Ease Crisis

- The RBI has agreed to provide rupees one billion in Rs 100 denomination notes to Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) to ease the acute shortage of Rs 100 notes faced by the Himalayan nation.
- NRB had also lowered exchange limit of Indian banknotes in Nepal. Currently, NRB is providing exchange facility of up to INR 2,000 on basis of citizenship identification. Similarly, it is providing INR 10,000 to those who submit a copy of air or train ticket to travel to India and INR 25,000 for those travelling to India for medical check-up.
- Currently, NRB has around INR 3.5 billion in its coffers and after bringing another INR one billion, NRB will be able to provide exchange facility to Nepali and Indian nationals in Nepal for the next eight to nine months.

### General G D Bakshi authored book titled "Bose: The Indian Samurai" launched

- A Book named "Bose: The Indian Samurai - Netaji And The INA (A Military Assessment)" has been launched by retired Major General Gagandeep Bakshi in New Delhi.
- This book seeks to evaluate Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose as a military leader and indeed, the First Supreme Commander of India. It is the first professional attempt to evaluate the military performance of the Indian National Army (INA) in World War-II and its significant impact on the Freedom Struggle.
- Bakshi is a veteran of many skirmishes on the Line of Control and of counter-terrorist operations in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab. His books include, "Afghanistan-the First Fault line War", "War in the 21st Century", "The Indian Art Of War", "The Paradox of Pakistan", "The Rise of Indian Military Power: Evolution of an Indian Strategic Culture" and "Limited Wars in South Asia."

### Forex reserves up by USD 625.5 mn to USD 360.296 bn

- The Reserve Bank of India, in a statement, clarified that Foreign exchange reserves rose by USD 625.5 million to USD 360.296 billion in the week ending December 30, helped by an increase in foreign currency assets.
- In the reporting week, foreign currency assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves, increased by USD 612.4 million to USD 336.582 billion.
- However, in the previous week, the reserves had declined by USD 935.2 million to USD 359.671 billion.

## Evening News Digest, 8 January 2017

### Nana Akufo-Addo sworn in as President of Ghana

- Nana Akufo-Addo was sworn-in as the fifth president of Republic of Ghana. He was sworn-in after he won presidential elections by a margin of 9.45% by defeating and replacing incumbent John Dramani Mahama.
- The 72 years old Human rights lawyer belongs to the New Patriotic Party. He was elected on his third attempt to reach the post, after a campaign dominated by the country's faltering economy. In Ghana, the term length of Head of State is four years.
- The Republic of Ghana, popularly known as 'Gold Coast' is a unitary presidential constitutional democracy, located along the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean, in the sub-region of West Africa. Its capital is Accra and incumbent vice-president is Mahamudu Bawumia.

### Haryana to set up a Sports University at Bhiwani

- Haryana will set up a Sports University at Bhiwani to provide international level sports facilities to the youth. It is intended to enhance Bhiwani's status as a sports town and would be named after former chief minister Bansi Lal.
- Also, Swarna Jayanti Centre of Excellence in Sports will be set up in districts, costing five crore rupees each. Swarna Jayanti indoor stadiums for different sports will also be made in each district at a cost of 25 crore rupees. Similarly, Swarna Jayanti Khel Suvudha Kendras costing three crore rupees each will be set up in all districts.
- A freestyle wrestling tournament 'Bharat Kesri Danga' would be organised at Ambala on March 23, 2017 to commemorate the martyrdom day of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev and the winner will be given a cash prize of one crore rupees.
- Haryana is the only state in the country which gives equal amount of cash prizes to medal winners of Olympics and Paralympics.

### Maharashtra appoints 3 Information Commissioners

- Maharashtra government appointed three new information commissioners named K L Bishnoi, a retired IPS officer; Sambhaji Sarkunde, a retired IAS officer, and former Tribal Commissioner and journalist Dilip Dharurkar.
- They would have tenure of five years or till the age of 65, whichever is earlier.
- The appointment was done in pursuance of the sub-section (1) of section 15 of the Right to Information Act, 2005 to establish Maharashtra Information Commission consisting of State Chief Information Commissioner and Seven State Information Commissioners.

### China begins first freight train service to London

- China has begun its first freight train service to London from Yiwu, in the eastern province of Zhejiang.
- The train will travel for 18 days over more than 7,500 miles (12,000 km) to reach Britain from China. It will pass through Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus, Poland, Germany, Belgium and France before arriving in London.

### Indians sweep U-19 class at British Junior Open squash

- The Under-19 boys category of the British Junior Open Squash also known as Drysdale Cup saw the first ever all-Indian final in the tournament's history with Velavan Senthilkumar winning the coveted Drysdale Cup.
- Senthilkumar who defeated his own countrymen Abhay Singh thus became the third Indian player to do so after Anil Nair (1970s) and Sourav Ghosal. The bronze medal was won by Adhitya Raghavan.
- The British Junior Open Squash (BJSO) 2017 was played in Sheffield. BJSO is considered the second most prestigious junior open squash championship in the squash history after the World Junior Squash Championships.

## Morning News Digest, 9 January 2017

### **Kerala ranks 8th in '12 Destinations to Watch' in 2017 by ABTA**

- Kerala has been placed at number eight in the "12 destinations to watch in 2017" by Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), Britain's largest and prominent travel and tours operators association.
- Among the not to miss experiences of the state mentioned in the report is a journey through the placid backwaters in the traditional houseboat, the life of the local people, spice plantations and forests. There is also a special mention of the rejuvenating touch of Kerala's traditional ayurveda therapies.
- In 2015, Kerala received 1,66,792 tourists from Britain, which accounted for a 17.06 percent share of the total foreign tourist arrivals to the state.

### **Google introduces Google My Business, Digital Unlocked for small businesses in India**

- Google India announced key initiatives namely 'My Business' and 'Digital Unlocked' for the small and medium businesses in India.
- My Business introduced first in India would help small businesses set up website from their mobile devices.
- Digital Unlocked is an education programme in association with industry body FICCI and Indian School of Business. The programme will impart mobile and online courses to help small businesses.

### **Sania Mirza wins Brisbane women's doubles title**

- Indian tennis ace Sania Mirza lifted the Brisbane International women's doubles title, with American Bethanie Mattek-Sands. With this, she picked up her first title of the season. However, she ended up losing the World No.1 crown to her partner.
- The duo defeated second-seeded Russian team of Ekaterina Makarova and Elena Vesnina in the final.
- The 2016 Brisbane International was played in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. It was the eighth edition of the tournament. Men's Singles was won by Milos Raonic and Women's Singles was won by Victoria Azarenka.

### **Novak Djokovic defeats Andy Murray to win Qatar Open**

- Serbian professional tennis player Novak Djokovic defeated Scottish Andy Murray to win Qatar Open 2017.
- Men's Doubles title was won by Jereme Chardy and Fabrice Martin. The pair defeated Vasek Pospisil and Radek Stepanek.
- Qatar Open is men's tennis tournament played on outdoor hard courts. It was the 25th edition of the Qatar Open.

### **9th Jaipur International Film Festival begins**

- The ninth edition of Jaipur International Film Festival (JIFF) began in Jaipur, capital city of Rajasthan. The 2017 Life Time Achievement Award was presented to Ramesh Prasad, film producer, chairman and Head of Prasad Studios, Prasad Art Pictures.
- The JIFF is held annually in Jaipur since 2009. The festival is conducted by the JIFF Trust. It is considered to be world's fastest growing film festival.
- The five-day film festival aims to promote work of emerging directors, as well as encourage exchange of knowledge, ideas, information and culture between India and the participating nations.

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## Morning News Digest, 10 January 2017

### Former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani dies at 82

- The former President of Iran, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani died in Tehran at the age of 82. He was the 4th president of Iran from 3 August 1989 to 3 August 1997.
- He played a key role in Iranian Revolution (1979) and was the chairman of the Expediency Discernment Council of Iran from 1989 until his death. The Council tries to resolve disputes between parliament and the Guardian Council.
- Rafsanjani has been described as having been a pragmatic Islamic conservative. He supported a free market position domestically, favoring privatization of state-owned industries and a moderate position internationally, seeking to avoid conflict with the United States and the West.

### General Anti-Avoidance Tax Rule to be effective from April 1, 2017

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) clarified that General anti-avoidance rule (GAAR), the legislation against tax avoidance, will become effective from April 1, 2017.
- GAAR was introduced in the 2012-13 Budget speech of the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee to check tax evasion and avoidance. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his Budget speech in 2015, deferred GAAR implementation by two years.
- Main provisions of GAAR are as follows:
  - The GAAR allows tax officials to deny tax benefits, if a deal is found without any commercial purpose other than tax avoidance.
  - It also allows tax officials to target participatory notes. Under GAAR, the investor has to prove that the participatory note was not set to avoid taxes.
  - It also allows officials to deny double taxation avoidance benefits, if deals made in tax havens like Mauritius were found to be avoiding taxes.

### 2017 Aircel Chennai Open concluded

- 2017 Aircel Chennai Open, the 22nd edition of the only ATP tournament from India, concluded at the SDAT Tennis Stadium in Chennai.
- Spanish professional tennis player Roberto Bautista Agut clinched the singles title by beating Russian Daniil Medvedev.
- Doubles title was clinched by Rohan Bopanna and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan by defeating Purav Raja and Divij Sharan.

### Japan PM Shinzo Abe urges South Korea to remove 'comfort woman' statue

- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged South Korea to remove a new 'comfort women' statue dedicated to women forced to work in Japan's wartime brothels.
- The golden statue of a seated young girl was installed in December 2016 outside the Japanese Consulate in Busan.
- He called on Seoul to implement a bilateral agreement reached in 2015 which aimed to settle the thorny issue.
- The statue is one of a number in South Korea representing "comfort women" procured for the Japanese military's wartime brothels before and during the war.

### Indian Army approved Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)

- The Indian Army approved heavy artillery gun, Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS), developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in Public-private partnership (PPP) mode.
- ATAGS is a 155-mm, 52-calibre towed artillery gun being developed in mission mode for the Army's artillery modernisation programme. It was designed by the DRDO's Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) in Pune.
- Some crucial characteristics of the gun are an all-electric drive, high mobility, quick deployability, auxiliary power mode, advanced communication system, and automated command and control system. It also boasts a range of 45 km, depending on the type of ammunition used.

Online

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# DELHI POLICE (CONSTABLE) EXAM MOCK TEST SERIES

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PRODUCT TYPE: MOCK TEST  
LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PRICE: **Rs.50**

## Evening News Digest, 9 January 2017

### Former President of Portugal Mario Soares passes away

- Mario Alberto Nobre Lopes Soares, the former prime minister of Portugal, passed away at the age of 92.
- He will be remembered as the Founding Father of Democracy in Portugal as he consolidated Portugal's transition to democracy. He became the first freely elected premier after a revolution ended almost five decades of dictatorship.
- He served as Prime Minister of Portugal from 1976 to 1978 and from 1983 to 1985, and subsequently as the 17th President of Portugal from 1986 to 1996.
- Also, he played a central role in the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Portugal and India in 1974.

### 20th National Conference on e-Governance begins in Visakhapatnam

- The 20th edition of National Conference on e-Governance (NCEG) began on January 9, 2017 in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The two-day conference will conclude on January 10, 2017.
- The theme of the conference is 'Digital transformation' and intends to create a digitally-empowered society.
- It is organised jointly by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Department of Electronics & IT, Government of India and AP Government.
- The Conference is held every year in partnership with one State Government since 1997. The 19th National Conference on e-Governance was held in Nagpur, Maharashtra in 2016.

### India's Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope plays key role in rare discovery

- For the first time, it has been shown that the central dense cores of certain kinds of special galaxies are the source that high energy particles like electrons need to create 'relic' radio emissions that are seen in clusters of galaxies.
- This has been an outstanding problem in understanding the physics of galaxy clusters that make up the large-scale structure of the universe.
- India's Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope, GMRT based at Khodad, Maharashtra and NASA's Chandra X-ray telescope have played a crucial role in this discovery. GMRT is operated by National Centre for Radio Astrophysics, Pune.
- The multi-national team is led by Reinout Van Weeran from Harvard Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics, Cambridge in USA.

### International Kite festival begins at Ahmedabad

- A week-long international kite festival (Uttarayan) is being held at Sabarmati River Front in Gujarat's Ahmedabad. It was inaugurated by state Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.
- The theme for this year is 'Tourist Destinations of Gujarat'. Kite fliers from Canada, Germany, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, New-Zealand, Poland, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and USA are part of them.
- Since 1989, it has been the sign for farmers that the sun is back and that harvest season is approaching which is called Makara Sankranti.

### Prime Minister launches Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojna

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a skill development program targeted at Indian youth seeking overseas employment. It is being implemented by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- It was launched after inauguration of 14th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas convention held in Bengaluru where Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa was the Chief Guest.
- PKVY will provide training and certify Indians who are seeking overseas employment in selected sectors in line with international standards.

Online 

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### Haryana to set up 'Prarambh School for Teachers Education' in Jhajjar

- The Haryana government has decided to set up 'State level Prarambh School for Teachers Education' at village Silani in district Jhajjar over an area of 10 acres with a cost of Rs. 50 crore. 'Prarambh' will be a first-of-its kind school for teachers to help them develop their professional skills.
- The programme intends to fulfill the vision of the education department to bring the best quality teachers to the 47 lakh-odd students in the state and aims to make the state a preferred destination for school education.
- A four-year integrated Bachelor of Education Programme is the first offering of this school.
- Also, a high-powered committee under the chairmanship of Surina Rajan has been constituted for creating curriculum for this programme.

### 28th edition of Road Safety Week observed

- The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is observing the 28th edition of Road Safety Week from January 9 to January 15, 2017. The objective is to spread awareness on the issue of road safety.
- The slogan of 2017's Safety Week is 'Safety Is Gainful, Accident Is Painful'. It focuses on the use of helmets and seat belts. It also highlights issues of excessive honking and fancy number plates.
- On this occasion, the Ministry also launched two mobile apps namely m-Parivahan and e-challan, a comprehensive digital solution for transport enforcement and traffic police.

### Assam govt to launch e-Wallet 'Tokapoisa.in'

- To enable the people of the state for hassle-free online transactions in local language, Assam Government will launch its indigenously-developed e-Wallet named 'Tokapoisa.in'. It will be launched on the occasion of Digi Dhan mela to be held in Guwahati.
- Developed by the Assam Electronics Development Corporation Ltd. (AMTRON), it facilitates government-related transactions using mobile application. Besides being an e-Wallet, it will be a virtual payment terminal.
- Traders and merchants, including small shop-keepers will be able to use the app to keep record of their transaction, with a feature of accounting package for such small traders.

### BSI scientists discovered New Ginger species in Andamans

- Scientists of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) have found a new species of Zingiber (Ginger) from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The species *Zingiber pseudosquarrosum* belongs to genus Zingiber, and has been used by the local Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of the Andaman for its medicinal values.
- The fresh extract of fleshy tuberous roots is used to treat abdominal pain and anti-helminthic troubles by Nicobarese and certain other tribal communities.

### Cristiano Ronaldo wins FIFA Best Player Award for 4th time

- Real Madrid and Portugal Cristiano Ronaldo was named the world's best player at Best FIFA Football Awards in Zurich. He defeated Lionel Messi to win the title for the 4th time.
- Carli Lloyd of the United States was named the world's best female player.
- Earlier in December 2016, Ronaldo also won the Ballon d'Or for the fourth time by defeating Lionel Messi.

## Evening News Digest, 10 January 2017

### PM Narendra Modi inaugurates India International exchange at GIFT city

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the India International Exchange (INX), at International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) in Gujarat International Finance Tec-city (GIFT) in Gandhinagar. It was inaugurated as part of Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2017 that began on January 10.
- It will be one of the world's fastest exchange that would be able to execute a deal in four microseconds. Rs 500 crore has been kept aside for this in the next three years.
- The exchange is a 100 percent subsidiary of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and it will operate for 22 hours a day to allow international investors and Non Residents Indians to trade from anywhere across the globe
- The India INX is housed at 'Hiranandani Signature' - the only structure to have come up in the free tax zone.

### ISRO, CNES ink pact on satellite launch

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has signed a partnership agreement with French Space agency (CNES) in satellite launch technology.
- The agreement was signed between ISRO Chairman Kiran Kumar and CNES President Jean-Yves Le Gall in the presence of visiting French Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean-Marc Ayrault. ISRO is the second partner of CNES, in terms of volume, after NASA.
- Besides, the French Foreign Minister also saw the signing of an agreement between Axiom Research Labs and CNES for equipping TeamIndus's lunar rover with two latest-generation CASPEX micro-cameras.
- The cameras have been developed by CNES in partnership with French firm 3DPlus and with this agreement CNES is sending French technology for the first time on lunar terrain.
- TeamIndus, the only Indian team competing for the Google Lunar XPRIZE, has been floated by Axiom Research Labs - the Indian "NewSpace" start-up. The CEO of Axiom Research Labs is Rahul Narayan.

### 74th Annual Golden Globe Awards announced

- The 74th Golden Globe Awards were given away in an award ceremony held at Beverly Hills in California, the United States. in California.
- These awards given annually honours the best in Motion Pictures and American Television for the previous year.
- List of Important Winners:
  - *La La Land*: It won all seven awards for which it had been nominated, becoming the most successful film in Golden Globe Awards history and seventh overall to win each award, including Best Director, Best Screenplay for Damien Chazelle and Best Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy. The only other film to win more than one award was *Elle*, which won both the awards for which it had been nominated.
  - *Moonlight*: The drama film got Best Motion Picture in Drama category.
  - *The Crown*: It got the Best Series award in Drama.
  - *Atlanta*: It got the Best Series award in Musical or Comedy.

### Pakistan test-fires Submarine-Launched Cruise Missile Babur-III

- Pakistan successfully test-fired submarine-launched cruise missile Babur-III, the enhanced version of Babur cruise missile.
- The indigenously developed missile has the range of 450 km. It is a low-flying, terrain hugging missile, which carries certain stealth features and is capable of carrying various types of warheads.
- Babur weapons system version II incorporates advanced aerodynamics and avionics that can strike targets both at land and sea with high accuracy at a range of 700 km.

### Maharashtra government launches India's largest WiFi service

- In order to empower people digitally, Maharashtra Government launched India's largest public WiFi service called 'MumbaiWifi' in Mumbai. It is claimed to be one of the largest wifi service in the world.
- The facility was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.
- Initially in the first phase, it will provide 500 Wifi hotspots across various locations across Mumbai. In the second phase, State Government will provide 1200 WiFi hotspots by 1 May 2017.

## Morning News Digest, 12 January 2017

### Gujarat government introduces India's first student startup and innovation policy

- The Chief Minister of Gujarat, Vijaybhai Rupani has introduced India's first Student Startup and Innovation Policy.
- Its objective is to make qualitative improvement in the conventional education system and to create a conducive environment to inculcate creative thinking and problem-solving attitude amongst students.
- In this regard, a State Innovation Fund with a corpus of \$29.3 million (Rs. 200 Crore) will be set up to provide funds to the students over the next five years. Fund will be contributed by Central and State government equally.
- Primary Objectives –
  - To convert at least 1% graduates into job creators.
  - To harness 500 student startups in the next five years.
  - To file at least 1,000 patents from universities in the state every year.
  - To support at least 1000 student-led innovations per year.
  - To build capacity for at least 200 educational institutes in the state in the next five years.
- Earlier in June 2016, the state has launched its first ever IT startup policy. In last two years, several other states have also launched their startup policies. These are Bihar, Odisha, Telangana, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, and Rajasthan

### Biography of Mahavir Singh titled 'Akhada' released

- A biography of Mahavir Singh Phogat titled 'Akhada' was released recently. The biography on Indian amateur wrestler and senior Olympics coach has been authored by sports journalist Saurav Duggal and published with Hachette India.
- The book traces Mahavir Phogat's journey with his daughters and nieces hailing from a small village in Haryana to winning the medals for the country.
- Mahavir's daughters, Babita and Geeta, have won medals at Olympics, World Wrestling Championship and Commonwealth Games.
- Noted Indian biographical film 'Dangal' starring Aamir Khan is based on this Dronacharya awardee - the highest National Sports award given to a Coach.

### Parag Havaldar wins Technical Oscar Award

- Indian-American Parag Havaldar, a computer engineer from IIT Kharagpur, is part of the Academy Awards' list of winners for Technical achievement.
- The list of 18 winners was recently announced by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for its 2017 Scientific and Technical awards.
- Havaldar is honoured for the development of expression-based facial performance-capture technology at Sony Pictures Imageworks.
- Currently Havaldar is a software supervisor at Sony Pictures Image works, where he leads the company's proprietary efforts in the area of performance capture.

### National Youth Festival commenced at Rohtak

- The 21st edition of National Youth Festival (NYF) will be organized from January 12 to 16, 2017 at Rohtak in Haryana to make the youth aware about the country's defence prowess.
- The theme for the festival is 'Youth For Digital India'. An amount of Rs 23 crore has been proposed for the event.
- India is one of the youngest nations in the world with about 65% of its population under the age of 35. This demographic dividend offers a great opportunity for the country to strive and work endlessly in the process of nation building following the paths shown by Swami Vivekananda.

### Karan Johar's biography 'An Unsuitable Boy' to be released

- The biography on the popular filmmaker Karan Johar, titled 'An Unsuitable Boy' will be released by Penguin Publishers. It has been co-authored by Journalist Poonam Saxena.
- The biography's title is a tribute to litterateur Vikram Seth's epic novel, A Suitable Boy, which delineated the search of a suitable match for its protagonist, Lata.
- In this book, Karan has come out candidly on his matters of sex and sexual orientation (sexuality and virginity) just stopping short of a bald admission.

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## Evening News Digest, 11 January 2017

### Roman Herzog, former President of Germany, passes away

- The former President of Germany Roman Herzog passed away in Bad Mergentheim, Germany. He was 82.
- Representing Christian Democratic Union (CDU), he served as the President of Germany from 1994 to 1999. He was elected as the President by the Federal Assembly (Bundesversammlung) on 23 May 1994.
- He was the first President of Germany to be elected to after the reunification of Germany.

### 12th World Hindi Day observed on January 10

- 12th World Hindi Day observed on January 10 by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Indian Embassies all over the world.
- The day first observed in 2006 seeks to promote Hindi at the world stage. It is celebrated in addition to the National Hindi Diwas observed every year on September 14, the day on which the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi written in Devanagari script as the Official Language of the Union.
- Hindi is the fourth most spoken language in the world after Mandarin, Spanish, and English. It is spoken as a mother tongue by more than 250 million people. Fiji adopted Hindi as an official language. The dialect of Hindi spoken in Fiji is known as Fiji Baat.

### China launches first commercial space mission with new Kuaizhou-1A rocket

- China successfully launched first commercial mission using an updated version of the low-cost Kuaizhou-1A rocket. As part of the mission, three satellites JL-1, CubeSats XY-S1 and Caton-1 were launched into space.
- Developed by Rocket technology company under the state owned China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (ACSIC), it was launched from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Gansu province.
- Kuaizhou-1A is a low-cost solid-fuelled carrier rocket with high reliability and short preparation period. It has been designed to launch low-orbit satellites weighing less than 300 kg.
- The JL-1 is a multi-functional remote-sensing satellite which will provide high-definition video images. These images will be used for land resource and forestry surveying, transport and disaster prevention, environmental protection and relief purposes.
- The XY-S1 and Caton-1 are experimental satellites to test technologies of low-orbit narrow-band communication and VHF Data Exchange System (VDES) respectively.

### World Bank lowers India's growth rate to 7 percent

- The World Bank has lowered down India's growth rate for the fiscal 2016-17 to 7 percent from its previous estimate of 7.6 percent.
- It stated that immediate withdrawal of a large volume of currency in circulation and subsequent replacement with new notes in India contributed to slowing growth. However, it said that the country would regain momentum in the following years with 7.6 and 7.8% growth.
- Moreover, India still maintains the distinction of being the fastest growing emerging market economies of the world, bypassing China.

### Flipkart replaces Binny Bansal with Kalyan Krishnamurthy as CEO

- In a management reshuffle, Flipkart has appointed former Tiger Global Management executive Kalyan Krishnamurthy as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- He replaced co-founder Binny Bansal, who has been named as the Group CEO of India's largest online marketplace. Co-founder Sachin Bansal continues to be executive chairman.
- Tiger Global owns about 35% stake in Flipkart, which is valued at \$15 billion.

Online

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## Morning News Digest, 13 January 2017

### Daniel Ortega sworn-in as Nicaragua's President for third term

- Daniel Ortega was sworn-in as President of Nicaragua for a third consecutive term. Also, his wife Rosario Murillo took oath as the new Vice President. With this, they became the first married couple to hold office in Nicaragua's history.
- Ortega and Murillo were elected in November 2016 with 72.5% of the vote. Their party won 71 of the 92 seats in parliament.
- He has been the President of the Central American nation since 2007. He was one of the leaders of the rebel Sandinista movement that ousted the four-decade Somoza family dictatorship in 1979.
- Nicaragua is the largest country in the Central American isthmus between the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Managua is the country's capital city.

### PR Sreejesh becomes member of FIH Athletes' Committee

- The Indian men's hockey team captain PR Sreejesh became a member of International Hockey Federation (FIH) Athletes' Committee.
- Michael Green is currently heading this committee with secretary Sandra Harik. Other members are Marsha Cox, Moritz Fuerste, Sanaz Heidari, Annie Panter, Scott Sandison, Beth Smith and Liam de Young.
- This committee is made up of current and former hockey players who have the responsibility to act as a liaison between the FIH and the Athletes and make sure the Athletes have a voice in the FIH decision making process.

### FIFA World Cup expanded to 48-team competition from 2026

- The international governing body of football FIFA announced that the World Cup will be expanded to host 48 teams, up from present 32.
- A 48-team tournament could bring in an extra £800 million more in broadcasting, commercial and match-day revenue.
- The move, which will come into effect from 2026, was the largest expansion in percentage terms since 1982. Then the competition was expanded from 16 to 24 teams. The expansion is also the first since it moved to the current 32-nation format in 1998.

### NTPC approves Rs 1,000 crore investment for Dulanga mining project

- State-run power giant National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) approved an investment of Rs 1,053.41 crore for Dulanga coal mining project with rated production of 7 million tonnes per annum.
- With a mineable reserve of 152 million tonne, the Dulanga block located in the Ib valley coalfields, is linked to NTPC's 1600 MW super thermal power station coming up at Darlipalli in Sundargarh district, Odisha. The project is scheduled to be commissioned by 2018.
- The total cost of developing the coal block is estimated at Rs. 1556.65 crore. Before this, NTPC has spent Rs. 76.92 crore on the coal mine project by March 2015.

### US Researchers discover the function of human appendix

- The United States (US) researchers from Midwestern University have identified the function of the human appendix, generally viewed as a vestigial organ with little-known use.
- According to the new discovery, the human appendix has evolved at least 30 times and even possibly up to a maximum of 41 times throughout the mammalian evolution.
- It was found that species with appendix have higher concentrations of immune (lymphoid) tissue in cecum (part of the large intestines), thereby suggesting that appendix could serve as a secondary immune organ.

Online

--End of Article--

## Evening News Digest, 12 January 2017

### DEFCON 2017 to be held in New Delhi

- DEFCON 2017, an annual seminar organised jointly by the Corps of Signals of Indian Army and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is scheduled to be held on March 23-24, 2017 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- The theme of seminar will be, 'Infrastructure and Skilled Human Resource for Digital Army' and will be led by Lieutenant General Ashish Ranjan Prasad, Signal Officer-in-Chief, Corps of Signals.
- It is a forum for interaction between the officers of the Armed Forces, Indian Industry, Academia and R&D organisations on matters related to operational communication systems for the Army.

### India-CERT signs an MoU with US-CERT

- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT- In) and the Department of Homeland Security, USA on cooperation in the field of cyber-security.
- It was signed by Aruna Sundararajan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and Richard Verma, US Ambassador to India.
- It intends to promote closer co-operation and the exchange of information pertaining to the Cyber Security in accordance with the relevant laws, rules and regulations of each economy and this MoU and on the basis of equality, reciprocity and mutual benefit.

### National Youth Day observed across the Nation

- National Youth Day was celebrated across the nation on January 12, 2017, the 154th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. In 1984 the Government of India declared the day as the National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.
- The day was started with an aim to encourage and inspire the youth of the country and motivate them by the life and ideas of Swami Vivekananda.
- Vivekananda was born Narendranath Datta in Calcutta on 12 January 1863. He founded Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. He passed away on July 4, 1902 at the age of 39 at Belur Math near Kolkata in West Bengal.

### India-Kenya sign two agreements to boost ties

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta in New Delhi.
- Both countries exchanged two agreements on agriculture, including granting of 100 million dollar line of credit to Kenya pertaining to agricultural mechanisation.
- Besides, both the countries also agreed to
  - to enhance cooperation in areas of maritime surveillance, maritime security; sharing of white shipping information and joint hydrographic surveys; and
  - to continue sharing information and expertise in counter terrorism, cyber security, combating drugs and human trafficking.

### India, Rwanda agree to forge Strategic Partnership

- Paul Kagame, the President of Rwanda was on a three-day visit to India from January 9-11, 2017. During the visit, India and Rwanda agreed to enhance their bilateral relationship to "Strategic Partnership". India also agreed to open a Indian Mission in Kigali.
- Following Agreements were signed during his visit:
  - Grant of US\$ 2 million of medicines and cash grant of US\$ 1 million for purchase of medical equipment.
  - Government of India (GoI's) assistance for Line of Credit of US\$ 81 million for a road project.
  - Commencement of direct flights between Kigali and Mumbai by Rwand Air.
  - Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance by Republic of Rwanda. Rwanda became the 25th partner of ISA.
  - MoU between Rwanda Police and Gujarat Forensic Sciences University.

## Morning News Digest, 14 January 2017

### Barack Obama awards Joe Biden with Top civilian honour

- The outgoing US President Barack Obama awarded Vice-President Joe Biden with the America's highest civilian honour, Presidential Medal of Freedom.
- Joe is the 47th and current Vice President of the United States (US), having been jointly elected twice with President Barack Obama. A member of the Democratic Party, Biden represented Delaware as a US Senator from 1973 until becoming Vice President in 2009.
- This award recognizes those people who have made an especially meritorious contribution to the security or national interests of the US, world peace, cultural or other significant public or private endeavors. It is not limited to U.S. citizens.

### Bargarh Dhanu Yatra concludes in Odisha

- The 11-day Bargarh Dhanu Yatra, an annual drama-based open theatrical performance, concluded in Bargarh, Odisha. The drama is the world's largest open theatre spread across a 6-km radius area around the Bargarh Municipality.
- This Yatra is based on mythological story of Krishna. It is about the episode of Krishna and Balaram's visit to Mathura to witness the Dhanu ceremony organized by their (maternal) uncle Kansa.
- The plays start with the dethroning of emperor Ugrasena by the angry prince Kansa over the marriage of his sister Debaki with Basudeba, and ends with death of Kansa and Ugrasen being restored as Mathura's king.

### TCS names Rajesh Gopinathan as MD and CEO

- India's largest IT services firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) named Rajesh Gopinathan as its new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He succeeded N Chandrasekaran who was elevated as Chairman of Tata Sons.
- TCS also appointed N Ganapathy Subramaniam as President and Chief Operating Officer (COO).
- Previously serving as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Gopinathan has been with TCS since 2001. He was appointed as CFO in February 2013. He has also worked with Tata Industries.

### Consulate General of India in Dubai announces launch of 'Diplomats Cricket Championship Cup'

- Consulate General of India Anurag Bhushan announced the launch of 'Diplomats Cricket Championship Cup' in Dubai.
- It was launched in association with the Skyline University College, Sharjah to promote sportsmanship, camaraderie and harmonious relationship among the diplomatic missions of UAE.
- The two-day cricket event also aims at building and establishing active, meritorious and strong social and corporate relationship amongst all participating Consulates, Embassies and Business Councils.
- The Championship is an annual event and the first edition of the tournament is scheduled to take place on January 20-21, 2017 at the Skyline University College cricket ground.

### Vijender, Harendra honoured at DSJA annual awards

- Boxing star Vijender Singh was chosen for 'Sportsman of the Year' honour at the Delhi Sports Journalists Association's (DSJA) annual awards. Hockey coach Harendra Singh, who guided the junior team to a historic World Cup triumph in 2016, was chosen for 'Coach of the Year' award.
- Besides, Rishabh Pant was named 'Emerging Sportsperson of the Year' and legendary wrestler and coach Mahabali Satpal for 'Lifetime Achievement' award.

### Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher Pinaka Mark-II successfully test fired

- The Mark-II version of Pinaka rocket that transformed the rocket into "Guided Pinaka" was successfully test fired from Launch Complex-III of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur.
- It has been jointly developed by Pune-based Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), Hyderabad-based Research Centre Imarat (RCI) and Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL).
- Guided Pinaka is equipped with a navigation, guidance & control kit and this conversion has considerably enhanced the range & accuracy of Pinaka.
- The rocket was fired from a multi-barrel rocket launcher (MBRL). The launcher can fire 12 rockets with 1.2 tonne of high explosives within 44 seconds and destroy a target area of four sq km at a time.

### Minimum monthly pension increased to Rs. 9,000 for Central Government employees

- Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr Jitendra Singh announced to increase the minimum monthly pension to Rs. 9,000 per person.
- The minister also stated that the ex-gratia amount for the employees has been increased from Rs. 10 -15 lakh to Rs. 25-35 lakh. There are about 50-55 lakh pensioners in the country and almost 88% of their accounts have been seeded to Aadhaar.
- Singh was addressing the 29th meeting of the Standing Committee of Voluntary Agencies (Scova), organised by the Department of Pensions and Pensioners' Welfare (DoP&PW) in New Delhi.

### Centre sets up 6-member committee to look into Hajj subsidy issue

- The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs headed by Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi constituted a six-member committee to look into the Haj subsidy issue in light of a 2012 Supreme Court order on gradually reducing and abolishing subsidy given to pilgrims by 2022. The committee will be headed by Afzal Ammanullah, former Secretary to Parliamentary Affairs Ministry.
- The committee will figure out whether the pilgrims can travel to Saudi Arabia paying less in the absence of such subsidy.
- The decision to form a committee came a day after the agreement between Minister of State for Minority Affairs (Independent Charge) Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Saudi Arabia's Haj and Umrah Minister Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benten in Jeddah. The agreement mentions to increase the size of India's Haj quota from 1,36,020 to 1,70,520.
- Earlier in 2012, the apex court had directed the Union government to gradually reduce and abolish Haj subsidy by 2022. Instead, it had asked the government to invest the subsidy amount of approximately Rs 650 crore a year on educational and social development of the community.

### Japanese PM Shinzo Abe signs 1 trillion Yen aid package to Philippines

- Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe signed a 1-trillion yen (about \$8.7 billion) aid package to the Philippines over the next five years.
- It was signed during Shinzo's two-day visit to Philippines, making him the first foreign leader to visit archipelago since the election of the Philippines' President Rodrigo Duterte in May 2016.
- Focused on infrastructure and energy, the package aims to improve economic and political relations between the two island nations.

### Barack Obama terminates 'Wet Foot, Dry Foot' Policy for Cubans

- The outgoing US President Barack Obama terminated the 22-year-old policy that allowed Cubans who arrived in United States (US) without visas to remain in the country and seek legal residency. The decision has been implemented with immediate effect.
- The so-called "Wet Foot, Dry Foot" policy, which dates to 1995, was mooted by the then President Bill Clinton after a mass exodus of Cuban in the US. This policy replaced the earlier "Open Door" policy on Cuban refugees mooted first by President Lyndon B Johnson.
- As per the new policy, Cubans refugees who were intercepted at sea were repatriated back to their country, but it allowed those who reached land to stay in the US.
- The decision is Obama's last move in his historic dealings with the Cuba. In 2014, he reopened ties to the island nation after a half-century of frozen diplomatic ties.



LUMINOUS POINT

# SSC JE 2016

## (MECHANICAL) Mock Test Series

PRODUCT TYPE: MOCK TEST

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

PRICE: **Rs.75**

## Morning News Digest, 15 January 2017

### Chinese base jumper achieves world-first

- A Chinese base jumper has successfully completed the world's first jump from the world's highest bridge in Yunnan province.
- The 29-year-old known as Adam completed the jump from the newly-opened world highest Beipanjiang Bridge which is 565 meters high. The whole jump took 81 seconds with Adam opening his parachute ten seconds into the jump, when he was 200 meters above the ground.
- The bridge, which connects Guizhou and Yunnan provinces, cut road trips from Liupanshui in Guizhou province to Xuanwei in Yunnan province from over four hours to less than two. Construction of the 1,341 metre-long suspension bridge started in 2013 and officially opened last month at a cost of 1 billion yuan (US\$150 million).

### Indian pepper holds key for new cancer-fighting drug: study

- A new study published in Journal of Biological Chemistry suggests that the Indian long pepper, widely popular for spicing up food may soon be used as a potential cancer treatment drug.
- Scientist from UT Southwestern Medical Center has recently uncovered the chemical process behind anti-cancer properties of a spicy Indian pepper plant called the long pepper, whose suspected medicinal properties date back thousands of years.
- The secret lies in a chemical called Piperlongumine (PL), which has shown activity against many cancers. PL converts to hPL, an active drug that silences a gene called GSTP1. The GSTP1 gene produces a detoxification enzyme that is often overly abundant in tumors.

### Our Moon is at least 4.51 billion years old: study

- A new research based on an analysis of minerals from the moon called 'zircons' revealed that the moon is at least 4.51 billion years old or 40-140 million years older than previously thought. The moon formed "only" about 60 million years after the birth of the solar system.
- Minerals found from Moon were brought back to Earth by the Apollo 14 mission in 1971 and have now been studied by researchers from University of California-Los Angeles (UCLA).
- This discovery would provide critical information for astronomers and planetary scientists who seek to understand the early evolution of the Earth and our solar system.

### Morocco bans production, sale of burqa

- Morocco, a majority-Muslim country, has banned the sale and production of burqas (full-body veils).
- The burka is more commonly worn in conservative Muslim societies such as Afghanistan and Pakistan. King Mohammed VI, who oversees the Moroccan government, favours a moderate version of Islam and has vowed to crack down on homegrown terrorism.
- Prior to it, burqas have been banned in seven places including Tessin, Switzerland since 2016 and Brazzaville, Congo, since 2015.

### PM Narendra Modi declared open Bharat Mada Sadanam in Kanyakumari

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 12, 2017 declared open the Bharat Mada Sadanam, Sri Ramayan Dharshanam and Anjaneyar statue at the Vivekanandapuram in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu.
- These were opened on the occasion of National Youth Day and the year 2017 marks the 154<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda.
- The triple project, established at a cost of over Rs. 15 crore, was executed by the Vivekananda Kendra through donations and sponsors.

Online 

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## Evening News Digest, 14 January 2017

### Lt Gen Sarath Chand takes over as Vice Chief of Army Staff

- Lieutenant General Sarath Chand took over as Vice Chief of Army Staff succeeding General Bipin Rawat, who was elevated as 26th Chief of Army staff.
- Prior to it, he was commanding Jaipur-based South Western Command, christened as the 'Sapta Shakti', in February 2016.
- He will head the General Staff Branch at the Army Headquarters and will provide crucial support to the Army Chief in discharge of his duties.
- He will be responsible for ensuring the operational effectiveness of the Army by directly overseeing the functioning of the military operations, intelligence and logistics directorates.

### Portugal's National Order of Knighthood conferred on Eduardo Faleiro

- Portugal Prime Minister Antonio Costa conferred on Eduardo Faleiro the 'Grande Oficial da Ordem do Infante D Henrique', the Portugal National Order of Knighthood. Faleiro is a former Union Minister of State for External Affairs in Congress-led UPA government.
- Besides, Paulo Varela Gomes was posthumously awarded a Cultural Merit Medal. He is a historian and former director of the Fundacao Oriente, an institution engaged in cultural activities in Goa.
- The order was created on June 2, 1960, to commemorate the quincentenary of the death of the Infante Henry the Navigator, fifth son of King John I of Portugal and his queen, Philippa of Lancaster. It is awarded for relevant services to Portugal and services in the expansion of the Portuguese culture, its history and its values.

### Norway becomes first country to ban FM Radio broadcasting

- Norway has banned FM radio broadcasting in the country, thus becoming the first country in the world to do so. The move is aimed at rolling out digital-only radio over the course of the year.
- Norway's Culture Ministry estimated that the move would help save 180 million kroner a year, or about \$25 million.
- FM broadcasting using analogue frequencies originated in the United States in the 1930s and arrived in Norway in the 1950s.
- Other European countries are also planning to phase out FM broadcasting. Switzerland is planning to phase out its own FM transmitters by 2020 and Britain is considering following suit once the proportion of people listening to digital radio reaches 50 per cent.

### Ken-Betwa river linking project receives environment, forest & tribal clearances

- Ken-Betwa river linking project has received formal environment, forest and tribal clearances. The project is aimed at addressing water needs of dry swathes in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- It is India's first river interlinking project that will connect Ken river in Madhya Pradesh with the Betwa in Uttar Pradesh. The project was envisaged first in 1980 to transfer surplus river water to dry and arid areas of Bundelkhand region. It will help irrigate an area of 6.35 lakh hectares annually in Bundelkhand region.
- The Water Resource Ministry is pursuing NITI Aayog to change its funding pattern of Centre and State share from 60:40 to 90:10 for the project as it is a special project.

### The Exorcist writer William Peter Blatty dies aged 89

- US author and filmmaker William Peter Blatty died of multiple myeloma at the age of 89. He was born on January 7, 1928 in New York City.
- He was best known for his 1971 novel "The Exorcist" which two years later in 1973 adapted into the film with same name directed by Blatty. Some of his other notable works are "Elsewhere" (2009), "Dimitri" (2010), and "Crazy" (2010).
- The Exorcist won Blatty an Oscar Award for best adapted screenplay and he went on to write and direct the second sequel The Exorcist III.
- He won 'The Gabriel Award' and American Film Festival Blue Ribbon for *Insight* TV series episode "Watts Made Out of Thread?".

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## Morning News Digest, 16 January 2017

### Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated “Saksham - 2017” programme

- Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State (IC) for Petroleum & Natural Gas, inaugurated a month long awareness programme “Saksham – 2017” in New Delhi.
- It is being organized by PCRA (Petroleum Conservation Research Association) and other Oil & Gas PSUs under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- Saksham - 2017 (Samrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav) aims to create awareness among the masses towards judicious utilization and conservation of petroleum products along with use of energy efficient appliances and switching to cleaner fuels.

### Former Punjab CM Surjit Singh Barnala is no more

- Former Punjab Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala died at the age of 91. He twice served as Union Minister and was Governor of Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh.
- He ruled Punjab as the 11th Chief Minister from September 1985 to June 1987. He was the first Governor of Uttarakhand from November 2000 to January 2003. After that, he was appointed as the 18th Governor of Andhra Pradesh from January 2003 to January 2004.
- He served as the Union Agriculture Minister in the Janata Party government of Morarji Desai (1977-1979) and again served as Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1998.

### India inks MoU with Sri Lanka to construct 3,000 rain water harvesting systems

- India has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sri Lanka to construct 3000 rain water harvesting systems in Rin Jaffna District at a cost of Rs. 300 million.
- This rain water project envisages construction of 3000 rainwater harvesting systems for 3000 households in selected divisions of Jaffna District.
- The scope of the project also includes training of the households on operation and maintenance (O&M) of the rain water harvesting systems. It will also generate employment opportunities in Sri Lanka.

### Kerala Launched its First Solar Powered Boat named ‘Aditya’

- The Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan has inaugurated the first solar-powered boat of the state water transport department, named ‘Aditya’ in Vaikom boat Jetty in Kerala.
- The boat is 20 metre long and seven metre wide. It can travel at a speed of 14 km per hour. When the ordinary boats takes 15 minutes to reach Thavanakkadavu from Vaikom, the solar boat will take only half that time.
- It will provide service between Vaikom and Thavanakkadavu. It will serve those who depend on water transport. The construction of the Rs 1.50-crore boat took nearly two years. The boat has a seating capacity of 75.
- The boat was manufactured based on the studies conducted at the ship technology department of the Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat).

### India, US inks agreement on collaboration on third world countries

- India and the United States (US) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate in the fields of developmental activities and aid in third world countries.
- This MoU underlines exchange of information and experience in sectors or issues pertaining to project development or implementation in partner countries. Besides, a joint advisory or technical assistance will be provided to third countries regarding sector policy reform, project and sector management, project implementation and economic growth promotion strategies in relevant sectors.
- The MoU was signed between the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and Union Ministry of External Affairs’ Development Partnership Administration (DPA).

## Evening News Digest, 15 January 2017

### 69th Army Day celebrated across the Nation

- The 69th edition of Indian Army Day was observed across the nation on January 15, 2017.
- On this day in 1949, Lt. General Kodandera Madappa Cariappa became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army (of the independent India) by succeeding British Army General Roy Butcher (last British Commander-in-Chief of India.).
- This day inspires the troops to continue to enrich the glorious traditions of the Indian Army with their dedication and sacrifice.

### Khelo India National Competitions begins

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in association with Sports Authority of India, organised Khelo India National level Competitions from Jan 15-21, 2017 in Swimming, Cycling and Wrestling.
- It was inaugurated by Vijay Goel, Minister of State (I/C) Youth Affairs & Sports, at Dr. Syama Prasad Mukherjee Swimming Pool Complex, New Delhi.
- It intends to promote sports at grass-root level and provide a platform to the budding talents to compete at national level. Nearly 1000 participants, from over 25 states/UTs are expected to participate in it.

### Prasar Bharti hosts International Dance Festival 2017 in Hyderabad

- The ABU International Dance Festival 2017 was organised in Hyderabad. The event was organised by Indian national broadcasters Doordarshan (DD) and All India Radio (AIR), which are part of the public broadcasting agency Prasar Bharati (PB).
- This was the inaugural International Dance Festival, co-organised by the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU). The festival's objective is to create a "bridge" between young people from different parts of the world through dance.
- K Chandrashekar Rao, Chief Minister of Telangana was the Guest of Honour. It saw the entries of 13 participants from 9 countries Afghanistan Azerbaijan Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Philippines and Uzbekistan. The competition is for amateur dancers between the ages of 18 and 25, who will perform two dance routines.

### Gujarat wins First Ranji Trophy title beating Mumbai

- Gujarat won their first-ever Ranji Trophy title by defeating Mumbai by five wickets in the final at the Holkar stadium in Indore.
- With this, Parthiv Patel-led team won the three domestic titles viz. T20, one-day and Ranji. They are only the fourth team to achieve this feat.
- Gujarat also achieved the highest-successful finals chase in the tournament's 83-year history. They eclipsed Hyderabad, who had chased down 310 against Nawanagar in 1937-38.
- Ranji Trophy is a domestic first-class cricket championship currently comprising of 27 teams, with 21 of the 29 states in India and Delhi. The competition is named after first Indian cricketer who played international cricket in 1934, Ranjitsinhji, who was also known as "Ranji". Till date, Mumbai claims to be the most successful team with total 41 titles.

### Digital Dakiya scheme inaugurated in MP to encourage cashless transactions

- Digital Dakiya scheme was inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh to encourage cashless transactions. It is a first of its kind scheme in the country, which aims to encourage cashless transactions. It was inaugurated by Jayant Malliya, state Finance Minister at Indore.
- Digital Dakiya or Digital Postman will visit different places to teach and encourage people about cashless transactions and its benefits. State government will provide Identity cards to the volunteers deployed in this programme.

### Kozhikode Corporation becomes Kerala's first Elderly-friendly corporation

- Kerala Transport Minister A.K. Saseendran declared Kozhikode an Elderly-Friendly City, the first of its kind in the State.
- The distinction has been achieved by the Kozhikode Corporation due to extension of the Vayomitram Project of the State Government to ensure that the elderly people in the city would have someone to take care of them.
- The Corporation has set aside Rs. 1.75 crore for the project which aims at social, physical and emotional well-being of senior citizens in the city.
- Almost one-third of the total population of the State is senior citizens thanks to improvement in health sector that has led to reduced birth rate.

### 62nd Filmfare Award ceremony held in Mumbai

- The 62nd Jio Filmfare Awards ceremony was held at the NSCI Dome in Worli in Mumbai, Maharashtra on January 14, 2017. The show was co-hosted by Karan Johar and Shahrukh Khan. The award recognises the best talent in Hindi cinema.
- List of Main Awards:
  - Best Actor (Male): Aamir Khan for 'Dangal'
  - Best Actor (Female): Alia Bhatt for 'Udta Punjab'
  - Best Film: 'Dangal'
  - Best Director: Nitesh Tiwari for 'Dangal'
  - Filmfare Critics Award for Best Film: 'Neerja'
  - Filmfare Critics Award for Best Actor (Male): Shahid Kapoor for 'Udta Punjab' and Manoj Bajpayee for 'Aligarh'
  - Filmfare Critics Award for Best Actor (Female): Sonam Kapoor for 'Neerja'
  - Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award: Shatrughan Sinha
  - Filmfare RD Burman Award for New Music Talent: Amit Mishra for 'Bulleya' from 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil'.

### American Actor Dick Gautier passes away

- Actor Dick Gautier, who is known for his role in the hit TV sitcom 'Get Smart', passed away at the age of 85.
- He was known for his television roles as Hymie the Robot in the television series and Robin Hood in the short-lived TV comedy series *When Things Were Rotten*, a Mel Brooks send-up of the classic legend.
- He was last seen in a cameo on American television drama series, 'Nip/Tuck' in 2010.

### Post-demonetisation, GDP to grow at 6% for next five years: CMIE

- The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) reported that India's GDP growth rate for the current financial year (2016-17) is set to slow to 6% on account of demonetisation and is expected to maintain the same rate for five years.
- Before this move, the Indian economy was expected to gradually accelerate its real GDP growth rate from 7.5% to over 8% per annum.
- The fall in retail inflation to 3.6% in November 2016 and the fall in sales reported by several fast-moving consumer goods companies are early indications of the fall in consumption expenditure.

### Restoring recently extinct species will take 8 million years: study

- Researchers from the Stony Brook University in the United States have reported that it will take at least eight million years to restore species recently lost to extinction. This report is authored by Liliana Dávalos. The study was published in the journal 'Nature Ecology and Evolution'.
- According to the study, in Caribbean alone, more than half of the mammal species went extinct after human colonisation.
- The research compiled data on the New World leaf-nosed bats and their close relatives. These bats form an ecologically diverse group that includes the fishing bat, many fig-eating bats and vampire bats.

## Evening News Digest, 16 January 2017

### Union Government launched App named 'SEZ India'

- Union Commerce Ministry launched a mobile app named 'SEZ India'. It was launched by Commerce Secretary Rita A Teotia.
- The app is developed as part of Department of Commerce's e-governance initiative, namely SEZ Online System. It features a compendium of the SEZ Act, 2005, SEZ Rules, 2006, Ministry of Commerce and Industry Circulars, details of SEZs and Units etc.
- It intends to help the SEZ Units and Developers to find information easily and track their transactions on SEZ Online System. With it, the SEZ Developers & Units can file all their transactions digitally through SEZ Online system and track the status on the go through the SEZ India mobile app.

### Panel recommends Reservation for Girl Students In IITs

- In order to address the issue of slump in the enrollment of female students in Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), a high-level panel has recommended reservation for girl students in these prestigious institutes. The panel was headed by Prof. Timothy Gonsalves.
- The committee also suggested creating 20 percent supernumerary seats for girls out of the total number of seats.
- The number of seats for male candidates will not be affected and this will help IITs achieve the 1 lakh target by 2020. Also, only candidates who have already qualified in JEE-Advanced will be considered.
- These recommendations will be taken into consideration in the meeting of the Joint Admission Board (JAB) for a final decision.

### Conference for Peace in Middle East held in Paris

- The Conference for Peace on the Middle East was held in Paris, the capital of France, on January 15, 2017. The aim of the Peace Summit was to kick-start long-stalled discussions on a two-state solution between Palestinians and Israelis.
- This is the second time France under the President Francois Hollande is organising this summit, first being in June 2016. The present summit was attended by representatives from 70 countries.
- The closing declaration of the conference urged both sides to officially restate their commitment to the two-state solution and disassociate from voices that reject this.
- It also warned them against taking one-sided actions that could hurt talks, an apparent reference to Israeli settlement building.

### Turkish parliament passes bill bolstering President's powers in first reading

- The Turkish parliament approved the two final sections of the 18-article new constitution in a first reading of the controversial bill. The bill bolsters the powers of the presidency under Recep Tayyip Erdogan.
- The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) gathered the necessary 330 or more votes - a three-fifths majority - needed for the adoption of the constitutional change and sending it to a referendum for final approval.
- Why the bill is controversial?
  - The proposed changes will create an executive presidency for the first time in modern Turkey with far-reaching consequences that will lead to one-man rule.
  - The president will have the power to appoint and fire ministers, while the post of prime minister will be abolished for the first time in Turkey's history.
  - There will a vice president, or possibly several.
- This constitution plan will now go to a second reading in the Ankara parliament.

### Google Girl Meghali Malbika Swain adds more records to her cap

- Ten-year-old Meghali Malbika Swain, popularly known as s 'Google Girl', has set three records simultaneously on a single day with the Indian Book of Records (IBR) in Bhubaneswar.
- Meghali has set the record by reciting the names of 1,009 rivers in 7 minutes and 39 seconds, 1,010 cities in 9 minutes and 4 seconds, and 1,012 physical bodies in 11 minutes and 29 seconds.
- Later she recalled the names of 196 cities of the world, 196 national capitals, 97 smart cities of the country and names of 400 rivers of Asia, 300 rivers of Europe, 100 rivers of Africa, more than 100 rivers of South and North America.

## Evening News Digest, 18 January 2017

### Meghalaya's Mawlynnong becomes role model for cleanliness

- In Meghalaya, Mawlynnong village has become a role model for other states in maintaining cleanliness, as it is termed as Asia's cleanest village.
- All 90 families of the village constructed toilets in 1989. Under Swachh Bharat Mission, three public toilets have been constructed in the village.
- It lies in the East Khasi Hills district of the Meghalaya. It comes under the Pynursla community development block and Vidhan Sabha (legislative assembly) constituency.
- Earlier in 2003, it was awarded the prestigious tag of 'Cleanest Village in Asia' by Discover India Magazine. As of 2014, there are about 95 households in Mawlynnong. The literacy rate is 100%

### Antonio Tajani is new President of European Parliament

- Italian conservative Antonio Tajani has been elected the new president of the European Parliament. He will take over from Germany's Martin Schulz.
- Tajani, who defeated another Italian, Gianni Pitella, is a former spokesman for Italy's Silvio Berlusconi and an ex-European commissioner.
- The European Parliament is composed of 751 (previously 766) members, who represent the second largest democratic electorate in the world after India. It has a President and 14 vice-presidents since July 14, 2014.

### NASA approves mission to explore iron-rich asteroid "16 Psyche"

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has approved a mission to explore '16 Psyche', an iron-rich asteroid. It is assumed that the total worth of contents of this asteroid is worth over 100-thousand times the value of the entire world economy.
- The mission, proposed in 2014, would send a NASA spacecraft to Psyche, running tests to learn more about the history and composition of the celestial body.
- Psyche is an asteroid with a diameter in excess of 125 miles, about the same size of the state of Massachusetts, and is almost entirely composed of iron and nickel.

### Second baby born using new type of 3-person IVF

- A baby has been born to a previously infertile couple in Ukraine using a new type of three-person IVF in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine.
- Doctors used a method called 'Pronuclear Transfer' which is claimed to be first in the world. However, it is not the first baby born with DNA from three parents. It is the world's second modern three-parent baby. Prior to it, another child was born using a slightly different method in Mexico in 2016.
- Doctors developed three-person IVF to help women who are at risk of passing on serious genetic disorders, called mitochondrial disease, to have a healthy child.
- Earlier in 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) became the first country to approve the "three-parent" technique.

### The Untold Vajpayee: Politician and Paradox by journalist Ullekh N.P

- A biography of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, titled 'The Untold Vajpayee: Politician and Paradox' written by journalist Ullekh N.P was released recently. The publisher of this book is Penguin India.
- Ullekh N.P. is a journalist and political commentator based in New Delhi. His first book was 'War Room: The People, Tactics and Technology behind Narendra Modi's 2014 Win'. He is the executive editor of Open magazine.
- Thoroughly researched, supported by hard facts and accompanied by inside stories and anecdotes, insightful interviews and archival photographs, The Untold Vajpayee will open a window to the life and times of a poet-politician.

## Morning News Digest, 19 January 2017

### **Kapil Dev inducted into Legends Club Hall of Fame**

- Cricket icon Kapil Dev was inducted into Legends Club 'Hall of Fame'. He was presented with a citation by former India player and Legends Club President Madhav Apte.
- He led India to the emphatic World Cup victory in 1983 and is considered as the country's greatest all-rounder.
- Earlier in May 2016, Nandu Natekar was inducted into the Legends Club as the first non-cricketing personality. Prior to it in 2013, Sunil Gavaskar was inducted into the club's Hall of Fame.

### **Saudi Arabia declares Health Emergency after Mass Food Poisoning**

- Saudi Arabia authorities declared a health emergency after a tragic food poisoning outbreak in a small-town restaurant killing at least 150 people. The incident occurred in Turabah, a city in Najd in Saudi Arabia.
- The incident occurred despite the fact that Saudi Arabia has invested heavily in its medical system. About 15 percent of this year's budget is allocated to health and social development spending, including for the setup of hospitals and healthcare centres in all the regions across the kingdom.

### **Singapore-headquartered Anchanto launches cross-border selling platform 'SelluSeller'**

- Anchanto, an NRI-owned e-commerce service provider, launched a one-stop platform 'SelluSeller' at the Asia E-Commerce Dialogue 2017 in Singapore. The platform enables merchants and enterprises to sell on various e-marketplaces across Asia .
- Singapore-headquartered Anchanto has had four major customer wins - Lazada, Bluebell Group, DKSH and PayTM during the first month of launch.
- The target is to have 5,000 sellers over the next five months, adding 1,000 sellers a month, said Vaibhav Dabhade, founder and CEO of Anchanto Pvt Ltd.

### **India featured among top six promising markets: PwC**

- According to the annual global CEO survey of consultancy giant PricewaterhouseCoopers Pvt Ltd (PwC), India has featured among top six for global executives in overall growth prospects over the next 12 months.
- The top two markets from the growth point of view are the US, as voted by 43 percent of respondents, followed by China (33 per cent). Others in the pecking order are Germany (17 percent), UK (15 percent), Japan (8 percent) and India (7 percent). However, it has dropped one position, when it ranked fifth in 2014.
- Study also showed that the US, Germany and the UK have become bigger priorities while willingness to invest in Brazil, India, Russia and Argentina has lessened from three years ago.

### **Prof C.V. Vishveshwara pioneer in black hole research work passed away**

- Professor C.V. Vishveshwara, who did pioneering work on black holes, passed away in Bengaluru.
- In the 1970s, while at the University of Maryland, he was among the first to study "black holes" even before they had been so named. His calculations gave a graphic form to the signal that would be emitted by two merging black holes – this was the waveform detected in 2015 by the LIGO collaboration, and contained the so-called "quasi normal modes" – a ringdown stage that sounds like a bell's ringing sound that is fading out.
- Till date, he was the founding director of the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium in Bengaluru. He has written several books including "Einstein's Enigma", or "Black Holes in My Bubble Bath".

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## Evening News Digest, 17 January 2017

### Centre, States reach consensus on GST; rollout from July 1

- The deadlock over administration of Goods and Services Tax (GST) has been put to an end after the Centre agreed to allow states control over most of small taxpayers. With this, Centre also pushed back the rollout date by 3 months to July 1, 2017.
- The split of GST taxpayers between the two will be done horizontally with states getting to administer and control 90 percent of the assesses below Rs 1.5 crore annual turnover, and the remaining 10 percent coming under the Centre. The Centre and states will share control of assesses with annual turnover of over Rs 1.5 crore in 50:50 ratio.
- Besides, the Centre also agreed to the demand of coastal states, allowing them to tax economic activity in 12 nautical miles even though constitutionally the Centre has jurisdiction over territorial waters.

### India signs Agreement with World Bank for US\$ 48 Million for “Nagaland Health Project”

- India signed a financing agreement with International Development Agency (IDA) for credit of US\$ 48 million for the ‘Nagaland Health Project’. It is valid till 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023.
- Objectives of the project are to improve health services and increase their utilization by communities in targeted locations in Nagaland. The project will directly benefit about 600,000 people.
- Communities in targeted locations will benefit from project activities at the community and health facility levels while the population of the state as a whole will benefit from improvements in higher-level facilities as well as system-wide investments.

### Election Commission allots symbol "Bicycle" to Akhilesh Yadav's SP faction

- The Election Commission of India, headed by Syed Nasim Ahmad Zaidi, ruled that group led by Akhilesh Yadav is the Samajwadi Party and is entitled to its name and its reserved symbol "Bicycle".
- ECI also accepted the claims of the Akhilesh camp that 205 of the 228 party MLAs supported him. The chief minister also had the backing of 56 of 68 members of the legislative council and 15 of the 24 MPs.
- The panel said Mulayam, despite its directions, failed to furnish affidavits in support of his claim. However, the faction led by Mulayam will have to go to the polls under a new name and symbol.

### Centre empowers EPCA to implement plan to tackle air pollution

- The Centre has empowered the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution Control and Prevention Authority (EPCA) to enforce the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in a bid to tackle air pollution in Delhi-NCR.
- In this regard a notification was issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoFCC) for assigning the task of implementing the GRAP to EPCA under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Consequently, stringent measures including, 'car-rationing', odd-even scheme, may be implemented in the Delhi-NCR region if pollution levels stays above the emergency levels for 48 hours.
- The GRAP, first of its kind in India, is prepared by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The plan received the Supreme Court nod on December 2, 2016. It envisages the roll out of a host of emergency measures including closure of schools, power plants and advisories asking people to avoid polluted areas and restrict outdoor movement among others.

### Vijay Goel inaugurates National Boxing Academy in Rohtak

- Union Sports Minister Vijay Goel inaugurated the National Boxing Academy (NBA) at Rajiv Gandhi sports complex in Rohtak, Haryana. The NBA set up under Sports Authority of India (SAI) is first of its kind in India and it had commenced operations in March 2016.
- Keeping in view the interest of outstanding players of the academy, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed with Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi, under whose supervision every player would be prepared.
- The infrastructure for NBA has been provided by Haryana Urban Development Authority (HUDA) with a cost of around Rs. 200 crore.
- Satish Kumar Sarhadi, current Deputy Director of Sports Authority of India (SAI), is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the NBA. The academy has 120 seats of which 60 are for men and 60 for women. It would train sportspersons for the state, national and international-level events.

## Morning News Digest, 18 January 2017

### Bahrain bans paper from publishing online after protests

- Bahraini authorities ordered an independent newspaper named 'Al-Wasat' to stop publishing online and the ban would remain in place until further notice.
- The stated reason was due to repeated publication of material inciting division in the community, jeopardizing national unity and disrupting public peace.
- Al-Wasat is widely seen as the only independent newspaper in Bahrain. It has been ordered to shut down twice since an Arab Spring-inspired uprising against the Sunni-led government erupted in 2011.

### Jharkhand Cabinet gives nod to 7th pay panel recommendations

- The state cabinet of Jharkhand gave its approval to implement the 7th Pay Commission recommendations with effect from January 1, 2016 for the State Government employees on the lines of Centre.
- In this regard, the arrears will be paid to the employees in two different installments in the next two financial years, that is, 2017-18 and 2018-19
- Other decisions of Jharkhand Cabinet:
  - A total of nine proposals were passed during the Cabinet meeting including increasing the commission for the PDS dealers from 10 paise to Rs 1 per liter on kerosene oil.
  - Minimum salary of an employee will be Rs. 18000, which earlier happened to be in the slabs of Rs. 1650 and Rs. 1800 for non-matric and matric employees respectively, while the minimum pension for a pensioner will be Rs 9000.
  - The revised pay structure will put an extra burden of Rs. 2500 crore per year on the State exchequer, Rs. 1800 crore for the present employees and Rs. 700 crore for the pensioners.
  - Also, Bokaro Steel City has been upgraded to 'Y' category for assessment of House Rent Allowance for the Government Employees.

### Smriti Irani inaugurates 58th India International Garment Fair in New Delhi

- Union Textile Minister Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the 58th edition of India International Garment Fair (IIGF) in New Delhi.
- Organized by Apparel Export Promotion Council (AEPC) India, this three-day fair that commenced in 1988, is one of the largest and most popular platforms in Asia, from which overseas garment buyers can source products and forge business relationships with India's finest players in the apparel and fashion accessories domain.
- During the inauguration, Ashok Rajani, Chairman AEPC claimed that that 58th IIGF is India's largest garment show in South Asia.

### Veteran film actress Geeta Sen passes away

- Veteran film and ex-wife of celebrated filmmaker Mrinal Sen, Gita Sen passed away at the age of 86.
- She had acted in a number of films including "Arohan", "Chorus", "Calcutta 71", "Kharji", "Akaler Sandhane", "Ekdin Pratidin" and "Khandahar". She also was part of the theatre movement.

### India & Mauritius sign MoU for Cooperation in the field of Cooperatives

- India and Mauritius signed an MoU for cooperation in the field of cooperatives and related areas.
- The MoU was signed between Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, and the Indian Ocean island country's Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives Minister Soomilduth Bholah.
- It will enable the two countries to collaborate in this vital sector and can significantly benefit thousands of Mauritians. India offered to exchange its expertise and technology with Mauritius in agro industry, fisheries and dairy sector.

Online 

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LUMINOUS POINT



# SSC MTS 2017

PRACTICE TEST SERIES

PRODUCT TYPE : MOCK TEST

LANGUAGE : ENGLISH

PRICE: **Rs.49**

## Evening News Digest, 20 January 2017

### India signs MoU for MSME Cooperation with IORA Member Countries

- India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) member countries for cooperation in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
- The MOU was signed during the Workshop on MSME Cooperation amongst IORA Member Countries held in New Delhi. The workshop was inaugurated by the Union Minister of MSME Kalraj Mishra.
- The workshop seeks to strengthen economic relationship amongst the member countries in the field of trade and investment facilitation especially in the sector.

### Alok Kumar Verma appointed as New CBI Director

- Delhi Police Commissioner Alok Kumar Verma was appointed as the Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He will replace Rakesh Asthana.
- He will be the 27th Director (including two acting chief) of India's premier probe agency and will have a fixed tenure of two-years.
- His name was cleared by a three-member selection panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising Chief Justice of India Jagdish Singh Khehar and Congress leader in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge as members.

### Centre constitutes negotiation committee on Mahanadi river water use

- Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has constituted a negotiation committee to assess availability and utilisation of water of Mahanadi and its tributaries.
- This 12-member committee will be headed by S Masood Husain, Member (Water Planning and Projects), Central Water Commission (CWC).
- It will also look into water usage aspects and sharing agreements of the river and its tributaries while considering claims of Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand.

### Bengaluru ranked world's most dynamic city: JLL Index

- According to recently released Jones Lang LaSalle's (JLL) City Momentum Index (CMI), Bengaluru has emerged as the most dynamic city in the world.
- The index tracks the speed of change of a city's economy and commercial real estate market. It covers 134 major established and emerging business hubs and ranks them on parameters like technology, connectivity, population, education and real estate investments.
- Top 5 cities in 2017 CMI: Bengaluru (India), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), Silicon Valley (US), Shanghai (China), Hyderabad (India).

### Second Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi

- The second edition of Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi with the theme "The New Normal: Multilateralism in a multipolar world". This flagship geo-political conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- It was held jointly by Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), an independent think tank based in India.
- The first edition of the conference was held in March 2016 with the theme "Asia: Regional and Global Connectivity". It is organized on the lines of the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore.

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## Morning News Digest, 21 January 2017

### UN adopts resolution backing Gambia's new President Adama Barrow

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) approved a resolution expressing "full support" to Gambia's new President Adama Barrow. The resolution also called on former President Yahya Jammeh to step down, condemning his attempts to usurp power.
- Barrow, a representative of United Democratic Party, was elected President of The Gambia. In the presidential elections held on December 1, 2016, he had defeated Yahya Jammeh, who was bidding for another term.
- With this, Barrow became the second head of state of second republic of The Gambia (1996-present). He will have a tenure of five years.

### US to launch Geo-3 satellite to detect and defeat missiles from space

- The US military will launch the Space-Based Infrared System (SBIRS) Geo Flight 3 mission. Its objective is to detect and destroy possible missile attacks.
- It was mounted on a Atlas V rocket and launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station's Launch Complex 41, Florida. It capitalizes on infrared technology for defence purposes that include missile warning, missile counter-defense, intelligence gathering, and geospatial situational awareness to support troops.
- Earlier in 2011 and 2013, the Air Force fired the Geo-1 and Geo-2 satellites respectively into space. Monitoring possible missile attacks from space has been one of the highest priorities of the United States (US) for meeting sophisticated 21st century national security threats.

### Punjab Royals crowned champions of Pro Wrestling League Season 2

- NCR Punjab Royals was crowned the champions of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) Season 2. It defeated Haryana Hammers at the K D Jadhav Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.
- The winners were presented with the Champions trophy along with a prize money of Rs. 1 crore and 90 lacs. The runners up were awarded the prize money of Rs. 1 crore and 10 lacs.
- PWL is the initiative of ProSportify and Wrestling Federation of India. The six teams for the Season 2 were: Haryana Hammers, NCR Punjab Royals, Mumbai Maharathi, Jaipur Ninjas, Colors Delhi Sultans, UP Dangal. There are 5 weight categories (57 kg, 65 kg, 74 kg, 97 kg, 125 kg) for men, and 4 weight categories (49 kg, 53 kg, 58 kg, 69 kg) for women.
- Revanta Mumbai Garuda was the winner of the Pro Wrestling League Season 1.

### Gulzar's new book of poems 'From Kalburgi to Ayodhya' released

- Poet-lyricist Gulzar released a collection of 52 poems written by him titled 'From Kalburgi to Ayodhya'. It is published by Penguin Random House.
- The poems, originally written in Hindi, have been translated into English by Pavan K Varma. The English version of the book is titled 'Suspected Poems'.
- The book includes the topics ranging from the political climate in the country and intolerance to the plight of the common man, and from atrocities against Dalits to Indo-Pak relations.

### India, Singapore renew bilateral air force training agreement

- India and Singapore have renewed a bilateral agreement that will allow Singapore's Air Force to continue its joint military training with Indian Air Force for another five years.
- Under the agreement, the RSAF will have opportunities to train with the IAF's advanced Su-30 fighter jet.
- The bilateral agreement was originally signed between the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) and the Indian Air Force (IAF) in 2007 and last renewed in 2012.

Online 

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## Evening News Digest, 19 January 2017

### 4th Joint Indo-Oman Air Exercise 'Eastern Bridge IV' commenced

- The fourth edition of Joint Indo-Oman Air Exercise 'Eastern Bridge IV' commenced at Air Force Station Jamnagar on January 16, 2017.
- The progress of the exercise was reviewed by Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa and Commander of Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) Air Vice Marshal Matar Ali Matar Al-Qbaidani.
- The RAFO is participating with five F-16 Block 50 Air Defence Fighters belonging to No. 18 Squadron based at Thumrait, while IAF is participating with Su-30 MKI Air Dominance Fighters, MiG-29 Air Superiority Fighters, Jaguar Maritime Strike aircraft and MiG-27 aircraft. This is the first time that RAFO F-16s are participating in an air exercise outside the Gulf Countries.

### Union launches web-portal 'ShaGun' for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

- Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Prakash Javadekar launched a dedicated web portal 'ShaGun' for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan at New Delhi.
- ShaGun aims to capture and showcase innovations and progress in Elementary Education sector of India by continuous monitoring of the flagship scheme - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).
- He also launched the 'Toolkit for Master Trainers in Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs'. The toolkit has been prepared by World Bank in collaboration with the Ministry.
- SSA in operation since 2000-2001 aims at Education for All. It also seeks to achieve "universalisation of elementary education" as mandated by the Right to Education Act, 2009 brought through 86th Constitution Amendment Act. The Act inserted Article 21A and made Right to Education a fundamental right.

### Scientists name 3 diseases that could cause next global health emergency

- Scientists have named three relatively rare diseases that could cause the next global health emergency. These are Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV), Lassa fever and Nipah virus.
- The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) has committed US\$ 460 million to speed up vaccine development for MERS, Lassa fever and Nipah virus and have asked the funders at the World Economic Forum (WEF), Davos for another US\$ 500 million.
- The CEPI aims to develop two new experimental vaccines ready for each disease within five years compared to nearly a decade it generally takes to develop the vaccines. .

### Indian Economy to grow at 7.7% in FY 2017: UN report

- The United Nations report 'World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2017' has claimed that India is still the fastest growing large developing economy and it would grow at the rate of 7.7 percent in the financial year 2017.
- It also predicted a 7.6 percent growth for the financial year 2018.
- The UN report comes a day after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut India's growth rate for the current fiscal year to 6.6 percent from its previous estimate of 7.6 percent due to the "temporary negative consumption shock" of demonetisation.

### 60 percent primates of the world facing extinction crisis

- According to a study published in journal 'Science Advances', Gorillas, monkeys, lemurs and other primates are in danger of becoming extinct.
- It stated that about 60 percent of more than 500 primate species are "now threatened with extinction" and 3 out of 4 primate species have shrinking populations.
- The decline has been blamed on human activities including hunting, mining and oil drilling. Logging, ranching and farming have also destroyed precious habitat in Africa, Asia and South America.

Online

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## Morning News Digest, 20 January 2017

### SC constitutes panel on recruitment of judges in lower judiciary

- The Supreme Court (SC) has set up a committee of judges to bring uniformity in the recruitment process of judicial officers in the lower judiciary across the country.
- The committee would deal with issues like fixing the date on which advertisements for filling up the vacancies would be issued, dates of examination, interviews, issuance of the appointment letter and the joining date.

### Gene Cernan, last astronaut to walk on the moon, passes away

- Gene Cernan, who became the last of only a dozen men to walk on the moon, passed away at the age of 82. He was also the second American to walk in space.
- He traveled into space three times: as Pilot of Gemini 9A in June 1966, as Lunar Module Pilot of Apollo 10 in May 1969, and as Commander of Apollo 17 in December 1972, the final Apollo lunar landing.
- He was a member of several organizations: Fellow, American Astronautical Society; member, Society of Experimental Test Pilots; member, Tau Beta Pi (National Engineering Society) and others.

### Book titled 'Faith, Unity, Discipline: The ISI of Pakistan' launched

- A book titled 'Faith, Unity, Discipline: The Inter-Service-Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan' was launched. It is authored by German political scientist Hein Kiessling and published by HarperCollins.
- The summary revolves around Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) which was established in the wake of the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947-48 by British officer Major General Robert Cawthorne and remained an under-developed and obscure agency for years.
- Offering fresh insights into the ISI based on intimate knowledge of its inner workings and key individuals, this startlingly original and provocative book uncovers the hitherto shady world of Pakistan's secret service.

### Jaipur Lit Fest begins with theme 'Freedom to dream'

- The tenth edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) commenced in Jaipur with the theme "Freedom to dream: India at 70". It aims to offer lively debates around modern India in the context of its history and future.
- The five-day festival will witness participation of over 250 authors, thinkers, politicians, journalists and popular culture icons, while the number of audience is expected to surpass last year's figure of 3.30 lakh.

### India ranked 78th in Global Passport Index

- The latest edition of the world's most popular Arton Capital's global ranking 'Passport Index' has been released. The index is based on cross-border access of national passports. Indian passport has been ranked a lowly 78 in a global ranking of the world's most powerful passports.
- Germany stands at the top with a visa-free score of 158, followed by Sweden and Singapore. Singapore overtakes South Korea and becomes the highest ranked Asian passport with a visa-free score of 156.
- Afghanistan's passport is the least powerful passport with a visa-free score of just 23.

## Evening News Digest, 22 January 2017

### Hong Kong withdraws visa-free facility for Indians

- In a setback to Indian travellers, Hong Kong, a special administrative region of China, has withdrawn the visa-free facility for Indians who will have to complete a pre-arrival registration.
- This registration for Indian Nationals will be implemented on January 23, 2017. The online service for Pre-arrival Registration for Indian Nationals is now open.
- This registration is normally valid for a six month period or until the expiry date of the Indian passport linked to it, whichever is earlier.

### India Innovation Index to measure performance of Indian state

- The World Economic Forum (WEF), NITI Aayog, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Cornell University will work to develop an India Innovation Index to provide impetus to states to drive innovative spirit.
- It will measure and rank the innovation performance of all states in India with the aim of moving India towards an innovation-driven economy. The first ranking of Indian states will be released at the India Economic Summit to be held in October 2017.
- The pillars of index include the capacity of human capital and research, strength of institutions, supporting infrastructure and the level of business sophistication, among others.

### Cooperative banks can't accept deposits under PMGKY: Govt

- The Centre has barred co-operative banks from accepting deposits under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, 2016.
- Following recent demonetisation, the Centre had come up with an amnesty scheme for holders of unaccounted cash by asking them to pay 50% tax and parking one-fourth of it in a no-interest bearing four-year deposit. This deposit could be made with any banks. But now cooperative banks have been barred from accepting such deposits. The PMGKY scheme is open till 31 March.
- Application for the deposit in the form of Bonds Ledger Account shall be received by any banking company, other than Co-operative Banks, to which the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (10 of 1949) applies.

### Anurag Thakur elected as head of HPOA

- Anurag Thakur was elected head of the Himachal Pradesh Olympic Association (HPOA) for a four-year term.
- Besides Thakur, Virender Kanwar was elected Senior Vice-President, while Rajesh Bhandari, who is a Vice President in the Boxing Federation of India, was elected General Secretary.
- Earlier, the Supreme Court ordered to remove Anurag Thakur from the post of BCCI President over not complying with court orders. It also removed Ajay Shirke from the post of BCCI Secretary.

### Physicists create a new form of Hydrogen

- Physicists from Austria have created new form of Hydrogen i.e. negatively charged hydrogen clusters. It is a previously unseen form of hydrogen. It will help researchers to easily identify the clusters in nature.
- For the past forty years, existence of hydrogen in ion clusters was known and is positively-charged clusters have already exists.
- Researchers initiated their research by injecting cold liquid helium droplets with hydrogen molecules to form clusters with a neutral charge. Then they exposed these hydrogen-infused droplets to an electron beam.

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## Morning News Digest, 23 January 2017

### Sushmita Sen to judge Miss Universe 2016 pageant

- Former Miss Universe Sushmita Sen is all set to be on the judges panel on the 65th Miss Universe 2017 beauty pageant which will be held in Manila, Philippines on January 30, 2017. 23 years back in 1994, Sen was crowned Miss Universe at the very same city, Manila.
- This will be the second time in the history of the competition that the pageant will skip the entire year, following the 2014 pageant which was held in January 2015.
- It will be hosted by American presenter and model - Steve Harvey and Ashley Graham respectively. It will see a participation of 86 entrants.

### "Dangal" declared tax-free in Madhya Pradesh

- Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced to exempt film Dangal from entertainment tax.
- Besides, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Delhi and Madhya Pradesh are four other states where the Nitesh Tiwari-directed film was declared tax-free. It intends to promote Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, that aims to reduce selective abortion of females, to protect girls, and to educate them.
- Dangal is an inspiring sports biopic, based on the life of Haryana wrestler Mahavir Singh Phogat, who taught wrestling to his daughters Geeta Phogat and Babita Kumari.
- Earlier too, At the 62nd Filmfare Awards, Dangal won four awards, including Best Film, Best Director (Tiwari), Best Action (Shyam) and Best Actor (Khan). Also, a biography of Mahavir Singh was released titled 'Akhada'. It was authored by Saurav Duggal.

### St Petersburg unveils logo for UEFA Euro Cup 2020

- The official emblem of St. Petersburg of Russia for the 2020 Euro Cup football tournament was unveiled.
- St. Petersburg was selected among 13 cities of 13 different countries to host the matches of the main European football tournament.
- The logo depicts the Palace Bridge, which "has established itself as one of the most iconic sites in the city".

### Manipur's Karang became India's first cashless Island

- Union ministry of electronics and information technology under its Digital India programme announced Karang as the first cashless island in India.
- This island is located in the middle of Loktak lake, the largest freshwater lake in Northeast India.
- Earlier, Akodara, a village in Gujarat, had attained the unique status to be India's first digital village in 2015.

### Dharamsala declared the second capital of Himachal Pradesh

- Himachal Pradesh chief minister Virbhadra Singh announced Dharamsala as the winter Capital of the tiny hill state.
- With this, Himachal Pradesh becomes the second Indian state having two capitals after Jammu & Kashmir.
- Dharamsala lies in Kangra district. It is the centre of the Tibetan exile world in India. Following the 1959 Tibetan uprising there was an influx of Tibetan refugees who followed the 14th Dalai Lama. His presence and the Tibetan population have made Dharamsala a popular destination for Indian and foreign tourists, including students studying Tibet.

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## Evening News Digest, 21 January 2017

### Joint Taskforce on Shared Intelligence and Collaboration meeting held in Paris

- India participated in the recently concluded Joint International Taskforce on Shared Intelligence and Collaboration (JITSIC) meeting on Panama Papers in Paris.
- At the meet 30 revenue authorities shared their findings on investigations arising from the Panama Papers including the role of tax intermediaries such as financial institutions and advisers.
- In April 2016, under "Panama Papers", a list of Indian names was alleged for stashing away unaccounted assets abroad.

### Ministry of Railways signs Joint Venture Agreement with Jharkhand

- A Joint Venture Agreement was signed between Ministry of Railways and Government of Jharkhand for developing railway infrastructure in the State.
- In this regard, the state government has initially identified 3 projects viz., Namkum - Kandra, Giridih - Parasnath-Madhuban, Tori - Chatra Rail Line. As part of the JV, the project identified will cover a length of 222 km at a cost of Rs. 2150 crore.
- Jharkhand is the 9th State to sign such a JV agreement with Ministry of Railways. Prior to it, Governments of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Odisha, Haryana, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat have signed such an agreement.

### National Conference on Tourism, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports commences

- A three day National Conference to promote and develop Tourism, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports began at Ramn of Kutch in Gujarat. It was organized by the Ministries of Tourism, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports in cooperation with the Government of Gujarat. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The theme of the Conference is "Converging Tourism, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports and Creating Synergy with States and UTs towards building a Resurgent Young India and strengthening Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat".
- Aim of the conference is to devise a strategic plan between the three important sectors viz. Tourism, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports through a planned engagement between Centre and States/Union Territories with the prime motto being, "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat".

### India's biggest aircraft carrier ship INS Vikramaditya first to have ATM onboard

- To save time and resources, Indian Navy's only operational aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya will soon have an ATM onboard. This ATM facility will be provided by India's largest Public Sector Bank State Bank of India.
- Originally built as Baku and commissioned in 1987, the carrier served with the Soviet Navy and later with the Russian Navy (as Admiral Gorshkov) before being decommissioned in 1996.
- It was purchased by India in January 2004 at a price of \$2.35 billion. It was commissioned in Indian Navy in November 2013.

### India, UAE hold first strategic dialogue

- India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) held their first strategic dialogue in New Delhi. The dialogue was held as part of the agreement to enhance the bilateral relationship to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar and MoS in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of UAE Anwar Gargash.
- The two sides discussed a number of issues ranging from cooperation in the areas of trade and investments to expanding the bilateral cooperation to new areas under the strategic partnership, inter alia in the areas of energy security and renewable energy, defence and security, electronics and information technology and space.
- Bilateral trade between India and the UAE stood at about \$50 billion in 2015-16. The Gulf nation is among the top investors in India in terms of foreign direct investments and was the fifth largest supplier of crude oil to India in 2015-16.

Online

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## Morning News Digest, 22 January 2017

### **AYUSH, ASCI sign MoU to co-regulate advertisements in AYUSH sector**

- The Ministry of AYUSH has signed a MoU with the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) to curtail malpractices in the advertisement of AYUSH drugs. In this regard, ASCI will comprehensively monitor these advertisements across print and electronic media.
- The MoU was signed by Advisor (Ayurveda), Ministry of AYUSH, Dr. Dinesh Chan Katoch and Chairman, ASCI Shri Srinivasan K Swamy in New Delhi.
- AYUSH is among top three sectors high incidence of misleading advertisements is prevalent and some of the advertisements in the AYUSH sector claiming treatment of certain diseases in violation of the Drugs and Magic Remedies Regulations have been a cause of concern.

### **Bihar to launch Nasha Mukta campaign to make state addiction-free**

- Bihar government has launched a Nasha Mukta campaign to make the state addiction-free, where no one will be permitted to use intoxicating substance and tobacco products.
- Over two crore people are likely to participate in human chains to be formed across the state on the occasion.
- With this, Bihar will form the world's longest human chain. The chain which will be formed to herald the second phase of a campaign in support of prohibition would be over 3,000 km long and would involve more than two crore people.

### **First dedicated football daily launched in Germany**

- To coincide with the Bundesliga season, a daily newspaper titled "FussballBild" ('FootballBild') has been dedicated to the game of Football for the first time in Germany.
- The chief editor of 32-page 'FussballBild' is retired Germany striker Lukas Podolski. The content will be pooled from the 23 regional editions of Bild.
- It has been launched by the Axel Springer media house, one of Europe's biggest media groups.

### **Centre shifts disinvestment advice to new department**

- The government transferred the role of advising the government on how to utilise the proceeds from disinvestment from the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to the Department of Economic Affairs. The objective is to streamline the disinvestment process.
- During his Budget speech 2016-17, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had announced renaming the previously known Department of Investment as DIPAM.
- The Centre had created a National Investment Fund in 2005 in which the proceeds from the disinvestment of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) were to be channelised.

### **ISKCON's Govardhan eco village bags UN award**

- ISKCON's Govardhan eco village in Wada taluka of Thane district, Maharashtra has been conferred the United Nations award for taking innovative measures for 'sustainable tourism' in country.
- This is for the first time India has won such recognition from the UN in the NGO sector.
- The award was presented at the annual United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Awards for Excellence and Innovation in Tourism at Madrid in Spain.

### **Nirmala Sitharaman launches Rubber Soil Information System (RubSIS)**

- Union Commerce & Industry Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched Rubber Soil Information System (RubSIS) in New Delhi.
- RubSIS is an online system for recommending application of appropriate mix of fertilizers to the specific plantations of rubber growers depending upon their soil nature.
- It brings soil data to the fingerprints of rubber growers and recommends the optimum mix and quantities of chemical fertilizers that his holding requires. It is a cost effective tool for sustainable & scientific management of rubber growing soils.
- It is developed by Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII) under the Rubber Board in collaboration with three agencies viz Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management (IIITM), Kerala, National Bureau of Soil Survey (NBSS) and Land Use Planning, ICAR and National Remote Sensing Center, ISRO.
- Initially, this system is launched for Kottayam, Kerela, which is the largest rubber growing district of India. Further, it will be extended to the entire traditional rubber growing region.

### **Centre amends All India Services Rules specifying 'timeline' for completing enquiry**

- The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has laid down specific timeline for completing enquiry against officers and members of All India Services (AIS) within a given deadline, in a time-bound manner.
- AIS (D&A) Rules, 1969 have been amended to provide specific timelines at different stages of the enquiry, with a view to complete the disciplinary proceedings against the members of All India Services in a time-bound manner.
- In this regard, a time limit of six months has been fixed for completion of departmental enquiry and submission of report.
- At present, there are three AIS, namely Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Services (IPS) and Indian Forest Services (IFS).

### **Rex Tillerson appointed as US Secretary of State**

- Rex Tillerson appointment as 69th US Secretary of State was approved by the US Senate. He is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ExxonMobil and will replace Tom Shannon.
- The Secretary of State is nominated by the President of the United States and, following a confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, is confirmed by the United States Senate.
- The secretary of state shall be concerned with foreign policy and is considered to be the U.S. government's equivalent of a Minister for Foreign Affairs.

### **Mike Pompeo appointed as Director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**

- Mike Pompeo appointment as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was approved by the US Senate.
- Previously, he was the U.S. Representative for Kansas's 4th congressional district from 2011–17. He is a member of the Tea Party movement within the Republican Party.
- The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is a civilian foreign intelligence service of the US federal government, tasked with gathering, processing and analyzing national security information from around the world, primarily through the use of human intelligence (HUMINT).

### **Donald Trump pulls US out of Trans-Pacific Partnership**

- US President Donald Trump formally withdrew the United States (US) from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal on January 23, 2017, thus distancing America from its Asian allies, as China's influence in the region rises.
- Fulfilling a campaign pledge to end American involvement in the 2015 pact, Trump signed an executive order in the Oval Office pulling the US out of the 12-nation TPP.
- The TPP accord, backed heavily by the US business, was negotiated by former Democratic President Barack Obama's administration but was never approved by the Congress.
- Twelve countries that border the Pacific Ocean signed up to the TPP in February 2016, representing roughly 40% of the world's economic output. The pact aimed to deepen economic ties between these nations, slashing tariffs and fostering trade to boost growth.

## Morning News Digest, 25 January 2017

### Indian-origin Mauritius PM Anerood Jugnauth steps down

- Mauritius Prime Minister Anerood Jugnauth resigned from the post of Prime Minister of Mauritius.
- He is the longest serving prime minister with more than 16 years of tenure. He served as Prime Minister from 1982 to 1995 and again from 2000 to 2003. He was then elected as President of Mauritius and served as such from 2003 to 2012. Following his party's victory in the 2014 general elections, he was appointed again to serve his sixth term as Prime Minister by President Kailash Purryag in 2014.
- Pravind Jugnauth, son of Anerood, took over as fifth Prime Minister as the former premier resigned in favour of his son. Both Pravind and Anerod represent 'Militant Socialist Movement'.

### Swiss Re receives IRDAI approval to open Mumbai branch

- Wholesale reinsurance provider Swiss Re received approval from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) to open a branch in Mumbai on February 1, 2017.
- Swiss Re will be headed by Kalpana Sampat, current Managing Director of Swiss Re Services India. It will offer both non-life and life and health reinsurance solutions directly to clients and brokers in the country.
- As the Indian insurance sector is poised for strong growth with an average annual growth rate of 8 per cent from 2017 to 2025, Swiss Re is among the first five foreign companies to obtain a licence to sell reinsurance in India.

### Australian David Warne wins Allan Border Medal for second consecutive term

- Australian opening batsman David Warner has won Australian cricket's top individual prize for the second year in a row, beating Steve Smith and Mitchell Starc for the Allan Border Medal.
- Warner is the fourth player – following former skippers Ricky Ponting (4) and Michael Clarke (4) and allrounder Shane Watson (2) – to win back-to-back awards.
- Allan Border medal is the most prestigious individual prize in Australian cricket. First awarded in 2000, the medal is named after former Australian captain Allan Border.

### Nepal launches 10-yr-plan to cut vegetable imports from India

- Nepal Government has launched a 10-year-plan to cut reliance on vegetable imports from India and boost domestic production.
- The scheme adopts modern farm techniques to boost productivity and aims to make the landlocked Himalayan country self-reliant in food.
- In recent times, Nepal is witnessing a continuous rise in the imports of vegetables from India. Nepal imports around 25,000 metric tonnes of vegetables worth Rs. 55 billion every year from India, but exports the same in negligible volume.

### Stamp Cover on Sindhu, Sakshi and Dipa Released by Postal Department

- The Indian postal department has released a special stamp cover titled Golden girls of India – Pride of Nation during a district-level philatelic exhibition in Agartala to honor the sporting personalities in the country.
- The special covers feature the 2016 Olympic medalist gymnast Dipa Karmakar, shuttler PV Sindu and wrestler Sakshi Malik. They were also awarded the nation's highest sports award Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in 2016.
- Besides the three, the cover also depicted the image of Dipa's coach Bishweshwar Nandi who was awarded the 2016 Dronacharya award.

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## Evening News Digest, 23 January 2017

### Saina Nehwal wins 2017 Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold Badminton title

- World No. 10 Saina Nehwal defeated Thailand teenager Pornpawee Chochuwong 22-20, 22-20 to win the women singles title of the 2017 Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold Badminton tournament. The tournament was held at the Sibu Indoor Stadium in Sarawak, Malaysia from January 17–22, 2017.
- **Other Winners**
  - Men's singles: Ng Ka Long of Hong Kong
  - Men's Doubles: Berry Angriawan and Hardianto Hardianto of Indonesia
  - Women's doubles: Jongkolphan Kititharakul and Rawinda Prajongjai of Thailand
  - Mixed Doubles: Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing of Malaysia
- The Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament is the first Grand Prix of the season and it began in 2009. It is the second level tournament held after Superseries. The total prize money is US\$120,000.

### Centre sets up a committee on implementation of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act

- A committee has been constituted by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to frame uniform rules for the states to avoid delay in proper implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 across the country.
- The committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Vinod Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD). It will also comprise of representatives from the Ministry of Health, DoPT, Labour, Legislative Department, and representatives from NGOs as members.
- The working group will suggest model draft rules for the states so as to have a uniform rules across the country and also to avoid delay in finalization of rules by any state.
- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 was notified by the Union on December 28, 2016. The Act provides for raising reservation for PwD in government jobs from present 3% to 4% and in higher education institutes from 3% to 5%.

### Tamil Nadu govt issues new guidelines for safe conduct of Jallikattu

- Tamil Nadu government has issued a set of stringent guidelines including CCTV surveillance and medical examination of bulls to ensure safe conduct of jallikattu.
- As per the guidelines:
  - The names of participants and bulls should be registered and a team of officials should monitor the events.
  - The bulls should be rested at least for 20 minutes before being released into the sporting arena. They will be examined by the veterinarians.
  - The bulls should be given 60 sq ft of space, and the owner of the animal should stand by it to give it a sense of security.
  - The sportsmen are allowed to hold onto the hump of the bull only for a distance of 15 metres, and not pull its tail.
- Earlier, the Centre had approved an ordinance of Tamil Nadu government for the holding of Jallikattu festival usurping Supreme Court imposed ban on Jallikattu.

### Crunchy potatoes and browned toast could give you cancer, says study

- Bread, chips and potatoes should be cooked to a golden yellow colour, rather than brown, to reduce our intake of a chemical which could cause cancer.
- UK government body, Food Standards Agency (FSA) issued a public warning over the risks of acrylamide - a chemical compound that forms in some foods when they are cooked at high temperatures above 120°C.
- It is also found in coffee, cooked pizza bases, black olives and cereal-based baby foods.

### Maharashtra SEC to allot common symbol to parties winning 5% seats on local elections

- To help avoid confusion among leaders as well as voters, the Maharashtra State Election Commission (SEC) has decided to allot common symbol to political parties that have won at least five percent seats in the local body election.
- This provision is used only for political parties registered with state election commission and has limited reach. SEC has asked the interested parties to submit their application, mentioning the symbol it wants along with the list of candidates who have won the last election. A winning candidate gets a certificate from returning officer immediately after the declaration of the results.
- Earlier, election symbols were distributed on lottery basis but it created confusion as single political party used to get different symbols in different local body polls.

## Morning News Digest, 24 January 2017

### Russia to help India increase train speed to 200 kmph

- In line with the Indo-Russian protocol signed in October 2016, Russian Railways will help Indian Railways in upgrading passenger train speeds on the 575 kilometre long Nagpur-Secunderabad route. This is for the first time that Russia will be making an entry in India's rail sector.
- As part of a "government to government" agreement between the two countries, the RZD International, a special purpose engineering company established within the Russian Railways, will help Indian Railways to increase the top train speed on the route from 120 kmph to 200 kmph.
- In 2014, India announced a semi-high train speed plan envisaging speed upgrades on nine identified routes including Delhi-Chandigarh, Chennai-Hyderabad and Delhi-Lucknow-Varanasi. At present, the Gatimaan Express – with a top speed of 160 kmph – is India's only semi-high speed train that is operational on the Delhi-Agra route.

### Apple named most innovative company of 2016

- Technology giant Apple has been named as the most innovative company for the year 2016 by the Boston Consulting Group's (BCG's) in its annual list of world's 50 "Most Innovative Companies". Apple has topped the list for the 11th straight year.
- Google was ranked second, followed by electric carmaker Tesla on the list. The other companies in the top 10 are Microsoft (4th), Amazon (5th), Netflix (6th), Samsung (7th), Toyota (8th), Facebook (9th) and IBM (10th). Meanwhile, ride-hailing service Uber and home rental platform Airbnb were among the firms included in the list for the first time.
- The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is an American worldwide management consulting firm with 88 offices in 48 countries.

### Special Task Force for women safety reconstituted

- A special task force (STF) consisting of 17 members has been reconstituted for women safety under the Chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Anil Bajjal.
- The decision to reconstitute the task force was taken pursuant to the High Court's December 21, 2016 order asking the L-G's office to apprise it whether any STF on women's safety was in place in Delhi.
- The task force was established in 2013 following the December 16, 2012 murder and gangrape of Nirbhaya in a moving bus. It was set up under the leadership of Rajiv Mehrishi, Union Home Secretary, and was dissolved in 2016.

### Over 3.5 lakh people sing national anthem in Gujarat, set new world record

- Over 3.5 lakh people set a new world record by singing the national anthem at an event at Kagvad in Rajkot district of Gujarat. It was registered in Guinness World Records.
- The occasion was installation of idol of goddess Khodiyar at a newly-built Khodal Dham temple in the town. Till this record, 2,54,537 people had sung the national anthem in Bangladesh in 2014 and set a record.
- The trust also set two new records for Limca Book of Records, by organizing the longest (40km) 'shobha-yatra' (procession) and a 1008-kund 'mahayagna'.

### Power Ministry recommends zero-rate under GST for renewables

- The Ministry of Power, headed by Piyush Goyal has recommended that renewable energy should be given a zero-rate tax status under the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- The presentation highlighted that any further tariff increase due to GST may have a multiplier effect on economic development such as:
  - difficulty in passing through the impact to agriculture and domestic consumers
  - adverse impact on industrial production and GDP
  - adverse impact on Make in India
  - adverse impact on export competitiveness of Indian products and services
- The recommendation was made to the GST Council to choose one of two options: either give renewable energy (RE) supply a zero-rate status, or give RE deemed export status.
- It asked for the inclusion of all hydel projects as renewable energy projects. Currently, only small hydel projects of up to 25 MW capacity are deemed renewable energy projects.
- It also requested that supplies made to under-construction hydel projects be granted deemed export status in line with what is being contemplated for solar projects.

Chronicle

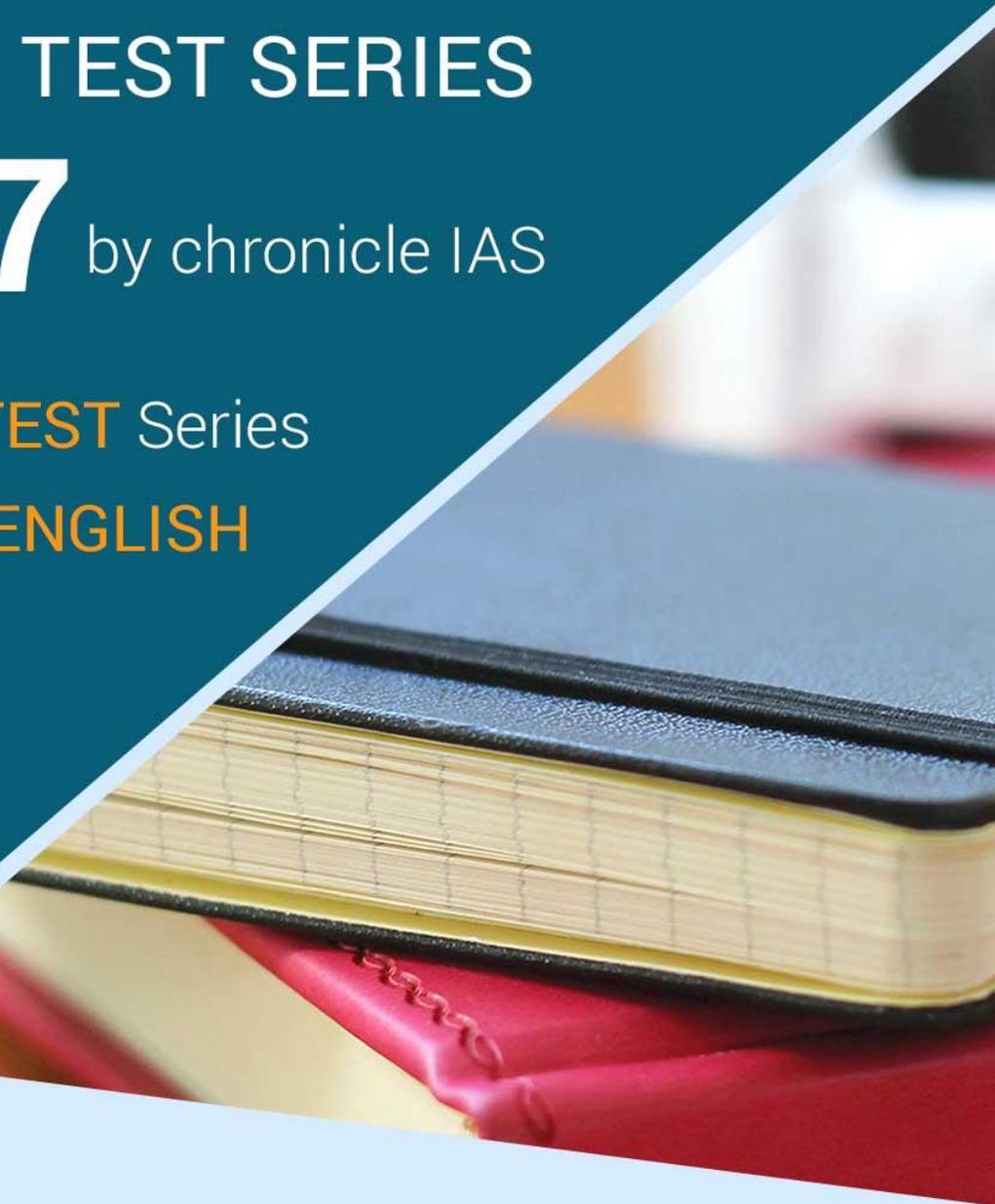
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## Morning News Digest, 27 January 2017

### Indian-American Uttam Dhillon appointed to key White House post

- The US president Donald Trump appointed Indian-American attorney as special assistant to assist the president on ethics and compliance matters.
- He will be part of the legal team to serve under White House Counsel Donald F McGahn with respect to compliance and ethics matters.
- Earlier, he served as chief oversight counsel for the House of Representatives Financial Services Committee. He has also served as chief of the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Counter-narcotics Enforcement.

### Indian-American Ajit Pai appointed Chairman of Federal Communication Commission

- The US president Donald Trump appointed Indian-American Ajit Pai as the next Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). As FCC head he will be responsible for regulating the nation's airwaves and internet connections.
- He had been one of the two Republican commissioners on a five-member panel that regulates the country's communications infrastructure.
- He is known for his fierce criticism of Obama-era "net neutrality" rules that bar internet service providers from favoring some websites and apps over others.

### CJI reinstates Justice M B Lokur as e-panel in-charge

- Chief Justice of India (CJI) J S Khehar reinstated Justice M B Lokur as Judge in-charge of Supreme Court's e-panel. Justice Lokur was dropped from the e-panel by former CJI Justice T S Thakur in November 2016.
- Justice Lokur is the fifth senior-most judge in the Supreme Court in the hierarchy. Besides him, the other members of the e-panel are Justice A M Khanwilkar, Justice D Y Chandrachud and two others.
- The invitee members of the committee include Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi, Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar, Justice B D Ahmed of Delhi High Court among others.
- The e-panel was set up in 2004 and CJI is the patron in-chief of the panel. It was constituted by the Government under the Supreme Court for policy formation on and implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the courts across the country.

### Damien Chazelle's 'La La Land' bags record 14 Oscar nominations

- The film 'La La Land' directed by Damien Chazelle has been nominated for Oscars in 14 different categories including Best Film, Best Actor and Best Director. This is the most nominations in Academy Award history.
- Earlier, 'Titanic' and 'All About Eve' were also nominated for 14 awards each. 'Titanic' had won 10 in 1997; while 'All About Eve' took home six Oscars in 1950. Earlier in January 2016, 'La La Land' had won a record seven Golden Globes Award.
- The Academy Awards will be hosted by comedian Jimmy Kimmel and will be broadcast on February 29, 2017.

### Pakistan tests 2200-km range surface-to-surface missile "Ababeel"

- Pakistan Military on January 24, 2017 successfully test-fired the long range surface-to-surface missile "Ababeel". The missile with 2200 km range was flight tested for the first time.
- The missile is capable of delivering multiple warheads including nuclear, using Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV) technology.
- The Ababeel Weapon System is aimed at reinforcing deterrence and ensuring survivability of Pakistan's ballistic missiles in the growing regional Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) environment.

Online

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## Evening News Digest, 26 January 2017

### India celebrates its 68th Republic Day

- India on January 26, 2017, celebrated its 68th Republic Day. It is on this day, India became a republic in and our Constitution came into force in the year 1950.
- For the Republic Day Parade 2017, the Chief Guest was the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The parade, held annually on January 26, starts from Rajpath and ends at Red Fort in Delhi.
- For the first time, a contingent of UAE soldiers marched in the parade and a contingent of the National Security Guard (NSG), popularly known as the Black Cat Commandos, also participated in the parade.

### Ashok Chakra awarded posthumously to Havildar Hangpan Dada

- President of India Pranab Mukherjee posthumously awarded the Ashok Chakra to Havildar Hangpan Dada of Assam Regiment. The award was received by his widow Chasen Lowan.
- He was killed on May 26, 2016, while fighting three terrorists in close combat in Naugam sector of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
- Ashok Chakra is the highest gallantry award given during peacetime for valour, courageous action and self-sacrifice. It is the peacetime equivalent of the Param Vir Chakra (PVC), the highest gallantry award.

### Padma Awards 2017 announced

- The Union Government announced the names of Padma Awardees recognizing their distinguished contribution in various spheres.
- This year the President of India approved conferment of Padma Awards to 89 persons. The list comprises of 7 Padma Vibhushan, 7 Padma Bhushan, and 75 Padma Shri Awardees. 19 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 5 persons from the category of foreigners, NRIs, PIOs and 6 posthumous awardees.
- The Government of India initially instituted Padma Vibhushan in 1954. Later in 1955, it categorised civilian awards into Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, and Padma Shri.
- Padma Vibhushan is given for exceptional and distinguished service; Padma Bhushan for distinguished service of a high order; and Padma Shri is given for distinguished service.

### Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards 2016

- President Pranab Mukherjee approved the conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Awards for the year 2016 on 36 persons.
- Out of 36 awards, Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak was given to five persons, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak was given to eight persons and Jeevan Raksha Padak was given to 23 persons. Out of the 36 awards, seven have received it posthumously.
- Jeevan Raksha Padak series of awards are given to a person for the meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person. Persons of either sex in all walks of life are eligible for these awards. The award can also be conferred posthumously.

### Donald Trump orders wall to be built on Mexico border

- President of the United States (US) Donald Trump issued an executive order for an "impassable physical barrier" to be built along the US border with Mexico.
- As part of the executive order, a 2000-mile barrier along the Mexican border will be built. The orders also called for hiring 10,000 immigration officials to help boost border patrol efforts.
- He also signed an action to strip funds from US cities that are sanctuaries for undocumented immigrants. The term "sanctuaries" applies to cities in the US that have policies in place to limit the assistance given to federal immigration authorities.

Online

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## Morning News Digest, 26 January 2017

### **‘BHARAT PARV’ to be organized at Red Fort from 26th January**

- The “Bharat Parv” event will be organized by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture at the Red Fort, Delhi from January 26-31, 2017.
- The prime objective of organizing the event is to generate a patriotic mood, promote the rich cultural diversity of the country, to ensure wider participation of the general public and to popularise the idea of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- Besides, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is also setting up a Photo Exhibition on the theme “Mera Desh Badal Raha Hai, Aage Badh Raha Hai”.

### **CMs Committee on Digital Payments presents interim report to the Prime Minister**

- The Chief Minister's Committee on Digital Payments, headed by the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandra Babu Naidu has submitted the interim report on Digital Payments to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Terms of Reference –
  - Suggest measures to enable all sections of the population to migrate to the digital payments
  - Recommend measures to leapfrog into the advanced digital payment systems of global standards.
- Report Highlights –
  - Non-cash payment transitions by non-banks per capita per annum is 11 in India as compared to 26 in China, 728 in Singapore, 355 in the UK, 142 in Brazil, 70 in South Africa and 32 in Mexico.
  - The number of (cashless) pay points per million people are 1,080 in India as against 31,096 in Singapore, 30,078 in the UK, 25,241 in Brazil, 7,267 in South Africa, 7,189 in Mexico and 16,602 in China.
- Panel's 5 Recommendations
  - Relief to merchants making Digital Payments, no retrospective taxation
  - Tax incentives to be extended to Micro ATMs, domestic production
  - Tax refund and incentives to small merchants undertaking Digital Payments
  - Abolition of MDR with an aim to make Digital Payments cheaper than cash
  - Expand and strengthen origination, acceptance, connectivity and hardware infrastructure.

### **Postal Department agrees to utilise Head Post Offices as Passport Seva Kendra**

- The External Affairs Ministry and the Department of Posts have agreed to utilise Head Post Offices in various states as the Post Office Passport Seva Kendra for delivering passport related services to the people.
- It is initiated at Head Post Offices of Mysuru in Karnataka and Dahod in Gujarat. This is done in order to extend passport services to the citizens on a larger scale and to ensure wider area coverage.
- This is the first time the External Affairs Ministry will share the powers it has under the Passport Act with another Ministry.

### **Japan launches large military satellite from base on country's southern-most islands**

- Japan launched its first military communications satellite ‘Kirameki-2’ to boost the broadband capacity of its Self Defence Forces as they reinforce an island chain stretching along the southern edge of the East China Sea.
- It lifted off from Japan's Tanegashima space port aboard an H-IIA rocket.
- The satellite is one of three planned so-called X-band satellites, that will quadruple broadband capacity, unify a fractured and overburdened communications network and allow communications across more territory.

### **Rest of India lift wins Irani Cup of Cricket**

- Wriddhiman Saha made a career-best first-class knock of 203 as Rest of India lifted the Irani Cup after effortlessly chasing down a 379-run target set by Gujarat.
- The match was held at Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai, Maharashtra. This is the 15th time in last 19 editions that Rest of India has won the tournament, which is in its 55th year.
- The Irani Cup (earlier called Irani Trophy) tournament was conceived during the 1959-60 season. It was conceived to mark the completion of 25 years of the Ranji Trophy championship. The fixture is played annually between the incumbent Ranji Trophy winners and the Rest of India Team.
- It was named after the late Z.R. Irani, who was associated with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) from its inception in 1928, till his death in 1970.

## Evening News Digest, 25 January 2017

### ECI celebrates 7th National Voters' Day on January 25

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) celebrated the 7th National Voters' Day across the country for enhanced participation of citizens in the electoral process.
- The theme for the 7th National Voters Day is "Empowering Young and Future Voters".
- The Commission's objective through National Voters' Day is to increase enrolment of voters, especially of the newly eligible ones. The day is also utilized to spread awareness among voters regarding effective participation in the electoral process.
- January 25 is the foundation day of the Election Commission, which came into being on this day in 1950.

### Centre launches Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana – 2017

- The Union Cabinet gave its post-facto approval for the launch of the Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana 2017.
- The scheme will be implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) during the current financial year 2016-17. It will provide social security during old age and protect elderly persons aged 60 years and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions.
- The scheme is meant to provide an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for ten years, with an option to opt for pension on a monthly/quarterly/half-yearly or annual basis.

### Cabinet approves a new Scheme for promotion of Rural Housing

- To push the 'housing for all' scheme, Union Cabinet approved a new scheme for promotion of Rural Housing in the country. It would be implemented by National Housing Bank.
- The Centre would provide interest subsidy under the scheme. Interest subsidy would be available to every rural household who is not covered under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen).
- However, the scheme will not be extended to those who have already availed benefits under a similar programme, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen (PMAY-G).
- The beneficiary who takes a loan under the scheme would be provided interest subsidy for loan amount upto Rs. 2 Lakhs

### LCA (TEJAS) and AEW&C will Fly-Past for first time at RD Parade -2017

- The Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas and Airborne Early Warning & Control System (AEW&C) developed by DRDO will fly-past for the first time during the Republic Day Parade 2017.
- Tejas is indigenously developed by Aeronautical Development Agency, an autonomous society of DRDO, and produced by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). It is a light-weight and multi-role fourth generation tactical fighter aircraft which can carry laser guided bombs and modern missiles to cause extreme damage to the target.
- The Airborne Early Warning & Control System (AEW&C) is an 'Eye in the Sky'. It is a force multiplier, developed by DRDO for IAF with Centre for Air Borne Systems (CABS) as nodal agency.

### Prime Minister's Shram Awards for the year 2015 announced

- Union Government announced the Prime Minister's Shram Awards for the year 2015. It will be awarded to 56 workers employed in the Departmental Undertakings & Public Sector Undertakings of the Central and State Governments and Private Sector Units.
- These awards will recognise their distinguished performances, innovative abilities, outstanding contribution in the field of productivity and exhibition of exceptional courage and presence of mind.
- Total number of Shram Bhushan Awardees are four. It carries a cash award of Rs. 1,00,000/- and a 'Sanad'. Total number of Shram Vir/Shram Veerangana Awards are twelve. It carries a cash award of Rs. 60,000/- and a 'Sanad'. Total number of Shram Shree/Shram Devi Awardees are sixteen. It carries a cash award of Rs. 40,000/- and a 'Sanad'.

## Morning News Digest, 29 January 2017

### GAAR will be effective from April 1, 2017: CBDT

- The Central Bureau of Direct Taxes asserted that General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR) will be implemented from April 1, 2017.
- The General Anti-Avoidance Rules (GAAR), seek to prevent companies from routing transactions through other countries to avoid taxes.
- CBDT also said the provisions will not apply if the tax benefits obtained are permissible under the limitation of benefits clause provided in tax treaties. Investments made by way of convertible instruments, bonus issuances or split/consolidation of holdings prior to April 1 will be grandfathered.

### 3 Indian origin persons awarded Australia's highest civilian honour

- Three Indian-origin persons have been awarded Australia's highest civilian honour for the year 2017 for their contributions in the field of medicine and work towards the community.
- Purushottam Sawrikar: Former president of Australian Indian Medical Graduates Association, received Order of Australia medal 2017 for his service to medicine, and to the Indian community.
- Makhan Singh Khangure: Hailing from Perth, he was given the award for his for significant service to medicine in the field of neuroradiology, to education, and to a range of professional medical associations.
- Vijay Kumar: A nuclear medicine specialist and a researcher, was given the award for his significant service to medical research in the disciplines of nuclear medicine and biology, to professional organisations, and to the community.

### Roop Kumar Dutta appointed as Karnataka DG and IGP

- Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah appointed Senior IPS officer Roop Kumar Dutta as Karnataka DG and IGP.
- Dutta, who is on deputation and working as Special Secretary, Union Home Department, will succeed the present DG and IGP Om Prakash.
- Dutta belongs to 1981 batch. He had worked as Superintendent of Police in Karwar, Davanagere, Lokayukta ADGP, Special Secretary, DGP Intelligence and Security Force. He has also served as CBI Additional Director.

### EU slaps China with new steel anti-dumping duties

- The European Commission has imposed anti-dumping duties on steel products from China and Taiwan to stop them flooding Europe's struggling steel market.
- The Chinese exports will now be taxed with duties ranging from 30.7-64.9 percent. Taiwanese exports face duties of 5.1-12.1 percent.
- The Commission introduced an unprecedented number of trade defense measures in place targeting unfair imports of steel products. Of 39 EU anti-dumping and anti-subsidy measures, 17 are on products originating in China.

### Dr Vijay Bhatkar appointed Chancellor of Nalanda University

- President Pranab Mukherjee appointed Dr Bhatkar as the Chancellor of Nalanda University with effect from January 25, 2017. He will replace George Yeo, former Singaporean politician.
- Bhatkar will hold the office for a term of three years from the date of his appointment as provided under Section 11(3) of the Nalanda University Act.
- Bhatkar is best known as the architect of India's first supercomputer and as the founder executive director of C-DAC, India's national initiative in supercomputing. He is credited with the creation of several national institutions.
- Bhatkar has been a member of the scientific advisory committee to the Union Cabinet as also of the governing council of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). He has been honoured with Padma Shri and Maharashtra Bhushan awards.

Online

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## Evening News Digest, 28 January 2017

### Centre announces setting up of KVKs in Mungeli and Bemtara of Chhattisgarh

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh announced the setting up of 7 new Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) have been proposed under the 12th Plan in Chhattisgarh.
- This decision was announced on the sidelines of inauguration of Krishi Samridhi-Rashtriya Krishi Mela 2017 in Raipur.
- Chhattisgarh has recorded 33% increase in foodgrains production, 58% in milk production, 92% in eggs production and 245% enhancement in fisheries for the last 13 years.

### Navy's Theatre Level Exercise, TROPEX 17, begins

- In order to strengthen the inter-operability and joint operations of the Indian Navy in a complex environment, the Theatre Readiness Operational Exercise (TROPEX), an annual Indian Navy exercise, kicked off the Western Seaboard.
- The last edition of the exercise was conducted in January 2015. The month long exercise will see the participation of ships and aircraft of both the Western and Eastern Naval Commands and assets from the Indian Air Force, Indian Army and the Indian Coast Guard exercising together.
- TROPEX 17 exercise is aimed at testing combat readiness of the combined fleets of the Indian Navy, and the assets of the Indian Air Force, Indian Army and the Indian Coast Guard.

### Dr.Prabhat Kumar Committee submits Report on National MSME Policy

- Dr.Prabhat Kumar, the Chairman of One Member Committee for formulating National MSME Policy presented its report to Kalraj Mishra, Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME). Prabhat Kumar is a former Cabinet Secretary.
- The first objective of this Policy must be not only to encourage establishment and growth, but also, emphasise on growth.
- Major Elements of Draft MSME Policy: Start-up Regime Framework, The Regulatory Regime Framework, The Subsidy Regime Framework, Environment Compliance Framework for Green, Orange and Red Categories of Industries, the Promotional Scheme Framework, New Product Development Framework, the Value Addition Mechanisms and Framework, Knowledge & Innovation Framework, Manufacturing and Services "Excellence" Framework, Export Promotion and Marketing Framework, the Growth Accelerator Framework, Consultative Mechanism Framework, Financial Regime Framework, Resources Provisioning Framework and Exit Policy Framework.

### CWC Signs MoU with IIT Madras and IIS Bengaluru

- Central Water Commission (CWC) under the Ministry of Water Resources River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation signed two separate MoUs with IIT Madras and IIS Bengaluru in New Delhi.
- The MoU intends to procure specified equipment and software for enhancing their capability to support dam rehabilitation efforts of CWC. It will build capacity building in the areas of dam safety through World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP).
- The scope includes strengthening the testing laboratories, enhancing analytical capabilities, exposure visits to best global institutions and on ground exposure to dam safety concerns to the faculty of these institutions.

### Sports Ministry reconstitutes committee to identify athletes under TOP Scheme

- The Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has reconstituted Target Olympic Podium (TOP) committee with the objective of identifying and supporting potential medal prospects for 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games under TOP scheme.
- The committee will be headed by Abhinav Bindra, Olympic Gold Medalist. Its members are Anil Khanna, Prakash Padukone, Karnam Malleshwari, P. T. Usha, Murlidhar Raja, Anjali Bhagwat, Rekha Yadav, Dr. S.S. Roy and Inder Dhamija.
- The TOP Scheme aims to identify and support potential medal prospects for 2016 and 2020 Olympic Games. Under this scheme, the selected athletes are provided financial assistance for their customized training at Institutes.

## Morning News Digest, 28 January 2017

### PCI constitutes five one-member committees for paid news issues in Assembly Polls

- The Press Council of India (PCI) constituted five one-member committees to look into the issues related to "paid news" during the upcoming Assembly polls in five states.
- Uttam Chandra Sharma has been nominated as the PCI sub-committee for the Uttarakhand polls, while Rajeev Ranjan Nag has been nominated for Punjab. Besides, Bipin Newar has been nominated for Uttar Pradesh, while K. Amarnath has been nominated for Manipur and K.D. Chandola for Goa.
- Terms of Reference are -
  - Formulate ways to make 'paid News' an electoral offence through amendment of Representative of Peoples Act, 1951.
  - Devise existing mechanisms of expenditure ceiling to curb the menace.
  - Suggest ways to partner with stakeholders, including political parties and media to fight the menace.
  - Formulate ways to sensitise people on the subject.

### India ranks sixth on eight great powers in 2017

- India is ranked at the sixth spot, behind China and Japan, in a list of eight great powers for the year 2017 compiled by a leading American foreign policy magazine.
- This list is topped by the United States, whereas China and Japan are tied at the second spot. Russia (fourth) and Germany (fifth) are the other two countries ahead of India. Iran is ranked seventh and Israel is on the eighth spot.
- Foreign Policy is an American news publication, founded in 1970 and focuses on global affairs, current events, and domestic and international policy.

### 23rd edition of Partnership Summit begins in Visakhapatnam

- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the State Government of Andhra Pradesh is organizing the 23rd edition of the Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- It is chaired by Nirmala Sitharaman, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry. The theme of this summit is 'Partnerships for Sustained Growth in an Emerging Global Economic Order'.
- The Partnership Summit, which started in 1995, to mark the centenary of CII, has since become one of the most important international business events in the country. It aims to further partnerships, to build ideologies based on shared dreams that bind societies together in this knowledge driven world.

### India's women boxers finish 3rd at Nation's Cup in Serbia

- The Indian women's boxing team secured a historic third place finish at the 6th Nations Cup in Serbia.
- India finished the tournament with one gold, four silver and a bronze medal.
- The gold medal was won by Haryana-girl Neeraj in the 51 kg category, who defeated Kazakhstan's Jaina Shekerbekova in the final. Russia finished second in the tournament behind winners Kazakhstan.

### Second unit of Kudankulam Nuclear Power plant to start generation of power soon

- The second unit of Kudankulam Nuclear Power plant in Tamil Nadu will soon start commercial generation of power, after it attained full power generation capacity of 1000 Mega watt in the third week of January 2017.
- Till now 13,197 million units of electricity has been generated in the first unit of Kudankulam fetching Rs 1000 crore revenue for the unit. The nuclear power generation will go up to 6,780 mega watt in the country with power generation in the second unit.
- The 1000 Mega watt Kudankulam nuclear power plant was built with Russian expertise in November 1988.

Online

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## Evening News Digest, 27 January 2017

### Meghalaya Governor V Shanmuganathan resigns

- Meghalaya Governor V Shanmuganathan resigned from his post on January 26, 2017 . He resigned following the ‘Young Ladies Club’ controversy, wherein he has been accused of sexual misconduct.
- He was appointed as the 15th Governor of the state on May 20, 2015 and he was also given the additional charge of Arunachal Pradesh. As a result, he also resigned as Governor of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ‘Young Ladies Club’ controversy: Several employees of Raj Bhawan wrote a letter to the President of India that Shanmuganathan had selected only girls to work from him, appointed them to full time duty, and that the security of the place was compromised with some women being given access to his bedroom. He “seriously compromised” the dignity of the gubernatorial office.
- Nagaland Governor Padmanabha Balkrishna Acharya has been given the additional charge of Arunachal Pradesh after President Pranab Mukherjee accepted Shanmuganathan resignation.

### Assam Government to organize Farmer's Martyrs day

- The State Government of Assam organized the Farmer's Martyrs day at Patharughat in Darrang district from January 27, 2017. The day is being organised to pay homage to the martyrs of 1894 farmers' rising at Patharughat.
- During this two-day event, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal will also give awards to 22 progressive farmers on this occasion.
- Patharughat Farmer's Uprising: On January 28, 1894, 140 innocent farmers were massacred and 150 others injured, when they rose in protest against the oppressive increase in land revenue by the then colonial British rulers. With this, Assam emerged as one of the pioneers and forerunners of India's struggle for independence.

### 65th International Customs Day celebrated

- World Customs Organisation celebrated the 65th edition of International Customs Day on January 26, 2017. The theme of 2017 International Customs Day is "Data Analysis for Effective Border Management".
- The Convention establishing the Customs Co-operation Council was signed on December 15, 1950 in Brussels and entered into force on November 4, 1952. On January 26, 1953, the official inauguration of the council was held in Brussels, in presence of 17 countries. It is to mark this inauguration day, the International Custom Day is celebrated.

### Usain Bolt loses one Olympic gold medal as relay partner Nesta Carter tests positive

- Jamaica's Usain Bolt has lost one of his nine Olympic gold medals after his team mate Nesta Carter was found guilty of doping at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.
- According to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), Carter has taken the sample of banned stimulant methylhexanamine.
- The IOC also stripped Russian Tatiana Lebedeva of her long jump and triple jump silver medals, which she won at Beijing Games after she tested positive for a steroid.

### Russian Ambassador Alexander Kadakin passes away

- Russian ambassador Alexander Kadakin, a career diplomat, passed away aged 68.
- Kadakin, who was serving as the Ambassador of India since 2009, was credited with playing a significant role in promotion of relations between India and Russia. This was his second stint as the Ambassador, having served one between 1999 and 2004.
- With a total tenure, in two stints, of over 12 years, he was the longest-serving Russian Ambassador to India and to any nation in the Indian subcontinent.

## Evening News Digest, 27 January 2017

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## Morning News Digest, 31 January 2017

### India's forex reserves increased by \$932.4 million to reach \$360.775 billion

- In its weekly statistical supplement, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that India's foreign exchange reserves soared by \$ 932.4 million to \$ 360.775 billion in the week-ended January 20, 2017.
- The country's forex reserves had increased by \$ 687.9 million to \$ 359.843 billion in the previous week. Foreign currency assets, which constitute a major chunk of the forex reserves, had gone up by \$ 926.4 million to \$ 338.434 billion during the week.
- Gold reserves remained unchanged at \$ 18.584 billion during the week, while its special drawing rights (SDRs) went up by \$ 2.3 million to \$ 1.442 billion. India's reserve position in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) increased by \$ 3.7 million to \$ 2.315 billion during the week.

### 31st Pune International Marathon concludes

- The 31st edition of Pune International Marathon (PIM) concluded on January 28, 2017. The race was dominated by Ethiopian athletes. Six of their runners bagged positions among top three in the three major events.
- Men's Full Marathon (42 km): 1. Kenyan Hosea Rutto (2 hrs, 12 min and 17 sec); 2. Ethiopian Udresa Kedir Figa; 3. Kenya's Simon Kiui
- Men's Half-Marathon (21 km): 1. Chuko Kuma Terecha (Ethiopia); 2. Abdata Ebisa Dinsisisa (Ethiopia); 3. Hika Wakshume Bulcha (Ethiopia)
- Women's Half-Marathon: 1. Kenya's Gladys Japkechei Tarus (1 hr, 12 min and 36 sec); 2. Meseret Gezahegn Merine (Ethiopia); 3. Bontu Fita Megersa (Ethiopia)
- Kishor Ghavane from Pune stood first among Indian runners in the full marathon by clocking 2 hr, 26 min and 30 sec.

### Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament concludes

- The 2017 Syed Modi International Grand Prix Gold was recently held at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium in Lucknow.
- Men's Singles: Sameer Verma beat B. Sai Praneeth.
- Women's Singles: Won by P V Sidhu. She defeated Gregoria Mariska
- Men's Doubles: Won by Mathias Boe and Carsten Mogensen.
- Women's Doubles: Won by Kamilla Rytter Juhl and Cristinna Pedersen
- Mixed Doubles: Won by Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N Sikki Reddy

### French screen icon Emmanuelle Riva dies aged 89

- Emmanuelle Riva, the French actress died at the age of 89. Her 60 year career came to a triumphant climax with her Oscar nomination for Michael Haneke's "Amour".
- She is best known for her roles in the films Hiroshima mon amour (1959) and Amour (2012). The actress won a BAFTA and a Cesar award for "Amour".

### New species of songbird found in Western Ghats

- A new species of songbird were found in the jungles of Western Ghats by Indian Ornithologists. The newly discovered songbird *Sholicola ashambuensis* is confined to the Agasthyar Malai mountain ranges.
- Besides, the team also found two new genera that is endemic to the Western Ghats. They designated the Western Ghats shortwings as *Sholicola* (closely related to flycatchers) and the laughing thrushes as *Montecincla* (closely related to babblers).
- These findings were published in the latest issue of 'BMC Evolutionary Biology'. Also, some old forgotten specimens in the Trivandrum Natural History Museum was discovered.

Online 

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## Evening News Digest, 30 January 2017

### NEC and Ministry of Textiles sign MoU for harnessing Cane & Bamboo of NER

- The North Eastern Council (NEC) and the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Shillong. The MoU intends to harness the hidden potential of Cane and Bamboo of North Eastern Region (NER).
- The MoU provides a push for the integrated and inclusive development of Cane & Bamboo Sector of North East Region by way of skilled manpower, technology dissemination, marketing support and institutional support. This in turn can coordinate a mission to mobilise masses and promote Bamboo sector as a whole throughout the country.
- As per the MoU, the Cane and Bamboo Technology Centre (CBTC), Assam will be transformed into a Regional Centre of Excellence and the Bamboo & Cane Development Institute (BCDI), Tripura will be converted as a separate entity under the name Indian Institute of Bamboo Technology (IIBT).

### IMD plans weather stations in 660 district

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has decided to set up weather stations in 660 districts of the country. It aims to cover 660 districts by 2019.
- In the first phase, the IMD plans to set up the system in 130 districts which have already been shortlisted.
- IMD has also tied up with the Ministry of Agriculture to use the Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in the districts, to use them as weather forecasting observatories.

### Kerala govt to implement Athirappilly hydro-electric project

- On the sidelines of a discussion on 'electricity crisis and management' organized by Calicut Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI), Kerala electricity minister M.M. Mani declared that the government has not yet abandoned the Athirappilly hydro electricity project, stating that it will be a great loss for the state if the project is discarded.
- Environmentalists have been opposing the Athirappilly project, citing the irreparable loss of biodiversity it is likely to cause. Activists have also been arguing that the project would lead to displacement and eventual extinction of the primitive tribal group, 'Kadars', in the area.
- The 163-MW project was proposed in 1996 by the Kerala State Electricity Board, which was to include a dam of 23-metre height, with a storage capacity of 8.44 Million Cubic Meter (MCM), on the Chalakkudy river in the Vazhachal Forest Division. It lies in Thrissur district of Kerala.

### Hitendranath Goswami to be new Speaker of Assam Assembly

- Jorhat BJP legislator Hitendranath Goswami will succeed Ranjit Das as the new Speaker of the Assam Assembly.
- Ranjit Das had on Dec 25, 2016 resigned as Assam Assembly Speaker after he was made president of the State BJP unit.
- Goswami is currently member of Bharatiya Janata Party, which he joined in March 2014. He was a member of Asom Gana Parishad until February 2013, when he resigned from the party membership.

### Arunachal Pradesh to amend delimitation of rules under APPSC

- The Arunachal Pradesh government has decided to amend the delimitation of rules under Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) so that the entire process of appointment of grade B and below State government employees would also be done through the Commission.
- Khandu has asked the Commission to devise a specific calendar of activities/examinations so that the candidates could plan and prepare themselves accordingly.

Online

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# Morning News Digest, 30 January 2017

## Australian Open 2017

- The 105th edition of Australian Open 2017 recently concluded in Melbourne Park.
- **Men's Singles:** Won by Roger Federer (Switzerland). He beat Rafael Nadal (Spain) in five sets 6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3. This was Federer's fifth Australian Open and his 100<sup>th</sup> Australian Open match. With this, he won a total of 18 Grand Slam titles, the most by any player in tennis history.
- **Women's Singles:** Won by Serena Williams (USA). She beat Venus Williams (USA) 6-4, 6-4. She won her seventh Australian Open and an Open-era record 23rd Grand Slam singles title.
- **Men's Doubles:** J Peers (Australia) and H Kontinen (Finland) beat B Bryan (US) and M Bryan (US) 7-5, 7-5
- **Women's Doubles:** B. Mattek-Sands (US) and L. Safarova (Czech Republic) beat A. Hlavackova (Czech Republic) and S. Peng (China) 7(7) – 6(4), 6-3, 6-3
- **Mixed Doubles:** A. Spears (US) and J. Cabal (Colombia) beat L. Hradecka (Czech Republic) and R. Stepanek (Czech Republic) 6-4, 7(7)-6(4)

## Bhutan Consulate General Office to be set up in Guwahati

- Assam Government agreed to a proposal for setting up of a Consulate General Office of Royal Government of Bhutan in Guwahati and conveyed willingness to the Ministry of External Affairs.
- They also decided to share intelligence inputs between them to put a tab on terrorist activities. The meeting discussed mechanism for vibrant entry-exit mechanism to give an impetus to industry and commerce.
- They also discussed the existing boundaries that Assam shared with Bhutan and exchanged inputs on missing boundary pillars and vowed to take immediate steps to address the issue.

## P Vijayan inaugurates 29th Kerala Science Congress

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the 29th Kerala Science Congress at the Mar Thoma College in Thiruvalla.
- 'Ecology and Environment' is the theme of this three-day annual event.
- It is being jointly organised by the Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment and the Kerala Forest Research Institute.

## Centre Launches Film Condition Assessment Project under NFHM

- Ajay Mittal, Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry, launched the Film Condition Assessment, which is the first phase of implementation of National Film Heritage Mission (NFHM) in Pune.
- This is a one-of-its-kind Rs.597.41 crore project in the world to enable creation of global facilities for film preservation in India. It aims to make rich filmic heritage available for the future generations to come.
- The condition of about 1,32,000 film reels at National Film Archive of India (NFAI), Pune would be assessed and necessary measures would be taken to prolong their life. Each film reel will be tracked and monitored through RFID tagging, during the first phase.

## Republic Day Parade Awards 2017 announced

- The results of different competitive presentations in the Republic Day Parade – 2017 have been announced by the Ministry of Defence.
- In Services Category, Madras Engineer Group won prize for Best Marching Contingent. In Para-Military Forces Category, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) contingent won prize for Best marching contingent.
- In the tableau category, Arunachal Pradesh tableau, which depicted the Yak dance, won first position. It was followed by Tripura's Hojagiri dance.
- In the category of tableaux representing Union Ministries/Departments, first prize has been awarded to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship which depicted the theme 'Transforming India through Skill Development'.

## Evening News Digest, 29 January 2017

### President appoints Banwarilal Purohit as Governor of Meghalaya

- President Pranab Mukherjee gave Governor of Assam, Banwarilal Purohit additional charge of Meghalaya. Besides, President also gave Governor of Nagaland, PB Acharya additional charge of Arunachal Pradesh.
- These appointments came a day after President accepted the resignation of V. Sharmuganathan as Governor of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The appointment, eligibility, tenure and other provisions related to Governor are mentioned in the Articles 156-167 of the Indian Constitution.

### India Pharma & Medical Device 2017 Conference to be organised in Bengaluru

- The Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), is organising the 'India Pharma & Medical Device 2017 Conference' in Bengaluru.
- The three-day international conference will be organised from February 11, 2017 with the vision 'For Responsible Healthcare'.
- The Themes are – 'Medical Devices- Shaping the Future-Making the Right Choices' and 'Pharma - Shaping the future of India Pharma'.
- The conference aims to provide a platform to tap global potential for the Indian Pharmaceutical and Medical Device sector and provide an opportunity to project India as an attractive investment destination for this sector.

### First ever North East "Investors Summit" inaugurated in Shillong

- The North East Investors Summit 2017, the first-of-its-kind summit for investors from North Eastern Region (NER), was inaugurated by Union Textiles Minister Smriti Zubin Irani in Shillong, Maghalaya.
- It was organised jointly by the Ministry of Textiles and the Ministry of DoNER, in collaboration with industry associations FICCI and CII from January 29-30.
- The theme of the summit is "Exploring Opportunities in North East Region". The summit aims to showcase the region as a global destination for investment, and to explore the possibility of bringing in convergence of efforts of various central ministries and north eastern states to attract investment in the region.

### Trump signs order to keep out radical Islamic terrorists

- US President Donald Trump ordered "extreme vetting" of people entering the US from several Muslim-majority countries and banned the entry of Syrian refugees until further notice. The executive order is part of new measures to "keep radical Islamic terrorists" out of America.
- The executive order "Protection of The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States" notes that the steps taken by the US in the aftermath of 9/11 has not been able to deter terrorists from entering the country.
- The executive order suspends the US Refugee Admissions Programme for 120 days until it is reinstated "only for nationals of countries for whom" members of Trumps Cabinet deem can be properly vetted.
- The total number of refugees admitted into the United States would also be capped during the 2017 fiscal year at 50,000, down more than half from the current level of 110,000.

### UNSC extends arms embargo on Central African Republic

- The UN Security Council (UNSC) has extended an arms embargo on the Central African Republic and a travel ban and asset freeze on blacklisted individuals for another year.
- The resolution also added a new provision making sexual violence a criterion for sanctions. It also encouraged member states to require that airlines provide advance passenger information to national authorities to make sure the travel ban is enforced.

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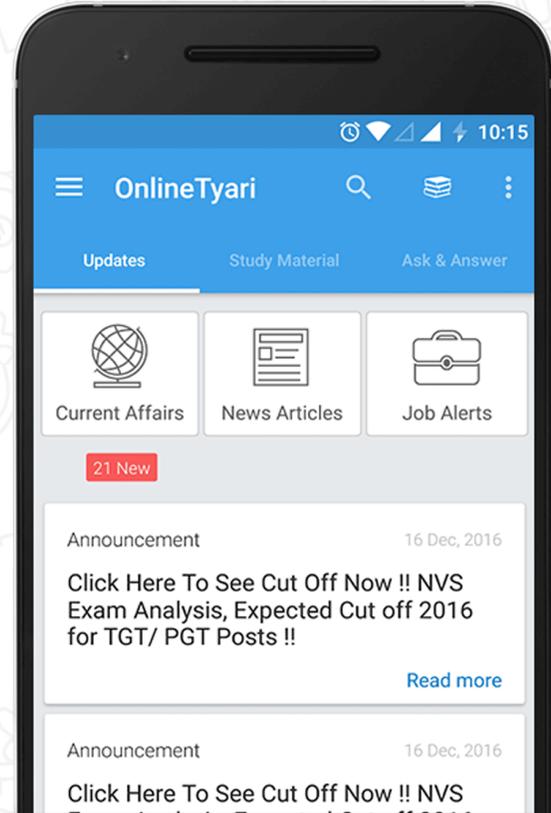
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