

MONTH OF JULY 2017

Persons in news – Appointments/Elections

K K Venugopal: President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed senior advocate and constitutional expert K K Venugopal (86) as the new Attorney General of India. He will be 15th Attorney General of India. He succeeds Mukul Rohatgi as the country's top law officer.

R K Pachnanda: Senior IPS officer R K Pachnanda took charge as the new Director General of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). He will be the 29th Chief of the ITBP.

Carrie Lam: Carrie Lam was sworn in as the first female Chief Executive (CE) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), an autonomous territory of China on the Pearl River Delta.

Achal Kumar Joti: President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed election commissioner Achal Kumar Joti as the next Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). He will be the 21st CEC and succeeded Nasim Zaidi.

Sanjay Kumar: Senior IPS officer Sanjay Kumar was appointed as Director General (DG) of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF). He will succeed R K Pachnanda who has taken charge as DG the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

Sanjiv Goenka: RP Sanjiv Goenka Group Chairman, Sanjiv Goenka, has been named as the Chairman of the Board of Governors at IIT-Kharagpur. He will serve as the Chairman for three years.

Preet Kaur Gill: Britain's first woman Sikh MP Preet Kaur Gill was elected to Home Affairs Select Committee in the UK Parliament. She will be one of 11 MPs on the cross-party home affairs committee.

TR Zeliang: Senior Naga People's Front (NPF) legislator TR Zeliang (65) was sworn in as the 19th chief minister of Nagaland. He was administered oath to office and secrecy by Governor P.B.Acharya.

Ram Nath Kovind: Former governor Ram Nath Kovind was elected as India's 14th President. He will be only the second Dalit leader after K R Narayanan since Independence to occupy India's highest ceremonial post.

Nawaz Sharif: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has resigned from his post after the Supreme Court disqualified him in the Panama Papers case. This is the third time Nawaz Sharif has been unable to complete his term in the chief executive's office.

Sports

Germany: Four-time FIFA World Cup winner Germany won maiden FIFA Confederation Cup Football title by defeating Copa America Champion Chile by 1-0 goals in the final match held at St Petersburg, Russia.

Harinder Pal Sandhu: India's Harinder Pal Sandhu has defeated Rhys Dowling of Australia 11-8 12-10 11-4 to lift South Australian Open squash title. This will be Sandhu's first PSA tournament victory in Australia.

Ravi Shastri: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has named former Indian all-rounder and captain Ravi Shastri as the new chief coach of the Indian cricket team till ICC World Cup 2019. He will succeed Anil Kumble who had resigned from the post after the ICC Champions Trophy 2017.

Mithali Raj: Indian captain Mithali Raj (34) scripted history by becoming first player in the history of women's ODI cricket to score more than 6000 career runs. She also became all-time leading run-getter in women's ODI. She achieved the record feat against Australia in the ICC Women's World Cup 2017 match at Bristol.

Sundar Singh Gurjar: India's Sundar Singh Gurjar (21) won gold medal in the men's javelin throw event at World Para Athletics Championships held in London, United Kingdom.

Harinder Pal Sandhu: India's Harinder Pal Sandhu (28) won the Victorian Open squash tournament held in Melbourne, Australia. In the final he defeated Rex Hedrick of Australia by 12-14, 11-3, 11-4 score.

Roger Federer: Switzerland's Roger Federer won 2017 Wimbledon title in the men's single category. In the final match he defeated Marin Cilic of Croatia by 6-3, 6-1, 6-4 score. It was Federer's record eighth Wimbledon title and overall 19th Grand Slam.

Karamjyoti Dalal: India's Karamjyoti Dalal has won bronze medal at the World Para Athletics Championships 2017 in the discus-throw. In the women's F55 category of discus-throw, she managed a throw of 19.02 m.

England: England's women's cricket team won 2017 ICC World Cup title by defeating India by 9 runs at Lord's Cricket Ground in London. It was England's fourth Women's World Cup title. Besides the inaugural edition in 1973, England had won the World Cup in 1993 and 2009 as well.

H S Prannoy: Ace Indian Shuttler H S Prannoy won the 2017 Yonex US Open Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament title. It was his third grand prix gold title of badminton.

Ajay Singh: India's Ajay Singh has won bronze medal in the 2017 Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships held at Kathmandu, Nepal. He got third place in 77 kgs men's junior category by lifting 143 kgs in snatch and 172 kgs in clean and jerk.

Persons in news: Died

Liu Xiaobo: China's most famous political prisoner, the Nobel laureate and democracy icon Liu Xiaobo passed away in custody following a battle with cancer. He was 61. Liu was awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for his long and non violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.

Udupi Ramachandra Rao: Internationally-renowned space scientist and former chairman of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization), Udupi Ramachandra Rao passed away in Bengaluru. Prof Rao is credited with having played an instrumental role in building up Indian satellite programmes right from nation's first satellite Aryabhata.

Yash Pal: Globally renowned physicist, academic and higher education reformer Professor Yash Pal passed away in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. He was 90. He was known for his contributions to the study of cosmic rays, as well as for being an institution-builder.

K.E. Mammen: Freedom fighter K.E. Mammen passed away due to age-related diseases in Neyyatinkara, Kerala. He was 96. He was a pacifist and adherent follower of Mahatma Gandhi

Science, Technology & Environment

Special Rhino Protection Force (SRPF): The Assam government is going to raise a new Special Rhino Protection Force (SRPF) for better protection of the one-horned rhinos in Assam.

Ebola virus disease: The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the end of the most recent outbreak of Ebola virus disease (EVD) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

World's sharpest laser: Scientists from Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) in Germany have developed the world's sharpest laser with record-breaking precision.

Kambala, bullock cart races: President Pranab Mukherjee has approved the promulgation of The Prevention of cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance, 2017 by the Governor of Karnataka in pursuance of Article 213 of Constitution. The promulgated ordinance legalises Kambala, bullock cart races and bull runs as traditional sports involving animals and exempt them from The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

Miniature versions of Saturn: Scientists from Northwestern University in the United States have created miniature versions of Saturn, complete with rings, by electrifying tiny droplets of fluids.

Gonorrhoea infection: Scientists from New Zealand for the first time have claimed that vaccine can protect against the sexually transmitted infection gonorrhoea. They have found that Men B jab vaccine originally developed to stop an outbreak of meningitis B can protect from gonorrhoea.

Zika virus: Tamil Nadu has reported its first case of Zika virus in a 27-year-old man from a village in Krishnagiri district. RT-PCR test conducted on patient's blood, urine and throat samples were found to be positive for Zika. This is second case Zika reported in India.

Juno spacecraft: NASA's unmanned spacecraft Juno has successfully peered into the Jupiter's giant storm known as the Great Red Spot. It became first space probe to complete flyby of Jupiter's Great Red Spot.

Nylon, synthetic manja banned: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed nationwide blanket ban on the use of kite strings (manja), made of nylon or any synthetic material on the grounds that it poses a threat to animals and humans.

Smallest star in universe: Scientists from University of Cambridge, UK have discovered the smallest star in the universe. It has been named as EBLM J0555-57Ab. The star was identified by SuperWASP, a planet-finding experiment run by several universities.

S-band doppler weather radar (DWR): A state-of-the-art, indigenously developed S-band doppler weather radar(DWR) of India Meteorological Department (IMD) was commissioned at Palluruthy in West Kochi, Kerala. It has been manufactured by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) based on the indigenous technology provided by ISRO.

Saraswati Supercluster: A team of Indian astronomers have identified previously unknown, extremely large supercluster of galaxies located in the direction of constellation Pisces. It has been named "Saraswati".

India's first solar powered train: Indian Railways has launched India's first solar powered diesel multiple unit (DEMU) broad gauge train. It is 1600 Horse Power (HP) train with all solar powered coaches. The train will run from Sarai Rohilla in Delhi to Farukh Nagar in Haryana.

SOHUM: The Union Ministry of Science and Technology has launched SOHUM, an indigenously developed low-cost hearing screening device for newborns. The innovative medical device has been developed by the School of International Biodesign (SIB) startup Sohumi Innovation Labs India Pvt Ltd under Department of Biotechnology (DBT) supported (SIB).

India's first Bio-CNG bus: India's largest Commercial Vehicles manufacturer Tata Motors has unveiled country's first Bio-CNG (bio-methane) bus. The bus was rolled out at the Urja Utsav, bio-energy programme, organised by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

World's first active Laser Weapons System: United States Navy successfully tested the world's first-ever active Laser Weapons System(LaWS). LaWS operates within an invisible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is absolutely silent and incredibly effective.

BharatNet project: The Union Cabinet has extended the second phase of the BharatNet project that forms the backbone for the Union government's Digital India initiative. The second phase aims at covering the remaining 1.50 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPS).

Coronal explosion on Proxima Centauri: India's first dedicated space observatory AstroSat along with other space and earth-based observatories have detected a massive coronal explosion on Proxima Centauri, sun's closest star neighbour.

Novobiocin compound: Researchers San Antonio Catholic University of Murcia, Spain have discovered novobiocin compound that could be used as a potential drug to fight the effects of a Zika virus infection. The novobiocin molecule (compound) was previously used in antibiotic drug to fend off "nosocomial" infections (those acquired inside a hospital).

World's first full-scale floating wind farm: The world's first full—scale floating wind farm is being built off the coast of Scotland in the North Sea. The wind farm, known as Hywind is a trial project which aims to bring power to 20,000 homes.

Human antibodies: Scientists for the first time have produced human antibodies in the laboratory. They have developed revolutionary technique which can help in rapid development of new vaccines to treat a wide range of infectious diseases.

Etmopterus lailae: Scientists have discovered new species of glow-in-the-dark shark living 1,000 feet below the Pacific Ocean off the coast of the northwestern Hawaiian islands. It has been named Etmopterus lailae and belongs to lanternshark family. It has an unusually large nose, weighs a little less than a kilo and measures less than a foot.

NABARD inks AMA with GCF: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has signed an Accreditation Master Agreement (AMA) with the Green Climate Fund (GCF). With this, NABARD becomes the first Indian organisation to get Direct Access Entity status of the GCF.

SurfNet: Scientists including one of Indian origin have developed new artificial intelligence (AI) software called SurfNet that can create three dimensional (3D) models from 2D photographs.

Genes of human embryos edited for first time: Scientists from Oregon Health and Science University, US for first time have successfully edited genes of human embryos to correct defective DNA that cause inherited diseases. They had used the CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology to alter human DNA in single-cell embryos, which allows specific sections of DNA to be altered or replaced.

Delhi Metro: World's first completely 'green' Metro system: The Delhi Metro Railway Corporation (DMRC) has become the world's first completely 'green' Metro system for adhering to green building norms for its residential colonies. In this regard, Delhi Metro has secured the platinum rating for adherence to green building norms for its 10 residential colonies from the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).

Methane hydrate or flammable ice: China has successfully produced natural gas from methane hydrate, also known as "flammable ice", in an experimental project in the South China Sea (SCS). As part of the experiment, a drilling platform had produced a total of 309,000 cubic metres of natural gas from gas hydrate in 60 days.

Bio-glue: Scientists have developed a super strong, flexible Bio-glue for wound healing without causing toxicity. It has been inspired by an adhesive material (glue) secreted by slugs that sticks to biological tissues.

Gelator: Scientists from the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Thiruvananthapuram have developed gelator that can suck up oil and congeal it. The gelator is hydrophobic material that has property of oleophilic (oil-loving) and takes up oil when it comes in contact with it.

Sprites: world's smallest spacecrafts: Scientists have announced that the world's smallest spacecrafts dubbed as Sprites ever launched are successfully travelling in low Earth orbit and communicating with systems on Earth. The six prototypes of Sprites were launched in June 2017 as part of the Breakthrough Starshot project designed to test technologies that would eventually be used for interstellar missions.

Events & Observances

Textiles India 2017: The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Textiles India 2017, India's first ever mega textiles trade fair at Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The three-day fair showcased the nation as a global sourcing hub and investment destination for manufacturers world-wide.

2018 Republic Day celebrations: India has planned to invite the ten leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as Chief Guests for 2018 Republic Day celebrations. This Plan has come at a time when India is engaged in a stand-off with China in the Sikkim sector.

July 11: World Population Day: The World Population Day is observed across the world on July 11 to attention on the urgency and importance of population issue. Observance of the day aims at increase people's awareness on various population issues such as the importance of family planning, maternal health, gender equality, poverty and human rights.

8th International Theatre Olympics: India for the first time will host 8th International Theatre Olympics, the greatest carnival of theatre in the world in 2018. The 51-day carnival of theatre will begin on February 17, 2018. The mega international event will be organised by the National School of Drama (NSD) in coordination with the Union Culture Ministry.

15 July: World Youth Skills Day: The World Youth Skills Day is observed globally on 15 July every year to raise awareness about the importance of investing in youth skills development. Observance of the day aims to create more awareness on training and the development of skills for the youth of today and also create better employment opportunities for the youth.

Paika Rebellion: President Pranab Mukharjee inaugurated the bicentenary (200th) celebration of Paika Rebellion (1817) of Odisha organised by the Union Ministry of Culture in New Delhi. Paika rebellion predates the 1857 Revolt i.e. first war of independence.

Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) 2017: India will host Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) 2017, the world's largest conference on cyber space and related issues in New Delhi in November 2017. This is for the first time GCCS is taking place outside Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations.

18th Kargil Vijay Diwas: The 18th anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas was celebrated across India to commemorate the success of Operation Vijay and remember brave sacrifice of Indian soldiers during the 1999 India-Pakistan Kargil War.

July 28: World Hepatitis Day: The World Hepatitis Day is being observed every year on July 28 around the world by World Health Organisation (WHO) to spread awareness about viral hepatitis. This year the theme of the Day is "Eliminate Hepatitis".

29 July: International Tiger Day: The International Tiger Day (also known as Global Tiger Day) is celebrated every year on 29 July to raise awareness for tiger conservation. The goal of observance of the day is to promote the protection and expansion of the wild tigers habitats and to gain support through awareness for tiger conservation.

Defence Related

QR-SAM: India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed quick reaction surface-to-air short range missile (QR SAM). It is an all-weather weapon system capable of tracking and firing. It has a strike range of 25 to 30 km and can engage multiple targets.

Maitree 2017: A joint military training exercise Maitree 2017 between Indian Army and Royal Thailand Army was held in Bakloh in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh. The aim of the exercise was to build and promote closer relations while exchanging skills and experiences between the two armies.

Hwasong-14: North Korea has claimed that it has successfully test-fired its first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Hwasong-14 into waters near Sea of Japan. The claim was confirmed by United States. The successful test also marks North Korea's the final step in becoming confident and powerful nuclear state that can strike anywhere on Earth.

2017 MALABAR naval Exercise: India, Japan and United States (US) navies have kicked off 2017 MALABAR trilateral naval Exercise near Chennai in Bay of Bengal. This year it is the 21st edition of the naval exercise. In this edition of the exercise, total of around 15 warships, two submarines and scores of fighter jets, surveillance aircraft and helicopters from three navies will take part.

National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA), 2018: The United States House of Representatives has passed an amendment to National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA), 2018, a \$621.5 billion defence expenditure bill to advance defence cooperation with India.

LCU Mark IV L52 ship: Indian Navy's second LCU (landing craft utility) Mark IV L52 ship built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata, was formally launched in Kolkata, West Bengal.

MRSAM defence system: The Indian Army has signed MoU with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to raise one regiment of the advanced Medium Range Surface to Air Missiles (MRSAM) defence system.

USS Gerald R Ford (CVN 78): The United States (US) Navy officially inducted USS Gerald R Ford (CVN 78), the world's largest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. It is the most advanced aircraft carrier in the world. USS Gerald Ford is first in the series of three of the futuristic ships of the Ford-class carriers ordered by US Navy.

Shachi and Shruti NOPVs: Reliance Defence and Engineering Limited (RDEL) launched the first two Naval Offshore Patrol Vessels (NOPVs) — Shachi and Shruti at their shipyard in Pipavav, Gujarat. These two NOPVs are the first warships to be launched by a private sector shipyard in India.

Muntra: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has rolled out Muntra, India's first unmanned, remotely operated tank at its Chennai lab. It has been launched in three variants Muntra-S, Muntra-M and Muntra-N for surveillance, mine detection and reconnaissance in areas with nuclear and biological threats. It is also likely to be used in Naxal-hit areas.

Finance, Business and Economy

Growth of eight core sectors: The growth of eight core sectors slowed to 3.6% in May 2017 due to fall in output of coal and fertilisers. It was 5.2% in May 2016. In April 2017, these eight sectors had recorded a growth rate of 2.8%.

NMCE, ICEX merger: National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE), India's first demutualised online national multi-commodities exchange will merge with Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX). The merged entity will create India's third biggest commodity exchange.

Global Entry programme (GEP): The United States of America (USA) has rolled out pre-approved expedited entry clearance for low-risk Indian travellers under its Global Entry programme (GEP). With this initiative, India became 11th country whose citizens are now eligible to enroll in the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) initiative.

Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI): India has been ranked 23rd out of 165 nations in the second Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) that measures the commitment of nations across the world to cyber security. The Index has been released by the UN telecommunications agency International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

Global Foreign Exchange Committee (GFXC): India will soon join Global Foreign Exchange Committee (GFXC), a newly-constituted forum of central bankers and experts working towards promotion of a robust and transparent foreign exchange (Forex) market. The committee has been set up under guidance of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), an international financial organisation.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index: India has been ranked low 116 out of 157 nations on the 2017 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Index and Dashboard report released by Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL): Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) for the first time in its trading history has crossed Rs 5 lakh crore in market capitalisation. The market cap of RIL stood at Rs 5,04,458.09 on BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange).

SBI Realty: India's largest commercial bank State Bank of India (SBI) launched SBI Realty, a dedicated portal that will help home buyers to choose flats from its 3,000 approved projects across the country.

IWAI Bonds: The Union Cabinet gave its nod to Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) to raise Rs.660 crore in bonds for extra budgetary resources (EBRs) in 2017-18.

National Trade Facilitation Action Plan (NTFAP): The Union Government released the 76 point National Trade Facilitation Action Plan(NTFAP). The plan has been adopted by the National Committee on Trade Facilitation (NCTF), reflecting Government's commitment to implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGB) Scheme: The Union Cabinet has approved revision of guidelines of Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGB) Scheme with a view to achieve its intended objectives.

Labour Code on Wages Bill: The Union Cabinet has approved the Labour Code on Wages Bill which will ensure a minimum wage across all sectors by integrating existing labour related laws.

Codex standards for spices: The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) has adopted three Codex standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin and thyme. It is for first time pepper, cumin and thyme, spices will have such universal standards. The adoption of Codex standards paves the way for universal agreement on identifying quality spices in various countries.

Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS):The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has received final nod from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to function as the Bharat Bill Payment Central Unit (BBPCU) and operate the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS).

Operational Guidelines for Planning and Implementation of Family Participatory Care: The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has released Operational Guidelines for Planning and Implementation of Family Participatory Care (FPC) for improving newborn health. The guidelines are for all stakeholders involved in the process of planning and delivering newborn care.

India: world's third-biggest exporter of beef:According to recently released OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2017 2026 report, India is the world's third-biggest exporter of beef. Brazil was ranked as the world's top beef exporter followed by Australia.

Advance Pricing Agreements: The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has entered into 9 Unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (UAPAs) with Indian taxpayers in July, 2017. With this, total number of APAs signed till date stands at 171 (Bilateral-12 and Unilateral-159).

Government Policy and Schemes

COMMIT programme: The Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pension has launched a new training programme Comprehensive Online Modified Modules on Induction Training (COMMIT) for State Government officials.

Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN): The Union Home Ministry is yet to give security clearance to the Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN), the IT backbone of the Goods and Service Tax (GST). Though the GSTN has been operational, it had not got the security clearance which is a mandatory requirement as it has private participation.

National Biopharma Mission:The Union Ministry of Science & Technology has launched National Biopharma Mission, a first ever Industry-Academia mission to accelerate biopharmaceutical development in India. Under this mission, the ministry also launched *Innovate in India (i3) program* to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the sector.

India's biggest Global Skill Park: The foundation stone of the country's biggest Global Skill Park was laid in Bhopal. The park will come up on 37 acre land allotted in Narela Shankari area of Bhopal. It will be established with the support of Singapore's Institute of Technical Education and Education Services(ITEES).

MERIT app and e-Bidding portal: Union Minister of State for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines, Piyush Goyal launched the 'MERIT app (Merit Order Despatch of Electricity for Rejuvenation of Income and Transparency)' and the e-bidding portal for offering an e-Bidding solution to States.

No-detention policy: The HRD Ministry has decided to remove the no-detention policy for students from the next academic year. Under the Right to Education Act, no child will be detained or held back in any class or expelled till the completion of elementary education covering classes 1 to 8.

Jigyasa: Jigyasa, a student- scientist connect programme has been launched by the government in New Delhi. The programme would be implemented by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in collaboration with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS).

4 digital initiatives to push e-education: President Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of Guru Purnima launched four major digital initiatives in to push e-education. They are Swayam, Swayam Prabha, National Academic Depository and National Digital Library.

Aaykar Setu: The Union Finance Ministry has launched Aaykar Setu, a new tax payer service module. The new e initiative literally means taxpayer's bridge and will be available in android phones. It compiles various tax tools, dynamic updates, live chat facility and important links to various processes within the Income Tax Department (ITD) in a single module.

Minimum educational qualifications for cooperative societies: Rajasthan has become the first State in the country to lay down the minimum educational qualifications for contesting elections to village cooperative societies and various other cooperative bodies. In this regard, state government has amended State Cooperative Societies Rules, 2003

Government e-Marketplace (GeM): 5 States and a Union Territory (UT) have formally adopted the Centre's Government e-Marketplace (GeM) initiative. They are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh and Puducherry (UT).

IRRI South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC): The Union Cabinet has approved establishment of International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) set up a regional centre International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), a global rice research institute. It will be named as IRRI South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC) and will be set up at campus of National Seed Research and Training Centre (NSRTC) in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

RailCloud: The Indian Railways has launched RailCloud, a virtual server with an inbuilt security system that will enable faster connectivity at a reduced cost. Rail Cloud works on popular Cloud Computing system.

Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC): The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) will establish India's first Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) at Patent Information Centre, Punjab.

Directorate General of Analytics and Risk Management (DGARM): The Union Government has set up Directorate General of Analytics and Risk Management (DGARM), a new wing to provide intelligence inputs taking action against tax evaders. It has been set up will be under the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC). It will also do big data analytics for taxmen for better policy formulation.

India-EU Investment Facilitation Mechanism: India and European Union (EU) have established Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM) for EU Investments in India. The mechanism will allow for a close coordination between EU and India with an aim to promote and facilitate EU investment in India.

Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES): The Union Government for the first time has given approval three infrastructure proposals to address the infrastructure problem under the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES).

National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Malaria Elimination (2017-22): The Union Health Ministry and Family Welfare for first time has unveiled National Strategic Plan (NSP) for Malaria Elimination (2017-22). It has set malaria elimination deadline as 2027, three years ahead of the global deadline.

mAadhaar App: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched 'mAadhaar', a new mobile application for syncing Aadhaar data on mobile phones. The app allows users to carry their unique Aadhaar information including name, date of birth, gender, address, and the linked photograph, on their smartphones.

Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY): The Union Finance Ministry has launched Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY), a pension scheme exclusively for senior citizens aged 60 years and above. Under this scheme, senior citizens will get a guaranteed interest of 8% for 10 years depending upon the investment made by them.

Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY): The Union Ministry of Rural Development will launch Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY), a sub-scheme under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). It aims to provide an alternative source of livelihood to members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) by facilitating them to operate public transport services in backward rural areas.

Aarambh mobile app: The Union Ministry of Rural Development launched Aarambh mobile app for performance based maintenance contracting and community contracting for maintenance of rural roads.

High-tech public transport: The NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog has approved 6 transport proposals of transport ministry exploring options to improve public transport. It includes high-tech mass rapid transportation technologies such as metrino, hyperloop, pod taxis, stadler buses, hybrid buses and freight rail road.

India Quake application: The Union Ministry of Earth Science has launched India Quake application on the occasion of its foundation day. The mobile app has been developed by the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) for automatic dissemination of earthquake parameter (location, time and magnitude) after the occurrence of earthquakes.

Sagar Vani: The Union Ministry of Earth Science has launched Sagar Vani, an integrated information dissemination system. Sagar Vani is an integrated information dissemination system that will serve the coastal community, especially the fishermen community with the advisories and alerts towards their livelihood as well as their safety at Sea.

Jiyo Parsi Publicity Phase-2: The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs has launched Jiyo Parsi Publicity Phase-2 in Mumbai, Maharashtra under the Jiyo Parsi scheme. The Jiyo Parsi Publicity Phase-2 aims at containing the declining trend of population of the Parsi community and reverses it to bring their population above the threshold level.

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG): The Executive Committee of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) in its 4th meeting has approved seven projects in the sector of sewage infrastructure, ghat development and research.

Awards

Pride of America Award: Two Indian-Americans, Adobe Chief Shantanu Narayen (54) and former US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy (39) have been chosen for prestigious Great Immigrants: The Pride of America Award 2017.

Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat: Mahesh Muralidhar Bhagwat, IPS officer from Telangana was conferred with the 2017 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report Heroes Award by the Unites States Department of State. He is third IPS officer to get this honour.

Ashwani Kumar: Former Union Minister Ashwani Kumar was conferred with the Japan's imperial decoration 'Order of the Rising Sun' award for his contribution to fostering Japan-India ties.

Miscellaneous Terms and Facts

Hebron: The UNESCO World Heritage Committee acting on a proposal brought by Palestine has put the West Bank city of Hebron on its list of world heritage in danger. This has made Israel angry and has triggered a new Israeli-Palestinian spat at the international body.

Global treaty banning nuclear weapons: The United Nations has adopted a historic global treaty banning nuclear weapons. The treaty was adopted by a vote of 122 members in favour. The Netherlands was the only country who voted against the treaty. Singapore abstained from voting.

Hamburg Action Plan: The 12th G-20 summit concluded in Germany's Hamburg city with adaptation of Hamburg Action Plan. It sets out the group's strategy for achieving strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth. The action

plan aims to address major global challenges, including climate change, harnessing digitalisation, and to contribute to prosperity and well-being.

Walled City of Ahmedabad: The 600-year-old Walled City of Ahmedabad was declared World Heritage City by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) of UNESCO after it met in Karlow, Poland. It is first Indian city get the honour. The Walled City of Ahmedabad is located on the eastern banks of Sabarmati River.

Okinoshima Island: Okinoshima Island, Japan's men-only island was declared as a UNESCO world heritage site. The island will be the 17th set of Japanese cultural assets to be granted this status and overall 21st in the list.

Maharashtra Prohibition of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2016: President Pranab Mukherjee has given his assent to Maharashtra Prohibition of People from Social Boycott (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Bill, 2016. Maharashtra is the first state in the country to formulate a law to punish social boycott. The presidential assent paves the way for the state to strictly enforce the law to deal with the scourge of social boycott with an iron hand.

India-UN Development Partnership Fund: India has contributed an additional \$1 million to India-UN Development Partnership Fund launched to support sustainable development projects across the developing world. Earlier, India had made an initial contribution of \$1 million when the fund was created.

India-Japan civil nuclear agreement: The landmark India-Japan civil nuclear agreement came into force. In this regard, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar exchanged the diplomatic notes with the Japanese envoy to India to formalise the completion of the process. The deal would enable Japan to export nuclear power plant technology as well as provide finance for nuclear power plants in India.

BRICS Taxation Cooperation Memorandum: Tax authorities of the BRICS- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have signed BRICS Taxation Cooperation Memorandum to establish a mechanism for taxation cooperation. The landmark document is the bloc's first document that elevates taxation cooperation to the institutional level.