

# MONTH OF JUNE 2017

## Persons in news – Appointments / Elections

**Shashi Shekar Vempati:** Shashi Shekar Vempati has been appointed as the CEO of Prasar Bharati based on the recommendation of the three-member committee headed by Vice President. He will hold the post for a period of five years. Since February 2016, Vempati is currently serving as a Member (part time) of the Prasar Bharati Board.

**Leo Varadkar:** Ireland's Fine Gael party has elected a 38 year old Leo Varadkar as prime minister of Ireland. He will succeed Enda Kenny. Varadkar will be confirmed as prime minister when Irish parliament next sits on June 13. Leo Varadkar has earned the distinction of becoming Ireland's first gay prime minister.

**Ganeshan Neelakanta Iyer:** Ganeshan Neelakanta Iyer has become the first Indian to be nominated as a member of the Umpires and Referees Committee (URC) by International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF). He will serve for a term of two years which is further extendable.

**Sher Bahadur Deuba:** Sher Bahadur Deuba, 70, has been elected as Nepal's Prime Minister for the fourth time. He was the only candidate who contested in the election as the main opposition party UML decided to end the obstruction of parliament and did not register its candidates for the election. Deuba managed to secure 388 votes in the 593 strong Parliament in order to prove his majority.

**Hoshiar Singh:** Hoshiar Singh, a 1994 batch officer of the Indian Telecom Service has been appointed as Registrar of Copyrights for a period of five years as per the recent order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

**Lt Col Raja "Grinder" Chari:** NASA has selected 12 new astronauts including an Indian-American, Lt Col Raja "Grinder" Chari, from 18000 applications, Lt Col Raja Grinder Chari, 39, is a commander of the 461<sup>st</sup> Flight Test Squadron as well as the director of the F-35 Integrated Test Force at Edwards Air Force Base in California. He belongs to Iowa. His father is from India.

**Preet Kaur Gill:** In a first Preet Kaur Gill has become the first Sikh to be elected to the British Parliament's House of Commons. Similarly, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhese has become the first turban-wearing Sikh to be elected to the House of Commons.

**Neeru Chadha:** Law expert Neeru Chadha has been elected to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Seas (ITLOS). With this election, she has become the first Indian woman to win a crucial election to a top UN judicial body that deals with disputes related to the law of the sea. Neeru has become the first Indian woman to be appointed as a judge at the ITLOS.

**Ram Nath Kovind:** Bihar Governor Ram Nath Kovind has been chosen by the National Democratic Alliance as its Presidential Candidate.

**Mohammed bin Salman:** Saudi Arabia's king has appointed his son Mohammed bin Salman as crown prince and heir to the throne replacing his nephew, Mohammed bin Nayef. This also means that Prince Mohammed bin Salman will become the kingdom's deputy prime minister while continuing as defence minister.

**Vladimir Voronkov:** The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has appointed Russian diplomat Vladimir Voronkov to head the newly established UN Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT), despite growing tensions between the US and Russia. The Vladimir Voronkov has been given the rank of Under-Secretary-General.

**Palbinder Kaur Shergill:** Palbinder Kaur Shergill has become the first turbaned Sikh woman to be appointed as Canada's Supreme Court judge. The announcement was made by the minister of justice and attorney general of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould.

**Mihai Tudose:** In Romania, President Klaus Iohannis has appointed outgoing economy minister Mihai Tudose as Prime Minister and thus paved the way for the formation of a new leftist Social-Democrat-led government in that country.

**Kaushik Basu:** Kaushik Basu has taken over as president of the International Economic Association (IEA). He will have three-year tenure. Kaushik Basu has served as India's chief economic adviser from 2009 to 2012. He has also served as senior vice-president and chief economist at the World Bank from 2012 to 2016.

**Dr Manoj Soni:** Dr Manoj Soni has taken Oath of Office and Secrecy as a member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The Oath was administered to him by the UPSC Chairman Prof. David R. Syiemlieh.

**Krishna R Urs:** S. President Donald Trump has appointed an Indian-American named Krishna R Urs as the new US Ambassador to Peru.

## Places in News

**Budhigandaki Hydroelectric Project:** Nepal has struck a major deal with China Gezhouba Group Corporation (CGGC) for developing a 1,200 MW Budhigandaki Hydroelectric Project, which will be the biggest hydro project in Nepal having the potential to resolve its perennial power crisis.

**Habibganj railway station:** Habibganj railway station in the suburbs of Bhopal will become country's first railway station to be redeveloped in a public-private partnership (PPP) mode. The idea is to develop Habibganj railway station as a world-class transit hub equipped with all amenities.

**Rutland Island:** The National Board of Wildlife has approved Rutland Island in South Andaman to be the site for the country's long-range missile test facility. DRDO has been seeking the approval for the test facility since 2012. Taking into account the strategic importance of the project for country's defence, the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife has approved the project.

**Kochi Metro:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated Kochi Metro, which will be Kerala's first metro line. The Construction of the Kochi Metro which was entrusted to the DMRC has been completed in a record four-year period. Prime Minister has inaugurated the first phase of the metro with 13.2 km out of the total 25 km stretch. The Kochi Metro will be the country's eighth inter-city metro rail project.

## Sports

**ESPN World Fame 100 list:** India captain Virat Kohli, former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni and left-handed batsmen, Yuvraj Singh and Suresh Raina are the only Indians who featured in ESPN's ranking of the 100 most famous active athletes in the world.

**Ramachandra Guha:** Historian Ramachandra Guha has tendered his resignation as BCCI administrator citing personal reasons. He submitted his resignation letter to Chairman of the Committee of Administrators of the BCCI Vinod Rai on May 28.

**Manika Batra, Mouma Das:** India's Manika Batra and Mouma Das have created history by becoming the first Indian pair to reach the quarterfinals of the World Table Tennis Championships.

**B Sai Praneeth:** Ace Indian Shuttler B Sai Praneeth has clinched Thailand Grand Prix Gold title by defeating Indonesia's Jonatan Christie 17-21, 21-18, 21-19 in Bangkok.

**Rohan Bopanna, Gabriela Dabrowski:** Rohan Bopanna has won his maiden Grand Slam title along with his Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski by winning the French Open mixed doubles trophy. This is Bopanna's maiden Grand Slam title at French Open.

**Jelena Ostapenko:** Unseeded Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia has lifted the the 2017 French Open Women's Singles crown. She defeated Simona Halep 4-6, 6-4, 6-3. This will be Ostapenko's first ever Grand Slam title. With this win, Ostapenko, 20, has become the first unseeded woman to win the French Open after Britain's Margaret Scriven's feat in 1933.

**Jitu Rai, Heena Sidhu:** Indian shooters Jitu Rai and Heena Sidhu have clinched the gold medal in mixed team 10m air pistol event of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup held at Gabala, Azerbaijan.

**Lewis Hamilton:** Lewis Hamilton won Canadian Grand Prix at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada. It is Hamilton's sixth victory at the Canadian Grand Prix. Previously, he had won the titles in 2007, 2010, 2012, 2015 and 2016. It is also his third victory this season and the 56<sup>th</sup> of his career.

**Virat Kohli:** India's Skipper Virat Kohli has created a record by becoming the quickest batsman to score 8000 runs in one-day international cricket beating South Africa's AB de Villier's record by seven fewer innings. He managed to cross the 8000 run mark in his 175th innings during India's match against Bangladesh in ICC Champion's Trophy semi-final in Birmingham.

**Kidambi Srikanth:** India's Kidambi Srikanth has lifted the Indonesia Open Super Series badminton title at Jakarta by defeating Japan's Kazumasa Sakai in straight sets 21-11, 21-19.

**Imran Khawaja:** The International Cricket Council (ICC) has appointed Imran Khawaja as its deputy chairman. Imran Khawaja is Chairman of Associates counties and a veteran administrator from Singapore.

**Kidambi Srikanth:** The world No.11 Kidambi Srikanth has sealed his second successive Super Series win by defeating reigning Olympic champion Chen Long in the Australian Open summit clash in Sydney.

**Yashaswini Singh Deswal, Anish Bhanwala:** Indian shooters Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Anish Bhanwala has bagged gold in the Women's 10m Air Pistol and Men's 25m Standard Pistol competition respectively in the Junior World Rifle/Pistol Championship held in Germany.

**Srinivas Gokulnath, Amit Samarth:** Nashik's army doctor Srinivas Gokulnath and Nagpur's doctor Amit Samarth have created history by becoming the first Indians to complete the 4,900-km Race Across America (RAAM) in the solo 18-59 age category.

**Rajeev Shukla Committee:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has constituted a special seven-member committee to analyse the few contentious Lodha panel reforms which are being opposed by the state units. The seven member Lodha committee has been formed under the head of Rajeev Shukla.

## Persons in news: Died

**Cingireddi Narayana Reddy:** Renowned Telugu poet and writer Cingireddi Narayana Reddy has passed away. In 1992, Reddy was awarded the country's third-highest civilian honour, Padma Bhushan. In 1977, he was awarded the Padma

**Shri. Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati** Former Chief Justice of India Prafullachandra Natwarlal Bhagwati who is considered as a pioneer of Judicial Activism has passed away. He was 95 years old. Justice Bhagwati had introduced the concepts of Public Interest Litigation (PIL) and absolute liability to the Indian judicial system.

**Helmut Kohl:** Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who is hailed as the father of German unification has passed away. He was responsible for unifying Germany after the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall despite facing stiff resistance from Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev.

## Science, Technology & Environment

**NASA's Parker Solar Probe:** NASA's Parker Solar Probe will be launched in the summer of 2018 to explore the sun's atmosphere. The purpose of the launch will be to study sun's outer atmosphere and to understand how sun works. The name of the probe initially called the Solar Probe Plus has been renamed as the Parker Solar Probe in honor of astrophysicist Eugene Parker. This is the first time NASA has named a spacecraft after a living person.

**US withdraws from Paris Accord:** President Donald Trump has announced that the United States is set to withdraw from the historic 2015 Paris Accord as the accord was hurting his country and economy very badly. However, he has said that he is open for a "new transaction" on terms that are fair to the US.

**India's First Automatic Coastal Warning for Disasters to come up in Odisha:** From July, Odisha will commission the ambitious Early Warning Dissemination System(EWDS) to warn the vast population residing along its 480 km-long coast in the event of the occurrence of natural disasters like a tsunami or a cyclone. Andhra Pradesh is also reportedly developing such system to alert the people in case of natural calamities.

**AmbuSens:** Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur has developed a wireless technology called 'AmbuSens' for remote monitoring of condition of those patients who are ferried in ambulances. It will help in wireless monitoring of various physiological conditions of patients who are ferried in ambulances. The AmbuSens system includes both hardware and software.

**Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer:** NASA is all set to launch the world's first ever mission devoted for studying neutron stars. NASA will launch the Neutron Star Interior Composition Explorer, or NICER, aboard a Falcon 9 rocket. The NICER will be installed aboard the International Space Station (ISS) as an external attached payload.

**Terrier-Improved Malemute sounding rocket:** NASA launched the Terrier-Improved Malemute sounding rocket into the space that released blue-green and red artificial clouds. The launch is expected to support space studies.

**World's first hybrid 'aeroboat':** The world's first hybrid 'aeroboat' which has been built by an Indo-Russian joint venture has been unveiled at a start-ups event organized by Russia's state-run Skolkovo Foundation. The aeroboat is capable of travelling on land, water, snow and sand.

**KELT-9b: Hottest Known Planet in Universe:** Scientists have discovered the hottest known exoplanet, designated KELT-9b which is warmer than most stars in the universe. The study has been published in the journal Nature.

**WHO protocol for antibiotics:** With an aim to curb antibiotic resistance, the World Health Organization (WHO) has revised the protocol for antibiotics. This revision is the biggest such revision of the antibiotics section in the 40-year history of the essential medicines list (EML).

**May 2017: Second hottest month in 137 years:** According to NASA, May 2017 was the second hottest month in a span of 137 years when modern record-keeping of average global temperatures had commenced. The temperature of May 2017 was 0.88 degrees Celsius warmer than the mean May temperature from 1951-1980.

**Orion Spacecraft:** NASA's Orion Spacecraft which has been designed to carry astronauts to deep space destinations like Moon and Mars has successfully carried out a series of tests to test its critical safety systems.

**James Webb Space Telescope:** Mission officials for NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) have announced the initial science targets for the James Webb Space Telescope.

**Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM):** ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM) completes 1000 earth days in orbit. The orbiter has outlived its lifespan which is more than 5 times the number of days the orbiter was designated to last in orbit.

**Environmental Impact Survey:** India has been ranked 75th out of 102 countries in a list that ranks the countries in terms of the human impact on environment per person. The ranking has been done by MoneySuperMarket, a UK-based financial services website.

**Energy Conservation Building Code 2017:** Minister of State for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines has launched the Energy Conservation Building Code 2017 (ECBC 2017). This updated version of the Code prescribes the energy performance standards for new commercial buildings to be constructed across India.

**Kepler Telescope:** NASA's Kepler Telescope has identified 10 Earth-like planets outside the solar system that are expected to host life due to their right size and temperature. This finding is a boost in the hope for life elsewhere.

**Cartosat-2 Satellite:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched earth observation satellite Cartosat-2 series weighing 712 kg and 30 nano-satellites using Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

**World's First Train that runs on Virtual Tracks:** China has unveiled world's first train that runs on a virtual track making use of sensor technology instead of metal rails. The new trains are non-polluting as they are battery powered.

**Roll-Out Solar Array (ROSA):** NASA is testing the effectiveness of a flexible solar array, the Roll-Out Solar Array, or ROSA, on space station for the very first time. ROSA is expected to one day power satellites and spacecraft. NASA had earlier tested the ROSA technology in vacuum chambers on the Earth but this is the first time it is testing the technology in space.

**KalamSat: World's Lightest Satellite:** NASA has launched world's lightest satellite weighing only 64 grams designed by 18-year-old boy Rifath Sharook from Tamil Nadu. The tiny satellite has been named as KalamSat after the former President APJ Abdul Kalam. The tiny satellite was launched into space on a sounding rocket from NASA's facility in Wallops Island.

**Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT):** Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT) is the world's biggest telescope which would facilitate astronomers to observe the intricacies of the universe from earth. It is a multi-million dollar project being developed by an international consortium of Five countries including India. The other four countries are Canada, China, Japan and the US.

**Mars rover Opportunity:** NASA's Mars rover Opportunity has found rocks at the edge of Endeavour Crater that might have been a lake of liquid water. The scientists believe that the rocks were either transported by a flood or eroded in place by the wind.

**Petya Ransomware:** Petya Ransomware is part of a new wave of cyber-attacks and has infected computer servers across the world. It is similar to the Wannacry ransomware. However, it is a variation of the WannaCry cyber-attack. It follows the WannaCry's pattern and locks up the computer data and cripples the Enterprise services in the corporate sector.

**GSAT-17 communication Satellite:** ISRO has successfully launched GSAT-17 communication Satellite onboard the Ariane-5 launch vehicle from the Guiana Space Center at French Guiana on June 28. GSAT-17 will be the ISRO's third satellite that is launched within a span of three months.

**SIERRA ODC building:** SIERRA ODC building has been recognised as the world's second highest ranking Green Building. The building has scored 103 points out of 110 under LEED certification.

## Events & Observances

**5 June: World Environment Day:** Every year World Environment Day (WED) is observed on 5 June to raise global awareness worldwide for the protection of our environment and the planet Earth. It is the single largest celebration of our environment each year. The celebration of the day is a global initiative of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

**June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought:** The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought is observed every year on June 17 to promote public awareness to combat desertification. The United Nations General Assembly(UNGA) had designated June 17 as the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought in 1994.

**June 21: International Yoga Day:** June 21st is annually celebrated as International Yoga Day since the year 2015. This year, the 3rd International Day of Yoga is being observed. The purpose of the yoga day is to promote yoga and make it as a part of people's daily routine.

**Centenary Celebrations of Sabarmati Ashram:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the centenary celebrations of Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. The ashram is located on the banks of the River Sabarmati. It had once served as one of the residences of Mahatma Gandhi for twelve long years.

**Sharjah: 2017 World Book Capital:** UNESCO has named Sharjah as the World Book Capital for 2019. Sharjah was chosen for its efforts to make books accessible to its entire population. It was selected to underline the efforts taken by it to make books accessible for reading to as many people as possible, especially the marginalised populations.

## Defence Related

**Prithvi-II missile:** The land version of the short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile Prithvi-II was successfully test fired from a defence base off Odisha coast. The test was conducted by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) of the Indian Army with logistics support from DRDO.

**AUSINDEX:** Indian warships have reached Australia's port city of Freemantle to take part in a week-long naval exercise off the Western Australian coast. Australia-India (AUSINDEX) was first conducted off the East Coast of India in September 2015. AUSINDEX-17 will be the second overall bilateral drill between Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy.

**Anti-tank 'Nag' missile:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test fired anti tank 'Nag' missile in Rajasthan. The test was conducted by Scientists of the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Missile Complex at Hyderabad, Defence Laboratory at Jodhpur, High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) at Pune and Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE) at Pune.

**Pact on F-16 fighter plane:** Lockheed Martin and India's Tata Advanced Systems have signed a pact to produce F-16 fighter planes in India. The two companies have announced their agreement at the Paris Airshow. Lockheed Martin's move to forge a joint venture with Tata is aimed at winning billions of dollars worth order from the Indian military.

**Reliance-Yugoimport Defence deal:** Anil Ambani's Reliance Defence Ammunition which is a subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure has entered into a strategic partnership with Serbia's state-run Yugoimport to manufacture ammunition in India. The joint venture is expected to target business opportunities worth Rs 20,000 crore from Indian armed forces in the next 10 years.

**Floating Dock (FDN-2):** Larsen & Toubro has launched the first indigenously built Floating Dock (FDN-2) to repair Indian Navy ships at its Shipyard at Kattupalli, north of Chennai. The floating shipyard would be handed over to the Indian Navy after conducting three to four months of trial.

**Guardian drones:** The United States has cleared the sale of the state-of-the-art Guardian 22 unmanned Guardian drones to India. The deal to sell UAV drones to India is estimated to be worth \$2 to \$3 billion. Though the deal has been approved by the State Department, an official announcement regarding the deal is yet to be announced.

**Sahayak System:** Indian Army is considering doing away with the colonial-era Sahayak System and considers recruiting civilian staff in peace stations. The Indian Army's move comes in the wake of rising cases of jawans coming out openly against the Sahayak system. Some jawans have accused of being treated as servants by their attached officers.

**C-17 transport aircraft:** US has decided to sell one C-17 transport aircraft to India. US and India have built a close defence relationship in recent years. The US along with Russia and Israel has emerged as a top three arms supplier to India.

## Finance, Business and Economy

**China: Fastest emerging economy:** As per the data released by the Ministry of Statistics, India registered 7.1% growth in the financial year 2016-17, which is slower than the 8% registered in 2015-16. In the fourth quarter of 2016-17, India registered a growth of GDP growth of 6.1% compared with China's 6.9% in the same period. Hence, India has lost its fastest-growing major economy tag in the fourth quarter of 2016-17.

**Airtel, Telenor Merger:** Bharti Airtel has stated that it has got approvals from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) for the proposed scheme of merger with Telenor (India) Communications Private Ltd.

**Uday Kotak Committee:** Market Regulator SEBI has formed a Committee on Corporate Governance under the chairmanship of Uday Kotak, the executive vice chairman and managing director of Kotak Mahindra Bank. The move is aimed at improving the standards of corporate governance of listed companies.

**World Bank's Global Economic Prospects:** The World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (GEP) has projected a growth rate of 7.2% for India in the financial year 2017 as against 6.8% growth in 2016. Also, the bank in its report expects India's growth rate to remain at 7.5% in 2018 and 7.7% in 2019.

**Global Retail Development Index (GRDI):** The 2017 Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) titled 'The Age of Focus' has placed India at the top position among 30 developing countries on ease of doing business in the retail sector. This is the 16th edition of the Global Retail Development Index (GRDI).

**World Investment Report 2017:** According to UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2017, India continues to remain as a favourite destination for FDI even though tax related concerns remain as a deterrent for the foreign investors. According to the report, the favourite destinations for FDI are the US, China and India.

**Options Trading in Commodity Futures:** SEBI has allowed options trading on futures contract of commodities. However, the capital market regulator has allowed the commodity derivatives exchanges to initially launch options on futures of only one commodity.

**World's largest refinery and petrochemical complex:** The Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies, Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum has have signed the joint venture agreement to jointly set up the world's largest refinery and petrochemical complex in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra.

**India is Top Remittance Receiving Country:** According to the 'One Family at a Time' study conducted by the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Indians working across the world had sent home USD 62.7 billion in 2016 making India the top remittance-receiving country surpassing China.

**India Infrastructure Fund:** China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved \$150 million equity investment loan to the India Infrastructure Fund. This loan will be the bank's first equity investment to fund private projects.

**Global Innovation Index 2017:** In the Global Innovation Index 2017, co-authored by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), India has moved up 6 places to reach 60<sup>th</sup> place among 130 countries emerging as the top-ranked economy in Central and South Asia. This is the 10th edition of the Global Innovation Index 2017 (GII).

**EU slaps Google with 2.42 billion euros Fine:** The European Union's competition watchdog has fined Google a record 2.42 billion euro for breaching the anti-trust rules by illegally favouring its shopping service. The European Commission regulates EU competition rules.

## Government Policy and Schemes

**T-Wallet:** Telangana has launched a digital wallet named T-Wallet for people to make public and private financial transactions. This is first such initiative by any state government in the country.

**Vatsalya – Maatri Amrit Kosh:** Government has inaugurated the 'Vatsalya – Maatri Amrit Kosh', a National Human Milk Bank and Lactation Counselling Centre at the Lady Hardinge Medical College (LHMC) in New Delhi. This centre would be the largest public sector human milk bank and lactation counselling centre available in North India

**India's first Rural LED Street Lighting Project to be implemented in Andhra Pradesh:** Government will retrofit 10 lakh conventional street lights with LED lights in Gram Panchayats of 7 districts in Andhra Pradesh. The project will be carried out by the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) functioning under the Ministry of Power. This project will be the first rural LED street lighting project under the Government of India's Street Lighting National Project (SLNP).

**Selfie with Daughter App:** The President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has launched a mobile Application 'Selfie with Daughter' at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The App is aimed at raising awareness among people about female foeticide and sex selection.

**SATH-'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human capital':** NITI Aayog has launched SATH-'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human capital' with the State Governments for furthering the agenda of cooperative federalism.

**Tele-Law initiative:** The Ministry of Law and Justice has launched the 'Tele-Law' initiative in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to provide legal aid services to the marginalized communities and citizens living in rural areas through the Common Service Centres (CSC) at the panchayat level, spread across the country.

**Mission Retro-Fitment:** Minister of Railways Suresh Prabhu has launched Mission Retro-Fitment to enhance the passenger experience by upgrading the existing fleet of coaches

**Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS):** The Union cabinet has approved the Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS) for farmers for the year 2017-18. The objective of the scheme is to make available agricultural credit for Short Term crop loans at an affordable rate. The scheme is expected to boost agricultural productivity and production in the country.

**Celebrating Yoga mobile app:** Minister for Science & Technology Dr. Harshvardhan has launched a Mobile App “Celebrating Yoga”. The Mobile App has been developed by Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science & Technology. The aim of app is to popularise Yoga and encourage people to practice yoga for a scientifically healthy living.

**Anti-profiteering authority:** The GST Council headed by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley comprising of state finance ministers as members have decided to set up a five-member anti-profiteering authority to decide on levying the penalty if businesses do not pass on the benefit of price reduction to consumers under GST regime. The GST Council has also approved the anti-profiteering rules.

**TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) Convention:** India has become the 71st nation to join the United Nations TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers) Convention. India’s decision to join the convention is part of its multi-modal transport strategy that aims at integrating Indian economy with global and regional production networks through better connectivity.

**Operation Swarn (‘gold’):** Concerned over the complaints received from the public over the premium trains of Indian Railways like Rajdhani and Shatabdi Express, Railways have decided to launch “Operation Swarn (‘gold’)“. The operation is aimed at improving the services in these premium trains.

**India’s largest municipal bond programme:** Union Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu has launched India’s largest municipal bond programme. The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) became the first municipal corporation in the country to tap money through municipal bonds in 14 years. The AA+ rated PMC’s municipal bonds raised Rs 200 crore at 7.59 per cent rate at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). This is the first-ever mobilisation of debt capital by a municipal corporation on the BSE BOND platform.

**Uttarakhand and Haryana Declared Open Defecation Free States:** Under the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM G), rural Uttarakhand and rural Haryana have been declared as the 4th and 5th Open Defecation Free (ODF) States of India. Already, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, have been declared ODF.

**Incubation Centre for biotechnology start-ups:** NITI-Aayog has chosen the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad for hosting the Rs. 10-crore Atal Incubation Centre for biotechnology start-ups.

**VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty scheme:** Department of Science and Technology has launched VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty scheme that enables NRIs and overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India.

**Merit Order Despatch of Electricity for Rejuvenation of Income and Transparency (MERIT):** Union Minister of State for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines Piyush Goyal has launched Weather Portal for Power Sector & Web Portal ‘MERIT’ (Merit Order Despatch of Electricity for Rejuvenation of Income and Transparency).

**City Liveability Index:** The Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu has launched its first liveability index which will rank the country’s 116 major cities on the basis of the quality of life. The index named ‘City Liveability Index’ will cover cities with a population above one million, including the capital cities

**Skill India mission:** The World Bank has cleared a USD 250-million loan to aid the Skill India mission. The loan amount would be used for making Indian youth more employable through reskilling. The mission will be a six-year programme in support of National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (2017-23).

**K. Kasturirangan Panel:** The HRD ministry has constituted a new nine-member panel headed by space scientist K Kasturirangan to frame a new National Education Policy (NEP). The other members of the panel include chosen experts and educationists from wide-ranging backgrounds.

**Blood Bank for Cattle:** Odisha is set to become the first state in the country to open a blood bank for cattle. The proposal has received the nod from the National Agriculture Development Programme (NADP). It is now awaiting the approval from the state government.

**Voter Registration Reminder:** The Election Commission of India has joined hands with Facebook to launch nationwide voter registration reminder aimed at reminding eligible Indian voters to register themselves on the electoral rolls.

## Awards

**Vizianagaram:** The Ministry of Rural Development has selected Vizianagaram as one among the 17 districts for MGNREGA annual award. The award was given to Vizianagaram for its effective implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act during the time period 2015-16.

**J P Nadda:** Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda was conferred the WHO Director-General's Special Recognition Award for global tobacco control. The award was presented to him by Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia at the 'National Consultation on Accelerating Implementation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) for achievement of SDGs'.

**Project Jal Sanchay:** 'Project Jal Sanchay', a water conservation model which is successfully adopted in Nalanda district of south-central Bihar, has been chosen for the national award for excellence in the Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee programme (MGNREGP) by the Ministry of Rural Development.

**David Grossman:** Israeli author David Grossman has won the Man Booker International Prize for his novel "A Horse Walks Into a Bar". He is the first Israeli author to win the Man Booker International Prize.

**Yeshe Dorjee Thongshi:** The Bhupen Hazarika National Award, 2017 has been conferred upon the noted writer Yeshe Dorjee Thongshi. The award has been instituted by Sarhad, a Maharashtra-based organisation. The award honours an outstanding literary work at national and international level. The award consists of 51,000 rupees, a memento and a certificate.

**Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute:** Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Pune has become the first recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for outstanding contribution to promotion and development of Yoga.

**Nisha Dutt:** Nisha Dutt, Chief Executive Officer of Intellectap has become the first Indian woman leader to have been honoured with the "Social Entrepreneur of the Year" award at The 7th Asian Awards in London. Nisha Dutt has been honoured in recognition of her work in making Intellectap a globally known enterprise that focuses on social capital.

**Mamata Banerjee:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has received the highest prize in United Nations Public Service Award for the state government's Kanyashree Prakalpa (Girl Child) scheme in The Hague, Netherlands.

## Miscellaneous Terms and Facts

**Astana Summit of SCO:** India and Pakistan's admission to the China-backed Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO) was formalised at the SCO's summit held in Astana, Kazakhstan from 8-9 June. The summit completed the admission procedures of both countries.

**Global Peace Index 2017:** India ranked 137th in the Global Peace Index 2017, which ranks 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness. In Last year's index, India was ranked 141st. The index is compiled every year by the Sydney-based think tank Institute for Economics and Peace.

**One Million Dollar Fund:** The Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping has established a one million dollar fund for boosting media cooperation in the five-nation grouping.

**Kambala:** The Union Ministry of Law and Justice has cleared the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals(Karnataka Amendment) Bill 2017, and thus legalising kambala. The bill will now be sent to the President for getting his assent.

**Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017:** The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to introduce a Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill, 2017 which will provide a comprehensive resolution framework for financial sector entities to deal with bankruptcy situation in banks, insurance companies, and other entities.

**India re-elected to ECOSOC:** India has won its re-election to the UN's principal organ on economic, social and environmental issues for another three-year term. India was one among the 18 nations to win election to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

**Taj Mahal Palace gets image trademark:** Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel has acquired an 'image trademark' under the Trademark Act of 1999, making it is the first building in the country to acquire intellectual property rights protection for its architectural design.

**UN tax fund:** India has contributed \$ 100,000 to the UN Trust Fund for International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the UN Tax Fund). The fund is aimed at helping the developing countries to actively participate in the discussion of tax issues. India has also earned the distinction of becoming the first country to make a voluntary contribution to the UN tax fund.