

CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : MAY 2017**STATE****Goa bans thin Plastic bags**

The Goa State government has decided to ban buying and selling of plastic bags below 50 microns. Goa has already banned the use of plastic bags below 40 microns.

The ban will come to effect from July onwards. Initially, violators of the ban will be asked to pay a fine of Rs. 500 and subsequently the fine amount would be raised to Rs 5000 depending upon the initiative's success. The move of the government is aimed at tackling the menace of garbage and litter in public places. Thin plastic bags tends to cause flooding by chocking the drains and are easily carried by wind and water in flood planes thus increasing the flooding of public places during rains. The state government also plans to simultaneously collect garbage dumped on highways to increase the cleanliness in the tourist state.

Madhya Pradesh becomes first state to shift financial year to Jan-Dec format

Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to shift its financial year from the present April-March cycle to January-December. The state's budget session for the next financial year would be held in December-January. Hence, the state government plans to finish the current budget proceedings by December this year.

Shifting of the financial year format to January-December would require shifting of the tax assessment year. It also necessitates changes to be made in infrastructure especially at the level of companies. The decision of the Madhya Pradesh state government comes in the backdrop of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestion of shifting the fiscal year to January-December period during NITI Aayog governing council meeting on April 23 held at New Delhi. He had reasoned that as agricultural income is exceedingly important, budgets need to be prepared immediately after the receipt of agricultural incomes for the year.

India's first bio refinery inaugurated in Pune

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highway Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the country's first bio refinery plant which produces ethanol from variety of biomass. The project is situated at Rahu in Pune district. Gadkari said a great revolution will take place in India's agriculture sector with the help of this kind of projects.

The plant can produce one million Litre of ethanol per annum by processing a variety of agro-residue like rice and wheat straw, cotton stalk, cane trash, corn cobs with superior product yields. Bio-refineries can help in utilizing the optimum energy potential of organic wastes and may also resolve the problems of waste management and GHGs emissions. Wastes can be converted, through appropriate enzymatic/chemical treatment, into either gaseous or liquid fuels. The pre-treatment processes involved in bio-refining generate products like paper-pulp, HFCS, solvents, acetate, resins, laminates, adhesives, flavor chemicals, activated carbon, fuel enhancers, undigested sugars etc. which generally remain untapped in the traditional processes. India has a tremendous biomass potential which could easily be relied upon to fulfil most of our energy needs. An estimated 50 MMT (million metric tonnes) of liquid fuels are consumed annually in India, but with the actual biomass potential and its full utilization, India is capable of generating almost double that amount per annum.

Government declares entire Assam as 'disturbed' area

The Centre has declared the entire Assam as a "disturbed" area under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act -- the AFSPA -- for three more months, citing various violent activities by insurgent groups ULFA, NDFB and others.

In a gazette notification, the Home Ministry said the entire Assam, besides bordering areas of Meghalaya, have been declared "disturbed" under the AFSPA for three months with effect from May 3. The ministry said there were 75 incidents of violence in Assam in 2016 in which 33 people, including four security personnel, were killed and 14 others were abducted. Besides, there were nine violent incidents in the state

in which four people, including two security personnel, were killed in 2017. The violence was perpetrated by insurgent groups like ULFA, NDFB and others, the ministry said. The AFSPA has been continuing in Assam since November 1990. In another gazette notification, the ministry declared three districts of Arunachal Pradesh - Tirap, Changlang and Longding - besides areas falling under 16 police stations bordering Assam as "disturbed" area under the AFSPA for three more months.

NATIONAL

Darwaza Band campaign launched

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has launched a nation wide campaign titled 'Darwaza Band' to promote toilet use and freedom from open defecation across the villages of the country. The campaign has been launched in Maharashtra in the presence of actor Amitabh Bachchan, Union Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Narendra Singh Tomar, and Chief Minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis. The campaign will run under the Swachh Bharat Mission. The campaign will be rolled out immediately across the country. Darwaza Band symbolically stands for shutting the door on open defecation. The campaign is supported by the World Bank. The campaign envisages to bring about a behaviour change in men who have toilets but are not using them. Actress Anushka Sharma is also part of the campaign who will encourage women to stand up for this issue and assume leadership roles in their villages. The basic objective is to provide sanitation facilities to every family, including toilets, solid and liquid waste disposal systems, village cleanliness, and safe and adequate drinking water supply by 2nd October, 2019.

Public Affairs Index 2017

Kerala and Tamil Nadu have secured first and second rankings for the second consecutive year in public affairs index (PAI) released by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bengaluru.

Gujarat has been ranked third followed by Karnataka and Maharashtra at the fourth and fifth position respectively in governance indicators. The last four positions among the large states has been occupied by Bihar (18th), Jharkhand (17th), Odisha (16th) and Assam (15th). Among the 12 small states which have

been categorised as small as they have population less than two crore, Himachal Pradesh has been ranked first followed by Goa and Mizoram. Delhi which occupied third position in 2016 index has slipped to ninth position in 2017. The last four positions among small states have been occupied Meghalaya (12th), Arunachal Pradesh (11th) and Jammu and Kashmir (10th). The survey was carried out based on 10 themes, 26 focus subjects and 82 indicators. The report was based on the following themes: essential infrastructure, support to human development, social protection, women and children, crime, law and order, delivery of justice, environment, transparency and accountability, fiscal management and economic freedom.

Government bans sale of Cattle for slaughter

The Ministry of Environment and Forests have come up with new regulations that bans the sale of cattle for slaughter. The central regulation for cow protection has been notified at the backdrop of rising cases of violence against cow traders by Hindu vigilante groups. The rules have been notified under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act of 1960. Slaughter of cows are banned in most parts of the country except parts of the north-east India and Kerala. The new rules will be implemented in the next three months.

Across India, the cattle trade is permitted only among farm land owners. Cattle can be only sold to a person possessing documents that he is an agriculturist. As per the new regulations, cattle bought cannot be resold within six months. Young and unfit animals cannot be traded. Animal markets cannot be set up within 50 km of an international border and 25 km of a state border. Transporting cattle outside of the country will require special approval of the state government nominee. All animal markets has to run with the approval of district animal market committee to be headed by a magistrate. The committee will also have two representatives from government-approved animal welfare groups. The new regulations prescribes around 30 norms for animal welfare in markets like that of water, fans, bedding, ramps, non-slippery flooring, veterinary facility and separate enclosure for sick animals etc. The owner of the animal has to bear the cost of its upkeep in a shelter. In case, the owner is unable to pay, the cost would be recovered as land arrears. The state government will specify the costs every year on April 1.

Prime Minister inaugurates country's longest bridge in Assam

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated India's longest river bridge - the Dhola-Sadia Bridge in Assam. He has also renamed the bridge as Bhupen Hazarika Bridge. The construction of the bridge began in 2011. The cost of the project is about Rs 2056 crores.

Dhola-Sadia Bridge is a three lane bridge stretching 9.15 kilometre built over river Lohit, which is a tributary of the Brahmaputra river. The bridge was built by Navayuga Engineering Co. Ltd. The Dhola-Sadiya bridge is 3.55 km longer than the Bandra-Worli Sea Link in Mumbai which is the longest bridge in the country as of now. The bridge will connect Sadia, which is 540 Km from Guwahati and Dhola, situated 300 Km from Itanagar. The bridge has been designed to withstand the weight of 60-tonne battle tanks. This will be the only bridge in the region that will be strong enough to withstand the travel of tanks to Tinsukia, a place from where Indian troops usually enter Arunachal. Road connectivity between Dhola to Sadia will boost overall economic development of the areas north of Brahmaputra in upper Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The bridge fills a huge connectivity gap that existed in the north east region.

Union Cabinet approves abolition of Foreign Investment Promotion Board

The Union Cabinet approved winding up of the 25-year-old Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), which has been vetting FDI proposals requiring government approval.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his Budget speech on February 1 had announced the scrapping of the inter-ministerial body, which comes under the ministry's Department of Economic Affairs. FIPB will be replaced by a new mechanism under which the proposals will be approved by the ministries concerned as per the standard operating procedure approved by the Cabinet. On the proposals pending with FIPB, he said they will go back to the ministries concerned. FIPB was constituted under the Prime Minister's Office following economic liberalisation in the early 1990s. Currently, only 11 sectors, including defence and retail trading, require government approval for foreign direct investment (FDI). The FDI proposals above Rs 5,000 crore would continue to be cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs. Inflow of foreign direct investment into India increased by 9 per cent to \$43.48 billion in 2016-17.

Union Cabinet launches Swachh Bharat App

Indian government has launched the Android app for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Movement) in National Museum. The 'Swachh Bharat App' has been launched by the Minister of State for Culture & Tourism Mahesh Sharma. The main focus of this 'Swachh Bharat App' is to involve people actively to become part of the clean India movement.

The app can be downloaded from Google Play Store. In this app, the concept of physical web is implemented. When you are in the monument or Museum it will deliver you the message about Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and ask you to report the garbage around you. All you need is to enable the Bluetooth of your mobile device. Even if you did not have the App installed then also you can deliver the message by Google about the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, which will give you the link to install the app. Once you start the app it will ask to take photograph of the garbage and write the comment and submit. It will be reported to the authority on the backend.

Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Sanchar Kaushal Vikas Pratisthan Scheme launched

The Minister of State for Communications Manoj Sinha has launched three new initiatives, namely, BSNL's satellite phone service; Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Telecom Skill Excellence Award Scheme & Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Sanchar Kaushal Vikas Pratisthan Scheme.

BSNL's satellite phone service will be offered in a phased manner. In the first phase, the service will be extended to the government agencies handling a disaster, state police, railways, Border security forces and other government agencies. In the subsequent phases, the phone service would be offered to those people who are travelling in flight and ships. Global satellite phone service is modern satellite phone service. Under Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Sanchar Kaushal Vikas Pratisthan Scheme, the ministry will impart training to 10,000 people from 10 States/UTs in the first phase. States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha, Punjab and Haryana will get benefitted in the first phase. Further, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) plans to establish more than 1,000 Sanchar Kaushal Vikas Pratisthan in future. In addition, a new award called Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Telecom Skill Excellence Award has been instituted to recognize achievers and talents in Telecom sector.

Prime Minister launches Narmada Seva Mission for Conservation of Narmada

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Narmada Seva Mission for the conservation of river Narmada, which is a lifeline of Madhya Pradesh. Prime Minister released a road map for the series of steps to be taken for the conservation of Narmada river. The roadmap envisaging the conservation efforts has been taken after wide-ranging consultations with various stakeholders, including environmentalists, river conservation experts among others. The event was held at Amarkantak in Anoopur district of Madhya Pradesh. The event also marked the conclusion of 'Namami Devi Narmade Sewa Yatra'.

Namami Devi Narmade Sewa Yatra was launched on December 11, 2016 from Amarkantak, the origin place of the River Narmada. The yatra covered a distance of 3,344 km and passing through over 1,100 villages and towns and concluded on May 15, 2017. The yatra is hailed as as the world's "biggest river conservation campaign with public participation." The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recently has found out in the Narmada river at least in three stretches water quality is not even fit for bathing. The Madhya Pradesh state government in its budget estimate for 2016-17 has allocated Rs 2095.31 for the Narmada valley development. In the state more than 700 Narmada seva committees and over 74000 Narmada sevaks have registered to protect the river.

Prime Minister to attend UN Vesak Day Celebrations in Sri Lanka

Prime Minister Modi will travel to Sri Lanka to attend the Buddhist festival 'Vesak Day' (Buddha Jayanti) that commemorates birth, enlighten and death of Buddha. This will be Prime Minister Modi's second visit to Sri Lanka since becoming the Prime Minister. 'International Day of Vesak' celebrations will be held in Colombo from May 12 to 14. As a part of the celebrations, International Buddhist Conference will be held in which over 400 delegates from more than 100 countries will participate. Vesak is the most important day in the Buddhist calendar. This is the first time Sri Lanka will host the festival.

The Buddhist link between India and Sri Lanka dates back to 2nd century BC. During the reign of Emperor Ashoka, Buddhism was made as the official religion of India. During last year Vesak celebrations held in Lumbini, China taking advantage of strained relation between New Delhi and Kathmandu partnered with

Nepal to celebrate Vesak.

INTERNATIONAL

Airlander 10: World's largest aircraft completes test flight

Airlander 10, the world's largest aircraft has successfully completed a test flight by flying for a total of 180 minutes in Cardington, UK. During the test flight, the aircraft's handling and improved landing technology were tested thus bringing it a step closer to commercial use.

Airlander 10 is hybrid ship i.e. it is a partly plane and partly airship filled with helium gas. It combines technology from airplanes, helicopters and airships. It is 92-metre-long and 43.5m wide. It can fly at up to 6,100 metres and reach speeds of 148 kilometres per hour. It can also carry a 10-tonne payload. The first test flight of Airlander 10 was carried out on August 17, 2016. During its second test flight, Airlander 10 suffered cockpit damage while landing in Bedfordshire in central England.

52nd Annual General Meeting of African Development Bank (AfDB)

The 52nd Annual General Meeting of African Development Bank (AfDB) is being held at Gandhinagar in Gujarat from May 22-26, 2017. This is for the first time that this meeting is being held in India. This meeting is expected to be attended by some 4500 delegates including the finance ministers and central bank governors of AfDBs members and non-member countries.

African Development Bank Group (AfDB) also known as Banque Africaine de Developpment (BAD) was founded in 1964 with a mission to fight poverty and improve living conditions of the people of African continent by promoting investment in government and private capital in development projects. India is a non-African member country for this bank. Some other non-African member countries include US, Japan, Germany, Canada, France, China etc. For the first time in 2017, the bank is holding its first annual conference outside Africa at Gandhinagar.

Ransomware cyber attack plays havoc in several countries

A global cyberattack has crippled nearly hundred

countries, including India. A cyber gang called Shadow Brokers, which is a mysterious organisation is held responsible for this massive cyberattack. The organisation has carried out the attack by stealing a hacking tool called 'Eternal Blue' from the National Security Agency (NSA), America's powerful military intelligence unit. The hacking tool Eternal Blue gives unprecedented access to all computers using Microsoft Windows. It was developed by NSA to gain access to computers used by terrorists and enemy states. The cyberattack is considered as the biggest ransomware attack of its kind. As per security software company Avast, its researchers have observed more than 75,000 attacks worldwide in 99 countries including the UK, Russia, Ukraine, India, China, Italy, and Egypt.

Finance ministers and central bank governors of G7 nations such as the United States, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Italy and Britain have agreed to strengthen cooperation to counter cyber threats such as the present global online attack. In India, Andhra Pradesh's police computers have come under the cyberattack. Computers in 18 police units in Chittoor, Krishna, Guntur, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts have been affected.

US President calls for complete isolation of Iran

US President Donald Trump urged Muslim countries to deny sanctuary to extremists and called for international isolation of Iran, which he accused of fuelling "sectarian conflict and terror".

From Lebanon to Iraq to Yemen, Iran funds, arms and trains terrorists, militias and other extremist groups that spread destruction and chaos across the region. Trump, visiting the kingdom at the start of his first foreign tour since taking office, told dozens of Muslim leaders invited to Riyadh for a special summit that he brought "a message of friendship and hope and love". He appealed to Muslim nations to ensure that "terrorists find no sanctuary on their soil" and announced an agreement with Gulf countries to fight financing for extremists. He said Arab, Muslim and Middle Eastern nations "have borne the brunt of the killings and the worst of destruction in this wave of fanatical violence".

BUSINESS

Amul signs MoU with ISRO

Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF) which markets its product under the brand name 'Amul' has signed an MoU with ISRO for fodder acreage assessment using satellite observation and space technology.

As per the MoU signed, ISRO would help in identification between food and fodder crops at the village level. ISRO will also help in establishing suitable areas at village level for green fodder cultivation. The Space Applications Centre (SAC) of ISRO has already carried out assessment that concluded that green fodder availability for dairy livestock at district and village level through remote sensing is feasible. The significance of the agreement lies in the fact that the fodder acreage estimation can help in monitoring and planning of fodder development activities by the stakeholders in the dairy sector. This will help the milk producing farmers of Gujarat to reap benefits of fodder cultivation. Amul is procuring around 150 lakh litres of milk every day from around 35 lakh milk producers living in 18,500 villages.

Paytm launches payments bank

Paytm has rolled out its Payments Bank operations by launching its first physical branch in Noida. With this launch, there are three payments bank operational in the country, the other two being Airtel Payments Bank Ltd and India Post Payments Bank Ltd. The Paytm Payments Bank will be the first bank in the country to offer cashbacks on deposits.

As a Payments Bank, Paytm will be able to accept deposits upto Rs 1 lakh per customer in wallet and savings/current accounts. Further it can also offer other services like Debit Cards, Online Banking and Mobile Banking. It will not be allowed to lend to customers. However, it will be able to offer financial products like loans, insurance, mutual funds, pension funds etc by partnering with other financial institutions and banks. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had given in principle approval to Paytm Payments Bank Ltd, an entity majority owned by One97 Communications earlier this year. In 2015, RBI had awarded 'in-principle' approval to Vijay Shekhar Sharma to set up a Payments Bank along with 10 others with an objective of deepening financial inclusion. The Paytm

Payments Bank aims to plans to roll out operations in 31 branches and 3,000 customer service points in the first year.

BSNL signs MoU with Facebook and MobiKwik

BSNL has inked agreements with Facebook and MobiKwik in order to popularize the internet and its value added services among its customers. Further, BSNL has also signed a third MoU with Disney Land India to offer premium online gaming services to its mobile customers. The series of MoUs signed by BSNL comes at the backdrop of a stiff competition faced by BSNL from private telecom companies like Airtel and Reliance Jio.

As per the terms of agreement signed with Facebook, BSNL will facilitate connectivity for Facebook's 'Express Wi-Fi Program'. Express Wi-Fi service program of the Facebook has been launched commercially in India and the service is now available via 700 hotspots across four states of Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Meghalaya. As per the MoU signed with the digital payments firm Mobikwik, BSNL and MobiKwik will work together to create a BSNL mobile wallet to facilitate payment for its products and services.

Forbes Global Game Changers List 2017

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani has topped the Forbes list of 'Global Game Changers'. Mukesh Ambani has been ranked at the top for his efforts to bring the internet to India's masses. This is Forbes' second annual Global Game Changers list and includes 25 "intrepid business leaders" who are known to transform their industries and effect changes to the lives of billions of people around the globe.

The top 10 spots in the list has been occupied by: Mukesh Ambani of India (1st), Ziv Aviram, Amnon Shashua of Israel (2nd), Stewart Butterfield of United States (3rd), John and Patrick Collison of United States (4th), James Dyson of United Kingdom (5th), Scott Farquhar, Mike Cannon-Brookes of Australia (6th), Larry Fink of United States (7th), Ken Frazier of United States (8th), Taavet Hinrikus, Kristo Käärman of United Kingdom (9th), Robert Katz of United States (10th). The Youngest person to be featured in the list is Stripe co-founders John and Patrick Collison, 26 and 28, as well as the Snapchat creator Evan Spiegel, 26. The oldest person to feature on the list is Christo Wiese, 75, who is credited for creating Africa's largest retail empire.

Discovery to launch its first Hindi general entertainment channel in India

Broadcasting firm Discovery Communications today said it will launch its first Hindi entertainment channel 'Discovery JEET' in India later this year. Discovery is scaling up investment in over 200 hours of local content originals which will premiere on this new channel.

Commenting on the development, Discovery Networks Asia Pacific President and MD Arthur Bastings said: The expansion into general entertainment with JEET redefines how Discovery will connect and interact with new young audiences across the heartlands of India. The new channel would be available for audiences in the metros, tier II and tier III cities. The channel, which will hit screens later this year, will have programmes based on heroic characters and their tales of achievement, among others.

AWARDS

Hollywood actor Emma Watson bags first ever 'genderless' award

Hollywood actor Emma Watson has received the first-ever Genderless Acting Award for the Best Actor category at the MTV Movie and TV Awards. This is the first ever genderless award that doesn't separate nominees based on their sex. The 2017 edition of the MTV Movie & TV Awards were held on May 7, 2017, in Los Angeles, California. It was the 26th edition of the awards. The MTV Movie & TV Awards is a film and television awards presented annually to winners decided online by the general public. Emma Watson is a British actress, model, and activist. She is famous for her role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series.

Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu selected for USIBC Award

The US-India Business Council (USIBC) has selected Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu for the 'Transformative Chief Minister Award' for his role in advancing the US-India partnership at the state level. The award will be presented to him at the USIBC West Coast Summit in the Silicon Valley on May 8th.

The USIBC West Coast Summit will see the participation of Indian government officials and 150 industry leaders from sectors such as information tech-

nology, banking, food processing, healthcare, clean energy, digital payments, and manufacturing to explore the impacts of manufacturing in India, digitisation, move towards adoption of a cashless society and the future of the US-India trade relations. The companies such as Amazon, Paypal, Deloitte, Facebook, Mastercard, Dell, TransAsia, Varian Medical and Visa will attend the summit. In addition, the Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and IT Aruna Sundararajan will also be honoured with the 'Transformative Leadership Award' for excellence in public service and for her role in advancing US-India cooperation and Digital India. Amitabh Kant, CEO of Niti Aayog was the last year's recipient of this award. USIBC was established in 1975 as a business advocacy organization for encouraging the private sectors in the US and India to enhance investments.

Priyanka Chopra to be honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award

International icon Priyanka Chopra will be honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, in the new category of Internationally Acclaimed Actress for her great work on the international platform.

Priyanka rose to international fame with the American television series *Quantico* in which she plays the role of a spy, Alex Parish. The *Barfi!* actress won two consecutive People's Choice Awards. Priyanka's mother Madhu Chopra too will be honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke Award in the Best Film category for her maiden production, *Ventilator*. The Dadasaheb Phalke Awards was founded in 2000 an honours talent from Hindi and regional film industry.

Indian scientist Shrinivas Kulkarni wins prestigious Dan David Prize

Indian scientist Shrinivas Kulkarni has won the prestigious Dan David prize as a recognition for his contributions made in the field of astronomy. Shrinivas Kulkarni, a professor of astrophysics and planetary science at California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, is a pioneer in the field of time-domain astrophysics. He has been credited for building and conducting the Palomar Transient Factory, which is a large-area survey of the night sky that has turned up with thousands of stellar explosions. Shrinivas kulkarni would share the award with Andrej Udalski of the University of Warsaw and Neil Gehrels of NASA for their discoveries on time-domain astrophysics in

the "Future" category of the prize. With this award, Shrinivas Kulkarni will join other prominent Indians who have won the Dan David prize like noted author Amitav Ghosh, music conductor Zubin Mehta and renowned chemist CNR Rao.

The Dan David Foundation was established in 2000 by the late Dan David, an international businessman and philanthropist. Three Dan David prizes of \$1 million each are awarded each year in the categories of "Past," "Present" and "Future" to people who have made exemplary contributions to humanity in the field of sciences, humanities, or for their work in civil society.

Indian activists Sanjay Gubbi and Purnima Barman win Whitley Awards 2017

Two Indian activists on Wednesday won the annual Whitley Awards, dubbed as the 'Green Oscars', for their works in the field of animal and bird conservation in India. Sanjay Gubbi of Karnataka and Purnima Barman of Assam were among six global winners of the award shortlisted from 166 entries. Each of the winners receives 35,000 pounds (USD 45,374) prize money in project funding over one year.

Purnima Barman won this award for creating an all-female network to save the Greater Adjutant stork, known in India as Hargila, and its wetland habitat in Assam. Gubbi had quit his job as an electrical engineer to work with nature and wildlife. In 2012, working closely with the Karnataka government, he secured the largest expansion of protected areas for the conservation of tigers in his state.

PERSON-IN-NEWS

James Bond actor Roger Moore passes away

British actor Roger Moore, who played the much famed secret agent James Bond, has passed away at the age of 89. Roger Moore has acted as James Bond in seven films for 12 years between 1973 and 1985. His famous films include *Live and Let Die* and *A View to a Kill*. Moore was also known for playing Simon Templar in TV series *The Saint* between 1962 and 1969.

Roger was appointed as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in 1991 and is well known for his humanitarian

work. He was Knighted for his service to charity by Queen Elizabeth II in 2003. In 2008, Roger was appointed as a Commander of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government.

Ovais Sarmad appointed to key post in UNFCCC

Ovais Sarmad who is an Indian national has been appointed by the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to the post of Deputy Executive Secretary, which is a key post in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). As per the U.N. Information Centre in Delhi, the appointment has been made after making wide consultations with the Conference of Parties. The appointment assumes significance as UNFCCC aims to slow down climate change.

Ovais is a seasoned bureaucrat having nearly 27 years of experience working with International Organization for Migration (IOM) at various capacities. He has worked in several policy and management areas to strengthen the organizations operational effectiveness in close consultation with IOM member States. He is currently the Chief of Staff to the Director-General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Edouard Philippe appointed as Prime Minister of France

French President Emmanuel Macron has appointed Edouard Philippe as the new prime minister of France. At 46, Edouard Philippe would be the second-youngest Prime Minister of France after Laurent Fabius (1984 to 1986), who was 37 at the time of appointment. Philippe is the Mayor of the port city Le Havre since 2010 and is a member of the Les Républicains party.

Edouard Philippe appointment as the new Prime Minister comes at the backdrop of Emmanuel Macron's plans to draw support from the conservative opposition and appeal to rightwing voters in elections for the National Assembly to be held next month.

Moon Jae-in elected as President of South Korea

Moon Jae-in has been declared winner in South Korea's presidential election by that country's National Election Commission. Moon, the Democratic Party's candidate has won with 41.08% of votes. Moon will replace the ousted President Park Geun-hye, who was ejected from office in March after a corruption scandal for which she's awaiting trial. Moon narrowly lost to Park in 2012 election. Park was South Korea's first

female President who has been impeached in a corruption scandal.

Moon is a 64 year old former human rights lawyer and a liberal who favors a more open policy toward North Korea. He is likely to overhaul South Korea's policy on North Korea. Unlike his predecessors, Moon favors engagement with North Korea and has challenged the deployment of US missile defense system in South Korea. Moon is a strong proponent of the "Sunshine Policy", which aimed to improve relations between the two Koreas from 1998 to 2008.

Amitabh Bachchan appointed as Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South East Asia Region

World Health Organization (WHO) has appointed Amitabh Bachchan as its Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South-East Asia Region. He has been appointed to boost awareness to stop the spread of hepatitis, which is one of the leading causes of liver cancer and cirrhosis.

As an ambassador, Amitabh Bachchan will participate in public awareness programmes to scale up prevention measures, early diagnosis and treatment. It is estimated that around 325 million across the world suffer from chronic hepatitis which is an inflammation of the liver resulting in liver scarring, liver cancer and death if untreated. Hepatitis viruses is one of the common cause of liver damage but other infections, toxic substances such as alcohol, certain medicine, food contaminants, bad lifestyle and autoimmune diseases may also result in chronic hepatitis.