

## CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS: JANUARY 2018

BUSINESS**JioCoin: Reliance Jio will launch own crypto currency**

Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd is planning to create its own crypto currency, JioCoin. The JioCoin project is being led by Mukesh Ambani's elder son Akash Ambani. The Ambani scion is reportedly interested in developing blockchain technology to aid the development of smart contracts and crypto currency payment-enabled supply chains. Blockchain is a digital ledger that works as a book-keeper for crypto currencies

**ONGC to acquire Government's entire 51.11% stake in HPCL**

The Union Government and state-run oil explorer ONGC clinched deal for acquisition of government's 51.11% stake in HPCL for a consideration of Rs. 36,915 crore. The share sale will help government exceed its divestment target of Rs 72,500 crore in 2017-18 – a first for the government ever. The government has already raised Rs 54,337 crore so far this year.

**Mercedes-Benz first to launch locally-made BS-VI-compliant car**

German auto major Mercedes-Benz has unveiled India's first BS-VI-compliant S Class car produced at Pune facility. The BS-VI-compliant S Class car was unveiled more than two years ahead of Government's deadline of April 2020 for switching to new BS-VI emission norm

**Government inks \$250 Million loan agreement with ADB to improve rural connectivity in 5 states**

The Union Government has inked \$250 Million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to Improve Rural Connectivity in 5 States viz. Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). The loan proceeds will be used to finance construction of 6,254 kilometers all-weather rural roads in these 5 States under the PMGS

GOVERNMENT**Government launches NARI & e-Samvad portals**

The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has launched online portal NARI (nari.nic.in) for the empowerment of women. It has been developed by the ministry to provide easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women

**Government announces details of electoral bonds for political funding**

The Union Government has announced details of electoral bonds for political funding that can be routed by donors to political parties. The electoral bonds scheme was announced in Union Budget 2017 with an aim for increasing transparency in political funding

**Government launches 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds 2018**

The Union Finance Ministry has launched 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018 scheme to help citizens invest in a taxable instrument, without any monetary ceiling. It will enable resident citizens/Hindu Undivided Families (HUF) to invest in a taxable bond, without monetary ceiling

**UIDAI introduces 2-tier security to Aadhaar to address privacy concerns**

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has introduced two-tier security feature viz. Virtual ID and Limited KYC to address privacy concerns. The move aims to strengthen security and privacy of Aadhaar data. It will also reduce the collection of Aadhaar numbers by various agencies

**World bank estimates India GDP to grow at 7.3% in FY 2018-19**

The 2018 Global Economics Prospect (GEP) released by the World Bank has projected India's growth rate to 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5 for the next two years i.e. 2019 and 2020. According to report, India, despite initial setbacks from demonetization and GST, is estimated to have grown at 6.7% in 2017, higher than 6.5% estimated by Government.

### **Ministry of Railways launches SFOORTI application**

The Union Ministry of Railways has launched Smart Freight Operation Optimization & Real Time Information (SFOORTI) application to help plan traffic flows and optimize freight operations. The app will help Freight Managers to monitor and manage freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) views and dashboard

### **Ministry of Petroleum launches Saksham 2018 Campaign**

The Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has launched month long Saksham 2018 (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav). Saksham is annual flagship event of PCRA with active involvement of Oil & Gas PSUs along with other stakeholders like State Governments

### **Delhi is the richest state, Jain wealthiest community: NFHS-4 wealth index**

According to wealth index released on basis of data from fourth round of National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4) Delhi is richest state and Jain wealthiest community in the country. The NFHS-4 was conducted among more than 6 lakh households in 2015-16

### **NCDEX launches India's first agri-options trading in Guarseed**

The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Ltd (NCDEX) unveiled India's first agricultural-commodity options in Guarseed designed as hedge for farmers to safeguard against price risks. NCDEX also launched Mandi.com, a mobile app for farmers where they can learn more about Options and the commodity markets

### **Government ends Haj subsidy**

The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs has decided to end Haj subsidy from this year as a part of its policy to empower minorities with dignity and without appeasement. Now onwards, proceeds from Haj subsidy will be used for educational empowerment and welfare of girls from minority communities

### **PM Narendra Modi & Benjamin Netanyahu inaugurate iCREATE facility**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu inaugurated iCREATE facility at Deo Dholera Village in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. iCreate aims to develop an ecosystem in India to generate quality entrepreneurs

### **Maharashtra becomes first state to unveil Public Cloud Policy**

Maharashtra became first state in country to unveil Public Cloud Policy that virtually mandates state government departments to shift their data storage onto cloud

### **Government launches National CSR Data Portal & Corporate Data Portal**

The Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has launched National CSR Data Portal & Corporate Data Portal for bringing accountability and transparency for corporate India. The portals aim to provide easy accessibility to general public and ensure high level of compliance

### **Mauritius was the largest source of FDI in India in 2016-2017: RBI**

According to Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies 2016-17 released by RBI, Mauritius was the largest source of FDI in India. The census yields carry comprehensive information on market value of foreign liabilities and assets of Indian companies arising on account of FDI, ODI and other investments

### **MeitY launches Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative**

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative to strengthen cyber security ecosystem in India in line Government's vision for a 'Digital India'. It was launched in association with National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and industry partners

### **Government launches Liveability Index to rate 116 Indian cities**

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs (MoHUA) launched the Liveability index to rate 116 Indian cities. The tool aims to measure quality

of life in 99 smart cities, capital cities and those with a population of over one million

**Website Accessibility Project launched to make 100 websites accessible to persons with disabilities**

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment launched Website Accessibility Project to make 100 websites various State Governments/UTs accessible to persons with disabilities (Divyangjans) under Accessible India Campaign. It was launched by Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot on the occasion of ‘National Conference on Improving Accessibility’

**Kolkata becomes first Indian metro to get floating market**

Kolkata, capital of West Bengal became first metro city in India to get floating market. It was inaugurated by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee. The floating market is located on lake at Patuli in South Kolkata which is 400 meters long and 60 meters wide

**VINBAX: Indian, Vietnam hold first military exercise in Jabalpur**

The India-Vietnam Bilateral Army Exercise (VINBAX-2018) was conducted at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. It is the first military exercise between the two countries. The six day-long military exercise (January 29 to February 3, 2018) was conducted as part of joint training undertaken with friendly foreign countries by Indian Army

**India becomes third largest producer of crude steel**

According to recent report published by World Steel Association (WSA), India has overtaken US to become the world’s third largest steel producer in 2017. India’s crude steel production has grown by 6.2% to 101.4 million tons (MT) in 2017 compared to 95.5 MT in the previous year.

**Government launches GeM 3.0**

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched third version of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM 3.0). The earlier version GeM 2.0 was launched as pilot project in August 2016.

GeM 3.0 will offer standardized and enriched catalogue management, powerful search engine, real time price comparison, template-based Bid and RA creation, demand aggregation, e-EMD, e-PBG, user rating, advanced MIS and analytics and more

INDIA’S GLOBAL RANKINGS

**India ranks 30<sup>th</sup> on WEF’s Global Manufacturing Index**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked India at 30<sup>th</sup> position among 100 countries on its Global Manufacturing Index (GMI). Top 10 countries in GMI: Japan, South Korea, Germany, Switzerland, China, Czech Republic, the US, Sweden, Austria and Ireland

**India ranked 62<sup>nd</sup> on WEF’s Inclusive Development Index 2018**

India was ranked at 62<sup>nd</sup> place among emerging economies on Inclusive Development Index (IDI-2018) released by World Economic Forum (WEF). Norway again remained world’s most inclusive advanced economy, while Lithuania again topped list of emerging economies

**India ranked 81<sup>st</sup> on Global Index of Talent Competitiveness**

India was ranked 81<sup>st</sup> among 118 countries in 2017 Global index of talent competitiveness (GTI) list. India has improved its position from 92<sup>nd</sup> last year. The index measures ability of countries to compete for talent i.e. how countries grow, attract and retain talent

**India Ranked 177 in Environmental Performance Index (EPI)**

India has been ranked 177 among 180 countries in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) – 2018. This index has been developed by Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission

**India 6<sup>th</sup> wealthiest country: New World Wealth Report**

According to New World Wealth Report, India was ranked sixth in list of wealthiest countries with total wealth of US \$8,230 billion in 2017. The total

wealth refers to private wealth held by all individuals living in each country/city

### INTERNATIONAL

#### **Vajra Prahar: Indo-US joint military exercise to be held in Seattle**

The Indo-US joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' will be held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle in third week of January in line with the increasing military cooperation between both countries. The exercise will mainly focus on special operations in urban areas

#### **Xian smog tower: China builds world's biggest air purifier**

China has constructed Xian smog tower, an experimental air purifying tower touted to be the world's biggest at height of over 100 meters (328 feet) in an attempt to fight air pollution

#### **10<sup>th</sup> Global Forum for Food & Agriculture held Berlin**

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of Global Forum for Food & Agriculture was held in Berlin, Germany from 18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The theme of this year's event is "Shaping the future of livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently". Indian delegation to the event is led by Union Minister of State (MoS) for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

#### **Indian economy to grow at 7.4% in 2018: IMF**

In its latest World Economic Outlook (January 2018 update) released by International Monetary Fund (IMF), India is projected to grow at 7.4% of its GDP in 2018 as against China's 6.8%. The projection makes India fastest growing major economy following slowdown in 2017 due to demonetization and GST implementation

#### **ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit issues Delhi Declaration**

The ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit was held in New Delhi to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of sectoral dialogue between two sides under the theme of "Shared Values, Common Destiny". It issued joint statement titled Delhi Declaration after the plenary session focusing

on counter-terrorism, identity security, military cooperation, and bilateral financial support

#### **WEF launches Global Centre for Cyber security**

The World Economic Forum (WEF) has launched new Global Centre for Cyber security in a bid to safeguard world from hackers and growing data breaches — especially from nation-states. The center will be headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and will become operational from March 2018

#### **Thar Link Express receives extension for three more years**

India and Pakistan have extended agreement of Thar Link Express, second solitary rail service between both countries for three more years i.e. till 2021. The Thar Express links Jodhpur (India) and Karachi (Pakistan) via Munabao (Rajasthan)-Khokhrapar (Sindh province) border crossing and carries only

### SCIENCE, AEROSPACE, DEFENCE and TECHNOLOGY

#### **Pratyush: India's fastest supercomputer unveiled**

India's fastest and first multi-petaflops (PF) supercomputer named Pratyush was unveiled at Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM). The supercomputer has been named as 'Pratyush', meaning Sun. It will help India with better forecasts in terms of monsoon, extreme events, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, air quality, lightning, fishing, hot and cold waves, flood and drought among others

#### **Indian Navy decommissions INS Nirbhik and INS Nirghat warships**

Indian Navy has decommissioned INS Nirbhik and INS Nirghat warships at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai (Maharashtra), after a glorious 30 and 28 years respectively in the service of the nation. During their glorious service over almost three decades, these ships had participated in numerous operations including Operations Parakram and Vijay

#### **Agni-5 ballistic missile successfully test-fired**

Long range ballistic missile Agni-5 was test fired from Odisha. It can carry a nuclear warhead & flew

about 3,000 miles (4,800 kilometers) in 19 minutes

**Mihir: High performance computing facility inaugurated at Noida**

Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) has inaugurated high performance computer system (HPC) or supercomputer Mihir (meaning the Sun) at National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), Noida. The HCP will provide facility for improving weather/climate forecasts. It is country's largest HPC facility in terms of peak capacity and performance

**INS Karanj: Third submarine of Scorpene class launched**

Indian Navy has launched Scorpene submarine INS Karanj at the Mazgaon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Mumbai, Maharashtra. It the third Scorpene class submarine built by MDL under ambitious Project 75 of the Indian Navy....

SPORTS

**Vidarbha wins 2017 Ranji Trophy tournament**

Vidarbha cricket team won 2017 Ranji Trophy tournament. It is Vidarbha's first Ranji Trophy title. In the final match held at Holkar stadium in Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Vidarbha thumped 9-wicket win over Delhi

**Australian Open 2018: Roger Federer wins Men's Singles title**

Swiss tennis player Roger Federer (World No. 2) has retained his Men's Singles title by winning 2018 Australian Open. In the summit clash played at Melbourne, he defeated Croatia's Marin Cilic. It was Federer's sixth Australian Open Crown (earlier won in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2017) and overall 20th Grand Slam singles titles. With this, he joins elite group of Margaret Court, Serena Williams and Steffi Graf who have won 20 or more Grand Slam singles titles

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AWARDS & HONOR

**75<sup>th</sup> Annual Golden Globe Awards**

The 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Golden Globe Awards honored the best in film and American television of 2017. The ceremony was organized at Beverly Hills, California. The Golden Globe Awards are the annual awards that honour the best in Motion Pictures and American Television for the previous year.

Winners of various awards are as follows:

Best Motion Picture Drama: Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri.

Best Motion Picture Musical/Comedy: Lady Bird

**2018 Padma Awards**

President Ram Nath Kovind has announced names of recipients of year 2018 Padma awards viz. Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri. He approved conferment of Padma Awards on 85 persons. The 2018 list includes 3 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 73 Padma Shri Awardees. 14 awardees are women, 16 awardees are from category of foreigners, NRIs, PIOs while 3 are posthumous awardees

**Mehul Garg: Indian-origin boy sets new Mensa record**

Indian-origin boy Mehul Garg (10) in United Kingdom became youngest applicant in decade to achieve highest score in Mensa IQ test, beating geniuses like Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking.

**Parliamentary Group to confer Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards to five MPs**

The Parliamentary Group has decided to confer Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards to five Members of Parliament. They are Dr Najma Heptulla: She is former Rajya Sabha MP and was selected for this award for the year 2013. Hukumdev Narayan Yadav: He is Lok Sabha MP and was selected for this award for the year for 2014. Ghulam Nabi Azad: He is Rajya Sabha and was selected for this award for the year for 2015. Dinesh Trivedi: He is Lok Sabha MP and was selected for 2016. Bhartruhari Mahatab: He is Lok Sabha MP and was selected for 2017

### PERSONALITIES

#### **Government appoints Vijay Gokhale as new Foreign Secretary**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed senior diplomat Vijay Keshav Gokhale (58) as Foreign Secretary, highest post for a diplomat in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). He will have a two-year term and shall succeed S Jaishankar, who completes his extended tenure in January 2018

#### **Former RAW Chief Rajinder Khanna Appointed Deputy National Security Advisor**

The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief Rajinder Khanna as Deputy National Security. He has been appointed without a fixed tenure and would remain at the post until further orders. In his new role, he will assist NSA Ajit Doval

#### **Rocket expert K. Sivan appointed as new chairman of ISRO**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed rocket scientist K. Sivan as next Secretary of the Department of Space and Chairman of ISRO. He will succeed A.S. Kiran Kumar and will have term of three years

#### **Indu Malhotra: First woman lawyer to be directly promoted as SC judge**

The Supreme Court collegium led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra has unanimously recommended name of senior advocate Indu

Malhotra for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court. With this, she becomes first woman lawyer from the country to be directly elected for post of judge of the Supreme Court.

#### **Sudeep Lakhtakia appointed as new DG of National Security Guard**

Senior IPS officer Sudeep Lakhtakia was appointed as new Director General of National Security Guard (NSG). He will succeed SP Singh, who retired from the post

#### **Anandiben Patel appointed as governor Madhya Pradesh**

President Ramnath Kovind has appointed former Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel as Governor of Madhya Pradesh. She will replace Gujarat governor Om Prakash Kohli who is holding additional charge of office of Governor of Madhya Pradesh

#### **Om Prakash Rawat appointed new Chief Election Commissioner**

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Election commissioner Om Prakash Rawat (64) as new Chief Election Commissioner. He will succeed Achal Kumar Jyoti who has retired from post.

#### **Scientist S. Somanath takes charge as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre**

Noted scientist S Somanath took charge as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, Thiruvananthapuram. He succeeded K Sivan, who was recently appointed as ISRO Chairman

#### **Legendary astronaut, moonwalker John Young passes away**

Legendary astronaut of NASA John Young, who walked on the moon and later commanded the first space shuttle flight passed away in Houston, US. He was 87. He was NASA's only astronaut to go into space as part of Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle program, and the first to fly into space six times