

## CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : NOVEMBER 2016

### STATE

#### **India's first LNG-powered bus launched in Kerala**

India's first eco-friendly liquefied natural gas (LNG)-driven bus was launched on 8 November 2016 in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The first pilot run of the eco-friendly bus was jointly flagged off by Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The LNG-driven bus was launched as part of the Centre's plans to use LNG. Thus, it opens new chapter in the country's transport sector which moves towards clean fuel. The project has been a joint effort of Petronet LNG Limited (PLL), Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOL) and Tata Motors Ltd. As it is a pilot project, the LNG-driven bus will run on a trial basis and later after certification it will be launched for commercial application.

Liquefied natural gas is natural gas (predominantly methane, CH<sub>4</sub>, with some mixture of ethane C<sub>2</sub>H<sub>6</sub>) that has been converted to liquid form for ease of storage or transport. It takes up about 1/600th the volume of natural gas in the gaseous state. It is odorless, colorless, toxic and non-corrosive. LNG achieves a higher reduction in volume than Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) so that the (volumetric) energy density of LNG is 2.4 times greater than that of CNG or 60 percent that of diesel fuel. This makes LNG cost efficient to transport over long distances where pipelines do not exist. Natural gas could be considered the most environmentally friendly fossil fuel, because it has the lowest CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per unit of energy. For an equivalent amount of heat, burning natural gas produces about 30 percent less carbon dioxide than burning petroleum and about 45 per cent less than burning coal.

#### **Maharashtra becomes first state to launch cyber police stations in all districts**

Maharashtra has become the first state in the country to have a cyber-police station in each district to take on cyber criminals. In this regard, state government is converting 42 state-of-the-art cybercrime labs into cyber police stations simultaneously.

These cyber police stations will also be set up at police commissionerate and Range IG offices. Any offence related to cybercrime will be registered in these police stations at district level. Besides, additional cyber police stations will also be set up in some cities.

In last few years, cyber-crime in Maharashtra has risen by a whopping 142.1%. Even cybercrime cases in tier-II cities and also in rural areas also have increased in Maharashtra. For the normal local police stations, tackling cyber-crimes is a daunting task owing to lack technical knowledge and of proper training. However, the cyber labs have trained manpower and modern equipment to deal with the new age crimes in the cyber world.

The state government's cyber crime wing is setting up 51 cyber crime labs in Maharashtra. These include the 34 labs at the district level, seven at Inspector General's offices, nine at Commissioner of Police offices and one lab at the state police.

#### **Kerala becomes third Open Defecation Free state**

Kerala has become the third Open Defecation Free state in the country after Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) (Gramin). The announcement in this regard was made by the Drinking Water and Sanitation Secretary Parameswaran Iyer in New Delhi on the occasion foundation day of Kerala (1 November). With this Kerala becomes first high density populated state in the country to achieve Open Defecation Free status. All 14 districts, 152 blocks, 940 Gram Panchayats and 2117 villages of the State have been declared free from open defecation. The Kerala government had constructed about 175000 toilets in the last four months to make Kerala the first among the big states to claim ODF status. Thrissur was the first district to become defecation free, followed by Kannur and Kozhikode.

Freedom from open defecation has been proven to lead to significant health benefits in terms of incidences of water-borne diseases, especially in children, and provide safety and dignity for all, especially women and senior citizens.

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) was launched in October 2014 to accelerate the efforts to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation. The mission aims to achieve Swachh Bharat or make India clean by 2019, as a fitting tribute to the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The SBM consists of two sub-missions Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), implemented in rural areas, and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), implemented in urban areas. SBM-G seeks to eliminate open defecation in rural areas by 2019 through improving access to sanitation by ensuring the use of toilets, besides their construction. It also seeks to generate awareness to

motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices, and encourage the use of appropriate technologies for sanitation.

#### **Maharashtra tops in 2016 Agricultural Marketing and Farmer Friendly Reforms Index of NITI Aayog**

Maharashtra has been ranked first state in the country in 2016 Agricultural Marketing and Farmer Friendly Reforms Index. The first-ever index based on initiatives taken by the states in implementing farm sector reforms was issued by the NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog.

NITI Aayog launched an index to rank States and UTs that is based on implementation of seven provisions proposed under model APMC Act, joining eNAM initiative, special treatment to fruits and vegetables for marketing and level of taxes in mandis. These indicators reveal ease of doing agribusiness as well as opportunities for farmers to benefit from modern trade and commerce and have wider option for sale of her/his produce. These indicators also represent competitiveness, efficiency and transparency in agri markets.

The second area of reforms included in the index is relaxation in restrictions related to lease in and lease out agricultural land and change in law to recognise tenant and safeguard land owners liberalisation. The third area included in the index represent freedom given to farmers for felling and transit of trees grown on private land. This represents opportunity to diversify farm business. The index has a score which can have minimum value 0 implying no reforms and maximum value 100 implying complete reforms in the selected areas. States and UTs have been ranked in terms of the score of the index.

Top 5 States are Maharashtra (score 81.7), Gujarat (71.5), Rajasthan (70), Madhya Pradesh (69.5) and Haryana (63.3). Maharashtra has implemented most of the marketing reforms and offers the best environment for doing agribusiness among all states and UTs. Almost two third states could not reach even halfway mark of reforms score. Major states like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, West Bengal, Assam, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and Jammu and Kashmir are in this group. Some states and UTs either did not adopt APMC Act or revoked it. They include Bihar, Kerala, Manipur, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Andaman and Nicobar. Therefore, they are not included in the ranking.

#### **City Union Bank launches India's first banking robot Lakshmi in Chennai**

India's first banking robot named Lakshmi was launched by the Kumbakonam-based City Union Bank

(CUB) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Lakshmi will be first on-site humanoid (robot) in India. Currently, CUB has readied only one version of humanoid banker and but is planning to deploy 25-30 robots at key branches by end of year if Lakshmi proves a hit with customers.

Lakshmi is artificial intelligence powered robot. It can speak English, gesture and engage in a life-like manner in conversations. Apart from being intelligent, fast and interactive, the robot has amazing features which will be very beneficial for both the bank staff and customers. Lakshmi can effectively answer queries related to 125 subjects. The robot which took 6 months to develop answers your questions in a very casual and simpler fashion unlike other robots. It answers your queries in English in a very gestural and lively manner, similar to a normal human conversation. Lakshmi can solve your queries related to bank balance, interest rates, bank facilities etc.

The robot is also capable of learning and improvising by interacting more with the customers. The more it interacts the better it becomes. Lakshmi doesn't just answer your questions, it is also capable of flashing the answer on its screen based on the confidentiality of your query. If a customer wants to know about their banking transactions, bank balance or bank history, Lakshmi won't shout out the answer but will instead flash the answer on its screen. Hence, making no compromise with your security.

#### **Maharashtra becomes first state to adopt Fly Ash Utilization Policy**

Maharashtra on 15 November 2016 became the first Indian state to adopt Fly Ash Utilisation Policy. The policy will pave way for prosperity by creating wealth from waste, and environment protection. It was approved by state cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The policy seeks 100% use of fly ash generated from thermal power plants and biogas plants for construction activities. Facilitates use of fly ash to make bricks, blocks, tiles, wall panels, cement and other construction materials. The policy extends use of fly ash to 300 kms radius of power plant from earlier 100 kms radius of power plant. It will help in environment protection and save soil excavation. It also will make available raw material for construction at low cost to help 'Housing for All' projects. It will also help create new employment opportunities in the power plant sector and pave way for prosperity by generating Wealth from Waste.

Fly ash is one of the coal combustion products. It is composed of the fine particles that are driven out of the boiler with the flue gases. In modern coal-fired power plants, fly ash is generally captured by elec-

trostatic precipitators or other particle filtration equipment before the flue gases reach the chimneys. Fly ash includes substantial amounts of silicon dioxide, aluminium oxide and calcium oxide. Heavy metals can leach from stored fly ash into groundwater, which can put the health of the surrounding population in danger. Apart from causing air pollution, it can also contaminate water and soil systems.

Recyclable Uses Fly ash can be used as a replacement for some of the Portland cement contents of concrete. It can be used in the production of bricks for building construction. Central Government has made it mandatory for use of fly ash bricks in construction activities happening 500km around thermal power plants.

#### **India's longest expressway inaugurated in Uttar Pradesh**

India's longest expressway connecting Agra and Lucknow was inaugurated by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav at Bangarmau in Unnao district of UP. It has been built by the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) to reduce traffic in already congested roads and to reduce pollution and carbon footprint in a record time of 23 months.

This expressway is connected to Yamuna Expressway through the Agra Ring Road, and thus providing an express link between Greater Noida, NCR to Lucknow via Agra. It connects Agra and Lucknow via Shikohabad, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Etawah, Auraiya, Kanpur, Unnao and Hardoi. The expressway will start at village Etmadpur Madra near Agra and will end at village Sarosa Bharosa near Mohan Road, Lucknow. It is six-lane greenfield expressway having total length of 302-km. It has a design speed of up to 120 kms per hour. It passes through four National Highways, two state highways and five rivers such as Ganga, Yamuna, Sai, Isan, and Kalyani. The expressway will help cut down the time between Agra and Lucknow to just 3.5 hours, from the current 7 hours. Moreover, it is expected to reduce the road travel time between Delhi and Lucknow to anywhere between 5 to 6 hours. The expressway has 2 km dedicated stretch built for fighter jets to land and take-off in times of "war-like emergencies". The six-lane expressway also can be expanded to 8-lane. It also has State-of-the-art Advance Traffic management System for safe & secure transit and reducing road accidents and helping even at the time of fog. The entire Expressway is lined with metal beam crash barrier on both sides and wire fencing for safe & secure transit.

#### **NATIONAL**

#### **RBI issues new series of Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 currency notes with improved features**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued new series of notes for 500 rupees and 2,000 rupees denomination with improved features and newer sizes. These new series of notes was issued following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement that Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 currency notes now in use will no longer be legal tender.

Both the designs of 500 rupees and 2,000 rupees notes is very friendly towards the visually-impaired by having features which make it accessible for all sections. The RBI said, 2000 rupees note, which is a first under the denomination, will be called as the 'Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series' and has a design of the low-cost mission to Mars, the Mangalayan, on the reverse side and Mahatma Gandhi on front side. The base colour of the note will be magenta. Size of the new note is 66mm\*166mm. 500 rupee note has different colour, size, theme, design and location of security features compared to the old notes. It has portrait and electrotype watermarks. It will be in a stone grey in colour. The motif Delhi's Red Fort is on reverse side and Mahatma Gandhi on front side. Size of the new note is 63mm\*150mm.

#### **India ranks 133rd in 2016 Global Youth Development Index**

India has been ranked 133rd out of 183 countries in the 2016 Global Youth Development Index (YDI) compiled by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Global Youth Development Index report measures countries' prospects for young people in employment, education, health, civic and political spheres.

India accounts for nearly 20% of the global youth population, with nearly 345 million young people between the ages of 15 and 30 living in the country. This makes India one of the countries currently experiencing the most significant "youth bulge"—with nearly 27 per cent of its total population made up of young people. India's overall rank in 2016 YDU is relatively low, but it has registered an 11% improvement in scores over last five years (from 2010 and 2015). The report highlights need for greater investment to reap so-called demographic dividend. Youth development levels in India lag particularly in the domains of education, health and employment.

The top 10 countries on the index are largely from Europe—Germany (1), Denmark (2), Switzerland (4), United Kingdom (5), Netherlands (6), Austria (7), Luxembourg (8), Portugal (9)—with Australia (3) and Japan (10). In the health and well-being domain, India

performs below the South Asian average. Except Afghanistan, all other South Asian countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, outperform India, largely due to high youth mortality rates and years of life lost due to mental disorders. China, which has a youth population of 525 million, is doing significantly better than India on similar parameters.

#### **Twin trial of Prithvi-II missile successfully conducted**

The twin trial of surface-to-surface nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile was successfully conducted by the India Army from a test range at Chandipur in Odisha. During the test, two Prithvi-II missiles in salvo mode were successfully test-fired in quick succession from mobile launcher from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR). Earlier, similar twin trial was conducted by Indian Army in October 2009 from the same base where both tests were successful.

Prithvi, the first missile developed under Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), has the capability to carry 500 Kg of warhead. It has a length of nine meters with one metre diameter thrust by liquid propulsion twin engine and uses Advanced Inertial Guidance System (AIGS) with manoeuvring trajectory and reaches the targets with accuracy. The missile was inducted in the Armed Forces in 2002.

Prithvi-II missile is one of the proven weapon systems of the country and it dives at the target at an 80 degree angle. It is surface-to-surface medium range ballistic missile with strike range of 350 km. It is capable of carrying 500 kg to 1000 kg of conventional as well as nuclear warheads. It is single-stage liquid-fuelled. It uses advanced inertial guidance system along with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target precisely.

The missile's short range variant was first tested in January 1996 and inducted in the Armed forces in 2002.

#### **Indian Navy's seventh landing craft utility L-57 launched by GRSE**

Indian Navy's seventh landing craft utility (LCU) L-57 was launched by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) in Kolkata, West Bengal. LCU L-57 is the largest ship of this kind built anywhere in the world. It is the seventh vessel in the series of eight LCU Ships being designed and built by GRSE for the Indian Navy.

LCU L-57 is fully designed in-house by GRSE. It is designed for a maximum speed of 15 knots with an endurance of more than 1,500 nautical miles. It can be deployed for multirole activities like beaching operations, humanitarian and disaster relief operations and evacuation from distant islands. It will be extremely useful for joint operations carried out by the

Indian Navy and Indian Army for ensuring maritime security and protection of remote islands. It has a capability to transport two tanks or four special vehicles and 160 Army troops for landing in remote area. The ship is cost effective, fuel efficient and best suited for protection of our island territories of Andaman and Nicobar in the Bay of Bengal as well as Lakshadweep islands in the Arabian Sea

### **INTERNATIONAL**

#### **Donald Trump elected as 45th President of United States**

Real estate mogul-turned politician and Republican Party candidate Donald Trump (70) on 9 November 2016 was elected as 45th President of United States of America (USA). He will be the first President of USA without political experience since Dwight D. Eisenhower (34th President). He will be the oldest first term President of USA. He will succeed Barack Obama and is scheduled to take office as the President of the USA on 20 January 2017.

In the 2016 Presidential elections, Donald Trump gained 48% of the votes and 279 votes in the Electoral College to defeat Democrat Party opponent Hillary Clinton who gained 47% votes. Hillary Clinton had created history in this election by becoming the first woman to top the presidential ticket of a major US political party.

Donald Trump born on June 14, 1946 in New York City, New York, United States. He received a bachelor's degree in economics from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in 1968. In 1971 he took control of his family's real estate and construction firm, Elizabeth Trump & Son, which was later renamed The Trump Organization. During his career, Trump has built, renovated or managed numerous office towers, hotels, casinos and golf courses. Various other products and activities bear his name. He owned the Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants from 1996 to 2015, and has made cameo appearances in films and television series. From 2004 to 2015, Trump hosted and co-produced The Apprentice, a reality television series on NBC. As of 2016, he was listed by Forbes as the 324th wealthiest person in the world, and 113th in the United States, with a net worth of \$4.5 billion.

#### **World's first zero-emissions hydrogen train, Coradia iLint, unveiled in Germany**

World first hydrogen-powered and zero-emission passenger train named as Coradia iLint was unveiled in September 2016 in Germany. The first of its kind ecofriendly train has been developed by French rail company Alstom. The Coradia iLint only emits excess

steam and condensed water into the atmosphere. Coradia iLint is powered by a hydrogen fuel tank on its roof. The fuel cell is supplied with hydrogen and oxygen from the air, which it converts into electric power. The system is backed up by lithium batteries. These batteries store the excess power in order to later supply the train when needed. The train is totally carbon-free, making it a much more sustainable alternative to the 4000 diesel trains currently in circulation in Germany. It has enough onboard hydrogen storage to power an 800 kilometre journey, with speeds topping out at 87 miles per hour. The testing of the train will be carried out by the end of 2016. If the results prove successful, the trains will service the Buxtehude-Bremervörde-Bremerhaven-Cuxhaven line in the German state of Lower Saxony by December 2017.

#### **Meng Hongwei elected as new INTERPOL President**

Meng Hongwei, high-level police official from China has been elected as the new President of International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL). With this, he becomes first Chinese citizen to hold the four-year post. He was sworn into his new position on 10 November 2016 at the closing of the organisation's 85th general assembly in Bali, Indonesia. He has previously served as the head of Interpol China. At the time of this appointment, he was holding the position of China's Vice Minister for public security. Meng has almost 40 years' experience in criminal justice and policing. In his career he has overseen affairs related to legal institutions, counter-terrorism, narcotics control, border control, immigration and international cooperation. Earlier, he had held many positions in the Ministry of Public Security like Director-General of the Traffic Control Department, Director of the Patrol Police Division, Assistant Minister and Vice Minister. He also served as Vice Chairman of the National Narcotics Control Commission, Member of the Chinese Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Regional Counter-Terrorism Structure and Director of the National Counter-Terrorism Office. He also serves as Director-General of the China Coast Guard.

INTERPOL is global police co-operation agency and a non-governmental organization (NGO). Its work focuses on public safety and battling terrorism, crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, environmental crime etc. It was established as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) in 1923. Its head-quartered is located at Lyon, France. It is the 2nd-largest international organization after the United Nations in terms of international representation with 190 member countries.

#### **China successfully launches pulsar navigation satellite XPNNAV-1**

China on 10 November 2016 has successfully launched experimental X-ray pulsar navigation satellite XPNNAV-1. It is the world's first pulsar navigation satellite or spacecraft. It was launched on board of Long March 11 solid-fuelled rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in China's northwest. It was 239th flight mission of the Long March carrier rocket series. The satellite and the rocket were designed by academies affiliated with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

The XPNNAV-1 satellite weighs more than 200 kilogrammes and carries two detectors. It will operate in a Sun-synchronous orbit (500 kilometers) inclined 97 degrees. It will conduct in-orbit experiments of autonomous spacecraft navigation using pulsar detectors to demonstrate new technologies. It will also test its detectors' functions in responding to the background noise of the universe, outline pulsar contours, and create a database for pulsar navigation.

Pulsars are highly magnetized, rotating neutron stars that emit a beam of electromagnetic radiation. They are spherical, compact objects that are about the size of a large city but contain more mass than the sun. Scientists are using pulsars to study extreme states of matter, search for planets beyond Earth's solar system and measure cosmic distance.

X-ray pulsar navigation is an innovative navigation technology in which periodic X-ray signals emitted from pulsars are used to determine location of a spacecraft in deep space. This method of navigation, based on X-ray signals emitted from pulsars is known as XNAV.

XNAV is expected to provide a faster estimation of spacecraft location in space as current systems are limited by the time delay at great distances. It is also seen as a cheaper alternative for a radio-based system as it would require reduced ground infrastructure. Besides, it is expected to lead to autonomous spacecraft navigation in the future. It will also save additional cost as X-ray satellites can be made smaller and lighter.

#### **Cuba's former President Fidel Castro passes away**

Cuba's former president Fidel Castro(90), one of the world's longest-serving and most iconic leaders, has passed away on 25 November 2016 due to old age. News of his death was announced on national television by President Raul Castro. The former Cuban President and leader of the Communist revolution ruled Cuba as a one-party state for almost half a century before handing over the powers to his brother Raul in 2008. His supporters praised him as a man who had given Cuba back to the people. He was com-

mander in chief of the 1959 Cuban revolution 1959 and had successfully built a communist state on the doorstep of the United States during Cold War.

Fidel Castro was born as Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz on August 13, 1926 in Birán, Holguin Province, Cuba. In 1953, he was imprisoned after leading an unsuccessful rising against Batista's regime. However was released in 1955 from prison under an amnesty deal. In 1956, Castro along with Che Guevara started a guerrilla war against the Cuban government led by US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. In 1959, he overthrew dictator Fulgencio Batista Government in through Communist revolution. He was sworn in as prime minister and was in office from 1959 to 1976. In 1960, he successfully fought off CIA-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion by Cuban exiles. He also defied many attempts even assassination attempts of US to topple him from power. 1962, under his leadership Cuba allowed USSR can deploy nuclear missiles on its territory which had resulted into Cuban missile crisis. Under his leadership, Cuba became a one-party communist state, industry and business were nationalized and state socialist reforms implemented throughout society. His greatest legacy is free healthcare and education, which have given Cuba some of the region's best human development statistics. In 2008, he stepped down as President of Cuba due to health issues. He was in office from 1976 to 2008. He world's third longest-serving head of state, after Britain's Queen Elizabeth and the King of Thailand.

### **BUSINESS**

#### **India rises to second spot on global business optimism index: Report**

As per recently released report, India has ranked second in the global business optimism index during the third quarter (July-September 2016). It was revealed by the Grant Thornton International Business Report. India has improved its ranking by one spot in the index. The report was prepared on the basis of a quarterly conducted global business survey of 2,500 businesses across 36 economies. Earlier in second quarter (April-June 2016) India was ranked third after being on top for two consecutive quarters.

In the report Indonesia took the top spot and Philippines was placed third after India. India was able to improve its rank because of policy reforms and adaptation of Goods and Services tax (GST). The improvement clearly reflects that the reform agenda of the government and its efforts on improving the climate for doing business are having an impact. The ranking was also complimented by the rise of employment expectations. India came into light in the

global economy due to the programmes and initiatives along with its focus on building relationships with all major economic powers. Globally, business optimism stands at net 33%, rising 1 percentage point from the previous quarter but has failed by 11 percentage points over the year.

#### **Airtel launches India's first Payments Bank service in Rajasthan**

Airtel Payments Bank Limited or Airtel Bank became the first payments bank in the country to launch live banking services in Rajasthan. The pilot phase of the Airtel bank launched in Rajasthan aims at testing systems and processes ahead of a full scale pan Indian launch.

Airtel Payments Bank is a subsidiary of Bharti Airtel Limited. Mahindra Bank holds 19.9% stake in it. Airtel retail outlets across Rajasthan will act as banking points. They offer a range of basic, convenient banking services as per Payments Bank guidelines issued by RBI. Customers can open bank accounts by using Aadhaar based e-KYC. Airtel subscriber's mobile number will function as a bank account number. The bank will accept deposits not exceeding Rs 1 lakh. It cannot perform lending activities, except while giving loans to its employees on approval of the board. It intends to give an interest rate of 7.25% per annum on deposits in savings accounts. The bank will be offering customers the option to perform cashless purchases of goods and services securely through their mobile phones. The bank also plans to expand its merchant network in Rajasthan to 1,00,000 by the end of the year giving a big boost to the digital payments ecosystem.

### **AWARDS**

#### **Rekha to be awarded DIFF (Dubai International Film Festival) Lifetime Achievement Award**

Veteran Bollywood actress and Rajya Sabha MP Rekha will be honoured by the upcoming Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) with a Lifetime Achievement Award. The festival will commence on 7 December 2016 and will conclude on 14 December 2016. Rekha will be honoured for her 40-year career and participation in more than 180 films.

Rekha was born as Bhanu Rekha Ganesan on 10 October 1954 in Chennai in then Madras State (now Tamil Nadu). She is known for her versatility and is acknowledged as one of the finest actresses in Hindi cinema. She had started her career in 1966 as a child actress in the Telugu film **Rangula Ratnam**. However, her film debut as a lead has happened with the movie **Sawan Bhadon**. She was often panned for her looks

and it was not until the mid-to-late 1970s that she got recognition as an actress. She has acted in over 180 films in a career spanning over 40 years. Apart from mainstream cinema, she also appeared in parallel cinema. She has won three **Filmfare Awards**, two for Best Actress and one for Best Supporting Actress, for her roles in **Khubsoorat**, **Khoon Bhari Maang** and **Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi** respectively. Her portrayal of a classical courtesan in **Umrao Jaan** won her the **National Film Award** for Best Actress. In 2010, she was honoured with the **Padma Shri** by the Government of India.

Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF) is an annual film festival held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It was started in year 2004. Each year DIFF provides platform and presents new and exciting cinema from the Arab world, Asia, Africa and beyond. It is a not-for-profit cultural event, presented and organised by Dubai Entertainment & Media Organization.

#### **SAIL wins 2016 Golden Peacock Award for corporate governance**

The Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has won the prestigious 2016 Golden Peacock Award for Corporate Governance. The award was received by Ashwini Kumar, CEO of Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) on behalf of SAIL during the 16th London Global Convention on Corporate Governance and Sustainability in London, UK. Golden Peacock awards Instituted by the Institute of Directors (IoD) in 1991. They are presented annually under various categories. The awards comprise to sets Global Awards and National Awards.

SAIL was presented the award on account of its exemplary performance in the field of corporate governance that is for balancing the interests of all the stakeholders of the company shareholders, management, customers, suppliers, financiers, government and the community

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) is one of the largest state-owned steel in India and one of the top steel makers in world. SAIL is the 24th largest steel producer in the world. It was founded in 1954 and incorporated in 1973. Its headquarters are in New Delhi. It operates and owns 5 integrated steel plants at Bhilai, Durgapur, Rourkela, Bokaro and Burnpur and 3 special steel plants at Salem, Durgapur and Bhadravathi.

#### **Professor Raj Bisaria selected for Kalidas Samman**

Madhya Pradesh Government has selected renowned theatre personality Prof Raj Bisaria for the prestigious 'Kalidas Samman' national award for 2015-16. He will be bestowed with the prestigious award for achievement in theatre in a ceremony to be held in Ujjain.

He was born on November 10, 1935. He is director, producer, actor and educationalist. He is best known for blending artistic concepts of the East and the West and the traditional and the modern. The Press Trust of India (PTI) describes him as the father of the modern theatre in North India. He had founded Theatre Arts Workshop in 1966 and Bhartendu Academy of Dramatic Arts in 1975. He also owns repertory company of Bhartendu Academy of Dramatic Arts founded in 1980.

The Kalidas Samman is a prestigious arts award presented annually by the government of Madhya Pradesh in India. The award is named after Kālidāsa, a renowned Classical Sanskrit writer of ancient India. The Kalidas Samman was first awarded in 1980. It was initially conferred in alternate years in the fields of Classical Music, Classical Dance, Theatre and Plastic Arts. From 1986-87 onwards, the awards were presented in all four fields every year. The award is presented for outstanding achievement in one of the four categories.

At present, the award carries a cash prize of 200,000 (200,000) rupees. The winners are selected by a five-member committee appointed by the Government of Madhya Pradesh, which consists of eminent artists, art critics and officials from the Sangeet Natak Akademi (India's National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama).

Some of the previous recipients are Pandit Ravi Shankar, MF Husain, Pandit Jasraj, Shambhu Mitra, Habib Tanvir, Ebrahim Alkazi etc.

#### **Radhika Menon becomes first woman to receive IMO's Exceptional Bravery award at Sea**

Captain Radhika Menon on 7 July 2016 was selected for the 2016 International Maritime Organization (IMO) Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea. Menon has been selected for the prestigious award for her role in the rescue of seven fishermen from a sinking fishing boat in the Bay of Bengal in June 2015. Captain Menon will also be the first female to receive the IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea. The award will be presented to Menon on 21 November 2016 at IMO Headquarters in London, United Kingdom.

Radhika Menon had joined the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) as a trainee radio officer in 1991. She was the first woman to do so and is native of Kodungallur in Kerala. Later on she ascended the hierarchy by clearing exams for the posts of second mate and chief mate and did the sea time required to appear for the master's certificate in 2010. In 2011, Radhika Menon had made history by becoming the first woman to become captain of Indian Merchant Navy. In 2012, she took charge of MT Suvarna

Swarajya.

International Maritime Organisation (IMO) is a UN's specialised agency responsible for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine pollution by ships.

Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea is an annual Award established by IMO. It seeks to provide international recognition for those who perform acts of exceptional bravery at the risk of losing their own life.

#### **Thailand's Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn conferred with first World Sanskrit Award**

Thailand's Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on 21 November 2016 was presented with the first 'World Sanskrit Award' for her exemplary contribution for the promotion of the language for the year 2015. On the other hand, American linguist and Indologist Professor George Cardona was also honoured with the award for the year 2016. They were bestowed with the award by Vice President Hamid Ansari at a function held in New Delhi.

Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is the second daughter of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej. She was bestowed with the ceremonial title on 5 December 1977. She holds degrees in history and a doctorate in educational development. She teaches at the history department of the Chulachomkhalao Royal Military Academy. She speaks fluent Thai, English, French and Mandarin Chinese. She is currently studying German and Latin. She is noted educator and scholar of Sanskrit and Pali. She has been awarded with several awards and Honorary Doctorates including Honorary Degree of Doctor of Literature (Sanskrit) from Delhi University in 1987. She also won Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development Award from the Union Government in 2004; and Magsaysay Award for Public Service in 1991. She was also the Royal Patron of the 16th World Sanskrit Conference which was held in Bangkok in 2015.

The World Sanskrit Award was instituted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). It was announced by the Union External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj during her inaugural address in the 16th World Sanskrit Conference in Bangkok in June 2015. It is presented to eminent Sanskrit scholars to recognise their outstanding contribution to the study/research/ teaching in Sanskrit language and literature.

#### **Pandit Hari Prasad Chaurasia receives 2016 Sumitra Charat Ram Award**

Noted flautist Pandit Hari Prasad Chourasia (78) was conferred 2016 Sumitra Charat Ram Award for lifetime

achievement in the field of Indian classical music. The prestigious award bestowed upon him by Lt Governor Najeeb Jung at a function held in New Delhi.

Pandit Hari Prasad Chourasia Chaurasia had started learning vocal music at the tender age of 15 from his neighbour Pandit Rajaram. Later, he had switched over to playing the classical flute under the tutelage of Pandit Bholanath Prasanna of Varanasi. He plays in the North Indian tradition. He joined the All India Radio (AIR), Cuttack, Odisha in 1957 and worked as a composer and performer.

Prestigious Sumitra Charat Ram Award has been named after Sumitra Charat Ram who had played a key role in revival of the performing arts traditions, specially kathak and Hindustani music in north India.

Sumitra Charat Ram was also the founder of Shiram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, premier institution of performing arts. Presented for excellence in field of Indian classical dance and music or other disciplines of Indian art and culture, including theatre during last 15 years. Award carries a purse, citation, shawl, and a silver plaque.

The past recipients include Pt Birju Maharaj (kathak), Kishori Amonkar (Hindustani vocal), Mayadhar Raut (Odissi), Pt Jasraj (Hindustani vocal) and Kumudini Lakhia (kathak).

### **SPORTS**

#### **Indian Women's hockey team wins 2016 Asian Champions Trophy**

Indian Women's hockey team on 5 November 2016 has won the 2016 Asian Champions Trophy held in Singapore. It was the maiden win of Indian Women's hockey team in Asian Champions Trophy. In summit clash held in Singapore, India defeated China by 2-1 goals. The first goal for India was scored by Deep Grace Ekka in the 13th minute which was equalised by China's Zhong Mengling in the 44th minute. The second and winning goal was scored by Deepika Thakur that gave the India formidable lead to win the tournament.

The Asian Hockey Champions Trophy is held annually by the Asian Hockey Federation since 2011. The tournament features the Asian Games top six field hockey teams competing in a round robin format. This is for the first time that Indian eves won the Asian Champions Trophy competition. Top five women's teams of Asia took part in this tournament. This was also the qualifying round for the 2017 Asia Cup. In women's category, South Korea has won most titles for two times in 2010 and 2011.

### **Pratul Joshi wins Bahrain International Challenge badminton tournament**

Indian shuttler Pratul Joshi has won the Bahrain International Challenge badminton tournament in the men's singles category. It was his maiden international title. In the final match played at Segayya in Bahrain, Pratul defeated his brother Aditya Joshi by 21-17, 12-21 and 21-15 score.

On the other hand, the women's singles title went to Sri fatmawati of Indonesia. In the final clash, she defeated compatriot Asty Dwi Widyaningru.

Bahrain International Challenge is an open international badminton tournament in Bahrain. It was established in 2013. The 2016 edition of the tournament was held from 27 October and 30 October 2016.

### **Padmini Rout wins 2016 National Women Premier Chess Championship**

International Master Padmini Rout has won the 2016 National Women Premier Chess Championship. With this win, she has scored a hat-trick in the National Women Premier Chess Championship. Earlier she had won the championship in 2014 and 2015. She was representing Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) and played out a hard fought draw with her Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) teammate Eesha Karavade that helped her to secure a hat-trick of title wins. Ending her tally with eight points from 11 games, Padmini managed to put an end to a series of mediocre performances that saw her rating go down by over seventy points. The Odisha girl was at the top of her game right through and did not face any challenge in her quest to strike for gold. S Vijayalakshmi of Air India won silver medal while Eesha bagged bronze. The victory ensured that Padmini will be a part of the Indian women team in the next World team chess championship in which the Indian eves qualified by virtue of their performance in the last Chess Olympiad. The other two confirmed members of the team are Grandmasters Koneru Humpy and D Harika.

### **Aditi Ashok becomes first Indian to win Ladies European Tour title**

Teen golf sensation Aditi Ashok (18) on 13 November 2016 became the first Indian woman to win a Ladies European Tour title. She achieved this feat by winning the Hero Women's Indian Open held at the DLF Golf and Country Club in Gurugram, Haryana. She won a prize purse of 60,000 dollar. She won the tournament with a score of 3-under-par 213. Her round included birdies on the par-four second and 10th holes and bogeys on the seventh, 13th and 17th.

Aditi Ashok is an Indian professional golfer. She made history by being the youngest and first Indian to

win the Lalla Aicha Tour School and therefore secured her Ladies European Tour card for the 2016 season. This victory also made her the youngest winner of a Q School for an international tour. She is the first and the only Indian golfer who played the Asian Youth Games in 2013, Youth Olympic Games in 2014, Asian Games in 2014 and Rio Olympics in 2016.

### **Gaganjeet Bhullar wins Indonesia Open**

Ace Indian Golfrer Gaganjeet Bhullar on 21 November 2016 won the Bank BRI-JCB Indonesia Open. He emerged victorious in the 300000 US dollar tournament for the second time in his career after closing with a four-under-par 68.

Earlier, Bhullar has also won the event in 2013. With this year victory, he has sealed his seventh Asian Tour victory. It was his second title 2016 season with a 16-under-par 272 total at the Pondok Indah Golf Course in Jakarta.

With this win, Bhullar became the fifth player after Thaworn Wiratchant (Thailand), Frank Nobilo (New Zealand), Frankie Minoza (Philippines) and Lu Hsi-chuen (Chinese Taipei) to win the event twice.

He was awarded Arjuna Award in 2013.

### **PV Sindhu wins 2016 China Open Super Series Premier title**

Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu has won the 2016 China Open Super Series title in women's category. It was her maiden Super Series Premier title and first post 2016 Rio Olympics title. In the summit clash held in Fuzhao, Sindhu (World No 11) defeated China's Sun Yu (World No 9) by 21-11, 17-21, 21-11 score.

## **PERSON-IN-NEWS**

### **RBI appoints M Rajeshwar Rao as new Executive Director**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 7 November 2016 has appointed M Rajeshwar Rao as Executive Director (ED). He succeeded G Mahalingam, who took voluntary retirement from the central bank. In his new role, Mr. Rao will look after Department of Statistics and Information Management, Financial markets Operations Department and International Department of the RBI.

M Rajeshwar Rao has a Bachelor of Arts in Economics and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from University of Cochin. He is also a Certificated Associate of Indian Institute of Bankers. He had joined RBI in 1984 and as career central banker has exposure in various aspects of central bank functioning. Prior to his appointment as ED, he was the Chief General

Manager (CGM), Financial Markets Operations Department of the RBI. Previously, he had held charge of the Risk Monitoring Department of RBI. He has also worked as the Banking Ombudsman, New Delhi and in the Reserve Bank's regional offices at Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai and New Delhi.

#### **Aniruddha Rajput elected as Member of International Law Commission of UN**

Indian lawyer, Aniruddha Rajput (33) on 4 November 2016 has been elected as a member International Law Commission (ILC), a top body of legal experts of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). He is India's first time candidate to the Commission and youngest among the group. He is also the first Indian nominee chosen from outside the close circuit of lawyers of the Union Ministry of External Affairs.

Rajput is among other 34 individuals elected as members of the ILC. The members were elected from five geographical groupings of Asia-Pacific, African, Latin American and Caribbean, Eastern European and Western European states. They will have five-year term commencing from January 2017. Rajput was elected from the Asia Pacific Group by gaining 160 votes. Aniruddha Rajput had practiced in the Supreme Court for six years and was also visiting professor for international Commercial Arbitration and International Trade Law at Indian Law Institute. He is an alumnus of London School of Economics. He was appointed by Law Commission of India to an expert group tasked with analysis of Model Bilateral Investment Treaty 2015. His prime areas of interest being international laws include sources of international law, law of sea, international arbitration, UN law & practice and international trade law (WTO law). He has several publications to his name, including books, articles, chapters, conference papers on legal issues.

The International Law Commission was established by the UNGA in 1947 to undertake the mandate of UN to ensure promotion and progressive development of International law and its codification. It holds its annual session in Geneva, Switzerland for a period of ten to twelve weeks.

The members of the Commission are the people who possess recognized competence and qualifications in both doctrinal and practical aspects of international law.

#### **Union Government appoints Bindheswar Pathak as brand ambassador of Swachh Rail Mission**

The Union Ministry of Railways has appointed Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak (73), the founder of Sulabh International as a Brand Ambassador for Swachh Rail Mission of Indian Railway. Indian Railways had tied

up with Sulabh International to clean some important railway stations across the country as part of the mission with an aim to promote cleanliness at rail premises. As a pilot project, Sulabh has started cleaning and maintenance of five important railway stations from September 2016. These railway stations are Gorakhpur, Old Delhi, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Gwalior. Bindheswar Pathak has born on April 2, 1943 in Rampur, Bihar. He is sociologist and he founder of Sulabh International, an India-based social service organization which works to promote human rights, environmental sanitation, non-conventional sources of energy, waste management and social reforms through education. His work is considered pioneering in social reform, especially in the field of sanitation and hygiene. He received various national and international awards for his work with this organization.

#### **Sarabjit Singh Marwah becomes Canada's first Sikh Senator**

India born Sarabjit Singh Marwah on 2 November 2016 has become the first Sikh to be appointed to the Canadian Senate (upper house). He was among six people from Ontario who have appointed to Senate by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. With this, he becomes the only Indian-origin member of the Canadian Senate. He is third Sikh person in the Canadian parliament after Defence Minister Harjeet Sajjan and Science Minister Navdeep Bains. There are over 20 MPs of Indian origin the Canadian House of Commons (lower house).

Sarabjit Singh Marwah was born in Kolkata in 1952. He completed his schooling from St Xavier's School. He is an alumnus of Delhi's St Stephen's College and the Delhi School of Economics and holds an MBA degree from the University of California in Los Angeles. He formerly worked at Scotiabank. He had joined the company in Toronto as a financial analyst in 1978. Rising through the ranks, he went on to become the Chief Financial Officer (COO) of the bank in 1998. In 2002, he was made the bank's senior executive vice president and chief financial officer. He is one of the founders of the Sikh Foundation of Canada that promotes Sikh culture and art among the diaspora community. He has also served on the boards of many famous Canadian institutions such as the Toronto Star, the Toronto International Film Festival, the C.D. Howe Institute, the Royal Ontario Museum, the United Way Campaign and the Hospital for Sick Children.

**Sushil Chandra takes charge as CBDT chairman**  
Senior Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Sushil Chandra on 1 November 2016 took over as chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Chandra

replaced Rani Singh Nair, who retired on 31 October 2016. Chandra is a 1980-batch officer of Indian Revenue Service. Prior to this appointment he was working in the board as Member (Investigation).

The Central Board of Direct Taxes provides essential inputs for policy and planning of direct taxes in India. It is the policy-making body of the Income Tax Department under the Union Finance Ministry. It is a statutory authority functioning under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963. The Chairperson of the CBDT is the senior-most IRS civil servant in the Government of India. The Chairperson of Central Board of Direct Taxes is the ex officio Special Secretary to the Government of India and also cadre controlling authority of the Indian Revenue Service. The CBDT Chairperson is placed above the officers of the rank of Lieutenant-General, Vice-Admiral or Air Marshal, CBI Director and Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General in the Order of Precedence.

#### **Veteran Carnatic Music exponent M Balamuralikrishna passes away**

Legendary vocalist, playback singer and composer Mangalampalli Balamuralikrishna passed away due to age-related geriatric problems in Chennai. He was 86. He was considered as doyen of classical music. During his long musical career he had excelled as a prominent Carnatic vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, playback singer, composer and actor.

Balamuralikrishna was born on 6 July 1930 in Sankaraguptam, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. He had started his musical journey as a child prodigy at a tender age of 8. Since then, he has performed in over 25 thousand concerts. He had innovated the whole Carnatic music system by keeping its rich tradition untouched. The ragas like Ganapathi, Sarvashri, Mahati, Lavangi etc. were credited to him. He also had composed over 400 compositions in various languages including in his native tongue, Telugu and in Kannada, Tamil, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali, and Punjabi. He has penned about 300 kirtanas. His compositions range from Devotional to Varnams, Krithis, Javalis and Thillans, in all the fundamental 72 melakarta ragas to film music. He made his acting debut with Bhakta Prahlada (1967) as Narada and also has acted in various films including Kananda

Many Universities decorated him with honorary doctorates. He was a recipient of by the French award Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and Mahatma Gandhi Silver Medal from UNESCO. He was a recipient of several awards and honours. Few of the awards and honours conferred on Balamuralikrishna were Padma Vibhushan (1991), Padma Shri(1971),

Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1975), National Film Award for Best Male Playback Singer for Hamsageethe –“Himadri Suthe Pahimam”(1976), National Film Award for Best Music Direction for Madhavacharya (1987). He was offered the title Sangita Kalanidhi by the Music Academy of Chennai.

#### **Jagdish Singh Khehar appointed executive chairman of NALSA**

The Union government on 18 November 2016 has appointed Jagdish Singh Khehar, a judge of the Supreme Court, as the new Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). He succeeds Anil R. Dave who retired as Judge of Supreme Court after completing tenure of over six years.

National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) provides for free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society. The National Legal Services Authority of India was formed on 5 December 1995. It was instituted under the authority of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987. Its aim is to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reasons of economic or other disabilities. NALSA also identifies specific categories of marginalised and excluded groups and formulates various schemes for implementation of legal service programmes. It provides services of free legal aid in civil and criminal matters for the poor and marginalised people who cannot afford the services of a lawyer in any court or tribunal. It also organizes Lok Adalats for amicable settlement of disputes. It works in close coordination with various State Legal Services Authorities, District Legal Services Authorities and other agencies.

#### **Indian-American Nikki Haley named as US ambassador to UN**

US President-elect Donald Trump has named Indian-American Governor of South Carolina State, Nikki Haley for the high-profile post of US ambassador to the United Nations. With this, she becomes the first Indian-American to be appointed to a Cabinet-level post in any US administration. She is also first female appointment to a Cabinet-level post and overall sixth appointment of the President-elect Donald Trump led administration.

Nikki Haley is the daughter of Indian immigrants. She was a vocal critic of Trump on the campaign trail. The 44-year-old has been characterised as a rising star within the Republican Party is the youngest Governor in the US. She has served America as the 116th Governor of South Carolina since 2011. She is also the first woman and first minority governor of South Carolina. She is the second Indian-American,

after Bobby Jindal, to serve as governor in the US. She was the prominent leader, who pushed for the removal of the Charleston battle flag from the South Carolina State House after the deadly church shooting in Charleston in June 2015.

#### **Former ISRO Chairman MGK Menon passes away**

Renowned physicist MGK Menon passed away on 22 November 2016. He was 88. He was Scientist, Science & Technology policy-maker, scholar, parliamentarian, Cabinet Minister. Menon had a major role in the development of science and technology in India over 50 years. One of his most important contributions was nurturing the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, which his mentor Homi J. Bhabha founded in 1945. He has been described as one of India's most eminent "statesmen of science"

Mambillikalathil Govind Kumar Menon was born on 28 August 1928 in Mangalore, Karnataka. He was famously known as MGK or Goku. He studied at Jaswant College, Jodhpur, and the Royal Institute of Science, Bombay, before he moved to the University of Bristol for his Ph.D in elementary particle physics under the guidance of Nobel Laureate Cecil F. Powell in 1953. He was awarded a Ph.D. at a relatively young age of 25 by University of Bristol, UK in 1953. He had joined TIFR (Tata Institute of Fundamental Research) in 1955 at invitation of Homi Bhabha. In 1966, he was appointed Director of TIFR after death of Homi Bhabha. In 1971, he was appointed Secretary in the Department of Electronics. Since then for two decades plus, he played important role in India's science and technology policy-making. In 1971, after death of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, he was given additional charge as Chairman of ISRO and the Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad. Subsequently in 1974 he was appointed Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister and concurrently looked after the DRDO. In 1978 he was appointed Secretary, Department of Science and Technology and Director-General of the CSIR. He had served as the Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from January 1972 and September 1972. He had served as member of the Planning Commission (1982-1989), Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister (1986-1989), Vice President, CSIR (1989-1990). He had served as a Minister of State (MoS) in the short-lived V.P. Singh Cabinet; and a Rajya Sabha member from 1990 to 1996. He has been awarded with Padmabhushan (1968), Padma Vibhushan (1985). The asteroid 7564 Gokumenon was named in his honour in late 2008. In May 1970, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

#### **Akodara in Gujarat becomes India's first Digital Village**

Akodara village in Sabarkantha district of Gujarat recently has earned the title of becoming first digital village in India. The village with a total population of 1,191 people and 250 households uses a various cashless system for payments of goods and services. All transactions in the village are carried out through digital modes like SMS, net-banking or debit cards. The village was adopted by ICICI Bank under its Digital Village Project in 2015 and made cashless by adopting digital technology. The project was launched in January 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and ICICI Bank MD and CEO Chanda Kochar to mark 60-year-celebration of the ICICI group's existence. All households in village have savings account in local ICICI Bank branch. The bank has provided training to villagers to embrace digital technology to reduce dependence on cash. The village has almost 100% financial rate and all mobile banking is done in Hindi, English and Gujarati languages.

In the village, most transactions between Rs. 10 and Rs. 5000 are done via SMS. The payment goes directly into the shopkeeper's bank account as the buyer and seller are both connected through their accounts in the same bank. The village has its own website: <http://akodara-digitalvillage.in>. Its wi-fi with high speed broadband connectivity has some 50 subscribers across 200-odd households. The wi-fi facility also enables farmers to access the latest price of agricultural commodities on NCDEX, with the bank acting as a hub for business activity. The ICICI Bank has developed a dedicated and customised SMS banking platform and software for the village to enable users to do basic banking transactions in English and Gujarati.

The bank has also developed a micro-ATM-based solution to facilitate the local mandi commission agents to make payments to farmers for their produce. It can be said that this village has become prime example of how e-banking can be practically implemented in Indian villages without much difficulty to make India cashless economy.