

CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : MAY 2016

STATE

2016 West Bengal Assembly election results

Fighting incumbency and the opposition alliance of the Left and the Congress, the Trinamool Congress has a solid two-thirds majority having bagged a total of 211 seats. In the 294-member Assembly, the Left-Congress alliance did not make much of an impact despite prediction to the contrary by political pundits, as it captured 74 seats. The Congress, however, did better than its Left allies winning 44 seats. The CPI(M) bagged 26 seats, while the BJP won three seats as against a single member in the outgoing Assembly. In the Darjeeling hills, the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha won three seats.

A number of heavyweights including five ministers, jailed ex-minister Madan Mitra, Indian soccer icon Bhaichung Bhutia and CPI(M) state secretary Surjya Kanta Mishra lost in the election. The option of NOTA had very little takers in WB, according to PTI. Only 1.5% — counted till around 8 pm this evening — went for the None Of The Above option.

The Narada sting operation seems to have failed to cut much ice with the West Bengal electorate. Five of the six Narada-stung nominees of the ruling party have emerged victorious, reports IANS. The only candidate to lose was Madan Mitra, the first former State Minister to contest the polls from behind the bars.

Red wave trounces UDF in Kerala Assembly elections

Barely two hours of counting and the trend already emerged. The LDF has wrested power in Kerala. The BJP-led NDA has consolidated its position. The party has won Nemom and has come second in some constituencies.

Three parties — Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), Janata Dal (United) and the Kerala Congress (Democratic) have drawn a blank in the State.

As per the final tally, LDF got 85 seats, while UDF settled for 47. Five independents are already supporting the Left front.

BJP breaks Congress stranglehold over Assam

The BJP was set to form its first government in the northeast, ousting the Congress in Assam after its

15-year uninterrupted rule. BJP chief ministerial candidate Sarbananda Sonowal promised that the new government would leave no stone unturned to fulfil the expectations of the people of Assam.

With results still pouring in, the Bharatiya Janata Party alliance looks set to bag over 85 seats in the 126-member assembly.

As per latest reports, the BJP has won 56 seats and is leading in four, while its alliance partners, Asom Gana Parishad has won in 12 and is leading in two seats, while the Bodoland People's Front (BPF) has won 10 seats and is leading in two. The Congress has won 23 seats, and is leading in three, while its partner United Peoples' Party (UPP) has drawn a blank.

The principal opposition party in the outgoing Assam legislative assembly, All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) could win only 13 seats (11 won and leading in two) compared to 18 seats it won in the last assembly elections in 2011. The results have dashed the hopes of the AIUDF, which had hoped to play kingmaker. Sarbananda Sonowal expressed happiness over the results and said the party would put in its best efforts to fulfill the expectations of the people of Assam.

“The greater Assamese society in Assam spontaneously responded to the appeal of BJP and its alliance partners and it led us to victory. The people of Assam have been suffering due to the misrule of the Congress in Assam. So they supported the BJP and its allies to form the government,” Sonowal said.

Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi accepted defeat and said the party will play the role of a constructive opposition in the Assam legislative assembly in the coming days.

Victorious Jayalalithaa hails people's faith in AIADMK

Poised for a successive term in office with her party establishing clear leads in over 125 seats, AIADMK supremo and Chief Minister Jayalalithaa said her party had managed the “historic” win despite absence of an alliance and hailed people's faith in her.

Making a victory speech from her Poes Garden residence amid a steady stream of visitors, including top officials, she thanked the voters for choosing her party and vowed to work with a new found energy for the welfare of people of Tamil Nadu.

The Chief Minister said the win was “truly historic” in the sense that after 1984, this was the first time that a ruling party could win elections and form government again.

Incidentally, AIADMK had managed a similar feat then also, under party founder and Ms. Jayalalithaa’s mentor late M.G. Ramachandran.

4.11 Lakh People Affected In Parts Of Andhra Pradesh Due To ‘Roanu’ Cyclone

Andhra Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister N Chinnarajappa said around 4.11 lakh people were affected by ‘Roanu’ cyclone in the East Godavari district. “Crops in 9,360 hectares were damaged due to rains, which have been lashing the district for the last two days. 304 villages in 33 mandals of the district are affected by the cyclone,” he said.

Over 10 lakh trees had been uprooted, 20.93 lakh families affected in some way or the other, and 22 lakh tonnes of food grain and standing crop destroyed. In all, 46 people died. Buildings shook as the wind speed breached the 200 kmph-mark and gusting peaked over 270 kmph.

Sarbananda Sonowal sworn in as first BJP CM of Assam

After 15 years of Congress rule, Assam gets its first BJP government headed by Sarbananda Sonowal. The BJP coalition won a comfortable 86 seats in the 126-member Assembly. The BJP had alliances with smaller parties and ethnic groups like the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), the Bodo People’s Front (BPF) and the Rabhas and the Tiwa community, which also paved the way for its stronghold in the state.

Pinarayi Vijayan to become Kerala CM

The CPI (M) leadership has picked party Polit Bureau member Pinarayi Vijayan as Chief Minister. The CPI (M) State secretariat took the formal decision to make Mr. Vijayan the party’s Chief Minister nominee in the presence of party general secretary Sitaram Yechury and Polit Bureau member Prakash Karat.

Mr. Yechury and Mr. Karat held a brief consultation with party veteran V.S. Achuthanandan, who had evinced interest in becoming the Chief Minister once again, about the party Central leadership’s decision shortly before the formal meeting of the State secretariat.

Gujarat BJP announces 10% EBC quota for non-reserved classes

Amid the ongoing Patidar reservation stir, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat announced 10 per cent reservation for economically backward classes from all non-reserved communities in the state. The decision was taken at the core-committee meeting held at state party headquarters, Shree Kamalam, under the chairmanship of national BJP chief Amit Shah and in the presence of Chief Minister Anandiben Patel. The reservation for EBCs will be in addition to the existing 49 per cent reservation for Scheduled Castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

The government will come out with an Ordinance regarding the same on May 1, which is also celebrated as Gujarat Day.

Announcing the decision, Vijay Rupani, state party president and cabinet minister said all the non-reserved communities in the state will get the benefit of 10 per cent reservation under the Economically Backward Class (EBC). The income limit for the same has been set at Rs 6 lakh per annum.

The non-reserved communities include Patidars, Brahmins, and Baniyas, among others.

Uttarakhand HC quashes President’s Rule

The Uttarakhand High Court quashed the order of the Central government that had put the State under President’s Rule on March 27. Deciding that the Congress shall return to power, the Division Bench of the Court also ordered that a floor test must be held in the Uttarakhand Assembly on April 29 where former Chief Minister Harish Rawat’s claim of having majority support shall be put to test.

The Division Bench comprising Chief Justice K.M. Joseph and Justice V.K. Bisht had decided to reserve the verdict for later, but taking the apprehensions of Mr. Rawat’s counsel into consideration where it was being feared that the Central Government might revoke President’s Rule and try and get the BJP to form government in the State before the Court’s final verdict in the case, the Bench took the decisions on quashing Presidential Proclamation.

Prior to the judgment, the Bench slammed the Centre for planning to attempt the revocation of President’s Rule before the Court’s verdict.

Chief Justice Joseph said that the Court was “pained” by the Centre’s actions in the case on imposition of President’s Rule in Uttarakhand where the Centre was acting like a “private party”. He said that the

Central government, which should be impartial, was acting like a “private party.”

In an application filed by former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat on April 7 it was apprehended that the Centre might revoke Article 356 from Uttarakhand and attempt to get the BJP in Uttarakhand to form government.

High Court strikes down Madhya Pradesh provision for reservation in promotions to SC/ST category

A two Judge Bench of the High Court of Madhya Pradesh gave a landmark judgment on the issue of reservation in promotions (in government service) for the SC/ST category by declaring as ultra vires and non-est in law the existing provision relating to reservation, backlog, vacancies, carry forward of backlog vacancies and the operation of roster, contained in the Madhya Pradesh Rules of 2002.

The High Court order says that the provision for reservation for promotions granted to the SC/ST category under Madhya Pradesh Rules 2002 runs contrary to the constitutional provisions contained in clause (4A) and (4B) of Article 16 and Article 335 of the Constitution.

The Madhya Pradesh Rules with provision for reservation in promotions for SC/ST category were framed and brought in force by the previous Madhya Pradesh Congress Government led by Digvijay Singh.

Drought declared in 29,000 villages in Maharashtra

The Maharashtra declared drought in over 29,000 villages of the State. The villages are mostly located in Marathwada and Vidarbha.

The government through a corrigendum said wherever a reference was made to a ‘drought-like situation’ in the State manual, it would be read as ‘drought’ in accordance with an assurance it gave to the High Court recently. The Congress and the NCP, however, said the State was not serious about addressing the drought and the move was meant to avoid judicial action.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the villages now declared drought-hit were already receiving benefits from the government.

President’s Rule lifted, Rawat to be CM again

Making a “graceful” exit from Uttarakhand, the Centre conceded in the Supreme Court that deposed Chief Minister Harish Rawat won the trust vote conducted on May 10. President’s rule in the State was revoked later in the day.

The Centre said Mr. Rawat, who had led the Congress-led government before his ouster on March 27, is to be restored as CM the very moment President’s rule is revoked. “You can wait at the gate. The moment it is revoked, go in and take charge,” Attorney-General Mukul Rohatgi told Mr. Rawat’s lawyers in an aside during the court hearing.

The offer from Mr. Rohatgi came even before a Bench of Justices Dipak Misra and S.K. Singh opened the sealed cover containing the results of the floor test. The Attorney-General’s open admission of Mr. Rawat’s 33-28 victory against the BJP in the trust vote won him plaudits from senior advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Manu Singhvi for being “very, very fair.” The Supreme Court Bench of Justices Dipak Misra and S.K. Singh clarified that the petition filed by former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat on the larger question of the constitutionality of proclamation of President’s rule on March 27 would be kept alive and judicially reviewed.

The court would also separately hear the pending petitions of nine dissident Congress MLAs who had challenged their disqualification by the Speaker for ‘horse-trading.’

It had refused to stay their disqualification, due to which they were unable to vote in the decisive apex court-ordered floor test. Had they voted, the numbers would have favoured the BJP in the Assembly in the trust vote.

The court indicated that in case it decides the petitions in favour of the disqualified MLAs, a second floor test may be a possibility.

NATIONAL

TRAI regulation on call drops arbitrary, unreasonable: SC

The Supreme Court struck down a TRAI regulation that made it mandatory for telecom companies to compensate subscribers for call drops holding it as “arbitrary, unreasonable and non-transparent.”

“We have held the impugned regulation to be ultra vires, arbitrary, unreasonable and non-transparent,” a Bench comprising Justices Kurian Joseph and R.F. Nariman said.

The apex court passed the judgment on the appeals filed by COAI, a body of Unified Telecom Service Providers of India and 21 telecom operators, including Vodafone, Bharti Airtel and Reliance, challenging the Delhi High Court order which had upheld TRAI’s decision.

The telecom companies had told the apex court that the entire sector is under huge debt and they have to pay big price for spectrum, therefore zero tolerance on call drops should not be imposed on them.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had told the apex court that it would take action against the telcos for call drops to protect the interest of consumers.

Earlier this year, the Delhi High Court upheld the October 16, 2015 decision of TRAI, making it mandatory for cellular operators to pay consumers one rupee per call drop experienced on their networks, subject to a cap of Rs. 3 a day.

Collegium recommends four judges for SC (Important)

The Supreme Court Collegium has recommended senior advocate L. Nageswara Rao, counsel for Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa in a disproportionate assets case in the Supreme Court, for appointment as Supreme Court judge. Mr. Rao also served as Additional Solicitor General in the Supreme Court for the UPA-II government and the present NDA government before he resigned from the post.

Mr. Rao is also spearheading the Tamil Nadu government's objections against the conduct of National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test in 2016-17.

If the appointment goes through, Mr. Rao would be the seventh person in India's legal history to be directly appointed to the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court collegium had also recommended the names of Allahabad High Court Chief Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Madhya Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Ajay Manikrao Khanwilkar and Kerala High Court Chief Justice Ashok Bhushan for appointment as Supreme Court judges.

The three names have reached the Ministry of Law and Justice, which is processing the files, sources in the ministry said.

The recommendation comes after a 15-month hiatus since the appointment of Justice Amitava Roy to the Supreme Court in February 2015. These three would be the first appointments to the Supreme Court since the collegium system of judicial appointments was restored.

A Constitution Bench of the apex court in October 2015 struck down the NDA government's National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) laws meant to replace the 22-year-old collegium system and give equal say to politicians in appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

The appointments, if finally made, would augment the judicial strength of the Supreme Court from the present 25 to 28. The collegium recommendations follow Chief Justice Thakur's emotional outpouring of the "impossible burden" shouldered by a skeletal number of judges who work day in and day out to clear pending cases.

The three appointments would also be a relief in a year in which the apex court would see five of its judges retiring — Justice F.M.I. Kalifulla in July, Justices V. Gopala Gowda and C. Nagappan in October, Justices Anil R. Dave and Shiva Kirti Singh in November.

Any further delay in appointment of Supreme Court judges, even as the government is yet to finalise the Memorandum of Procedure for Appointment of Judges, would have reduced the apex court's strength to 20 by the end of 2016.

Justice D.Y. Chandrachud hails from Maharashtra and is a graduate from St. Stephen's College. He did his post-graduation in Law and is also a Doctor of Juridical Sciences from Harvard. He has appeared in several PILs, including cases dealing with the rights of bonded women workers, HIV positive workers in the workplace, contract labour, and the rights of religious and linguistic minorities.

Justice A.M. Khanwilkar also hails from Maharashtra and has been the top judge of the State's High Court since 2013.

Justice Ashok Bhushan hails from Uttar Pradesh and was sworn in as the State's Chief Justice in March 2015. The last such direct appointments from the Bar were that of Justices Rohinton F. Nariman and U.U. Lalit after a gap of 15 years.

The first to be appointed from the Bar was Justice S.M. Sikri in 1963. He became the Chief Justice of India in January 1971 and retired in April 1973.

Justice S.C. Roy was appointed judge in 1971 and he died after holding the post for four months. In 1988, Justice Kuldip Singh was appointed directly from the Bar. He retired in December 1996.

Three years later in January 1999, Santosh Hegde was appointed Supreme Court judge and he retired in June 2005.

Bankruptcy code gets Rajya Sabha nod, to ease business conditions

The Rajya Sabha gave its assent to the new bankruptcy code, almost a week later after it was passed by the lower house of the Parliament, clearing the law that provides for speedy resolution of bankrupt

businesses.

The bill seeks to bring a host of regulatory changes to build a robust and faster insolvency resolution mechanism besides setting up of an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India. Under the new code, employees and workmen will have first right during liquidation of assets under the law followed by secured creditors.

Mahindra joins EP100 campaign to double its energy productivity

Automobile giant Mahindra & Mahindra has become the first Indian company to join a global energy campaign led by an international non-profit group that will work with the world's most influential businesses in setting commitments to double their energy productivity.

By signing up to 'EP100' campaign led by 'The Climate Group', the world's largest manufacturer of tractors has committed to doubling their energy productivity by 2030, a core requirement for any business signing on to the campaign.

Supreme Court upholds validity of criminal defamation law

The Supreme Court upheld the validity of the criminal defamation law. The court pronounced its verdict on a batch of petitions including the ones by Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BJP leader Subramanian Swamy challenging the constitutional validity of sections 499 and 500 of the Indian Penal Code providing for criminal defamation.

The apex court gave eight weeks to petitioners Mr. Gandhi, Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Swamy to challenge pending criminal defamation cases in High Courts or face trial. The law has no chilling effect on free speech, the apex court said. "Right to free speech is not absolute. It does not mean freedom to hurt another's reputation which is protected under Article 21 of the Constitution".

The petitioners had argued that the criminal defamation under these sections of the IPC travelled beyond constitution's article 19(2) that imposes reasonable restriction on the freedom of speech and expression. The central government had defended their retention on the grounds that while in other countries, defamation cases are decided very fast, in India it takes years even decades before they reach conclusion. Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi told the bench in the course of the hearing on July 8, 2015, that unlike

in Britain where such cases are decided very fast, in India, it takes 10 to 20 years to decide them.

The verdict was reserved on August 13, 2015, after the bench of Justice Dipak Misra and Justice Prafulla C. Pant heard the matter spread over a month. Mr. Rohatgi had said that there were sufficient safeguards in article 19(2) which imposed reasonable restrictions of the right to free expression and speech guaranteed under article 19.

Emergency number '112' from Jan 1

The single emergency number '112' will be operational throughout India from January 1 to help people reach immediate services of police, ambulance and fire department.

Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has approved the provision of a single number for various emergency services that would be similar to the '911' all-in-one emergency service in the U.S..

The service will also be accessible even through those SIMs and landlines whose outgoing call facility has been stopped or temporarily suspended.

A person in distress will need to call only 112, which will direct the call to concerned departments immediately for help.

All existing emergency numbers will be phased out within a year of rolling out 112, depending upon the awareness about this new facility.

In India, different emergency communication and response systems are in place - police (100), fire brigade (101), ambulance (102) and Emergency Disaster Management (108).

People will be able to feed '112' in panic button system which will also be available on all mobile phones from January 1 under law. The panic button will enable users to make emergency call or send alerts to multiple numbers just by pressing a button.

Besides, in-built GPS navigation system would be mandatory for all phones a year later with effect from January 1, 2018. The emergency service calls will also be supported through a call centre like facility, which will have representatives speaking in Hindi, English and the local language.

Delhi not 'most polluted' as per WHO (Important)

Delhi is no longer the most polluted city in the world, the latest air quality report from the World Health Organization (WHO) says.

The national capital which earned notoriety for the state of its environment now stands 11th among 3,000 cities in 103 countries in terms of fine particulate matter

or PM 2.5. The 'Global Urban Ambient Air Pollution Database (update 2016)' released by WHO placed the capital in 25th place based on bigger particulate or PM 10 levels. Particulate matter affects everyone but causes harm faster to children and senior citizens. Although Delhi improved its ranking, four Indian cities are among the world's ten most polluted. Ten out of the top 20 are also in the country. The data are for 2013, but the Delhi government was quick to put out a statement exulting in a "definitive positive trend" in the city.

In 2014, Delhi was ranked the most polluted globally in terms of PM 2.5, for which the WHO had monitored 1,600 cities. Delhi's place as the most polluted is taken by Zabol, in Iran. Gwalior and Allahabad, meanwhile, come a close second and third in terms of PM 2.5, while Patna and Raipur are ranked 6th and 7th.

WHO used data from government and research organisations to prepare the database. It is based on ground measurements of annual mean concentrations of particulate matter (PM 10 and PM 2.5) and "aims at representing an average for the city or town as a whole, rather than for individual stations. Years of measurements range from 2010 to 2015, unless the latest available data was older," the report said.

PM 2.5 refers to atmospheric particulates with a diameter less than 2.5 micrometers. Exposure to fine particulates is linked to premature death from heart and lung disease. They trigger or worsen asthma, heart attack, bronchitis and other respiratory problems. The WHO states that as urban air quality declines, the risk of stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma increases.

More than 7 million premature deaths occur every year due to air pollution, and 3 million of these are due to outdoor air quality.

Common causes of air pollution include diesel-fuelled vehicles, heavy construction activities, temperature control in large buildings and use of coal or diesel generators.

Bringing back lost heritage – India Pride Project

There have been no official studies, but it is estimated by experts that nearly 70,000 artefacts have gone missing from India. According to the India Pride Project (IPP), a volunteer group working towards bringing back stolen artefacts, there could be nearly 7,000 from Karnataka alone, given the several dynasties and stone splendour that once thrived here.

Most States lack a monitoring committee to deal with the problem. IPP has been urging government agencies to put heritage recovery high on their agenda. IPP is on a nationwide awareness campaign to let the nation understand the reality that the country is losing so many of its artefacts.

It has been urging the Karnataka government to put in place the right policies and to draw up an inventory of the State's artefacts.

"Among the five [artefacts] brought back to India through IPP last year is the celebrated Nataraja Idol of Brihadeeswara Temple of the Chola period in Tamil Nadu. The idol, stolen more than three decades ago, had reached museums in the United States, and then Australia where it was sold for \$1.5 billion!"

Interestingly, IPP studies suggest that India lost more artefacts after independence than during the rule of various dynasties.

CBFC Report by Shyam Benegal on Film Certification

At the outset, some of the recommendations of the Shyam Benegal Committee to revamp the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), submitted last week to Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Arun Jaitley, are worth applauding, especially the thrust on certifying films rather than indiscriminately censoring them. Let's look at some of the laudatory suggestions first before asking the niggling questions. The panel stated: "CBFC should only be a film certification body whose scope should be restricted to categorising the suitability of the film to audience groups on the basis of age and maturity." The motivations of the panel are approbatory — artistic expression and creative freedom should not be curbed, audiences should feel empowered to make informed viewing choices, and the certification process should be responsive to rapid social change. In view of this, the panel has called for an increase in the number of film certification categories now to U, UA12, UA15, A and AC (Adult with Caution).

Further, the committee has stated quite clearly that the censor board, including the chairperson, should only play the role of a guiding body and not be involved in the day-to-day affairs of certification of films. This is a suggestion that perhaps emanates from the urgent need to curb the arbitrary intrusions that some filmmakers have been facing from the current chairman, Pahlaj Nihalani.

Indian Naval Ships Veer and Nipat decommissioned on 28 Apr 2016

Indian Naval Ships Veer and Nipat, which are 1241 RE class missile vessels, have been scheduled to be decommissioned on 28 April 2016. Both the ships have completed 29 and 28 years of commissioned service respectively.

PM to launch Rs. 8,000 crore scheme for free LPG connections to poor

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 1 will launch Rs. 8,000 crore scheme to provide 5 crore free LPG connections to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families using the money saved from 1.13 crore cooking gas users voluntarily giving up their subsidies.

The scheme is called Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and Mr. Modi will be launching it on May 1 at Ballia in Uttar Pradesh and Dahod in Gujarat on May 15. The 'Give-it-Up' campaign seeking the well-heeled to voluntarily surrender cooking gas subsidies for one year was launched in January, 2015.

"Since the launch, 1.13 crore people have given-up LPG subsidies and are buying cooking gas at market price," Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan told reporters here.

Maharashtra tops the list with 16.44 lakh consumers giving up subsidies, then Uttar Pradesh where nearly 13 lakh users gave up subsidies, followed by Delhi with 7.26 lakh people giving up subsidies. Prime Minister's home state Gujarat was way down the list with just 4.2 lakh giving up subsidies. In Odisha around 1.3 lakh people gave up subsidies.

Consumers are currently entitled to 12 cylinders of 14.2 kg each or 34 bottles of 5 kg each in a year at subsidised rates. A subsidised 14.2 kg cylinder is currently available at Rs. 419.13 per bottle in Delhi while the 5 kg pack costs Rs. 155.

Market-priced LPG is available at Rs. 509.50 per 14.2 kg cylinder. Giving up subsidised LPG will help cut the government's subsidy bill, which was at Rs. 30,000 crore on the fuel last fiscal.

Nearly Rs. 5,000 crore of subsidy saved through the campaign is being used to provide LPG connection to the poor.

Modi, Pradhan said, will on May 1 launch the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana for providing providing free LPG connections to women from BPL households. The scheme provides a financial support of Rs. 1,600 for each LPG connection to the BPL households. The identification of eligible BPL families will be made in consultation with the State Governments and the Union

Territories, he said.

Those who have decided to give up their subsidies have to buy the product at the market price.

The surrendered subsidy is used by the government to provide cooking gas connection to the poor in rural households free of cost, the official said.

LPG subsidy is transferred to beneficiaries directly in their bank accounts in advance.

Consumers can opt out of the subsidy by submitting written request to the distributor or electronically at mylpg.in.

India third in doping tally, says WADA

India, with 96 doping violations, was third top drugs offender in 2014, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has said in its annual report for 2014. Russia accounted for 148 of the 1,693 violations recorded to be on top. Athletics and bodybuilding were the worst offenders, accounting for more than 400 of the violations between them. In total, individuals from 109 countries across 83 sports committed anti-doping rule violations.

Swamy, Sidhu, Mary Kom among six nominated to Rajya Sabha

The Rashtrapati Bhavan approved a list of six nominated members to the Rajya Sabha, including senior BJP leader Subramanian Swamy, former Test cricketer and BJP MP Navjyot Singh Sidhu and boxing legend Mary Kom among others.

Economist and former member of the Sonia Gandhi-led National Advisory Council Narendra Jadhav has also been nominated for a Rajya Sabha seat, along with journalist Swapan Dasgupta and Malayalam actor Suresh Gopi.

These nominations to the Upper House are for achievers in various spheres of public life, and total 12 in number. As of now, there are seven vacancies among these 12, for which six names have been announced, and one kept in abeyance.

Of these, Mr. Sidhu's nomination is politically most significant as there had been talk that the former cricketer was negotiating with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) just ahead of the Assembly polls in Punjab. The AAP lacks a strong Sikh face in its leadership in the State, and sources suggested that Mr. Sidhu was in active talks with the party after falling out with the high command in the BJP on giving up his Amritsar seat to Arun Jaitley in the 2014 general elections.

With this, things could get very interesting for the Congress in Punjab which is fighting the elections in the State under the leadership of Capt. Amarinder Singh, the current MP from Amritsar.

Dr. Swamy, who has been pursuing the *National Herald* case against the Gandhis is expected to bring in some aggression in the Treasury benches in a House where the numbers are stacked against them.

Ms. Kom is an internationally known pugilist, while Mr. Jadhav, apart from his economics writings is famous for penning a biography of his family, called *Amchi Baap Ani Amhi* in Marathi and was translated as *Untouchables* in English.

Actor Suresh Gopi's name was the first to be out, nearly two days ago, in the middle of campaigning for the Kerala polls. He is considered close to the BJP.

Five associate banks to merge with SBI

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, has kick-started the process of merging its five associate banks with itself at one go. The merger is expected to be completed by the end of the current financial year.

The SBI board discussed the issue, and also explored the possibility to merge Bharatiya Mahila Bank.

"A proposal seeking an 'in principle' approval to start negotiations with associate banks will be submitted to the Central government, she said.

She said the bank will try to merge all the entities together, "not on the same day but in close order."

As all the associates are on the same technology platform, integration of the systems will not be an issue.

The merged entity will have one-fourth of the deposit and loan market, as SBI's market share will increase from 17 per cent to 22.5-23 per cent, while the total business of the merged entity will be over Rs. 35 lakh crore. SBI's staff strength will increase by 35-49 per cent while branch network will increase by 6,000. At present, SBI alone has more than 15,000 branches in the country.

The merger move comes after the government announced a road map for bank consolidation during the budget. This was required to build size, seen as necessary to fund the huge infrastructure financing needs of the country. No bank in India features in the top 50 banks of the world in terms of size.

The SBI will have to create and expand its present structure to ensure smooth operations of the merged entity.

Anurag Thakur elected BCCI president

Anurag Thakur was elected the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) during its Special General Meeting (SGM). Mr. Thakur's elevation from the secretary's to the president's post had been virtually sealed earlier in the week. The BCCI chief's position had to be filled following Shashank Manohar's resignation on May 10, a day before he was appointed the International Cricket Council's independent chairman.

Shirke returns as a BCCI office-bearer after three years. He was elected as Board secretary. The former treasurer had resigned from his post in May 2013, protesting the manner in which N. Srinivasan's regime had handled the IPL corruption scandal in the aftermath of the arrest of Gurusath Meiyappan, a Chennai Super Kings official and Srinivasan's son-in-law.

Mohun Bagan defeats Aizawl, wins 14th Fed Cup title

Mohun Bagan perfected a spectacular second-half resurgence to floor Aizawl FC by a record 5-0 margin and regain the Federation Cup football title after eight years, at the Indira Gandhi Stadium. Figuring prominently in Bagan's win with two goals was Mizoram striker Jeje Lalpekhlua while Haitian Sony Norde, Dhanachandra Singh and Bikramjit Singh scored one each.

Aizawl, which had surprised everyone with a series of outstanding performances including the vanquishing of I-League champion Bengaluru FC, had to submit to Bagan's supremacy.

The Kolkata giant produced one of its finest runs of success, scoring 17 goals and conceding just two in the five matches it played in the tournament and in the process extending the record of winning the title to 14. The last time Bagan had won the title was in 2008, when it beat Dempo 1-0 at home.

Ruskin Bond with his two new books

As India's much loved author Ruskin Bond turns 82, his fans will be treated to two new books — "My Favourite Nature Stories" and "The World Outside My Window" — themed on nature, the writer's first love.

In the first (both are published by Rupa), Bond talks about his various encounters with the natural world. From the chorus of cicadas to the song of the whistling thrush, from his love for sea shells to his favourite place on earth, Bond details the reasons for his abiding love for nature.

Kiran Bedi appointed Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry

BJP leader and former IPS officer Kiran Bedi was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry, a post that has been vacant for the past two years. The Union Territory was under the additional charge of Lt. Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The appointment comes three days after the Congress-DMK alliance won 17 seats in the 30-member Assembly. The AIADMK, which contested the elections on its own, won four seats while the BJP could not get even a single seat.

The post has been lying vacant after the Narendra Modi government sacked UPA nominee Virendra Kataria on July 2014. Ms. Bedi, who joined the BJP just before the 2015 Assembly elections in Delhi and had been the party's chief ministerial candidate, said she looked "forward to giving every bit of myself to the responsibility.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, with whom Ms. Bedi had differences as part of the India Against Corruption movement and against whom she had fought polls, congratulated Ms. Bedi on her appointment. "My best wishes to Kiran Didi (elder sister) for this new role," he tweeted.

Cook inaugurates Apple Maps development office in Hyderabad

Apple Inc announced the opening of a new office here that will focus on development of Maps for its products including iPhone, iPad, Mac and Apple Watch.

The Californian tech giant said in a statement that this investment will accelerate Maps development and create up to 4,000 jobs. The company, however, did not disclose the quantum of investment that it intends to invest on the facility.

"We are thrilled to open this new office in Hyderabad which will focus on Maps development," Apple CEO Tim Cook said.

"The talent here in the local area is incredible and we are looking forward to expanding our relationships and introducing more universities and partners to our platforms as we scale our operations," he said.

Apple has been continually updating and adding new features to Maps including 3D views, the Flyover feature and tools to help customers find convenient places to shop, eat and explore nearby areas, the statement said.

With iOS 9 Apple added Transit, offering a combination of trains, subways, buses and walking, which

is already available for more than 300 cities around the world.

The new facility, located on the Waverock campus, will provide a world-class, LEED-certified home for the expanding Maps team, it added.

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has said the State is honoured that Apple chose Hyderabad as a home for its Maps development office.

"This will create thousands of jobs here and is a testament to our proactive approach, quality infrastructure and the excellent talent base we have in the region," he said. Apple supports over 6,40,000 iOS app developer jobs and other positions related to the iOS ecosystem across India, the statement said.

INTERNATIONAL

"Education Cannot Wait" fund to be launched at UN World Humanitarian Summit

More than 100 of the world's leading countries, companies and philanthropists will join forces to create a "major breakthrough" in the effort to assist millions of children whose education has been disrupted by conflicts and natural disasters, the United Nations envoy for education announced.

The new Education Cannot Wait fund is being launched at the two-day Summit in Istanbul, Turkey. It is designed to cater the needs of 30 million displaced girls and boys, the largest population of girls and boys uprooted since 1945 – 20 million of whom have no choice at the moment and are unable to go to school.

Denmark first European team to lift Thomas Cup

Denmark beat Indonesia 3-2 in the Thomas Cup final securing the nation's first world badminton team championship after racking up eight second-place finishes over the decades.

Hans-Kristian Vittinghus led the Danes to victory in the fifth and final match of the tie on the back of strong singles performances from fourth-ranked Viktor Axelsen and world No. 5 Jan O. Jorgensen. Denmark is the first European nation to win the Thomas Cup.

Tsai Ing wen wins Taiwan leadership election

Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan's main opposition party becomes the island's first female president in a landslide victory over the ruling Kuomintang, as voters turned their backs on closer China ties.

In a speech at the Kuomintang (KMT) headquarters in Taipei, Tsai's rival KMT candidate Eric Chu

acknowledged his failure, saying he would take responsibility and resign from the post of KMT chairman.

Writings by Mother Teresa to be published

A collection of previously unreleased writings by Mother Teresa is coming out in August, weeks before the late Nobel Peace Prize winner is to be canonised. Image, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, told The Associated Press that it has set an August 16 release date for “A Call to Mercy: Hearts to Love, Hands to Serve.”

The material in the book focuses on mercy and compassion and was compiled by the Rev. Brian Kolodiejchuk, who has led the case for Mother Teresa’s sainthood.

On September 4, Pope Francis will declare Blessed Teresa of Calcutta a saint. She died in 1997, at age 87.

80 countries to attend world aid summit

Some 80 countries so far are planning to attend the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul this month to re-think how to confront global crises, the UN aid chief said.

Among those, 45 will be represented by their heads of state or heads of government who will be asked to pledge funds and make commitments for action during the May 23-24 summit.

Stephen O’Brien, the UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, said he found the turnout “so far encouraging”, even though it amounts to fewer than half of the UN’s 193 member-states.

World governments, international organisations and aid agencies are struggling to cope with the largest refugee crisis since World War II affecting 60 million people on the move.

World’s first robot lawyer hired by US firm

The world’s first artificial intelligence lawyer has been employed by a law firm in the US, which will use the robot to assist its various teams in legal research. The robot called ‘ROSS’ is built upon Watson, IBM’s cognitive computer. With the support of Watson’s cognitive computing and natural language processing capabilities, lawyers can ask ROSS their research question and the robot reads through the law, gathers evidence, draws inferences and returns highly relevant, evidence-based answers.

ROSS also monitors the law around the clock to notify users of new court decisions that can affect a case.

The programme continually learns from the lawyers who use it to bring back better results each time. ROSS Intelligence, the company that built ROSS, began out of research at the University of Toronto in 2014 with the goal of building an artificial intelligence legal research assistant to allow lawyers to enhance and scale their abilities.

Just ten months after they began teaching ROSS bankruptcy law, the company has been commercializing its first offering.

Andre Brahic, discoverer of Neptune’s rings, passes away at 73

French astrophysicist Andre Brahic, one of the discoverers of Neptune’s rings, died in Paris at the age of 73. An expert on the solar system, in 1984 he launched a programme which led to the discovery, with US astronomer William Hubbard, of the rings around the gaseous planet Neptune.

French President Francois Hollande in a statement hailed a great mind “who knew how to make simple the mysteries of the sky”. It was his interest in Saturn and its rings which led him to launch his Neptune research.

Neptune’s outermost ring is divided into three arcs to which Brahic gave the names Liberte, Fraternite and Egalite. In 1990 an asteroid, number 3488, was named Brahic in his honour.

India to develop Iran’s Chabahar port

India and Iran signed a series of agreements that will allow New Delhi to use the port of Chabahar to access Central Asia and Afghanistan.

The first agreement, a bilateral, signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s May 22-23 visit, will provide India the right to develop and operate two terminals and five berths with multipurpose cargo handling capacities in the port of Chabahar for 10 years. After the bilateral, Prime Minister Modi and Iranian President Dr. Hassan Rouhani were joined by Dr. Ashraf Ghani, President of Afghanistan, who sealed the agreement for Trilateral Transport and Transit Corridor connecting Chabahar with Afghan road and rail network.

The two countries also sealed 11 other agreements, covering culture, finance and conservation, during Mr. Modi’s official meetings with the Iranian President

Ken Loach wins second Cannes Palme d'Or with 'I, Daniel Blake'

Veteran British director Ken Loach won his second Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival when *I, Daniel Blake*, his latest social-realist drama, took the Best Picture award.

Loach, 79, is one of only nine directors to have won the top prize at Cannes twice. Loach had won in 2006 with *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*. Switching to English, Loach said he found it very strange to receive an award in such opulent surroundings given the miserable living conditions of the people who inspired his film.

I, Daniel Blake, shows how Britain's social security system conspires to drive a downtrodden carpenter and a single mother of two into poverty in the northeastern city of Newcastle.

UK grants refugee status to Maldives ex-President Mohamad Nasheed

Former Maldives President Mohamad Nasheed, who was allowed to travel to London to seek medical treatment by the government of President Abdulla Yameen in January this year, has been granted refugee status by the United Kingdom.

The former President – the first democratically elected head of state of the troubled island nation – was convicted and jailed in the Maldives in 2012 after a trial that attracted international criticism, including from the United Nations Group on Arbitrary Detention.

"President Yameen has jailed every opposition leader and cracked down on anyone who dares to oppose or criticise him. In the past year, freedom of the press, expression and assembly have all been lost. Given the slide towards authoritarianism in the Maldives, myself and other opposition politicians feel we have no choice but to work from exile — for now," Mr. Nasheed said in a statement.

Kenya to close Dadaab, world's biggest refugee camp

The Kenyan government will close Dadaab refugee camp which has hundreds of thousands of Somali refugees and is often referred to as the world's largest camp, the East African country's interior security minister said.

The decision has been condemned by domestic and international rights groups and organizations dealing with refugees.

Dadaab camp, with an estimated 328,000 refugees, mostly from Somalia, compromises Kenya's security

because it harbors some of Somalia's al-Shabab Islamic extremists and is a conduit for smuggling weapons, Joseph Nkaissery said.

Obama Signs Law Making Bison the First National Mammal

President Obama signed a law making the bison — tens of millions of which once roamed North America — the country's first national mammal.

The designation does nothing to threaten the bald eagle's position as the national animal. But the eagle is not a mammal. So, at long last, the nation now has an official one.

The bison's territory once stretched from the forests of Alaska to the grasslands of Mexico. The animal remains the largest mammal in North America, with mature bulls weighing up to a ton. Despite their size, the animals are surprisingly quick, reaching speeds of up to 35 miles per hour.

Harriet Tubman, former slavery victim, to be first African-American on US currency

Anti-slavery advocate Harriet Tubman will become the first African-American on the face of U.S. paper currency, and the first woman in more than a century, when she replaces former President Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill.

The U.S. Treasury Department said that Tubman, who was born into slavery in the early 1820s and went on to help hundreds of slaves escape, would take the centre spot on the bill, while Jackson, a slave owner, would move to the back.

Introduced alongside a slew of changes to the \$5 and \$10 notes as well, the redesign gives the Treasury "a chance to open the aperture to reflect more of America's history", Treasury Secretary Jack Lew said. A new \$10 bill will add images of five female leaders of the women's suffrage movement, including Sojourner Truth and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, to the back, while keeping founding father Alexander Hamilton on the front.

The reverse of a new \$5 note will show former first lady Eleanor Roosevelt and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., officials said. Former President Abraham Lincoln will remain on the front.

Mr. Lew said the designs should be unveiled by 2020 and go into circulation "as quickly as possible," although he declined to say when. He said the \$10 bill was scheduled to go out first, citing security needs. The long-awaited decision to replace the seventh president of the United States with Tubman followed

months of outreach by the Treasury regarding which woman should be featured on a bill.

The debate began when the Treasury announced plans in June to feature a woman on the \$10 note, prompted partly by a young girl's letter to President Barack Obama that criticized the lack of women on U.S. currency and a social media campaign last year called "Women on 20s".

Hamilton's growing celebrity status, due largely to a Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway musical about his life, *Hamilton*, created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, propelled an effort to keep the first U.S. Treasury Secretary on the \$10 note and to replace Jackson on the \$20 bill instead.

Jackson, a hero of the War of 1812's Battle of New Orleans, was President between 1829 and 1837. But he has been criticised for his treatment of American-Indians and ownership of slaves.

After considering hundreds of candidates, Mr. Lew said Tubman was chosen for her leadership and work helping others.

Tubman grew up working on a Maryland plantation and escaped in her late 20s. She returned to the South to help hundreds of black slaves to freedom and worked as a Union spy during the Civil War. She died in 1913.

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who is campaigning to become the first female U.S. president, praised Tubman as "a woman, a leader, and a freedom fighter" on Twitter and said she could not think of a better choice.

Australian Craig Wright says he is bitcoin creator
Australian tech entrepreneur Craig Wright has told the *BBC* he was the creator of controversial digital currency bitcoin after years of speculation about a person who until now has gone by the name of Satoshi Nakamoto.

The *BBC* reported that Wright gave some technical proof demonstrating that he had access to blocks of bitcoins known to have been created by bitcoin's creator. But he declined requests from *The Economist* to provide further proof that he was Nakamoto.

The *BBC* said prominent members of the bitcoin community had confirmed Wright's claim. "I was the main part of it, but other people helped me," the *BBC* quoted Wright as saying.

In December, police raided Wright's Sydney home and office after *Wired* magazine named him as the probable creator of bitcoin and holder of hundreds

of millions of dollars worth of the cryptocurrency, which has attracted the interest of banks, speculators, criminals and regulators.

The treatment of bitcoins for tax purposes in Australia has been the subject of considerable debate. The Australian Tax Office (ATO) ruled in December 2014 that cryptocurrency should be considered an asset, rather than a currency, for capital gains tax purposes. In a blog post, Wright appeared to out himself as bitcoin founder by posting a technical explanation, including examples of code, of the process by which he created the currency. He thanks all those who had supported the project from its inception.

Unlike traditional currency, bitcoins are not distributed by a central bank or backed by physical assets like gold, but are "mined" by users who use computers to calculate increasingly complex algorithmic formulas.

Bitcoin experts say that unmasking Satoshi Nakamoto would be significant for the industry. Not only would the proven founder likely hold some sway over the future of the bitcoin protocol, but Nakamoto may also hold enough bitcoin to influence its price.

As an early miner of bitcoins, Nakamoto is sitting on about 1 million bitcoins, according to bitcoin expert Sergio Demian Lerner. That is equivalent to about \$450 million at current exchange rates.

European Central Bank decides to cease printing of 500-euro bank note

In a move aimed at hampering cash transactions by terrorists, drug dealers and money launderers, the European Central Bank announced an end to the 500-euro bank note. When it comes to moving money nefariously, the 500-euro note has been especially handy.

It is a large denomination in a widely circulated and easily convertible currency. In the US, the largest denomination is \$100, after the Federal Reserve discontinued the \$500, \$1,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000 bills in 1969. Switzerland has a 1,000-franc note, worth about \$1,050, but its supply is limited.

The 500-euro note is also more compact and convenient for evading the gaze of authorities. The equivalent of \$1 million, in that high euro note, weighs about 5 pounds and fits in a small bag, according to a Harvard University study this year.

After the European Central Bank phases out the 500-euro note by the end of 2018, the next highest denomination will be the 200-euro note. That same \$1 million would weigh roughly 2 1/2 times as much.

US law enforcement officials have noted for years that the euro has become the currency of choice for drug cartels. European Central Bank officials acknowledged that 500-euro bills play a role in illegal transactions like money laundering and in financing terrorism. And the Harvard study said that, in some circles, criminals refer to the note as a “Bin Laden,” after the former leader of al-Qaida, Osama bin Laden.

Rajan, Sania, Priyanka among 100 most influential people: Time

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan, tennis star Sania Mirza, actress Priyanka Chopra, Google CEO Sundar Pichai and founders of Flipkart Binny Bansal and Sachin Bansal have been named by *Time* magazine in its list of the ‘100 Most Influential People in the World.’

Time’s annual list, released, includes pioneers like American composer Lin Manuel-Miranda, leaders like IMF head Christine Lagarde and icons like Oscar-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio who are “exploring the frontiers of art, science, society, technology and more

Terming Dr. Rajan “India’s prescient banker,” *Time* said he is among a rare breed of “economic seers” who “steered” India through the global crisis and fallout, “playing a large role in making it one of the emerging market stars of the moment.

While serving as the youngest chief economist of the IMF from 2003 to 2006, *Time* said Dr. Rajan predicted the subprime crisis that would lead to the Great Recession, standing up to critics like former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, who labelled him a “Luddite.”

In a profile for Sania Mirza, cricket superstar Sachin Tendulkar writes that her “confidence, strength and resilience reach beyond tennis” and she has inspired a generation of Indians to pursue their dreams” and to “realize that they can also be the best.”

Tendulkar described Mirza, who recently was awarded India’s third highest civilian honour the Padma Bhushan, as an “inspiration” on the court. He lauded her “dedication and willpower” to reinvent herself fully as a doubles player when her singles career was cut short by wrist injuries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was among the probable contenders for the list, was not in the final list determined by *Time*’s editors. Modi was among *Time*’s 100 most influential people in the world last year.

Time said Flipkart founders Binny Bansal and Sachin

Bansal may have come across as arrogant when they told investors the company they started in 2007 as an online bookstore could be worth \$100 million in a decade.

“It turned out to be modesty: Flipkart now has 75 million users and a \$13-billion valuation,” *Time* said. On Sundar Pichai, author Bill Nye said the “internet’s chief engineer” has “helped change the world.”

The Chennai-born was the “head guy” on Google Drive and worked on Google Chrome, Gmail and Android phones and the world is now watching what he comes up with next, Mr. Nye has said in his profile.

On activist Sunita Narain, author Amitav Ghosh said her ideas have shaped some of the “key debates of our time” and “hers is a voice that urgently needs to be heard in this era of climate change.

“As an activist, Narain is a pioneer,” he said, adding that she and her organization New Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment, have been campaigning to reduce the Indian capital’s dangerous air-pollution levels for almost two decades.

Also on the list is Indian-origin actor and comedian Aziz Ansari and Indian-origin Raj Panjabi, CEO of organization Last Mile Health.

“The way Aziz talks about his ethnicity and career is so interesting, and the entertainment-industry world he writes about is hysterical and on point,” his colleagues from the industry Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson said.

On Mr. Panjabi, who at 9 had escaped a civil war in his home country of Liberia former U.S. President Bill Clinton said, “to spend time with Raj Panjabi is to see up close what happens when someone with uncommon courage and compassion puts himself on the frontlines of the world’s most complex challenges.” Mr. Clinton said the “heroic work” Panjabi and his organization did to train 1,300 community health workers in Liberia was critical in helping the government contain the Ebola epidemic.

This year’s list includes Pope Francis, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla, Russian President Vladimir Putin, U.S. President Barack Obama, French President Francois Hollande, Myanmar’s pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, Democratic Presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton, her Republican rival Ted Cruz, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

On Ms. Suu Kyi, Mr. Obama wrote for the *Time* that “The Lady” remains a “beacon” of hope, “now more than ever,” for 50 million people reaching for justice, and for millions more around the world.

175 countries sign Paris Climate Agreement

The historic agreement on climate change marked a milestone, with a record 175 countries, including India, signing it. But world leaders made it clear that more action is needed, and quickly, to fight a relentless rise in global temperatures.

With the planet heating up to record levels, sea levels rising and glaciers melting, the pressure to have the Paris Agreement enter into force and to have every country turn its words into deeds was palpable at the U.N. signing ceremony.

The agreement will come into force once 55 countries representing at least 55 per cent of global emissions formally join it, a process initially expected to take until 2020.

But following a host of announcements at the signing event, observers now think it could happen later this year.

China, the world's top carbon emitter, announced it would "finalise domestic procedures" to ratify the agreement before the G20 summit in China in September. The United States, the world's second-largest emitter, reiterated its intention to ratify this year, as did Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the leaders of Mexico and Australia.

French President Francois Hollande, the first to sign in recognition of his key role in achieving the December agreement, said he would ask parliament to ratify it by this summer.

U.S. Secretary of State Kerry said the signing of the agreement had to be followed by a recommitment by world leaders to actually win the "war" against carbon emissions that are making the world hotter every year. Putting the deal into economic terms, he said, "the power of this agreement is what it is going to do to unleash the private sector" to define the new energy of the future and set the global economy on a new path to growth and development that preserves the environment.

Academy Award-winning actor Leonardo DiCaprio, a U.N. messenger of peace and climate activist, captured the feelings of many when he spoke.

After he spoke, leaders and diplomats from the 175 countries were called to the front of the chamber to sign the agreement. Mr. Kerry carried his granddaughter in his arms, a symbol of the future generations the agreement is aimed at protecting.

The signing set a record for international diplomacy — Never have so many countries signed an agreement on the first available day. States that didn't sign on Friday have a year to do so.

The ceremony, held on Earth Day, brought together a wide range of states that might sharply disagree on other issues.

North Korea's Foreign Minister Ri Su Yong made a rare U.N. appearance to sign and Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe brought applause when he declared, "Life itself is at stake in this combat. We have the power to win it."

Prime Minister Enele Sosefo Sopoaga of Tuvalu, which has seen four of its small islands disappear into the Pacific Ocean since 2000, said the agreement can change the world but islands on the frontline of climate change urgently need better access to financing to protect themselves against rising oceans. He urged international support for an insurance program for Pacific island nations.

Those that haven't indicated they will sign include some of the world's largest oil producers Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Nigeria and Kazakhstan, according to the World Resources Institute.

The Paris Agreement was a major breakthrough in U.N. climate negotiations, which for years were slowed by disputes between rich and poor countries over who should do what.

Under the agreement, countries set their own targets for reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The targets are not legally binding, but countries must update them every five years. Already, states face pressure to do more. Scientific analyses show the initial set of targets that countries pledged before Paris don't match the agreement's long-term goal to keep global warming below 2°C (3.6°F), compared with pre-industrial times. Global average temperatures have already climbed by almost 1°C. Last year was the hottest on record.

The latest analysis by the Climate Interactive research group shows the Paris pledges put the world on track for 3.5°C of warming. A separate analysis by Climate Action Tracker, a European group, projected warming of 2.7°C.

AWARDS

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* wins 2016 Man Booker Prize

South Korean author Han Kang has won the prestigious Man Booker International Prize for her "unforgettably powerful" novel 'The Vegetarian' which deals with a woman's rejection of human brutality and giving up of eating meat.

Kang beat writers including Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk

and international bestseller Elena Ferrante to win the £50,000 award last night which she shared with the novel's translator Deborah Smith.

Published by Portobello Books, 'The Vegetarian' was selected unanimously among 155 books by a panel of five judges chaired by noted critic and editor Boyd Tonkin who described Kang's work as "lyrical and lacerating".

Kang, 45, who currently teaches creative writing at the Seoul Institute of the Arts, is already very popular in South Korea and has won Yi Sang Literary Prize, the Today's Young Artist Award, and the Korean Literature Novel Award.

The Vegetarian is her first novel to be translated into English by 28-year-old Smith who started learning Korean only at the age of 21 and will share the £50,000 award with Kang.

"The Vegetarian by Han Kang, translated from the Korean by Deborah Smith, is an unforgettably powerful and original novel that richly deserves to win the Man Booker International Prize 2016," said Tonkin. The Vegetarian is a three-part novel that follows the story of Yeong-hye, a dutiful Korean wife who, spurred on by a dream, decides one day to become a vegetarian, something that is extremely uncommon in South Korean society.

This subversive act fractures her familial life and affects her relationships with the people around her, including her sister and her brother-in-law, an artist who becomes obsessed with her.

63rd National Film Awards – Pranab Mukherjee gives the honours

Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan was accompanied by his family members to the 63rd National Film Awards ceremony here, where the megastar received the best actor honour for his role of a hypochondriac father in *Piku*.

Actor Kangana Ranaut too turned up with her father, mother, sister and brother to receive the best actress award for *Tanu Weds Manu Returns*.

Veteran film actor and director Manoj Kumar was given the 47th Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Known for featuring in films with patriotic themes, Manoj Kumar presented a Sai Baba idol to President Pranab Mukherjee.

The 78-year-old looked frail in a wheelchair, but was in high spirits as he waved to the cheering crowd when he got on to the stage. The President honoured the cine icon, whose career began in 1957.

A five-member jury — Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Salim Khan, Nitin Mukesh and Anup Jalota — unanimously recommended Manoj Kumar for the prestigious award this year.

The Dadasaheb Phalke Award is given by the government of India for outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema. The award consists of a Swarn Kamal (Golden Lotus), a cash prize of Rs.10 lakh and a shawl.

SPORTS

Micky Arthur appointed Pakistan coach for cricket team

Pakistan has appointed South African Mickey Arthur as head coach of the national team, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced. Arthur "has confirmed his acceptance for the post of head coach of the Pakistan national cricket team", the PCB said in a statement, replacing Waqar Younis.

Kane Williamson named New Zealand's Test captain & other formats of the game

Kane Williamson has been handed the reins of the New Zealand's Test side and other formats of the game after leading the national side at the World Twenty20 earlier this year. New Zealand Cricket made the official announcement of the right-handed batsman replacing Brendon McCullum, who retired in February 2016.

Shashank Manohar resigns as BCCI president, ICC chairman

Shashank Manohar has resigned as president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC). His move comes in anticipation of him being re-nominated as ICC chief during the governing body's annual board meeting scheduled for next month.

When Mr. Manohar took over as BCCI president for a second term last October, days after the demise of then president, Jagmohan Dalmiya, he was designated as the ICC chairman. However, with the ICC set to revert to its old rule of not allowing its chief to hold a post in his/her home board, Mr. Manohar has stepped down.

The deadline for filing the nomination for the ICC chief's post is May 23. The BCCI will have to propose Mr. Manohar as its ICC presidential candidate. Mr. Manohar's resignation leaves the BCCI a headless body for the second time in less than a year. Ac-

According to its controversial rulebook, which has been under the scanner of the apex court, secretary Anurag Thakur will now have to call a Special General Body Meeting within two weeks to elect a new president. The new president, who will have to be nominated by at least one of the six full members from the east zone, will be in charge till the 2017 AGM. An aspiring candidate should have attended at least two AGMs and have held the post of an office-bearer or vice-president in the past.

IPL chairman Rajeev Shukla and BCCI secretary Anurag Thakur are the frontrunners to occupy the vacant chair. Ajay Shirke, former treasurer, and current vice-president G Gangaraju are also in contention for the post.

England longest serving women's captain Edwards retires

Long-serving England women's captain Charlotte Edwards announced her retirement after a sparkling and pioneering 20-year career. The 36-year-old led her country to glory in the Ashes, World Cup and ICC World Twenty20, winning a world-record 309 caps and scoring over 10,000 runs across the formats.

"Everyone who knows me — and how much I love playing for England — will appreciate what a difficult decision it has been for me to retire from international cricket," she said in a statement.

"I have given 20 years to playing for England and I leave very proud of the standing in which the women's game is held and of my contribution as a player and captain." Edwards led England on 220 occasions, with the highlights of her captaincy including three Ashes triumphs against Australia — in 2008, 2013 and 2014 — and a World Cup/World Twenty20 double in 2009. In 2008, she was named the International Cricket Council's Women's Player of the Year and in 2014 was selected as a Wisden Cricketer of the Year.

Shashank Manohar is ICC's first independent chairman

There were strong undercurrents of resentment and dismay among a few senior cricket administrators soon after Shashank Manohar announced his resignation as the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) two days ago. They had supported him giving carte blanche powers to bring in reforms in administration and elected him president of the BCCI last October, for the remainder of a three-year term, following the death of Jagmohan Dalmiya.

The bitterness had barely diminished when the official announcement came that the 58-year-old Manohar was

elected unopposed as the first independent chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC) for an initial period of two years from May 12. Although he will assume charge straightaway, he will formally preside over meetings at the ICC's annual conference at Edinburgh, Scotland in June. Manohar was the unanimous choice of the ICC's 13-member executive board; even England and Wales Cricket Board's Giles Clarke — who was supposed to succeed India's N. Srinivasan by a 2014 arrangement, proposed his name.

Trinidad's Iraq Thomas Blows Away Chris Gayle's Record of Fastest T20 Ton

From the land of Brian Lara has emerged a 23-year-old who has smashed the fastest hundred in T20 cricket. His name itself is explosive. His 21-ball century in a T20 match organized by Tobago Cricket Association surely was. Iraq Thomas has blasted Chris Gayle out of the record books.

Iraq Thomas has been making headlines since he scored a 31-ball 131. He was playing for Scarborough/Mason Hall United in a match organized by Tobago Cricket Association at Louis D'Or.

Mark Selby wins World title in Snooker Championship

Mark Selby denied Asia its first snooker World champion by beating China's Ding Junhui 18-14 in the World Championship final.

It was the second time in three years that the Englishman had won snooker's most important prize.

Selby was ahead throughout in the final at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre but concluding session saw Ding, who bases himself in the northern English city for much of the snooker season, close the gap to 16-14 before the 2014 champion prevailed.

PERSON-IN-NEWS

Verstappen becomes youngest ever F1 winner

Teenager Max Verstappen became Formula One's youngest winner when he took full advantage of a spectacular first lap crash that eliminated both Mercedes cars to claim a memorable triumph in the Spanish Grand Prix.

In his maiden outing with Red Bull, following his unexpected promotion from Toro Rosso, the 18-year-old Dutchman showed supreme composure under pressure as he resisted all attacks to claim a stunning victory in only his 24th F1 race. He became the

youngest race winner, at 18 years and 228 days, replacing four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, who had also taken that record as a Red Bull driver.

Swiss govt. honours Yash Chopra by boosting tourism

Director Yash Chopra, who shot most of his romantic dramas in the lush mountains of Switzerland, has been honoured with a special statue by the government. The bronze statue of the late film-maker, which weighs about 250 kg.

The statue is installed at the heart of Interlaken, inside the Kursaal area.

Sadiq Khan sworn in as the first Muslim Mayor of a major western city, promises a 'better' London (Important)

Newly elected London Mayor's opening words at his swearing-in ceremony – "Good Morning, I'm Sadiq Khan, and I'm the Mayor of London" – were drowned in claps and whistles by the audience at the Southwark Cathedral in London.

The 44-year old human rights lawyer of Pakistani descent is not only the first Muslim head of London, but set a record by winning 1.1 million votes. His lead over his closest rival was bigger than that achieved by both his predecessors Boris Johnson and Ken Livingstone. With a 45 per cent election turnout, he finished with a margin of 13.6 percentage points over Zac Goldsmith of the Conservative Party.

Warmly acknowledging the introduction made by Doreen Lawrence, the mother of the British teenager Stephen Lawrence who was killed in a racist attack in London in 1993, Mr. Khan promised to "lead the most transparent, engaged and representative council London has ever seen".

He harked back to his humble beginnings – "So you better know this but I grew up in a council estate," – and said he achieved what he never dreamt of because of the opportunities and "helping hand" the city offered him and his family. Promising a "better" London, he pledged to give all Londoners the opportunities that he was offered.

Mr. Khan led an energetic campaign that was turned increasingly toxic by the personal attacks and slander levelled against him by his opponent, the billionaire Mr. Goldsmith, including the smear that he shared platforms with extremists in the past.

- ☺ This class sheet provides snapshot of key events that took place in May 2016.
- ☺ For additional practice, please refer to myIMS repository of monthwise CA snippets.
- ☺ Also refer to myIMS question banks of static GK and Current Affairs.

Static GK

1. The Dag Hammarskjöld Medal is a posthumous award given by which of the following institutions /organizations?
 - 1] The U.S. Institute of Peace
 - 2] Institute of International Education
 - 3] *Pax Christi International*
 - 4] United Nations (UN)
2. Who among the following was the first Indian to win an individual Olympic medal?
 - 1] Abhinav Bindra
 - 2] KD Jadhav
 - 3] Leander Paes
 - 4] Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore
3. The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) belongs to:
 - 1] ITC
 - 2] Raheja Group
 - 3] Sahara Group
 - 4] Tata Group
4. Acmādhyâyī, the foundational text of Sanskrit grammar and phonetics was written by:
 - 1] Gargya
 - 2] Kasyapa
 - 3] Panini
 - 4] Yaska
5. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly arose from the experience of the:
 - 1] Cold War
 - 2] First World War
 - 3] Second World War
 - 4] American Civil War
6. The headquarters of the African Export-Import Banks are located in:
 - 1] Benin
 - 2] Cairo
 - 3] Durban
 - 4] Johannesburg
7. An exoplanet or extrasolar planet is a planet that :
 - 1] orbits the Sun.
 - 2] orbits a star other than the Sun.
 - 3] radiates heat as it revolves around the sun (exothermic).
 - 4] is not a part of any solar system.
8. A 'Bitcoin' is:
 - 1] issued by the central bank of a country
 - 2] primarily a digital currency
 - 3] managed by peer-to-peer technology without a central authority
 - 4] Both [2] and [3]
9. Which of the following Articles deals with the appointment of High Court Judges?
 - 1] Article 112
 - 2] Article 126
 - 3] Article 217
 - 4] Article 376
10. Which of the following is levied by the State Government?
 - 1] Capital gains tax
 - 2] Stamp duty
 - 3] Excise duty on tobacco
 - 4] Corporation tax
11. A political party becomes eligible to be recognised as a national party if :
 - 1] The party has won 2 per cent of seats in the Lok Sabha (11 seats) from at least three different states in the latest general election.
 - 2] A party has got recognition as a state party in at least four states.
 - 3] Any one of these
 - 4] Both [1] and [2]

12. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) is an international financial institution that encourages:
- 1] public and private partnerships in infrastructure projects in developing countries.
 - 2] private sector development in developing countries.
 - 3] public sector development in developed countries.
 - 4] public sector development in emerging countries.
13. 'Landfall' is a term used in the context of which natural phenomenon/calamity?
- 1] Tropical cyclones
 - 2] Earthquakes
 - 3] Landslides
 - 4] Wildfires
14. Which of the following describes an economy in which success in business depends on close relationships between business people and government officials?
- 1] Proxy Government
 - 2] Crony Capitalism
 - 2] Rubber Stamp Government
 - 3] Kleptocratic Bureaucracy
15. Which of the following Acts allows banks and financial institutions to auction properties (residential and commercial) when borrowers fail to repay their loans?
- 1] RTI
 - 2] SARFAESI
 - 3] TADA
 - 4] POCSO
16. The certifying agency for ISI is...
- 1] Bureau of Indian Standards
 - 2] Indian Statistical Institute
 - 3] *Indian Institute* of Legal Metrology
 - 4] Standards Institute of India
17. Wangala is the biggest festival of which north-eastern state of India?
- 1] Arunachal Pradesh
 - 2] Meghalaya
 - 3] Sikkim
 - 4] Tripura
18. The Objective of India's 'Act East Policy' is to promote:
- 1] economic initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - 2] cultural ties with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - 3] strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - 4] All of these
19. The French Open tennis tournament is held every year in:
- 1] Arènes de Metz
 - 2] Rod Laver Arena
 - 3] Roland Garros
 - 4] Wimbledon Centre Court
20. Import duties are imposed with the aim of:
- 1] raising revenue
 - 2] protecting the local market
 - 3] creating economic opportunities for neighbouring countries
 - 4] Only [1] and [2]
21. The _____ is the chief legal advisor to the Indian Government.
- 1] Attorney General of India
 - 2] Solicitor General of India
 - 3] Additional Solicitor General of India
 - 4] Chief Justice of India
22. Which of the following pairs of country-currency is wrongly matched?
- 1] Philippines - Peso
 - 2] Taiwan - Taiwan dollar
 - 3] Mauritius- Mauritian Rupee
 - 4] Indonesia -Rupees
23. Panchayati Raj system was first adopted by which state in India?
- 1] Bihar
 - 2] Maharashtra
 - 3] Odisha
 - 4] Rajasthan
24. The International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen is awarded annually for work done for/ in the service of:
- 1] Chinese unity
 - 2] assimilation of Hispanics in the U.S.
 - 3] European peace and unity
 - 4] preserving ethnic diversity of Australia
25. The *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito is the main vector for:
- 1] Chikungunya
 - 2] Dengue
 - 3] Yellow Fever
 - 4] All of these

Current Affairs

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a historic *deal* with *Iran* to develop a strategic port. Where is this port located in Iran?
 - 1] Abadan
 - 2] Bandar Abbas
 - 3] Chabahar
 - 4] Khorramshahr
2. As of June 2016, who is the Chief Minister of Assam?
 - 1] Balkrishna Acharya
 - 2] Harish Rawat
 - 3] Sarbananda Sonowal
 - 4] Tarun Gogoi
3. Which of the following is India's first-ever indigenous space shuttle launched from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh?
 - 1] BTR -1D
 - 2] NSR - D
 - 3] MON
 - 4] RLV-TD
4. Where was the first World Conference on Tourism for Development (WCTD) held?
 - 1] Beijing
 - 2] London
 - 3] Singapore
 - 4] Tokyo
5. What was the route of the EgyptAir Flight 804, an Airbus A320, which crashed into the eastern Mediterranean Sea?
 - 1] Cairo to New York City
 - 2] Paris to Cairo
 - 3] Brussels to Cairo
 - 4] Cairo to Paris
6. The Pandemic Emergency Finance Facility (PEF) to help countries and health agencies fight deadly disease outbreaks has been launched by :
 - 1] African Development Bank
 - 2] Asian Development Bank
 - 3] New Development Bank
 - 4] World Bank
7. Which city has topped the list of winners of the Fast Track competition conducted by the Union Ministry of Urban Development for 23 cities for the second batch of Smart Cities Mission?
 - 1] Bhagalpur
 - 2] Dharamshala
 - 3] Lucknow
 - 4] Raipur
8. Researchers at the University of Newcastle, Australia have built the world's first _____.
 - 1] Active Contact Lenses
 - 2] Handheld Molecular Scanner
 - 3] Quantum Photonic Imager
 - 4] Scanning Helium Microscope
9. Which of the following films won the Palme d'Or at the 69th Cannes Film Festival held in May, 2016?
 - 1] Elle
 - 2] Paterson
 - 3] I, Daniel Blake
 - 4] The Handmaiden
10. What is the single emergency number which will be operational throughout India from January 1, 2017?
 - 1] 105
 - 2] 112
 - 3] 212
 - 4] 144
11. Former IPS officer Kiran Bedi has been appointed Lt Governor to which state or Union Territory?
 - 1] Andaman & Nicobar Island
 - 2] Chandigarh
 - 3] Lakshadweep
 - 4] Puducherry
12. On May 5, 2016, the Lok Sabha unanimously passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2015. The code seeks to:
 - 1] ensure the completion of insolvency resolution of companies and individuals within 180 days.
 - 2] allow the sale of assets of the borrowers to repay creditors, if insolvency is not resolved.
 - 3] create an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Fund.
 - 4] All of these
13. Who among the following Indian-American researchers/scientists has been selected to receive the prestigious *National Medal of Science* award, an honour bestowed by the President of the United States?
 - 1] Asima Chatterjee
 - 2] Milind Kulkarni
 - 3] Rakesh K Jain
 - 4] Vikram Shyam

14. With which of the following countries has India signed a protocol to amend taxation methods for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and capital gains?
1] Indonesia 2] Malaysia
3] Mauritius 4] Singapore
15. Who has been appointed as Chief of the Naval Staff?
1] D K Joshi 2] P Murugesan
3] R.K. Dhowan 4] Sunil Lanba
16. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced it will issue banknotes of Rs. 1000 denomination with inset letter ____ in both the number panels.
1] I 2] M 3] R 4] V
17. Apple Inc has invested in Chinese ride-hailing firm Didi Chuxing. What is the amount invested?
1] \$50 million 2] \$80 million
3] \$1 billion 4] \$3 billion
18. Which book has been announced as the winner of the 2016 Man Booker International Prize?
1] A Whole Life
2] A Strangeness in My Mind
3] The Story of the Lost Child
4] The Vegetarian
19. Titan Co Ltd bought a majority stake in which online e-commerce company?
1] Caratlane.com 2] Myntra.com
3] Suratdiamond.com 4] Yebhi.com
20. What is India's rank in 2015 Crony-Capitalism Index 2015?
1] seventh 2] ninth
3] twelfth 4] fifteen
21. Which country has won the third edition of the Asian Kabaddi Championship (Circle Style) 2016?
1] Azerbaijan 2] India
3] Pakistan 4] Sri Lanka
22. Girnar Software Pvt Ltd, which owns auto portals CarDekho.com and Gaadi.com, acquired which of the following companies in May, 2016?
1] Agnus VR
2] Jazzmyride
3] Hash Media
4] Volob Technologies Pvt. Ltd.
23. Which state has announced that it will establish Asia's first Rice Technology Park?
1] Andhra Pradesh
2] Jharkhand
3] Karnataka
4] Madhya Pradesh
24. The Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademark has granted American pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences the patent for the drug Sofosbuvir (brand name Sovaldi) in India. The drug is used for the treatment of:
1] Diabetes
2] Ebola
3] Hepatitis C
4] Metastatic Melanoma
25. Who has been conferred the *Yug Kavi Siddhicharan Award*, one of the Nepal's prestigious literary award?
1] Banira Giri
2] Dhirba Chandra Gautam
3] Mohan Koirala
4] Pawan Chamling

CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : MAY-2016

ANSWER KEY**Static GK**

1-4	2-2	3-4	4-3	5-3
6-2	7-2	8-4	9-3	10-2
11-3	12-2	13-1	14-2	15-2
16-1	17-2	18-4	19-3	20-4
21-1	22-4	23-4	24-3	25-4

Current Affairs

1-3	2-3	3-4	4-1	5-2
6-4	7-3	8-4	9-3	10-2
11-4	12-4	13-3	14-3	15-4
16-3	17-3	18-4	19-1	20-2
21-3	22-4	23-3	24-3	25-4

Explanatory Answers**Static GK**

- The Dag Hammarskjöld Medal is a posthumous award given by the United Nations (UN) to military personnel, police, or civilians who lose their lives while serving in a United Nations pecekeeping operation. The medal is named after Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. Hence, [4].
- Wrestler KD Jadhav was the first Indian to win an individual Olympic medal (bronze medal) in 1952 in Helsinki. Hence, [2].
- The *Indian Hotels Company Limited* (IHCL) and its subsidiaries, collectively known as Taj Group, belong to the Tata Group. Hence, [4].
- Acmādhyāyī*, the foundational text of Sanskrit grammar and phonetics was written by Panini. Hence, [3].
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10th December, 1948 arose directly from the experience of the Second World War. The document sets out fundamental human rights to be universally protected. Hence, [3].
- The headquarters of the African Export-Import Bank are located in the city of Cairo, Egypt. Hence, [2].
- An exoplanet or extrasolar planet is a planet that orbits a star other than the Sun. Hence, [2].
- Bitcoin is primarily a digital currency. Bitcoin is a decentralized currency managed by peer-to-peer technology (P2P2), without a central authority. Hence, [4].
- Article 217 deals with the appointment of High Court Judges. Hence, [3].
- Stamp duty on transfer of immovable properties is levied by the State Government. All the other taxes are levied by the Central Government. Hence, [2].
- A political party becomes eligible to be recognised as a national party if the party has won 2 per cent of seats in the Lok Sabha (11 seats) from at least three different states in the latest general election or if it has got recognition as a state party in at least four states. Hence, [3].
- The International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group is an international financial institution that encourages private sector development in developing countries. It is the largest global development institution focused exclusively on the private sector in developing countries. Hence, [2].
- 'Landfall' is the event of a storm moving over land after being over water. A tropical cyclone makes landfall when the center of the storm moves across the coast. Hence, [1].

14. 'Crony Capitalism' is a term describing an economy in which success in business depends on close relationships between business people and government officials. Hence, [2].
15. The *Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002*, (SARFAESI Act, 2002) allow banks and financial institutions to auction properties (residential and commercial) when borrowers fail to repay their loans. Hence, [2].
16. The certifying agency for ISI is the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the national standards body of India. Hence, [1].
17. *Wangala* is the biggest traditional festival of Garo tribes, who live in Meghalaya, India. It is a post-harvest festival held in winter. Hence, [2].
18. The Objective of India's 'Act East Policy' is to promote economic initiatives, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. Hence, [4].
19. The French Open tennis tournament is held every year between late May and early June at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris, France. Hence, [3].
20. Import duties are imposed with the aim of raising revenue and protecting the local market. Hence, [4].
21. The Attorney General of India is the chief legal advisor to the Indian Government. Hence, [1].
22. The currency of Indonesia is Rupiah. All others are correctly matched. Hence, [4].
23. The *Panchayat Raj system* was first adopted by the state of Rajasthan in Nagaur district in 1959. Hence, [4].
24. The International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen is the oldest prize awarded for work done in the service of European unification. Hence, [3].
25. The *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito is a vector for Chikungunya, Dengue and Yellow Fever. Hence, [4].

Current Affairs

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi signed a historic *deal* with *Iran* to develop a \$ 85 million strategic port in *Chabahar* in southeastern Iran. Hence, [3].
2. Sarbananda Sonowal is the Chief Minister of Assam. He is also the first BJP Chief Minister of the state. Hence, [3].
3. On 23rd May, 2016, India successfully tested its first-ever indigenous space shuttle as its scale model, the Re-Usable Launch Vehicle - Technology Demonstrator or RLV-TD - was launched from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. Hence, [4].
4. The first World Conference on Tourism for Development (WCTD) was held from May 18-21, 2016 in Beijing, China. It was held under the theme 'Tourism for Peace and Development' to advance the contribution of tourism to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Hence, [1].
5. The EgyptAir Flight 804, an Airbus A320, flying overnight from Paris to Cairo crashed into the eastern Mediterranean Sea on 19th May, 2016. Hence, [2].
6. The Pandemic Emergency Finance Facility (PEF) to help countries and health agencies fight deadly disease outbreaks has been launched by the World Bank. Hence, [4].
7. Lucknow topped the list of winners of the Fast Track competition conducted by the Union Ministry of Urban Development for 23 cities for the second batch of Smart Cities Mission. Bhagalpur and Raipur were also winners in the competition. Hence, [3].
8. Researchers at the University of Newcastle, Australia built the world's first Scanning Helium Microscope (SHeM) which will enable scientists to study human, animal and plant samples, as well as computer chips and pharmaceutical drugs, without damaging or changing them. Hence, [4].
9. *I, Daniel Blake* by Ken Loach won the Palme D'Or at Cannes Film Festival held in May, 2016. Hence, [3].

10. The single emergency number '112' will be operational throughout India from January 1, 2017 to help people access services of police, ambulance and fire department. Hence, [2].
11. Former IPS officer Kiran Bedi has been appointed Lt Governor to Puducherry. She will be the 24th Lt Governor of the Union Territory. Hence, [4].
12. On May 5, 2016, the Lok Sabha unanimously passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2015. The Code creates time-bound processes for insolvency resolution of companies and individuals. These processes will be completed within 180 days. If insolvency cannot be resolved, the assets of the borrowers may be sold to repay creditors. The Code also creates an Insolvency and Bankruptcy Fund. Hence, [4].
13. Indian American scientist Rakesh K Jain, a professor of tumour biology at Massachusetts General Hospital in the Harvard Medical School has been selected to receive the prestigious 'National Medal of Science' award from U.S. President Barack Obama. Hence, [3].
14. India and Mauritius have signed a protocol to amend taxation methods for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and capital gains. Hence, [3].
15. Vice Admiral Sunil Lanba has been appointed as the new Chief of the Naval Staff from May 31, 2016. Hence, [4].
16. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced it will issue banknotes of Rs. 1000 denomination with inset letter 'R' in both the number panels. Hence, [3].
17. Apple Inc has invested \$1 billion in Chinese ride-hailing firm Didi Chuxing, earlier known as Didi Kuaidi. Hence, [3].
18. *The Vegetarian*, a novel by Han Kang has won the 2016 *Man Booker International Prize*. Hence, [4].
19. Titan Co Ltd bought a majority stake in India's largest jewellery e-tailer Caratlane.com. Hence, [1].
20. India is ranked ninth in 2015 Crony-Capitalism Index with crony sector wealth accounting for 3.4 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). Hence, [2].
21. Pakistan has won the third edition of the Asian Kabaddi Championship (Circle Style) 2016 by defeating India. Hence, [3].
22. Jaipur-based Girnar Software Pvt Ltd, which owns auto portals CarDekho.com and Gaadi.com, acquired virtual reality (VR) startup Volob Technologies Pvt. Ltd in May, 2016. Hence, [4].
23. Karnataka Government has announced that it will establish Asia's first Rice Technology Park at Gangavati in Koppal district. Hence, [3].
24. The Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademark has granted American pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences the patent for the drug Sofosbuvir (brand name Sovaldi) in India. The drug is used for the treatment of Hepatitis C virus infection. Hence, [3].
25. Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling has been conferred the *Yug Kavi Siddhicharan Award*, Nepal's prestigious literary award for his commendable contribution in promoting Nepali literature in India. Hence, [4].