

**CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : MARCH 2016  
INSTRUCTOR NOTE***Time : 120 minutes***STATE****President to declare Kerala as first digital state**

President Pranab Mukherjee will declare Kerala as the first digital state of the country, pinning another feather on the cap of the southern state that boasts of many firsts in the human development index.

With high e-literacy rate and mobile penetration (32 m connections) it will be the first fully digitised state. It is also the first to complete the national optic fiber network project which helps to provide high-speed internet in all gram panchayats and remote areas. Many key government offices will be paperless soon. More than 3000 offices in the state, including motor vehicles and land registration departments, have achieved this feat.

**President's rule in Uttarakhand; Congress says 'murder of democracy'**

Capping a nine-day high-voltage political drama, the Centre brought Uttarakhand under President's rule citing a constitutional breakdown in the wake of a rebellion in the ruling Congress, which slammed the decision calling it a "murder of democracy" and a "black" day.

President Pranab Mukherjee signed the proclamation under Article 356 of the Constitution dismissing the Congress government headed by Harish Rawat and placing the Assembly under suspended animation this morning on the recommendation of the Union Cabinet.

The Centre was of the view that continuance of the Rawat government was "immoral and unconstitutional" after the March 18, 2016, when the Speaker declared the Appropriation Bill "passed" in controversial circumstances without allowing a division pressed for by 35 MLAs, including 9 rebel Congress legislators.

The Union Cabinet had held an emergency meeting presided over by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had cut short a visit to Assam to return

to the capital for the purpose.

The Cabinet considered several reports received from Governor K.K. Paul, who had described the political situation as volatile and expressed apprehensions over possible pandemonium during the scheduled trial of strength in the State Assembly. The purported CD of the sting operation conducted against the Chief Minister that was in public domain was understood to have been factored into the decision of the Cabinet which found it as a case of horse trading.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is believed to have briefed the President explaining the rationale for the Cabinet's recommendation.

The dismissal of the Rawat government now renders confidence vote infructuous. It also came amidst that Speaker Govind Singh Kunjwal disqualifying nine rebel Congress MLAs that would have enabled Mr. Rawat to sail through in the trust vote.

**NATIONAL****SC issues notice to Centre on triple talaq**

The Supreme Court admitted a petition filed by a woman to declare the practice of triple talaq, nikah halala (bar against remarriage with divorced husband without an intervening marriage with another man) and polygamy under Muslim personal laws as illegal, unconstitutional, and violative of the rights to equality, dignity, life and freedom of religion under the Constitution. A Bench of Justices Anil R. Dave and A.K. Goel issued notice to the Centre on the petition filed by Shayara Bano, who introduced herself in the petition as a "Muslim citizen whose husband has attempted to illegally divorce her after frequently subjecting her to cruelty during the currency of their marriage".

**Former Lok Sabha speaker P.A. Sangma passes away**

Former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno Agitok Sangma died of heart attack. He was 68.

Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan announced the news of his death in the House, which was adjourned for the day. Condoling the death of Sangma, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was “a self-made leader whose contribution towards the development of the Northeast is monumental. Sangma’s tenure as Lok Sabha Speaker “is unforgettable”. His down-to-earth personality and affable nature endeared him to many,” he said, adding “Sangmaji was deeply influenced by Netaji Bose.”

Sangma was a nine-time member of the Lok Sabha and the Speaker in the 11th Lok Sabha. He had also held important portfolios in the Union government.

He was also the Chief Minister of Meghalaya from 1988 to 1990 and Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly from 1990 to 1991.

Born on September 1, 1947 in village Chapahati in the picturesque West Garo Hills District of Meghalaya, Sangma struggled hard to rise in life. After completing his graduation from St. Anthony’s College, he went to the Dibrugarh University in Assam for his Masters degree in International Relations. Subsequently, he also obtained a degree in Law.

A Congressman, who was one of the founding members of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), was expelled from it in July 2012 when he refused to accept his party’s decision to quit the race for India’s President. In January 2013, he formed the National People’s Party.

### **LS rejects RS recommendations, passes Aadhar Bill**

Rejecting Rajya Sabha’s five amendments and opposition’s appeal not to make “haste”, the Lok Sabha passed the legislation that aims at better targeting of subsidies through the Aadhaar unique identity number within hours of the Upper House returning it.

Just moments before it was adjourned for more than a month-long recess for scrutiny of budget, the Lok Sabha adopted the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other subsidies, benefits and services) Bill, 2016, by a voice vote after rejecting the recommendations for five amendments made by the Upper House earlier in the evening.

Armed with the Speaker’s that it was a money bill, the government rushed it through the Rajya Sabha, which cannot amend it but only make

recommendations for amendment to the Lok Sabha. Once the Lok Sabha passes a money bill with or without amendments recommended by the Rajya Sabha, it is deemed to have been passed by both the Houses.

Showing urgency in getting the law through, the government, which enjoys a comfortable majority in the Lok Sabha, brought the measure to the lower house within an hour of being returned by the Rajya Sabha.

The government considers the Aadhaar bill as a significant instrument for implementing its Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) schemes by better targeting of beneficiaries but the Opposition attacked the government saying it was violating the Supreme Court direction that Aadhaar card cannot be made mandatory but should only be voluntary.

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who moved the bill and piloted them in both the Houses, also turned down opposition argument that Parliament cannot legislate since the matter is before Supreme Court. Parliament cannot abdicate its duty under the Constitutional which clearly separates powers among various institutions, he said.

In last-ditch attempts, Opposition members including those from Trinamool, CPI(M) and BJD appealed to the government to respect the “wisdom” of the house of elders and accept their amendments in a democratic spirit and not to reject them on “ego”.

The Lok Sabha rejected the amendments proposed by the Rajya Sabha by a voice vote amid walk out by opposition parties including Trinamool Congress, BJD and CPM. Congress members were conspicuous by their absence.

### **Justice Dattu takes over as NHRC chief**

Former Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu took over as the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), becoming the seventh head of the highest government institution protecting human rights of the citizens.

Justice Dattu served as the Chief Justice of India from September 28, 2014 to December 2, 2015. Elevated as a Judge of the Supreme Court on the December 17, 2008, he has several landmark judgments to his credit in which he protected fundamental rights of citizens and laid down significant principles of law.

He handed down an important ruling that “bail is the rule and jail an exception”, while granting bail to five corporate executives in the 2G spectrum

scam case.

He headed the Bench that acquitted 11 persons charged under terror laws, telling the Gujarat police that no innocent person should be branded a terrorist simply because he belongs to a minority community. The post of NHRC chairperson was lying vacant since May 11 last year after Justice K.G. Balakrishnan completed his tenure.

### India ranks 118th in happiness index

Denmark took the top spot as the 'happiest country' in the world, displacing Switzerland, according to *The World Happiness Report 2016*, published by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), a global initiative of the United Nations. India was ranked 118th in the list, down one slot from last year on the index. The report takes into account the GDP per capita, life expectancy, social support and freedom to make life choices as indicators of happiness.

Switzerland was ranked second on the list, followed by Iceland (3), Norway (4) and Finland (5).

The report said that India was among the group of 10 countries witnessing the biggest happiness declines, along with Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen and Botswana.

India comes below Somalia (76), China (83), Pakistan (92), Iran (105), Palestinian Territories (108) and Bangladesh (110).

The U.S. is ranked 13th, coming behind Australia (9) and Israel (11).

### Vedanta Ltd wins first ever auction of an Indian gold mine

Chhattisgarh earned the distinction of auctioning its first gold mine in India with Vedanta Private Limited quoting the highest bid of 12.55 per cent of IBM (Indian Bureau of Mining) price of Rupees 74,712/ troy ounce (1 troy ounce = 31.10 gram) to win the gold mine against three other bidders. The successful auction of gold mine of Baghmara at Sonakhan in Balodabazaar-Bhatapara district took place on February 26 for 13 hours from 11am to 11.47 pm when the final bid was stamped upon. It is the first gold mine auctioned in the country, for grant of composite license (prospecting license-cum-mining lease) since enforcement of new amendment in Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 2015.

The mine, with a reserve of 2700 kg, is expected to earn more than Rupees 81.40 crores to Chhattisgarh in addition to existing royalty of Rs 24.70 crores.

### Highlights of Union Budget 2016-17

Affirming that the economy is right on track, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the Union Budget for 2016-17. Citing that the CPI inflation has come down to 5.4% from 9 plus, he said it is huge relief for the public.

#### Tax

Infrastructure and agriculture cess to be levied. Excise duty raised from 10 to 15 per cent on tobacco products other than beedis

1 per cent service charge on purchase of luxury cars over Rs. 10 lakh and in-cash purchase of goods and services over Rs. 2 lakh.

SUVs, Luxury cars to be more expensive. 4% high capacity tax for SUVs.

Companies with revenue less than Rs 5 crore to be taxed at 29% plus surcharge

Limited tax compliance window from Jun 1 - Sep 30 for declaring undisclosed income at 45% incl. surcharge and penalties

Excise 1 per cent imposed on articles of jewellery, excluding silver.

0.5 per cent Krishi Kalyan Cess to be levied on all services.

Pollution cess of 1 per cent on small petrol, LPG and CNG cars; 2.5 per cent on diesel cars of certain specifications; 4 per cent on higher-end models.

Dividend in excess of Rs. 10 lakh per annum to be taxed at additional 10 per cent.

#### Personal Finance

No changes have been made to existing income tax slabs

Rs 1,000 crore allocated for new EPF (Employees' Provident Fund) scheme

Govt. will pay EPF contribution of 8.33% for all new employees for first three years

Deduction for rent paid will be raised from Rs 20,000 to Rs 60,000 to benefit those living in rented houses.

Additional exemption of Rs. 50,000 for housing loans up to Rs. 35 lakh, provided cost of house is not above Rs. 50 lakh.

Service tax exempted for housing construction of houses less than 60 sq. m

15 per cent surcharge on income above Rs. 1 crore

**Social**

Rs. 38,500 crore for Mahatma Gandhi MGNREGA for 2016-17

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan allocated Rs.9,500 crores. Hub to support SC/ST entrepreneurs

Government is launching a new initiative to provide cooking gas to BPL families with state support. LPG connections to be provided under the name of women members of family: Rs 2000 crore allocated for 5 years for BPL families.

2.87 lakh crore grants to gram panchayats and municipalities - a quantum jump of 228%.

300 urban clusters to be set up under Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

Four schemes for animal welfare.

**Health**

2.2 lakh renal patients added every year in India. Basic dialysis equipment gets some relief.

A new health protection scheme for health cover upto 1 lakh per family.

National Dialysis Service Prog with funds thru PPP mode to provide dialysis at all district hospitals.

Senior citizens will get additional healthcare cover of Rs 30,000 under the new scheme

PM Jan Aushadhi Yojana to be strengthened, 300 generic drug store to be opened

**Education**

Scheme to get Rs.500 cr for promoting entrepreneurship among SC/ST

10 public and 10 private educational institutions to be made world-class.

Digital repository for all school leaving certificates and diplomas. Rs. 1,000 crore for higher education financing.

Rs. 1,700 crore for 1500 multi-skill development centres.

62 new navodaya vidyalayas to provide quality education

Digital literacy scheme to be launched to cover 6 crore additional rural households

Entrepreneurship training to be provided across schools, colleges and massive online courses.

Objective to skill 1 crore youth in the next 3 years under the PM Kaushal Vikas Yojna-FM Jaitley

National Skill Development Mission has imparted training to 76 lakh youth. 1500 Multi-skill training institutes to be set up.

**Energy**

Rs. 3000 crore earmarked for nuclear power generation

Govt drawing comprehensive plan to be implemented in next 15-20 years for exploiting nuclear energy

Govt to provide incentive for deepwater gas exploration

Deepwater gas new disc to get calibrated market freedom, pre-determined ceiling price based on landed price of alternate fuels.

**Investments and infrastructure**

Rs. 27,000 crore to be spent on roadways

65 eligible habitats to be connected via 2.23 lakh kms of road. Current construction pace is 100 kms/day

Shops to be given option to remain open all seven days in a week across markets.

Rs. 55,000 crore for roads and highways. Total allocation for road construction, including PMGSY, - Rs 97,000 crore

India's highest-ever production of motor vehicles was recorded in 2015

Total outlay for infrastructure in Budget 2016 now stands at Rs. 2,21,246 crore

New greenfield ports to be developed on east and west coasts

Revival of underserved airports. Centre to Partner with States to revive small airports for regional connectivity

100 per cent FDI in marketing of food products produced and marketed in India

Dept. of Disinvestment to be renamed as Dept. of Investment and Public Asset Management

Govt will amend Motor Vehicle Act in passenger vehicle segment to allow innovation.

MAT will be applicable for startups that qualify for 100 per cent tax exemption

Direct tax proposals result in revenue loss of Rs.1060 crore, indirect tax proposals result in gain of Rs.20,670 crore

**Agriculture**

Total allocation for agriculture and farmer welfare at Rs 35984 crores

28.5 lakh hectares of land will be brought under irrigation.

5 lakh acres to be brought under organic farming over a three year period

Rs 60,000 crore for recharging of ground water recharging as there is urgent need to focus on

drought hit areas cluster development for water conservation.

Dedicated irrigation fund in NABARD of Rs.20.000 cr

Nominal premium and highest ever compensation in case of crop loss under the PM Fasal Bima Yojna.

### **Banking**

Banks get a big boost: Rs 25,000 crore towards recapitalisation of public sector banks. Jaitley says: Banking Board Bureau will be operationalised, we stand solidly behind public sector banks.

Target of disbursement under MUDRA increased to 1,80,000 crore

Process of transfer of government stake in IDBI Bank below 50% started

General Insurance companies will be listed in the stock exchange

Govt to increase ATMs, micro-ATMs in post offices in next three years

### **Budget 2016: Govt announces 0.5 per cent Krishi Kalyan Cess to fund farm programmes**

The government announced a Krishi Kalyan Cess of 0.5 per cent on all taxable services effective from June 1 this year to fund farm initiatives. It also proposed cut in excise duty on irrigation pumps and soil nutrients besides slashing import duty on cold storage related equipments.

He said the cess would come into force with effect from June 1, 2016. "Input tax credit of this cess will be available for payment of this cess," he added.

### **India to host 8th BRICS Summit in Goa**

India will host the eighth annual Summit of BRICS from October 15—16 in Goa in its capacity as chair of the influential bloc comprising five countries with 42 per cent of the world population and combined GDP of over USD 16 trillion.

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj made the announcement during a function where she also unveiled a logo and a website of the Summit. India assumed chairmanship of BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa) from Russia on February 15 and it will last till December 31. The External Affairs Minister said India's core-theme during BRICS chairmanship will be building responsive, inclusive and collective solutions for the grouping.

The logo for the Summit is a lotus having colours from all the five member countries and a traditional 'namaste' in the centre.

She said India's emphasis would be on institution building, implementation of previous commitments flowing from the past Summits, and exploring synergies among the existing mechanisms.

The grouping has been pushing for greater economic growth among the member countries and reform of global financial institutions.

### **Ashgabat Agreement gets Cabinet nod**

The Cabinet has approved a proposal to accede to the Ashgabat Agreement, a move that will further strengthen trade ties between India and the Eurasian region.

The decision paves the way for an international transport and transit corridor facilitating transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Oman, Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the founding members of the Ashgabat Agreement, and Kazakhstan joined it subsequently.

The decision is a big step towards enabling India to utilise the existing transport and transit corridor to facilitate trade and commercial interaction with the Eurasian region, Prasad said. Further, this would synchronise with India's efforts to implement the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) for enhanced connectivity, he added.

### **Ministers are answerable under RTI Act: CIC**

Ministers in the Union and state cabinets are "public authorities" liable to answer public questions addressed to them under the Right to Information Act, the Central Information Commission has ruled. This directive that ministers are answerable under the RTI Act will mean that people can directly send questions to a minister by filing an RTI application which will be answered by a public information officer in his office.

"The Commission strongly recommends the Centre and States to provide necessary support to each minister, including designating some officers, or appointing as Public Information Officers and First Appellate Authorities," Information Commissioner Sridhar Acharyulu held in his order.

### **Free LPG connection for women in households below poverty line**

The Committee has approved Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana – scheme for providing free LPG connections to women from BPL households. Under the scheme, 8,000 crore has been earmarked for providing five crore LPG connections to BPL households.

Through this scheme, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas will provide LPG connections at a concessional rate to five crore below poverty line families, over the next three years.

The connections will be given in the names of women members of the households.

After the implementation of the Direct Benefit Transfer for LPG scheme, 77 lakh people voluntarily surrendered their LPG subsidy, which has been utilised to provide 50 lakh BPL families with LPG connections.

### **Capital Local Area Bank receives RBI licence to operate as small finance bank**

Capital Local Area Bank has emerged as the first bank to have received licence from the Reserve Bank of India to start small finance bank.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Google doodle celebrates International Women's Day with 'One day I will...'**

Google celebrates International Women's Day with a doodle that leads to a video where women from across the world are seen completing the sentence beginning with "One day I will...". The video, that includes toddlers, young and elderly women, shows snippets from around the world.

Team Google went to 13 countries, including New Delhi, Moscow, Cairo, Berlin, London and Paris among others to shoot.

"Over the years, Doodles have commemorated the achievements of women in science, civil rights, journalism, sports, arts, technology and beyond. It's always an honor to pay tribute to women who have changed the course of history, sometimes in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles," Google wrote in its page.

Among the popular faces, Nobel Prize winner Malala Yousafzai and anthropologist Jane Goodall are seen sharing their dream.

### **34 killed as bombs rip through Brussels: Islamic State Claims Responsibility for the attack**

Bombs exploded at the Brussels airport and one of the city's metro stations, killing 34 people and wounding dozens, as a European capital was again locked down amid heightened security threats. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks.

The blasts, at least one of them blamed on a suicide bomber, left behind a chaotic scene of splattered blood in the departure lounge as windows were blown out, ceilings collapsed and travelers streamed out of the smoky building.

About an hour later, another bomb exploded on a rush-hour subway train near the European Union headquarters. Terrified passengers had to evacuate through darkened tunnels to safety.

The bomb attacks that have killed at least 31 people at the airport and a metro station in the Belgian capital demonstrate that jihadists remain a serious security threat to European societies despite a massive security crackdown since the November 2015 Paris attacks. Brussels, which hosts key European Union institutions, is the *de facto* capital of Europe. By striking in the city four days after Salah Abdeslam, thought to be the lone remaining perpetrator of the Paris attacks, was caught, the terrorists have sent a strong message not just to the Belgian government but to the entire European establishment. The Belgian government woke up to the terrorist threat it faces only after the Paris attacks that killed at least 130 people. Several of the attackers came from the Brussels neighbourhood of Molenbeek. Security forces had carried out a massive combing operation in the neighbourhoods and even locked down the capital city for days. But still it took more than four months for the Belgian authorities to track down and arrest Abdeslam, who was reportedly planning more attacks in Europe. What is more tragic and surprising is that the authorities still could not stop the attack. Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel's words that "what we feared has happened", bluntly point to the failure of the intelligence and security establishment.

The Brussels attacks also come in a broader context of global jihadists stepping up attacks on civilians around the world. The Islamic State in particular, which has claimed responsibility for the Brussels strike, has carried out a number of attacks across the world, from Paris to Ankara, in recent months. One of the reasons for these attacks in faraway locations is that the group is facing military setbacks

in and around the so-called 'caliphate', the seat of its influence. Attacking public places and killing innocent people may appear to be sheer madness. But for groups such as the IS, there is a rationale. First, not being able to expand the territories of the 'caliphate', the IS wants to export terrorism to other countries so as to stay 'relevant' and find more recruits. Second, and more important, the IS is fighting a war against the civilisational values of the modern world. By attacking the public, it wants to create panic in free and open societies, break their social cohesion and then reap the dividends. And it is certain by now that Europe is high on the hit list of the IS because it knows that when it hits Western societies, which are generally known for democratic, secular and pluralistic values, it sets off the real panic button. For the same reasons, the challenges before Europe are also greater. To be sure, it has to raise security operations to a higher standard and strengthen cooperation among other countries in fighting terrorist groups such as the IS and al-Qaeda.

#### **ExoMars: Mars Odyssey by Russian & EU scientists**

Space engineers are making final preparations for the launch of a robot spacecraft designed to sniff out signs of life on Mars.

The probe, ExoMars 2016 — the first of a two-phase exploration of the Red Planet by European and Russian scientists — is scheduled to be blasted into space on a Proton rocket from Baikonour cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 0931 GMT.

#### **Turning Off the Lights: Earth Hour 2016**

On March 19, iconic landmarks and skylines were plunged into darkness as people and businesses around the world participated in Earth Hour 2016, turning off their lights for an hour at 8:30 p.m. local time. Earth Hour was organized by the World Wildlife Fund in 2007 as a way to bring attention to energy consumption, sustainability, and climate-change issues.

#### **N. Korea threatens pre-emptive nuclear strike on South, U.S.**

North Korea threatened "indiscriminate" nuclear strikes against South Korea and the U.S. if the two allies push ahead with joint military drills. The threat to carry out what it described as a "pre-emptive nuclear strike of justice" was made

in a statement by the North's powerful National Defence Commission, citing the Supreme Command of the Korean People's Army (KPA). It came just days after leader Kim Jong-un ordered the country's nuclear arsenal to be placed on standby for use "at any moment," in response to tough new UN sanctions imposed over the North's fourth nuclear test in January and last month's long-range rocket launch.

Pyongyang has issued dire warnings of nuclear attack in the past, usually during periods of elevated military tensions of the Korean peninsula.

While the North is known to have a small stockpile of nuclear warheads, experts are divided about its ability to mount them on a working missile delivery system.

The national Defence Commission described the annual South Korea-U.S. military exercises as "undisguised nuclear war drills" that threatened the North's national sovereignty, and vowed an all-out offensive in response.

Any strike would not just target operational theatres on the Korean peninsula, but also U.S. bases on the mainland and in the rest of the Asia-Pacific region.

The annual exercises — called "Foal Eagle" and "Key Resolve" — last for weeks and involve tens of thousands of U.S. and South Korean troops. Pyongyang has long condemned the drills as provocative rehearsals for invasion, while Seoul and Washington insist they are purely defensive in nature.

#### **Kejriwal named among world's 50 greatest leaders by Fortune**

Arvind Kejriwal has been named among the world's 50 greatest leaders by Fortune magazine with the Delhi Chief Minister being the sole Indian leader on the list topped by Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. Fortune's third annual 'World's 50 Greatest Leaders' list features men and women from across the globe from the fields of business, government, philanthropy and the arts who are "transforming the world and inspiring others to do the same."

47-year-old Aam Aadmi Party chief is ranked 42nd on the list and is the sole leader from India. However, South Carolina's Indian-American Governor Nikki Haley is also on the list at 17th while another Indian-American Resham Saujani is at the 20th spot.

Fortune credits Mr. Kejriwal for his efforts to curb pollution in New Delhi through the scheme

of allowing vehicles of odd and even numbers on alternate days on the city's roads.

It said leadership is not "demagoguery, pandering, even populism" but is defined by people across the world "you've never heard of who are rallying followers to make life better in ways you never imagined."

Mr. Bezos, who topped the list this year, has been on the list all three times, along with Pope Francis who comes in at the 4th position followed by Apple CEO Tim Cook.

The list includes German Chancellor Angela Merkel (2), Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi at (3), US astronaut Scott Kelly and Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Kornienko (22), IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde (36), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Co-chair and CEO Melinda Gates and Susan Desmond-Hellmann (41), Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (48) and Bhutanese Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay (50).

### **World's Costliest Train Station Opens At Site Of 9/11 Attacks**

The most expensive train station in the world opens at the site of the World Trade Center destroyed 14 years ago in the 9/11 attacks.

Twelve years in the making, there will be no official ceremony to mark the 3 pm opening to rail commuters of the World Trade Center Transportation Hub next to the site of the Twin Towers, which were destroyed in the Al-Qaeda hijackings.

The building, designed by Spanish-Swiss architect Santiago Calatrava and called Oculus, is a giant oval made up of steel ribs and glass laid out in elliptical shape, reaching for the sky like wings of a bird.

Initially budgeted at \$2 billion, it has spiraled to \$3.85 billion according to a spokesperson in Calatrava's office, which would make it the most expensive station in the world.

In contrast, the temporary station which was built straight after the September 11, 2001 attacks cost just \$323 million.

It said that when completed, the transit hub will serve 250,000 people and more than 200,000 commuters each day, making it the third-largest transportation center in the city.

### **Modi on TIME's 'most influential on Internet' list for second year**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is among the most influential people on the Internet, *TIME* magazine

said, describing the Indian leader as an "Internet star" who often uses social media to "conduct diplomacy."

The magazine cited Mr. Modi's unconventional announcement on Twitter of his visit to Pakistan last year while naming him among 'The 30 Most Influential People on the Internet' for the second year in a row in this year's unranked list.

The list includes U.S. Presidential hopeful Donald Trump, reality TV star Kim Kardashian and her husband Kanye West, author J.K. Rowling, former Olympic athlete Caitlyn Jenner and soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo.

On Mr. Trump, the magazine noted that he is "redefining how political candidates use social media, for better and for worse."

Despite facing flak for his often insulting tweets and comments online, Mr. Trump has almost 7 million followers on Twitter, more than any other presidential candidate including Hillary Clinton, it said.

For its second annual roundup of the most influential people on the Internet, *TIME* said it looked at the contenders' global impact on social media and their overall ability to drive news.

On Mr. Modi, *TIME* said the leader of the world's largest democracy is also an "Internet star", boasting more than 18 million Twitter followers and over 32 million Facebook likes.

It also cited Mr. Modi's use of social media to break news and conduct diplomacy.

*TIME*, however, also cited the *faux pas* Mr. Modi made when he took to Twitter last month to convey his birthday wish to Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani, who politely corrected him that his birthday was in May.

Last year, Mr. Modi was named by *TIME* among the 100 most influential people in the world in its annual list, with U.S. President Barack Obama penning a flattering profile of him.

This year's list also includes Indo-Canadian vlogger Lilly Singh, who *TIME* has said is rapidly becoming one of the biggest stars on YouTube, both on and off-screen.

### **India, Seychelles joint military exercise begins tomorrow**

The 7th joint military exercise of Indian Army and Seychelles People's Defence Forces (SPDF) Lamitye 2016 — will be conducted at Seychelles Defence Academy (SDA), Victoria till February 28.

India and Seychelles have been conducting joint drill since 2001 and 'Exercise Lamitye', which means friendship in Creole (local dialect), is conducted biennially with the aim of enhancing military cooperation and interoperability between the two countries.

#### **Five Indian women on Forbes World's Billionaires List**

Five Indian women have made it to the *Forbes* list of world's richest people in the world, which saw 190 women billionaires — a little over 10 per cent of the total count.

Globally the number of women in the coveted rich list declined from last year. Of the total 1,810 billionaires this year, 190 are women, down from 197 in 2015. Moreover, women still account for just a small percentage — a little over 10 per cent of the total richie-rich population.

Among the Indian women on the list Savitri Jindal and family was ranked at the 453rd place on the list with a net worth of \$3.5 billion.

On Ms. Jindal, *Forbes* said, in the past five years, her fortune has declined by close to \$10 billion due to a downward slide in shares of her O.P. Jindal group of companies.

Indu Jain who chairs media conglomerate Bennett, Coleman & Co, was placed at the 549 rank globally. Her net worth stood at \$3.1 billion.

Others on the list include, Smita Crishna-Godrej ranked 810 on the list with a net worth of \$2.2 billion. This is her maiden appearance on the billionaires list by virtue of a one-fifth stake in the family assets.

Meanwhile, low-profile heiress Leena Tewari debuted on the billionaires list. She chairs and owns privately held Indian generics maker USV, known for its drugs for diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, among much else. Ms. Leena Tiwari was placed at 1067 position with a net wealth of \$1.7 billion.

Vinod Gupta ranked 1577 with assets of \$1.1 billion, is the wife of Qimat Rai Gupta, who died in November 2014. She inherited her husband's shares in electrical firm Havells India, though she doesn't hold an executive or board position.

Globally, the grand dame of L'Or, Liliane Bettencourt and her children were ranked at the top among the richest women in the world. She was placed at the 11th position with a net worth of \$36.1

billion, followed by Alice Walton ranked 16th with assets of \$32.3 billion and Jacqueline Mars (27, \$23.4 billion).

Microsoft's co-founder Bill Gates continued his reign as the world's richest person with a net worth of \$ 75 billion, according to *Forbes*' annual ranking of billionaires, with Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani leading the pack of 84 Indian billionaires in 2016.

*Forbes*' 2016 list of the World's Billionaires includes 1,810 billionaires, down from a record 1,826 a year ago. Their aggregate net worth is \$6.48 trillion, \$570 billion less than last year.

Gates remains the richest person in the world with a net worth of \$75 billion, despite being \$4.2 billion poorer than a year ago. He has been number one for 3 years in a row and topped the list 17 out of 22 years.

*Forbes* said Ambani, 58, has retained his position as India's richest person despite shares of his oil and gas giant Reliance Industries taking a hit due to lower oil prices.

He is ranked 36th on the list with a net worth of \$20.6 billion, the magazine said, adding that "the \$62.2 billion (revenues) firm is likely to resume buying crude oil from Iran after the lifting of sanctions."

Occupying the second spot on the list is Spanish billionaire Amancio Ortega, founder of clothing retail giant Zara and the richest man in Europe.

On the third spot is billionaire philanthropist and Berkshire Hathaway CEO Warren Buffett, Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim Helu (4) and Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos (5).

Ambani leads a pack of 84 billionaires from India, with pharma magnate Dilip Shanghvi (rank 44 and \$16.7 billion networth), Wipro Chairman Azim Premji (55 with \$15 billion networth) and HCL co-founder Shiv Nadar (88 and \$11.1 billion networth) coming in among the top 100 billionaires.

Other prominent Indian billionaires include ArcelorMittal Chairman Lakshmi Mittal (135), Bharti Airtel's Sunil Mittal (219), ports and power magnate Gautam Adani (453), matriarch Savitri Jindal (453), Bajaj Group's Rahul Bajaj (722), Infosys chairman emeritus N R Narayana Murthy (959) and Mahindra Group's chief Anand Mahindra (1577).

### AWARDS

#### **Resul Pookutty wins Golden Reel Award for 'India's Daughter'**

Oscar-winning sound designer Resul Pookutty has won a Golden Reel Award for the documentary film "India's Daughter".

Pookutty was nominated in two categories at Motion Picture Sound Editors' 63rd annual Golden Reel Awards for the films "Unfreedom" and "India's Daughter", both of which are banned in India. Pookutty won the award for Best Sound & Music Editing: Television Documentary Short Form

#### **Tikka Shatruijit Singh knighted with top French award**

Tikka Shatruijit Singh, the royal scion of Kapurthala's Ahluwalia dynasty, has been conferred with the prestigious Knight of the Legion of Honour for his "extraordinary work in the exchanging the French lifestyle and Indian culture with each other."

"The business journey with Tikka started with Louis Vuitton and he has been an incredible man of culture working tirelessly for promoting the French culture in India," the ambassador said. The Legion d'Honneur, created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, is the highest civilian award given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality of the recipients.

#### **Anand Mahindra conferred with France's highest civilian award**

Mahindra & Mahindra Chairman and Managing Director Anand Mahindra has been conferred with Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour) by the French authorities. The highest French civilian distinction came in recognition of Mahindra's outstanding national and international achievements and initiatives at the helm of the Mahindra Group, it added.

Mahindra is recognised as one of the most prominent business leaders in India, who has turned Mahindra & Mahindra into a global company of outstanding repute.

#### **British mathematician Sir Andrew Wiles gets Abel math prize**

British mathematician Sir Andrew J. Wiles has won the Abel Prize in math for cracking a centuries-old hypothesis. Norway's Academy of Science

and Letters said he was given the annual award "for his stunning proof of (French mathematician Pierre de) Fermat's Last Theorem by way of the modularity conjecture for semi-stable elliptic curves, opening a new era in number theory."

It said in 1994, the 62-year-old cracked the theorem, which was "the most famous, and long-running, unsolved problem in the subject's history." He will receive the 6 mn kroner award at a ceremony on May 24 in Oslo.

#### **Palestinian wins \$ 1 million global teaching prize**

A Palestinian teacher from the West Bank has won a \$1 million award for her innovative approach of using play to counter violent behaviour.

Hanan Al-Hroub, who grew up in a Palestinian refugee camp in Bethlehem and now teaches at a high school in the West Bank, was awarded the Global Teacher award at a ceremony in Dubai. Wearing a traditional Palestinian dress and black veil, Hroub was hailed by world leaders at the ceremony for the Nobel-style award, set up two years ago by the Dubai-based Varkey Foundation. Detailed in her book "We Play and Learn", Hroub's approach has "led to a decline in violent behaviour in schools where this is usually a frequent occurrence," the foundation said in a statement.

#### **Manoj Kumar to be honoured with Dadasaheb Phalke award**

Veteran actor Manoj Kumar, best known for his patriotic films *Purab Aur Paschim*, *Upkar* and *Kranti*, will be conferred the Dadasaheb Phalke award for his contribution to the film industry. The actor became the 47th recipient of the award, the highest recognition in Indian cinema, which consists of a golden lotus, a cash prize of Rs 10 lakhs and a shawl.

Kumar was born as Harikrishna Giri Goswami in Abbottabad, which was then a part of pre-independent India.

He initially started as a romantic hero following his debut in 1960 with *Kaanch Ki Gudia* but later shifted focus to acting and directing films with patriotic themes so much so that fans started calling him 'Bharat Kumar'.

Kumar won National Award for *Upkaar* and was honoured with the Padma Shri in 1992.

### **Leonardo DiCaprio wins Best Actor, Spotlight is Best Picture at Oscars 2016**

- Best Picture - 'Spotlight'
- Best Actor in a Leading Role - Leonardo DiCaprio for 'The Revenant'
- Best Actress in a Leading Role - Brie Larson for 'Room'
- Best Directing - Alejandro G. Inarritu for 'The Revenant'
- Best Foreign Language Film - Hungary; 'Son of Saul' directed by Laszlo Nemes

### **Gianni Infantino of Switzerland wins FIFA presidential election with 115 votes**

Gianni Infantino pulled off a stunning victory to take over as FIFA president.

The Swiss official received 115 of the 207 eligible votes in the second round to earn a decisive majority over Sheikh Salman of Bahrain, who had been the strong favorite entering the election.

The 45-year-old former lawyer saluted voters by patting his right hand over his heart, and had to compose himself before starting his acceptance speech.

Sheikh Salman received 88 votes after being the front-runner during much of the four-month campaign. Prince Ali of Jordan had four votes, and Jerome Champagne of France got zero.

Infantino, the general secretary of European governing body UEFA, is the second straight FIFA president from the Valais region in the Swiss Alps. Infantino is from Brig and replaces the 79-year-old Blatter, who was born in neighboring Visp. Infantino will be president through May 2019, completing the remainder of Blatter's term.

Blatter was forced out by the pressure of American and Swiss investigations of corruption that hit FIFA two days before the previous election in May. Not since 1974 has a second-round vote been held in a FIFA presidential election. Then, Joao Havelange of Brazil beat 13-year incumbent Stanley Rous of England 68-52 after an initial 62-56 ballot in Frankfurt, Germany.

Infantino takes over a wealthy but vulnerable soccer body whose image and confidence has been shattered by escalating scandals.

Blatter was re-elected for a fifth term in May but bowed to pressure four days later and announced he would resign. Blatter was subsequently banned

for six years for financial mismanagement and was absent after 40 years as a fixture at FIFA meetings.

Before electing FIFA's first new president since 1998, 87 per cent of the 207 voting federations passed wide-ranging reforms to protect against corruption and curb the powers of its new president.

### **Mumbai win Ranji Trophy for 41st time**

Mumbai won the Ranji Trophy for a record 41st time with a comprehensive innings and 21-run victory over Saurashtra on day three of the five-day final in Pune.

Not many would have predicted Mumbai to run away with the title in less than three days but their bowlers dismissed Saurashtra for 115 to cap off a dramatic day three.

The record Ranji Trophy champions got their hands on the trophy for the first time in three seasons and now they have 41 titles to their name in 45 finals with 10 of them being an innings victory. Karnataka are a distant second in the overall Ranji standings with eight titles.

### **Goverdhan Mehta conferred Germany's prestigious award**

Goverdhan Mehta, a well known researcher in Chemical Sciences & former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad (UoH), has been conferred with Federal Republic of Germany's prestigious 'Cross of the Order of Merit'.

Mehta was the VC during 1994-98 of the UoH, which is among the top 10 Universities in the country. However, the campus got caught recently in the unsavoury events following the suicide of Ph.D student, Rohit Vemula and the political fall out.

Achim Fabig, the German Consul General in Chennai, conferred the 'Bundesverdienstkreuz' (the Cross of the Order of Merit) to Goverdhan Mehta. Instituted in 1951 it is the only honour that may be awarded in all fields of endeavour and is the highest tribute the Federal Republic of Germany can pay to individuals for achievements in political, economic, social or intellectual realm and for all kinds of outstanding services to the nation in the field of social, charitable or philanthropic work.

## SPORTS

### **After Ranji, Mumbai clinch CK Nayudu Trophy too**

After clinching their 41st Ranji Trophy title in Pune around a week back, Mumbai annexed their second title this season when they won the Col CK Nayudu Trophy (U-23) by beating Madhya Pradesh on the basis of first innings lead at the MPCA Stadium in Indore on Thursday (January 4).

Resuming at 419-6, Madhya Pradesh folded up for 442 on the fifth and final day to lose the all-important first innings lead by 135 runs. Pacers Tushar Deshpande (5-143) and Akash Parkar (4-77) were the bowling heroes for Mumbai. The triumph was set up by Jay Bista, who continued his superb touch in this tournament with a magnificent 217 in the final.

### **Jitu Rai strikes gold at ISSF World Cup**

A fit-again Indian shooter Jitu Rai edged past a strong field, including former Olympic champion Pang Wei, to clinch the 50m pistol gold at the ISSF World Cup. Jitu, who had been nursing a palm injury for some months, beat China's former World and Olympic Champion Wei to second place shooting 191.3 to Pang's 186.5. Wang Zhiwei, also of China and an Olympic Bronze medallist, finished third with a final round score of 165.8.

### **Services beat Maharashtra 2-1 to win Santosh Trophy**

Riding on Arjun Tudu's double strike, Services retained the Santosh Trophy National Football Championships title after beating hosts Maharashtra 2-1 in the summit clash here.

Tudu, a national camper for the SAFF Cup last year, scored twice in the space of 11 minutes (26th and 37th) to help Services clinch their fifth title overall at the SEC Railway Stadium. Mohammed Shabaz had given Maharashtra the lead in the 15th minute.

### **Irani Cup: Rest of India chase 480-run target set by Mumbai, lift title**

Rest of India batsmen displayed collective brilliance as they planned a classic run-chase to perfection against Ranji Trophy champions Mumbai, winning the Irani Cup by 4 wickets reaching a mammoth victory target of 480 runs, in Mumbai.

### **India wins Asia Cup for record sixth time**

India demonstrated its dominance in Twenty20 cricket and regained continental supremacy, downing host Bangladesh by eight wickets in the final of the Asia Cup at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

Bangladesh found its total of 120, after having been asked to bat, too meagre to challenge the efficiency of the Indians who completed the run chase with seven balls to spare. The match was reduced to a 15-over affair after a thundershower delayed the start by two hours.

Shikhar Dhawan played the lead with a chanceless 60 (44b, 9x4, 1x6) while Virat Kohli (41 not out) supported him ably in a 94-run stand for the second wicket. Captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni produced late fireworks, scoring 20 off just six balls (two sixes and a four), to ensure India's sixth Asia Cup title. This was the 10th win in 11 matches for India — an encouraging statistic ahead of the ICC World T20.

### **Sharapova to be suspended as she failed dope test in January**

Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova said that she had been notified by the International Tennis Federation that she tested positive for a banned substance at the Australian Open in January.

A five-time Grand Slam champion, Ms. Sharapova (28), is one of tennis' biggest stars and has been the highest-paid female athlete for 11 straight years. She said she had been taking Mildronate since 2006 for health issues. Mildronate is also known as Meldonium, which was added to the prohibited list this year.

Ms. Sharapova said she received an email from the World Anti-Doping Agency in December that noted changes to the tennis programme for 2016. "I have to take full responsibility for it," she told a news conference. "It's my body, and I'm responsible for what I put into it."

Ms. Sharapova will be provisionally suspended starting March 12, the International Tennis Federation said. Three of her sponsors — sportswear giant Nike, Swiss watch brand Tag Heuer and German luxury car company Porsche — announced they were cutting ties with her.

### **New Zealand Cricket Legend Martin Crowe No More**

The International Cricket Council has expressed its sadness at the passing of ICC Cricket Hall of Famer and former New Zealand captain Martin Crowe, who died due to health ailments.

He was exceptional throughout his career in both forms of the game and against all oppositions.

Crowe made his international debut at the age of 19 in 1982 and retired in 1995 after representing New Zealand in 77 Tests and 143 One-Day Internationals. He scored 5,444 Test runs with 17 centuries, the most by a New Zealand batsman, and 4,704 ODI runs, including 456 runs in the ICC Cricket World Cup 1992 that won him the player of the tournament award.

Crowe captained New Zealand in 16 Tests and 44 ODIs.

During the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 match in Auckland between New Zealand and Australia, Crowe was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame. Crowe later described his induction as one of the highlights of his career.

### **Dutch football legend Johan Cruyff dead**

Johan Cruyff, the legendary Dutch soccer striker and coach, has died of lung cancer aged 68, according to a message posted on his website. The site said he had died in Barcelona, surrounded by family.

As a player, Cruyff was the embodiment of Dutch "total football", a fluid style of play focused on ball possession and rapid passing, and involving all members of the team in both attack and defence.

He emerged as one of the world's greats in the early 1970s when he helped Ajax Amsterdam win three European Cups in a row from 1971-73, and he was named European Footballer of the Year in 1971, 1973 and 1974.

He joined Barcelona for a then-world record transfer fee of \$2.0 million, and it was the Catalan club that later defined his coaching career as he led them to their first La Liga title in nearly 15 years in 1974.

He was also a key player in the great Netherlands team that reached the 1974 World Cup final, when a global audience saw him perform the now-famous "Cruyff turn", in which the player tries to deceive a defender by hooking the ball behind their own leg before swerving away in the direction of the

ball.

Cruyff had been a heavy smoker, and had had heart surgery in 1991. His death comes less than six months after he announced that he had been diagnosed with lung cancer.

### **Patna Pirates steal it from U Mumba in Kabaddi League**

Patna Pirates had struggled to break the semifinal jinx in the previous two editions of the ProKabaddi League (PKL). Having got past that hurdle, the side went all the way, defeating defending champion U Mumba 31-28 in the dying seconds of the game to win the title at the Indira Gandhi indoor stadium but not before Mumba gave it a scare till the last few seconds of the game.

### **PERSON-IN-NEWS**

#### **Alok Kumar Verma to take over as the new Delhi Police chief**

Amid mounting pressure regarding the controversy around the JNU row, the government fast-tracked the announcement of the new Delhi Police chief. Director General (Prisons), Alok Kumar Verma, will replace BS Bassi on March 1, a top home ministry official told The Hindu.

Though the formal orders will be issued, the official said that the Cabinet Committee on Appointments (CCA), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has cleared Verma's name.

The Delhi's Commissioner of Police post is important because of the Aam Aadmi Party Government in power in the national capital. With frequent clashes between the police and the Delhi Government, the central government would want an officer who can withstand Kejriwal's antics to browbeat the police.

However, it will be interesting to see how Verma deals with the negative image of "government's stooge" to be left behind by his predecessor Bassi whose force zealously pursued cases against Aam Aadmi Party legislators but appears to have turned limp in dealing with BJP MLA OP Sharma who was seen assaulting a CPI leader.

With BJP in the centre and the AAP government in Delhi, the new police chief will have a tricky situation to deal with when he takes over.

### **Ray Tomlinson, inventor of modern email, dies**

Raymond Tomlinson, the inventor of modern email and a technological leader, has died, his employer said.

Email existed in a limited capacity before Tomlinson in that electronic messages could be shared amid multiple people within a limited framework. But until his invention in 1971 of the first network person-to-person email, there was no way to send something to a specific person at a specific address. Tomlinson wrote and sent the first email on the ARPANET system, a computer network that was created for the U.S. government that is considered a precursor to the Internet. Tomlinson also contributed to the network's development, among numerous other pioneering technologies in the programming world.

At the time, few people had personal computers. The popularity of personal email wouldn't take off until years later and would ultimately become an integral part of modern life.

The first email was sent between two machines that were side-by-side. Tomlinson said in a company interview that the test messages were "entirely forgettable and I have, therefore, forgotten them." But when he was satisfied that the program seemed to work, he announced it via his own invention by sending a message to co-workers explaining how to use it.

Tomlinson is the one who chose the "@" symbol to connect the username with the destination address and it has now become a cultural icon.

Tomlinson held electrical engineering degrees from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. And despite being a famed programmer and recipient of numerous awards and accolades, co-workers described as humble and modest.

### **Beatles' producer George Martin dies at 90**

George Martin, the Beatles' urbane producer who quietly guided the band's swift, historic transformation from rowdy club act to musical and cultural revolutionaries, has died. He was 90. British Prime Minister David Cameron tweeted that Martin "was a giant of music working with the Fab Four to create the world's most enduring pop music."

Too modest to call himself the "Fifth Beatle," a title many felt he deserved, the tall, elegant Londoner produced some of the most popular and influential

albums of modern times "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "Revolver," "Rubber Soul," "Abbey Road" elevating rock LPs from ways to cash in on hit singles to art forms, "concepts." He won six Grammys and was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in 1999. Three years earlier, he was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II. Martin both witnessed and enabled the extraordinary metamorphosis of the Beatles and of the 1960s. From a raw first album in 1962 that took just a day to make, to the months-long production of "Sgt. Pepper," the Beatles advanced rapidly as songwriters and sonic explorers. They not only composed dozens of classics, from "She Loves You" to "Hey Jude," but turned the studio into a wonderland of tape loops, multi-tracking, unpredictable tempos, unfathomable segues and kaleidoscopic montages. Never again would rock music be defined by two-minute love songs or guitar-bass-drums arrangements. Lyrically and musically, anything became possible.

### **BS Chauhan is new Law Commission Chairman**

Former SC judge Balbir Singh Chauhan has been appointed as the Chairman of the Law Commission. Chauhan is also the Chairperson of the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal. He was the judge of the Supreme Court of India from May 2009 to July 2014. He previously served as the Chief Justice of Orissa High Court from July 2008 to May 2009. The 20th Law Commission, under justice A.P. Shah, did some exemplary work with 19 reports over the course of two years. This included reports and recommendations on arbitration law, death penalty, commercial courts and electoral reforms. Of these, commercial courts and amendments to arbitration law have already been passed as laws.

### **Mother Teresa to be canonised on September 4 (Important)**

Mother Teresa will be made a saint on September 4, Pope Francis announced, 19 years after the death of the Nobel Laureate who spent 45 years serving the poor and sick on the streets of Kolkata. "Pope Francis approved Mother Teresa's elevation to sainthood and set September 4 as the date for her canonisation," said a message from the Vatican to the Mother's House, the headquarters of the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata.

Mother Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity and spent 45 years serving the poor, the sick,

the orphaned, and the dying on the streets of Kolkata. She died at the age of 87 in Kolkata in 1997.

The elevation of Mother Teresa to sainthood came after the Church recognised a second miracle earlier, the Missionaries of Charity said.

The Missionaries of Charity and other Christian associations in Kolkata are planning a big thanksgiving Holy Mass on October 2 at the Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata.

More than 300,000 pilgrims went to Rome in 2003 for Teresa's beatification — the first step towards sainthood.

Mother Teresa was born Anjeze Gonxhe Bojaxhiu of Albanian parents in Macedonia in 1910 in what was then part of the Ottoman Empire. After having lived in Macedonia for some 18 years, she moved to Ireland and then to India, where she lived for most of her life.

She was granted Indian citizenship in 1951 and received a state funeral after her death.

Mother Teresa, who will now be a Saint of the Roman Catholic Church, was beatified by then pope John Paul II in a fast-tracked process in 2003.

In 2002, the Vatican officially recognised a miracle she was said to have carried out after her death, namely the 1998 healing of a Bengali tribal woman, Monika Besra, who was suffering from an abdominal tumour. The traditional canonisation procedure requires at least two miracles.

"The first miracle was performed in Kolkata many years ago. The second one was performed in Brazil, where a person had been healed miraculously as a result of her earlier prayers," Kumar said, adding that such miracles were known to happen even after the death of a saint.

Kumar, who worked closely with the Mother, said the late nun was an extraordinary woman who believed that hard work was the best way to serve God.

### **Obama nominates Merrick Garland to Supreme Court**

President Barack Obama said he would nominate appeals court judge Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court, challenging Republicans to reject a long-time jurist and former prosecutor known as "one of America's sharpest legal minds".

Mr. Garland, 63, is the chief judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a court whose influence over federal policy

and national security matters has made it a proving ground for potential Supreme Court justices.

Mr. Obama announced his choice at a ceremony in the Rose Garden, with Democratic Senate leaders and allies looking on.

Mr. Garland is known for his "decency, modesty integrity, even-handedness and excellence", he said. The President noted Mr. Garland was confirmed to the D.C. Circuit in 1997 with backing from a majority in both parties, including seven current Republicans senators.

If confirmed, Mr. Garland would be expected to align with the more liberal members, but he is not viewed as down-the-line liberal. Particularly on criminal defence and national security cases, he's earned a reputation as centrist, and one of the few Democratic-appointed judges Republicans might have fast-tracked to confirmation under other circumstances.

But in the current climate, Mr. Garland remains a tough sell. Republicans control the Senate, which must confirm any nominee, and GOP leaders want to leave the choice to the next President, denying Mr. Obama a chance to alter the ideological balance of the court before he leaves office next January. Republicans contend that a confirmation fight in an election year would be too politicised.

Ahead of Obama's announcement, the Republican Party set up a task force that will orchestrate attack ads, petitions and media outreach.

Federal appeals court judge Sri Srinivasan had also been a finalist for the nomination

Mr. Garland a white, male jurist with an Ivy League pedigree and career spent largely in the upper echelon of the Washington's legal elite breaks no barriers. At 63 years old, he would be the oldest Supreme Court nominee since Lewis Powell, who was 64 when he was confirmed in late 1971.

### **Hinduja brothers top Britain's 'Asian Rich List'**

Hinduja brothers have emerged as the richest Asian-origin entrepreneurs in Britain for the fourth consecutive year with an estimated personal fortune of 16.5 billion pounds.

The India-born brothers GP Hinduja and SP Hinduja topped the "Asian Rich List 2016" and the annual rankings showed that they had added one billion pounds to their personal fortune in a year to be worth an estimated 16.5 billion pounds.

The Asian Rich List assesses the total wealth of Britain's top 101 richest Asians and is compiled

by UK-based publishing house Asian Media and Market.

Steel tycoon Lakshmi Niwas Mittal was ranked second in the list, released by the Indian high commissioner to the UK Navtej Sarna. The fortune of Mittal, however, has plummeted by 3.3 billion pounds to finish with 6.4 billion pounds.

Leading NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul is listed as 15th richest with fortune worth 500 million pounds.

This year's analysis showed that the UK's richest Asians have their fortunes worth 55.54 billion pounds up from 54.48 billion pounds in 2015.

The highest riser and a new entry is Cyrus Vandrevala, with 2 billion pounds at number five. He moved to London with his wife Priya, having made his money in the US in the internet business. He is now in private equity and real estate.

Sri Prakash Lohia, chairman of the Indorama Corporation, is listed 3rd richest with fortune worth 3 billion pounds.

The Arora brothers — Simon, Bobby and Robin — owners of discount retail chain are 4th richest with a fortune worth 2.1 billion pounds.

Within the Hinduja group — conglomerate with interests across automotive, real estate and oil — GulfOil, Ashok Leyland, IndusInd Bank and Hinduja global Solutions appear to have done particularly well.

According to the Asian Rich List, Gopi Hinduja, co-chairman of the Hinduja group does not think that wealth should be measured only or even mainly by how much there is in someone's bank account.

### **20 sites added to UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves**

The International Co-ordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO added 20 sites to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves during its meeting in the capital of Peru on 18 and 19 March. The newly adopted sites include 18 national site and one transboundary site shared between Spain and Portugal. The Council also approved 9 extensions to existing Biosphere Reserves. Following the withdrawal of two sites at the request of Austria, this brings the total number of biosphere reserves to 669 sites in 120 countries, including 16 transboundary sites.

The Man and the Biosphere Programme was created by UNESCO in the early 1970s as an intergovernmental scientific endeavour to improve relations between people around the world and their natural

environment. Biosphere reserves are places for learning about sustainable development aiming to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with the sustainable use of natural resources. New reserves are designated each year by the International Co-ordinating Council of the Programme, which brings together elected representatives of 34 UNESCO Member States.

Agasthyamala (India)—Located in the Western Ghats, in the south of the country, the biosphere reserve includes peaks reaching 1,868m above sea level. Consisting mostly of tropical forests, the site is home to 2,254 species of higher plants including about 400 that are endemic. It is also a unique genetic reservoir of cultivated plants especially cardamom, jamune, nutmeg, pepper and plantain. Three wildlife sanctuaries, Shendurney, Peppara, Neyyar and Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger reserve are included in the site. A number of tribal settlements with a total population of 3,000 are located in the biosphere reserve. They largely rely on biological resources for their sustenance and recent projects have been set up successfully to reduce their dependence on the forests.

### **Justice Permod Kohli appointed as Chairman of Central Administrative Tribunal**

Retired Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court Justice Permod Kohli has been appointed as the Chairman of Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT).

CAT was established under Article 323A of the Constitution (inserted by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment, 1976). It exercises original jurisdiction in relation to recruitment and all services matters of public servants covered by it. Its jurisdiction extends to the all-India services, Central civil services, civil posts under the Centre and civilian employee of defence services.