

## CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : DECEMBER 2016

### STATE

#### **Kerala Government launches Haritha Keralam Mission**

Kerala Government on 8 December 2016 has launched Haritha Keralam Mission, a comprehensive programme for creating new sustainable development perspectives in the state. It was launched by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in the state capital Thiruvananthapuram.

The Haritha Keralam Mission aims at creating new development perspectives by maximum utilization of opportunities through waste management, water resources and agricultural development. It is multi-dimensional development project focuses on water conservation, sanitation, environmental protection, and paddy cultivation. It aims to clear and remove waste from all water bodies in the state, ensure disposal of solid waste and removal of waste water and increase the area of land under cultivation. This is the first of the four mega missions planned by the LDF government. The health, housing and education missions will be launched subsequently. As a part of the mission, the government will conduct a survey covering 60 lakh houses, to collect data about existing waste management systems in the state. Among the immediate programs that will be launched include the cleaning of vacant lands which will be used for vegetable cultivation. Also, a comprehensive waste management plan will be launched to collect, separate and recycle waste in panchayats and municipalities. Eminent Carnatic vocalist and playback singer **K J Yesudas** is the **Brand Ambassador** of the mission.

#### **Rajasthan Government launches Annapurna Rasoi Scheme**

Rajasthan Government has launched Annapurna Rasoi Scheme to provide quality meal at cheap price to poor and needy on lines with Tamil Nadu Government's Amma canteens. It was launched by Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje at Jaipur Municipal Corporation campus. The tagline for the scheme is: "Sabke liye bhojan, sabke liye sammaan (Food for all, respect for all)".

Under this scheme, the state government will provide breakfast and lunch at Rs.5 and Rs.8 for needy people such as workers, students, employers, auto drivers, street vendors, rikshawale, old age people, female workers and other weaker section.. In the first phase, the scheme has been implemented in 12 districts of

Rajasthan including Jaipur, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Kota, Udaipur, Bikaner, Bharatpur, Pratapgarh, Banswara, Dungarpur, Bara and Jhalawad. The remaining 21 districts of state will be covered in second phase. Local Self Government department of Rajasthan is the nodal agency for the scheme. The meals will be cooked and served by staff trained in hospitality. It will be distributed by 80 mobile vans at locations decided by local self-help agencies in districts. Apart from seating arrangement around the van, the staff will have a special uniform, along with gloves, caps and aprons. The scheme is being implemented through Jeevan Sambal Trust.

#### **Haryana becomes first state to launch Mahila Police Volunteer initiative**

The Government of Haryana on 14 December 2016 launched the Mahila Police Volunteer(MPV) initiative for the safety of women. The initiative was launched by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar. With this launch, Haryana has become the first State in the country to adopt the scheme. Mahila Police Volunteer is a joint initiative of Union Ministry of Women & Child Development and the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

MPV initiative is a voluntary service under which Mahila Police Volunteers (Gram Sakhi) will be inducted. Its objective is to create a link between the police authorities and the local communities in villages. To achieve this objective, specially trained women volunteers will be appointed by the State government. The target is to appoint at least one volunteer in every village. The primary job of a volunteer is to keep an eye on situations where women in the village are harassed or their rights and entitlements are denied. These MPVs will be selected through a laid out procedure from among the empowered, responsible, socially aware women who will facilitate police outreach on gender concerns. The volunteers will be trained by the respective state police authorities on their role and responsibilities. They will be appointed by state government.

#### **Punjab Government launches India's first amphibious bus project**

The Punjab Government on 12 December 2016 has launched country's first amphibious bus project at the Harike wetland near Amritsar. The amphibious bus named as "Harike Cruise" travels on land and as well as in water. It was launched by Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal.

The water bus, Punjab Harike Water Cruise, will enter the Harike Pattan wetland after transversing on-road and off-road terrains. The project has cost the state government over Rs 11 crore. It has a seating capacity of 34 people and is equipped with life-jackets for everyone. At present, the route of the bus includes a 13-kilometer ride from Amritsar to the Harike wetlands, which the bus is expected to traverse over 45 minutes. It will then traverse 4km on water. The first of its kind amphibious bus in India was imported from Swedish automobile company Scania. It will be run by the Punjab Tourism department.

Harike Wetland (also known as Hari-ke-Pattan) is largest wetland in northern India. It is a house of Harike Lake. The lake and wetlands were formed in 1953 by constructing head works across the Sutlej River. These head works are located on the downstream of the confluence of Beas and Sutlej rivers. It is located along the border of Tarn Taran Sahib and Firozpur districts. Due to its rich biodiversity and vast concentration of migratory fauna of waterfowls including a number of globally threatened species, it was as a wetland by the Ramsar Convention in 1990. It is one of the Ramsar sites in India for conservation, development and preservation of the ecosystem.

#### **Assam Government launches Atal-Amrit Abhiyan Health Insurance Scheme**

Assam Government rolled out 'Atal-Amrit Abhiyan', a health insurance scheme to provide coverage against several critical illnesses. The scheme was launched by the State Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal at a function held in the conference hall of the Assam Secretariat. Atal-Amrit Abhiyan aims to make quality health care affordable to every individual member of a family in the state. This scheme is claimed to be the biggest health care initiative undertaken by any State Government in the country. It has financial outlay of the scheme is around Rs 200 crore.

Under the scheme Both Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) families with annual income below Rs 5 lakh are eligible to avail benefit. The scheme covers 437 diseases that were further segregated into six major disease groups. The six major disease groups that covered under this scheme are cardiovascular diseases, cancer, kidney diseases, neonatal diseases, neurological conditions and burns. The coverage under the scheme will be up to Rs 2 lakh annually for critical healthcare costs and the payments will be made through cashless mode at the point of delivery. The beneficiaries of the scheme will be given a laminated health card with a unique identification number to avail facilities. An independent society under the Department of Health and Family Welfare will be set up to oversee the functioning of the scheme.

#### **India's first 2G Ethanol Bio-refinery to be set up in Punjab**

The foundation stone ceremony for setting up the first Second Generation (2G) Ethanol Bio-refinery in India was held on 25 December 2016 at village Tarkhanwala, Bathinda in Punjab. Harsimarat Kaur Badal, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries, Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State (I/C) Petroleum & Natural Gas, and Sardar Sukhbir Singh Badal, Deputy Chief Minister of Punjab, jointly laid the foundation stone. Central Government Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU) Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) is setting up this project at a cost of 600 crore Rupees.

HPCL's bio-refinery will produce 100 kilolitres of ethanol per day i.e. 3.20 crore litres per annum from agricultural residues. It will be sufficient to meet the 26% of the ethanol blending requirement of Punjab. It will also produce about 30,000 tonnes of bio-fertiliser per annum to enhance soil nutrients. It will also produce more than 1 lakh kilograms of Bio-CNG per annum which can cater to transport and clean cooking requirements. With the setting up of the bio-refinery, employment for about 1200 -1300 persons will be generated in the biomass supply chain. It will also generate an additional income of approximately Rs 20 crores per annum for the farmers through purchase of their agriculture residues. On the other hand, the proposed bio-refinery will help in reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions from the paddy straw, which is currently is being burnt after harvesting.

#### **NATIONAL**

#### **Dr. B R Ambedkar's birth anniversary will be observed as Water Day**

The Union Government is going to observe birth anniversary of the father of Indian Constitution B R Ambedkar (April 14) as "Water Day" in the country. Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Uma Bharti announced the same while addressing a National Seminar on Marching ahead on Dr Ambedkar's path of water resources management for inclusive growth. The seminar was organised on 6 December 2016 to mark the 61st death anniversary of Dr Ambedkar by Central Water Commission (CWC) in New Delhi.

The day will be observed with an aim to sensitise people about managing water resources, which is a precious resource for life. It will also spread awareness about work of Dr. Ambedkar who was also responsible for a definite all-India policy on managing water resources in India besides being instrumental in framing the country's Constitution.

The CWC paper (Ambedkar's contribution to water

resources development) released on the occasion of the Dr. Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary in April 2016 mentions that he was a pioneer in the field of developing multi-purpose projects for independent India. He had helped in evolving a new water and power policy during 1942-46 to utilise the water resources of the country to the best advantage of everybody.

#### **Remote sensing satellite Resourcesat-2A successfully launched**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on 7 December 2016 has successfully launched remote sensing satellite Resourcesat-2A into its dedicated orbit. The observation satellite Resourcesat -2A was launched with PSLV C36/ RESOURCESAT-2A from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. It was PSLV's 38th flight and XL version of the rocket was used. It was the 37th consecutive successful flight of the rocket.

Resourcesat-2A is a remote sensing satellite and is intending for resource monitoring. It is a follow-on mission to Resourcesat-1 and Resourcesat-2, which were launched in 2003 and 2011 respectively. This satellite is intended to continue the remote sensing data services to global users provided by its two predecessors. Resourcesat-2A weighs 1,235 kg and is placed into an 817 km polar sun synchronous orbit (i.e. orbiting pole-to-pole). The mission life of Resourcesat-2A is five years. It carries three payloads viz. high resolution Linear Imaging Self Scanner (LISS-4) camera, medium resolution LISS-3 camera, and coarse resolution Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS) camera. These three cameras of different resolution. These cameras will give regular micro and macro information on land and water bodies below, forests, farm lands and crop extent, coastal information, mineral deposits, rural and urban spreads besides helping in disaster management. It also carries two Solid State Recorders with a capacity of 200 Giga Bits. Each of it can store the images taken by its cameras which can be read out later to ground stations.

The PSLV rockets are a four stage engine rocket that is powered by solid and liquid fuel alternatively. It is a four stage engine rocket powered by solid and liquid fuel alternatively. In this flight, the 'XL' version of PSLV with six solid strap-on motors was used.

PSLV is ISRO's versatile launch vehicle that is used for launch of multiple satellites in polar SSOs, Geo-synchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO), Low Earth Orbits (LEO) and sub-GTO. It has been used for launching satellites for international customers.

Since 1994, PSLV has been used for launching 121 satellites of which 79 were from other countries and 42 were Indian satellites.

#### **Triple Talaq is unconstitutional and violates rights of Muslim women: Allahabad High Court**

Allahabad High Court on 8 December 2016 declared 'Triple Talaq' (Talaq-e-bidat) as unconstitutional and violates the rights of women enshrined in constitution. The order was passed by HC Justice Suneet Kumar while hearing a petition filed by a woman who claimed her husband arbitrarily divorced her. Besides, the High Court also held that No Personal Law Board is above the Constitution i.e. it was indirectly referring to All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB). Talaq-e-bidat is an Islamic practice of divorcing a woman in which the male counterpart of the woman pronounces the word talaq, three successive times. Thus, it is oral talaq pronounced for irrevocable instantaneous divorce at one go. Many activists say that this practice is not of Islamic origin. AIMPLB, a non-government organisation always has held that Talaq-e-bidat is integral part of Muslims and courts have no role to play in Personal Law as it falls under the Fundamental Right to practice religion. Supreme Court is also hearing a petition challenging the validity of triple talaq, as several individuals and NGOs have sought a ban on its practice. Even, the National Commission of Women (NCW) considers it "highly misused" custom and asked Government to scrap it to protect the rights of Muslim women.

The practice of 'triple talaq' has enabled husbands to divorce their wives arbitrarily and unilaterally, devoid of any substantiation. It impact adversely on the rights of women to a life of dignity. It also has been abolished in 21 Islamic theocratic countries including Pakistan. It is also against constitutional principles such as gender equality, secularism, international laws etc. Thus, it must be kept in mind that gender equality is a sacred principle of our constitution and modern society. So it is right time to make necessary changes.

#### **FSSAI bans use of newspapers for packing food**

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has banned use of newspapers for wrapping and packing of food items. In this regard, FSSAI has issued an advisory all states and Union territories and asked commissioners of food safety to restrict the use of newspapers for packing, serving and storing of food items.

In India, use of newspapers for wrapping and packing of food items, a common practice by small corner shops and street vendors. Wrapping food in newspapers is an unhealthy practice and the consumption of such food is injurious to health, even if the food has been cooked hygienically. Indians are being slowly poisoned due to newspapers being widely used as food packaging material by small hotels, vendors and also

in homes in lieu of absorbent paper. Packing, serving and storing of food items in newspapers can cause serious health concerns due to contaminated food items by newspaper ink. Printing ink used for printing newspapers may contain bioactive materials, harmful pigments, colours, additives, binders, preservatives, chemical contaminants and even pathogenic micro-organisms that may pose potential risk to human health. Even newspaper or cardboard boxes made of recycled paper may be contaminated with mineral oils, metallic contaminants and harmful chemicals like phthalates which can cause digestive problems and also lead to severe toxicity. Older people, teenagers, children and people with compromised vital organs and immune systems are at a greater risk of acquiring cancer-related health complications after they are exposed to food items packed in such materials.

Newspapers should not be used to wrap, cover and serve food or to absorb excess oil from fried food. There is an urgent need to discourage the use of newspaper as food packaging material by creating awareness among businesses, especially, unorganized food business operators and consumers, on its harmful effects. Suitable steps need to be taken to restrict and control the use of newspapers for packing food material.

This is the first time in recent years FSSAI has issued a new rule related to packaging of food items. So far, it had focused on setting standards for packaged food.

#### **NASA successfully launches 8 mini-satellites for hurricane forecasting**

The NASA has successfully launched a constellation of eight mini-satellites as part of the Cyclone Global Navigation Satellite System (CYGNSS) into space to improve hurricane forecasting. NASA had opted for an air launch by aerospace company Orbital ATK, versus a traditional rocket liftoff from the ground, to cut costs. These satellites were launched onboard of Pegasus rocket fired from a plane at a height of 12km.

Each of the micro-satellites of CYGNSS weighs just 64 pounds (32kg) and has a 5-foot wingspan. They will be placed into the orbit 500km above the earth's surface. The satellites have GPS navigation receivers to frequently measure the surface roughness of oceans, enabling scientists to calculate wind speed and storm intensity. Unlike weather satellites already in orbit, these spacecraft can peer through rain swirling in a hurricane, all the way into the eye, or core.

#### **India becomes world's 4th largest defence spender**

According to the recently released 2016 IHS Jane's Defence Budgets report, India has become the world's fourth largest defence spender. In this edition of the report published by US research firm IHS Inc, India has

surpassed Russia, France, Japan and Saudi Arabia to become the world's fourth largest defence spender. Asia's third largest economy now has the fourth-largest defence budget.

United States, China, and the UK remain the top three defence spenders in the world. In 2016, the total global defence spending increased to \$1.57 trillion. US tops with mammoth defence spending of \$622 billion. China is second with defence spending of \$191.75 billion. India had spent \$50.6 billion in 2016 on the defence sector, up from \$46.6 billion the year 2015. Thus, India spends some 1.8% of its GDP on defence. Of this, up to 36% is spent on capital acquisition. Over the next few years, India will re-emerge as a key growth market for defence suppliers to fulfill its military focused modernisation. India will surpass the UK in defence spending by 2018. India needs to spend some \$130 billion to modernise its military over the next seven years. NDA Government since coming to power in May 2014 has laid tremendous stress on ramping up the country's defence facilities. The government announced that in the last two years and the current year, it has signed 135 contracts, valued at Rs 1,91,018.78 crore with Indian and foreign vendors to acquire UAVs, ships, missiles, frigates, rockets, simulators, aircraft, helicopters, radars and rifles.

India also has been looking at increasing its share of domestic manufacturing in defence goods. The foreign direct investment (FDI) limit for the defence sector in India also has been raised to 49%. India's defence and aerospace market is among the most attractive globally. Government is keen to leverage this advantage to promote investments in the sector.

#### **Microsoft launches India's first Cybersecurity Engagement Centre in New Delhi**

Software giant Microsoft India has launched its first full-scale Cybersecurity Engagement Centre (CSEC) in New Delhi. It is Microsoft's seventh Cybersecurity Centre in the world. Microsoft's other six cyber security centres are located in Singapore, Tokyo, Beijing, Seoul, Berlin and Washington DC. It will function as a satellite to the its Redmond Digital Crimes Unit (DCU).

The first-of-its-kind centre in India will bring together Microsoft capabilities to foster deeper cybersecurity collaborations with public and private sector organisations. It will help to build a trusted and secure computing environment, a critical enabler for India's digital transformation.

Microsoft's strategy is to provide protection across all end-points, from sensors to the data centre, detection of attack using targeted signals, behavioural monitoring and machine learning – and eventually closing the gap between discovery and action taken to

neutralise the attack. It will enable and empower enterprises to manage modern security threats effectively. It will also expand Microsoft's public-private partnerships in India. The centre will also enable customers tap into a pool of resources such as security specialists and technologies at Microsoft. Microsoft has also rolled out Microsoft Secure, a nationwide campaign to increase awareness on cybersecurity to help organisations understand their security requirements better.

#### **India ranks 7th in 2016 Global Terrorism Index**

According to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index (GTI) released by the Institute for Economics & Peace, a Sydney-based think-tank, India was ranked 7th among 163 countries in the list of most impacted by terrorism in 2015. The fourth edition of the index was released by Sydney-based think-tank Institute for Economics & Peace. India is one of six Asian countries ranked in the top 10 nations most impacted by terrorism. The country most affected by terrorism last year was Iraq, with 2,415 terrorist incidents, causing 6,960 deaths and 11,900 injuries, followed by Afghanistan, which suffered 1,715 terrorist incidents, which caused 5,312 deaths and 6,249 injuries. Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen were ranked behind these countries, in that order. The situation in Somalia, Egypt and Libya was worse than that in India, with Libya figuring on the 10th place in the ranking.

GTI In India, as many as 797 terrorist attacks were recorded in 2015 up by 4% since 2014. Besides, 289 terrorism-related deaths were recorded in India, a 45% decline over 2014. However, number of Indian Army and paramilitary soldiers killed this year is at an eight-year high. 2015 attacks were the highest since 2000, 80% were non-lethal. India experienced 7% of all terrorist attacks around the world, the fourth highest after Iraq (20%), Afghanistan (14%) and Pakistan (8%). In 2015, India suffered fewer terror attacks (797) than only Iraq (2,415), Afghanistan (1,715) and Pakistan (1,008). India suffered twice as many attacks as Syria (384).

GTI (Global Terrorism Index) systematically rank the nations of the world according to terrorist activity. It scores a country is calculated based on weightage assigned to four indicators. They are total number of terrorist incidents, injuries, fatalities and property damage sustained in the year in question. The index also takes into consideration attacks that took place in the four previous years.

#### **India successfully test-fires nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-5**

India successfully test-fired its home-grown long range intercontinental surface-to-surface nuclear capable

ballistic missile Agni-5. The state-of-the-art surface-to-surface missile was test fired successfully from the Abdul Kalam Wheeler Island off Odisha coast at 11:05 am on 26 December 2016. It was the fourth developmental and second canisterised trial of the missile.

Agni 5 is a three-stage propellant missile with nuclear warhead carrying capacity of more than one tonne. Unlike other missiles of Agni series, Agni-5 is the most advanced having new technologies incorporated with it in terms of navigation and guidance, warhead and engine. It is capable of striking a target more than 5000 kilometres. It is about 17 meters long and 2 meter wide and has a launch weight of around 50 tonnes. Agni-5 has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program. It can hit most northern parts of China and other parts of Asia, Europe and Africa. It has not yet inducted into the Services. It carries Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles (MIRV) payloads. A single MIRV equipped missile that can deliver multiple warheads at different targets. It is also incorporates advanced technologies involving ring laser gyroscope and accelerometer for navigation and guidance.

#### **INTERNATIONAL**

#### **Magnus Carlsen wins 2016 Chess Championship title**

Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen of Norway has won the 2016 World Chess Championship for the third consecutive time. He retained the title after defeating Sergey Karjakin of Russia. Karjakin had tied against Carlsen in 12 regular rounds but was beaten in the final phase of four quickfire games.

Magnus Carlsen is a Norwegian chess grandmaster. He is No. 1 ranked player in the world and reigning World Chess Champion in classical, rapid, and blitz. He became a chess Grandmaster in 2004, at the age of 13 years. This made him the third-youngest grandmaster in history. In November 2013, he became World Champion by defeating Viswanathan Anand in the World Chess Championship. On the May 2014 FIDE rating list, he reached his peak rating of 2882, which is the highest in history. He successfully defended his title in November 2014 by defeating Anand once again. In 2014, he also won the World Rapid Championship and the World Blitz Championship, thus holding all three world championship titles. In 2013, he was named in the Time magazine list of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2013.

### **Usain Bolt and Almaz Ayana win IAAF World Athlete of the Year Award**

Sprint king **Usain Bolt** from Jamaica has been awarded the 2016 IAAF World Athlete of the Year award in male category for sixth time. Earlier he had won it in 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012 and 2013. He is the first man to hold both the 100 metres and 200 metres world records since fully automatic time became mandatory. He is also the world record holder as a part of the 4 × 100 metres relay. He is the reigning World and Olympic champion in these three events. He is regarded as the fastest human ever timed. He is also known as “Lightning Bolt.” His awards include the IAAF World Athlete of the Year, Track & Field Athlete of the Year and Laureus World Sportsman of the Year. Almaz Ayana of Ethiopia won the award in women’s award category. She was presented with the award for her world-record run to win Olympic gold medal in the 10,000 meters. She is the third Ethiopian woman to win this award following Genzebe Dibaba (2015) and Meseret Defar (2007).

The IAAF Athlete of the Year award is a prize that can be won by athletes participating in events within the sport of athletics organised by the International Athletic Federation of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF). The winners are chosen by athletics officials, athletes, journalists and an online public poll.

### **English most powerful language in the world: World Economic Forum**

English has been ranked first in the top 10 most powerful languages in the world according to the 2016 World Power Language Index (PLI). The index was published by World Economic Forum (WEF). Indian language Hindi was ranked 10th in the 2016 PLI.

There are over 6,000 languages spoken in the world. Of these 2,000 count fewer than 1,000 speakers. Moreover, just 15 languages account for half of the languages spoken in the world. English is dominant powerful-languages language of 3 nations G7 (USA, UK and Canada). As per the WEF, the British legacy has given English a global footprint. It is the world’s lingua franca. Eight of the 10 global financial centres are English-speaking/proficient cities. Four of the 10 most competitive economies have English as an official language. The remaining six have high shares of English speakers and/or a high proficiency in English, with the exception of Japan.

Top 10 Languages in 2016 PLI: English (1st), Mandarin (2nd), French (3rd), Spanish (4th), Arabic (5th), Russian (6th), German (7th), Japanese (8th), Portuguese (9th) and Hindi (10th). The top six languages are official languages of the United Nations. The remaining 4 in the top 10 include two other BRIC

languages (Portuguese and Hindi) and 2 of the economic heavyweights (Germany and Japan). Hindi is most primarily language spoken in India with a share of 41%. It is also the official language of Indian government.

The World Power Language Index (PLI) compares or ranks languages on their efficacy in the various domains. The Power Language Index uses 20 indicators to measure the influence on language. It measures the usefulness of a language to a representative human being. It is not meant to apply to any particular person with their own set of conditions, preferences and geography. The index is not a measure of the beauty/merit of a language or its associated culture(s).

### **Astronaut John Glenn, the 1st American to Orbit Earth passes away**

Former US astronaut John Glenn, the first American to orbit Earth, died on 8 December 2016. He was 95. The ex-Marine and Senator had been in hospital in Columbus, Ohio, for more than a week. He last surviving member of the Mercury Seven Mission. He was first American to orbit Earth and had circled three times earth in 1962 aboard Friendship 7 space capsule. His achievement marked the moment in US space history as during that time it was caught up with the Soviet Union in manned space exploration.

John Glenn Born as John Herschel Glenn Jr. on July 18, 1921 in Cambridge, Ohio, US. Before gaining fame of orbiting world, he was a distinguished fighter pilot in World War II and Korean war. Later he joined America’s space agency NASA. He had joined Mercury 7, America’s first class of astronauts after setting the transcontinental flight speed record as a test pilot. On February 20, 1962, he flew the Friendship 7 mission and became the first American to orbit the Earth and the fifth person in space After returning to Earth, he was elected in 1974 as a Democrat to the US Senate, where he served for 24 years i.e. till 1999. In 1984, he failed to run for the Democratic presidential nomination. In 1998, at the age of 77, he also became the oldest person, worldwide, to fly into space. He went to the orbit aboard the space shuttle Discovery. He was a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honours awarded by the United States and Congressional Gold Medal. In 1959, he was named as an astronaut. He was named as the astronaut after he set a transcontinental speed record flying a jet to New York from California in three hours and 23 minutes. Glenn served as an advisor to NASA until 1964.

### **Pakistan successfully test-fires enhanced version of Babur cruise missile**

Pakistan Army has successfully test fired an enhanced version of an indigenously-designed nuclear-capable Babur cruise missile on 17 September 2012 with a range of 700 km (435 miles). It is a low flying, terrain-hugging missile that can be used against targets at land and sea with pin-point accuracy.

The missile was launched from a multi-tube missile launch vehicle that extensively enhances the targeting and deployment options of the Babur system. The missile is designed to avoid radar detection and penetrate enemy air defences. Pakistan has already conducted the tests of a wide range of nuclear-capable missiles this year. Serial production of the Babur was started in October 2005.

The Babur Missile has been named after the first Moghal emperor. It is a low flying, terrain hugging cruise missile. It is part of Babur Weapon System version-2 which is an important force multiplier for Pakistan's strategic defence. It is an enhanced version of earlier missile. It carries certain stealth features and is capable of carrying various types of warheads Range: It can hit targets located at 700 km with all kinds of warheads. Thus, it brings many Indian cities within its range. It is equipped with state-of-the-art navigational technologies of Terrain Contour Matching (TERCOM) and all time Digital Scene Matching & Area Co-relation (DSMAC). It enables the missile to engage various types of targets with pinpoint accuracy even in the absence of GPS navigation.

### **Cristiano Ronaldo wins 2016 FIFA Ballon d'Or Award**

Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo (31) from Portugal has won the prestigious 2016 FIFA Ballon d'Or Award. The decision was announced by France Football magazine in Ballon d'Or ceremony on 12 December 2016. He has earned this title of world's best football player for fourth time. He won his first award in 2008, the same year in which he won the FIFA World Player of the Year. He subsequently won the 2013 and 2014 honours as well. In 2015, he was beaten by Argentina's Lionel Messi.

FIFA Ballon d'Or Award is annual football association award given by FIFA to the male player who has performed the best in previous calendar year. It was instituted in 2010 after France Football's Ballon d'Or and the men's FIFA World Player of the Year award were merged. It is awarded to male player, based upon highest votes secured by him from national team coaches and captains, as well as journalists from around world.

### **Japan successfully launches space junk collector into orbit**

Japan's space agency (JAXA) successfully launched a Kounotori 6 (HTV-6) spacecraft that will deliver a large magnetic tether, a space junk collector technology into orbit. The spacecraft was launched on board of H-IIB rocket from Tanegashima Space Center. It was also carrying essential supplies for International Space Station (ISS).

Once in orbit, the spacecraft is set to perform Kounotori Integrated Tether Experiments (KITE) in order to test out the new technology designed by JAXA engineers in collaboration with Nitto Seimo Co., a Japanese fishing net company. The experiments will see a 20-kilogram (44-pound) weight extended into space attached to a 700-metre (765-yard) tether. The objective is to study the behavior and movement of the tethered mass. In theory, the net-like tether will generate enough slowing effect to influence the trajectory of space debris toward Earth's atmosphere where they will burn up.

More than 5 decades of human space exploration since the first Soviet-launched Sputnik satellite in 1957 has produced this hazardous belt of orbiting debris in the space. More than 500,000 pieces of "space junk" are circling our planet and being tracked by NASA. Millions more tiny fragments of old satellites and spent rocket stages evade our radars as they are too small to be monitored. Traveling at speeds of up to 17,500mph, a relatively small piece of orbital debris can inflict a great deal of damage on a satellite or a spacecraft orbiting our planet, especially the inhabited International Space Station (ISS). This phenomenon is Kessler Syndrome which describes a self-sustaining cascading collision of space debris in low earth Orbit. The growing problem of a potentially major collision has prompted several companies and space agencies to propose and devise ways to get rid of the unwanted rubbish in space.

### **BUSINESS**

#### **ICICI Bank launches EazyPay app for Merchants**

India's largest private sector bank ICICI Bank on 23 December 2016 launched EazyPay mobile application for merchants as an all-in-one acceptance payment platform. This app consolidates all digital wallets, QR code, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), and credit & debit cards modes of payments. With this, ICICI Bank became first bank in the country to roll out all-in-one payments platform.

Eazypay app is a sustainable payment mode in comparison with other digital applications. It's open architecture makes it different from other digital

platforms that are actually closed-loop prepaid instruments. Customers can make payments by using this app through any bank account using UPI, internet banking or by entering credit or debit card details on a link forwarded by the merchant. There is no issue of hitting the limit with this app as the money flows directly into the bank account of merchant. Moreover, the app also has its in-built billing application for the merchants. It also allows merchants to receive the payments from ICICI Bank's e-wallet Pockets. ICICI Bank will sell this app to all the merchants in 2300 towns and cities, where the bank has its branches.

#### **India surpasses Britain to become world's sixth-largest economy: Forbes magazine**

According to a report published in Forbes magazine, India's continuous efforts and speed towards the economic growth have led to a change in its economic ranking. India is now the 6th largest economy in the world. India has actually surpassed Britain's GDP which took over 150 years. India has managed to overtake UK owing to Britain's recent Brexit-related problems and its rapid economic growth followed by a decline in the value of the pound. UK's economy is expected to grow by 1.8% in 2016 and slow down to 1.1% in 2017. Its economy and currency are struggling since it voted to leave the lucrative common market of the European Union. Whereas, India's economy maintained its growth around 7% primarily due to a price slump in global commodities, good rainfall, lower-than-expected inflation, reforms undertaken by the Government to spur growth. Following the change in the rankings, India's economy now stands behind the United States, China, Japan, Germany and France.

The economic think-tank Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) had also predicted this shift back in December 2011, that India will see its big moment of economic growth in the year 2020, however, it has already arrived now in 2016.

Furthermore, this gap is expected to widen as India grows at 6 to 8 per cent p.a. compared to UK's growth of 1 to 2 per cent p.a. until 2020, and likely beyond. Even if the currencies fluctuate that modify these figures to rough equality, the verdict is clear that India's economy has surpassed that of the UK based on future growth prospects.

#### **AWARDS**

#### **Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh conferred with 52nd Jnanpith Award**

The Jnanpith Selection Board on 23 December 2016 conferred the 52nd Jnanpith Award on eminent modern Bengali poet Shankha Ghosh. An announcement in

this regard was made at a meeting of the board chaired by noted scholar, writer and critic Prof. Namwar Singh. He is the 52nd recipient of the Jnanpith Award. He is the sixth Bengali litterateur to bag this prestigious literary award after Tarasankar Bandyopadhyay (1966), Bishnu Dey (1971), Ashapoorna Devi (1976), Subhash Mukhopadhyay (1991) and Mahasweta Devi (1966).

Shankha Ghosh was born on 6 February 1932 in Chandpur now in Bangladesh. He is a prolific poet, critic and academician. He is regarded a leading authority on Rabindranath in addition to being one of the most prolific writers in Bengali. He is an authority on Tagore, whose poetic idiom and experiments with various poetic forms mark his greatness as a creative talent. His poems convey messages but free of polemics. Ghosh is a poet with an eye to the social milieu and his poems record both his time and space in a rare poetic style. Murkho Baro, Samajik Noy and Baborer Prarthana are some of his classic creations. Dinguli Raatguli and Nihita Patalchaya are among those creations which have inspired a whole generation of modern poetry due to their unique form and feeling. His poems have been translated into many Indian languages that include Hindi, Assamese, Punjabi and Malayalam. His works have been translated into many foreign languages as well. He is a recipient of many coveted awards that include Narsingh Das Puraskar, Sahitya Akademi Award and Saraswati Samman.

Jnanpith Award is India's highest literary honour. Its name has been taken from Sanskrit words Jnana and Pitha which means knowledge-seat. It was instituted in 1961 by the Bharatiya Jnanpith trust founded by the Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain family that owns the Times of India newspaper group. It is bestowed upon any Indian citizen who writes in any 22 official languages of India mentioned in VIII Schedule of Constitution of India and English. Prior to 1982, the award was only given for a single work by a writer. But after 1982, the award is given for lifetime contribution to Indian literature. The award carries a cash prize of 11 lakh rupees, a citation plaque and a bronze replica of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge and wisdom.

#### **2016 Sahitya Akademi Award winners**

Sahitya Akademi on 21 December 2016 announced the Sahitya Akademi Awards for the year 2016 in 24 languages. Eight books of poetry, seven books of short stories, five books of novel, two books of criticism, one book of essays and a book of play have won the prestigious awards for the year.

The awards were recommended by distinguished jury members representing 24 Indian languages and approved by the Executive Board of the Sahitya Akademi, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Vishwanath Prasad

Tiwari, President of the Akademy.

The prestigious award will be presented to the winners at a special function to be held on 22 February 2017 in New Delhi. The Award includes a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and a cheque of Rs. 100000.

Winners are as follows

Play: Swarajbir (Punjabi).

Essay: Nrisinghaprasad Bhaduri (Bengali).

Criticism: Aziz Hajini (Kashmiri) and Nizam Siddiqui (Urdu).

Short stories: Chahatrapal (Dogri), Shyan Darihare (Maithili), Moirangthem Rajen (Manipuri), Asaram Lomate (Marathi), Paramita Satpathy (Odia), Bulaki Sharma (Rajasthani) Vannadhasan (Tamil).

Poetry: Jnan Pujari (Assamese), Anju (Bodo), Kamal Vora (Gujarati), Prabha Varma (Malayalam), Sitanath Acharya (Sanskrit), Gobinda Chandra Majhi (Santhali), Nand Javeri (Sindhi) and Papineni Sivasankar (Telugu).

Award Sahitya Akademi Award is conferred annually on writers of outstanding works in one of the twenty-four major Indian languages (22 Scheduled Languages+ English and Rajasthani). The Award was established in 1954.

#### **Kaisa Matomaki, Maksym Radziwill win 2016 SASTRA Ramanujan award**

Kaisa Matomaki and Maksym Radziwill have been jointly won the 2016 SASTRA-Ramanujan award for mathematics for their 'revolutionary' collaborative work on short intervals in number theory. Their mathematical work dwells on properties of numbers in "short intervals." The two mathematicians worked with Fields medallist Terence Tao in making a breakthrough on the Chowla conjecture. They were presented with this prestigious award at inauguration of International Conference on Number Theory at SASTRA University at Kumbakonam. The award citation and the shared prize money of \$5,000 was presented by Prof. Steven Weintraub from Lehigh University who is also the Associate Secretary of the American Mathematical Society.

Kaisa Matomaki from Finland's University of Turku is first woman to receive this prize since it was instituted in 2005. Maksym Radziwill is Assistant professor at McGill University, Canada.

The SASTRA Ramanujan Prize, founded by Shanmugha Arts, Science, Technology & Research Academy (SASTRA) University in Kumbakonam, India, Srinivasa Ramanujan's hometown, is awarded every year to a young mathematician judged to have done outstanding work in Ramanujan's fields of interest. The age limit for the prize has been set at 32 (the age at which Ramanujan died), and the current award is \$10,000.

The prize is given annually to recipient at Kumbakonam which is Ramanujan's hometown.

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

#### **Rakesh Asthana appointed as Interim Director of CBI**

Senior IPS officer Rakesh Asthana was on 3 December 2016 appointed as the Interim Director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He was given this additional charge by the Union Government following retirement of Anil Sinha. He was given this charge after government failed to find any full-time Director for CBI. This is the first time in last 10 years and only the second time in the CBI's history that no new Director has been named to succeed an incumbent.

Rakesh Asthana is 1984 batch IPS officer of Gujarat Cadre. Before this appointment, he was serving as Additional Director in the Central Bureau of Investigation itself. He had held several important assignments in Gujarat. He has also served as the commissioner of police, Vadodara and Surat. He had headed the special investigation team (SIT), which probed the Godhra train arson of February 2002.

CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) is the chief investigative police agency in India and derives its power from the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946. It was established in 1941 as the Special Police Establishment and was later renamed as CBI in 1963. It has its headquarters in New Delhi and serve the motto of 'Industry, Impartiality, Integrity'. It is headed by Director who should be an IPS officer of DGP rank. The director is selected as per the provisions of Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) Act, 2003. The CBI Director is selected by a collegium comprising Prime Minister, Chief Justice of India and Leader of Opposition or leader of the largest party in opposition in Lok Sabha.

#### **Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J Jayalithaa passes away**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalithaa passed away at the Apollo Hospitals, Chennai following cardiac arrest. She was 68. Jayalithaa was one of the country's most articulate and determined political personalities and a top film actress of the 1960s and 1970s. She was famously known as Puratchi Thalaivi Amma (revolutionary leader) or Amma.

J Jayalithaa Born on 24 February 1948 at Melkote in Mandya district in then Mysore State (now Karnataka). At birth she was named Komalavalli and was renamed Jayalithaa. She had entered into film industry when she was 16 years old. Her debut as lead actress was in a Kannada film Vennira Aadai in 1955. She was launched into Tamil films starring as the heroine in MGR's "Aiyirathil Oruvan." Since

then both have acted together in 28 films, many of them super hits. In her acting career, she had acted in more than 140 films in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi and English. She was also known for her dancing skills and was often referred as the uncrowned queen of Tamil cinema. Her last film was the Nadhiyai Thedi Vandha Kadal (1980)

She had entered into politics in 1982 under the mentorship of co-star and then Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran (MGR), the founder of the AIADMK. After death of MGR in 1987, she took charge of the party and became chief minister of Tamil Nadu for first time in 1991. She was the second female chief minister of Tamil Nadu after Janaki Ramachandran. She served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for six times from 1991 to 1996 (1st time), in 2001 (2nd time), from 2002 to 2006 (3rd time), from 2011 to 2014 (4th time), 2015 to 2016 (5th time) and May 2016 to December 2016 (sixth time). Jayalalithaa was a pioneer of several social sector schemes like Cradle to baby scheme aimed at fighting the curse of female foeticide, Amma Canteens to provide low-priced food to the urban poor, Other similar pro-poor schemes launched by her included 'Amma salt', 'Amma water' and 'Amma medicines'. These schemes had won accolades nationally and endearing herself to the masses.

#### **O Panneerselvam sworn-in as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu**

AIADMK leader O Panneerselvam was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 5 December 2016. He succeeded AIADMK supremo and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa who died at the Apollo Hospital. Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao administered the oath of office and secrecy for Panneerselvam at a somber ceremony at the Raj Bhawan. Other 31 ministers of the erstwhile Jayalalithaa Cabinet were also sworn-in. This is for third time he has sworn in as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. Earlier he had served CM for two brief periods from 2001-02 and 2014-15 after Jayalalithaa was unseated from the post by the courts on various grounds. Panneerselvam has been a trusted aide of AIADMK supremo Jayalalithaa. After her death, he was elected the leader of the Legislature Party. He will have remaining four years term of the Jayalalithaa Government. In Jayalalithaa's government he was Minister for Finance and Public Works Departments since May 2016.

O Panneerselvam was born on January 14, 1951 in Periyakulam, Tamil Nadu. He was once a tea stall owner and an agriculturist. He was a member of All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) party of Tamil Nadu. He started his political career as

chairman of Periyakulam Municipality (1996 to 2001). Previously in Jayalalithaa's government he had served as Minister of Revenue Department (March 2002 to December 2002), Minister for Public Works (December 2002 to May 2006) and Finance Minister (May 2011 to September 2014). He represents the Bodinayakanur Assembly constituency in the current assembly. The constituency is located in Theni district.

#### **Justice JS Khehar appointed as 44th Chief Justice of India**

Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar(64) on 19 December 2016 was appointed as the 44th Chief Justice of India by the President Pranab Mukherjee. He will be the 44th CJI and shall succeed Chief Justice TS Thakur who retires on January 3, 2017. Justice Khehar will be sworn in as the CJI by President Pranab Mukherjee on January 4, 2017. With this, Justice Khehar will be the first Chief Justice of India from the Sikh community. Justice Khehar's name for appointment as the next CJI was recommended by SC collegium headed by Chief Justice TS Thakur. He would remain in office from January 4, 2017 till August 4, 2017 i.e. till he attains the age of 65.

Jagdish Singh Khehar was born on 28 August 1952. He was awarded the LL.B degree by the Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1977. Later he acquired the LL. M. qualification from the same University in 1979. He was enrolled as an Advocate in 1979 and practiced mainly in Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh High Court, Shimla and the Supreme Court.

Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar had led the five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court that struck down the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act for the appointment of judges. He also led the bench that in January 2016 set aside the imposition of President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh. He also headed the bench that passed a verdict of equal pay for equal work for the benefit of people engaged as casual and contractual employees who work like regulars and daily wagers. He was a part of the bench that sent Sahara Chief Subrata Roy to jail after hearing the matter relating to the refund of money invested by people in his two companies.

#### **Anil Dhasmana appointed as new chief of Research and Analysis Wing**

The Union Government has appointed senior IPS officer Anil Dhasmana as new chief of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), India's external intelligence agency. He succeeds Rajinder Khanna who completes his two year tenure on 31 December 2016. He will take charge as the new chief on January 30, 2017. He will have tenure of 2 years.

Anil Dhasmana is a 1981-batch IPS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre. Prior to this appointment he was Special Secretary in the agency. He has been with RAW for the last 23 years during which he has served on important desks including Pakistan. His domain of expertise is considered to be Balochistan, counter-terrorism and Islamic affairs. He also has a vast experience on Pakistan and Afghanistan. He has served in key capitals, including London and Frankfurt and has also handled SAARC and Europe desks. The Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW or RAW) is the primary foreign intelligence agency of India. It was established in 1968 following the intelligence failures of the Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistani wars, which persuaded the Government of India to create a specialised, independent agency dedicated to foreign intelligence gathering; previously, both domestic and foreign intelligence had been the purview of the Intelligence Bureau. It is under the direct command of Prime Minister and reports on an administrative basis to the Cabinet Secretary of India, who reports to the Prime Minister. Its primary function is gathering foreign intelligence, engaging in counter-terrorism, advising Indian policymakers, promoting counter-proliferation and advancing India's foreign strategic interests.

#### **Lt Gen Bipin Rawat appointed Chief of Indian Army Chief**

The Union Government has appointed Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat as new Chief of Army Staff (CoAS). He succeeds Army Chief General Dalbir Singh who retires on December 31, 2016. His appointment goes against the long-held tradition of appointing the senior-most eligible officer to the topmost post. With this criterion, he has superseded two seniormost commanders Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen Praveen Bakshi and Southern Army Commander Lt Gen PM Hariz. Prior to this appointment, he was the Vice Chief of the Army.

Lt. Gen. Bipin Rawat is from the 5/11 Gorkha Rifles. Prior to taking over as the Vice Chief, he was the Southern Army Commander. He hails from Uttarakhand and had received the 'sword of honour' when he passed out from the Indian Military Academy in 1978. Over last three decades of his service, Lt. General Rawat has tremendous hands-on experience of serving in combat areas, and at various functional levels in the Indian Army. He has handled various operational responsibilities in many areas, including along the LAC with China, the LoC with Pakistan and in the North-East. He is known for his balanced approach towards compassion, soldiering and connect with civil society. His experience as GOC-in-C Southern Army Command in Mechanised Warfare has been focused

towards the western borders, in coordination with the other two services.

The last time the senior-most eligible army officer was not appointed was in 1983 when then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi chose to appoint Lt. Gen. A.S. Vaidya as the Chief, contrary to appointment of his senior Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha. In protest, his senior Lt Gen SK Sinha had resigned.

#### **Rajiv Jain appointed as new chief of Intelligence Bureau**

The Union government has appointed Jharkhand cadre IPS officer Rajiv Jain as the new chief of Intelligence Bureau (IB). He succeeds Dineshwar Sharma and shall have two years term. Mr Jain, who is currently serving as the Special Director in the IB, will take over on January 1 after the incumbent Dineshwar Sharma completes his two-year tenure on December 31.

He is IPS officer of the 1980-batch of Jharkhand-cadre. He had joined the IB in 1989 as assistant director. Since then he has worked in different capacities including the sensitive Kashmir desk. He had handled various assignments as chief of Subsidiary Intelligence Bureau (SIB), name given to IB units in state capitals. He had headed the Ahmedabad SIB (from 2005 to 2008) and later in Delhi SIB (from 2008 to 2012) which is considered politically sensitive. He was advisor to previous NDA government's interlocutor on Kashmir K C Pant when talks were held with separatist leaders. He is recipient of President's Police Medal.

The Intelligence Bureau (IB) is India's internal intelligence agency. It was recast as the Central Intelligence Bureau in 1947 under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

#### **Air Marshal BS Dhanoa appointed Air Chief of IAF**

The Union Government has appointed Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa as the next Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force (IAF). He succeeds Arup Raha who retires on December 31, 2016. Prior to this appointment he was Vice-Chief of IAF. He is the third person from Sikh community to head the IAF after Arjan Singh and Dilbag Singh.

Air Marshal B.S. Dhanoa(59), was born in Punjab's SAS Nagar, Mohali district, comes from a family of war veterans. His grandfather Capt Sant Singh was with the British Indian Army and fought in the World War II against the Japanese. His father, Sarayan Singh, served as the Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab during the 1980s and later served as advisor to the state governor. He was an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College (RIMC) and National Defence Academy (NDA). He was commissioned into the fighter

stream of the Air Force in June 1978. Before being appointed as Vice Chief he was the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the South Western Air Command. He has distinguishably served various important operation appointments including Chief Instructor (Air) at the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Intelligence) at Air Headquarters and Senior Air Staff Officer of two operational Commands.

During the Operation Vijay in 1999 (Kargil Operations), he famously commanded a fighter squadron and himself flew numerous night strike missions in the mountainous terrain. He was awarded Yudh Seva Medal (YSM), Vayusena Medal (VM) in 1999, and Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) in 2015.

#### **PM Narendra Modi ranks 9th among world's most powerful people list of Forbes**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was placed at 9th position among 74 of the world's most powerful people list released by the Forbes Magazine. The list gives the annual ranking of the World's Most Powerful People on the basis of their financial resources, scope and use of power and the number of people they impact.

2016 edition of the list was topped by Russian President Vladimir Putin. This is for fourth consecutive year Putin has topped the list. The first billionaire President of the United States was ranked second in the list. In the 2015 edition of the list he was placed 72. Outgoing US President Barack Obama dropped from 2 to 48. German Chancellor and backbone of the European Union Angela Merkel was ranked 3rd. She continues her reign as the most powerful woman on the planet for consecutive 11 years.

10 most powerful people in the world Rank are as follows

Vladimir Putin (President of Russia), Donald Trump (President of US), Angela Merkel (Chancellor of Germany), Xi Jinping (President of China), Pope Francis (Pope of Roman Catholic Church, Vatican City), Janet Yellen (Chairperson of US Federal Reserve), Bill Gates (Chairman of Bill & Melinda Foundation), Larry Page (Founder of Google), Narendra Modi (Prime Minister of India), Mark Zuckerberg (Cofounder of Facebook) Apart from Narendra Modi, the other Indian in the Forbes list was Mukesh Ambani (38 in the list) (Chairman of Reliance Industries) and Satya Nadella (51 in the list) (Microsoft CEO)

The list of World's Most Powerful People started in 2009 by Forbes magazine. Since then annually published. The list has one slot for person or leader for every 100 million people on Earth. These slots are allocated based on the amount of human and financial

resources as well as their influence on world events. It that in 2011 there were 70, and in 2012 there were 71 slots. Similarly in 2016 it has 74 slots.

#### **Viral V Acharya appointed as RBI Deputy Governor**

The Union Government on 28 December 2016 has appointed Viral V Acharya (42) as new Deputy Governor at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). He will have regular three-year tenure. His appointment was cleared by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. He will be serving under RBI Governor Urjit Patel. The existing three Deputy Governors of RBI are S S Mundra, R Gandhi and N S Vishwanathan.

Viral V Acharya is an alumnus of IIT, Mumbai, with a degree of BTech in Computer Science and Engineering in 1995 and PhD in Finance from NYU-Stern in 2001. He was with London Business School (2001-08) and served as the Academic Director of Collier Institute of Private Equity (2007-09) and Senior Houblon-Normal Research Fellow at Bank of England (2008). In 2015, Acharya co-authored a research paper that analysed the precarious condition of public sector banks in India. He has previously served on the International Advisory Board of Securities and Exchange Board of India. His papers have been published in renowned finance journals.

He also has served as Director, NSE-NYU Stern Initiative on the Study of Indian Capital Markets. He also was member of SEBI's International Advisory Board. Prior this appointment, he was serving as the C V Starr Professor of Economics in the Department of Finance at the New York University Stern School of Business (NYU-Stern). He is known for his research in theoretical and empirical analysis of systemic risks of the financial sector, its regulation and genesis in government-induced distortions. His research areas also span across agency-theoretic foundations, credit and liquidity risks as well as their general equilibrium consequences. He also has co-authored in the past at least three papers with the former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan. He was the recipient of numerous awards including the Rising Star in Finance Award.