

## Top Questions of January 2017

### Why following 'Terms' and 'Events' are important

- Who is regarded as 'Father of Democracy'?
- Who was appointed as the new Chairman of Tata Sons (Tata Group)?
- **What is the purpose of Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016?**
- Know about Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana?
- How Argentina and Davis Cup connected?
- Know about the marching band from Arab country defence forces to join the parade on India's Republic Day on 26 January 2017.
- Which is the first country in the world to turn-off its FM radio network and switch entirely to digital broadcasting?
- Know about Kerala-based Catholic Syrian Bank?
- Which is India's first payment bank formally launched across all 29 states on 12 January 2017?
- Which defence equipment manufacturer PSU, to be sold through strategic disinvestment?

Q. Which state will host the National Games of 2022 as declared by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA)? – **Meghalaya**

Q) What is Easypay.?

- Newly launched Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, scheme associated with declaration of black money.
- Solar Powered Boat
- Global Content Bazaar-2017

- What is MCLR?
- Rockefeller Foundation
- India INX
- Youth Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas
- Antonio Guterres – UN Secretary General
- Technical Oscar'
- 104<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress (ISC)

Q. What is the connection between Kalam Island off Odisha and - **Agni – 5**

Q. Know about Anil Bajjal, a 1969 batch IAS officer of UT cadre?

Q. What is **Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)**?

Q. What is 'Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process'?

Q. India in terms of the size of the economy overtook **United Kingdom** to emerge as the sixth largest economy in the world?

Q) Who was crowned Miss World 2016 - Stephanie Del Valle

Q) India's first ever 'Indian Institute of Skills' (IIS) will be established in which city of Uttar Pradesh? – **Kanpur**

Q) China operationalized world's longest bullet train network that is 2,252 kilometers in length, name two cities connected? – **Shanghai and Kunming**

Q) **Role of** Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) at Tuting – **Arunachal Pradesh**

Q) What is 'tag-free' Airports who became Tag-Free in India? – **New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Ahmedabad**

Q) What is **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code?**

Q. Why **Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1951** was cited recently by SC?

Q. What is 145 M777 ultralight howitzer guns and its significance with India and US.?

**Q)** Which is India's External Intelligence wing, and who was appointed as the new Chief of it? – **Anil Dhasmana**

**Q)** Russian Ambassador to Turkey **Andrei Karlov** was shot dead by a gunman in a shocking incident at a photo exhibition in Ankara.

**Q)** The first Humsafar Express, the new series of express trains for inter-city overnight journeys designed specifically for middle-class passengers, was launched by Indian Railways between which two destinations? – **Gorakhpur and Anand Vihar (Ghaziabad)**

**Q)** What is the name of the 17<sup>th</sup> Gyalwang Karmapa who is visiting the state of Arunachal Pradesh and its significance? – **Urgyen Trinley Dorje**

**Q)** Who was selected as the new Chief Justice of India on 6 December 2016? – **Justice J.S. Khehar**

**Q)** Name of the remote sensing satellite that was successfully launched by ISRO on and was the last launch of its 2016 itinerary? – **Resourcesat-2A**

**Q)** The government will observe B R Ambedkar's birth anniversary as '**Water Day**' on 6 December 2016.

**Q)** What is – '**DigiShala**'

Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) started from 1 January 2017 as he officially took charge from outgoing Ban Ki-moon. Guterres is .....UN Secretary General – **9<sup>th</sup>**

**Explanation:** The 10 year long term of Ban Ki-moon (South Korea) ended on 31 December 2016 and Portugal's Antonio Guterres took charge as the 9<sup>th</sup> Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) on 1 January 2017.

– With this Guterres became the first Secretary-General from Western Europe since Kurt Waldheim (1972–1981) and the first Secretary-General born after the establishment of the United Nations. It is worth mentioning that he was the Portuguese Prime Minister from 1995 to 2002.

– The 8 Secretary Generals of the UN (in chronological order) are – **1) Trygve**

**Lie** (Norway) – 2 Feb 1946-10 Nov 1952. **2) Dag Hammarskjöld** (Sweden) – 10 April 1953 to 18 September 1961. **3) U.**

**Thant** (Burma) – 30 November 1961 – 31 December 1971. **4) Kurt**

**Waldheim** (Austria) – 1 January 1972 – 31 December 1981. **5) Javier Pérez de Cuéllar** (Peru) – 1 January 1982 – 31 December 1991. **6)**

**Boutros Boutros-Ghali** (Egypt) – 1 January 1992 – 31 December 1996. **7) Kofi Annan** (Ghana) – 1 January 1997 – 31 December 2006

and **8) Ban Ki-moon** (South Korea) – 1 January 2007 – 31 December 2016.



**2)** Country's largest commercial bank State Bank of India (SBI) on 1 January 2017 decreased the benchmark interest rate across various maturities by 0.9%, a move that is expected to be shortly followed by other banks. What is the new interest rate for SBI's 1-year tenure instruments? – **8.0%**

**1-2 January 2017**

**1)** Antonio Guterres' tenure as the

**Explanation:** With effect from 1 January 2017, State Bank of India (SBI) reduced marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) by 0.9% from 8.90% to 8% for 1-year tenure. MCLR has been reduced by 0.9 percentage points to 8.10% for two years and 8.15% for three years.

– Banks have moved to MCLR as their new benchmark lending rate from June 2016, replacing the base rate system for new borrowers. It is calculated on the marginal cost of borrowing and return on net worth for banks. It was introduced by RBI to ensure fair interest rates to borrowers as well as banks.

– It is worth mentioning that Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on 31 December 2016 had asked banks to pay special attention towards poor and middle-class.

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**3)** What is the name of the Ordinance approved by the President of India that seeks to cancel the legal tender character of the existing series of banknotes in the denominations of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 in circulation? – **Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016**

**Explanation:** The President of India on 30 December 2016 approved the promulgation of the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Ordinance, 2016. The Ordinance is a follow-up to the decision taken by the Government of India to cancel the legal tender character of the existing series of banknotes, as on 8 November 2016, in the denominations of Rs.500 and Rs.1000 (Specified Bank Notes-SBNs) in circulation.

– The main objectives of the Ordinance are (i) to provide clarity and finality to the liability of the Reserve Bank of India and the Government of India for the SBNs; (ii) to provide an opportunity to those persons who were unable to deposit the SBNs within the time provided; and (iii) to declare holding, transferring or receiving SBNs as illegal, with provisions for penalty for contravention of any of the provisions of the Ordinance.

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**4)** Which entity has recently received RBI's in-principle approval to pick up a 51% stake in Catholic Syrian Bank and thus is poised to become the first-ever non-banking financial entity to takeover an Indian bank? – **Fairfax Financial Holdings**

**Explanation:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has given an in-principle approval to Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa's Fairfax Financial Holdings picking up a 51% stake in Kerala-based Catholic Syrian Bank (CSB).

– This will be the first takeover of an Indian bank by a non-banking financial entity, after the central bank tweaked ownership norms in May 2016. The last takeover of a private sector lender by a foreign bank happened when ING picked up majority stake in Vysya Bank in 2002-03.

– RBI's approval requires Fairfax Financial Holdings to bring down its stake in CSB to 15% over a period of 12 years. It also mandates that the foreign investor cannot sell its shares in the first five years.



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**5)** India's star singles tennis player Somdev Devvarman on 1 January 2017 announced his retirement from professional tennis. Injuries thus brought an abrupt end to what was once a promising career. In which year he won two Asian Games gold medal? – **2010**

**Explanation:** Somdev Devvarman was India's star singles player since he first broke into the scene in 2008. He was a regular in India's Davis Cup squad. He appeared in 14

rubbers and played a crucial role in India reaching the World Group back in 2010.

– He reached zenith of his career by winning the singles and doubles gold medals at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China. His 44-1 win-loss record in 2008 at the NCAA Men’s Tennis Championship remains unmatched so far.

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**6) Who was named the new Prime Minister of Romania recently thus bringing to end the political turmoil in the country after left front’s win in the parliamentary elections? – Sorin Grindeanu**

**Explanation:** 43-year-old former communications minister Sorin Grindeanu was named the new Prime Minister of Romania by centre-right president Klaus Iohannis in a decree signed by him.

– The election of Grindeanu thus brought to end weeks of uncertainty since the left won a parliamentary vote on 11 December 2016. He now faces a confidence vote in parliament on his programme and cabinet nominees.

– It is worth mentioning that President Iohannis had earlier rejected a previous candidate (Sevil Shhaideh) who would have been the country’s first female and first Muslim prime minister.

## 3 January 2017



**1) The Consumer Affairs Department of the Union Government on 2 January 2017 came out with which statement pertaining to payment of service charges in the hotels/restaurants? – Consumers**

**have the discretion to not pay service charges added the bill by any hotel/restaurant**

**Explanation:** In a statement issued on 2 January 2017, the Consumer Affairs Department asked the state governments to advise the hotels/restaurants to prominently display that “the service charges are discretionary / voluntary and a consumer dissatisfied with the services can have it waived off.”

– This statement was issued following several complaints from consumers that hotels and restaurants are seeking ‘service charge’ in the range of 5-20%, in lieu of tips, which a consumer is forced to pay irrespective of the kind of service provided to him/her.

*(Photo Courtesy : Livemint)*

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**2) The flight-trial of India’s long range, strategic ballistic missile, Agni-IV was successfully conducted on 2 January 2017. What is the range of this missile? – Up to 4,000 km**

**Explanation:** Agni-IV is a two-stage, surface-to-surface missile that can travel 4,000 km and can carry a nuclear warhead weighing one tonne. The flight trial of this missile was successfully conducted from a road-mobile launcher on Abdul Kalam Island, off Odisha kcoast on 2 January 2017.

– It has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It is 20 metres long and weighs 17 tonnes. Both its stages are powered by solid propellants.

– Agni-IV had been launched five times earlier in 2011, 2012, twice in 2014 and once in 2015. All the five were missions were successful.

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**3) The Supreme Court on 2 January 2017 removed BCCI President Anurag Thakur and Secretary Ajay Shirke primarily on which charge? – Failing to comply with its order on implementing administrative reforms in BCCI as recommended by the Lodha panel**

**Explanation:** A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India, T.S. Thakur, on 2 January

2016 removed Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) President Anurag Thakur and Secretary Ajay Shirke from their posts. The Bench also said all other office bearers must submit an unconditional undertaking that they would comply with its order on Lodha panel reforms.

– The court also issued a show cause notice to Thakur asking why perjury and contempt proceedings should not be initiated against him for misleading the court.

– At its next hearing on 19 January 2017, the court will decide on a new set of administrators who will take over the functioning of BCCI to ensure implementation of the Lodha reforms.

– The court had issued the notice to Thakur on perjury after it found discrepancies in his statements on seeking a letter from the International Cricket Council (ICC) to state that implementation of Lodha panel's recommendations and the apex court's directions amounted to government interference in the board's working and could mean the derecognition of BCCI.

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**4)** What is the name of the India-born DNA expert who was chosen to be conferred with a knighthood by the British Queen as announced in the New Years' Honours List 2017? – **Shankar Balasubramanian**

**Explanation:** Shankar Balasubramanian, the Chennai-born professor of medicinal chemistry at the University of Cambridge, has been chosen for the prestigious knighthood award for year 2017. This was announced in the New Years' Honours List 2017.

– According to the knighthood citation, 50-year old Balasubramanian is the co-inventor of Next Generation DNA sequencing, considered the most transformational advance in biology and medicine for decades. His work has spawned an entirely new discipline of Bioinformatics.

– The New Years' Honours List 2017 includes several Indian-origin academics and individuals who have distinguished themselves in different walks of life. It also includes the largest ever

number of individuals from the black and Asian minority ethnic communities of Britain.

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**5)** Lt Gen Bipin Rawat took over as the new Chief of the Indian Army by succeeding General Dalbir Singh Suhag. What is his chronological order as the Chief of the Army Staff? – **27<sup>th</sup>**

**Explanation:** Bipin Rawat took over as the head of the 1.3 million strong Indian Army, succeeding General Dalbir Singh Suhag on 31 December. Rawat, whose appointment had kicked up a row, was designated as Army chief by the ruling NDA government ignoring protests from opposition including Congress. Rawat, a Gurkha officer is the 27<sup>th</sup> Chief of the armed forces.

– Rawat, who learnt his art in Kashmir and the northeast, headed the Indian brigade during the UN peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2008. Indian peacekeepers performed splendidly under his leadership. The general is credited with providing dynamic leadership under the UN banner.

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**6)** What is the chronological order of Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa as the Chief of the Indian Air Force (IAF) after he took over the charge from Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha? – **22<sup>nd</sup>**



**Explanation:** Air Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa on 31 December 2016 took over as the Chief of the Indian Air Force after Former Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha retired from post. He thus became Air Chief Marshal and became the 22<sup>nd</sup> Chief of the Air Staff.

– Dhanoa has mainly flown the Kiran and MiG-21 aircraft and has flying experience across the entire spectrum of fighter aircrafts from the

Jaguar to the state-of-the-art MiG-29 and Su-30 MKI.

– He also became the third Chief of the IAF to come from Sikh community after Arjan Singh and Dilbag Singh.

## 4-6 January 2017

**1)** The 104<sup>th</sup> Indian Science Congress (ISC) was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3 January 2017. The latest edition of this prestigious annual event is being hosted at which place? – **Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh)**

**Explanation:** Sri Venkateswara University (Tirupati) is hosting the 104<sup>th</sup> edition of the Indian Science Congress. The event is being organized from 3 to 7 January 2017 and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi who addressed the gathering of eminent scientists at Tarakarama Stadium of the University.

– Six Nobel Prize winners from different countries such as the US, Japan, Israel, France and Bangladesh also took part in the event besides about 14,000 scientists and scholars from across the country.

– It is the second time that Tirupati is hosting the prestigious ISC, the first being in 1983 when the 70<sup>th</sup> ISC was held here.

**2)** Guru Gobind Singh's which historic birth anniversary celebrations concluded with fanfare across the country on 5 January 2017? – **350<sup>th</sup>**

**Explanation:** The innumerable celebratory programmes held for observing the 350<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of Sikhs, concluded on 5 January 2017. The main programme was held in Patna, the birth place of Guru Maharaj.

– To mark the occasion, a huge Prakash-Parv was observed in Patna Sahib Gurudwara, where the Guru was born on 22 December 1666. Apart from this over 5-lakh Sikhs from all over the world assembled in Patna for which prayers and langar

(community kitchen) was held in 61-acre area in Patna's historic Gandhi Maidan.

– Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth Guru of the Sikh order and before he left the mortal world, he proclaimed that the Adi Granth would be henceforth the Guru for all Sikhs, the proclamation known as 'Guru manayo Granth'.

– His teachings were essentially a continuation of Guru Nanak and the other Gurus. He created the Khalsa or the pure.

**3)** Who took over as the new Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on 4 January 2017? – Prof. **David R. Syiemlieh**

**Explanation:** Eminent historian David R. Syiemlieh was appointed the new Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) by President Pranab Mukherjee on 3 January 2017. He took over his responsibilities from 4 January. He succeeded former IAS officer Alka Sirohi as chairman.

– Syiemlieh will occupy this prestigious post till 21 January 2018. He was till now the member of UPSC. He comes from the Khasi community and became the second person from Meghalaya, after Rose Millian Bathew, to hold the coveted post. Bathew was the first from Meghalaya to hold the post of UPSC chairperson. She was also the first woman to chair the commission from 1992 until 1996.

– UPSC is India's central agency authorised to conduct various exams such as Civil Services Examination (IAS), Engineering Services Examination, Combined Medical Services Examination, Combined Defence Services Examination, National Defence Academy Examination, Naval Academy Examination, Indian Forest Service, etc. It consists of a chairman and ten members.

**4)** Google Inc. on 4 January 2017 announced which two new initiatives for small and medium

businesses (SMBs) in India with the view of utilizing the power of the Internet to transform entrepreneurship? – **‘Digital Unlocked’ and ‘My Business Websites’**

**Explanation:** ‘Digital Unlocked’ and ‘My Business Websites’ are the names of two website-based initiatives announced by Google CEO Sundar Pichai on 4 January 2017.

– In launching these new initiatives, Google cited a joint study with KPMG that showed 68% of the 51 million SMBs in India are offline. The study attributed the lack of understanding of the benefits of digital technology and technical skills as the primary reasons for being offline. Their digitisation will dramatically increase their contribution to the Indian GDP

– The Digital Unlocked initiative is meant to empower Indian SMBs with essential digital skills. Digital Unlocked’s Primer app seeks to teach digital marketing skills in an interactive manner, and has been launched in English and Hindi. It works offline, and Google is touting upcoming support for Marathi, Tamil, and Telugu.

– ‘My Business Websites’ lets business easily create a mobile optimised website for free. Using data provided by business alongside photos from Google Maps, this service will create template, editable websites. The service will be available in English, Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, and Malayalam.

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**5)** Which Indian origin trustee was on 5 January 2017 appointed President of the Rockefeller Foundation, one of the largest and most influential philanthropies? – **Rajiv J. Shah**

**Explanation:** Rajiv J. Shah was appointed the new President of the Rockefeller Foundation on 5 January 2017. He will succeed Judith Rodin, who has been president for 12 years. 43-year old Shah will be the youngest person and the first Indian-American to lead the Rockefeller Foundation.

– The Rockefeller Foundation is one of United States’ largest and most influential philanthropies. It was founded in 1913 by the oil tycoon John D. Rockefeller. The foundation says it has given away the equivalent of more than \$17 billion in today’s dollars and donates almost \$200 million annually.

– Shah until recently had been the administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (UNAIDS). He is presently one of the trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation. He had worked at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for nearly a decade.

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## 7-9 January 2017

**1)** 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 January 2017. This event is hosted by which city? – **Bengaluru**

**Explanation:** The 14<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bhartiya Divas, celebrating Indian diaspora across the world, kicked off in style with huge participation of Indian diaspora at Bengaluru on 7 January 2017. The first event of the 2-day PBD, addressing the stakes of young Indians living abroad, was titled as “Youth Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas”.

– Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa is the Chief Guest of this edition of PBD.

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**2)** What is the name of the new skill development scheme aimed at Indian youth wishing to seek jobs abroad that was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 January 2017 on the occasion of 14<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bhartiya Divas? – ‘Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana’

**Explanation:** ‘Pravasi Kaushal Vikas

Yojana’ is the name of the new scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 8 January 2017. It was launched in Bengaluru on the occasion of the inauguration function of 14<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD).

– This scheme aims to boost the confidence level of the Indian youth so that they did not feel strangers when they land in a country of their choice for vocation and assured.

**3)** Talented actor Om Puri, who delivered riveting performances in Hindi films, passed away in the early hours of 6 January 2017. Mainly known for varied character roles, Om Puri, won the National Award for Best Actor how many times?

– **Twice**

**Explanation:** 66-year old Om Puri was one of the best actors of all time in the Indian film industry. Apart from performing some outstanding roles in Hindi films, he had also acted in English and Pakistani movies.

– He won the National Award for Best Actor twice – for ‘Arohan’ (1982) and ‘Ardhya Satya’ (1983). He won a Filmfare award for Best Supporting Actor for his role in ‘Aakrosh’ (1980). He also played a much-acclaimed cameo in Richard Attenborough’s ‘Gandhi’ (1982).

– Puri made his film debut in 1976 Marathi film ‘Ghashiram Kotwal’. Some of his most notable films include ‘Sandgate’, ‘Mirch Masala’, ‘Jaane Bhi Do Yaaron’, ‘Dharavi’, ‘Maachis’, ‘Gupt’, ‘Dhoop’, ‘Yuva’, ‘Don’, ‘Agneepath’, ‘Bajrangi Bhaijaan’ and others. He also appeared in Hollywood films such as ‘City of Joy’, ‘Wolf’, ‘The Ghost’ and ‘The Darkness’.

– He was also an alumnus of the 1973 class of National School of Drama (NSD), where Naseeruddin Shah was a co-student.

**4)** The SEBI on 4 January 2017 relaxed its rules for investment by angel funds with the view of giving a fillip to start-up funding in India. Under the new rules what is the upper limit for number of angel investors in a scheme? – **200**

**Explanation:** To give a fillip to start-up funding, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) relaxed its rules for investment by angel funds. According to the notification issued by the SEBI on 4 January 2017, the upper limit for number of angel investors in a scheme will be increased from 49 to 200. The SEBI has also allowed the angel investors to invest in up to five-year old entities, which was earlier three years.

– To diversify risks, SEBI also allowed angel funds to make overseas investments, up to 25% of their investible corpus, in line with other Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs).

**5)** The Union Sports Ministry constituted a committee after it had to suspend the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for appointing Suresh Kalmadi and Abhay Chautala as life presidents. Who is heading this committee? – **I. Srinivas (Sports Secretary)**

**Explanation:** Keen to avoid a repeat of the furore caused by IOA’s decision to name scam-tainted Suresh Kalmadi and Abhay Chautala as Life Presidents, Sports Minister Vijay Goel on 2 January 2017 constituted a committee to suggest improvements in the National Sports Code.

– The committee is headed by Injeti Srinivas who is currently the Secretary (Sports) in the Ministry. It will suggest improvements in the present National Sports Development Code on the basis of suggestions and feedback given in meetings held by the Ministry with the various stakeholders. The committee is expected to submit a report within a month.

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**6)** Which entity is poised to become the first major public sector undertaking (PSU) to be sold through the route of strategic disinvestment, as announced during January 2017? – **Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML)**

**Explanation:** According to an announcement made on 5 January 2017, Union Government will sell 26% stake in defence equipment manufacturer Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), making it the first major PSU to be sold through strategic disinvestment. The proposed disinvestment is expected to fetch the exchequer over Rs 1,000 crore.

– After the strategic sale, government stake in the PSU would come down to 28.03% from the present 54.03%.

– The strategic sale approval is just the third in over 12 years. In September 2016, the Cabinet had cleared strategic sale of Bharat Pumps and Compressors Ltd, while in December 2016 it had approved sale of India's first pharma company Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Ltd as well as Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd.

– These PSUs will be the first privatisation since sale of Jessop and Co. in 2003-04 under the NDA government headed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

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**7)** What is the name of the former Portuguese President and Prime Minister who was known as 'Father of Democracy' in his country and who passed away on 7 January 2017? – **Mario Soares**

**Explanation:** Former Portuguese President and Prime Minister Mario Soares, regarded as a father of the country's democracy, died in a Lisbon hospital at the age of 92 on 7 January 2017.

– He played a key role after the 1974 Carnation Revolution, a military coup that put an end to 48 years of Salazar rule, led by dictator António de Oliveira Salazar. Later Soares served as Portugal's Prime Minister, twice, and then as President (1986-96).

– He then spearheaded the country's entry into the European Union. But, in recent years, he became a vocal critic of the austerity policies associated with the massive eurozone bailout Portugal sought in 2011.

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**8)** Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan, who passed away on 4 January 2017, was a legendary classical musician associated with which instrument? – **Sitar**

**Explanation:** Abdul Halim Jaffer Khan was the last survivor of the 'Sitar Trinity' of India along with the late Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan. He passed away at the age of 88 at his Mumbai residence on 4 January 2017.

– Khan was born in Jawra, Madhya Pradesh. He was associated with the 'Indore Gharana' and is credited for innovating the unique music style of 'Jafferkhani Baaj'. Apart from solo performances he was famous for playing the sitar for various Bollywood films, including "Mughal-E-Azam", "Kohinoor", "Goonj Uthi Shehnai" and "Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baaje", among many others.

– He was conferred with the Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Sangeet Natak Akademi awards.

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**9)** Which country is poised to become the first country in the world to turn-off its FM radio network and switch entirely to digital broadcasting? – **Norway**

**Explanation:** Norway is set to become the first country in the world to turn off its FM radio network. This process will start with the northern town of Bodoe switching off its local network on 11 January 2017.

– By the end of the year, all FM broadcasts in Norway will have ended, replaced by Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) transmissions that generally offer better sound quality.

– The decision to shut down Norway's FM radio system was made by the country's parliament in 2011. The government suggested that the cost of

having both an FM radio network and a DAB network was prohibitive in a country with only 5 million people.

– Estimating that the cost of FM was eight times higher than digital, Norway’s government argued that the savings could be spent on improving radio content.

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**10) Who won the men’s open title of Chennai Open 2017 on 8 January 2017? –**

**Roberto Bautista Agut (Spain)**

**Explanation:** Spaniard veteran Roberto Bautista Agut won the men’s singles title of the Chennai Open 2017 by defeating 20-year-old Daniil Medvedev (Russia) in the final on 8 January 2017. Agut defeated Medvedev 6-3, 6-3 to claim his first ATP title of the career.

– Medvedev was chasing his first ATP title while Agut had already won four singles titles including two in 2016 when he won in Sofia and Auckland.

– The Chennai Open acts as the prelude to the first Grand Slam of the season at Australian Open which begins on 16 January 2017 in Melbourne.

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**10 January 2017**

**1) In an important step to keep a check on tax dodgers, the Union Government on 8 January 2017 directed banks to obtain the permanent account number (PAN) from all bank account holders by which date? – 28 February 2017**

**Explanation:** According to a notification issued by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on 8 January 2017 all banks shall obtain and link PAN or Form No. 60 (where PAN is not available) for all existing bank accounts by 28 February 2017. For this the pertaining IT rules have been amended.

– However, this rule will not apply to Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts (BSBDA), which include zero balance savings accounts such as Jan Dhan. The BSBDA were introduced to take care of simple banking needs of people and come

with free ATM card, monthly statement and a cheque book.

– The crackdown has come amid fears that most of the most of the banned 500 and 1000 rupee notes have made their way to bank accounts several of which are ‘benami’ created merely to launder cash.

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**2) According to media reports of 8 January 2017 Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India has cut its equity investment target for the year ending March 2017 to Rs.**

**50,000 crore due to adverse market conditions. What was the proposed equity investment target for the group? – Rs. 60,000 crore**

**Explanation:** India’s largest domestic institutional investor and life insurance behemoth LIC of India has decided to invest the surplus money it earned from premiums this year in fixed income papers instead of stocks because of adverse market conditions.

– It has thus cut its equity investment target for the year ending 31 March 2017 to Rs. 50,000 crore from Rs. 60,000 crore.

– Although LIC collected higher new business premium this year (2016-17) as compared to last year (2015-16), due to lack of opportunities in an insipid equity market, it will invest the surplus money earned from premiums in fixed income papers instead of stocks.

– Every financial year, LIC earmarks funds for various markets, including equities. It controls total assets worth about Rs. 21 trillion and manages life insurance for at least 250 million people through 300 million life policies.

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**3) What is the name of the alumnus of IIT-Kharagpur who during January 2017 was chosen for the Technical Achievement Award, popularly called the ‘Technical Oscar’, awarded by the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences? – Parag Havaldar**

**Explanation:** Parag Havaldar, who graduated from IIT-Kharagpur in 1991 with a degree in computer science and engineering, has been

chosen for the prestigious Technical Achievement Award (the Scientific & Technical Awards prize) that is awarded by the Academy of Motion Pictures and Sciences. The award is popularly called the ‘Technical Oscar’,

– Havaldar works as a software supervisor at Sony Pictures Imageworks. The technology developed by him and his team has been used to create stylised and realistic character animations. Havaldar’s popular works include Watchmen, Green Lantern, The Amazing Spider-Man and Beowulf.

– He will be awarded a certificate from the Academy at Beverly Hills on 11 February 2017.

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**4) Who was appointed as the new CEO of Indian retail major Flipkart by replacing co-founder Binny Bansal on 9 January 2017? – Kalyan Krishnamurthy**

**Explanation:** Retail major Flipkart on 9 January 2017 elevated former Tiger Global Management executive Kalyan Krishnamurthy as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO), replacing co-founder Binny Bansal. Bansal was named as Flipkart’s group Chief Executive.

– With this elevation, Krishnamurthy will be responsible for the Flipkart profit and loss account, the company said. He will report to Binny Bansal. Flipkart’s current chief administrative officer Nitin Seth is being elevated to the role of Chief Operating Officer (COO).

– As part of the new organizational structure, Binny Bansal will oversee functions such as capital allocation across all the group companies, merger and acquisition activities and CEO selection at group companies. Co-founder Sachin Bansal continues to be executive chairman.

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**5) Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who passed away on 8 January 2017, was a former President of which country? – Iran**

**Explanation:** Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who served two terms as Iran’s president from 1989 to 1997, passed away on 8 January 2017 after suffering a heart attack. He was 82.

– Throughout his political career, Rafsanjani was seen as a conduit for better relations with the West. He was a vocal supporter of current Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

– Rafsanjani was also seen as a key figure in Iran’s moderate movement, losing a presidential bid against the former hardline Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005.

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## 11-12 January 2017

**1) What is the name of India’s first international exchange that was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 10 January 2017 at Gandhinagar? – India INX**

**Explanation:** India INX is the name of India’s first international exchange. It has been established at the International Financial Service Centre (IFSC) in GIFT City, Gandhinagar (Gujarat). It is a wholly owned subsidiary of BSE and is expected to compete with similar bourses in Singapore and Hong Kong.

– Formal trading operations at India INX will start from 16 January 2017. It will trade in a vast range of products such as equity derivatives, currency and commodities, barring agricultural futures. Initially, the exchange will be open for 22 hours a day, which may be extended to 23 hours later. In the first year, the exchange plans to focus on equity derivatives and currency.

– This exchange targeting foreign investors is India’s attempt to take on the \$48 billion worth of offshore trade and business activities from Singapore, Dubai and Hong Kong, which already have such exchanges in place.

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**2) Who was appointed the first head of India INX, country’s first international exchange? – V. Balasubramanian**

**Explanation:** V. Balasubramanian was on 9 January 2017 deputed by BSE Ltd., Asia’s oldest stock exchange, to head India INX as its first Managing Director (MD) and Chief Operations

Officer (COO). He was till now the Chief Business Officer (CBO) in the BSE.

– BSE chief executive officer Ashish Chauhan is the chairman of the INX board, which also includes former Reserve Bank of India deputy governor Anand Sinha, and economist Ajit Ranade.

– It is worth mentioning that India INX is a wholly owned subsidiary of BSE.

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**3) Haryana, infamous for very low sex ratio, achieved which major achievement in sex ratio recently? – Sex ratio at the birth in the state touched the 900-mark for the first time in almost two decades**

**Explanation:** The According to recently published data, from January to December 2016 out of 5,25,278 children were born in the state of Haryana, 2,76,414 were boys and 2,48,864 were girls. Thus sex ratio at birth (SRB) in December 2016 stood at 914 in the state. This was the first time in almost two decades that SRB crossed 900 mark in the state.

– Haryana has been notorious for its skewed sex ratio and patriarchal mindset. The SRB in the state was just 834 in 2011, while the national mark stood at 914.

– It is worth mentioning that Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the ambitious “Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao” (B3P) campaign against female foeticide in Panipat in January 2015. The campaign has been seen as a major force in this historic turnaround in state’s SRB.

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**4) Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2017 in Gandhinagar on 10 January 2017. This is which edition of the biennial event primarily aimed at bringing investors to Gujarat? – 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Explanation:** ‘Vibrant Gujarat’ is the name given to a biennial investors’ summit organized biennially by the state government of Gujarat. The event is aimed at bringing together business leaders, investors, corporations, thought leaders,

policy and opinion makers to explore business opportunities in the state.

– The event was organized for the first time in year 2003 and was the brainchild of the then Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi. The 2017 summit is the Eighth edition of this global summit. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi on 10 January 2017. The event will conclude on 13 January.

– The mega exhibition is witnessing participation from across countries and will showcase over 25 sectors. After the inauguration, Prime Minister Modi also interacted with 60-odd global and Indian CEOs over a roundtable meeting.

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**5) Which FIFA World Cup (men’s) would feature as many as 48 teams (from the present 32), as decided by the FIFA Council on 10 January 2017? – 2026 FIFA World Cup**

**Explanation:** The FIFA World Cup (men) will expand to 48 teams from its current 32, starting with the 2026 edition of this showpiece event. This important decision was taken by FIFA’s decision making body, the FIFA Council on 10 January 2017.

– It was also decided to have 16 groups of three teams in the group stage. FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who replaced the disgraced Sepp Blatter in February 2016, had made FIFA World Cup expansion one of his promises during his successful electoral campaign.

– It is worth mentioning that 2026 FIFA World Cup doesn’t have a host nation yet, with the bidding process delayed due to the corruption scandal

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**6) The marching band from which Arab country will create history by taking part in India’s Republic Day Parade 2017 and thus becoming the first-ever contingent of Arab soldiers to take part in this prestigious event? – United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

**Explanation:** A marching band from the

UAE's defence forces will join the parade on India's Republic Day on 26 January

2017 and it will be the first time that Arab soldiers will be marching in this iconic event of the country.

– It is worth mentioning that UAE's crown prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan is the Chief Guest of this year's Republic Day Parade.

– It seems that after the French marching band joined the parade in 2016 in honour of French President Francois Hollande, the practice has caught the fancy of others as well.

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## 13 January 2017



**1) Who was appointed as the new Chairman of Tata Sons (Tata Group) on 12 January 2017? – N.Chandrasekaran**

**Explanation:** Tata Sons appointed Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) CEO Natarajan Chandrasekaran as Chairman of the holding company, to take over from interim chairman Ratan Tata. The decision was taken at Tata Sons' board meeting held in Mumbai on 12 January 2017.

The 53-year-old TCS veteran will become only the third non-Tata Chairman of the \$103 billion salt-to-software conglomerate's holding company and will take his responsibilities on 21 February 2017.

– Ratan Tata was appointed interim chairman of the group following the surprising ouster of Cyrus Mistry on 24 October 2016. Following Mistry's ouster Tata group had constituted a body – comprising industry veterans such as

Ratan Tata, Venu Srinivasan, Amit Chandra, Ronen Sen and Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya – to scout for a new chairman within the next four months.

– Chandrasekaran has been CEO and managing director (MD) of TCS since 6 October 2009. Before that he served as the chief operating officer at the firm. A Tata lifer, he had joined the company in 1987. He was appointed on Tata Sons board on October 25, 2016.

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**2) What is the name of the second indigenously built Scorpene submarine of India that was launched in Mumbai on 12 January 2017? – INS Khanderi**

**Explanation:** 'INS Khanderi' is the name of India's second indigenously built Scorpene submarine that was launched at the Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL) in Mumbai on 12 January 2017.

– It is the second of the six submarines being built at the MDL in collaboration with DCNS of France, as part of Project-75 of the Indian Navy. The first one, Kalvari, is completing sea trials and will be commissioned shortly into the Indian Navy.

– INS Khanderi can undertake multifarious types of missions, i.e anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance, etc. It is designed to operate in all theatres, including the tropics. All means and communications are provided to ensure interoperability with other components of a naval task force.

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**3) Which entity became India's first payment bank after the**

services of this entity were formally launched across all 29 states on 12 January 2017? –

**Airtel Payments Bank**

**Explanation:** The services of Airtel Payments Bank, a subsidiary of the country's leading mobile phone operator

Bharti Airtel, were formally launched across all 29 states on 12 January 2017. The nationwide launch of Airtel Payments Bank was done at the hands of the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in Delhi. It thus became India's first payments bank to launch its pan-India operations.

– With this national rollout, Airtel Payments Bank has a network of 2,50,000 banking points, (Airtel retail stores) across 29 States from day one. This is more than the total number of ATMs in the country. While Bharti Airtel has 80% stake in the entity, Kotak Mahindra Bank has 20% stake in it.

– On 11 April 2016, Airtel Payments Bank had become the first entity in India to receive a payments bank licence from the RBI. In November 2016, Airtel had rolled out its banking services in Rajasthan and was the first bank to start payment bank services in the country. In December 2016, Airtel extended its footprint to south India by rolling out pilot services in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

– In 2015, a total of 11 companies had received an in-principle approval from the RBI to offer payments bank services out of which three have surrendered their licenses i.e. Chalomandalam Distribution Services, Sun Pharmaceuticals and Tech Mahindra.

– A payment bank is fully digital and paperless banking and customers can access services over their mobile phones, including all feature/basic mobile phones. It offers all basic banking facilities like account-opening services and cash deposit & withdrawal facilities. Savings accounts are opened using Aadhaar based e-KYC. This requires no documents at all, only the customer's Aadhaar number is needed. Although deposits up to Rs.1 lakh can only be made.

**4)** The first-of-its-kind solar-powered boat service was started in which state from 12 January 2017? – **Kerala**

**Explanation:** Kerala scripted a new chapter in country's transport sector as India's first-of-its-kind solar-powered boat service was started from Vaikom in Kottayam district on 12 January 2017.

– The solar-powered boat conducted its first service with 75 passengers from Vaikom to a place near Kochi. The service was offered as part of the state government's initiative to shift from diesel and petrol to other sources of energy, in order to curb growing environment pollution.

**5)** The first-of-its-kind show in India to promote sale and purchase of content in the entertainment industry began in Mumbai from 12 January 2017. What is the name of this 3-day event? – **'Global Content Bazaar-2017'**

**Explanation:** 'Global Content Bazaar-2017' is the name given to a 3-day B2B event organised to promote the sale and purchase of content in the multi-crore entertainment industry. The event commenced on 12 January and will conclude on 14 January 2017.

– The event is a one-stop marketplace for content creators and innovators to showcase their work to potential buyers and distributors and also to engage in collaborations that are pivotal in the creation of content for films, television, new media, mobile, gaming and radio.

– Members of the film fraternity from various countries such as Turkey, UK, Spain and Malaysia are participating in the event. On the other hand content providers from China, Russia and Nigeria put up pavilions in the event.

**14-15 January 2017**



India's annual Haj quota by 34,500 from 1,36,020 to 1,70,520.

– A day later on 12 January 2017 the union government formed a committee to look into the Haj subsidy issue in light of the 2012 Supreme Court order. The committee will engage all the stakeholders concerned before submitting its report.

**1)** Which team won its maiden Ranji Trophy title as it defeated defending champions Mumbai in the finals of the 2016-17 edition on 14 January 2017? – **Gujarat**

**Explanation:** Gujarat defeated defending champions Mumbai by five wickets to bag their maiden Ranji Trophy title on 14 January. With this title win Gujarat became only the fourth team to be crowned domestic champions in all three formats. The other three teams are UP, TN and Bengal. The final was played at Indore's Holkar Stadium.

– The final Gujarat captain Parthiv Patel played a brilliant captain's knock by smashing an unbeaten 143 runs to chase down a formidable target of 312 runs. This was also the highest total chased down in a Ranji Trophy final with the previous best being 310 by Hyderabad vs Nawanagar way back in 1937-38.

– This title win also took Gujarat into an elite list comprising Holkar, Delhi, Karnataka and Haryana as the teams to defeat Bombay/Mumbai in a Ranji Trophy final.

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**3)** Who was conferred with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States' highest civil honour, by President Barack Obama on 12 January 2017? – **Joe Biden (Vice President)**

**Explanation:** U.S. President Barack Obama on 12 January 2017 bestowed the Presidential Medal of Freedom on Joe Biden, the man he called "the finest vice president we have ever seen."

– The Presidential Medal of Freedom is country's highest civil honour and award of this medal to Biden was the last time President Obama presented the honour. While awarding the medal to Biden, the President was effusive in his praise for the man who ran against him in 2008, then agreed to be his running mate.

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**4)** Who was appointed the new CEO of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest software company, on 12 January 2017? – **Rajesh Gopinathan**

**2)** The Union Government on 12 January 2017 formed a 6-member committee to look into the Haj subsidy issue in light of a Supreme Court order on gradually reducing and abolishing subsidy given to pilgrims by 2022. The Supreme Court had given this order in which year? – **2012**

**Explanation:** The Supreme Court had in 2012 directed the Union government to gradually reduce and abolish Haj subsidy by 2022. It had asked the government to invest the subsidy amount of approximately Rs. 650 crore a year then on educational and social development of the community.

– Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Saudi Arabia's Haj and Umrah Minister Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen inked an agreement in Jeddah on 11 January 2017 to increase

**Explanation:** Rajesh Gopinathan was on 12 January 2017 appointed the next Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), India's largest software firm. He will replace N. Chandrasekaran who was elevated to the post of Tata Sons chairman on the same day.



– 46-year old Gopinathan is presently the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in the company. He will take over his new post on 21 February 2017. He was handpicked by Chandrasekaran when he joined TCS from Tata Industries in 2001.

– On the other hand TCS also appointed N.G. Subramaniam as the new chief operating officer, thereby creating the CEO-COO model after seven years. Subramaniam, who is also Chandrasekaran's elder brother, is president of a business unit, TCS Financial Solutions.

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**5) Who was appointed as the new Vice Chief of the Indian Army on 12 January 2017? – Lt. Gen. Sarath Chand**

**Explanation:** Lieutenant General Sarath Chand, Army Commander of Jaipur-based South Western Command, was on 12 January 2017 appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff.

– Lt. Gen. Chand was commissioned into the Garhwal Rifles in June 1979 and has an outstanding professional career spanning over 38 years. He has served in every important military theatre of India and has been in active combat leadership roles at every stage of command in the Army.

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**16 January 2017**



**1) Which team won the 2017 Premier Badminton League (PBL) title after defeating Mumbai Rockets in the finals on 14 January 2017? – Chennai Smashers**

**Explanation:** Chennai Smashers won the Premier Badminton League (PBL) for 2017 as it defeated Mumbai Rockets 4-3 in a pulsating summit clash at the Siri Fort Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on 14 January 2017.

– Chennai Smashers, led by Olympic silver medalist P.V. Sindhu, and Mumbai Rockets were locked 3-3 before the final match. In the last match Thailand's Tanongsak Saensomboonsuk came from behind to clinch the second men's singles tie 9-11, 11-7, 11-3 against Ajay Jayaram of India to help Chennai clinch the title.

– Before this in the women's singles match between World No.6 P.V. Sindhu and world No.3 Sung Ji Hyun, Sindhu won 11-8, 11-8.

– This was the first PBL title for Chennai Smashers. The first edition of PBL (2013) was won by Hyderabad Hotshots while 2016 edition was won by Delhi Acers. PBL was earlier known as Indian Badminton League (IBL) when founded in 2013. It is a franchisee league managed and commercially owned by the Badminton Association of India (BAI).

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**2) Former Punjab Chief Minister Surjit Singh Barnala passed away on 14 January 2017 at the age of 91. He served as state's**

Chief Minister during which years? – **From 1985 to 1987**

**Explanation:** Surjit Singh Barnala took over reins of the state of Punjab in the difficult period when militancy was at its peak in the mid-80s from 1985 to 1987.

– He was a five-time member of Punjab Assembly -1967, 1969, 1972, 1980 and 1985 – and twice a member of the Lok Sabha in 1977 and 1998. He served as Union Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Resources, Forests minister in the Morarji Desai-led Janta Party government from 1977 to 1980. He became the minister for Chemical & Fertilisers and Food & Consumer Affairs in the Atal Behari Vajpayee Cabinet in 1988.

– He was instrumental in setting of the Guru Nanak Dev University at Amritsar. The historic Ganga Waters Agreement (Farakka Agreement) with Bangladesh was signed by him.

– He also occupied the post of Governor of the states of Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand and Andhra Pradesh besides being Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



**3) Which private sector bank during the second week of January 2017 blocked transactions on digital payments app PhonePe, accusing it of breaking the UPI guidelines of interoperability? – ICICI Bank**

**Explanation:** India's largest private sector bank ICICI Bank, from 13 January 2017 blocked transactions on Flipkart-owned Unified Payment Interface (UPI)-based digital payments app PhonePe, accusing it of indulging in restrictive practices and breaking the guidelines of interoperability. PhonePe CEO Sameer Nigam confirmed that ICICI Bank has blocked all their customers from using PhonePe, and even blocked any other bank's customers from sending money to ICICI Bank's customers using the app.

– On the other hand ICICI Bank claimed that PhonePe was following restrictive practices allowing users to make payments with only its UPI handle, which is in contravention to the UPI guidelines of interoperability and choice that empowers a customer to choose any app to make payments through UPI.

– This was the second instance of mainstream banks blocking services to new-age digital payments companies. Previously, SBI had stopped allowing users from topping up their Paytm wallets using the internet banking feature. The bank claimed it did so because of security concerns.

**4) Securities market regulator SEBI on 14 January 2017 announced how much reduction in the turnover fees levied on stock brokers? – 25%**

**Explanation:** Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) reduced the turnover fees levied on the stock brokers by 25% to Rs. 15 per crore of turnover from the current Rs. 20 per crore of turnover. This was announced in its board meeting at Jaipur held on 14 January 2017.

– On the other hand the fee to be charged for open offer/takeover has been increased from Rs. 3 lakh to Rs 5. lakh. SEBI also decided to align the fees payable for buy back of securities with the fees payable for an open offer.

– The reduction in turnover fees is expected to result in reduction of overall cost of transactions and will benefit the investors and promote the development of securities market.



**5) What is the name of the new compact sports utility vehicle (SUV) from the stable of Maruti**

Suzuki that was launched on 13 January 2017? – **'Ignis'**

**Explanation:** 'Ignis' is the name of the new compact SUV series launched by India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki on 13 January. Through this new vehicle the company wants to attract a larger chunk of young car buyers, a consumer segment it has failed to address in over three decades.

– The petrol version of 'Ignis' is priced between Rs 4.59 lakh to Rs 6.69 lakh, while the diesel variants start from Rs 6.39 lakh and goes up to Rs 7.80 lakh.

– 'Ignis' is expected to pose a threat to the Mahindra KUV100 and the Renault Kwid for its styling, but also give Hyundai i10 and Honda Brio a run for their money too.

## 17 January 2017



**1)** The rollout date for the ambitious Goods and Services Tax (GST) was deferred to which new date, as announced by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on 16 January 2017? – **1 July 2017**

**Explanation:** Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on 16 January 2017 declared that the rollout date of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has been deferred to 1 July 2017. The Union Govt. had earlier announced 1 April 2017 as the GST rollout date.

– In another important development, the GST Council also reached a consensus on the crucial issue of dual control. Under this, 90% of the GST taxpayers with up to Rs. 1.5 crore turnover would be assessed by the States and those above Rs. 1.5

crore would be assessed by both the States and the Centre on a 50:50 basis.

– The GST will subsume a host of indirect taxes levied by the Centre and the States, including excise duty, VAT, service tax, entry, luxury and entertainment levies.



**2)** According to an analysis by anti-poverty organisation Oxfam that was released on 16 January 2017, just 8 men own as much wealth as 3.6 billion people comprising around a half of world's population.

Which are these 8 super-rich men named in this study? – **Bill Gates, Amancio Ortega, Warren Buffett, Carlos Slim Helu, Jeff Bezos, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Ellison and Michael Bloomberg**

**Explanation:** Oxfam used Forbes' billionaires list that was last published in March 2016 in support of its claim that 8 men own as much wealth as 3.6 billion people.

– According to the Forbes list, Microsoft founder Gates is the richest individual with a net worth of \$75 billion. The others, in order of ranking, are Amancio Ortega, the Spanish founder of fashion house Inditex, financier Warren Buffett, Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim Helu, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg, Oracle's Larry Ellison and Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York.

– Oxfam said that this means that the gap between the super-rich and the poorest half of the global population is starker than previously thought. This analysis was released on the dawn of the annual gathering of the global political and business elites under World Economic Forum (WEF) in the Swiss ski resort of Davos.

– Oxfam also urged world leaders to do more than pay lip-service to the problem of inequality.

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**3)** National-level sports competition involving over 1,000 children from 25 states was inaugurated under which scheme by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Vijay Goel on 15 January 2017 in New Delhi? – **'Khelo India scheme'**

**Explanation:** Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Vijay Goel on 15 January 2017 inaugurated national level competitions under the 'Khelo India scheme' at the S.P. Mukherjee Swimming Pool complex in the Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi.

– Under this championship, besides swimming, various competitions of cycling, wrestling under different categories will be held till 21 January 2017. The venues for events have been kept open for public with free entry.

– The objective of this national championship is to prepare well for future games and equip the budding talents with the best facilities and help them in honing their skills.

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**4)** What is the new daily cash withdrawal limit from bank ATMs as announced by the RBI on 16 January 2017? – **Rs. 10,000**

**Explanation:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 16 January 2017 increased the daily cash withdrawal limit from ATMs to Rs. 10,000 a day from Rs. 4,500. However, the weekly withdrawal limit was left unchanged at Rs. 24,000.

– In addition, the limit on withdrawal from current accounts has been increased to Rs. 1,00,000 a week from Rs. 50,000. The new limit applies to overdraft and cash credit accounts too.

– The RBI had placed limits on cash withdrawals following the demonetization of Rs. 1,000 and old Rs. 500 notes on 8 November 2016.

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**5)** Which film emerged as the best film at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Jio Filmfare Awards 2017? – **'Dangal'**

**Explanation:** Aamir Khan starrer wrestling drama 'Dangal' was declared the film at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Jio Filmfare Awards 2017, the award ceremony for which was held at the NSCI Dome in Worli, Mumbai on 14 January 2017.

– Alia Bhatt was honoured with the Best Actress Award for her gritty portrayal of a Bihari migrant in 'Udta Punjab'. Rounding up the top awards was 'Dangal' again- the wrestling drama was awarded the Best Film and Nitesh Tiwari bagged the Best Director Award.

**Other Major Awards:**

– Critics Award for Best Film: 'Neerja'

– Critics Award for Best Actor (Male): Shahid Kapoor for 'Udta Punjab' and Manoj Bajpayee for 'Aligarh'

– Critics Award for Best Actor (Female): Sonam Kapoor for 'Neerja'

– Best Male Debut: Diljit Dosanjh for 'Udta Punjab'

– Best Female Debut: Ritika Singh for 'Saala Khadoos'

– Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Male): Rishi Kapoor for 'Kapoor & Sons (Since 1921)'

– Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female): Shabana Azmi for 'Neerja'

– Filmfare Lifetime Achievement Award: Shatrughan Sinha

– Best Music Album: Pritam for 'Ae Dil Hai Mushkil'

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# 18 January 2017

## 1) The Employees' Provident Fund

Organisation (EPFO) on 16 January announced that it would invest at least Rs. 2,800 crore in the Central Public Sector Enterprises exchange-traded fund (CPSE-ETF)'s follow-on sale. What is the significance of this move by the EPFO? –

### **The move marks the first time that EPFO is participating in the government's divestment plans**

**Explanation:** The EPFO announced its decision to invest at least Rs. 2,800 crore or over 62% of the original issue size in the Central Public Sector Enterprises exchange-traded fund (CPSE-ETF)'s follow-on sale or further-fund offer (FFO). It thus became the first time that EPFO is participating in the government's divestment plans.

– As a part of its divestment programme, the government had announced second tranche sale of the CPSE-ETF, aiming to raise Rs. 4,500 crore. The ETF offer opened for subscription on 17 January 2017.

– The CPSE ETF was launched by Goldman Sachs Asset Management India in March 2014, and comprises stocks of 10 PSU firms – Oil and Natural Gas Corp. Ltd, Coal India Ltd, Indian Oil Corp. Ltd, GAIL (India) Ltd, Rural Electrification Corp. Ltd, Oil India Ltd, Power Finance Corp. Ltd, Container Corp. of India Ltd, Bharat Electronics Ltd and Engineers India Ltd.

## 2) The 100<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of which iconic politician from south India and a former Chief Minister was observed in a grand manner on 17 January 2017? – **M.G. Ramachandran**

**Explanation:** M.G. Ramachandran was born on 17 January 1917. He was the founder of the AIADMK, the pre-dominant political entity in Tamil Nadu. He was one of the most popular politicians of all times in the country and served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for ten years between 1977 and 1987.

– Prior to his political career he was an iconic actor in the south Indian film industry. He became a member of the C. N. Annadurai-led Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and rapidly rose through its ranks, using his enormous popularity as a film star to build a large political base. In 1972, three years after Annadurai's death, he left the DMK.

– He formed his own party, the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and led the party to a grand victory in Assembly elections of 1977. He thus became first film actor to become Chief Minister of an Indian state. He passed away in 1987.

– His 100<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary was celebrated in a grand manner in Tamil Nadu on 17 January 2017. The day was declared a public holiday in the state.

## 3) The deep-sea search for Malaysia Airlines Flight MH 370 was officially closed on 17 January 2017 after nearly 3 years of futile search for the world's greatest aviation mystery. This flight disappeared on which date? – **8 March 2014**

**Explanation:** Flight MH370 belonging to Malaysia Airlines having 239 passengers onboard vanished en route to Beijing from Kuala Lumpur on 8 March 2014. Its disappearance has been the world's greatest aviation mystery as no trace of the aircraft has been found even after around 3 year-long multi-nation probe.

– On 17 January 2017 the Joint Agency Coordination Center (JACC) associated with the search of the mishap announced that the search had officially been suspended after crews finished their fruitless sweep of the 120,000-square kilometer search zone west of Australia.

– So far only seven of the 20 pieces of recovered debris have been identified as definitely or highly likely to be from the ill-fated Boeing 777. However, the family members of the 239 missing passengers strongly opposed the decision to close the search operations.

**4)** What was the name of the U.S. astronaut who was the last human to walk on the Moon, and who passed away on 16 January 2017? – **Gene Cernan**

**Explanation:** Gene Cernan was the commander of NASA's Apollo 17 mission on his third space flight when he set foot on the lunar surface on 14 December 1972. He thus became the last of only a dozen men to walk on the Moon. He was 82.

– He traced his only child's initials in the dust before climbing the ladder of the lunar module the last time. It was a moment that forever defined him in both the public eye and his own.

**5)** Professor C.V. Vishveshwara, who passed away on 16 January 2017 in Bengaluru, was a pioneer researcher of the country in which field? – **Black holes**

**Explanation:** Professor C.V. Vishveshwara was among the first to study "black holes" even before they had been so named so.

He started studying black holes first in the 1970s when he was with Chicago University. He was known for giving a form to the characteristic signal that would be emitted by two merging black holes.

– Prof. Vishveshwara was the director of the Jawaharlal Nehru Planetarium in Bengaluru, where he set up REAP (Research Education Advancement Programme in Physical Sciences). He was 79.

## 19 January 2017



**1)** What is the main objective of the ambitious 'Mission 41K' that was unveiled by Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on 17 January 2017? – **Reducing energy consumption**

**Explanation:** Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu on 17 January 2017 unveiled 'Mission 41K', with the primary objective of saving Rs. 41,000 crore on the Indian Railways' expenditure on energy consumption over the next 10 years.

– Indian Railway (IR) seeks to achieve this ambitious target by taking a slew of measures which include moving 90% of traffic to electric traction over diesel. Presently, this is at 50% of the total rail traffic.

– Under 'Mission 41k initiative, IR will electrify 24,000km of rail tracks over the next five years by doubling the annual rate of electrification from 2,000 km to 4,000 km in the next two years.

– It is also aimed to procure more and more electricity at cheaper rates through open market instead of sourcing it through DISCOMs and thereby hopes to save as much as 25% on its energy expenses.

– IR consumed over 18.25 billion units of electrical energy for its traction and non-traction application during 2014-2015 for which it paid a total of Rs. 12,635 crore.

For diesel traction it spent Rs. 18,586 crore in the same period.



**2)** In an important development the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on 18 January 2017 gave its go-ahead for the listing of five public sector general insurance companies in the stock market. The government will bring down its holdings in these companies from 100% to – **75%**

**Explanation:** The listing of these PSU-based general insurance companies is expected to

help them raise resources from the capital market to meet fund requirements. These companies are – New India Assurance, United India Insurance, Oriental Insurance, National Insurance, and General Insurance Corporation of India.

– After listing, the government’s holdings in these companies will be brought down to 75% from 100% through the offer of shares in one or more tranches.

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**3)** In a huge mess-up, at-least 50 persons were killed in an air strike conducted by Nigerian Air Force on a refugee camp in country’s northeast on 17 January 2017.

Which terrorist organisation was the intended target of this air-strike? – **‘Boko Haram’**

**Explanation:** The air-strike by Nigerian Air Force was meant to target jihadist militant group Boko Haram militants. It instead struck a refugee camp in Rann in Borno state. This area is the epicentre of the Boko Haram’s seven-year-long bid to create an Islamic caliphate.

– The air strike came amid an offensive against Boko Haram by Nigeria’s military over the last few weeks.

– The Boko Haram insurgency has killed more than 15,000 people since 2010 and forced some two million to flee their homes, many of whom have moved to camps for internally displaced people.



**4)** According to the data released by mobile analytics firm App Annie, during 2016 which country overtook both the US and

Brazil to become the nation that downloaded the most apps from Google’s Play Store? – **India**

**Explanation:** Internet and mobile analytics firm App Annie has claimed that during 2016 India leapfrogged both the US and Brazil to become the nation that downloaded the most apps from Google’s

Play Store. It also claimed that China became the biggest source of revenue for Apple’s iOS App Store for the first time.

– The popularity of Google Play downloads in India is linked to the fact that the nation became the world’s second largest smartphone market in 2016. Only China has more users, but because of local restrictions they mostly download Android apps from marketplaces run by local tech firms such as Baidu, Tencent and Huawei.

– San Francisco-based App Annie’s research is widely used by app publishers and others involved in the digital industries.



**5)** What is the name of the new flagship model launched by Tata Motors on 18 January 2017 as a replacement of Aria? – **Hexa**

**Explanation:** Tata Hexa is the name of the new flagship model launched by domestic automobile make Tata Motors on 18 January 2017. Hexa will replace Aria series and is based on the Aria platform as well but gets all-new design from Tata Motors’ design teams in India, UK and Italy.

– Hexa is powered by the 2.2-litre, four-cylinder, turbocharged VARICOR diesel engine. It has been made available in either a five-speed manual, a six-speed manual or a six-speed automatic gearbox.

– The new car is primarily positioned as a Mahindra XUV500 rival, but can also be seen as an option to even the Toyota Innova Crysta, expected to undercut the Innova Crysta by a fair margin in price terms.

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## 20 January 2017

**1)** India formally became as associate member of CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research) on 16 January 2017. This became

possible as the Indian Govt. completed internal approval procedures during November 2016. With India's inclusion, CERN has how many associate members now? – **Six**

**Explanation:** India became an Associate member of CERN on 16 January 2017 with the Indian government completing its internal approval procedures in respect of the agreement it had signed with CERN on 21 November 2016. CERN is the biggest name in nuclear research and operates the largest particle physics lab in the World.

– With India's inclusion as an associate member, the total number of associate members of CERN has risen to six. The other associate members are – Cyprus, Pakistan, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

– On the other hand CERN has 22 countries as full-fledged members. Israel is the only non-European country granted full membership. It is worth mentioning that Cyprus and Serbia are associate members in the pre-stage to membership.

– As an Associate member India will have full access to all data generated at CERN. India will also be able to take part in all experiments. There are other benefits of becoming an Associate member. Whenever any CERN facilities get upgraded and go through maintenance, it will provide opportunities for Indian industries to participate. India has to pay about Rs. 40 crore a year as an Associate member.



**2)** President Pranab Mukherjee on 18 January 2017 unveiled the restored iconic four-door German-made Wanderer W24 Sedan car that had been used by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to engineer the 'Great Escape' from the clutches of British intelligence authorities. This 'Great Escape' had taken place on which date? – **17 January 1941**

**Explanation:** Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose had used the German Wanderer sedan car (registration no. BLA 7169) for his historical 'Great Escape' from his Elgin

Road residence in Calcutta in the early hours of 17 January 1941 (Kolkata) to Gomoh railway station (now in Jharkhand).

– Netaji escaped on the rear seat of this very car disguised as Mohammad Ziauddin, an insurance agent thus dodging an entourage of British intelligence and police officers keeping a close watch on him. From Gomoh he took the Kalka-Peshawar Mail to reach Kalka. He finally reached Germany to seek Adolf Hitler's help in liberating India.



**3)** What was the theme of the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of "Raisina Dialogue", the annual geopolitical conference that was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17 January 2017? – **'The New Normal: Multilateralism in a Multipolar World'**

**Explanation:** "Raisina Dialogue" is the name of the annual geopolitical conference organized by the Indian Government. It is held jointly by Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), an independent think tank based in India. The event is organized on the lines of the Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore.

– The second edition of "Raisina Dialogue" was held on 17-18 January 2016 and was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The theme of this edition was – **'The New Normal: Multilateralism in a Multipolar World'**.

– Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his inaugural address, stated that India alone cannot walk the path of peace with Pakistan and the neighbouring country must walk away from terrorism if it wants bilateral dialogue to resume, On Sino-Indian ties

he said that both sides should show sensitivity and respect for each other's core concerns and interests.

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**4)** A sub-committee of the Joint Admission Board (JAB) of the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) recommended how much reservation for girl students in IITs? – **Up to 20%**

**Explanation:** Concerned by the slump in number of girl students entering IITs, IIT's Joint Admission Board (JAB) had set up a sub-committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Timothy Gonsalves. The sub-committee was tasked with the job of finding ways to rectify the situation in the institutes.

– The sub-committee in its report released during January 2017 has suggested creating up to 20% supernumerary seats for girls out of the total number of seats. However, the number of seats for male candidates will not be affected and this will help IITs achieve the 1 lakh target by 2020. Also, only girl candidates who have already qualified in JEE-Advanced will be considered.

– The recommendation of the committee will be taken up in the meeting of the joint admission board (JAB) for a final decision, which will decide whether the reservation will come into effect this year or from 2018.



**5)** Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar on 18 January 2017 launched a dedicated web portal for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) that aims to capture and showcase innovations and progress in elementary education sector of India by continuous monitoring of SSA. What is the name of this portal? – **'ShaGun'**

**Explanation:** 'ShaGun' is the name of the newly launched web portal of the Sarva Shiksha

Abhiyan (SSA), the flagship scheme in the field of elementary education sector of India.

– 'ShaGun', which has been coined from the words 'Shala' meaning Schools and 'Gunvatta' meaning Quality, has been developed with a twin track approach.

– ShaGun is expected to help monitor progress of implementation of SSA by assessing performance of States and UTs on key parameters. It will thereby serve as a platform for the central government for effective planning and deliver on the promise of providing quality education to all.

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**6)** What is the name of the 117<sup>th</sup> seeded Uzbek tennis player who ousted defending champion Novak Djokovic from the second round of 2017 Australian Open on 19 January 2017? – **Denis Istomin (Uzbekistan)**

**Explanation:** Uzbek tennis player Denis Istomin created a huge upset by ousting defending and 6-time champion Novak Djokovic (Serbia) from Australian Open, year's first tennis Grand Slam event.

– He defeated Djokovic by 7-6 (10-8) 5-7 2-6 7-6 (7-5) 6-4. It was just the first time that he lost in the second round of a Grand Slam since 2008 at Wimbledon. It was also only the second time in seven years that Djokovic has lost to a player ranked outside the top 100.

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**21 January 2017**

**1)** Donald J. Trump took charge as the new President of the United States of America (USA) after he was sworn-in at the 58<sup>th</sup> Presidential inauguration ceremony held in Washington D.C. on 20 January 2017. He thus became ..... President of the country? – **45<sup>th</sup>**

**Explanation:** Real estate magnate Donald Trump took reins as the 45<sup>th</sup> President of the USA on 20 January 2017. His oath-ceremony was held at the Capitol Hill in Washington D.C. Chief Justice of U.S. Supreme Court John Roberts administered the

oath of office to Trump who placed his hands on two Bibles while taking the oath. He was administered the 35-word oath as specified in Article II, Section 1 of the U.S Constitution. Mike Pence was administered the oath as country's new Vice President.

– It is worth mentioning that the swearing-in ceremony of the U.S. President is always held on 20 January, every four years. If this date falls on a Sunday, a private swearing-in is conducted, followed by a ceremonial one at the Capitol Hill the next day.

– But in a sign of deep divisions Trump sowed during his combative campaign, dozens of Democratic lawmakers boycotted the swearing-in ceremony on Capitol Hill.

– On the other hand, President Donald Trump signed his first executive order in the Oval Office shortly after his inaugural parade ended, directing agencies to ease the regulatory burdens associated with Obamacare.

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**2)** All but four states were exempted from mandatory investment norms for the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) as announced by the Union Govt. on 18 January 2017. The move is expected to allow states to borrow from the market at more competitive rates. Which 4 states are still under NSSF's mandatory investment norms? – **Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh**

**Explanation:** It is worth mentioning that the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission had recommended that the state governments should be excluded from mandatory investment norms for the National Small Savings Fund (NSSF). The main reason given was that NSSF loans come at an extra cost to the State Governments compared to the market rates which are considerably lower.

– In tune with this, the Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister on 18 January 2017 announced to exempt all but four States from mandatory investment norms for the NSSF with effect from 1 April 2016. It was announced that Arunachal Pradesh will be given loans to the tune of 100% of

NSSF collections within its territory, while Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi (UT) will be provided with 50% of collections.

– National Small Savings Fund (NSSF) was established in 1999 with the primary objective of bring all the monetary transactions under small savings schemes of the Union Government under one umbrella.

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**3)** The Union Government received bids from how many air transport operators for its UDAN scheme, the scheme to start subsidized flights to remote and unconnected airports till 16 January 2017, the deadline date for submitting bids? – **Eleven (11)**

**Explanation:** Ude Desh Kaa Aam Nagrik (UDAN), the regional aviation connectivity scheme, which will be in operation for 10 years, envisages providing connectivity to un-served and underserved cities and towns by reviving existing airstrips and airports.

– 16 January 2017 was the deadline date for submitting bids to Airports Authority of India (AAI), which is managing UDAN.

The government received bids from 11 air transport operators for the scheme.

– The eligible airlines for the UDAN scheme are chosen through a process of reverse bidding. Fares will be capped, and the airlines get a government subsidy and tax incentives for starting these flights. The fare for a one-hour journey of about 500 km on a fixed wing aircraft or a 30-minute journey on a helicopter will be capped at Rs. 2,500

– Nearly 43 airports, which do not receive flights, could get them under the new scheme over time, taking the number of operational airports from the current 75 to 118. These include 21 airports in north India, 16 in the south, 32 in the west, 12 in the east and 11 in the north-east.

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**4)** Who was named the next Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) after his name was cleared by a three-member selection

panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 19 January 2017? – **Alok Kumar Verma**

**Explanation:** Delhi Police commissioner Alok Kumar Verma was on 19 January 2017 appointed the next director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), country's premier probe agency. His name was cleared by a three-member selection panel headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and comprising Chief Justice of India Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar and Congress leader in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge as members.

– Verma, a 1979 batch IPS officer of Arunachal Pradesh-Goa-Mizoram and Union Territories (AGMUT) cadre, took over as Delhi Police Commissioner from 29 February 2016.

– The post of CBI director was lying vacant for over one month following Anil Sinha's retirement on 2 December 2016.

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**5)** Who was sworn-in as west African country Gambia's new President in neighbouring country Senegal on 19 January 2017 as country's longtime ruler Yahya Jammeh refused to cede power? – **Adama Barrow**

**Explanation:** Adama Barrow was sworn-in as Gambia's new President on 19 January 2017. The swearing ceremony was held in neighbouring Senegal because country's longtime President Yahya Jammeh has refused to cede power to him. Barrow's hastily-arranged oath ceremony was held at Gambia's embassy in the Senegalese capital, Dakar.

– Jammeh came to power in a 1994 coup. He has refused to step down despite losing a disputed presidential election to Barrow on 1 December 2016, deepening a political crisis. Jammeh has resisted strong international pressure for him to step down, but African nations have now begun stepping away from him.

– At least 26,000 people have fled Gambia for Senegal since the start of the crisis fearing unrest, according to UN's refugee agency UNH

## 22-23 January 2017

**1)** The Union Government during January 2017 transferred the role of advising the government on how to utilise the proceeds from disinvestment from the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) to which department in its ongoing efforts to streamline the disinvestment process? – **Department of Economic Affairs**

**Explanation:** According to a notification issued by the Cabinet Secretariat, the Department of Economic Affairs in the Finance Ministry will now be in charge of "financial policy in regard to the utilisation of the proceeds of disinvestment channelised into the National Investment Fund." Till now this responsibility rested with the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM).

– The move came days after the Union Cabinet approved an alternative mechanism to decide the modalities to do with stake sales in public sector undertakings (PSUs), so as to speed up the process.

– During his Budget speech 2016-17, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had announced renaming the previously known Department of Investment as DIPAM.

– The Centre had created a National Investment Fund in 2005 in which the proceeds from the disinvestment of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) were to be channelised.

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**2)** What is the name of the express train that derailed near Vizianagram in Andhra Pradesh on 22 January 2017 resulting in the death of at least 40 passengers? – **Hirakhand Express**

**Explanation:** 7 coaches and the engine of the 18448 Jagdalpur-Bhubaneswar Hirakhand Express derailed near Kunderu station late on 21 January 2017. Besides the engine, the luggage van, two general coaches, two sleeper coaches,

one AC three tier coach and an AC two tier coach derailed. At-least 36 passengers were killed in this derailment.

– The train left Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh at around 4.25 p.m on 21 January and it was scheduled to reach Bhubaneswar at around 6.30 a.m on 22 January. After crossing Rayagada in Odisha, the train derailed just before Kunderu railway station. The train had no stop at Kunderu and the next stop was at Parvathipuram in Vizianagarama district in AP. This was the third major derailment for Indian Railways in around 2 months.

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**3)** What is the name of the Indian soldier who was in Pakistan’s custody for the past four months and was handed over to Indian authorities by Pakistan on 21 January 2017? – **Chandu Babulal Chavan**

**Explanation:** Indian soldier Sepoy Chandu Babulal Chavan, who was in Pakistan’s custody for the past four months, returned to India after he was handed over to Indian officials by Pakistani authorities on 21 January 2017.

– The news of the 22-year-old soldier crossing over to Pakistan had emerged just hours after India’s famous surgical strikes across the Line of Control (LoC) during September 2016. It had said that the soldier had inadvertently crossed the LoC from the Army post in Mendhar district of J&K on 29 September 2016 where he was on duty.

– The Pakistani authorities handed over Chavan at the Wagah border in Punjab on 21 January 2017 as a goodwill measure. It is worth mentioning that as the news of his capture reached home, Chavan’s grandmother suffered a cardiac arrest and died.

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**4)** Which south-east Asian country has withdrawn the visa-free facility for Indians with effect from 23 January 2017? – **Hong Kong**

**Explanation:** In a major setback to Indian travellers Hong Kong has withdrawn the

visa-free facility for Indians with effect from 23 January 2017. This means that from 23 January the Indian travellers seeking to enter Hong Kong will have to complete a pre-arrival registration as the Pre-arrival Registration for Indian Nationals will be implemented from this date.

– This is a set-back for over half a million Indians who visit the former British colony for business, trade and holidays. Till now Hong Kong has permitted Indians to enter with valid passport for a period up to 14 days without a visa. But the facility has been withdrawn despite representations from India ostensibly on the ground that the number of Indian asylum seekers was on the rise.

– It is worth mentioning that Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China.

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**5)** Indian badminton ace Saina Nehwal won the women’s singles title of which Masters Grand Prix tournament on 22 January 2017 that was her first tournament after recovering from a career-threatening injury? – **Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold**

**Explanation:** Saina Nehwal notched up her first title after a career-threatening injury of 2016 by claiming the women’s singles title of Malaysia Masters Grand Prix Gold tournament on 22 January 2017.

– She defeated 18-year-old Pornpawee Chochuwong of Thailand by 22-20, 22-20. This was her 23<sup>rd</sup> title overall and the first after last year’s Australian Open. While top seeded is ranked No.10 in the world, Chochuwong is ranked 67<sup>th</sup>.

24 January 2017



**1)** What is the name of the amendment bill passed on 23 January 2017 by the Tamil Nadu Assembly for to legalize conducting the bull taming sport of 'Jallikattu' without any hindrance? –

**“Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment), Act, 2017”**

**Explanation:** “Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Tamil Nadu Amendment), Act, 2017” was passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly on 23 January 2017 to replace an ordinance promulgated two days ago (on 21 January 2017) to allow Jallikattu in the state. The Amendment Bill was unanimously passed even as protests over Jallikattu continued across the state.

– The government had promulgated the ordinance in a bid to defuse the raging protests across the state, especially at the Marina Beach in capital Chennai, by students and others, demanding lifting of the ban on Jallikattu.

– The Amendment Bill also seeks to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.

**2)** By launching its initial public offering (IPO) on 23 January 2017 which entity became India's first stock exchange to hit the capital market? – **BSE**

**Explanation:** BSE hit the capital markets by launching its first IPO on 23 January 2017. With this IPO, the stock exchange aims to raise up to Rs. 1,243 crore from the IPO, which is priced at Rs. 805-806 per share.

– BSE thus became the first domestic stock exchange to come up with its IPO. Multi

Commodity Exchange of India is the only listed bourse in the country but it deals in commodities.

– BSE is the world's largest exchange by number of listed companies. It is India's largest and the world's 10<sup>th</sup> largest exchange by market capitalisation. BSE shares will be listed on NSE as SEBI rules do not allow self-listing for an exchange.

– Meanwhile, NSE too had filed draft papers with the SEBI during December 2016 for an estimated Rs. 10,000-crore IPO.

**3)** What has been the printing cost of the new Rs. 500 and Rs. 2000 currency note, as disclosed by Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Pvt Ltd (BRBNMPL) in an RTI query sought by a leading financial daily?

– **Rs. 3.09 (for Rs. 500 note) and Rs. 3.54 (for Rs. 2000 note)**

**Explanation:** Responding to an RTI query sought by financial daily 'The Hindu Businessline', Bengaluru-based Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Pvt Ltd. (BRBNMPL) has disclosed that the selling price of the new design bank notes printed by BRBNMPL for 2016-17 is Rs. 3,090 per thousand pieces for Rs. 500 and Rs. 3,540 per thousand pieces for Rs. 2,000.

– The BRBNMPL is a subsidiary of the RBI and prints currency notes on its behalf at two presses, in Mysore and Salboni, West Bengal. These are then bought by the central bank and circulated in the market.

**4)** Which country's railway is helping Indian Railways to increase the speed of its passenger trains up to 200 km per hour, as was disclosed in a preliminary report submitted by Indian Railways during January 2017? – **Russia**

**Explanation:** The Russian Railways is at present collaborating with the Indian Railways (IR) on a 575-km stretch between Nagpur and Secunderabad in an effort to help IR increase the speed of its passenger trains up to 200 km per hour. A protocol for this project was signed

between the railway ministries of the two countries in October 2016.

– To reach the desired speed limit, Russian Railways has proposed several technical and technological solutions, including reconstruction of railway alignment as well as treating the earth bed where there are speed restrictions.

– But Russian Railways has expressed concern over “a number of large bridges with speed limits” on this particular stretch. It has also pointed out that railroad switches, which enable trains to shift from one track to another, at stations on this stretch are not suitable for a speed of 200 km per hour and a different type of switch has been recommended.

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**5)** Hugo Barra, who announced his resignation on 23 January 2017, was the most prominent global executive of which Chinese smartphone manufacturer? – **Xiaomi Inc.**

**Explanation:** Hugo Barra, Xiaomi’s Vice President in charge of global operations and the face of its international expansion for around three and a half years, announced his resignation on 23 January 2017 citing health problems. He announced that he will return to Silicon Valley, where he had prominent stints before joining Xiaomi.

– Barra was largely believed to be the main force behind Xiaomi’s incredible run for a period of time. The company was briefly the world’s most valuable startup with a valuation two years ago of \$45 billion and had hopes to be China’s equivalent of Apple Inc. But it fell out of the top five in China for smartphone vendors in 2016, after reaching No. 2 in 2015.

– Barra’s exit comes at a time Xiaomi is trying to adjust its strategy. The company has pulled back from several overseas markets, including Singapore and Brazil, in 2016.

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## 25 January 2017

**1)** The Union cabinet on 24 January 2017 cleared the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) Bill, 2017 that aims to grant complete autonomy to these institutes. What will be a major change with this Act becoming effective? – **IIMs will be able to grant degrees instead of diplomas**

**Explanation:** With the IIM Bill, 2017 coming into effect these elite B-schools will be able to issue MBA degrees instead of diplomas (such as PGDM) as is the case now.

– The bill will allow IIMs to grant degrees to their students and complete autonomy, combined with accountability. It will ensure that these institutes are “board-driven, with the chairperson and director selected by the board”. This means, neither the human resources development (HRD) ministry nor the President will have a say in the selection of top executives of these B-schools.

– Currently, the boards largely make recommendations and the government either accepts or rejects a proposal. This includes subjects like the appointment of directors and the chairman of the board of governors. At present India has 19 IIMs.

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**2)** The Union Government on 24 January 2017 approved how much interest subsidy on loans of up to Rs. 2 lakh for all households which are not covered under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen)? – **3%**

**Explanation:** In a bid to ease EMI burden by ensuring cheap home loans in rural areas, The Union Government on 24 January 2017 approved 3% interest subsidy on loans of up to Rs 2 lakh for all households which are not covered under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Grameen).

– Interest subsidy would be available to every rural household which is not covered under the PMAY(G), under which the government aims to construct about 44 lakh houses. The scheme would also enable people in rural areas to construct new

houses or add to their existing pucca houses to improve their dwelling units.

– National Housing Bank (NHB) would implement the scheme and the government would provide the net present value of the interest subsidy of 3% to it.

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**3)** Yogesh Aggarwal, who was arrested by the CBI on 23 January 2017 in a seven-year-old case related to Rs. 900-crore loan default by now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines, is the former Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of which bank? – **IDBI Bank**

**Explanation:** In its sternest action so far against Vijay Mallya-promoted Kingfisher Airlines, the CBI arrested on 23 January 2017 eight people, including former IDBI Bank chairman Yogesh Aggarwal and airline's ex-CFO A Raghunathan. The arrests were made in a seven-year-old case related to Rs. 900-crore loan default.

– The other persons arrested by the CBI include IDBI Bank's ex-deputy managing director O V Bundellu and two other officials, SKV Srinivasan and R S Sridhar and Kingfisher Airlines' executives Shailesh Borkar, AC Shah and Amit Nadkarni.

– In 2009-10 IDBI Bank had led a loan restructuring exercise for debt-laden KFA despite the airline enjoying sub-par rating. The bank had accepted the 'Kingfisher brand' as collateral for the loan even as the company was facing turbulence.

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**4)** Which team won the 55<sup>th</sup> Irani Trophy title on 24 January 2017? – **Rest of India**

**Explanation:** Rest of India defeated 2016-17 Ranji Trophy champions Gujarat in the final of the 2017 Irani Trophy to win this coveted title once again on 24 January 2017. For Rest of India this win was inspired by Wriddhiman Saha's career-best first-class knock of 203 as the team effortlessly chasing down a 379-run target set by Gujarat with more than two sessions to spare.

– Saha's 203 and skipper Cheteshwar Pujara's unbeaten 116 helped Rest of India overhaul the target with six wickets still in hand. The match was played at Mumbai's Brabourne Stadium.

– This was 15<sup>th</sup> time in the last 19 editions that Rest of India had won the tournament, which is in its 55<sup>th</sup> year. Irani Trophy is played annually between the newly-crowned Ranji Trophy champions and the Rest of India.

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**5)** Who replaced the legendary Bernie Ecclestone on 23 January 2017 to become the new boss of Formula 1 championship? – **Chase Carey**

**Explanation:** Bernie Ecclestone, the 86-year old F1 icon, who was running the F1 show for nearly 40 years, was replaced by Chase Carey on 23 January. Ecclestone was appointed Chairman Emeritus and will act as an adviser to the board.

– This change in the top management of F1 took place as US giant Liberty Media completed its \$8 billion takeover of the sport.

– It is worth mentioning that Ecclestone was central in turning F1 from a relatively minority activity into one of the biggest television sports in the world outside the Olympics and the football World Cup.

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## 26-27 January 2017

**1)** India celebrated her 68<sup>th</sup> Republic Day on 26 January 2017 with a grand parade held at the majestic Rajpath. While the indigenously developed light combat aircraft Tejas, set a speed record, which force made its maiden entry in the annual parade? – **National Security Guards (NSG)**

**Explanation:** The elite black cat' commandos of the elite counter-terror force National Security Guards (NSG) made its maiden-entry in the Republic Day Parade as a contingent of the force marched down the Rajpath.

– On the other hand indigenously developed light combat aircraft flew past Rajpath at a speed of 780km/hour thus setting up a speed record at

Rajpath. Group Captain Madhav Rangachari led the 'Vic' formation of LCA aircraft 'Tejas' at a height of 300 m and flying at a speed of 780 km/hr.

– As he engaged the third terrorist, the hidden fourth terrorist opened fire at him. Undeterred, Havildar Dada, bleeding profusely, challenged the fourth intruder, wounding him before he died.

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**2) Who was the Chief Guest at the 68<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Parade? – Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (UAE)**

**Explanation:** United Arab Emirates' (UAE) Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was the Chief Guest at the 68<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Parade held in New Delhi on 26 January 2017.

– 179 soldiers from the army, navy and air force of the UAE marched past, accompanied by their military band, on the Rajpath and thus creating a record of becoming the first-ever contingent from an Arab country to take part in this event.

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**Who was awarded country's highest peacetime gallantry award 'Ashok Chakra'?**

**3) Who was awarded country's highest peacetime gallantry award 'Ashok Chakra' posthumously on the occasion of the 68<sup>th</sup> Republic Day on 26 January 2017? Havildar Hangpan Dada**

**Explanation:** Havildar Hangpan Dada from Arunachal Pradesh, who killed three of the intruders and fatally injured a fourth before he died of bullet wounds at 13,000 feet in the icy Himalayas, was awarded the 'Ashok Chakra', the highest award to an army man during peace-time operations, on 26 January 2017.

– His wife Chasen Lowang received the medal from President Pranab Mukherjee at Rajpath.

– On 27 May 2016, the Havildar and his team spotted the movement of terrorists and engaged the four-heavily armed men in Jammu and Kashmir's Naugam. The 36-year-old led his team to the spot where the terrorists were holed up and killed two of them on the spot. He killed a third after a hand-to-hand scuffle as they slid down the hill towards the LoC.

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**4) The committee of state chief ministers led by Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu recommended cash withdrawals above how much amount to be taxed, as was proposed by the committee in its report presented during January 2017? – Rs. 50,000**

**Explanation:** According to an important recommendation in a report presented to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 24 January 2017 by a committee of state chief ministers, a banking cash transaction tax (BCTT) could be levied on cash withdrawals of Rs. 50,000 and above.

– The panel, formed on 30 November 2016 after the government outlawed high-denomination currency notes, is headed by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

– The committee also recommended that all government sections dealing with insurance, educational institutes, fertilizers, public distribution system and petroleum have to switch to digital payments. It also disapproved of the merchant discount rate (MDR) that banks want to charge on usage of debit and credit cards.

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**5) What is the guaranteed interest rate under the Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) 2017, the new senior citizen pension plan that was approved by the Union Cabinet on 24 January 2017? – 8%**

**Explanation:** The Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana (VPBY) 2017, a scheme unannounced by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on new-year eve, was approved by the cabinet on 24 January 2017.

– One important feature of the scheme will be that it comes with a guaranteed interest of 8% for 10 years of the senior citizens (above 60 years of age).

– VPBY is expected to be launched on 1 April 2017 by Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). It will

remain open for subscription for one year from the date of launch. The subscriber will have the option to opt for a pension on a monthly, quarterly, half yearly and annual basis.

– If there is a shortfall between LIC generated return and the guaranteed 8% return, it would be borne by the government.

## 28-30 January 2017

**1)** President Donald Trump on 27 January 2017 signed an executive order of far reaching proportions that temporarily bars refugees and citizens of 7 Muslim countries from entering the United States. Which seven countries have been included in this order? – Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen

**Explanation:** President Trump on 27 January 2017 closed the nation's borders for 90 days to refugees and citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries linked to concerns about terrorism – Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. He also ordered that families fleeing the slaughter in Syria be indefinitely blocked from entering the United States.

– In an executive order that he said was part of an extreme vetting plan to keep out “radical Islamic terrorists,” the

President also established a religious test for refugees from Muslim nations – he ordered that Christians and others from minority religions be granted priority over Muslims.

– Human rights activists roundly condemned Trump's actions, describing them as officially sanctioned religious persecution dressed up to look like an effort to make the United States safer.

**2)** Serena Williams created tennis history as she won the women's singles title of the Australian Open 2017 by defeating her elder sister Venus Williams in an emotional final on 28 January 2017. Serena broke whose record to emerge as the most

successful tennis player in the open era? – Steffi Graf

**Explanation:** Serena Williams defeated Venus Williams by 6-4, 6-4 in the women's singles title of 2017 Australian Open to win her record 23<sup>rd</sup> Grand Slam title and thus become the most successful tennis player in the open era.

– She went past Steffi Graf's record of 22 titles on the list of all-time Slam winners and she now sits just one shy of Margaret Court's long-standing record of 24.

– It was Serena's seventh Australian Open title. This was the first title clash between the Williams sisters since 2009. Venus was oldest finalist in Melbourne in the professional era and won huge admiration for her unlikely run to the final.

**3)** Roger Federer won the men's singles title of Australian Open 2017 as he defeated Rafael Nadal in the clash of vintage tennis icons on 29 January 2017. With this title win Federer has now won how many record Grand Slam tennis singles' titles? – 18

**Explanation:** 35-year old Roger Federer (Switzerland) won his 18<sup>th</sup> Grand Slam title and first for five years with a thrilling five-set victory (6-4, 3-6, 6-1, 3-6 and 6-3) over Rafael Nadal (Spain) in the Australian Open men's singles final on 29 January 2017. Federer is at the top of the all-time men's major winners' list and with this title win he further extended his record.

– Nadal remains tied in second with Pete Sampras (U.S.) on 14 Grand Slams following his first final since 2014.

– Federer also became the first man in history to win five or more titles at three different Grand Slam events – 5 Australian Opens, 5 US Opens and 7 Wimbledons.

**4)** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 25 January 2017 prohibited Indian entities from making direct investments in any entity located in non co-operative countries and territories. Which

inter-governmental body identifies these entities? – **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**

**Explanation:** FATF was established in 1989. Its objectives are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

– On 25 January 2017 the RBI prohibited Indian entities from making direct investments in any entity located in ‘non co-operative countries and territories, as identified by the FATF. The prohibition on investment is “in order to align” instructions under FEMA with the objectives of the FATF.

– The FATF currently comprises two regional organisations and 35 member jurisdictions, including India, US, UK, China and the European Commission.

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**5)** What is the name of the Governor of Meghalaya who resigned from his post on 26 January 2017 amidst charges of sexual harassment? – **V. Shanmuganathan**

**Explanation:** Facing sexual harassment charges, Meghalaya Governor V. Shanmuganathan on 26 January 2017 resigned from his post. He resigned after a section of Raj Bhavan employees demanded his removal for “seriously compromising” the dignity of the gubernatorial office.

– Nearly 100 Raj Bhavan staff here petitioned President Pranab Mukherjee, the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh seeking their intervention to remove the Governor and restore the dignity of Raj Bhavan.

– Later Assam Governor Banwarilal Purohit was appointed acting Governor of Meghalaya on 28 January 2017.

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**6)** General anti-avoidance rules (GAAR), which seeks to address concerns of foreign investors over implementation of the anti-evasion

measure, will be implemented from which date as announced by the Income-Tax on 27 January 2017? – **1 April 2017**

**Explanation:** GAAR seeks to give the tax department powers to scrutinize transactions structured in such a way as to deliberately avoid paying tax in India. After being postponed twice, it is slated to be implemented from 1 April 2017.

– Last year, foreign investors had sought clarifications on the implementation of GAAR and the tax department had constituted a working group to look into their concerns.

## 31 January 2017

**1)** Who was appointed the new head of the BCCI by the Supreme Court on 30 January 2017? – **Vinod Rai**

**Explanation:** Former Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India Vinod Rai was named the head the four-member committee of administrators to run the Board for Control of Cricket in India (BCCI), as was announced by the Supreme Court on 30 January 2017.

– Other members of the committee include the legendary women test cricket player Diana Edulji, noted historian Ramchandra Guha and IDFC Ltd MD and CEO Vikram Limaye. Limaye is expected to provide the committee with expertise in financial matters.

– They will function as the new interim bosses of the BCCI and run the day-to-day administration of BCCI till the Lodha reforms are fully implemented and elections are held.

– It is worth mentioning that on 2 January 2017 the Supreme Court had ousted former BCCI President Anurag Thakur and Secretary Ajay Shirke for stalling Lodha reforms.

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**2)** The Union Sports Ministry on 30 January 2017 constituted an 8-member panel (Task Force) entrusted with the task of preparing the blueprint for the country’s success at the next three

Olympic Games. Who are the personalities in this panel? – **Abhinav Bindra, Pullela Gopichand, Viren Rasquinha, Om Pathak, S Baldev Singh, G L Khanna, Rajesh Kalra and Sandeep Pradhan**

**Explanation:** India's lone individual

Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra, national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand and former India hockey captain Viren Rasquinha were named in an eight-member Task Force of the Sports Ministry to draw up an action plan for the next three Olympic Games.

– The other five members of the task force are School Sports Promotion Board head Om Pathak, hockey coach S Baldev Singh, who runs an academy in Shahabad, G L Khanna (Professor and Dean of Exercise and Physiology at Manav Rachna International University at Faridabad), journalist Rajesh Kalra and Sports Authority of Gujarat Director General Sandeep Pradhan.

– The task force will identify core medal prospects for the 2020 Tokyo Games besides preparing the blueprint for the country's success at the next three

Games. India have won 28 medals since first competing at the Olympics in 1900 but Bindra remains country's only individual gold medallist with his victory in the men's 10 metre air rifle in Beijing in 2008.

– The Indian men's hockey team won the Olympic gold medal eight times, most recently in 1980.

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**3) Which tableau was adjudged the best tableau in this year's Republic Day Parade (2017), as announced on 28 January 2017? – Arunachal Pradesh**

**Explanation:** The Arunachal Pradesh tableau, depicting the Yak dance of the Mahayana sect of Buddhist tribes, was adjudged the best tableau in 2017

Republic Day Parade. Tripura's tableau based on 'Hojagiri' dance, depicting the magnificent Reang tribal dance was adjudged the second best, while the third position was shared by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

– In the category of tableaux representing Union Ministries/Departments, the first prize was given to the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship which depicted the theme 'Transforming India through Skill Development', and highlighted the achievements of the Ministry and its programmes.

– 23 tableaux, including six from Union Ministries/Departments, took part in the Parade.

– On the other hand Madras Engineer Group was adjudged the Best Marching Contingent in the services category, while the CISF was adjudged the best marching contingent under the category of Para-Military Forces and other auxiliary marching contingents.

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**4) Who was appointed the new Vice-Chancellor of Nalanda University by the Union Government during January 2017? – Vijay Pandurang Bhatkar**

**Explanation:** Vijay Pandurang Bhatkar, a technocrat who is considered the father of the Indian Supercomputer, was appointed the new Vice-Chancellor of Nalanda University, Rajgir, in Bihar.

– He will hold the office for a three-year period from the date of his appointment as per the Nalanda University Act, Sec.

11(3). He replaced Gopa Sabharwal who resigned on 24 November 2016, followed by the resignation of Chancellor George Yeo.

– Established in November 2010 as a Central University, Nalanda University is spread over a 443-acres campus and started offering academic programmes in 2014. It is a dream project of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

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**5) Who was crowned Miss Universe 2016 in function held in the Philippines on 29 January 2017? – Iris Mittenaere (Miss France)**

**Explanation:** Miss France Iris Mittenaere was crowned the new Miss Universe (2017) on 29

January 2017. She thus won the honour on behalf of France for the first time since 1953.

– Miss Haiti, Raquel Pelissier, a 25-year-old survivor of the devastating 2010 earthquake that destroyed her hometown, was named first runner up while Miss Colombia, 23-year-old, Andrea Tovar, was second runner up.

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EDGE ACADEMY