

1-6 Dec 2017



1) Which port was inaugurated by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on 3 December 2017 as the first phase of the ambitious Indo-Iran Chabahar Port project billed as an “International Gateway”? – **Shahid Beheshti Port**

**Explanation:** Chabahar Port project being built by India in Iran’s southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan is being seen as a rival to the Chinese-built Gwadar port off Pakistan, about 80 km away, which is a critical link in China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Chabahar provides India with an easy land-sea linkup with Afghanistan.

– The first phase of this port in the form of Shahid Beheshti Port was inaugurated by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on 3 December 2017.

– Chabahar is Iran’s only oceanic port town and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti. The opening of the first phase of Shahid Beheshti Port (out of five phases defined for the project), which has tripled its capacity to 8.5 million tons (equal to that of all the northern ports of the country), will allow the docking of super-large container ships (between 100,000 DWT and 120,000 DWT) and increase India’s connectivity with Afghanistan.

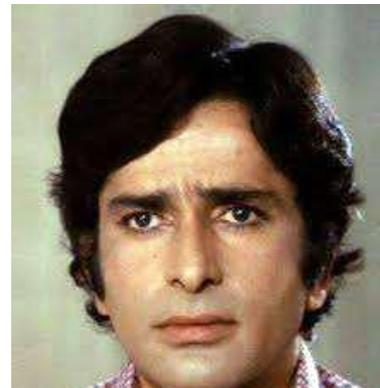
2) What is the name of the new virtual currency (cryptocurrency) announced by Venezuela on 3 December 2017 that will be backed by country’s natural resources? – **‘Petro’**

**Explanation:** ‘Petro’ is the name of the new virtual currency (cryptocurrency) of struggling Latin American country Venezuela that was announced by President Nicolas Maduro on 3 December 2017. It will be backed by oil, gas, gold and diamond reserves, which Venezuela has in abundance. ‘Petro’ is being launched to shore up country’s collapsed economy.

– The announcement highlighted how sanctions enacted this year by U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration are hurting Venezuela’s ability to move money through international banks.

– Venezuela’s real currency, the Bolivar, is in freefall, and the country is sorely lacking in basic needs like food and medicine.

– Cryptocurrencies are typically are not backed by any government or central banks. With ‘Petro’, Venezuela looks to pivot away from the U.S. dollar.



3) Renowned Indian actor Shashi Kapoor passed away on 4 December 2017 in Mumbai. The youngest son of Prithviraj Kapoor, he was among the popular Hindi film actors and one of India’s first actors to go international. In which year he was awarded the prestigious ‘Dada Sabab Phalke Award’? – **2015**

**Explanation:** Shashi Kapoor (born as Balbir Prithviraj Kapoor) was one of the most prolific Hindi film actors and went on to appear in 116 Hindi films, including 61 films as the solo lead hero and 55 multi star-cast films.

– He had started his career as a child artist with best-known performances in ‘Aag’ (1948) and ‘Awaara’ (1951). He made his debut as a leading man in the 1961 film ‘Dharmputra’. His best performances as solo lead hero in Hindi films were in ‘Neend Hamari Khwab Tumhare’, ‘Jab Jab Phool Khile’, ‘Haseena Maan Jayegi’, ‘Pyaar Ka Mausam’, ‘Raja Saab’, ‘Jaanwar Aur Insaan’, ‘Mr.Romeo’, ‘Aa Gale Lag Jaa’, ‘Chori Mera Kaam’, ‘Phaansi’, ‘Junoon’, ‘Kalyug’, ‘Pighalta Aasman’ and ‘New Delhi Times’. In 1998, he retired from acting after his final film appearances in “Jinnah” and “Side Streets”. He also produced many films including ‘Junoon’ (1978), ‘Kalyug’ (1981), ‘36 Chowringhee Lane’ (1981), ‘Vijeta’ (1982), ‘Utsav’ (1984) and ‘Ajooba’ (1991).

– Shashi Kapoor revived the erstwhile ‘Prithvi Theatre’ in November 1978, which was started in 1942 by his father Prithviraj Kapoor. This theatre still remains one of the leading theatre establishments in the country.

– He was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India’s third highest civilian award in 2011 and the Dada Sahab Phalke award in 2015 for his immense contribution to the Indian film industry.



4) Who was named as CEO of Infosys by the company on 2 December 2017? – **Salil S. Parekh**

**Explanation:** Leading Indian software company Infosys Ltd named outsider Salil S. Parekh as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on 2 December 2017. With this announcement the company ended the company’s search for a new leader after previous head Vishal Sikka quit following strident criticism from a group of founders, landing it in uncertainty.

– Parekh, a senior executive at Capgemini SE with degrees from the Indian Institute of Technology and Cornell University in the US, has been appointed CEO and managing director for a five-year term that starts on 2 January 2018.

– Sikka had walked out in August 2017 after clashing with founders, led by former chairman Narayana Murthy, who had run it for three decades.

5) The first international conference and exhibition on AYUSH and wellness systems, “International Arogya 2017” was inaugurated on 4 December 2017 at which place? – **Delhi**

**Explanation:** “International Arogya 2017”, the first-ever global summit on AYUSH and wellness, was inaugurated by Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry in Delhi on 4 December 2017. This summit will conclude on 7 December 2017 and will showcase the strength and scientific validation of traditional Indian systems of medicine in the global context.

– The 4-day event is organized by FICCI in collaboration with Govt. of India’s Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Commerce & Industry, and Pharmaexcil.

– The medicinal systems being showcased in the event include Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa-Rigpa and Homoeopathy (AYUSH), and facilitate their worldwide promotion, development and recognition.

7-9 Dec 2017



1) India-led International Solar Alliance (ISA) formally came into existence on 6 December 2017 as it became a treaty-based international inter-governmental organisation with more than 121 countries joining hands to focus on large scale deployment of solar energy. ISA is having its headquarters at which place? – **Gurugram**

**Explanation:** International Solar Alliance (ISA) is the name of the alliance created in 2015 through the joint efforts of India and France. It has its headquarters in Gurugram (Haryana).

– It is an alliance of more than 121 countries, most of them being sunshine countries, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. It formally came into existence on 6 December 2017 following ratification by Guinea as the 15<sup>th</sup> country to become a founding-member of the body.

– ISA aims at large scale deployment of solar energy through better harmonization and aggregation of demand from solar rich countries lying fully or partially between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.



2) Which religious event of the country has been listed as an Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO as announced on 7 December 2017? – **Kumbh Mela**

**Explanation:** Kumbh Mela, the largest congregation of pilgrims on the planet, has been listed as an Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation). This inscription is the third in two years following the inscriptions of ‘Yoga’ and ‘Norouz’ on 1 December 2016. Kumbh Mela is held in Haridwar, Allahabad, Ujjain and Nashik.

– The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO inscribed ‘Kumbh Mela’ on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of – Humanity during its 12<sup>th</sup> session held at Jeju, South Korea from 4-9 December 2017.

– The inscription of ‘Kumbh Mela’ in the list was undertaken following recommendation by an expert body which examines nominations submitted by member countries of the UNESCO.

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3) Which elite nuclear weapons export control regime on 7 December 2017 decided to admit India as its new member thus raising country’s stature in the field of non-proliferation? – **“Wassenaar Arrangement”**

**Explanation:** “Wassenaar Arrangement” (WA) is an elite export control regime that plays a significant role in promoting

transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies. It was established in Wassenaar in the Netherlands in 1996.

– In a significant development, Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) on 7 December 2017 decided to admit India as its new member, which is expected to raise New Delhi's stature in the field of non-proliferation besides helping it acquire critical technologies. The decision to include India was taken at the two-day plenary meeting of the grouping in Vienna.

– India will now become the Arrangement's 42<sup>nd</sup> participating state as soon as the necessary procedural arrangements for joining the WA are completed.

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**4) Which state became the first in India to come up with a Bill to award death penalty to those found guilty of raping girls aged 12 and below? – Madhya Pradesh**

**Explanation:** The Madhya Pradesh Assembly on 4 December 2017 unanimously passed a Bill awarding death to those found guilty of raping girls aged 12 and below. With this, Madhya Pradesh becomes the first State where those convicted of such rapes will face the gallows.

– Under this Bill, capital punishment would be awarded to convicts under Section 376 (A), which is related to rape, and Section 376 (D, A), pertaining to gang rape.

– Introduced in the House by Law and Legislative Affairs Minister Rampal Singh, the Bill was discussed in detail and then passed by all parties, including the ruling BJP and the Opposition Congress.

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**5) US President Donald Trump on 6 December 2017 reversed which decades-old American policy pertaining to Palestine-Israel relations and thus upset the Arab world as well as some of its Western allies? – It recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel**

**Explanation:** In a surprising and almost unexpected move US President Donald Trump on 6 December 2017 reversed decades of U.S. policy and recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. He announced his administration would begin a process of moving the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

– The status of Jerusalem – home to sites holy to the Muslim, Jewish and Christian religions – is one of the biggest obstacles to reaching a peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians.

– The international community does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the entire city, believing its status should be resolved in negotiations. No other country has its embassy in Jerusalem.

– The announcement was hailed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu but other close Western allies of Washington such as Britain and France were critical.

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**6) To rein in the problem of malnourishment and stunted growth in the country, the Union Cabinet on 1 December 2017 gave its approval to set up which new mission? – National Nutrition Mission (NNM)**

**Explanation:** The cabinet on 1 December 2017 approved the setting up of a National Nutrition Mission (NNM) with a three-year

budget of Rs. 9,046.17 crore, to rein in malnourishment and stunted growth.

– Under the mission, the government is targeting a reduction of 2% a year in stunting, under-nutrition and low birthweight among 100 million people. It aims to reduce anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls by 3% a year. The programme would be undertaken in a phased manner, covering 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and the remaining districts in 2019-20.

– The NNM would be implemented using information technology as the basic tool; workers at anganwadis (women and child development centres) would be given smartphones and their supervisors the smart tablets to monitor daily activities and compile reports. Under this mission the ministries of women and child development, health and family welfare, and water and sanitation will work together.

7) Which two Arab countries on 5 December 2017 announced forming a new economic and partnership group separate from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), a step that is expected to undermine the council amid a diplomatic crisis with Qatar? – **UAE and Saudi Arabia**

**Explanation:** On 5 December 2017 UAE announced that it has formed a new economic and partnership group with Saudi Arabia and it is separate from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The announcement was made just hours ahead of a GCC meeting in Kuwait.

– This step is expected to undermine the 6-member GCC. GCC is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf, except for Iraq. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman are its members. It was formed in 1981 and has its headquarters in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia).

– It is worth mentioning that the UAE and Saudi Arabia have cultivated even-closer ties in recent years. Emirati troops are deeply involved in the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

10-14 Dec 2017



1) What is the name of the first made-in-India Scorpene class submarine that was commissioned into the Indian Navy by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14 December 2017? – **INS Kalvari**

**Explanation:** INS Kalvari is the name of the most modern and first made-in-India non-nuclear Scorpene class submarine, which was inducted into the Indian Navy on 14 December 2017. It was inducted into the service by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at an induction programme held in Mumbai.

– Kalvari, named after a deep sea tiger shark, weighs about 1,600 tonnes. Powered by an extremely silent diesel-electric motor, it is very difficult to detect underwater. For self-defence it has mobile anti-torpedo decoys.

– The Navy last inducted a conventional diesel-electric submarine, INS Sindhusashtra, procured from Russia in July 2000.

– It is worth mentioning that six Scorpene-class indigenous submarines are being built by Mazagon Dock Limited in Mumbai as a part of Project-75 of the Indian Navy in technical assistance with French naval defence and energy company DCNS. The remaining five boats of the Project 75 would be delivered by the yard to the Navy by 2020.

– At present India has just about 15 submarines, a mix of Russian-origin Kilo class vessels and German HDW submarines while China has four times as many. The second Scorpene submarine, INS Khanderi, is currently undergoing trials and is likely to be inducted soon.



**2)** Which railway station was adjudged the first Energy Efficient 'A1 Category' Railway Station of Indian Railways on 8 December 2017? – **Kacheguda**

**Explanation:** Hyderabad's Kacheguda railway station, which comes under the South Central Railway (SCR), earned the unique distinction of being the first Energy Efficient 'A1 Category' Railway Station on Indian Railways.

– The station achieved 100% energy efficiency by replacing 1,312 conventional lights with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting, among other steps. About 370 ceiling fans, too, were replaced with energy efficient Brushless DC Electrical (BLDC) motors fans, and 12 air conditioners with energy efficient inverter-type air conditioners. All these measures would save about 1.76 lakh units and Rs. 14.08 lakh per annum with reduction of the connected load by 46.18 kW for Railways.

– Kacheguda Railway station is a historic building and had completed 100 years. Situated in the heart of Hyderabad, it was built in 1916 by the Nizam's Guaranteed State Railway during the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh Nizam.

**3)** Sri Lankan government handed over which strategic port to China on a 99-year lease during December 2017? – **Hambantota**

**Explanation:** Struggling to pay its debt to Chinese firms, the nation of Sri Lanka formally handed over the strategic port of Hambantota to China on a 99-year lease during December 2017.

– Many international experts and critics are of the view that the transfer of port threatens the country's sovereignty. In recent years, China has shored up its presence in the Indian Ocean, investing billions of dollars to build port facilities and plan maritime trade routes as part of its "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative to help increase its market reach.

– Sri Lankan politicians said the Hambantota deal, valued at \$1.1 billion, was necessary to chip away at the debt, but analysts warned of the consequences of signing away too much control to China.

– Sri Lanka has long been in India's orbit, but its relationship with China has strengthened in recent years.

**4)** Which state during December 2017 became the first State to endorse the Central government's draft bill that makes instant triple talaq a cognisable and non-bailable offence? – **Uttar Pradesh**

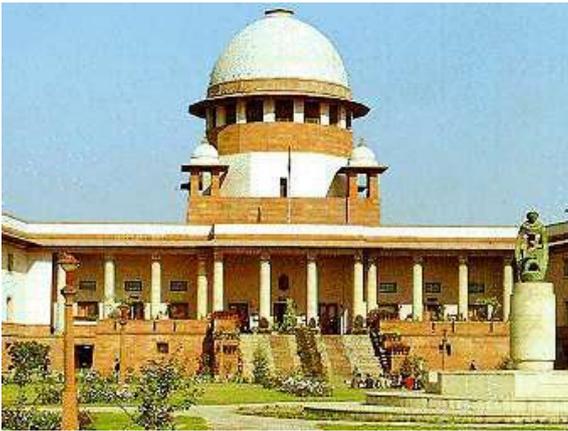
**Explanation:** Union Government's draft Bill on triple talaq, which provides for three-year imprisonment and a fine to a man trying to divorce his wife by uttering "talaq" three times, got the Uttar Pradesh state government's approval. The decision to endorse the bill was taken in a Cabinet meeting headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on 5 December 2017.

– Uttar Pradesh thus became the first state to endorse the Central government's draft bill. The draft 'Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Marriage Bill' was sent by the

Centre to the States as the practice continued despite the Supreme Court striking it down.

– On 22 August 2017, the Supreme Court struck down triple talaq, calling the practice unconstitutional and in violation of Article 14 of the Constitution, which provides for equality before the law.

## 15 December 2017



1) The Union Government has proposed setting up how many special courts to decide cases involving politicians as accused, a proposal that was given green-signal by the Supreme Court on 14 December 2017? – **Twelve (12)**

**Explanation:** The Union Government on 12 December 2017 told the Supreme Court that it will establish 12 special courts to decide cases involving politicians as accused. It also allotted Rs 7.8 crore for the purpose.

– The apex court had on 1 November 2017 directed the Centre to place before it details regarding 1,581 cases involving MPs and MLAs, as declared by the politicians at the time of filing their nominations during the 2014 general elections.

– On 14 December 2017 the Supreme Court gave its approval to establish these 12 fast track courts.

2) The 11<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was held

at which place from 10 to 13 December 2017? – **Buenos Aires (Argentina)**

**Explanation:** The Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11) of World Trade Organisation (WTO) was held from 10 to 13 December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Conference was chaired by Minister Susana Malcorra of Argentina.

– The conference ended without any substantial outcome as consensus eluded the 164-member multilateral body. After the US blocked permanent solution on public stockholding for food security purposes, India toughened its stand on new issues like e-commerce and investment facilitation.

– Finally, consensus could not be reached on a ministerial declaration and the conference ended with a chair's summary which is non-binding in nature.

3) Federal Reserve, the US central bank, increased the benchmark interest rate by 25 basis points (bps) on 13 December 2017. What was an important aspect associated with this policy meeting? – **This was expected to be the last policy meeting chaired by Janet Yellen**

**Explanation:** Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen chaired in what is expected to be her last policy meeting on 13 December 2017 in which the key interest rate was increased by 25 bps. If confirmed by the US Senate, Fed governor Jerome Powell, President



Donald Trump's nominee to succeed her, will take over when her four-year term as chair expires on 3 February 2017.

- The 7-2 vote for the rate move, the Fed's third this year, raises the benchmark lending rate by a quarter percentage point to a target range of 1.25% to 1.5%.
- The US Federal Reserve also raised its forecast for economic growth in 2018, even as it stuck with a projection for three hikes in the coming year.



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**4) Which state became the first in India offer Hindi e-mail IDs in an effort to offer vernacular e-mail service to its residents? – Rajasthan**

**Explanation:** In a move to ease electronic communication for residents who are not fluent in English, Rajasthan government on 3 December 2017 launched a Hindi e-mail service under the facility – name@rajasthan.bharat (in Devnagari script). It thus became the first state to offer vernacular e-mail service to its residents.

- The first Hindi e-mail id to be created under the service was that of the chief minister, Vasundhara@rajasthan.bharat (in Devnagari). All state government personnel are also expected to receive an e-mail id in Hindi soon.
- It is worth mentioning that state-owned BSNL had launched a similar service in eight Indian languages in December 2016. However, unlike the Rajasthan government's service, BSNL's initiative was not available for all internet users.

**5) Who won the Peter England Mr. India 2017 title on 14 December 2017?– Jitesh Singh Deo**

**Explanation:** Lucknow's Jitesh Singh Deo bagged the coveted title of Peter England Mr. India 2017 at a spectacular ceremony held at Bandra Fort in Mumbai on 14 December 2017. He competed with 15 other contestants to grab the coveted title.

- While Jitesh bagged the top spot, Prathamesh Maulingkar won the title of Peter England Mr. India Supranational 2017, followed by Abhi Khajuria and Pavan Rao, who won the titles of Peter England Mr. India 1st Runner-Up and Peter England Mr. India 2nd Runner-Up, respectively.
- The winners were coveted by actress Kangana Ranaut.

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**16 December 2017**

**1) In an effort to boost digital payments, the Union Cabinet on 15 December 2017 decided to waive the merchant discount rate (MDR) applicable on all**



debit cards, BHIM and UPI transactions up to Rs 2,000. This waiver will be applicable for what period initially? – **2 years**

**Explanation:** From 1 January 2018, the customers will not be charged fees on all debit cards, BHIM and UPI transactions up to Rs. 2,000 for at least two years. The decision to waive the merchant discount rate (MDR) was taken by the Union Cabinet on 15 December 2017. The MDR will be borne by the Union Government initially for a period of 2 years.

– The Union Government estimated that the MDR to be reimbursed to the banks in respect of transactions less than Rs 2,000 in value would be Rs.1,050 crore in financial year (FY) 2018-19 and Rs.1,462 crore in FY 2019-20.

– As a result of this approval, for all transactions less than Rs. 2000 in value, the consumer and the merchant will not suffer any additional burden in the form of MDR thereby leading to greater adoption of digital payment modes for such transactions.

– MDR is the rate charged to a merchant by a bank for providing debit and credit card services when payment is made at a merchant point of sale (PoS). In most cases, the charge is passed on to the customer by the merchant, saying that it eats into his margin.

2) Which entity during December 2017 struck a deal to buy film, television and international businesses from Rupert Murdoch's Twenty-First Century Fox Inc. for \$52.4 billion? – **Walt Disney Co.**

**Explanation:** Walt Disney Co., which is the world's largest entertainment company, on 14 December 2017 struck a deal to buy film, television and international businesses from Rupert Murdoch's Twenty-First Century Fox Inc. for \$52.4 billion in stock.

– Under the deal, expected to close in 12 to 18 months, Disney acquires 21st

Century Fox's film and television studios, its cable entertainment networks and international TV businesses.

– With this deal Disney receives an arsenal of shows and movies to combat growing digital rivals Netflix and Amazon. On the other hand it brings to a close more than half a century of expansion by Murdoch.

– It is worth mentioning that 86-year old Murdoch has been successful in turning a single Australian newspaper he inherited from his father at the age of 21 into one of the world's most important global news and film conglomerates.



3) Who was elected unopposed as the President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on 14 December 2017? – **Narinder Batra**

**Explanation:** International Hockey Federation (FIH) chief Narinder Batra was elected unopposed as the President of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) on 14 December 2017. His election to the top post was a mere formality after Asian Tennis Federation (ATF) President Anil Khanna withdrew from the race earlier. On the other hand Rajeev Mehta was re-elected Secretary General for a four-year term.

– With his election, Batra became one of the few sports administrators to head a national Olympic committee while heading an important international sports federation.

4) What is India's place in 'The Legatum Prosperity Index 2017' among 149 countries included in the index? – **100**

**Explanation:** India is ranked 100<sup>th</sup> on the list of prosperous countries among 149 countries in the latest edition of the Legatum Prosperity Index that was released on 14 December 2017. The index, developed by the London-based Legatum Institute, primarily offers an insight into how prosperity is forming and changing across the world.

– An important conclusion drawn by the index is that the gap between China (90<sup>th</sup> rank) and India's prosperity has narrowed since 2016 and to a quarter of what it was in 2012. India's best performance is in the Governance parameter where it is ranked 41<sup>st</sup> in the world while its worst performance is the Natural Environment parameter where it was ranked a measly 139<sup>th</sup>.

– Norway was placed at the top place in the index followed by New Zealand, Finland, Switzerland and Sweden in the top 5 while Yemen was placed at the last place (149).

– The Legatum Prosperity Index is the world's leading global measure of economic and social wellbeing that studies 104 indicators under these categories: Economic Quality, Business Environment, Governance, Personal Freedom, Social Capital, Safety and Security, Education, Health and Natural Environment.

## 17-18 December 2017



1) Rahul Gandhi formally took charge as the President of the Indian National Congress (INC) at a function held in New Delhi on 16 December 2017. He became .....member of the Nehru-Gandhi family to occupy this post – **Sixth**

**Explanation:** 47-year old Rahul Gandhi became the sixth member of the Nehru-Gandhi family to occupy the post of the President of the Indian National Congress (INC). He replaced his mother Sonia Gandhi on 16 December 2017, who held the post for record 19 years (from 1998 to 2017)

– The four other members of the Nehru-Gandhi family to occupy this prestigious post are – Motilal Nehru (1919 and 1928), Jawaharlal Nehru (1929-30, 1936, 1937, 1951-52, 1953 and 1954), Indira Gandhi (1959, 1978-83 and 1984) and Rajiv Gandhi (1985-1991).

– Rajiv Gandhi is overall the 87<sup>th</sup> President of this historic political party, which was founded in 1885 in Bombay with W.C. Bonnerjee as its first President.

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**2)** In an exceptional step the UIDAI on 16 December 2017 temporarily barred which major telecom company from conducting Aadhaar-based SIM verification of mobile customers using eKYC on charges of related malpractices? – **Bharti Airtel**

**Explanation:** In its strongest action yet, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on 16 December 2017 temporarily barred Bharti Airtel Ltd and Airtel Payment Bank Ltd from conducting Aadhaar-based SIM verification of mobile customers using eKYC (electronic Know Your Customer) process as well as e-KYC of payments bank clients.

– This exceptional step was taken following allegations of Bharti Airtel using the Aadhaar-eKYC based SIM verification process to open payments bank accounts of its subscribers without their ‘informed consent’.

– This essentially means Airtel would not be able to, in the interim, carry out ‘electronic-verification’ or link mobile SIMs of its customers with their 12-digit biometric national ID Aadhaar though the efficient and paperless eKYC process of UIDAI.

**3)** The Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council on 16 December 2017 decided to make electronic permits (e-way bills) compulsory for inter-state movement of goods from which date? – **1 February 2018**

**Explanation:** Federal indirect tax body the Goods and Service Tax (GST) Council on 16 December 2017 decided to make electronic permits compulsory for inter-state movement of goods from 1 February 2018, which will help in seamless movement of goods across state borders.

– The e-way bill system will be available on a trial basis for voluntary adoption by businesses from 16 January 2018. It will help the tax authorities to monitor cross-border movement of consignments and check instances of under-valuation of goods.

– States have time till 1 June 2018 to implement the national e-way bill system for intra-state goods movement. The Council wants the system to cover the entire movement of goods-within and across states-from June.

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**4)** Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that Mizoram had become the third power-surplus state in the north-east after commissioning of the 60-MW Tuirial hydropower project on 16 December 2017. Which are the other two power-states of the region? –

**Sikkim and Tripura**

**Explanation:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 60-MW Tuirial hydropower project in Mizoram on 16 December 2017. He announced that with this the state has become the third



power-surplus state in the north-east after Sikkim and Tripura.

– The Tuirial project, which was announced and cleared in 1998 by the then Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, is the first major central project to be successfully commissioned in Mizoram.

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5) Who defeated India's P.V. Sindhu in the women's singles final of Dubai BWF World Superseries badminton tournament on 17 December 2017? –

**Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)**

**Explanation:** Top Indian badminton player PV Sindhu suffered yet another final loss, as she went down to World No. 2 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in a pulsating women's singles summit clash of the Dubai BWF World Superseries Finals on 18 December 2017. Dubai Superseries is the prestigious season-ending tournament of the BWF calendar.

– Yamaguchi defeated Sindhu 15-21, 21-12 and 21-19. Sindhu lost the final despite winning the first game and leading in the second game 5-0 at one time. Sindhu thus came agonisingly close to clinching the title before finishing runner-up once again in her third major tournament, following last year's Rio Olympics and this year's Glasgow World Championship in August 2017.

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## 19-22 Dec 2017

1) The United Nations General Assembly on 21 December 2017 voted by a huge majority to reject US President Donald Trump's unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Apart from US and Israel, which other 7 countries voted against the resolution and thus supported the US?

– **Guatemala, Honduras, Marshal Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Togo**

**Explanation:** The United States was effectively isolated on the issue of President Donald Trump's controversial decision of 6 December 2017 to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital as the United Nations' General Assembly on 21 December 2017 voted by a huge majority (128-9) to declare the recognition "null and void".

– At an emergency session of the body's General Assembly, 128 countries voted in favour of the resolution rejecting US President Donald Trump's controversial decision, 9 countries voted against, while 35 abstained.

– All 4 other members of the UN Security Council (Russia, China, France and UK) opposed the US. Other important countries that voted against the US include India, Iran, Brazil, Germany, Italy, Japan, Pakistan, South Korea, Saudi Arabia and Switzerland.

– Apart from US and Israel, 7 small countries voted against the resolution and thus supported the US. These countries are – Guatemala, Honduras, Marshal Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau and Togo.

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2) The Companies (Amendment) Bill, 2017 that seeks to strengthen corporate governance, initiate action against defaulting firms and improve ease of doing business was passed by the Parliament on 19 December 2017. It will bring about major changes in which Act? – **The Companies Act, 2013**

**Explanation:** The Companies (Amendment) Bill 2017, which seeks to bring about major changes in the Companies Act, 2013, was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 19 December 2017 by a voice vote. The bill, which was adopted by the Lok Sabha in July 2017, will now have to receive the assent of the President to become law.

– The major changes in the amendment bill include simplification of the private placement process; rationalization of provisions related to loans to directors and replacing the requirement of approval of the central government for managerial remuneration above prescribed limits by approval through special resolution of shareholders. The Companies Act, 2013 has already been amended once under the current government.



**3)**A Delhi court on 21 December 2017 acquitted all accused, including former Telecom Minister A. Raja and DMK Rajya Sabha MP Kanimozhi in the 2G spectrum allocation scam case. This anticipated ruling was delivered by which Special Judge of the CBI? –**Justice O.P. Saini**

**Explanation:** CBI had charged A. Raja, Kanimozhi, then Telecom Secretary Siddhartha Behura, Raja's former private secretary R.K. Chandolia and 11 other persons in the 2G spectrum allocation scam case.

– The CBI has alleged that the promoters of the Essar Group were the real investors and beneficiaries of the spectrum and licences

were issued to Loop Telecom, a front company of Essar to acquire 2G licences and spectrum in 2008.

– Acquitting the accused, Special CBI Judge Justice O.P. Saini said: "I have no hesitation in holding that the prosecution has failed to prove the charges beyond reasonable doubt."

**4)** For the first time in its 105-year history, the Indian Science Congress (ISC), the largest congregation of Indian and foreign scientists in India, indefinitely postponed as announced on 20 December 2017. Which university was to host this prestigious event? –

**Osmania University (Hyderabad)**

**Explanation:** Hyderabad's Osmania University was scheduled to host the 2018 edition of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) from 3 to 7 January 2018. But on 20 December 2017 the university expressed its inability to host the event due to certain issues in the campus. The university has been witnessing student unrest since suicide of a student last year.

– The ISC is traditionally the first public function the Prime Minister addresses in the calendar year. The event witnesses several Nobel Laureates, heads of Indian science academies and thousands of students.



**5)**A bill to exclude which plantation entity from the definition of 'tree' under the Indian Forest Act was passed by the Lok Sabha on 20 December 2017? –**Bamboo**

**Explanation:** The Lok Sabha on 20 December 2017 passed a bill to exclude bamboo from the definition of 'tree'. The bill permits felling and transit of bamboo grown in non-forest areas and will amend the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

– The bill will also replace the pertaining ordinance promulgated by the President on 23 November 2017. The government is of the view that bamboo taxonomically is grass and expects that change in law would encourage bamboo plantation by farmers.

– It is worth mentioning that India imports bamboo despite being its second largest producer after China. Bamboo is used extensively in variety of applications such as furnishing, yarn, pulp and paper, handicrafts, decoration, musical instruments, etc.

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**6) Congress improved its tally remarkably in the 2017 Gujarat Assembly elections despite unable to defeat the ruling BJP. With this win the BJP was able to retain the power for which successive term in the state? – Fifth**

**Explanation:** The results of the 2017 Gujarat Assembly elections were announced on 18 December 2017 in which the ruling BJP was able to retain power despite significant reduction in its seat. The party won just 99 assembly seats in the 182 seat house while the Congress with its allies bagged 80 seats. Congress itself won 77 seats. 6 seats were won by other parties/independents.

– With this win the BJP was able to win elections continuously for sixth time while it retained power for fifth successive time. It came to power for the first time in 1995 by winning 121 seats out of 182. It has been able to retain the power in five successive Assembly elections from then – in 1998, 2002, 2007, 2012 and now 2017. However, Congress was able to improve its tally significantly from 60 in 2012 to 77 now.

– On the other hand BJP was successful in dethroning the Virbhadra Singh-led Congress

government in Himachal Pradesh. Of the 68 seats in the state Assembly, BJP won 44 while Congress was reduced to just 21. 3 seats were won by other parties/independents. With this win the BJP and its alliance partners have governments in 19 states across the country.

## 23-26 December 2017

**1) India's first-ever air-conditioned (AC) suburban train services were commenced in which city from 25 December 2017? – Mumbai**

**Explanation:** The country's first air-conditioned (AC) suburban train commenced its services from 25 December 2017 in Mumbai. The AC local will operate on the Churchgate-Borivili section.

– The train, operated by the Western Railway (WR), began its journey at 10.32 am from the Borivili station to Churchgate in South Mumbai.

– The train will make six trips daily (12 services per day) and from 1 January 2018 it will run from Churchgate to Virar. The train will not operate on Saturdays and Sundays as it requires maintenance.



**2) Which city's logo was launched on 24 December 2017 with which it became the first Indian city to have its own logo? – Bengaluru**

**Explanation:** Bengaluru became the first-ever Indian city to have its own logo and with this the city joined the league of global metros like New York, Paris, Singapore, London, Melbourne and Berlin which have their own logos.



– Based on a crowd-sourced design, Bengaluru’s logo (scripted in English and Kannada) was unveiled on 24 December 2017 at the ‘Namma Bengaluru Habba’ fest to promote ‘Brand Bengaluru’ on the global tourist map.

– The state tourism department will promote Bengaluru by leveraging its new identity through the logo.

3) The Union Government on 21 December 2017 launched DARPAN, the project to improve the quality of service, add value to services and achieve “financial inclusion” of un-banked rural population through post offices. The term DARPAN stands for? –

**Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for a New India**

**Explanation:** DARPAN (Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for a New India) was launched by the Union Minister of Communications Manoj Sinha on 21 December 2017. It is an IT modernization project with an outlay of Rs. 1400 Crore and seeks to provide a low power technology solution to each Branch Postmaster (BPM) that will enable each of approximately 1.29 Lakhs Branch Post Offices (BOs) to improve the level of services being offered to rural customers across all the states.

– As on 1 December 2017, 43,171 Branch Post Offices have migrated under the “DARPAN” project with the aim of financial inclusion to rural population and it is targeted to complete the project by March, 2018.

– The ‘Darpan’ Project is expected to increase the rural reach of the Department of Posts and enable BOs to increase traffic of all financial remittances

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4) Who was appointed as the next Secretary General of Amnesty International on 21 December 2017? – **Kumi Naidoo**

**Explanation:** Kumi Naidoo, the Indian-origin South African human rights activist, was on 21 December 2017 appointed as the next Secretary General of the London-based human rights organisation Amnesty International. He will take over from Indian activist Salil Shetty in August 2018.

– Naidoo is of Indian-origin and was born in Durban. He was formerly International Executive Director of Greenpeace.

– Amnesty International is the largest human rights movement globally, with a global presence including offices in more than 70 countries, 2,600 staff and seven million members, volunteers and supporters worldwide.

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5) Which Indian IT firm during December 2017 won a \$2.25 billion outsourcing contract, the largest ever bagged by an Indian IT firm? – **Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS)**

**Explanation:** During December 2017 Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) won a \$2.25 billion outsourcing contract from television ratings measurement company Nielsen, which the largest ever bagged by an Indian information technology firm.

– The deal marks the renewal of TCS’s engagement with Nielsen, which first awarded a \$1.2 billion, 10-year contract to the Mumbai-based company in 2007.

– The renewal of the deal is considered a shot in the arm for Rajesh Gopinathan, who took over as CEO in February 2017 after his predecessor N. Chandrasekaran was appointed chairman of Tata Sons Ltd, the group holding company.



**6)** Who won Chennai’s prestigious R.K. Nagar seat for Tamil Nadu Assembly, the result of which was declared on 24 December 2017? –

**T.T.V. Dhinkaran**

**Explanation:** Sidelined AIADMK leader T.T.V. Dhinkaran won the R.K. Nagar bypoll decisively by a margin of more than 40,000 votes on 24 December 2017. This prestigious seat was represented by former Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa in the Tamil Nadu Assembly till her death in December 2016.

– The ruling AIADMK finished at second place while 57 other candidates, including the DMK’s Marudhu Ganesh forfeited their deposits.

# 27 December 2017

1) The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) recently allowed which made-in-India aircraft to be used for commercial flights? – **Dornier 228**

**Explanation:** The DGCA has recently allowed Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)-manufactured Dornier 228 to be used for civilian flights. Thus the 19-seater aircraft became the first plane to be made in the country for commercial flights.

– Dornier 228 is a non-pressurised plane, has a maximum cruise speed of 428 kmph and a range of 700 km. It is capable of night flying. It has been used by defence forces extensively.

– HAL successfully carried out test flights of this plane at Kanpur airport during December 2017. HAL has a “transport aircraft division” in Kanpur since 1960. With DGCA’s approval, HAL can now sell this plane to airlines in India and it can be used by them for regional flights under the Union Government’s ambitious UDAN scheme.

2) What is the name of India’s first home-grown high purity gold reference standard that was launched at the India Government Mint (IGM) Mumbai on 23 December 2017? – **BND-4201**

**Explanation:** BND-4201 (or Bharatiya



Nirdeshak Dravya-4201) is the name of India’s first-ever home-grown high purity gold reference standard. It is the reference material for gold of ‘9999’ fineness (gold that is 99.99% pure).

– BND-4201 was launched at the India Government Mint (IGM) on 23 December 2017. This gold reference standard has been developed through a collaboration between IGM, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre – National Centre for Compositional Characterisation of Materials (Hyderabad), and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (New Delhi).

3) What is the name of the new online platform launched for central government employees on 25 December 2017 that facilitates access to all service details of the employees?– **electronic-Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS)**

**Explanation:** electronic-Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS) is the name of the new online platform launched for central government employees on 25 December 2017 to apply for leave and access their service-related information.

– The platform (e-HRMS) was launched by Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh on the occasion of Good Governance Day on 25 December.

– With launch of e-HRMS, employees will be able to not only see all their details with respect to service book, leave, GPF, salary, etc. but also apply for different kind of claims/reimbursements, loan/advances, leave, leave encashment, LTC advances, tour etc. on a single platform.

– They shall not be dependent on the administration for updating data. They may themselves update it with their login subject to verification.

4) Indian professional boxer Vijender Singh defeated which African boxer on 23 December 2017 to win his tenth consecutive bout and successfully defend his two titles? – **Ernest Amuzu**

**Explanation:** Indian star boxer Vijender Singh's juggernaut in professional boxing rolled on as he won the tenth consecutive bout of his career on 23 December 2017. He defeated African champion Ernest Amuzu by points in a 10-round bout to successfully defend his WBO Oriental and Asia Pacific Super middleweight titles. He also succeeded in continuing his unbeaten run in the pro circuit.

– This tenth bout of his professional career was held at a jam-packed Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur (Rajasthan). Prior to this bout, West African Boxing Union Middleweight champion Amuzu had 23 wins under his belt including 21 knockouts out of 25 fights.

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5) BSE Sensex closed above which mark for the first time on 26 December 2017? – **34,000 points**

**Explanation:** BSE Sensex closed above 34,000 points mark for the first time ever on 26 December 2017. Sensex hit an all-time high of 34,061.88 before settling 0.21%, or 70.31 points up at 34,010.61. All the sectoral indices on BSE ended higher.

## 28-29 Dec 2017



1) The Union Government on 27 December 2017 reduced the interest rate on small savings schemes by what percent for Jan-Mar 2018 quarter? – **0.2%**

**Explanation:** The Union Government reduced the interest rate on small savings schemes, including public provident fund (PPF), national savings certificate (NSC) and Kisan Vikas Patra, by 0.2 percentage points for the January-March 2018 quarter on 27 December 2017.

– For January-March 2018 quarter PPF and NSC will fetch a lower annual rate of 7.6% while KVP will yield 7.3% and mature in 11 months. The girl child savings scheme Sukanya Samridhi Account (SSA) will offer 8.1 from existing 8.3% annually. Term deposits of 1-5 years will fetch a lower interest rate of 6.6-7.4%, to be paid quarterly, while the five-year recurring deposit is pegged at 6.9%.

– Interest rate in the five-year Senior Citizens Savings Scheme, however, has been retained at 8.3%. The interest rate on the senior citizens' scheme is paid quarterly.

– Since April 2016, interest rates of all small saving schemes have been recalibrated on a quarterly basis, but there was no change in small savings interest rates in the October-December 2017 quarter.



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2) Who took over as the 14th Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh on 27 December 2017? – **Jai Ram Thakur**

**Explanation:** BJP leader Jai Ram Thakur took oath as the chief minister of Himachal Pradesh at a grand swearing-in ceremony held on 27 December 2017. He replaced Congress' Virbhadra Singh.

– Thakur, the five-time BJP MLA from Seraj constituency, was administered the oath by Himachal Governor Acharya Dev Vrat as the function held at the historic Ridge Maidan in Shimla. The swearing-in ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and it was the very first time that a prime minister attended the oath-taking ceremony in the state.

– Thakur was elected to lead the state after the party's chief ministerial candidate Prem Kumar Dhumal failed to register a win from his constituency in the recently held assembly polls. BJP had ousted the Congress from power in the state by winning 44 out of the 68 seats.

– Earlier on 26 December 2017 Vijay Rupani was sworn in as the 16<sup>th</sup> Chief Minister of Gujarat along with 19 Ministers, including Nitin Patel, Deputy Chief Minister, after the BJP's victory in the recent Assembly elections. This is Rupani's second term as Gujarat Chief Minister.

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**3) Which university will host the 2018 edition of the Indian Science Congress during March 2018, the annual event which was initially scheduled to be hosted in Hyderabad? – Manipur University**

**Explanation:** The 2018 edition of the prestigious Indian Science Congress (ISC) will be held at Manipur University, Imphal, in March 2018. Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) on 27 December 2017 confirmed that Manipur University will host the event.

– ISC is the largest congregation of scientists in India and sees several students, Nobel Laureates and scientists from India's science academies in attendance.

– The event was scheduled at the Osmania University (OU), Hyderabad, in the first week of January but had to be moved out due to "security problems." This was the first time the 106-year-old ISC had to be postponed at the last minute.

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**4) Which Indian photographer was declared the National Geographic's Nature Photographer of the Year 2017?**

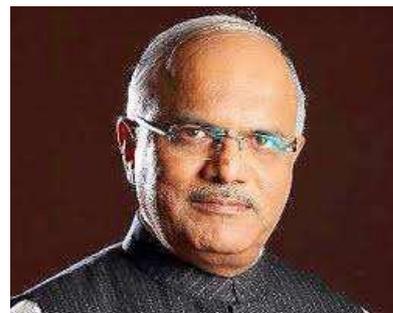
– **Jayaprakash Joghee Bojan**

**Explanation:** Jayaprakash Joghee Bojan won the National Geographic's Nature Photographer of the Year 2017 for his photograph of an orangutan crossing a river in the wilds of Borneo.

– Bojan is from the Nilgiris and after living in Bengaluru for some years he shifted to Singapore when his wife was transferred there. His favourite subjects are primates, orangutans in particular, the tiger and otters.

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**30-31 December  
2017**

**1) Who was appointed the new President of Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) by the Union Government on 29 December 2017? – Vinay Sahasrabudhe**



**Explanation:** Vinay Sahasrabudhe, the National vice-president of the BJP and a member of the Rajya Sabha, was appointed the President of Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) on 29 December 2017. He will replace Lokesh Chandra, who was a scholar and thinker, and had been appointed by the NDA government in October 2014 and has completed his three-year-term.

– Sahasrabudhe is the vice-president of Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini which is

South Asia's only training and research academy for elected representatives and voluntary social workers.

– ICCR was founded in 1950 by India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and its main objectives are to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations and to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries.



2) What is the name of the Palestinian Ambassador to Pakistan, who was recalled by the Palestinian Authority for sharing dais with Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed? – **Walid Abu Ali**

**Explanation:** The Palestinian Authority decided to recall its controversial Ambassador to Pakistan, who had shared dais with terrorist organisation Jamaat-ud-Dawa chief Hafiz Saeed. This decision was conveyed on 30 December 2017 by Palestinian Ambassador to India Adnan Abu Al Haija.

– A day earlier on 29 December 2017 the Palestinian Ambassador to Pakistan had attended a rally by the Difa-e-Pakistan radical Islamist front led by Hafiz Saeed at Rawalpindi's Liaqat Bagh. Indian Government had strongly conveyed to the Palestinian side that the Palestinian Ambassador in Pakistan's association with terrorist Hafiz Saeed, who is proscribed by the United Nations (UN), is unacceptable to India.

– The move by the Ambassador to Pakistan was considered particularly insulting as it came close on the heels of

India's vote at the UNGA in support of Palestine and against US and Israel for supporting a shift in Jerusalem's status.

3) What is the name of the CEO of Compass Group Plc., the world's biggest catering firm, who died in a tragic seaplane accident in Australia on New Year's Eve on 31 December 2017? – **Richard Cousins**

**Explanation:** 58-year old Richard Cousins was Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the British-based catering and food services giant Compass Group Plc. He died along with four of his close family members when the seaplane they were travelling in crashed into Sydney River in the evening of 31 December 2017. Pilot Gareth Morgan also died in the crash.

– Cousins, who led Compass over the past 11 years, was due to step down in March 2018. It followed his decision to quit his role of senior independent director of supermarket giant Tesco. He has been widely credited with turning the company's business around and making Compass into one of the Financial Times Stock Exchange's best-performing firms.

4) What is the name of the senior bureaucrat who was appointed as Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) during December 2017? – **Sumita Misra**

**Explanation:** Sumita Misra was on 26 December 2017 appointed as Joint Secretary in the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) as part of a mid-level bureaucratic reshuffle. Misra, a 1990 batch IAS officer of Haryana cadre, was appointed to the post for five years.

– The PMEAC, set up in September 2017, is mandated to analyse all critical issues, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the prime minister and advising him thereon.