

## AWARDS & HONOURS

Morocco born French Director Robin Campillo's drama film '120 BPM' or '120 Beats Per Minute' won the coveted **Golden Peacock Award** at the 48th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), which concluded in Goa. The film, set in France in the 1990s deals about homosexuality and the AIDS epidemic. Chinese director Vivian Qu won the Best Director Award for her 2017 film 'Angels Wear White'. The Best Actor (Male) Award went to Nahuel Perez Biscaryat and the Best Actor (Female) went to Parvathy T K.

Mohamad Al Jounde from Syria was honoured with the **International Children's Peace Prize 2017** for his efforts to ensure the rights of Syrian refugee children.

Time magazine named as **Person of the Year** "the silence breakers" who triggered a national reckoning by revealing the pervasiveness of sexual harassment, assault and abuse in US life. President Donald Trump was runner-up in the prestigious ranking, ahead of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping.

Noted Hindi writer, Mamta Kalia was conferred with the **Vyas Samman, 2017** for her novel "Dukkham Sukkham". She had earlier received Yashpal Katha Samman, Sahitya Bhusan Samman and Manohar Lohia Samman.

## BUSINESS & CORPORATE

UN Women in collaboration with **Facebook** inaugurated a two-day event in Mumbai titled 'We The Women' to empower and recognise the magnificent contribution of women in our society.

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry signed an agreement with German firm **GIZ** for technical cooperation in the implementation of transport projects in Coimbatore, Bhubaneswar and Kochi.

Salil S Parekh was appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of **Infosys**, with effect from January 2, 2018. He comes from Capgemini, where he was a member of the Group Executive Board.

**OBOPAY**, the global mobile payment solutions company based in US, announced that the company secured a licence for Prepaid Payment Instrument (PPI) from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to operate a semi-closed loop wallet in the country. The company said it would also be using the licence to increase business in its B2B (business-to-business) operations by co-branding the prepaid instrument with a partner brand.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved debt financing and partial risk guarantees totaling \$583 million to develop the 750 MW power plant and LNG terminal project of **Reliance Power** in Bangladesh.

## BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission launched the Atal Tinkering Lab's Community Day in the national capital on 15th December, 2017. The day marked the Community Drive Initiative in which 25 young Mentors engaged with more than 200 students not enrolled in the formal education system. The Atal Tinkering Lab Community Drive Initiative is aimed at maximizing the impact of Atal Tinkering Labs by extending innovation to children in the community who do not have access to formal educational institutions. The purpose of this initiative is to provide these children with the same educational tools as the students in Atal Tinkering Labs to enable them to become problem solvers. The NGOs participating in these interactions include organizations working with disabled children, street and working children, and girls from the weaker sections of society.
- In order to strengthen the ecosystem for government services, Karnataka state government announced that it would be soon launching a digital platform to address the issues of the common citizen.
- The Bihar government launched Safe City Surveillance Scheme for keeping the crimes against women in check. The scheme aims to bring all major public places under a strict watch of close-circuit television (CCTV) cameras and improve the overall crime control in the state.
- Union Health Minister JP Nadda launched new initiatives including 'Laqshya-A Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative' and safe delivery application on the occasion of Universal Health Coverage Day (December 12).
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW) and Rotary India. The MoU will provide support and accelerate the efforts under Polio Eradication Programme, Routine Immunization including Mission Indradhanush, Intensified Mission Indradhanush.
- India and Italy signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in Agriculture and Phytosanitary issues.
- The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) set up a three-member committee to study the matter to give minority status to Hindus in 7 states and 1 union territory where their population is less than 50 per cent. The committee will be led by NCM's Vice Chairman George Kurien and has been given three months to submit its report.
- India and Cuba signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for enhanced cooperation in the health sector.
- The Rajasthan government will soon introduce 'Guru-Shishya' programme in all districts, under which college students can raise discuss with their teachers the issues and problems related to their institutes.
- The Madhya Pradesh state assembly unanimously passed a bill aimed at amending the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to impose the death penalty on those found guilty of raping girls aged 12 and below.

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

- A Financing Agreement for IBRD loan of USD 250 million (equivalent) for the “Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) Project” was signed between India and the World Bank. The Objective of the project is to enhance institutional mechanisms for skills development and increase access to quality and market-relevant training for the work force.
- According to ‘World Economic Situation and Prospects 2018’ report, the Indian economy will grow at 7.2% in 2018 (as compared to 6.7% in 2017) and accelerate to 7.4% in the following year as a result of robust private consumption, public investment and structural reforms, but it still faces the risk of sudden capital withdrawal on account of monetary policy normalization in developed countries.
- The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology approved Andhra Pradesh government’s proposal to set up a Greenfield Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) at Vikruthamala village in Chittoor district. The EMC will be developed over 501.40 acre at a cost of Rs. 339.80 crore. The proposed EMC is expected to generate nearly one lakh jobs.
- India joined the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), becoming the arrangement's 42nd participating State. The membership will facilitate high-technology tie-ups for country's defence and space programmes. India's entry into the export control regime would enhance its credentials in the field of non-proliferation despite not being a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The Wassenaar Arrangement plays a significant role in promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies. Its member countries are required to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine these goals. The aim is also to prevent the acquisition of these items by terrorists.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6% and reverse repo at 5.75% in its fifth bi-monthly monetary policy review for the year 2017-18 The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate remained at 6.25%.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

Noted South Indian music director, **Adithyan**, passed away in Hyderabad at age 63. He has scored music for many Telugu and Malayalam movies.

Buddhist monk **Dhammapiya** from Tripura was elected as the new secretary general of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

**Giriraj Singh**, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for MSME, launched a Public Procurement Portal 'MSME Sambandh' to monitor the implementation of the Public Procurement from MSEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs).

Lucknow boy **Jitesh Singh Deo** bagged the coveted title of Peter England Mr. India 2017. While Jitesh bagged the top spot, Prathamesh Maulingkar won the title of Peter England Mr. India Supranational 2017.

**Lalji Singh**, a noted scientist and the father of DNA fingerprinting in India, passed away.

The Minister of State for Culture (Independent Charge) and Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Dr. **Mahesh Sharma** led the Indian delegation to the second UN World Tourism Organization/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture, with focus on sustainable development, which was held in Muscat, Capital city of Oman.

Minister of State for Culture (Independent Charge) Dr. **Mahesh Sharma** inaugurated the three day 'Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage' in New Delhi.

Romania's former King **Michael I**, a onetime boy monarch who later engineered the ouster of pro-Nazi strongman Gen. Ion Antonescu during World War II, only to be forced at gunpoint to abdicate by a communist-led postwar government, died at age 96.

Television ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council (Barc) India elected **Nakul Chopra** as its new chairman. Chopra is currently the president of Advertising Agencies Association of India (AAAI) and the senior advisor at Publicis Communications.

Bollywood actor, writer and director, **Neeraj Vora**, known for films such as "Satya", "Phir Hera Pheri" and "Daud", passed away at age 54.

**Ram Naik**, the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, officially launched the new multi-coloured logo for the Allahabad Kumbh Mela 2019 in Lucknow

**Ravi Shankar Prasad**, Minister of Law & Justice and Electronics & Information Technology inaugurated the "NIC-CERT", a setup of National Informatics Centre, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. NIC-CERT has been setup with the objective of creating a comprehensive framework that integrates world class security components and inbuilt threat intelligence for detection, prevention and incident response.

**Saraswati Tripathy**, the prominent Gandhian and freedom fighter, passed away at age 89.

**Snehlata Shrivastava**, a 1982 batch IAS officer, was appointed as the new Secretary-General of Lok Sabha.

Veteran journalist **Sukharanjan Sengupta** died at age 85. Sengupta had worked for Bengali dailies 'Jugantar' and 'Ananda Bazar Patrika' in his long career spanning over six decades.

The 11th Ministerial conference of the 164-member World Trade Organization (WTO) started in Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 10, 2017. At the meeting, India was represented by Union Commerce and Industry Minister **Suresh Prabhu**.

**Uhuru Kenyatta** was sworn-in for a second and final five-year term for the post of President of Republic of Kenya.

**Uma Shankar** was appointed as the new Executive Director of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

## SPORTS

**Australia** defeated Argentina in the final of the Hockey World League Final to win gold at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

**Cristiano Ronaldo**, the Real Madrid and Portugal superstar, won the 2017 Ballon d'Or award for the year's best player in Paris, France.

**Deepika Kumari** from India won bronze at the Indoor Archery World Cup Stage 2 that concluded in Bangkok, Thailand.

**Gurdeep Singh** created three new senior national records in +105kg weight category in the recently concluded IWF World Weightlifting Championships at Anaheim in USA.

Minister of State (I/C) for Youth Affairs & Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore felicitated former Captain of Indian Football Team **Gurdev Singh Gill** for his outstanding contribution to Indian Football.

**India** won the first-ever South Asian Regional Badminton Team Championship by defeating Nepal in the final match.

**Indian** national hockey team secured the bronze medal at the Hockey World League tournament by defeating Germany.

Pistol aces **Jitu Rai** and Heena Sidhu bagged a bronze each to continue India's medal charge at the 10th Asian Championship 10m Rifle/Pistol in Wako City, Japan.

**Kanchanmala Pande** from Nagpur, the visually impaired swimmer, became the first Indian to win gold at the World Para Swimming Championship in Mexico.

**Mehuli Ghosh** and Tushar Mane became the first Indian shooters to secure the women's and men's quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) by winning a gold and bronze each at the 10th Asian Championship 10M Rifle/Pistol at Wako City, Japan.

The man behind India's best ever medal haul at the recently-concluded AIBA Women's Youth Boxing Championship, Italian coach **Raffaele Bergamasco**, was elevated to the position of Performance Director for senior women pugilists.

The first International Conference on Sports Medicine & Sports Sciences "**SAICON 2017**" was inaugurated by the Minister of State (I/C) Youth Affairs and Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore in New Delhi.

**Saurabh Chaudhary** and Manu Bhaker booked quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) by winning a gold and a silver each at the 10th Asian Championship 10m Rifle/Pistol at Wako City, Japan.

Wrestler **Sushil Kumar** and Boxer M C Mary C. Kom submitted their resignation as National Sports Observers, as both are still active in their respective fields.

Indian cricketer **Yuvraj Singh** launched the UNICEF-ICC's adolescent campaign "Power of Sports to Shape the Future of Adolescents" in Colombo, Sri Lanka to promote a UNICEF sports initiative for youngsters in South Asia.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### World

- Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the World conference on Vedas "Vishwa Ved Sammelan" in New Delhi.
- Norway became the first country in the world to shut down its entire FM (Frequency Modulation) radio network and replace it with digital radio.
- The 54th meeting of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) programming committee was held at Kathmandu.
- The World Human Rights Day (WHRD) was observed on December 10 with the theme 'Let's stand up for equality, justice and human dignity'.
- United States officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel thus becoming the first country to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which is claimed by both Israelis and Palestinians.
- The World Soil Day (WSD) was observed on December 5 with the theme "Caring for the Planet starts from the Ground".
- The US informed the UN that it was ending its participation in the Global Compact on Migration, a world group started in September 2016 with the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants by the 193-member UN General Assembly to promote "safe, orderly and regular migration". Under Donald Trump and his "America First" policies, the United States has withdrawn from several global commitments made under the administration of president Barack Obama, including the Paris climate deal.
- Amid a severe social and economic crisis, Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro said his government would launch the "petro," a crypto currency backed by oil, gas, that would help Venezuela advance in issues of monetary sovereignty, to make financial transactions and overcome the financial blockade.
- South Korea and the United States launched their largest-ever joint aerial drill exercise "Vigilant Ace-2017".
- The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was observed on December 3 with the theme "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all".
- The World AIDS Day was observed on December 1 with the theme "Right to health."

### India

- The third edition of World Telugu Conference was formally inaugurated by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- The National Energy Conservation Day (NECD) was celebrated in India by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power, on December 14.

- India was ranked 100th out of 149 countries at the 11th edition of Legatum Prosperity Index (LPI-2017)- the world's leading global measure of economic and social well-being. The list was topped by Norway, followed by New Zealand, and Finland.
- Rajasthan became India's first state to offer free e-mail address in Hindi to its residents.
- The Rajasthan Cabinet decided to accord those detained under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and Defence of India Rules during Emergency during 1975-77 outside the state the status of fighters for democracy. The detainees, most of them Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leaders, will now be entitled to pension and other allowances after getting the status of 'Loktantra Rakshak Sainani'.
- Alappuzha, in Kerala, is among five places in the world that have been recognised by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as success stories in fighting the problem of solid waste. Besides Alappuzha, the other cities on the list includes Osaka (Japan), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Penang (Malaysia) and Cajicá (Colombia).
- India has been declared free from trachoma, a contagious bacterial infection of the eye common among children. An announcement to this effect was made by Indian Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda.
- The Union Government sanctioned Rs. 75 crore for setting up a Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) bottling plant in Meghalaya - the only state in the region which has no bottling plant.
- Kacheguda railway station in Hyderabad became India's first Energy-Efficient 'A1 Category' Railway Station.
- The two-day Adivasi Mahotsav was held in Raipur, Chhattisgarh to display the rich and diverse tribal traditions of the State.
- India's 'first' mobile food testing laboratory, which will enable on-the-spot food safety tests to be conducted in Goa, was launched by Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar.
- The Taj Mahal, a mausoleum crafted in ivory-white marble, located in Uttar Pradesh's Agra, is the second best UNESCO world heritage site in the world, according to a new survey by a travel portal Trip Advisor. It is rated after Cambodia's Angkor Wat.
- The Armed Forces Flag Day was observed in India on December 7.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the BR Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi to encourage research and original thinking among the youth.
- Uttar Pradesh became the first State to endorse the Central government's draft bill that makes instant triple talaq a cognisable and non-bailable offence.
- The 6th International Tourism Mart 2017 was held in Guwahati, Assam.
- The Shamli district of Uttar Pradesh was included in the National Capital Region (NCR), taking the total number of districts in the NCR to 23.



- India's largest floating solar power plant became operational at the Banasura Sagar dam in Wayanad, Kerala.
- The first International exhibition and Conference on AYUSH and Wellness sector- AROGYA 2017 was held in New Delhi.
- The Indian Navy Day (IND) was observed on 4th December.
- India's first Madame Tussauds wax museum was officially opened in New Delhi.
- The World Telugu Conference was held in Hyderabad, with focus on ways to preserve, protect and enrich Telugu in the Telangana region.
- The Andhra Pradesh assembly passed the Kapu reservation bill to provide 5% quota to Kapu community under the Backward Castes (BC) 'F' Category in education and employment in the state.
- The Telangana State Government announced to set up the world's first IT Campus for differently-abled persons.
- India was re-elected to the Council of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) at an assembly of the organisation at its headquarters in London.
- The 14-day long Combined Military exercise 'Ajeya Warrior- 2017' between India and the United Kingdom (UK) was held in Rajasthan.