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National News

Central government officials to declare assets under new Lokpal rules

- The Union government has notified rules on declaration of assets and liabilities of its employees under the Lokpal Act.
- Though system of declaration of assets and liabilities has been in vogue, the Lokpal Act seeks to systematise it with additional information.
- As per the new rules notified by the government, its employees have to file returns with details on cash in hand, bank deposits, investment in bonds, debentures, shares and units in companies or mutual funds, insurance policies, provident fund, personal loans and advance given to a person or any entity, among others.
- The returns should give information about spouses as well. The employees' need to declare motor vehicles, aircraft, yachts or ships, gold and silver jewellery and bullion possessed by them, their spouses and dependent children, according to the form.
- The employees also to have to give details of their immovable properties along with statement of debts and other liabilities on first appointment or as on March 31 of every financial year.

Government promises broadband facility in every village

- The Centre promised to extend broadband facility to every village in the country with the active cooperation of State governments.
- More than 1.34 lakh internet enabled centres have been set up in rural areas to promote and develop information technology in rural areas of the country.
- Problem of unavailability of bandwidth and regional language barrier have impeded thee-governance initiatives in India, government said availability of bandwidth to important places will be done on priority basis.

Hubble telescope inspired technology helps restore eyesight

- NASA's telescopes are not just helping us look into the dark deep universe but have inspired surgeons to restore the eyesight of the elderly.
- The tiny telescopes inserted in Phyllis Price (a 79-year-old woman can see again) eyes, magnified the images and also directed them away from diseased parts of the eye and onto healthier areas.
- This "giant leap" in medical science holds hope to an optical disease that affects hundreds of thousands of elderly people.

TRAI paves way for sharing of all telecom spectrum

- Telecom sector regulator TRAI has recommended allowing sharing of all categories of spectrum.
- The move is likely to benefit major operators such as Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, Idea, Reliance Communications and Tata Teleservices, helping them reduce costs and at

the same time improve service quality.

- At present, telecom operators are allowed to share passive infrastructure such as mobile towers and have been demanding allowing of spectrum sharing for a long time.
- All access spectrum i.e. spectrum in the bands of 800/900/1800/2100/2300/2500 MHz will be sharable provided that both the licensees are having spectrum in the same band.

Shipping firms needn't renew licences every year

- The Ministry of Shipping has decided to reduce paperwork by scrapping the requirement of annual renewal of licenses for Indian ships and any other vessel chartered by an Indian citizen or company.
- Such licences will now be issued with a life-time fee instead of annual fee but the licence will be co-terminus with the certificate of Registry of the Ship.
- The decision also provides for all the five Registrars of Ships at Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Goa and Cochin to issue these licenses under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act,1958.

Parliament passes bill on Polavaram project

- Parliament on Monday passed a bill to facilitate transfer of 205 villages spread across seven mandals in the newly formed State of Telangana to the residual state of Andhra Pradesh for the multi-purpose Polavaram irrigation project.
- The bill, approved by Lok Sabha last week, was opposed by members of the House from Telangana and the States of Odisha and Chattisgarh on the plea that it would cause unwarranted displacement of 52 thousand scheduled caste families from the three States.
- The project is a difficult project to implement as it involves massive resettlement. It is on par with Sardar Sarovar Dam (in Gujarat) and Indira Sagar project in Madhya Pradesh.

SC Constitution Bench to decide on 'living will' to die with dignity

- A five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court will take up for consideration a petition seeking to declare the execution of a 'living will' of persons, suffering from chronic terminal diseases and likely to go into a permanent vegetative state, to refuse treatment to pave way for their death.
- Petition was filed by NGO Common Cause.
- AG Mr. Rohatgi said the issue had lot of legal, social and moral aspects concerning the humanity as a whole. He said right to die merely because of pain and suffering would not be in the interest of society as it was against public policy.
- Ruling in 'Aruna Shanbaug's case' decided that passive euthanasia is wrong.
- In November 2012 the Law Commission had submitted a report relating to passive euthanasia and 'living will'.

NCW backs amendments to Juvenile Justice Act

- National Commission for Women (NCW) chairperson Mamta Sharma on Wednesday said the Commission would back amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act to ensure proper punishment in rape cases.
- Ms Sharma reiterated that times were changing and keeping in mind that 45 per cent of the registered rape cases were perpetrated by juveniles, amendments were necessary in the law.
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development said juveniles committing rape should be tried as adults, the National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and child rights groups had opposed it.
- Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number cases against women at 8252, with Delhi coming second with 2000 cases and Haryana -864 cases.
- She also called for a Code of Conduct for Parliamentarians.
- The NCW is also short of funds and last year the annual budget was down to Rs nine crore, half of which goes for salaries.

SC/ST Amendment bill sent to standing committee

- A Bill that makes it a punishable offence for public servants to “wilfully neglect” duties on matters relating to atrocities against Scheduled Castes and Tribes was referred to a Standing Committee.
- The Bill replaces an Ordinance that states that if a non-SC/ST public servant wilfully neglects duties required to be performed under this Act, he or she shall be punished with imprisonment for a term from six months to one year.
- The Bill also makes provisions for States to set up special courts to try offences under the Act.

Special court to hear coal scam cases: SC

- The Supreme Court decided to set up a special court to try cases arising from the coal block allocation scam and also appoint a special public prosecutor to lead the cases there.
- The petitioner NGO common cause and CBI both accepted the name of Gopal Subramaniam as the special prosecutor.
- Court on Friday issued notice to seven private and public sector companies on central government’s plea seeking transfer, to apex court of all cases, challenging the cancellation of coal blocks allocated to them, pending before various high courts.

An emotional outpouring on Bangalore streets

- Emotions ran high as hundreds of people, including college students and members of several organisations, parents and grandparents took part in a rally, demanding justice for the six-year-old who was sexually assaulted in a school in Marathahalli earlier this month.
- The parents have urged the police to ensure that the evidence is not tampered with. They have also sought speedy trial of the accused in fast-track courts. The 10 demands also include police seeking answers from the management over the punishment meted out to the six-year-old, by keeping her in a dark room where the alleged crime is said to have taken place.

Modi government to go with UPA policy on FDI in retail

- The Narendra Modi Government is unlikely to rescind the foreign direct investment (FDI) policy for multi-brand retail that the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government had notified.
- The decision to continue with the UPA Government's policy has been taken as the Centre does not want to deny the freedom of choice that the notified FDI rules gives to States for choosing whether or not to let foreign retailers set up shop.
- The Modi Government also decided to carry on with the UPA Government's initiative of Aadhaar card for targetted schemes but new Government will issue Aadhaar numbers to Indian citizens only.

Water levels dip in major reservoirs

- Water level in major reservoirs in the country has dipped lower than the average of last 10 years, due to a weak south-west monsoon this year.
- Water storage in six reservoirs of the northern region, including Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan has dipped to 47 per cent as compared to 56 per cent in the corresponding period last year.
- In the western region comprising Gujarat and Maharashtra, where the monsoon is particularly deficient this year, the average water level in 22 reservoirs is reported to be 22 per cent of the total storage capacity as against 45 per cent in the corresponding period last year.
- In the central region comprising U.P., Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh the water level is on an average 31 per cent of the total capacity as against last year's 48 per cent.

Law Commission recommends fixed tenure for CJI

- A.P. Shah has recommended, Same retirement age of 65 for Supreme Court and High Court judges; a "cooling-off period" for judges after retirement; and a fixed tenure for Chief Justice of India.
- Justice Shah reasons that the retirement age of Supreme Court judges was increased to 65 as an "incentive" for High Court judges to leave the comfort of their hometowns and come to New Delhi. This consideration is no longer relevant, the note says. The retirement age of High Court judges is 62. Elevation to the Supreme Court guarantees them an additional three-year tenure.
- It recommends that the Chief Justice of India should get a fixed tenure of two years in case their tenure as CJI is less than two years. This step should be implemented from August 26, 2022 after the junior-most judge currently serving in the Supreme Court, and who is slated to be CJI, retires.
- The note says the JAC should be a seven-member body with the CJI as chairperson, and three Supreme Court judges. Incidentally, the note has the Law Minister as the sole representative from the government side "to ensure that the executive has a meaningful voice".

Govt to review DTC bill in its present form

- Draft DTC Bill prepared by the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee in 2010 which proposed the slabs at Rs 2-5 lakh (10 per cent), Rs 5-10 lakh (20 per cent) and

Rs 10 lakh and above (30 per cent). Here the corporate tax was proposed at 30 per cent.

- The Standing Committee on Finance headed by Senior BJP leader Yashwant Sinha suggested raising the income tax exemption limit to Rs 3 lakh as against Rs 2 lakh proposed in the DTC Bill, 2010.
- The Standing Committee in its recommendation suggested the slabs in the brackets of Rs 3-10 lakh, Rs 10-20 lakh and Rs 20 lakh and above. On corporate tax, it recommended that the rate be retained at 30 per cent. 11 per cent jump in Home Ministry's budget
- The Home Ministry was allocated Rs. 65,745 crore in the 2014-15 Budget announced on Thursday, a 11 per cent jump over last year's outlay.
- It is also proposed to set up 'Crisis Management Centres' in all the districts of National Capital Territory of Delhi this year in all government and private hospitals. The funding will be provided from the Nirbhaya Fund setup after 16th december 2012 incident in Delhi.
- CRPF which is involved in anti-Naxal operations besides maintaining security situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeastern region has been allocated Rs. 12,169.51 crore comparison to Rs. 11,373.72 crore it received last year.
- The BSF, which guards Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh borders ; Assam Rifles, which plays a key role in anti-insurgency operations in the Northeast and guards the Indo-Myanmar border ; The ITBP, which guards the icy heights along the Sino-Indian border etc. have all seen a rise in their allocation.
- A sum of Rs. 11.37 crore has been allocated for developing traffic and communication networks and model traffic systems in NCR, Rs. 11.50 crore for installation of traffic signals in the national capital and Rs 110 crore for construction of fortified police stations in Naxal-affected states.

Govt proposes over Rs. 2,000 cr for Ganga Conservation Mission

- An integrated programme for the conservation of river Ganga called "Namami Gange" with an outlay of Rs 2,037 crores has been proposed.
- To harness the enthusiasm of the NRI community towards the conservation of the river Ganga, an 'NRI Fund for Ganga' will be set up which will finance special projects.
- A sum of Rs. 100 crore has been set aside for Ghat development and beautification of the river front at Kedarnath, Haridwar, Kanpur, Varanasi, Allahabad, Patna and Delhi.
- The budget also contains the first ever effort to link the rivers across the country with the Finance Minister setting aside a sum of Rs. 100 crore in the current budget to expedite the preparation of Detailed Project Reports.

Govt to continue Aadhaar, provides Rs. 2k cr in 2014-15

- A sum of Rs 2,039.64 crore has been provided for 2014-15 to execute the task of implementing Unique Identification as entrusted to Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI).
- UIDAI was mandated to collect biometrics of 600 million residents in the country

and rest of the population was to be covered under the National Population Register (NPR) project.

- Cabinet Committee on UIDAI decided that all residents would be issue National Multi-purpose Identity Cards under NPR and UIDAI would generate Unique identification number for the entire population. Both UIDAI and NPR were to share the biometric data collected by them for issuing NMIC and generating unique identification number.
- The NPR is a comprehensive identity database maintained by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Home Ministry.

Supreme Court stays order quashing VC's appointment

- The Supreme Court stayed an order of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, quashing the appointment of Kalyani Mathivanan as Vice-Chancellor of Madurai Kamaraj University.
- After hearing senior counsel K.K. Venugopal, who appeared for Ms. Kalyani, a Bench of Justices S.J. Mukhopadhaya and Ranjan Gogoi issued notice to the respondents, including the petitioner who got the appointment quashed.
- Since 1965, Madurai Kamaraj University, like every other university in Tamil Nadu, had prescribed no qualification for appointment as Vice-Chancellor, going instead by the wisdom of the Chancellor and the experience of the search committee. The UGC Regulations, introduced in 2010, upset the existing mechanism, affecting the federal structure of the Constitution.

DoPT launches e-service record system for govt. employees

- With the objective to promote a paperless regime and better human resource management, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has launched an e-service record book portal for government employees.
- Earlier documented in paper files, the service record provides information on various portfolios and posts held by a particular government employee.
- In future, it would also prove to be of great assistance in an efficient management of human resource. The system can facilitate work allocation based on the skills and experiences of the employees under consideration for a particular post or department.
- The DoPT has also launched a Basic Leadership Skills Module for Central Secretariat Services officers at the Institute of Secretariat Training and Management. The module is expected to equip civil servants with the skills that help them function efficiently in a complex and challenging environment.
- A Learning Resource Centre has also been set up with a mandate to identify and adopt the leading national and international practices in the field of training techniques and technologies to strengthen the Trainers Development Programme, to develop a cadre of high quality trainers.



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International News

Algerian plane disappeared over northern Mali

- An Air Algerie flight carrying 116 people from Burkina Faso to Algeria's capital Algiers disappeared from radar over northern Mali after heavy rains were reported, nearly half of the passengers were French.
- The plane sent its last message around 1.30 a.m. GMT (9.30 p.m. EDT), asking Niger air control to change its route because of heavy rains in the area.
- Northern Mali fell under control of ethnic Tuareg separatists and then al-Qaeda-linked Islamic extremists following a military coup in 2012. A French-led intervention last year scattered the extremists, but the Tuaregs have pushed back against the authority of the Bamako-based government.

World needs India to succeed: WB president

- The world was closely watching the new government in India and needed India to succeed in order to end extreme poverty by 2020, According to Jim Yong Kim, president of the World Bank Group.
- He also mentioned, If the ranking of India in Doing Business Report(DBR) was based just on Gujarat, [the country] would improve 50 places. So our hope is that what Mr. Modi did in Gujarat in improving the business environment is scaled to all of India, if that does happen, India will rise very quickly in the DBR rankings.
- WB will provide financial support to India worth \$15-18 billion over the next three years.
- He added, "The world needs India to succeed. If India reaches its economic goals, several million people will be lifted out of poverty in a generation's time. This represents an historic opportunity [which is] critical not only for India but for the world if we are to end extreme poverty by 2020."

West Asia: dialogue only viable option, says India

- India expressed "deep concern" over the escalation of conflict between Israel and Palestine. India also reiterated its joint stand — with IBSA and BRICS partners — to promote dialogue and understanding in Palestine and Israel.
- In a statement made at the 21st special session of the UNHRC — on the human rights situation in occupied Palestinian territory — India urged for an immediate ceasefire and called on both sides to resume dialogue.
- The solution to the "Palestine issue," India said, should be based on relevant U.N. resolutions, the Arab Peace Plan and the Quartet Roadmap resulting in a "sovereign, independent, viable and united State of Palestine within secure and recognised borders side-by-side at peace with Israel and with East Jerusalem as its capital".

India home to one in every three child brides in world: UN

- According to a United Nations report, India has the sixth highest prevalence of child marriages in the world, with one in every three child bride living in India.

- Child marriage among girls is most common in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and India is among the top 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage.
- Worldwide, more than 700 million women alive today were married as children or before their 18th birthday.
- In India, about 27 per cent of women aged 20 to 49 years were married before age 15. About 31 per cent of women in that age group were married after age 15 but before they turned 18.
- The report added that in India, the median age at first marriage is 19.7 years for women in the richest quintile compared to 15.4 for the poorest women.

UN Security Council calls for ceasefire as Gaza toll rises to 501

- The powerful 15-nation Council held an emergency meeting and expressed serious concern about the escalation of violence in and around Gaza.
- The Palestinian death toll rose to 501 after bodies of 16 people who were killed in an Israeli air strike on a house in the south of the Gaza Strip were found this morning.
- The members of the Security Council called for an immediate cessation of hostilities based on the November 2012 ceasefire agreement reached between Israel and Hamas.
- The Council also emphasised the need to improve the humanitarian situation, including thorough humanitarian pauses, such as the five-hour truce brokered last week by the Secretary-General's Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Robert Serry.
- The emergency UNSC meeting came even as Mr. Ban is in the region as part of a visit aimed at expressing solidarity with Israelis and Palestinians and help bringing about a ceasefire.
- Meanwhile U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry to Cairo to meet Egyptian and other officials on the volatile situation in the Gaza Strip and seek an immediate cessation of hostilities.
- Mr. Kerry told that Israel is responding to an intransigent Hamas that it was offered a ceasefire and didn't want to take it.

Typhoon Rammasun leaves 13 dead in Vietnam

- The typhoon slammed southern China and the Philippines with torrential rain and gales before hitting Vietnam.
- At least 94 people were reported killed in the Philippines and Twenty-six were killed in China.
- Now thirteen people were killed and four remain missing after Typhoon Rammasun made landfall in northern Vietnam.
- Heavy rain also caused landslides in Lang Son province, which borders China, killing five people.

UN chief heads to Middle East to help end conflict

- Amid an escalation of violence in the Middle East, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon will leave for the region to help end the conflict between Israel and Palestinians that has killed more than 300 people, mostly civilians.

- Mr. Ban is currently reviewing a request by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas which would place Palestine under an international protection system administered by the UN.
- Mr. Abbas met with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi in Cairo, and both agreed to the necessity of an immediate ceasefire and the urgency of holding a donors conference to start rebuilding the Gaza Strip.

Iran nuke talks to be extended till Nov 24

- Iran and six world powers failed on Saturday to meet their target date for cutting a nuclear deal but agreed to extend the talks until Nov. 24.
- There are still differences over the size and capacity of activities by Tehran that could be used to make nuclear arms.
- Months of exhausting negotiations were meant to culminate in an agreement by Sunday that would limit programs Iran says it needs to produce energy and for other peaceful purposes but which can also be used to make nuclear arms.
- Both the U.S. and Tehran facing pressure from powerful skeptics at home, the extra time means that both will increasingly be negotiating not only with each other but also those at home.
- The main dispute remains over uranium enrichment, Iran, pushed to be allowed to expand its enrichment program over the next eight years to a level that would need about 190,000 current model centrifuges. It now has about 20,000 centrifuges, with half of them operating. But U.S. said that even 10,000 are too many. Diplomats say Washington wants no more than 2,000.
- Iran has received more than \$6 billion of sanctions relief since late last year under an interim nuclear deal and the U.S. officials said that Tehran would get access to an additional \$2.8 billion of frozen assets during the extended talks.

U.N. aviation body to help with Ukraine probe

- Officials of ICAO, the U.N. body in charge of civil aviation based in Montreal are being dispatched to assist the Ukrainian investigative team to ascertain just what led to the tragic crash of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine.
- ICAO Council President Dr. Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu in a statement announcing that a team of experts would be sent "in response to an official request from Ukraine's government."
- Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko announced there would be an "open enquiry" into the crash.
- Ukraine and Russia have since traded charges on who operated the complex anti-aircraft system which is available to both the Ukrainian military as well as the Russian army.
- ICAO official said that some of the blame must be apportioned to the Ukrainian government for allowing the air corridor open over a part of the country under rebel control which is an active zone of conflict.
- In march this year, the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) in New Delhi had instructed Indian airlines to move to flying 50 nautical miles above the current flight path, but that still remained over Ukraine.

- After the MH 17 crash, another DGCA advisory has shifted the suggested flight path 100 nautical miles further north.
- Meanwhile Ukraine accused pro-Russian insurgents of destroying evidence at the crash site of the Malaysia Airlines jet.
- German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a joint call for an independent commission to have immediate access to the site.

Pipeline to Pakistan may revive stalled mega projects

- India's decision to pipe natural gas and other petroleum products to Pakistan is being seen as a first step that could lead to the revival of two stalled mega undertakings involving Islamabad — the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline and the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) project.
- Instability in Pakistan's Baluchistan, through which the proposed IPI would pass, coupled with the policy of the United States so far to seek Iran's political and economic isolation, have impeded the project.
- But the IPI could revive, should a breakthrough be achieved in the ongoing nuclear talks between Iran and the six global powers.

11 top Ukrainian separatists hit with EU sanctions

- Ukrainian separatist leader Alexander Borodai and 10 other top rebel officials were hit with EU sanctions. This will include travel ban and asset freeze.
- Ukraine has seen a descent into violence since February, when former President Viktor Yanukovich fled the former Soviet nation following mass protests over his reluctance to seek closer ties with the EU.
- The separatists have also declared the Donetsk and Luhansk regions independent from Ukraine, with Borodai — a 41-year-old political consultant from Moscow — appointed in May as Prime Minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic.
- New Ukrainian President petro poroshenko called for uprooting of rebels, which led to continuous clashes between ukrainian authority and seperatist.

The European Court of Human Rights upheld France's controversial burqa

- The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) upheld France's controversial burqaban, rejecting arguments that outlawing full-face veils breaches religious freedom.
- In a case brought by a 24-year-old French woman with the support of a British legal team, the court ruled that France was justified in introducing the ban in the interests of social cohesion.
- The court emphasised that states should be allowed a degree of discretion — "a wide margin of appreciation" — on a policy issue which is subject to significant differences of opinion. Two of the 17 judges who spent several months deliberating on the case dissented from the majority view that the ban did not breach the European Convention on Human Rights' provisions protecting the freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Japan's defence policy shift slammed

- China has slammed the move by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government to reinterpret the country's Pacifist Constitution to enable a wider role for the Japanese military overseas, terming the decision "a brutal violation" of the spirit of the post-Second World War Constitution.
- Mr. Abe's Cabinet approved a reinterpretation of the post-war imposed Pacifist Constitution that severely limited the use of the Japanese military, even when on overseas peacekeeping missions. The reinterpretation now allows for "collective self-defence" that would permit Japan to come to the aid of its allies overseas.
- That the move came amid the most heightened tensions between China and Japan in many years over disputed East China Sea islands and questions over war-time history has prompted analysts in Beijing to see the reinterpretation as being directed at China.
- "The new policy raises doubts about Japan's approach to peaceful development. We urge Japan to sincerely respect the rightful concerns of neighbouring Asian countries, diligently solve any related issues, and not affect China's rights and the stability of the region, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei was quoted as saying by the official Xinhua news agency.

Xi Jinping's historic Sri Lanka visit

- China's President Xi Jinping will this year become the first Chinese head of state to visit Sri Lanka in three decades, underlining Beijing's renewed push to deepen its strategic and economic presence in the neighbourhood and in the Indian Ocean.
- Mr. Xi's visit was discussed in Beijing this week as Sri Lankan Minister of Economic Development Basil Rajapaksa, as the President's Special Envoy, met with the Chinese leadership.
- The Chinese leader will become the first President to visit Sri Lanka since former leader Li Xiannian in 1986. His visit assumes significance in the context of strengthening ties between the two countries, with China investing heavily in the island nation.
- A \$500 million- built port built by the Chinese was inaugurated in Colombo last year giving Beijing a strong foothold in one of the busiest international shipping routes in the world. With heavy investment in infrastructure, including in a massive port it helped build in Hambantota along Sri Lanka's southern coast, China is said to have surpassed Japan and India as the biggest contributor to investments in the island nation.
- Foreign policy experts have often pointed to Sri Lanka playing the "China card" against India, which has invested in some key projects in the neighbouring country, including a massive housing project targeting 50,000 homes in the war-torn north that it is currently engaged in.
- For Chinese President Xi, Sri Lanka has become a particularly important country as a crucial point on his government's signature "maritime silk road" economic initiative, which the President unveiled in October in a bid to boost maritime connectivity and economic ties in the neighbourhood.

Hamas agrees to 24-hour truce in Gaza

- Israel extended the humanitarian truce in Gaza for another 24 hours at the request of the United Nations, but Hamas resumed rocket fire and rejected the move saying no ceasefire is valid without Israeli tanks withdrawing from Gaza as conflict killed 1,050

Palestinians.

- Hamas later agreed to observe a 24-hour humanitarian truce as fighting resumed and the two sides wrangled over the terms of a lull the international community hopes can be expanded into a more sustainable truce.

Construction of bridge with world's tallest pillar begins

- Construction of the world's tallest railway bridge with the tallest pillar — it'll be 141 metres-high — has begun near Noney in Manipur.
- The bridge, which spans over a gorge with an overall length of about 700 meters, is part of the 111-km long Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal broad gauge railway line under construction that will connect Manipur's capital Imphal with the country's railway network.
- This bridge is slated to become the tallest in the world from the point of view of pillar height surpassing the existing tallest of Mala-Rijeka viaduct on Belgrade-Bar railway line in Europe where the height of pillars is 139 m.

India And The World

India links trade pact to food subsidies deal

- India said at the WTO General Council meeting in Geneva that the failure of the trade body to work in the interests of all its members and to deliver meaningfully on the development mandate of the Doha Development Round would pose a far more serious risk to its credibility than any other factor.
- India suggested that the adoption of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) be postponed till satisfactory progress is made on the issue of finding permanent protection for India's minimum support prices to farmers against the WTO subsidy caps that are benchmarked to food prices of the 1980s.
- India said it was not opposed to the TFA but demanded that other decisions of Bali be taken forward in the same time frame and demanded that the adoption of the TF Protocol be postponed till a permanent solution on public stockholding for food security is found.
- India proposed modifications to the Protocol, including setting December 31, 2014 as the deadline for finding a permanent solution on public stockholding for food security, Other suggestions include the immediate establishment of an institutional mechanism such as a dedicated Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture to arrive at the permanent solution by the deadline.
- India pointed out that the developing countries had accepted the Bali package in good faith reassured by the renewed affirmation of commitment to the Doha Development Agenda and its development dimension

Chinese rail lines up to India border

- China is planning the construction of two railway lines in Tibet that will extend up to the border with India and are expected to be completed by 2020.
- The railway lines will run from the town of Shigatse, which next month will be connected to the Qinghai-Tibet railway line that extends to Lhasa.
- Railway line will be further extended during the 13th five year plan period (2016-2020), running to two regions near the border with India: Yatung, a trade centre close to Sikkim and Bhutan, and to Nyingchi in the east, near the Arunachal Pradesh border.
- A third railway line will be build to Gyirong, where there is a trade and border checkpoint connecting Tibet's Yatung county and Nepal.
- It will accelerate transportation of the mineral products, which could only be transmitted through highways that often risk being cut off during rainy seasons or see vehicle turnovers, the bargaining chips will be increased on the Chinese side if people in the South Tibet region see better economic development in southwestern Tibet.

India to host IBSA Summit next year

- India will be hosting the 7th IBSA (India-Brazil-South Africa) Summit in 2015.
- IBSA is a trilateral initiative amongst India, Brazil and South Africa "to promote, inter-alia, South-South cooperation and exchange".

- The platform was announced, following a meeting of the foreign ministers of the three countries in Brasilia in 2003, through the adoption of the Brasilia Declaration.
- The IBSA summit involves consultations at the Heads of State level while meetings between Ministers and officials are held at the Trilateral Joint Commission and Focal Point levels respectively.
- New Delhi would also be hosting the India Africa Forum in December this year.

India refuses to ratify TF Protocol

- Protesting against the imbalance in favour of developed countries at the ongoing World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations at Geneva, India broke away from the consensus on the Trade Facilitation (TF) Protocol. India's refusal to ratify this agreement that has been readied to their satisfaction as a follow up to the Bali Ministerial decisions of last December has led to a stalemate at the talks.
- In a strong statement India said it will support the TF agreement only if there is progress in Geneva on mechanisms for ensuring permanent protection of the government's Minimum Support Price (MSP) against the WTO's subsidy caps.
- The new government is clear that the MSP is a tool important enough for us to take this stand at the WTO.
- India has repeatedly expressed concern over the uneven pace of work at the negotiations in Geneva over the past few months but despite that the imbalance in progress has persisted.

India, U.S. to discuss problems in nuclear trade

- Mr. Kerry will be meeting External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj along with a full delegation for the fifth Indo-U.S. Strategic Dialogue.
- Mr. Kerry will also meet Mr. Jaitley, and sources said discussions on defence purchases that the U.S. is pushing, including helicopters, missiles, and ultra-light howitzer guns, are expected to be positive.
- During the strategic dialogue, India and the U.S. will try and iron out the issues in conducting civil nuclear trade. Despite interest from companies such as Westinghouse and GE, trade has been blocked over U.S. concerns on India's suppliers' liability clause. India has already been able to cross similar hurdles with France and Russia.

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Business and Economy

Govt clears 19 FDI proposals

- The government has cleared 19 foreign investment proposals, including that of Walt Disney Company and Reckitt Benckiser (India), entailing total investment of Rs. 2,326.72 crore.
- The FIPB, however, rejected an investment proposal of Multi-Commodity Exchange of India (MCX), the FIPB also rejected foreign investment application of George Institute for Global Health (Hyderabad), BIESSE Manufacturing Company (Bangalore) and three others.
- The government gave its nod to the proposal of Walt Disney Company (Southeast Asia) Pte Ltd, Singapore.

Government extends NDA's senior citizen pension scheme for one more year

- Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana, first introduced by the previous NDA government has been revived again for the period of one year.
- Govt. also proposed setting up a committee to examine unclaimed amounts lying as deposits in accounts of PPF, Post Office and other saving schemes and recommend how this amount can be used to protect and further financial interests of the senior citizens.

Pay revised wages for MGNREGA, says SC

- The Supreme Court on Friday directed all States to pay workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MGNREGA) revised wages as per the notification issued by the Centre in February this year.
- It further asked the government to find a way out to end the disparity between the wages paid under the MGNREGA and State-mandated rates under the Minimum Wages Act.
- As per the February 13, 2014 notification issued by the Ministry of Rural Development, the wages per day to be paid by the States and Union Territories range from Rs. 156 in Uttarakhand to Rs. 236 in Haryana.

TRAI warns against raising call rates

- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has warned telecom service providers against increasing call rates and other tariffs beyond the base (maximum) rates in a bid to pay off their debts.
- Base rates or headline tariffs are the maximum call or service rates that a telecom operator can charge to its customers but normally companies charge less than these rates.
- At present most of the telecom operators have fixed base rate at 2 paise per second. The regulator allows free hand to fix telecom call and service rates as it feels that competition in the market will keep control on tariffs.
- Apprehensions over an increase in rates were spiked after TRAI recently released its

recommendations on spectrum sharing and lowering of leased line rates that could lead to cost savings for mobile operators.

- "I do not expect headline tariff to change. If they change, as and when they change, then the TRAI reserves the right to go back and look at it again if forbearance should be continued or not." TRAI Chairman Mr. Khullar said.

More steps will be taken to sustain economic recovery

- Finance Minister said that there was "no contradiction in being pro-business and being pro-poor." Only a spike in economic activity could create the resources "to service the poor" through social welfare programmes.
- Mr. Jaitley outlined a road map for economic recovery through a stable tax regime, targeted subsidies for the poor and marginalised and using private investment to boost infrastructure and housing, foreign direct investment (FDI) in defence and insurance.
- He said that new government has pushed for fiscal discipline than populism and it intended to rationalise subsidies so that they benefitted the poor, not the middle class through subsidies in the oil sector and education.

Contingent liabilities of states a cause for concern, says RBI paper

- A working paper of the Reserve Bank of India titled "Debt sustainability at the State level in India" sounded a warning that the contingent liabilities, primarily in the form of issuance of guarantees by the state governments, remained an area of concern.
- Going forward, there could be downside risks in case the slowdown in growth momentum observed during the last two years persisted.
- The debt position of state governments witnessed a significant improvement from 2004-05 onwards. This has been attributed, among others, to the implementation of Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Acts/Fiscal Responsibility Legislations (FRLs) at the state level in early 2000s.
- Karnataka was the first to enact its FRBM Act in September 2002, followed by Kerala (2003), Tamil Nadu (2003) and Punjab (2003).
- This was also supported by the implementation of Debt Swap Scheme (DSS) from 2002-03 to 2004-05 and Debt Consolidation and Relief Facility (DCRF) from 2005-06 to 2009-10. These two debt restructuring schemes provided debt relief through debt consolidation, and reduced the interest burden on the states.
- These developments were mirrored in lower debt-GDP ratio at 26.6 per cent in end-March 2008, before declining further to 21.7 per cent in end-March 2013.

Housing for all by 2022 and Rs. 7,060 crore for 100 smart cities

- Finance Minister offered a tax sop for homeowners by extending the additional tax incentive on home loans.
- A sum of Rs. 4,000 crore has been earmarked for National Housing Bank with a view to increase the flow of cheaper credit for affordable housing to the urban poor.
- Slum development has been added to the list of Corporate Social Responsibility

(CSR) activities.

- Government announced 100 smart cities, which will be enabled with the latest technology like wi-fi connectivity and infrastructure and will have concepts such as sustainability, walking spaces and specialised domains.

FDI limit in insurance, defence hiked to 49 %

- Government proposed hiking the foreign direct investment limit in insurance and defence sectors to 49 per cent, with full Indian management and control, through the FIPB (Foreign Investment Promotion Board) route.
- Government also proposed Rs. 5,000 crore hike in defence allocation over the previous interim budget.
- Mr. Jaitley also announced that Rs. 1,000 crore were being earmarked for strategic

SAT dismisses RIL appeal

- The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT), dismissed an appeal filed by Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) against capital market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), which rejected RIL's consent application on an insider trading case.
- The case involved trading in shares of RIL's group company, Reliance Petroleum, in November, 2007.
- "Since Section 15T(2) is deleted and Section 15JB (4) is inserted to the SEBI Act with retrospective effect from April 20, 2007, by Ordinance No: 2 of 2014, which bars appeal against any order passed in consent proceedings, we have no option but to dismiss the appeal," said Justice J. P. Devadhar, Presiding Officer of SAT, in his order.

Science and Technology

Govt. mulls use of radiation tech to preserve vegetables

- The government proposes to adopt radiation technology developed by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) for improving the shelf-life of fruits and vegetables especially onions, potatoes and tomatoes to address the issue of supply side shortage that often results in price rise.
- Radioactive technology had been available in the country for some time and already in use in Maharashtra, though on a small scale, Safety concerns should be taken care of as existing norms do not permit radiation above a permissible limit.
- Food irradiation is a physical process in which food and farm commodities, in pre-packed form or in bulk, are exposed to controlled radiation energy to prevent sprouting, delay ripening, kill insects, pests, pathogenic and spoilage micro-organisms.

MH17 black boxes handed over to British experts

- The British government has confirmed that the two black boxes from Malaysian airlines Flight MH 17 that crashed in eastern Ukraine killing 298 on board have been handed over to British investigators.
- Boxes will contain recordings of all cockpit conversations prior to the crash, The AAIB can now analyse hours of conversation and the contents of the flight data recorder for clues on why and how the plane went down.
- The boxes were handed over by a joint technical protocol signed by representatives of the Netherlands, Malaysia, Ukraine and the United Nations' International Civil Aviation Organisation.
- The AAIB is responsible for the investigation of civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents within the U.K.

Poor healthcare ups private spending

- The ninth edition of the National Health Profile, 2013, reveals that per capita private expenditure on health is three to four times higher than per capita public expenditure.
- Funds flow to the health sector is maximum by private funds at 71.62 per cent as per 2008-09 estimates, while public funds had accounted only for 26.70 per cent.
- The report by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare says the expenditure on health has gone down from 4.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2000 to 3.7 per cent in 2010.
- Madhya Pradesh reported the maximum number of foeticide and infanticide cases, with Uttar Pradesh in the second position followed by Maharashtra.
- Morbidity due to non-communicable diseases accounts for a large share of the disease burden in India. The number of cases of coronary heart disease was estimated to be nearly 3.6 crore for the year 2005, which is expected to reach 6.1 crore by 2015.
- Medical education infrastructure has shown rapid growth in the last 20 years. There are 381 medical colleges and 19,817 hospitals with 6,28,708 beds in the country.

GEAC clears field trials for GM crops

- The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has given the green signal for field trials of genetically modified (GM) rice, mustard, cotton, chickpea and brinjal.
- While the GEAC has approved the commercial release of Bt brinjal it has been stayed by the Ministry of Environment and Mr. Pande said the government would have to take a decision on this.
- The only genetically modified crop approved for release in India is cotton.
- Three companies - Bayer Bio Sciences, Monsanto and BASF have been allowed to import the Soyabean oil, which is genetically modified. The last time Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), gave a clean chit to imported samples.

Seven new dwarf galaxies discovered

- Astronomers have used a new type of telescope made by stitching together telephoto lenses to discover seven new dwarf galaxies.
- Their Dragonfly Telephoto Array uses eight telephoto lenses with special coatings that suppress internally scattered light, This makes the telescope uniquely adept at detecting the very diffuse, low surface brightness.
- The previously unseen galaxies may yield important insights into dark matter and galaxy evolution
- These are the same kind of lenses that are used in sporting events like the World Cup.

Mars orbiter spacecraft to reach target in 75 days

- Exactly 75 days from Saturday, India's Mars spacecraft is scheduled for a rendezvous with the red planet, Mars Orbiter Spacecraft has travelled 525 million km on its heliocentric arc.
- In the last crucial milestone on June 11, ISRO performed the second Trajectory Correction Manoeuvre (TCM—2) on the orbiter as a mid-course correction to keep the spacecraft on course.
- The ambitious Mars mission under a Rs 450 crore project was launched from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh onboard the Pollar Satellite Launch Vehicle on November 5 2013.

INS Kamorta handed over to Navy and Navy gets its largest destroyer

- INS Kamorta, the first in series of anti-submarine corvettes indigenously built by Kolkata based Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE), was handed over to Indian Navy.
- It is first Indian Naval warship ever built in the country with almost 90 per cent of indigenous content.
- The Indian Navy has got its largest-ever destroyer after the addition of the 163 metre-long vessel Kolkata (D63).
- Kolkata (D63) is India's first domestically built guided missile destroyer to feature a Western-style air search radar and stealth technology.

- Kolkata has an all-round capability against enemy submarines, surface warships, anti-ship missiles and fighter aircraft.
- It incorporates modern weapons and sensors having advanced information warfare suite, an auxiliary control system with sophisticated power distribution architecture and modular crew quarters.

PSLV C23 successfully put five foreign satellites

- India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle C-23 successfully put five foreign satellites into orbit in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Indian Space Research Organisation's spaceport in Sriharikota.
- In a smooth 20-minute mission, the ISRO launched the 714-kg French earth observation satellite SPOT-7, the 14-kg German AISAT, the two 15-kg Canadian NLS7.1 (CAN-X4) and NLS7.2 (CAN-X5) and the 7-kg Singapore VELOX-1. Following a "perfect" lift-off at 9.52 a.m., the PSLV-C23's four stages came to life and fell off as programmed — the 4-storey heat shield which protected the satellites from turbulence, split in two and fell into the Bay of Bengal. Soon, all five were in their slots at a height of more than 660 km.
- Observing that 40 of the 67 PSLV satellites were put into orbit from 19 foreign countries, Mr. Modi said it was "a global endorsement of India's capabilities".

ISRO must develop Saarc satellite- Modi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked India's space community to take up "the challenge of developing a Saarc satellite" which can be dedicated to "our neighbourhood, as a gift from India".
- He suggested that the Saarc satellite could provide a full range of applications and services to all neighbours of India. He also asked the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) "to enlarge the footprint of our satellite-based navigation system to cover all of South India."
- Mr. Modi, who addressed the ISRO employees from the Mission Control Centre (MCC) at Sriharikota after the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C23) successfully put five foreign satellites into orbit, wanted the ISRO to develop more advanced satellites with higher degree of computation, imaging and transmission. "We must expand our satellite footprint in terms of frequency and quality."
- The Prime Minister praised India's space scientists for helping the country become a self-reliant space power. India could be proud that its space programme was indigenous and the country

Sports

India aims top three finish in Glasgow CWG

- The unprecedented success achieved in the last edition in India would be hard to replicate this time after the dropping of a few disciplines, a 215-strong Indian contingent would nonetheless seek a top-five finish in the 20th Commonwealth Games.
- India finished second behind Australia with a record 101 medal haul in New Delhi Games.
- The Delhi CWG triggered an ascent in sports achievements with another record-breaking show in the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou where India won 65 medals. Two years later, the country won six medals in London, almost half of the individual medals won in the entire Olympic history.
- The Games will see 4,500 athletes from 71 nations of the erstwhile British empire compete for the top honours with superstar sprinter Usain Bolt of Jamaica and middle and long distance king Mo Farah of England expected to set the Hampden Park Stadium ablaze.
- India, which has sent 215 athletes in 14 sports, will be hit hard by the scrapping of archery and tennis from Glasgow Games and the reduction in the number of medal events in shooting and wrestling. The country had won a combined 12 medals from archery and tennis in 2010 while bagging 14 medals from the 18 events dropped this time from shooting. Greco-Roman category in wrestling, from which India won eight medals in 2010, has also been done away with in Glasgow.

Germany lift FIFA World Cup 2014 title

- Germany's Mario Götze kicks in second half of extra time to win 1-0 against Argentina in final of the FIFA World Cup 2014. Germany became the first side from Europe to win a World Cup in South America.
- Lionel Messi Of Argentina was awarded Golden Ball, which is given to best player of the tournament.
- This was Germanies fourth world cup, last coming in 1990 against the same opponent. This is the first World Cup for unified Germany, the previous three having been won by West Germany in 1954, 1974 and 1990.
- Argentina last won world cup in 1986, which was played in Mexico.
- Manuel Neuer of Germany won the Golden Glove, award for best goalkeeper.
- James Rodriguez of Colombia won the Golden boot award for most number(6) of goals in the tournament.

Djokovic comes up trumps in a classic tussle

- Two great players nudged each other to even greater heights to produce a Wimbledon final that will go down as one of the finest in its history. One of them, Novak Djokovic, would eventually lift the trophy having beaten his opponent Roger Federer in five close sets 6-7(7), 6-4, 7-6(4), 5-7, 6-4.
- But the scoreline and the victory seemed to pale before the tennis itself, which was

the real winner as these two champions outplayed themselves. This was a match that was undeserving of being assessed by the twists and turns and the thrills and spills, even if there was enough of that edge-of-the-seat suspense which left the audience gasping.

- When remembered as a great tennis match, the Federer-Djokovic final will not be read like an exciting pot-boiler, but like a literary novel that produced classical tennis of great quality and refinement. Every shot in the book was used and the exchanges forced the two players to constantly innovate, take risks and play boldly, often in an audacious manner.

Russian award for Viswanathan Anand

- Chess greats Viswanathan Anand (India) and Boris Gelfand (Israel) have been selected for the Russian Federation's 'Order of Friendship' award.
- The awards recognise foreign nationals' contribution to expanding friendship and cooperation with the Russian Federation and to the development of economic, scientific and cultural ties.
- Anand and Gelfand played the FIDE world chess championship match at the State Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow in 2012.

Indian boxers in CWGs

Led by Olympic bronze medallist Vijender Singh, Indian pugilists stole the lime-light on the ninth day of the competitions with four of them assuring silver medals for India while paddlers Achanta Sharath Kamal and Anthony Amalraj bagged a silver in the men's doubles event of the 20th Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

Indian powerlifter Sakina wins bronze

Indian powerlifter Sakina Khatun won the bronze in the women's lightweight (up to 61kg) category to give the country its first medal of day 10 of the 2014 Commonwealth Games on Saturday.

Sakina lifted a total weight of 88.2 kg to finish third.

Esther Oyema (136kg) of Nigeria took home the gold while England's Natalie Blake took home the silver with a 100.2kg lift.

India with the latest addition of medal take their tally to 52, including 13 golds, 23 silvers and 16 bronzes.

Seema Punia takes discus silver

Seema Punia gave India a second track and field medal by clinching the silver in women's discus throw of the athletic events of the Commonwealth Games.

The Indian had a season's best throw of 61.61m off her fifth effort as she finished second best behind Australian gold medallist Dani Samuels.

Samuels had a best of 64.88m through her fourth trial, to save the top place of the podium, after towering over the field all along.

Krishna Poonia, the gold medal winner at the New Delhi Games in 2010, finished fifth with a best effort of 57.84m against her name.

In The News(Person)

Joko Widodo

- Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo, who won the hearts of Indonesians with his common man image, won Indonesia's presidential election with 53 per cent of the vote.
- The numbers were released shortly after his opponent, former general Prabowo Subianto, declared he was withdrawing from the contest, saying there was massive fraud during the election.

Rajan Vichare

- Shiv Sena MP Rajan Vichare, who was caught on camera force-feeding a Muslim employee of Maharashtra Sadan during Ramzan, posted an uncharacteristic message on Facebook on July 21: Walk away from arguments that lead you to anger and nowhere.

Tarun Vijay

- A biography of Prime Minister Narendra Modi titled "Modi—Incredible emergence of a star" has been published in the Chinese language.
- The biography by Tarun Vijay, a BJP MP and a journalist, is published by Sichuan University's South Asia Study Centre.

New Governors

- Former Union Minister Ram Naik appointed as Governor of Uttar Pradesh and veteran Delhi leader O.P. Kohli will move to Gujarat as Governor.
- According to the communique, Keshari Nath Tripathi, a former Uttar Pradesh Speaker will take over the post of Governor in West Bengal.
- Balram Das Tandon, 87, founder member of Jan Sangh in 1951, was appointed Governor of Chhatisgarh.
- Padmanabha Acharya, was appointed as Governor of Nagaland.

Chandi Prasad Bhatt

- Environmentalist Chandi Prasad Bhatt will be awarded the prestigious Gandhi Peace prize for 2013 by President Pranab Mukherjee.
- The Gandhi Peace Prize was instituted by the government in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- This annual award is given to individuals and institutions for their contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods. It carries a plaque, citation and an amount of Rs. 1 crore.
- The recipients of this award include former Tanzanian President Dr Julius K Nyerere, founder President of Sarvodaya Sharamadana movement in Sri Lanka Dr A.T. Ariyaratne, Dr Gerhard Fischer of Rama Krishna Mission in Germany, Baba Amte, Dr Nelson Mandela etc.

Nadine Gordimer

- Nadine Gordimer, died peacefully in her sleep at her home in Johannesburg. She was 90 years old.
- Nadine Gordimer was first a writer of fiction and a defender of creativity and expression, she was also a determined political activist in the struggle to end white minority rule in her country.

Pinky Anand

- Senior Advocate Pinky Anand has been appointed Additional Solicitor-General in the Supreme Court.
- She is the second woman lawyer to be appointed ASG after senior advocate Indira Jaising.

Appointment/Transfer

- Gujarat Governor Kamla Beniwal transferred to Mizoram for the remainder of her term.
- Vakkom Purushothaman, Governor of Mizoram, was shifted and appointed as Governor of Nagaland for the rest of his term. However, Mr. Purushothaman will continue to hold the additional charge of the office of the Governor of Tripura.
- According to the communiqué, Rajasthan Governor Margaret Alva will discharge the functions of the Governor of Gujarat, in addition to her own duties, until regular arrangements are made. Her tenure finishes in August.

M.K. Narayanan

- Two days after the Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) recorded his statement as a witness in the probe into kickbacks in the 2010 AgustaWestland chopper deal, M.K. Narayanan has resigned as Governor of West Bengal.
- The first Governor to be questioned by an investigative agency, Mr Narayanan is the fourth Governor to resign following pressure from the BJP government on appointees of the UPA government. A formal acceptance of the resignation by the President is awaited.

R.M. Lodha

- Chief Justice of India R.M. Lodha made a frontal attack on the Centre for unilaterally segregating senior advocate Gopal Subramaniam's name for elevation as a Supreme Court judge without his knowledge and concurrence.
- Speaking at a farewell function for Justice B.S. Chauhan on his superannuation, the CJI said "the segregation of Mr. Gopal Subramaniam's name was done unilaterally by the Executive without my knowledge and concurrence which was not proper."

Bharat Vir Wanchoo

- Goa Governor Bharat Vir Wanchoo, who was quizzed by a team of the Central Bureau of Investigation as a "witness" in AgustaWestland Chopper deal scam, submitted his resignation in the evening.
- He forwarded his resignation to the President of India. The Governor, a former chief of the elite Special Protection Group, recorded his statement as a "witness" in the VVIP helicopter case under Section 161 CrPC. Continuing its probe into allegations

of over Rs.360 crore bribe paid in the purchase of VVIP helicopters, a team of CBI comprising officials from Mumbai and Delhi recorded Mr. Wanchoo's statement.

- His questioning comes a week after former West Bengal Governor M.K. Narayanan was quizzed by the CBI; Mr. Narayanan resigned thereafter.

Hu Shuli

- An influential Chinese journalist and a crusading environmental lawyer from China are among this year's winners of Asia's Magsaysay awards.
- Among this year's six awardees is Hu Shuli (61), founder and editor of Caijing, a business magazine famed for its groundbreaking investigative reporting that has had a profound impact on China.
- Another winner was Chinese lawyer Wang Canfa (55), founder of the Centre for Legal Assistance to Pollution Victims, which has handled thousands of environmental complaints and beaten powerful industrialists in court.
- Also honoured were Indonesian anthropologist Saur Marlina Manurung, National Museum of Afghanistan director Omara Khan Masoudi, Filipino teacher Randy Halasan, and the Pakistani non-government group The Citizen's Foundation.

K V Chowdary

- K V Chowdary has been appointed as the new Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the top policy making body of the Income Tax department.
- The officer was till now working as the Member (Investigations) of the direct taxes revenue collection board. He has earlier served as the Director General of I-T (Investigations) in the national capital where he headed a number of high-profile tax probes, including the 2G spectrum allocation case and the HSBC Geneva taxpayers list along with a number of cases dealing with black money and tax evasion.
- CBDT has six members apart from the Chairman and is the apex body for framing policy and administrative issues related to direct taxes and the Income Tax department.

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