

Some Key Current Info-Bits at Random (January 21- January 31)

- On January 25, 2014 President of India has approved conferment of 127 Padma Awards including one duo case (counted as one).
- The list comprises two Padma Vibhushan, 24 Padma Bhushan and 101 Padma Shri Awardees.
 - Prof Yashpaul, a physics graduate from Panjab University and noted scientist, along with Roddam Narsimha, an aerospace scientist formerly with ISRO, have been named for the country's highest civilian honour, Padma Vibhushan.
- On January 21, 2014 the seventh chapter of the **Zee Literature Festival** concluded at Jaipur
 - The next and the eighth chapter of the Zee JLF will be held from January 21 to 25, 2015.
- On January 22, 2014 Cabinet Committee on Investment (CCI) cleared **three hydro power projects**, which were stuck due to environmental bottlenecks. . . Tawang (800 MW), Tato (700 MW) and Teesta (520 MW).
- On January 22, 2014 an eminent Indian-American physician, Madras-native **Ramanathan Raju** was appointed by New York Mayor Bill de Blasio as the head of health network of city, the largest public hospital system in US.
- On January 22, 2014 **Neeraj Ghaywan** and three others won the prestigious 2014 Sundance Institute-Mahindra Global Filmmaking Award, which is given every year to emerging independent directors from around the world.
- Recently, **Jayanto Narayan Chaudhury**, an IPS officer of 1978 batch, took over as the Director General of the National Security Guard.
- On January 22, 2014 thespian of Telugu cinema **Akkineni Nageswara Rao**, 91, who strode the celluloid world like a colossus for nearly seven decades, died.
 - He had acted in 256 films in a career spread over seven decades and won several awards, including the Dada Saheb Phalke Award.
 - He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 2011.
- On January 22, 2014 **Amnesty International** said that GoI should abolish the death penalty in the light of Supreme Court verdict granting life term to 15 death-row convicts.
- On January 22, 2014 Petroleum Minister gave nod for the launch of **the portability of LPG connections** from onwards across oil marketing companies and distributors covering 480 districts in India.
 - As a pilot project, the oil companies like Indian Oil, HPCL and BPCL together had launched LPG connection portability scheme in 24 districts covering 13 states in October 2013.

- On January 23, 2014 Supreme Court cautioned the government **against promoting industrialisation and economic growth at the cost of farmers**, pointing out that a large section of Indian population was still dependent on agriculture for their livelihood.
- On January 23, 2014 Finance Ministry approved a proposal for providing a minimum **monthly pension of Rs 1,000** to workers in the organised sector, a move which would benefit 27 lakh pensioners immediately.
- On January 23, 2014 South Sudan government and rebels signed a **ceasefire agreement**, pledging to halt fighting within 24 hours and end more than a month of intense fighting.
 - The agreement was signed in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa by representatives of South Sudan's **President Salva Kiir** and rebel delegates loyal to ousted vice-president **Riek Machar**.
- Recently, State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence of China shared that **Yutu**, first moon rover of China has experienced a mechanical control abnormality and scientists are organising an overhaul.
 - The lunar probe mission, comprising the lander **Chang'e-3** and rover **Yutu**, was launched in December as part of the second phase of the Chinese Lunar Exploration Programme.
 - The mission, which made the **first soft-landing on the Moon since 1976**, makes China the third country to successfully send a lunar rover to the moon, after the US and the former Soviet Union.
- On January 27, 2014 French electronic music duo Daft Punk dominated the 56th annual **Grammy awards** with "Random Access Memories" winning album of the year, while their hit track "Get Lucky", featuring Pharrell Williams, walked away with the best record of the year.
- On January 26, 2014 Saina Nehwal snapped her 15 months title drought, clinching the Syed Modi International **India Grand Prix Gold badminton** crown with a victory over compatriot PV Sindhu.
- Recently, South Korean Olympic badminton gold medallist **Lee Yong-dae** was hit with a one-year ban for missing doping tests by Badminton World Federation.
 - The 25-year-old won mixed doubles gold at the 2008 Games in Beijing and a bronze medal in the men's doubles in London four years later.
- On January 28, 2014 Supreme Court reaffirmed the validity of **Section 377 of IPC**, under which sexual acts among LGBTs (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender population) are a criminal offence attracting a maximum punishment of life sentence.
 - The Delhi High Court had diluted Section 377 of the IPC on July 2, 2009, holding that homosexual acts among consenting adults in privacy were no crime.

- However, the Supreme Court set aside that verdict on December 11, 2013, making such acts illegal once again.
- On January 28, 2014 Ukrainian PM **Mykola Azarov** resigned while deputies loyal to President Viktor Yanukovich, acting to calm violent street protests, back-tracked and overturned anti-protest laws they rammed through Parliament 12 days ago.
- On January 28, 2014 in a first-of-its-kind arrangement in India, Japanese automotive giant **Suzuki Motor Corporation (SMC)** announced the setting up of a wholly owned subsidiary for the Gujarat project
 - SMC holds 56% stake in MSIL and the latter contributes more than 50% to the former's global earnings.
- On January 28, 2014 Britain marked 100 years since the day **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel** was called to the Bar in London with the unveiling of a special commemorative plaque.
 - UK Attorney General Dominic Grieve was joined by Indian High Commissioner to the UK Ranjan Mathai at iconic Middle Temple.
- On January 29, 2014 SJVN, a joint venture between Gol and HP, along with five other PSUs, signed an MoU for executing a **4,000-MW ultra mega solar power project** at Sambhar in Rajasthan.
- On January 28, 2014 WTO DG **Roberto Azevedo** said Indian trade with African countries could touch the \$100-billion mark after the trade facilitation agreement decided upon in the recent ministerial conference at Bali is implemented.
- On January 29, 2014 after a gap of several years, an army contingent, **Sikh Light Infantry** was adjudged as the best marching contingent among the services during the Republic Day parade.
 - The Sikh LI traces its origins to the Sikh Pioneers raised in 1857 and deployed for various military campaigns in India and abroad.
- On January 29, 2014 International Shooting Federation (ISSF) certified world record feat of **Heena Sidhu**, she achieved last year by becoming the first pistol shooter from India to win a gold medal at the ISSF World Cup finals in Munich
 - Heena Sidhu, the Patiala shooter had created history by becoming the first pistol shooter from India to win a gold medal at the ISSF World Cup finals in Munich, Germany.
- On January 30, 2014 Union Cabinet gave its approval to amend **Central list of OBCs** to ensure reservation benefits to about 60 castes and communities which have not been able to avail of these so far.
 - Based on the recommendations of the **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**, the approval was given for making amendments in the Central list of the OBCs in respect of 60 castes in 13 states by way of inclusion, correction, deletion of these castes and communities.
 - The amendments will notify 115 changes recommended by the NCBC.

- On January 30, 2014 India and Pakistan agreed to **resume bus service** between the two parts of Kashmir.
 - The service had remained suspended for two weeks after the seizure of 114 kg of brown sugar that was being smuggled from PoK in a truck during cross-LoC trade.
- On January 30, 2014 Supreme Court asked the states to give up their lenient attitude towards those responsible for **adulteration of milk** and milk products with hazardous synthetic substances as the issue involved the health of the entire population.
- On January 31, 2014 internationally acclaimed thinktank **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute** suggested that Chinese defence companies produced and sold 40 pc of the worlds arms, ammunition and weaponry in 2012
- On January 31, 2014 Ukraine President **Viktor Yanukovich** signed into law an amnesty for demonstrators detained during mass unrest and repealed anti-protest legislation, in a fresh bid to take the heat out of the political crisis.
- On January 31, 2014 at Wellington, Indian cricket team slumped to its worst ODI series defeat in New Zealand, going down 0-4, after loosing by 87 runs to kiwis (304) in the inconsequential fifth and final ODI.
- At the 2014 Australian Open:
- Chinese **Li Na**, 31, defeated Dominika Cibulkova to win her first Australian Open title to become the oldest woman to win at Melbourne Park.
 - For Asia's first grand slam singles winner, Li it is her second grand slam title after winning the 2011 French Open.
- **Sania Mirza and her Romanian partner Horia Tecau** failed to clinch the Australian open mixed doubles title as they lost to French-Canadian combination of Kristina Mladenovic and Daniel Nestor.

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For IASC*