

## Some Key Current Info-Bits at Random (July 1 – July 15)

- **India becomes the first country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty**
  - India became the first country to ratify the Marrakesh Treaty *to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind and visually impaired.*
    - The treaty was *signed by 64 countries* in Marrakesh, Morocco, on *June 28, 2013* but has been ***ratified just by India.***
- **Rajasthan Government declared Camel as the State animal**
  - The step has been taken *to check the diminishing number of camels* in the State.
    - Camel is called as *‘a ship of desert’*.
- **National Doctors’ Day observed across India on 1<sup>st</sup> July**
  - The day is observed to honour legendary physician, *Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy* whose *birth and death anniversary falls on the same day.*
    - On February 4, 1961 *Roy received the Bharat Ratna.*
- **Bor Wildlife Sanctuary of Maharashtra to be the country’s 47th Tiger Reserve**
  - On July 1, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) notified Bor Wildlife Sanctuary as Tiger Reserve.
    - With this, Bor Wildlife sanctuary will become the 47th, Tiger Reserve of India and 6th, Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra.
  - The approval aimed at *strengthening the conservation efforts of the national animal.*
    - The MoEF declared *13812 hectare area* of Bor Sanctuary, New Bor Sanctury and New Bor Extended Wildlife Sanctuary *as a core, critical tiger habitat.*
    - The sanctuary will also act as an *important corridor between Tadoba-Andhari and Pench Tiger Reserves* that lies on the boundary of Nagpur and Wardha districts.
- **Japanese Cabinet adopted resolution to end 60 years of pacifism giving Army the option to exercise force.**

- **Shah Rukh Khan Conferred with Knight of the Legion of Honour**
  - The 'Knight of the Legion of Honour' is the *top French civilian award*.
- **J&K government directed by the Supreme Court to restore Dal Lake**
- **Indian pistol shooter Jitu Rai ranked No. 1 in the world**
  - Jitu Rai became World Number 1 pistol shooter in the *men's 10m air pistol category*.
    - Rai, a 27-year-old army man from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh is the *seventh Indian shooter to have achieve the feat*.
- **Michelle Howard becomes first female four-star admiral in US Navy**
  - Michelle is the first women admiral in *236 year old history of US Navy*.
- **Protection of Pakistan Bill 2014 approved by the National Assembly of Pakistan**
  - On July 2, the National Assembly of Pakistan approved the Protection of Pakistan Bill, 2014 amid military offensive against the Taliban in North Waziristan.
    - The Bill seeks to *provide for protection against waging of war against Pakistan and the prevention of acts threatening the security of Pakistan*.
      - This *Bill will remain in force for two years*.
    - Earlier, the Bill was unanimously approved by the Senate or upper house on June 30.
- **CCEA approved inclusion of Onion and Potato under Essential Commodities Act, 1955**
  - On July 2, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) *approved the inclusion of onion and potato under the purview of stock holding limits of the Essential Commodities Act, 1955*.
    - The *inclusion will remain in force for a year*.

- **Dual citizenship for children of immigrants approved by German Cabinet**
  - The *German Cabinet* headed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel approved a new law that allows dual citizenship for the children of immigrants.
    - As per new law, *those born since 1990 will be allowed to keep both passports, i.e., German citizenship and the citizenship of their parent's country of origin.*
      - The rule applies for those *who are at age 21 and have lived in Germany for at least eight years, attended school for at least six years, gained school-leaving qualifications in Germany or completed vocational training in Germany.*
    - Germany had already allowed dual citizenship to *European Union and several dozen other nations.*
- **Test run of Delhi-Agra semi-high speed train conducted**
  - The train is equipped with an *electronic locomotive of WAP 5400 horse power* from the Ghaziabad Loco Shed.
  - It is the *country's fastest train.*
    - At present the fastest train of India is *Bhopal Shatabdi Express* that runs at a *speed 150 kilometres between Delhi and Agra stretch.*
- **RBI restored the limit of Overseas Direct Investment (ODI) taken under automatic route**
  - *ODI is the reverse of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) i.e. Indian direct investment abroad.*
- **Four new vaccines introduced by the Union Government as a part of UIP**
  - As part of India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) the four newly introduced vaccines include *vaccines against rotavirus, rubella and polio (injectable), along with an adult vaccine against Japanese encephalitis.*
    - The aim of introduction of these lifesaving vaccines *is to ensure that the benefits of vaccination reach to all sections of the society, regardless of social and economic status.*

- **25 km-long Udhampur-Katra railway line inaugurated**
- **ADB approved 300 million US dollar loan for Assam's power sector**
  - The loan will help to eliminate power sector inefficiencies that are hurting consumers, world-famous tea industry and environment.
- **Japan issued multiple entry visas to Indians**
  - The visas will allow Indian visitors to spend up to 15 days on a visit and the visas are likely to be valid for three years.
- **Petra Kvitova won the Women's single of Wimbledon Tennis Open 2014**
- **240MW Uri-II Hydro Electric Project in J & K**
  - On July 4, the Prime Minister inaugurated the 240MW Uri-II Hydro Electric Project (HEP) in Jammu and Kashmir.
  - This Uri-II project will be able to generate an estimated 1124 million units of hydel-energy annually from its four units of 60 MW each.
    - It is the second power project on the Jhelum River in Uri area and is close to the Line of Control (LoC) in Baramullah district.
    - It is located on the downstream of the 480-MW Uri-I HEP that is operational whose work was completed in 1997.
- **NABARD and SFAC signed a MoU for development of Small Farm Producers**
  - On July 4, National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the development of Small Farm Producers.
    - The MoU seeks to bring the two institutions in close coordination for implementing schemes for promotion of Producer Organizations (POs).
    - The SFAC is implementing a scheme of the Government of India whereby the Producers Organizations are given equity support and the financing banks are given credit guarantee cover to enable formation of Producer Organizations.

- **Four India-born Americans honoured on US Independence Day**
  - On the eve of US Independence Day – July 4, four India-born Americans were honoured, *for their contributions to the US during annual Great Immigrants tribute* held in New York, US.
    - The Indian-Americans honoured were Microsoft Corp chief executive *Satya Nadella*, Comedian and actor *Aasif Mandvi*, Carnegie Mellon University President *Subra Suresh* and former President of the University of West Georgia, *Beheruz Sethna*.
- **Novak Djokovic won the Men's Wimbledon Tennis Open defeating Roger Federer**
  - This is the *second Wimbledon title* for 27 year old Djokovic and seventh career Grand Slam.
  - Djokovic won his first Wimbledon title in 2011.
    - *Djokovic of Serbia defeated Roger Federer of Switzerland.*
- **C Rangarajan Committee on Poverty presented its report to the Union Government**
- **Scholar of Indian constitution Granville Austin died**
  - On July 6, Granville Austin (87), the eminent scholar of the Indian Constitution died in Washington DC.
  - Austin described Indian Constitution as *the first and foremost a social document that embodied the objectives of a social revolution*.
    - In 2011, he was awarded with *the fourth highest civilian award in India, Padma Shri*.
  - Austin authored two books on Indian Constitution, “*The Indian Constitution – The Indian Constitution: A Cornerstone of a Nation*” and “*Working a Democratic Republic: The Indian Experience*”.
- **Law Commission submitted a report titled Manpower Planning in Judiciary: A Blue Print to Union Government**
  - The Commission recommended *recruitment of judges to dispose the backlog, special evening and morning courts and additional courts to ensure timely justice*.
- **Social Media Platform launched by the Indian Railways**

- **Supreme Court ruled Shariat Courts as illegal**

- On July 7, the Supreme Court of India ruled that *Shariat courts are illegal and objected to Shariat Court from passing orders against innocent person.*
- The Court said that:
  - *no religion allows punishment of innocent and hence no Darul Qaza should give verdict on rights of a person, unless it is asked for by the person.*
  - *no legal status has been granted to the Sharia Courts for religious decrees of fatwas, thus they are illegal if it violates fundamental rights of an individual.*

- **IMG constituted to examine potential of GAGAN in Non-Aviation Sectors**

- On July 7, the Union Civil Aviation Ministry constituted an Inter-Ministerial Group (IMG) *to examine the maximum potential of the GPS Aided Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) system.*
  - *GAGAN is a satellite based augmentation system of India which was jointly developed by Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at an estimated cost of 774 crore rupees for enhanced Air Navigation Services across the country.*
- The IMG will be headed by Ashok Lavasa, the Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

- **Three new judges appointed to Supreme Court**

- On July 7, Justice Arun Mishra, Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel and Justice Rohinton F. Nariman were appointed as Supreme Court judges.
  - *Nariman is the fifth lawyer to be elevated as Supreme Court judge.*
- With this, *the Supreme Court's bench strength is raised to 27 including Chief Justice of India, R M Lodha.*
  - *The sanctioned strength of judges in the Supreme Court is 31, including the CJI and all of them are appointed by the President of India.*

- **Sania Mirza ranked career-best fifth in WTA doubles rankings**
  - On July 7, the Indian tennis ace, *Sania* and her Zimbabwean doubles partner *Cara Black* were ranked *career-best fifth in the latest WTA Doubles rankings*.
    - *Sania, who became a professional tennis player in 2003, entered the top-five chart for the first time in her career.*
- **Former President of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze died**
  - Eduard (86), became the *second President of Georgia* in 1992 after disintegration of Georgia from the erstwhile Soviet Union.
    - *He was toppled in November 2003 after the Rose Revolution led by Mikheil Saakashvili.*
- **Union Railway Budget 2014-15 presented**
  - The Railway Budget was presented on July 8 by the Union Railway Minister Sadanand Gowda.
    - The rail budget estimates for 2014-15 reflected *total receipts of 164374 crore rupees and total expenditure at 149176 crore rupees*.
  - In the budget introduction of several trains on different routes were announced. Apart from this, the budget also saw certain new initiatives for Railways.
- **India State of Forest Report - 2013 released**
  - It is *13th, report* in the series and *it provides information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover and growing stock inside and outside forest areas*.
    - The report was released on July 8 in New Delhi by Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister of State for Environment, Forests & Climate.
- **UN Tribunal ruled Indo-Bangladesh Maritime border dispute of the Bay of Bengal**
  - On July 8, the UN Tribunal, Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) has *awarded 19467 square kilometers, a major part of disputed area to Bangladesh from a total disputed area of 25602 square kilometers*.
    - *The Verdict will open the way for Bangladesh to explore for oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal.*



- **India and UK to launch civil nuclear cooperation**
- **Core group constituted to eradicate Kala Azar by 2015**
  - On July 8, the Union Health Ministry constituted a core group *to work out a detailed action plan to eradicate the dreaded vector-borne disease, Kala Azar by 2015.*
    - Earlier, the Union Government in 2004 had set a target to wipe out the disease by 2008, which has been revised twice to 2010 and now to 2015.
- **Emma Watson appointed as UN Goodwill Ambassador**
  - On July 8, the British Actress Watson was appointed as *the Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women.*
    - Watson will work for *empowerment of young women* and also as *an advocate for UN Women's HeforShe campaign in promoting gender equality.*
- **Supersonic cruise missile BrahMos successfully test-fired**
  - On July 8, India successfully test-fired *an advanced version of the 290km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile* from Chandipur-on-Sea off Odisha coast.
    - It was *test-fired from a mobile launcher* from launch complex number three of the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore.
  - BrahMos has been *inducted into the Army and Navy*, while, the *Air Force is in final stages of trial.*
    - The induction of the first version of BrahMos Weapon Complex (N1) in the *Indian Navy commenced from 2005* with the missile being deployed on-board warship *INS Rajput* (the first ship with the missile).
    - The *Indian Army* also received the first regiment of BrahMos missile, Block I (A1), with the formation of *N816 missile* regiments and commencement of deliveries from 2007.
  - BrahMos, the first supersonic cruise missile known to be in service, operates on '***Fire and Forget Principle***'.
    - The name 'BrahMos' has been formed from the names of two rivers, namely the *Brahmaputra of India* and the *Moskva of Russia*.



- **F-Cube Technology to promote Football at ground level launched**

- On July 8, the *Sports Authority of India (SAI)* and the *Football Link* jointly launched F-Cube technology at the Weightlifting Auditorium of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi
- F-Cube technology was launched *to promote football at the grass-root level.*
  - F-Cube is *interactive software* that has various entertaining and educational games and can create standardized test that can help SAI to recognize talented children and will also develop an athlete's mental and physical attributes.
  - F-Cube is *an attractive medium* that can entice children of all age-groups and economic backgrounds
  - F-Cube will also *act as a video coaching platform* that will be an *aid in the Technical and Tactical development of a Footballer* through various educational and game/practice applications.
    - *Under-17 FIFA World Cup, 2017 will be hosted by India* and thus All India Football Federation is taking steps to scout talent with SAI's assistance.

- **India-Canada Audiovisual Co-production Treaty signed**

- India and Canada have signed in Delhi the first of its kind for India, an *India-Canada Audiovisual Co-production Treaty with an aim to create jobs in both countries and boost tourism.*
  - This treaty has been inked after negotiations of last 15 years.
  - The treaty *came into force on July 1, 2014* but the announcement was made on July 9, 2014.
- The treaty will *combine creative, technical and financial resources of both the countries to create audiovisual co-productions.*
  - It is applicable for the *media and entertainment industry* across India and thus would *lead to a deeper level of engagement between the audiovisual sectors of both the countries, greater cultural and economic benefits and increased access to audiences worldwide.*

- **Nigeria's team suspended from International football competitions**

- Nigeria was suspended by FIFA on account of *government interference* in running Nigeria Football Federation (NFF).

- **Economic Survey of India 2013-14 presented**
  - On 9 July, the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the Economic Survey of India 2013-14 in the Lok Sabha.
    - India's economy in financial year 2014-15 is expected to grow *in the range of 5.4 - 5.9 percent.*
- **Central Ground Water Board & IIRS signed MoU**
  - On 9 July, the *Central Ground Water Board* and *Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS)* signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) *to facilitate a collaborative study to assess the impact of ground water abstraction on land subsidence in Northern India.*
    - Central Ground Water Board is *one of the scientific organisations in the Ministry of Water Resources.*
    - Established in 1966, IIRS was formerly known as *Indian Photo-interpretation Institute (IPI).*
- **Union Budget 2014-15 presented in the Parliament**
  - On July 10, the Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley presented Union Budget 2014-15.
    - The budget sops included the *increase in the tax bracket to 2.5 lakh rupees from previous 2 lakh rupees*, whereas, *for senior citizen it has been raised to 3 lakh rupees from previous 2.5 lakh rupees* and the *increase in deduction under 80C from 1 lakh rupees to 1.5 lakh rupees.*
- **World Urbanization Prospects Report 2014 released by UN**
  - The report said that at present, *54 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas*, which will have *an additional 2.5 billion people in urban areas by 2050.*
    - *Tokyo was ranked at first position as populous cities in 2014* with 38 million inhabitants (projection says that Tokyo's population will decline, but will remain the world's largest city in 2030 with 37 million people).
    - *Delhi with 25 million population was ranked at 2nd, position.*
  - At present, *urban population of 758 million exists in India and China*, which accounts to 30 percent of world's urban population.

- **Air India joined global airline group Star Alliance**
  - On July 11, Air India formally joined the airline group Star Alliance *as its 27th, member.*
    - By joining the group, it became the *first Indian airline* to become a member airlines club operating over 18500 flights a day in 192 countries.
- **World Population Day 2014 observed across the World**
  - On July 11, the World Population Day was observed with the theme '*Investing in Young People*'.
    - World Population Day was first celebrated in 1987, the day when world population reached *five billion people.*
      - The World population edged to 7 billion people in 2011 from 2.5 billion in 1950.
- **SC ordered Union Government to bring MGNREGS's wage rates on par with minimum wages**
- **Afghanistan's presidential candidates agreed on the audit of votes casted in elections**
  - On July 13, the two presidential candidates *Ashraf Ghani* and *Abdullah Abdullah* agreed for an audit of every vote cast in June 2014 presidential election after two days of negotiations held in Kabul.
    - *The deal was brokered by US Secretary of State John Kerry in an effort to end a bitter standoff that raised fears of violence and ethnic unrest.*
      - After the audit of the votes, *the winner will serve as President and will immediately form a government of national unity.*
  - The *deadlock over the run-off vote to choose a successor to outgoing President Hamid Karzai plunged Afghanistan into political crisis* and dented US hopes of a smooth transfer of power as Washington seeks to withdraw all its troops by late 2016.
    - Preliminary results released on July 7, 2014 showed that *Ghani was in the lead, with some 56 percent of the vote, ahead of Abdullah on 44 percent.* However, *Abdullah declared himself the true winner citing massive fraud in counting of votes.*

- **Germany won the 2014 FIFA Football World Cup beating Argentina**
  - On July 13, Germany lifted the trophy for the *fourth time* in the history of FIFA World Cup and first since 1990.
    - Germany also became the *first European team to win a World Cup played in North or South America*. The previous title was won by Germany in 1954, 1974 and 1990.
  - Brazil with *five wins* is the country that *leads the winning record*.
  
- **Indian Railways register 9.48 percent increase in its earning during the first quarter of the fiscal year 2014-15**
  
- **Haryana Governor gave assent to Sikh Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee Bill 2014**
  - On July 14, Haryana Governor Jagannath Pahadia gave his assent to Haryana Sikh Gurudwaras (Management) Bill, 2014.
    - With this, the Haryana Sikh Gurdwaras (Management) Bill, 2014, will be notified as an Act.
  - *The Act cleared the decks for the state government for creation of a separate committee for managing the Sikh Gurdwaras in the state.*
    - The Bill was passed on July 11, 2014 by the Haryana Legislative Assembly.
      - *The Bill stripped the powers of Amritsar-based Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), an apex Sikh body, to control and manage 11 historical Sikh shrines and their assets worth crore across Haryana.*
  
- **Retail inflation fell to 30-month low of 7.31 percent**
  - The retail inflation went down in June; mainly *on account of lower prices of food items* that includes vegetables, cereals, and meat.
  
- **Governors of five states appointed by the President**
  - On July 14, the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee appointed *Ram Naik, Balramji Dass Tandon, Keshari Nath Tripathi, Om Prakash Kohli and Padmanabha Balakrishna Acharya* as Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Gujarat and Nagaland respectively.

- **15 member UNSC adopted resolution to allow cross-border aid to Syrians**
  - On July 14, the 15 member United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted the **resolution 2165** in New York.
    - The resolution 2165 *sought to allow cross-border aid to three million Syrians.*
  - The resolution *authorized UN Humanitarian agencies and other agencies to deliver relief materials to Syrians for 180 days across the conflict lines and through additional border crossings.*
    - It also called for the *expeditious deployment of a monitoring mechanism to assure compliance.*
  
- **National Centre for R&D in Bulk Drugs to be set up in NIPER Hyderabad**
  
- **Operation to refloat wrecked Italian ship Costa Concordia launched**
  - The refloating operation launched was *one of the biggest maritime operations in the history.*
  
- **320 Mahila Suraksha Dals to be set up for women safety by Delhi government**
  - The Mahila Suraksha Dals (MSDs) will comprise of *retired army personnel, representatives from the local community (both men and women) and local NGO representatives.*
    - Each team will consist of *20 community members and three ex-servicemen.*
      - These MSDs will be established to ensure women safety at public places.
  
- **Assam decided to implement National Food Security Act from September 1, 2014**
  
- **Gandhi Peace prize 2013 won by Chandi Prasad Bhatt**
  - On July 15, *environmentalist and social activist* Chandi Prasad Bhatt (80), was awarded with the prestigious Gandhi Peace prize for 2013 by the President of India.
    - In 2005, he was awarded with *Padma Bhushan.*

- **Japan nuclear regulator gave nod to restart work at Sendai nuclear plant**
- **Satyam founder Ramalinga Raju barred from accessing capital markets**
  - On July 15, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) barred founder of Satyam Computers, *B Ramalinga Raju* and other top executives including *Vadlamani Srinivas*, *G Ramakrishna* and *VS Prabhakara Gupta* from accessing the capital markets for 14 years.
    - Apart from this, the SEBI ordered the top five executives of Satyam to pay 1849 crore rupees because they made unlawful gains through sale of shares.
- **BRICS to create 100 billion dollar Development Bank and Emergency Reserve Fund**
  - On July 15, the BRICS nations signed a deal, to create a new 100 billion US dollar Development Bank and Emergency Reserve Fund, during the 6th, *BRICS Summit* at Fortaleza, Brazil.
    - BRICS group includes *Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa*.
  - Initially, the bank will start off with 50 billion dollars in initial capital with the five BRICS putting in 10 billion US dollars each.
  - As per the deal, *headquarter of the bank will be in Shanghai, China and a regional office in Johannesburg, South Africa*.
    - *The Bank will have a rotating chair and its first President will come from India for the first six years.*
- **127th, edition of Durand Cup Football Tournament to be held in Goa in October 2014**
  - A host of top clubs and military football teams will participate in the tournament at Goa from October 28 to November 9.
    - *The Durand Cup is the Asia's oldest and third oldest football tournament in the World. It was first played in 1888.*

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