

Some Key Current Info-Bits at Random (July 16 – July 31)

- **Bashar al-Assad sworn in as President of Syria**
 - Assad was sworn in as Syria's President in Damascus for a *seven years term* on July 16.
 - Assad won *88.7 percent of the votes* in the *first multi-candidate election* that was conducted only in the areas of Syria which were under government control.
 - With this he became the President for the *third consecutive term*.
- **Rahul Dravid elected as member of Laureus World Sports Academy**
 - He is the *47th, member* of the Academy.
 - The Laureus World Sports Academy is a *unique association of 47 of the greatest living sporting legends from sports* as diverse as football, tennis, athletics, skateboarding and motor racing.
 - The members of the Academy believe in *the power of sport to break down barriers and bringing people together* to improve lives of young people around the world.
- **India and Brazil signed three agreements to strengthen the bilateral relation**
 - On July 16, India and Brazil signed three agreements relating to *MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Environment, Agreement on Space and on Cooperation in the Establishment of a consultation mechanism on mobility and consular issues* during the *sixth BRICS Summit* in Fortaleza, Brazil.
 - The agreement was signed by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff at the official residence of the Brazilian President – *the Itamaraty Palace*.
- **95th Garo Labour Corps Day observed in Meghalaya**
 - On July 16, Garo Labour Corps Day was celebrated as *on this day the Garo men returned to India at Tura in Meghalaya from Mersailles in France*.

- **Australia's Senate voted to repeal Carbon tax**
 - The Australian Senate *voted by 39 to 32 votes* to repeal the tax.
 - *A carbon tax is a tax on energy sources which emit carbon dioxide.*
 - With this Australia became *the first country in the world to abolish carbon tax.*
- **Supreme Court asks State governments and UTs to submit responses over legalising 'Passive Euthanasia'**
- **7th, BRICS Summit to be held in Ufa**
 - The 7th, BRICS Summit will be held in the *Russian city* of Ufa.
 - The *first summit of the leaders of BRIC countries was held in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg* in June 2009. Brasilia hosted the 2nd, BRICS summit in 2010, followed by Sanya in China in 2011, New Delhi in 2012 and Durban in 2013.
 - The term 'BRIC' was *first used in 2001* by international investor firm Goldman Sachs in their Global Economics Paper No. 66, '*The World Needs Better Economic BRIC*'.
 - The theme of the 6th, BRICS Summit was *Inclusive Growth: Sustainable Solutions.*
- **CBDT formed committee to reduce litigation at dispute resolution forums in IT Department**
 - On July 17, the Central Board of Direct Tax (CBDT) constituted *a six-member empowered committee* to reduce litigation at the dispute resolution forums in the Income Tax Department.
 - The Committee will also *suggest steps to reduce legal cases* and is asked to submit its *report within two months.*
 - The CBDT constituted the panel after seeing that an estimated *4 lakh crore rupees of tax revenue is locked up in litigation.*
 - The Central Board of Direct Taxes is a *statutory authority functioning under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963.*
- **Germany ranked number one in FIFA's world rankings**
 - As per the latest FIFA's world rankings released on July 17, India was ranked 151, India improved its position by three places.

- **India to host 7th, IBSA Summit in 2015**
 - The 7th, *India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Summit* will be held in New Delhi, India.
 - IBSA is a *trilateral initiative amongst three different societies of three different continents in India, Brazil and South Africa.*
 - It was *formed on June 6, 2003* with an aim to *promote South-South cooperation and exchange of like-minded countries, committed to inclusive sustainable development.*
- **Draft guidelines for infrastructure investment trusts issued**
 - On July 17, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) announced *draft regulations* for infrastructure investment trusts.
 - The trust will *allow companies to monetize their infrastructure projects.*
 - The infrastructure investment trusts aims to *provide easier financing options to developers of public works.*
- **President rejected mercy petitions of Nithari killer Surinder Koli and 5 others**
- **National Health Profile – 2013 released**
 - On July 17, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan released the *9th, edition* of the National Health Profile (NHP) 2013.
 - The annual document is prepared by the *Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI)*. It covers *demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators*, along with *comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health.*
 - CBHI has been *publishing NHP every year since 2005.*
 - The NHP called for *creating comprehensive database for all sectors in healthcare for sound planning and effective implementation.*
 - In 2013, India's *doctor-to-population ratio* worsened as compared to 2012. It was *1: 1217.84* as compared to *1:740.49* in 2012.
 - That is, *for a population of more than 1200 people only one doctor is available.*

- **Delhi Budget 2014-15 presented in Parliament**

- On July 18, the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented Delhi's Budget 2014-15 of 36776 crore rupees in the Parliament.
 - Of the total proposed budget of 36766 crore rupees, 19066 crore rupees is non-plan expenditure.
 - The budget was presented in Parliament as the legislative assembly of Delhi has been kept under suspended animation because of imposition of President Rule.

- **Global Innovation Index – 2014 released**

- On July 18, the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2014 was released at the Business 20 (B20) Australia Summit held in Sydney 2014.
 - The B20 is a forum through which the private sector produces policy recommendations for the annual meeting of the Group of 20 (G20) leaders.
 - The theme of the GII 2014 was **Human Factor in Innovation**.
- GII 2014 in its 9th, edition covers 143 countries around the world and uses 81 indicators across a range of theme.
 - India slipped 10 notches on the GII 2014. India fell from the 66th, position to the 76th, on the index.

- **Child labour for kids legalized in Bolivia**

- On July 18, Bolivia passed a law to legalise child labour for kids from age 10.

- **200 crore allocated to NABARD for setting up of Mega Food Parks**

- To promote the food processing industry in the country, the Union Government announced to provide a sum of 200 crore rupees to NABARD.
 - The main objective of the Mega Food Park Scheme is to establish the integrated value chain by keeping processing at the focal point. The aim of the scheme is to receive support by forward as well as backward linkage.
- Among the total variety of food produced in India, only 2% is processed.
- Food processing leads to development of a country and Mega food Park is a scheme which can create synergy between Agriculture and Industry – two most important pillars of Indian economy.

- **Expert Committee constituted on Cost Records and Cost Audits**
 - On July 19, the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs constituted *R S Sharma Expert Committee on Cost Records and Cost Audits*.
 - The Expert Committee will review the Companies (Cost Records and Audit) Rules, 2014 and the need to have a comprehensive policy towards the role of the cost professions in the corporate and other sectors of economy.
 - The Committee will *submit the report within three months*.
- **Qualitative changes in PMNRF functioning suggested**
 - On July 19, the Prime Minister of *India suggested certain qualitative changes* in the functioning of Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) *to target the selection of beneficiaries and to give priority to the poor and children*.
 - *The PMNRF was established in 1948* with public contributions to assist displaced persons from Pakistan.
 - The PMNRF fund *consists entirely of public contributions and does not get any budgetary support*. The corpus of the fund is invested with banks in fixed deposits. Disbursements are made with the approval of the Prime Minister.
- **British Golf Open 2014 won by Irishman Rory McIlroy**
- **OECD released global Standard for Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information**
 - On July 21, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released *single global standard for automatic exchange of financial account information between jurisdictions*.
 - The Standard for Automatic Exchange of Financial Account Information in Tax Matters *calls on governments to obtain detailed account information from their financial institutions and exchange that information automatically with other jurisdictions on an annual basis*.
- **Deadline for reaching an agreement on Iran's Nuclear Programme extended till November 24**

- **UNSC adopted the resolution for an international probe into MH-17 plane crash**
 - On July 21, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) *adopted a resolution demanding an international probe into the shooting down of Malaysian airplane MH-17 in eastern Ukraine on July 17.*
 - The resolution was adopted by the 15-member UNSC unanimously and it condemned the shooting down of MH-17 in Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine in the strongest terms.
 - The incident resulted in the *tragic loss of 298 lives.*
- **Tirupati airport to be upgraded to international standards by June 2015**
- **Jakarta Governor won Indonesian presidential election**
 - On July 22, Jakarta Governor Joko Widodo won the Indonesian presidential elections.
 - He won the election with *53% of the vote* casted in his favour.
- **Sania Mirza appointed as Brand Ambassador of Telangana**
 - To promote the new state's interests in India and abroad *Indian tennis star* Sania Mirza was appointment as brand ambassador of Telangana.
- **Three Low Cost Airports proposed for Bihar**
- **Hindi version of Google Maps on Android and PC to be launched by Google**
- **Guidelines for setting up TReDS for MSMEs issued**
 - On July 23, the Reserve Bank of India issued draft guidelines for *setting up and operating a Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) in order to facilitate financing to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and to help them convert trade receivables into liquid funds.*
 - TReDS will provide the *platform to bring these participants together for facilitating uploading, accepting, discounting, trading and settlement of the invoices or bills of MSMEs.*
 - TReDS is the *scheme for setting up and operating an institutional mechanism for facilitating the financing of trade receivables of MSMEs from corporate buyers through multiple financiers.*

- **Himachal Pradesh selected for pilot programme to train Heads of Government Schools**
- **TCS became first Indian Company to achieve Market Capitalization of 5 lakh crore rupees**
 - On July 23, the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), *the largest software services exporter of the country*, became the first Indian company to achieve a market capitalization of 5 lakh crore rupees.
 - This feat was achieved by the company on the back of Quarter 1 results.
 - In terms of market capitalization, TCS is followed by the *Oil and Natural Gas Corporation* (ONGC) at 3.5 lakh crore rupees and *Reliance Industries* at 3.3 lakh crore rupees.
- **Union Government decided to intensify war against Japanese Encephalitis**
- **Unregulated e-rickshaws banned in Delhi**
 - On July 23, the Delhi High Court *rapped Delhi government over its failure to regulate e-rickshaws*. The Court said the e-rickshaws could not be allowed to ply uncontrolled without licence, registration or insurance and they should be banned.
 - *Deendayal e-rickshaw Scheme* was launched on *June 18, 2014* by the Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi.
 - The scheme aims to *legalise the operation of e-rickshaws* in Delhi.
- **India voted in favour of the UNHRC resolution on Israel's offensive in Gaza**
 - On July 23, India voted in favour of United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution titled, '*Ensuring Respect for international law in The Occupied Palestinian Territories, including East Jersusalem*' for a probe on Israel's offensive in Gaza.
 - The resolution saw *29 countries voting in favour* of resolution while *17 countries including European countries abstained* from the voting.
 - In the 47 member UNHRC the *US was the only nation to vote against the resolution*.

- **Glasgow Commonwealth Games – 2014 got off in Scotland**
 - The Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 got off at the *Celtic Park in Glasgow* in Scotland.
 - The 2014 Games are the *20th, Commonwealth Games*.
- **CCEA approved 49% foreign investment in Insurance sector**
 - On July 24, the Union Cabinet gave its *approval to 49% foreign investment in insurance companies through the FIPB route* ensuring management control in the hands of Indian promoters.
 - The decision was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
 - With this decision, *the FDI cap in insurance sector has been raised from 26% to 49%.*
- **Fuad Masum elected as the President of Iraq**
 - Muhammad Fuad Masum of the *Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)* party was elected as the *seventh* President of Iraq on July 24.
- **India decided against signing WTO's TFA**
 - On July 24, India decided against signing Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
 - The decision was taken at the meeting of the *General Council of the 160 member WTO Geneva, Switzerland.*
- **Arseniy Yatsenyuk, Prime Minister of Ukraine resigned**
- **Malabar Naval Exercise 2014 started**
 - On July 24, the Malabar Naval exercise started in the *Pacific Ocean*.
 - It is the *18th, edition of the Malabar series conducted to enhance multinational maritime relationships and mutual security issues.*
 - It is a *joint naval exercise* first conducted as a bilateral one between the US and Indian navies in 1992, however, *it was not conducted for a brief period after Pokhran II nuclear test conducted by India in 1998.*

- **EU extended sanctions on Russia in wake of MH-17 incident**
- **Public Servants Rules, 2014 notified**
 - The Union Government notified the Public Servants (Furnishing of Information and Annual Return of Assets and Liabilities and the Limits for Exemption of Assets in Filing Returns) Rules, 2014.
 - As per the Public Servants Rules 2014, *it has been made mandatory for all Government employees to file declarations of their assets and liabilities and those of their spouses and dependent children.*
- **India won 5 medals at 45th International Physics Olympiad (IPHO2014)**
- **Web platform 'MyGov' to get citizen's ideas for governance launched**
 - Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi launched a web platform MyGov.nic.in
 - The platform has been *created to facilitate Citizen Engagement in Good Governance.*
 - It will be *implemented and managed by National Informatics Centre (NIC), Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY).*
 - The platform has been *divided into various groups* with an objective to bring about a qualitative change in that sphere through people's participation. The groups are *Clean Ganga, Girl Child Education, Clean India, Skilled India, Digital India and Job Creation.*
- **International Gaucher Day observed on July 26**
 - The World observed *the first International Gaucher Day (IGD).*
 - The day was observed to mark the *160th, birthday of Philippe Gaucher.*
 - The IGD day has been *established by the European Gaucher Alliance (EGA) to raise international awareness about Gaucher disease.*
 - The slogan of the day was '*Rare but Not Alone*'.

- **Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrated across the country**
 - The *15th*, anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas was celebrated in India on July 26.
 - Kargil War was *fought for 73 days* between India and Pakistan in 1999.

- **Setting up of rape crisis centers in all districts approved**
 - On July 28, in wake of *increasing crime against women* the Union Finance Ministry gave its nod to the proposal to set up rape crisis centres in all district of the country.
 - It will offer medical and legal services besides police help to victims of rape and sexual assault.
 - The proposal was made by the Union Ministry of Women and Children Development.

- **World Hepatitis Day observed across the world on July 28**
 - World Hepatitis Day is an *annual event* that is observed on the July 28.
 - For the first time, it was *launched in 2008 by the World Hepatitis Alliance* in concern of chronic viral hepatitis.
 - The year's theme *Think Again*, acknowledges that we do not know nearly enough about viral hepatitis as a health threat in much of the world.

- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission launched**
 - On July 28, Union Government launched the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (a nationwide scheme) to promote conservation and developments of indigenous breeds of cows in a focused and scientific manner.
 - The Mission is a focused project under the *National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development*.

- **Certificate of Registration of six NBFCs cancelled**
 - On July 28, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cancelled the certificate of registration of six non-banking financial company (NBFCs).
 - These six NBFCs include *GE Strategic Investments India (GESII), Profound Exports Private Limited, Two Brothers Holding Limited, Swank Services Private Limited, Praxis Consulting and Information Services Private Limited, Credible Microfinance Ltd.*

- **Amitabh Bachchan named as Maharashtra's horticulture ambassador**
- **'The Lives of Others' shortlisted for Man Booker Prize 2014**
 - The Lives of Others authored by *Neel Mukherjee* was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize 2014
 - Neel Mukherjee is a *Kolkata-born British Indian writer* and this is his *second novel*.
 - The novel is set in 1960's Bengal and revolves around a man's extremist political activism during troubled times. The Novel is *published by Granta* which has so far *sold 3,00,000 copies* in the United Kingdom and almost *5,00,000 copies worldwide*.
- **Last airman in US bombing of Hiroshima died**
 - *Theodore Van Kirk* (93), the last surviving crewman of the US plane that dropped the atomic bomb in Hiroshima, Japan during the World War II died on July 28.
- **6th C-17 Globemaster III aircraft received**
 - The C-17 Globemaster III aircraft *will enhance the operational potential of the Indian Air Force (IAF)* with its payload carriage and performance (about 75 tonnes).
 - The first Boeing C-17 Globemaster III Aircraft was received by India on June 18, 2013
- **World's tallest Railway Bridge at Noney in Manipur**
- **Shooting Pair events reinstated in 2018 CWG**
 - On July 28, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth Shooting Federation (CSF) agreed to *reinstate shooting pair events in the 2018 Commonwealth Games (CWG) to be held in Australia*.
 - The CSF agreement came after *India pushed for reinstatement* of the shooting pair events.
- **International Tiger Day observed across the world**
 - The World observed the International Tiger Day on July 29.
 - It is *celebrated as an awareness day*. The goal of the Tiger Day *is to promote protection and expansion of the wild tiger habitats and also to gain support awareness for tiger conservation*.

- **Sabine Lisicki sets record of fastest serve in women's tennis**
 - On June 30, German Sabine Lisicki created a record of *fastest serve* in the women's tennis.
- **Arup Raha became Chairman of the Chief of Staff Committee**
- **Lt General Dalbir Singh Suhag took over as Chief of Army Staff**
 - On July 31, Lt. General Dalbir Singh Suhag (59) took over as the *28th, Chief of Army Staff*.
 - He will serve as Army Chief for 29 months till December 31, 2016.
 - He succeeded General Bikram Singh

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