

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

- **SC allows Subrata Roy to use conference room in Tihar jail**
 - On August 1, Supreme Court allowed Sahara Chief Subrata Roy to use the conference room of Tihar jail *to negotiate the sale his offshore and domestic properties* with prospective buyers.
 - The room can be used by him for *10 days*.
 - These negotiations will allow him *to raise 10000 crore rupees* (100 billion rupees) of bond money for his *interim bail*.
- **NCW Chairperson Mamta Sharma demits office**
 - Mamta Sharma, Chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW) demitted office on August 1, after serving the Commission for three years.
 - **Nirmala Samant Prabhavalkar**, Member, NCW would act as Chairperson, NCW with effect from August 1.
 - The National Commission for Women was *set up as statutory body in January 1992* under *the National Commission for Women Act, 1990*.
- **New Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes appointed**
 - **K.V. Chowdary**, Senior IRS officer, was appointed as new Chairman of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) on August 1.
 - He succeeded R.K. Tewari.
 - CBDT is the *apex authority of the Income Tax department*.
- **Supreme Court calls for fast-track criminal justice system proposal**
 - On August 1, Supreme Court of India directed the Union Government to come up with a *proposal to fast-track the criminal justice delivery system in the country*.
- **New species of Australian humpback dolphin identified**
 - The new species of Australian humpback dolphin with the *scientific name Sousa Sahulensis* were identified.
 - The species found are *one of four recognised species* of humpback dolphin.

- **Bachendri Pal conferred Bharat Gaurav by East Bengal Club**
- **Hari Gautam Committee to review the status of UGC**
 - On August 3, Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) set up a *four member committee* to review the present status of Universities Grants Commission (UGC).
 - The committee will be *headed by Dr. Hari Gautam*, the former UGC Chairman.
 - The committee will *suggest ways to restructure and reorganise the panel to attain better performance* in order to meet desired objectives.
- **Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 concludes**
 - On August 3, the **20th, Commonwealth Games (CWG) 2014** concluded at *Hampden Park stadium in Glasgow, Scotland*.
 - *4929 athletes from 71 countries and territories* of the erstwhile British Empire participated in the *11 days competition*.
 - The **21st, Commonwealth Games will be held in Gold Coast in Australia**.
- **SC asks for latest data on steps taken to curb Female Feticide**
 - On August 3, a Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice Dipak Misra asked from *all States as well as the Centre the data which can elaborate on the steps taken by them to curb the menace of female foeticide*.
 - Female feticide is *selective abortion after pre-natal sex determination*, and thus avoiding the birth of girls.
- **Defence Ministry allows Armed Forces to do business with Rolls Royce**
 - On August 3, Union Defence Ministry *allowed armed forces to do business related to essential requirements with the Rolls Royce*.
 - The decision of Union Defence Ministry came after *Attorney General Mukul Rohtagi opined that IAF and the Navy can procure from the Rolls Royce the systems essential for their maintenance and operational requirements of the two services and not allowing the procurement would affect the defence preparedness of the two forces*.

- **England topped the Medal Tally at 2014 Commonwealth Games**
 - England won a total of *174 medals* comprising of *58 Gold, 59 Silver and 57 Bronze medals*.
 - *Australia was ranked second* with total 137 medals.
 - *Canada ranked third* with 82 medals.

- **100 years of the outbreak of First World War observed across the globe**
 - August 4 was celebrated as the Centenary year of the First World War.
 - The First World War started on August 4, 1914 and ended on November 11, 1918.
 - Lights-out Project was unveiled across Britain to commemorate 100 years of First World War.
 - Under this project, *lights were turned-off for an hour to pay tribute to all those who died in First World War*. Prime Minister, David Cameron asked all to switch off all lights in their homes to mark hundred year centenary.
 - *135 countries took part in World War – I, and more than 15 million people died in the war.*

- **Wrestling Federation of India suspends Virender Malik**
 - On August 4, the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) suspended *international wrestling referee Virender Malik*.
 - He was suspended after he was *arrested in Glasgow during the 2014 Commonwealth Games on charges of sexual assault*.

- **China decides to ban use of Coal in Beijing by 2020**
 - On August 4, the *Beijing's Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau announced the plans to ban coal use* in Beijing and five other districts by the end of 2020.
 - The purpose of the ban is *to fight increasing levels of air pollution in China's major cities*.
 - China has been *battling the problem of smog in its major cities* due to increasing pollutants in air.
 - The Bureau also decided *to prioritize electricity and natural gas for heating*.

- **Italian researchers decodes the language of African Penguins**

- **Gannett – the USA Media Company decides to spin off its Publishing Business**
 - On August 5, the Gannett Company – a USA based media group, announced *to spin off its print operations including USA Today from its digital and broadcasting business.*
 - Gannett also said that *it would add another digital operation to its portfolio by buying 73 percent of auto sales website cars.com*
 - The purpose of such move is to free faster growing media operations from less beneficial newspaper and magazine businesses. Executives and Investors hope that such deals will boost stock prices in the future.

- **Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red: Unveiled in London**
 - The artwork titled, '*Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red*' was unveiled on August 5, at Tower of London to commemorate the centenary of World War – I. It is a garden of poppy's flowers made of ceramic.
 - The artwork was unveiled by *Britain Prince William* along with his brother Harry and his Princess Kate.
 - The artwork is of *Artist Paul Cummins* and set is designed by *Designer Tom Piper* who chose the poppy to be in ceramic form *to create a visually staggering tribute.*
 - In the garden, *a poppy for each soldier from Commonwealth Nations who died during the Great War is planted.*
 - In the World War – I, around 888246 soldiers lost their lives from Commonwealth nations including 74000 Indian soldiers.
 - At present, 1,20,000 poppys have been planted and the remaining plantation will continue till Armistice Day on November 11 as World War – I ended on November 11, 1918.

- **Justice Manjula Chellur sworn in as Chief Justice of Calcutta HC**
 - On August 5, Justice Dr. Manjula Chellur took oath as *the first woman Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court.*
 - Prior to this, Dr. Chellur was Chief Justice of Kerala High Court.

- **Corridor of Life to transport organs between Delhi and Gurgaon**
 - On August 5, Delhi Police and Gurgaon Police transformed the distance between *Indira Gandhi International Airport and Fortis Memorial Research Institute* in Gurgaon into **Corridor of Life**.
 - The test run was done *to provide uninterrupted passage to airlift human organs*.
 - The distance between these two locations is 15.5 kms.
 - During the try run, *it was heart, which was transported*.
 - The transport time was now cut down to a mere 15.42 minutes. The test run took place around 11:00 am when the road is said to comprise of heavy traffic.
- **Sayeeda Warsi resign from British Government over Gaza conflict**
 - On August 5, Sayeeda Warsi, the *Foreign Office Minister of Britain* resigned from the government in protest of Britain's policy on Gaza.
 - She described the British policy on the crisis in Gaza as *morally indefensible*. She tendered her resignation to the British Prime Minister, David Cameron.
 - She was the **first female Muslim Cabinet Minister** to serve United Kingdom during David Cameron led government.
 - Although, she, has *never won an election*.
- **1968 Olympic Javelin Champion dies**
 - *Angela Nemeth* (68), the 1968 Olympic Javelin Champion of Hungary died.
 - She won a Javelin throw Gold Medal in 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, Mexico with career best throw of 60.36 meter.
 - Till date, she is the *only Hungarian woman to win an Olympic title in a throwing event*.
- **Royal Society honours Sir Alec Jeffreys with Copley Medal 2014**
 - The geneticist **Prof. Sir Alec Jeffreys** who *discovered DNA fingerprinting in 1984*, was awarded with Copley Medal 2014 by Royal Society of London.
 - He received the *award for his great work in variation and mutation of human genome*.

- **Construction work of a new Suez Canal launched by Egypt**
 - On August 6, Egyptian President, *Abdel Fattah al-Sisi* inaugurated the work on a new Suez Canal *alongside the 145 years old historic Suez Canal*.
 - The project has been launched *with an aim to speed up the traffic along the existing waterway and boost the battered economy of Egypt*.
 - It will *expand trade between Europe and Asia*.
 - Suez Canal was *opened in 1869 after ten years of construction*.
 - It is *an artificial waterway in Egypt that connects Mediterranean Sea and Red Sea*. The canal allows traders and ships to navigate between Europe without passing through Africa. It is *owned and maintained by Suez Canal Authority of Egypt*.
 - Suez Canal is *an important source of revenue for the country*. Egypt earns *about 5 billion US dollar every year* through Suez Canal.

- **The Securities Laws (Amendment) Bill, passed in Lok Sabha**
 - The Securities Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2014 was passed in Lok Sabha *by voice vote*.
 - The Bill *will empower and strengthen, SEBI to crackdown on fraudulent investment schemes and seeks information from any entity related to a probe*.

- **Union Cabinet approved the Juvenile Justice Bill, 2014 to amend the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000**
 - On August 6, the Union Cabinet approved the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill, 2014 to amend the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000.
 - The Union Government *plans to introduce the bill in the Monsoon session of Parliament*.
 - The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 *is the primary legal framework for juvenile justice in India*. The Act provides *a framework for the protection, treatment and rehabilitation of children in the purview of the juvenile justice system*.
 - This law, ***brought in compliance of the Child Rights Convention 1989***, repealed the earlier Juvenile Justice Act of 1986 after India signed and ratified the Child Rights Convention 1989 in year 1992.

- **Russian President signs decree banning imports of agricultural products from West**
 - On August 6, Russian President, Vladimir Putin signed a decree that *bans imports of agricultural products from all countries that have imposed sanctions on Russia over the crisis in Ukraine.*
 - *Major sanctions were made by the US and EU.*
- **FDI limit in Defence sector raised from 26 percent to 49 percent**
 - On August 6, the Union Cabinet raised the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) limit in Defence sector *to 49 percent from 26 percent.*
 - The FDI ceiling in the sensitive defence sector was hiked with the condition that *control in joint ventures for manufacturing of defence equipment will remain in Indian hands.*
 - Currently, the *domestic defence sector imports 70 percent of its military hardware. The move is aimed to boost the domestic industry.*
 - Foreign investment in defence will be through the *approval route.* The investment will be cleared by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).
 - The *FDI was allowed in the defence sector in 2001* and since then 5 million US dollar of FDI has flowed into India.
- **Tamil Nadu Entry into Public Places Bill introduced**
 - The Tamil Nadu Entry into Public Places (Removal of restriction on dress) Bill, 2014 was introduced in the state assembly.
 - The bill *removes restrictions on the entry of dhoti-clad men in recreation clubs, hotels, theatres and malls in the state of Tamil Nadu.*
- **Liberia declares state of emergency over outbreak of Ebola Virus**
- **Rosetta becomes first ever spacecraft to orbit a Comet**
 - On August 6, Rosetta of European Space Agency became first ever spacecraft to reach a Comet named **67P / Churyumov-Gerasimenko** that was discovered in 1969.
 - It reached the comet after a journey of *10 years, five months and four days* through deep space.

- **Indian Airports to set-up Ebola check posts to screen passengers**
 - On August 6, Union Health Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan asked *all Indian airports to set-up Ebola check posts to screen and track passengers travelling from West Africa*. He also advised all Indians to avoid travelling to Ebola-affected places till the situation gets better.
 - Around *45,000 Indians* live in the Ebola affected places, viz., Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. There is a possibility that these Indians travel back to India to safeguard themselves from Ebola Virus.
 - Ebola virus disease (EVD) is a ***severe human disease***.
 - Ebola Virus was *formerly known by the name Ebola haemorrhagic fever*.
 - World Health Organisation (WHO) has recently reported around 1,600 Ebola infected cases including 887 deaths in Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria till August 4, 2014.
- **Status quo on management of Haryana Gurudwaras: Supreme Court**
 - On August 7, the Supreme Court of India directed the Haryana Government to *maintain status quo on the control of 50 odd gurudwaras* in the state. These gurudwaras are currently under the administration of the Amritsar based *Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)*.
 - There are *fifty-two gurudwaras in Haryana* and *eight of them are historic*.
 - SGPC has been controlling gurudwaras in *Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh* since the enactment of the Sikh Gurdwara Act in the year 1925.
- **Ebola declared as Global Health Emergency**
 - The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Ebola as Global Health Emergency.
 - Ebola has claimed at least *932 lives* and *infected more than 1,700 people* since outbreak of the virus in Guinea in early 2014.
 - US based Drug Company ***Mapp Biopharmaceutical*** made available drug ***ZMapp*** to treat Ebola.
 - The WHO *sanctioned the use of ZMapp to fight against Ebola*.

- **Parliament security panel to review the Parliament security**
 - A Parliament security panel is formed *under the Chairmanship of former Home Secretary R.K. Singh* to review the Parliament security.
 - It will comprise of other two members *namely* Harish Chandra Meena, former Rajasthan DGP and Satyapal Singh, former Mumbai Police Commissioner.
- **RBI issues draft guidelines for implementation of BBPS**
 - On August 7, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued draft guidelines for implementation of the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), *an anytime anywhere bill payment system*.
 - The proposed guidelines *describe the basic requirements of operating the BBPS*.
 - BBPS is *intended for the implementation of a unified bill payment system across the country*. It would enable the customers to pay the bills with the help of agents and *getting instant confirmation of the payment made*.
- **Ajitpal Singh to head Dronacharya Award Selection Committee**
 - On August 7, the *three-time Olympian and former Hockey Captain* Ajitpal Singh was selected as the Chairman of the Dronacharya Award Selection Committee.
 - The committee will have *15 members*, including 12 eminent sportspersons and three officials.
- **UK destroyed Syrian chemical weapon at Ellesmere Port**
 - On August 7, the United Kingdom's Foreign & Commonwealth Office announced that it has *destroyed entire chemical stockpile of 190 metric tonnes of Syrian Arab Republic that was transported to the country*.
 - The destruction of the stockpile comprised was carried out at a commercial facility in Ellesmere Port.
- **Russian hackers used Botnets to hack 1.2 billion internet passwords**
 - The word *Botnet* is a combination of the words '*robot*' and '*network*' and *is a collection of Internet-connected programs communicating with other similar programs in order to perform tasks*.

- **Two Labour Reform Bills tabled in Lok Sabha**
 - The two Labour Reform Bills tabled in Lok Sabha are the Factories (Amendment) Bill 2014 and the Apprentices (Amendment) Bill 2014.
 - The two bills aim *at enabling the government to make certain rules in consultation with the States to ensure safety and welfare of workers at workplace.*
- **Kapil Dev to head Arjuna Awards Selection Committee**
 - The Committee will choose *outstanding sportspersons of the country* for the year 2014.
- **Qaraqosh, Iraq's largest Christian town seized by ISIS militants**
- **India equals world record of maximum number of 6 ducks in a test innings**
 - On August 7, the Indian cricket team equalled the world record of maximum number of 6 ducks (zero runs) in a Test innings.
 - India equaled the record *on the first day of the Manchester Test played against England.*
- **US launched air strike against Islamic militants in Iraq**
- **Committee constituted on industries using silica dust by Uttarkhand Government**
- **Telangana State Public Service Commission notified**
 - On August 8, the Telangana State Public Service Commission was notified as per *Article 315 of the Indian Constitution.*
- **PM releases book titled Gujarat's success story in Water Management**
 - On August 9, by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi released the book titled, "Gujarat's success story in Water Management".
 - This Book *explains how the water resources were utilised and its achievements in the development of the Gujarat's Economy.*

- **Indian Women's Recurve team won Gold medal**
 - Indian Women's Recurve team on August 10 won gold medal at the *Archery World Cup Stage IV* in Wroclaw, Poland.
 - Overall, India bagged a total of *five medals* on the last day.
- **Whatsapp helpline launched to curb corruption**
 - On August 10, Delhi Police launched Whatsapp helpline to curb corruption.
 - Under the facility, *a person can just call and register the complaint and also send a recorded audio or video clips if any policeman harasses or a person demands bribe.*
- **Google polluted internet with classified material: Survey of India**
 - Survey of India (SoI), the Official mapping agency of the country on August 10, alleged that *Google continued to pollute the internet with the map results of India's classified areas even after being warned against it.*
 - As per Surveyor General of India, Swarna Subba Rao, *Google collected a lot of classified data on India during its 2013 Mapathon exercise.*
 - As per the National Map Policy 2005, *"the responsibility for producing, maintaining and disseminating the topographic map database of the whole country, which is the foundation of all spatial data, vests with the Survey of India"*.
- **Haider al-Abadi named as new Iraqi Prime Minister**
 - On August 11, Iraqi President, Mohammed Fuad Masum named Haider al-Abadi as the new Iraqi Prime Minister.
 - Masum has given *thirty days* to Haider al-Abadi to form the next government and present it for the approval of parliament.
- **Oscar winning actor Robin Williams dies**
 - Oscar winning actor and comedian Robin Williams (63) died in California on August 11.
 - He was *remarkably known for his accurate impersonations.*
 - He will be remembered *for his crazy comic personality and great dramatic performances.*

- **TATA-SIA Airlines brand name to be called Vistara**
 - Tata – Singapore Airlines (SIA) named its upcoming joint venture airline as *Vistara* and will start its operation from October 2014.
 - *Vistara* is an inspiration from **sanskrit word**, *Vistaar* that means *limitless expanse*.
 - It has drawn inspiration from the brand's domain – the limitless sky.
- **Member of first Lok Sabha Reshamlal Jangade dies**
- **The National Judicial Appointments Commission Bill introduced in Lok Sabha**
 - The 121st, Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced to give **Constitutional Status** to the *six-member body* called the Judicial Appointments Commission (JAC).
 - The *JAC* will replace the existing *Collegiums'* system for appointing judges of higher judiciary.
 - For this, the *Bill amends Article 124* of the Constitution relating to Supreme Court and **inserts new Articles 124A, 124B & 124C**.
- **SEBI issues KYC Registration Agency Regulations**
 - SEBI issued Know your Client (KYC) Registration Agency (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2014.
- **World Elephant Day observed on August 12**
 - World Elephant Day was observed across the World on August 12.
 - It is *an international annual event* and is *dedicated towards the preservation and protection of the World's elephants*.
 - Goal of observing and celebrating the day is *to create awareness about the plight of African and Asian elephants*.
 - Both these species of elephants are facing extinction as per the *IUCN Red List of threatened species*.
 - African Elephants (*Loxodonta Africana*) are being vulnerable
 - Asian Elephants (*Elephas Maximus*) are endangered.

- **MEDA, one of the payloads of NASA's Mars 2020 rover mission**
 - Mars Environmental Dynamics Analyzer (MEDA) would be *one of the seven payloads to be carried by the Mars 2020 rover mission.*
 - The project Mars 2020 rover was announced by NASA on July 31, 2014.
 - MEDA is *an instrument that is a set of sensors and is capable of providing measurements of temperature, wind speed and direction, pressure, relative humidity and dust size and shape on Mars.*
- **Foundation of two hydel projects laid in J&K**
 - On August 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation of *44 MW Chutak hydro-electric project* and *45 MW Nimoo Bazgo project* in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - The Chutak hydro-electric project is in *Kargil district* and the Nimoo Bazgo project is in *Leh district*.
 - The *aim of the project is to supply the power to the Ladakh region.*
- **Bimal Jalan to head the Expenditure Management Commission**
 - On August 12, the Union Government decided to appoint former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan as the head of the Expenditure Management Commission.
 - Commission will *suggest ways for managing public finances by reducing food, fertiliser and oil subsidies to include fiscal deficit.*
- **Jaitley, Karan Singh, Sharad Yadav felicitated with Outstanding Parliamentary Awards**
 - On August 12, President Pranab Mukherjee conferred the Outstanding Parliamentary Awards for the invaluable contribution in discharge of their parliamentary duties.
 - Arun Jaitley, BJP leader, received the award for 2010;
 - Karan Singh, Congress Veteran, received the award for 2011;
 - Sharad Yadav, JD(U) leader, received the award for 2012.
 - In 1994 *Atal Bihari Vajpayee* was honoured with this award.
- **Vijayawada to be the adhoc capital Andhra Pradesh**

- **Himachal Pradesh to host first Para-gliding World Cup in India**
 - It will be the *first para-gliding World Cup to be hosted in India*.
 - The tournament will be organised *under the aegis of Para-gliding World Cup Association, France*.
- **SC gives two weeks time for Ganga clean-up roadmap**
- **Four highway projects approved for Jammu and Kashmir**
 - The four highway projects approved for J&K will *provide all weather connectivity*.
 - The four highway projects are:
 - *Srinagar – Banihal,*
 - *Qazigund – Banihal,*
 - *Chenani – Nashri and*
 - *Jammu – Udhampur.*
- **Sikkim emerges as the most favoured destination for foreign tourists in the North-East Region**
- **Nuri al-Maliki resigned as Prime Minister of Iraq**
- **Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana re-launched**
 - On August 14, Union Government re-launched the Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana *for the benefit of citizens aged 60 years and above*.
 - This re-launched scheme would *provide financial security to almost half a million people by ensuring regular income during their advancing year*.
 - The scheme was re-launched by the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in New Delhi.
 - The Scheme will be *administrated by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)*.
 - The scheme will be open for a period of one year between August 15, 2014 and August 14, 2015.

- **India celebrates its 68th, Independence Day**

- On August 15, India celebrated its 68th, Independence Day.
 - The Indian Independence Act, 1947 of the Parliament of the United Kingdom, was in effect the implementation of the Mountbatten Plan, partitioned British India into the two new independent dominions of India and Pakistan (including Bangladesh) with effect from August 15, 1947.
 - The Act received the Royal assent on July 18, 1947.

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