

*Dear Readers,*

*In continuation to what we started, here we are with the next version of GA Tonic that covers the Current Affairs from 25th December 2015 to 3rd January 2016. For interview candidates, it becomes more important to get yourself well acquainted with the current affairs.*

*The next big event for the banking aspirant will be LIC AAO 2016. Instead of waiting for the last moment preparation, you can start preparing the GA section now to avoid the last minute pressure.*



## GA TONIC (From 25 DEC 2015 to 3 JAN 2016)

### Banking News

- ✓ The Reserve Bank of India has invited applications for **"Payment System Innovation Awards"** to encourage innovative solutions in the field of Payment and Settlement System. With this initiative, the RBI is hoping to transform the way transactions are processed in the world's fastest growing emerging economy. Some broad areas which the contest will hope to cover are:
  1. Payment security including fraud prevention
  2. Customer convenience and cost reduction
  3. Mobile payments
  4. Acceptance/electronic payment infrastructure
  5. Use of emerging technologies for payments
- ✓ LIC is offering a 'New Year gift' to the public in the form of a limited-premium, non-linked and with-profit endowment assurance plan **'JeevanLabh'**. The highlight of the plan is that premium is payable for a limited period while risk is covered for the whole policy term. The plan is available from ages 8 to 59 years. **The maximum age at maturity is 75 years.**
- ✓ Iran's leading banks will open branches in India to energise commercial ties between New Delhi and Tehran. The decision was amongst a slew of commercial measures taken by the India-Iran Joint Commission that met for the first time. After the meeting led by External Affairs Minister SushmaSwaraj and Iranian Finance Minister Ali Tayebnia, India decided to allow the **Pasargan Bank and Parsian Bank of Iranto set up branches in New Delhi and Mumbai.**
- ✓ India's central bank has asked the lenders to open more brick and mortar branches in villages with no banking facilities and **with a population of more than 5,000.** The banking regulator has asked banks to submit a roadmap on how **many branches they will be opening by 31 March 2017.** Banks have to submit the roadmap by end of January 2016. RBI observed that coverage of banking services in unbanked villages is skewed towards the BC (Banking Correspondent) model and the ratio of branches to BC is very low. Therefore, it has been decided to focus on villages with population above 5,000 without a bank branch of a scheduled commercial bank.

### Indian Economy in News

- ✓ Eight states have agreed to implement direct benefit of transfer in kerosene in 26 districts, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said on Friday. The scheme will be implemented **from April 1, 2016** and till then state governments will be consulted in the run up to the scheme.
- ✓ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved introduction of Amended Technology

Upgradation Fund Scheme (ATUFS) for technology upgradation of the textiles industry. The ATUFS replaces existing Revised Restructured Technology Upgradation Fund Scheme (RR-TUFS) to give a boost to textile sector under Make in India campaign.

- ✓ The Union Government has added 106 drugs including that of HIV/AIDS, Cancer and Hepatitis C to the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). In this regard, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's core committee has revised the NLEM. The committee was headed by V.M. Katoch, former secretary of Department of Health Research. The revision includes addition of 106 essential medicines and deletion of 70 medicines. **With this total number of essential medicines in the list has gone up to 376 from earlier 348 medicines.** This move will ensure their availability across the country at affordable prices.

### Business News

- ✓ Paytm has acquired Shifu for \$8 million (about Rs 53.2 crore), a move that will enable the digital payments company to offer more personalised user experience. Shifu, a context-aware personal assistant application, mines the smartphone usage patterns of users and makes personalised and highly relevant recommendations to them. Shifu, created by Delhi-based The Signals, is a free task-managing app. Once the app is installed, it analyses the usage patterns of the device owner and give various suggestions based on a predictive algorithm.
- ✓ State-run Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has commissioned a 660 MW unit of Prayagraj Super Thermal Power Project at Bara town in Allahabad district of Uttar Pradesh. This is the first supercritical thermal unit to be commissioned in the state to achieve capacity addition on attaining full load. Supercritical units are generally eco-friendly and more efficient thermal power plants as they consume less coal as fuel.
- ✓ State-run Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has emerged as the country's biggest company in terms of annual revenue as per an annual list of 2015 Fortune 500 companies in India. IOC was followed by MukeshAmbani-led private sector Reliance Industries at the second. Top ten companies are.....
  1. Indian Oil Corp (IOC)
  2. Reliance Industries
  3. Tata Motors
  4. State Bank of India (SBI)
  5. Bharat Petroleum (BPCL)
  6. Hindustan Petroleum
  7. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)
  8. Tata Steel
  9. Hindalco Industries

#### 10. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)

- ✓ IT major Tech Mahindra has launched first of its kind 'Tap N Pay' contactless digital payment wallet **MoboMoney** for the Indian masses. MoboMoney has been billed as India's first commercial NFC ecosystem rollout that would allow consumers to convert cash into e-cash for making payments.



**his/her spouse has taxable income of more than 10 lakh rupees.** This income would be as per the previous financial year computed under Income Tax Act, 1961. This decision will be given effect to initially on self-declaration basis **of LPG consumers while booking cylinders January 2016.**

- ✓ Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has introduced e-office, an initiative which will help provide efficient services to the people by digitizing more than 12,000 files. It was formally launched by WCD Minister Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in New Delhi on the lines with the spirit of Good Governance initiative of Union Government. This e-office module is likely to start from **the 1 January, 2016.** All the attached offices of the ministry are also going to come under the e-office platform.
- ✓ Reliance JioInfocomm Ltd (RJIL) or Reliance Jio on 27 December 2015 launched 4G telecom service. The service was launched at the Reliance Corporate Park in Navy Mumbai to mark the birth anniversary of Dhirubhai Ambani, founder of the Reliance Industries Limited (RIL). The services are expected to **begin by April 2016.**
- ✓ Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda on 25 December 2015 announced 4 new Information Technology-based initiatives to provide citizen-centric health services. The initiatives include three applications, namely, **Kilkari, Mobile Academy and M-Cessation and a dedicated toll free number 1800-11-6666** which will provide round the clock counselling and treatment support services for TB patients. **The initiatives were announced on the occasion of the Good Governance Day** which is being celebrated annually to mark the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister **AtalBihari Vajpayee.**

#### National News

- ✓ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the new building of Afghanistan Parliament in the capital city Kabul built by India at a cost of USD 90 million. It was inaugurated during Narendra Modi's first official visit to Afghanistan after becoming Prime Minister. **He also named one block of Parliament as Atal Block after former Prime Minister AtalBihari Vajpayee.** Prime Minister also handed over 4 Mi-25 attack helicopters to Afghanistan Air Force symbolising a shift in India's position on supplying 'offensive' equipment. The Prime Minister also addressed the two houses of Afghanistan.
- ✓ Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Bihar have agreed to join the central government's electricity distribution utility (Discom) financial turnaround scheme to take the total number up to 15. Piyush Goyal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Power, Coal and New & Renewable Energy Minister said on Monday that within two months of getting Cabinet approval, more than half the states have voluntarily agreed to join the scheme called the Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY). Under UDAY, states shall take over 75 per cent of Discom debt as on 30 September 2015 over two years where 50 per cent of Discom debt shall be taken over in 2015-16 and 25 per cent in 2016-17. Discoms will also issue bonds for the remaining 25 per cent of their debt which will be guaranteed by the state governments.
- ✓ Union Government has announced to link **LPG subsidy to income of consumers in order to ensure that the subsidy benefits go to the targeted group.** Henceforth, the LPG subsidy will not be available to LPG consumers **if the consumer or**

1. **Kilkari** is an audio-based mobile service that delivers weekly audio messages to families about pregnancy, child birth and child care. Each pregnant woman and infant's mother would receive weekly voice messages relevant to the stage of pregnancy or age of the infant. Those who are registered in Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS), a web-enabled name-based system to monitor and ensure delivery of full spectrum of services to all pregnant women and children, will be benefitted from the service.
2. **Mobile Academy** is a mobile-based application aimed at providing training services to 9 million ASHAs. This will aid in enhancing their interpersonal skills. Once registered, ASHAs can access the 240-minute course via their mobile phones. They can then complete the standardized course at their convenience. Digital bookmarking technology enables ASHAs to complete the course at their own pace.

3. **M-Cessation** will be an IT-enabled tool to help tobacco users to quit tobacco. Built on a helpline concept, it will register beneficiaries on the basis of a missed call. The counselling would be done through a two-way SMS process, the Minister informed.

- ✓ Wicked Ride, a start-up founded in 2014 by **Vivekananda H.R., Anil G and Varun Agni**, has launched its brand '**Apna Ride**' for utility bike rentals, targeted primarily at budget conscious bike enthusiasts. The service would be initially available at Bengaluru, Mysore and Jaipur and bookings can be done through [www.apnaride.com](http://www.apnaride.com).
- ✓ Seeking to **boost entrepreneurship at the grassroots level**, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the action plan for '**Start up India, Stand up India**' will be unveiled on January 16. Mr. Modi said the programme will focus on ensuring benefits reach the youth from the lowest strata of the society.
- ✓ The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of 69 Bridges including Approach Roads on the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa (TKK) road section of the Trilateral Highway in Myanmar.
- ✓ With two unannounced stops, in Kabul and Lahore on Christmas day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi rewrote the recent history of geopolitics in the region on Friday. Officials in Delhi and Islamabad told that Mr. Modi had telephoned Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from Kabul to wish him on his birthday, and during the call, made plans to travel to Lahore to wish him personally a few hours later.
- ✓ "**Make in India Week**": Taking a cue from the biennial investor congregation - Vibrant Gujarat Summit - held every alternate year in Gujarat the Central Government is organising "Make in India Week" in Mumbai during February 13-18, 2016. The week-long event, being organised by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

#### International News

- ✓ The World Health Organization (WHO) on 29 December 2015 declared the end of Ebola virus transmission in the Republic of Guinea.
- ✓ China's National People's Congress Standing Committee, country's top law making body, on 27 December 2015 gave its approval to amending One Couple, One Child Policy. The amended policy, which will come into force on 1 January 2016, will lift the restrictions on couples from having only one child. The amended policy is aimed at balancing the country's population structure by allowing all couples to have two children.
- ✓ Seychelles government allowed India to build its first Naval Base on **the Assumption Island in the Indian Ocean region (IOR)** as a joint project between both countries.

- ✓ The World Bank has approved an additional financial assistance to **Pakistan of \$35 million** to support improved management, planning and development of water resources in the Indus River Basin in Pakistan.

#### States in News

- ✓ **e-VahanBima**: Electronic motor insurance policies are legally accepted by the police and transport authorities in Telangana from today, making it the first state in the country to do so.
- ✓ The ambitious odd-even scheme of Delhi government, a first such intervention in the country to combat spiralling air pollution, got off to a decent start on new year with volume of cars on the city roads coming down significantly amid deployment of thousands of policemen and moderately augmented public transport.
- ✓ Government of Andhra Pradesh signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Microsoft India on a range of technology initiatives. The MoU was signed after a meeting between the Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella in Hyderabad. The purpose of the MoU is to improve use of information and communication technologies, drive digital inclusion and provide IT-based decentralised citizen services. The initiatives will help in checking school dropouts, improving agricultural productivity and providing better citizen services.

#### New Appointments in India

- ✓ **T K Kurien & Abidali Neemuchwala**: India's third largest IT services exporter - Wipro has announced major management changes with the elevation of the chief executive officer (CEO) T K Kurien as the executive vice-chairman and chief operating officer Abidali Neemuchwala as the new CEO and member of the board.
- ✓ **Atul Sobti**: on 1 January 2016 took charge as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of state-owned power equipment maker Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) for a period of five years
- ✓ Shekhar Saran has taken over as Chairman-cum-Managing Director of Ranchi-based Central Mine Planning & Design Institute Ltd (CMPDI) from this month. Prior to this, he served as the Director (Technical) of CMPDI.
- ✓ **D.K.Hota**: The Public Enterprises Selection Board has recommended D.K.Hota to be the new CMD of defence PSU BEML Ltd. He is currently Director (HR) of the Bengaluru-based BEML. He has been on deputation at BEML from oil marketing major HPCL for the past two years.
- ✓ **Dr Gyanendra D Bandgaiyan**: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) on 30 December 2015 approved the appointment of Dr Gyanendra D



Bandgaiyan as the Director General of the National Centre for Good Governance.

- ✓ Sweden's **Bjorn Isberg** was appointed as the Tournament Director of Coal India Hockey India League (HIL), the premier league for hockey in India.
- ✓ The Govt of India gave Amitabh Kant the additional responsibility of being Chief Executive Officer of NITI Aayog, effective 31 December 2015.
- ✓ **Karan Adani**, son of Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani, has been appointed as the CEO of Adani Ports and SEZ (APSEZ) with effect from January 1, 2016.

### Summits and Conferences

- ✓ The 18th Session of the India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held on 28 December 2015 in New Delhi. The session was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister of India (EAM) Sushma Swaraj and Ali Tayebnia, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran.

### Sports News

- ✓ **SAFF**: India on 3 January 2016 won of the South Asian Football Federation Cup (SAFF) championships. In the title clash played at Trivandrum International Stadium of Kerala, India defeated defending champions Afghanistan 2-1.
- ✓ Star India off-spinner **Ravichandran Ashwin** ended 2015 as the No. 1 Test bowler in the ICC rankings issued on the back of his strong showing against South Africa in the recent home series. Ashwin, who took 62 wickets in nine Tests this year including 31 scalps in the four matches against South Africa, became the first India bowler since Bishen Bedi in 1973 to achieve the milestone of finishing the year on top.
- ✓ Indian Test captain Virat Kohli was named '**Cricketer of the Year**', while **Mithali Raj** was picked for the M.A. Chidambaram Trophy for the best women's cricketer. Under Kohli, the Indian team ended a 22-year wait for a series win on Sri Lankan soil before battering world No.1 South Africa to give them their first overseas loss in nine years. Mithali, on the other hand, became the first Indian woman and second overall to complete 5,000 runs in ODI format this year. In other awards, **former wicketkeeper Syed Kirmani will be presented the Col. C.K. Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award**. Karnataka all-rounder Robin Uthappa has been picked for the Madhav Rao Scindia Award for being the highest run-scorer in Ranji Trophy.
- ✓ World champion Magnus Carlsen of Norway won the Qatar Masters Open chess tournament, billed as the strongest Open in history.
- ✓ Former India player and Bengal captain Laxmi Ratan Shukla announced his retirement from cricket.

- ✓ Gujarat clinched the Vijay Hazare Cricket Trophy. It is the first time that Gujarat won the trophy. In the final of the limited overs tournament, Gujarat defeated Delhi by 139 runs at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, Bengaluru. The Vijay Hazare Trophy is also known as the Ranji One Day Trophy.
- ✓ Shiva Keshavan on 27 December 2015 grabbed a silver medal in the 18th edition of the Asian Luge Championship held in Nagano, Japan. The first place was claimed by defending champion Hidenari Kanayama of Japan. On the other hand, South Korea's Kim Dong-hyeon grabbed the third place.
- ✓ Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Kusal Perera is facing the prospect of a four-year ban after his B sample tested positive for a banned substance. The ICC has informed that he faces a four-year ban, as his urine sample was tested positive in Qatar after the ICC had originally found it contained banned substance.

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### Awards and recognitions

- ✓ The Drug Authentication and Verification Application (DAVA) project of The Department of Commerce has won the 2015 eASIA Award under Trade Facilitation category. The award was announced by Asia Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation (APCTF) and Tehran based (Iran) Electronic Business.
- ✓ Foremost south Indian classical vocalists Sanjay Subrahmanyam has conferred with prestigious 2015 **Sangita Kalanidhi** award. The prestigious award was bestowed upon him by renowned mathematician Manjul Bhargava at 89th annual conference of the Madras Music Academy in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. With this, he became seventh artistes to be conferred with this award before completing 50 years of age.
- ✓ An Indian-origin cancer research expert **Harpal Singh Kumar** was honoured with a Knighthood from Queen Elizabeth II for his influential work on prevention and treatment of cancer. Mr. Singh's name has appeared in the 2015 New Year's Honours list that includes several other Indian-origin individuals.
- ✓ Well-known sand **artist Sudarsan Pattnaik's Santa Claus** found a place in Limca Book of World Records. Pattnaik claimed that he had created a 45 feet high sand Santa Claus at Puri beach on 24 December 2015,

which was recognised as the largest sand Santa Claus as of today by the Limca Book of World Records.

- ✓ **Syed Kirmani**, Former Indian Wicket-Keeper nominated for the 2015 Col. CK Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award. A decision in this regard was taken at a meeting of the Col. CK Nayudu Awards Committee in Mumbai. The award was instituted by the BCCI in 1994 to celebrate the birth centenary of Col. Cottari Kanakaiya Nayudu, the country's first test captain.
- ✓ The Cabinet on Wednesday approved the formation of joint venture companies with various state governments to mobilise resources for undertaking rail infrastructure projects. The initial paid-up capital of the Ministry of Railways will be limited to Rs. 50 crore for each state. The joint venture companies would be formed with equity participation from the Ministry of Railways and the state governments concerned. Each joint venture will have an initial paid-up capital of Rs. 100 crore and based on the projects to be undertaken, further fund infusion would be done on approval of the project.
- ✓ Eminent Gujarati litterateur **Raghuveer Chaudhary** was selected for the 51st Jnanpith award for his contribution to the Indian literature. Chaudhary is the fourth Gujarati litterateur to bag this prestigious award after Uma Shankar Joshi (1967), Pannalal Patel (1985) and Rajendra Shah (2001).
- ✓ Rakhi Haldar and Kavita Devi bagged gold in their respective weight categories in the Senior National Weightlifting Championships held in Patiala, Punjab.
- ✓ The Globe Soccer on 27 December 2015 presented the sixth edition of Globe Soccer Awards 2015 to the winners at a ceremony held in Dubai, UAE. Awarded for excellences in the field of football, Globe Soccer Awards are the first and only awards for the Best Club Director and the Best Agent of the Year. The awards conferred were based on the performance of the players and football clubs in 2015.
  1. Best Player of the Year - Lionel Messi
  2. Best President of the Year - Josep Maria Bartomeu
  3. Best Club of the Year - F.C. Barcelona
  4. Best Media Attraction in Football - F.C. Barcelona
  5. Best Coach of the Year - Marc Wilmots
  6. Best Agent of the Year - Jorge Mendes
  7. Best Referee of the Year - Ravshan Irmatov
  8. Best Academy of the Year - Benfica
- ✓ **'Export Quality Excellence'**: Pump manufacturing major CRI Pumps has bagged 'Export Quality Excellence' award for the 11th time in a row.
- ✓ **Nandagopal Lakshminarayanan**: An Indian-origin software engineer named Nandagopal Lakshminarayanan has won a prestigious award in the UK for creating an innovative electronic smart key system which enables the creation and management of keys and locks that cannot be copied or picked.

### Trade and Agreements

- ✓ The Union government and the World Bank signed a \$50-million credit agreement for a project aimed at helping young people from minority communities complete their education and improve their employment opportunities named Nai Manzil Scheme.
- ✓ Reliance Defence said on Thursday it had signed a manufacturing and maintenance deal potentially worth \$6 billion with Russia's Almaz-Antey, the maker of an air defence system that sources said the Indian military was poised to buy. The partnership between the Indian firm controlled by billionaire Anil Ambani and the Russian firm was announced as Prime Minister Narendra Modi began a trip to Moscow aimed at strengthening defence ties.
- ✓ The Union Cabinet has given its approval to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) on the Conservation of Migratory Birds of Prey in Africa and Eurasia. With signing it, India will become the 54th signatory to the MoU.
- ✓ Japan and South Korea on 28 December 2015 reached an Agreement on Issue of Comfort Women. The agreement was reached after a meeting between Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and Yun Byung-se, Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Korea in Seoul. It aims to resolve a decades-old dispute over Korean women who were used as sex slaves by Japanese soldiers during World War II.
- ✓ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on 1 January 2016 signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) for web-based monitoring of Indo-German Watershed Development projects. The web-based monitoring of Indo-German Watershed Development projects will happen in three states- Gujarat, Rajasthan and Telangana.
- ✓ Bangladesh's state-run Atomic Energy Commission signed a deal with Russia to set up two nuclear power plants, each with 1,200 MW capacity, an investment totalling \$12.65 billion.
- ✓ **India and Russia signed 16 Agreements/Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)** to deepen bilateral cooperation in the fields of energy, security, technology, etc. The pacts were signed after the conclusion of the 16th India-Russia Annual Summit in Moscow. After the summit, which was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin, both the leaders issued a joint statement with the theme Shared Trust, New Horizons.

**Some Agreements/MoUs signed were:**

1. Protocol amending the agreement on simplification of requirements for mutual travels of certain categories of citizens of the two countries.
2. Protocol amending agreement between India and Russia on mutual travel regime for holders of Diplomatic & Official Passports. Cooperation in the field of Helicopter Engineering Plan for Cooperation between the Federal Customs Service of the Central Board of Excise and Customs, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, India and the Russian Federation for combating Customs violations in 2015 – 2017.
3. Indian Oil Corporation and Oil India Ltd have signed a memorandum of understanding with Russian national oil company Rosneft for cooperation in geologic survey, exploration and production of hydrocarbons in select onshore areas in Russia. The MoU document was signed during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Russia. In all, 16 agreements were signed between Indian and Russian firms in the field of nuclear energy, hydrocarbon, defence and other sectors.


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#### Science & Technology

- ✓ Union Government has unveiled National Biotechnology Development Strategy (NBDS) 2015-2020 to establish India as a world-class bio-manufacturing hub. It was unveiled by the Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan in New Delhi.
- ✓ Students who have opted for the Science stream at the high school level, but have no access to physical labs now have the option to perform experiments in a virtual science-lab. Thanks to the educational technology initiative - "Online Labs" - developed by Amrita CREATE (Centre of Research in Advanced Technologies for Education) in association with CDAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing).

OLabs or Online virtual Science Labs allows students to repeat the experiments as many times as they wish.

- ✓ China successfully launched **Gaofen-4** Earth observation satellite toward a geostationary orbit from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in the south-western province of Sichuan. The Satellite was launched aboard a Long March-3B carrier rocket. Launched as a part of the China High-resolution Earth Observation System (CHEOS), Gaofen-4 is located at the orbit 36000 kilometres away from the earth and moves synchronously with the earth.

#### Committees

- ✓ **R M Lodha Committee:** The Supreme Court-appointed Lodha Committee today recommended sweeping reforms for the controversy-ridden BCCI, suggesting a bar on ministers from occupying positions, putting a cap on the age and tenure of the office-bearers and legalising betting.
- ✓ **Shyam Benegal Committee:** To put an end to recent controversies surrounding the Censor Board, the Centre has set up a Committee headed by noted filmmaker Shyam Benegal to work out a revamp plan and submit its report within two months.
- ✓ **Vijay Kelkar Committee:** The Union Ministry of Finance recently released the report of the Committee on Revisiting and Revitalising Public Private Partnership (PPP) Model. The 9-member committee was headed by former Finance **Secretary Vijay Kelkar** and submitted its report on 19 November 2015.
- ✓ The Reserve Bank of India released the Report of the Committee on Medium-term Path on Financial Inclusion. The committee was constituted on 15 July 2015 by the RBI with the objective of working out a medium-term (five year) measurable action plan for financial inclusion. The 14-member committee was headed by RBI Executive Director Deepak Mohanty
- ✓ **Kamlesh Chandra committee:** The Union Government has constituted a committee to examine the wage structure, service conditions of the Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) in the Department of Posts (DoP). It is one member committee comprising of Kamlesh Chandra, Retired Member of Postal Services Board.

#### Defence News

- ✓ **Amament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE)** successfully test-fired Pinaka II multi barrel rocket launcher (MBRL) System. The three-day long user assisted trials were conducted at Pokhran in Rajasthan. Pinaka is an unguided rocket system and capable of neutralising large areas with rapid salvos. Range of Pinaka II is 20 km more than the Pinaka I version, which has a 40 km range and has already been inducted into the forces.



- ✓ Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM), the missile co-developed by India and Israel, was successfully test-fired on the Western Sea Board. The missile was fired from INS Kolkata and it successfully intercepted an aerial target at extended ranges. The test-fire was jointly carried out by the Indian Navy, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Israel Aerospace Industries. **This was the first test for LRSAM or BARAK 8 missile in India.** Earlier, on 11 November 2015, it was successfully test-fired from a range in Israel. The missile was developed by the DRDL, Hyderabad in collaboration with Israel Aerospace Industries. **It has been manufactured by M/s Bharat Dynamics Limited, India.**
- ✓ Under the "Make in India" initiative, **Russian firm Rostech State** Corporation has tied up with India's Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to manufacture 200 Kamov 226T light helicopters. The new fleet of Kamovs will replace the ageing Cheetah and Chetak helicopters. The deal is estimated to be worth \$1 billion, according to Press Trust of India report.
- ✓ Indigenously developed **Beyond Visual Range (BVR) air-to-air missile**, Astra, was successfully test fired. The test was conducted by the Indian Air Force off the coast of Odisha near the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore.

#### Obituaries

- ✓ **Hindi film actress Sadhana:** Yesteryear Hindi film actress Sadhana, known for popularising the fashionable Sadhana cut (fringe haircut), passed away in Mumbai.
- ✓ **Ian Fraser LemmyKilmister**, founding member and singer in the British heavy metal band Motorhead, passed away on 28 December 2015 after battling cancer.
- ✓ Veteran **singer SubirSen** passed away on 29 December 2015 due to lung cancer in Kolkata. A hit film AaskaPanchhi marked the peak of Sen's popularity.
- ✓ **General Om PrakashMalhotra**, former Punjab Governor and ex-Chief of Army, passed. General Om PrakashMalhotra was the 13th Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army from 1978 – 1981.
- ✓ Oscar-winning cinematographer **Haskell Wexler** died peacefully in his sleep on in California, US. He was 93. He was one of the America's most influential cinematographers.
- ✓ Popular science-fiction writer George Clayton Johnson, who penned the script for the first Star Trek episode, The Man Trap, passed away on 25 December 2015 due to cancer in Los Angeles, California.

- ✓ **Justice V S Malimath:** Former Chief Justice of Karnataka and Kerala High Courts Justice V S Malimath died at Manipal hospital in Bengaluru. He served as an International Observer to oversee the Referendum in Sri Lanka. In June 2015, he was appointed as the Chairman of the Karnataka Border Protection Force by the Karnataka government.

#### Important Days

- ✓ **25 December:** Good Governance Day was observed on 25 December 2015 across the country. The day was observed to mark the birth anniversary of former-Prime Minister AtalBihari Vajpayee.

#### Miscellaneous

- ✓ ArunimaSinha, the amputee mountaineer who set a record by climbing the Mount Everest on 25 December 2015, conquered Mount Aconcagua in Argentina. With this, Arunima has successfully completed the 5th summit of the Mission 7 Summits and also became the first female amputee to climb 5 Mountains of the World.
- ✓ The Union Home Ministry cleared the proposal to grant **Adnan Sami the citizenship of India**. Mr Sami, who has been staying in India since 2011, will now have to fill a citizenship form at the Home Ministry's office in Delhi and pay Rs 13,700. He will be given citizenship under Section 6 (I) of the Indian Citizenship Act, 1955 under the category "citizenship by naturalisation.". Lahore-born Sami first arrived in India on March 13, 2001 on a visitor's visa with a validity of one year.
- ✓ Direct-selling FMCG firm Amway India today announced Bollywood actor **FarhanAkhtar** as its **brand ambassador** to promote Nutrilite range of the products.



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