

★★★★ **Starred Articles** ★★★★★

29 PETA to create India's first elephant sanctuary in Karnataka

Jan **India > India's first elephant sanctuary**

The People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) will create India's first caged elephant sanctuary within the Bannerghatta Biological Park in Karnataka. A model of the sanctuary is designed by PETA and elephant expert Carol Buckley. The sanctuary is set to come up in an area of 49.5 hectares within the biological park, which is a part of the Bannerghatta National Park. The sanctuary will allow elephants to roam freely without human interaction, and allow them to live a natural life. PETA will provide training to local trainers and mahouts to ensure protection and care for the elephants.

30 Anti-leprosy day celebrated on 30th January

Jan **Days > Anti-leprosy day**

India celebrated anti-leprosy day on 30th January 2015 to bring the disease, also known as the Hansen's disease, into the spotlight. The day is celebrated to pay tribute to the selfless efforts made by Mahatma Gandhi in order to take care of those people who were affected by leprosy. The objectives of celebrating the day include offering regular and free of cost treatment to the affected persons, supporting the diseased persons psychologically and helping them to cope up with physical impairments of skin sores and nerve damage, ascertaining that all affected persons are getting the necessary treatment, rehabilitation and care and estimating the marked decrease or increase in the rate of disease spread.

India constitutes 55 percent of the leprosy cases of the world with Chhattisgarh having the highest prevalence rate of leprosy followed by Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

30 Djokovic and Serena win Australian Open titles, Leander Paes – Martina
Jan Hingis win mixed doubles

Sports > Australian Open

The Australian Open saw many veterans as well as newcomers securing the Grand Slam title in Melbourne. Serena Williams won her sixth Australian Open women's singles title and 19th career Grand Slam beating her close rival Maria Sharapova. The men's singles title was won by Novak Djokovic, who beat Andy Murray to claim his fifth Australian Open title. Among the first-timers were the pairs Fognini-Bolelli and Sands-Safarova, who won the men's doubles and women's doubles titles respectively. The Indo-Swiss pair of Leander Paes and Martina Hingis, who came together for the first time, won the Australian Open mixed doubles title.

01 First canister-based nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-5 test-fired

Feb **Science and Technology > First canister-based nuclear-capable ballistic missile**

India's first ever inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM), the Agni-V, successfully test-fired, taking the country's strategic strikes capability to a new level. It has a strike range of more than 5,000 km and can deliver a nuclear warhead of over one-tonne-deep inside China. The trial took place in the Wheeler Island off Odisha coast, where a three-stage missile was launched from a canister mounted on a truck. Congratulating scientists from the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) for the success, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the missile was an asset for the country's forces. The most powerful missile of India can travel faster than a bullet despite weighing nearly 50 tonnes and will increase the operational flexibility of armed forces.

Others

29 Jan Airtel applies for payment banks license through Kotak Mahindra

Corporate > Airtel

In a first of its deal with a banking entity, AMSL (Airtel M Commerce Services Ltd), the wholly-owned subsidiary of Bharti Airtel, is set to convert its existing prepaid payment instrument licence into a payments bank licence with Kotak Mahindra as partner. AMSL has been offering mobile money services under the brand name Airtel Money. The licence will be issued by the Reserve bank of India as per its prescribed guidelines. Following this, Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. will procure 19.90% from the deal, subject to regulatory approvals.

Bharti Airtel along with Kotak's banking expertise is looking forward to deliver financial services to millions of unbanked citizens across the country in a bid to drive India's financial inclusion agenda.

29 Jan Shekhar Sen named as the new chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi

India > Sangeet Natak Academy

Prominent theatre director, actor and singer Shekhar Sen was appointed as the chairman of Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's premier institution of performing arts. He was also awarded with the prestigious Padma Shri on the 26th of January this year for his contribution to performing arts. Sen was appointed for a term of five years by the culture ministry, after the previous chairman Leela Samson quit.

02 Feb Country's first financial centre set to be formed in Gujarat

India > Finance

At a meeting between financial regulators RBI, SEBI and IRDA, the proposal to start India's first finance centre was laid down. The finance body tentatively named as the International Finance Centre (IFC) is set to come up in the special economic zone in Gujrat's International Finance Tech-City and will handle dealings and settlement in foreign currency. It aims to win back some of the finance related businesses that have settled in Dubai and Singapore. The IFC was originally envisaged for Mumbai, but the plan failed to materialise after the 2008 crisis.

02 Feb Central government set to hire more than 62000 constables for various parliamentary and police forces

India > Security

The central government, in one of its biggest recruitment drives has said it will hire 62,000 young men and women as constables for various organisations like CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB, CISF, NIA and SSF. The Staff Selection Committee (SSC) will do the hiring under guidelines provided by the centre. Out of the total 62,390 posts, 16 % will be reserved for women candidates. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has the most number of vacancies 24,588, followed by 22,517 for the Border Security Force (BSF). The selection procedure will be a three stage affair, consisting of a physical examination, written test and medical test. Candidates who have passed the 10th standard and are between 18 – 23 years of age are eligible for the vacancies. Age relaxation is applicable for SC/ST and OBC candidates and the kin of those killed in the Gujarat riots of 2002 and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

03 Government allocates 1700 crore to Swachh Bharat Mission

Feb **Politics and government > Swachh Bharat Mission**

The government has allocated Rs. 1700 crore to the Swachh Bharat Mission for complete sanitation in urban and rural areas. The budget for the programme has been allocated in the supplementary budget as the programme was launched only in October, 2014. However, states are yet to submit their final proposals and with only 2 months left of this financial year, there is little chance that all of the allocation will be utilized.

03 RBI resets the upper limit of Liberalised Remittance Scheme to \$250,000

Feb **India > Economy**

In a monetary policy review, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) enhanced the limit under Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) to \$250,000 per person per year. RBI had reduced the eligibility limit for foreign exchange remittances under LRS to \$75,000 in 2013 as a safety measure. As the foreign exchange market gained stability, the remittance was increased to \$125,000 in June 2014 and the present increase comes in the light of the current scenario being more favourable.

03 RBI cuts SLR by 50bps but leaves the repo rates and CRR untouched

Feb **Bank specific > RBI rates**

RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan, recently announced decline in the SLR by 50 basis points falling from 22% to 21.2%. While the repo rates and CRR remained unchanged, the SLR was cut down to create space for banks to expand credit. The RBI said that the decline in SLR will encourage the banks to increase their lending to productive sectors on competitive terms so as to support investment and growth. As there was no decrease in the rate of inflation and the fiscal outlook saw no growth since January 15, the RBI has decided to move ahead with current interest rates stance. However, the GDP growth estimates in 2015-16 are expected to rise to 6.5 per cent, owing to the improvement in domestic growth. RBI estimated the current account deficit (CAD) for 2014- 15 at 1.3 per cent of the GDP, significantly lower than the earlier projection.

Information to help:

Statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) is the reserve requirement that the commercial banks in India require maintaining in the form of gold, cash or government approved securities before providing credit to the customers. Statutory Liquidity Ratio is determined and maintained by Reserve Bank of India in order to control the expansion of bank credit.