



Gene Editing Swats at Mosquitoes

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SERIES EDITOR: SEEMA SINHA

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SUPER Science

DAWN PROBE ORBITS DWARF PLANET CERES

NASA's Dawn space probe to study the mysterious dwarf planet Ceres enters orbit around Ceres, becoming the first spacecraft to visit a dwarf planet.

Observations made by NASA's Dawn spacecraft, which has been orbiting the dwarf planet since March, suggest that Ceres' many bright spots could be made primarily of hydrated magnesium sulfates.

Here on Earth, magnesium sulfate is sold as Epsom salt, a popular home remedy for a variety of ailments, including sore feet and joint inflammation.

GENE EDITING SWATS AT MOSQUITOES

A new genetic tool developed by scientists, called "gene drive", may help wipe out Africa's main malaria-carrying mosquitoes. In tests done, the scientists tweaked the pieces of DNA. They sterilised *Anopheles gambiae* mosquitoes, in other words, it stopped them from reproducing.

The gene drives have been designed to find a target gene, slice into it and then insert themselves. This cut-and-paste system alters the function of the original gene, and it is self-propagating, which means that it makes more of itself.

This is the second gene drive aimed at eliminating malaria. The first, announced earlier, stops mosquitoes from transmitting the parasite that causes malaria. The newer gene drive instead eliminates the mosquitoes themselves by making it impossible for females to make new baby mosquitoes.





Skiing has been an Olympic Sport since 1936. It continues to be popular till date, with the gear becoming much cooler and free skiing becoming more extreme and entertaining.

Following are the top ten destinations for skiing in India:

1. Pahalgam - Jammu and Kashmir



Pahalgam is a small town located in the Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is a major tourist destination where snow skiing is undertaken heavily. The place is very popular among all the regions of western Himalayas. The presence of breathtaking views makes the place a favourite with trekkers and skiers alike. The best time to visit the place is from December to March, when there is a thick snow cover. There are ample options for accommodation here.

2. Gulmarg - Jammu and Kashmir

Gulmarg is a beautiful hill station in the Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir. Popularly known as the “Heartland of winter sports in India”, the place is the seventh best skiing destination of Asia. Gulmarg also has the famous ‘Gulmarg Gondola’, which is one of the highest cable cars in the world. The best time to visit the region is between the months of December and March.

3. Solang Nala - Himachal Pradesh

Solang Nala is a famous valley in Kullu, in Himachal Pradesh. The place is famous for conducting many types of winter sports, especially skiing. Many tournaments are organised here every year, and a number of workshops are also held to teach amateurs the basics of skiing. If you are an adventure seeker, other summer sports that are popular here are parachuting, paragliding, skating and zorbing. One can visit the place during any month because the steady trickle of visitors keeps the place always alive. So, the skiing lovers, make sure to visit the Solang Valley this season!

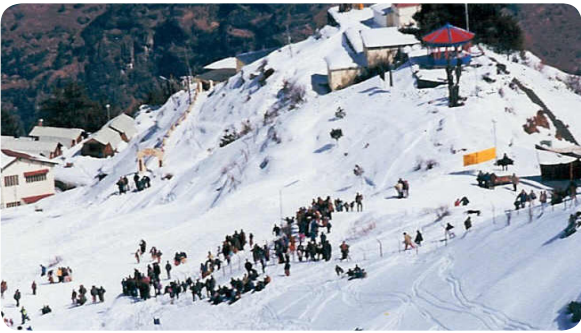
4. Munsiyari - Uttarakhand

The name Munsiyari means a ‘place with snow’. It is situated on the banks of the river Goriganga. It is a fast growing tourist destination, and mountaineers, glacier enthusiasts, high altitude trekkers and nature lovers use it as a hub or their base camp. Munsiyari also falls on the ancient salt route from Tibet and is at the entrance of the Johar Valley.

5. Manali - Himachal Pradesh

Manali is a picturesque town situated in Himachal Pradesh. It is a magnificent hill station that is very popular with the tourists. Ample snow formations and beautiful slopes make the place a heavenly location for skiing in the winters. There are many guides and professional skiers who can assist you in taking the preliminary lessons in snow skiing. The availability of many good ski slopes in the nearby Solang Valley also keeps the skiers spirit high. The best time to visit the place for skiing is from January to February.

6. Auli - Uttarakhand



Auli is a favourite skiing destination for many not only because of the beautiful glistening slopes but also for the clean environment that the place offers. Located at about 250 kms away from Rishikesh, the place is like heaven on earth! The slopes are located at an altitude of almost 2500 to 3000 m. Situated high up on the Garhwal Hills, Auli is a must visit destination if skiing is your passion.

7. Dayara Bugyal - Uttarakhand

Dayara Bugyal is one of the most picturesque skiing spots of Uttarakhand. There are lush slopes, dotted with vast expanse of beautiful alpine grasslands. The breathtaking views of the surrounding snow covered gigantic Himalayan peaks make for an awesome summer retreat.

Dayara Bugyal also has the beautiful lake of Barnala Tal in its midst, which is a famous camping site for most trekkers and visitors to the area. You can ski and enjoy to your heart's content on the most awesome slopes of Dayara Bugyal.

8. Kufri - Himachal Pradesh

Kufri is a quaint little region of Himachal Pradesh that attracts a lot of tourists, comprising mainly of skiers from all over India. The ideal time for skiing in this region is from the months of November to February. The winter season covers the area with a nice white sheet of snow and the scenery is just breathtakingly beautiful. The tall deodars and the green pines look regal. The winter sport of snow skiing on Kufri's undulating slopes is amazingly refreshing.



9. Narkanda - Himachal Pradesh

Narkanda is located at a high attitude of almost 2708 m on the Hindustan Tibet road. The place offers a stunning view of the high snow ranges. Tourists seeking seclusion in the mountains can come here for enjoying a peaceful time. The place is a dream destination for those who want to enjoy unlimited skiing options too. The region is dotted with a number of apple orchards as well as dense forests. The famous slopes of Narkanda are apt for skiing and winter sports. Skiing at the Narkanda slopes started in the year 1980 and continues till date.

10. Mundali - Uttarakhand

Mundali is another famous skiing destination located in the district of Dehradun. It has a thick cluster of dense forests, but this does not deter the skiers from enjoying skiing every year. One can get a nice view of the snow-capped Himalayas from the slopes of Mundali, hence there is a great rush of visitors and tourists almost the whole year round in Mundali.



BAIRA

Comic Strip

BAIRA AND BELA



BELA

Baira and Bela were at their grandparents' house in the village to spend their winter vacation. Both were getting bored as the small village did not provide them with television and Internet facilities. They decided to find their own ways of entertainment.

Let's do something interesting. Let's form our own secret way of communicating.

But how?

Idea! Get some lemon juice and a candle from grandma and I will get cotton swab and paper. Hurry!

Okay!

When the brother-sister duo had collected all the required things they set out to work.

Baira dip the cotton in the lemon juice and write something on the paper.

Baira followed Bela's instruction.

But nothing is visible.

Once he had finished writing, Bela took the paper from him.

Now I will light the candle and hold the paper on top of it.

Won't the paper catch fire?

Not that close, silly!

Bela lit the candle and kept the paper at a considerable distance so that only the warmth of the fire reached the paper.

Wow! The message is becoming visible!

Yes! The acid in the lemon juice reacts with the heat and colours the paper to reveal the writing.



JOKE



1. I asked the boss if I could get a raise, and he said, "Because of the fluctuational predisposition of your position's productive capacity as juxtaposed to the industry standards, it would be monetarily injudicious to advocate an increment."

I said, "I don't get it."

He said, "That's right."

2. A young businessman had just started his own firm. He rented a beautiful office and furnished it with antique furniture and paintings. Sitting there, he saw a man come into the office. Hoping to look like a hot shot, the businessman picked up the phone and started to pretend he was working on a big, important business deal. He threw huge figures around and made giant commitments. Finally he hung up and asked the visitor, "Can I help you?"

The man said, "Yeah, I've come to activate your phone lines."

3. An employee was getting to know her new co-workers when the topic of her last job came up. "Why did you leave that job?" asked one co-worker. "It was because of something my boss said," she replied. "What did he say?" the co-worker quizzed. "You're fired."

4. The owner of a company tells his employees:

"You worked very hard this year, therefore the company's profits increased dramatically. As a reward, I'm giving everyone a cheque for ₹ 50,000."

Thrilled, the employees gathered and gave high five to one another.

"And if you work with the same zeal next year, I'll sign those cheques!"

5. As the owner of a large company I went down to check out how everything was going.

I noticed some guy just chilling out in the coffee room. Furious, I asked, "Just how much are you getting paid for a week?"

"Two hundred bucks!" Replied the young man. Taking out my wallet I give him two hundred bucks and said, "Here is a week's pay and don't come back!"

Turning to one of the supervisors, I asked, "How long was that lazy bum working here anyway?"

"He doesn't work here," said the supervisor, "he just walked in to ask directions!"



RIDDLES?

Q 1: Name me! My first name starts with 'P' and the second name ends with 'E', but I have thousands of letters.

Q 2: I have all the knowledge you have. But I am so small that I weigh just about 1.5 kg. Who am I?

Q 3: I am the biggest alphabet, as I contain large area of salt water in the world. Who am I?

Q 4: I have 28 days in a month. Which month I am?

Q 5: Find me who am I. I am a building with a number of stories.

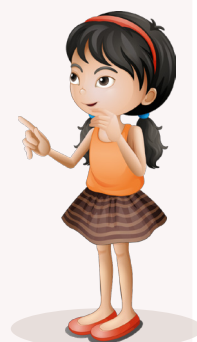
Q 6: Astronomers are trying hard to find out what is between earth and heaven. Can you help them?

Q 7: Which word is spelt incorrectly in all dictionaries?

Q 8: Every time a person speaks, they break me. Who am I?

Q 9: What do you give to a sick lemon?

Q 10: If a crocodile makes shoes, what does a banana make?



WORD SEARCH

Find the names of birds given below horizontally, vertically or diagonally in the grid:

E	W	A	M	D	R	J	L	D	A	C	E	P
A	O	R	Y	F	Y	B	A	Y	D	O	V	E
G	O	G	N	R	H	E	Z	J	U	S	Q	A
L	D	J	A	W	J	D	F	G	C	T	W	C
E	P	G	H	E	N	J	G	D	K	R	E	O
M	E	B	K	C	M	C	T	Y	U	I	R	C
N	C	S	P	A	R	R	O	W	L	C	T	K
B	K	G	A	I	O	O	L	F	Y	H	Y	J
V	E	N	R	X	G	W	J	D	S	I	U	H
X	R	A	R	F	G	E	H	J	K	C	I	G
Z	X	C	O	Q	U	I	O	P	L	K	O	F
V	U	L	T	U	R	E	P	N	H	E	P	D
K	I	N	G	F	I	S	H	E	R	N	A	S

- ☒ EAGLE
- ☐ WOODPECKER
- ☐ SPARROW
- ☐ PARROT
- ☐ CROW
- ☐ KINGFISHER
- ☐ PEACOCK
- ☐ DOVE
- ☐ PIGEON
- ☐ OSTRICH
- ☐ MYNAH
- ☐ VULTURE
- ☐ DUCK
- ☐ CHICKEN



HOW TO WRITE A SPEECH

1.

Decide a topic for your speech and stick to it. People usually don't remember much from a speech so try to keep it simple.
2.

Write short sentences and write it in the manner you speak, in a conversational style. It makes it easier to communicate that way. Always read your speech aloud while writing, it helps in assessing how the speech sounds.
3.

Use examples to explain your point and state facts and details to substantiate your point of view.
4.

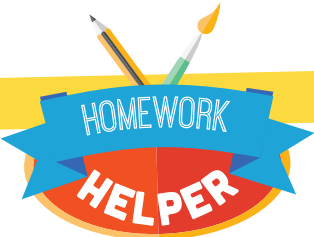
Do a thorough research on the facts and figures you use so that you can convincingly put across your point.
5.

Follow the problem-solution structure in your speech. Keeping the topic in mind, state the problems and then offer relevant solutions with the help of good examples. Just stating problems will not create an impact on your audience.
6.

Always go back to your first draft of the speech. Simplify it so that it is easily understood by everyone.
7.

Keep the speech short, crisp and to the point. Do not overemphasise anything.
8.

Conclude your speech with an impressive point/argument, which will make an impact on your audience.



RIDDLES?

Answers

- Ans 1: Post Office

Ans 2: I'm your brain!

Ans 3: Alphabet 'C'
- Ans 4: All months in a year have 28 days and many have more than 28 days.

Ans 5: A Library

Ans 6: AND
- Ans 7: Incorrectly

Ans 8: Silence

Ans 9: Lemon aid!

Ans 10: Slippers!

DID YOU KNOW?

1



A lobster's blood is colourless, but when it is exposed to oxygen it turns blue!

2

The mortar used to bind the stones used in the Great Wall of China was made with sticky rice!

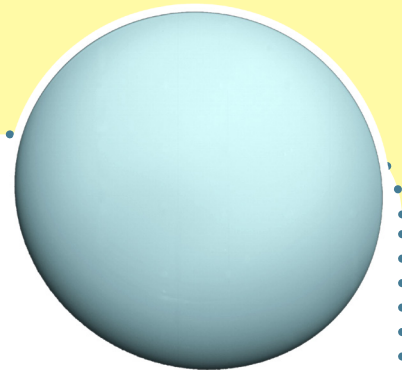


3



Eating an apple is more effective at waking you up in the morning than coffee.

4



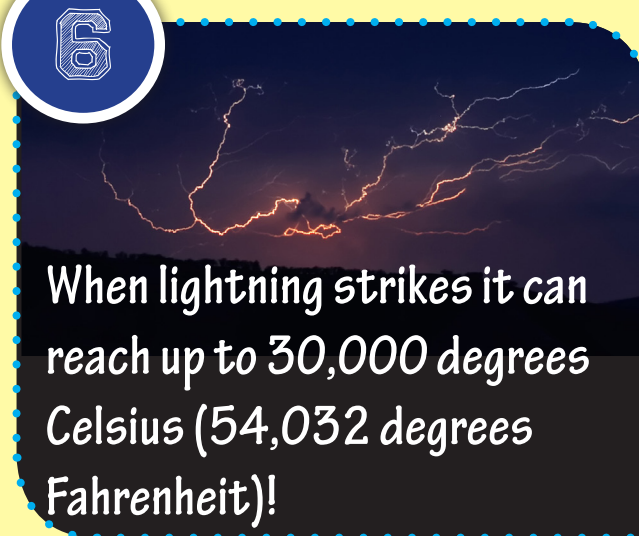
Winter lasts for 21 years on Uranus!

5



A bat can eat 3000 insects in one night!

6



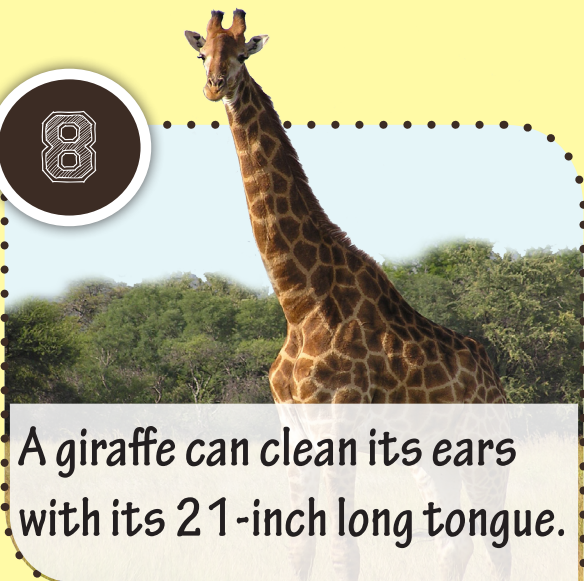
When lightning strikes it can reach up to 30,000 degrees Celsius (54,032 degrees Fahrenheit)!

7



Cat urine can glow under black light!

8



A giraffe can clean its ears with its 21-inch long tongue.

9

ABC

The sentence "the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" uses every letter in the English alphabet.

10



Strawberries have more vitamin C than oranges.

CURRENT EVENTS UPDATES

November 2015

1 November 2015

Brijmohan Lall Munjal, the founder of Hero Group, passes away at 92.

2 November 2015

Swiss veteran Martina Hingis and India's Sania Mirza win their ninth title at the WTA Finals in Singapore.

3 November 2015

- Agreeing to the prosecution's argument for awarding the maximum punishment provided under the amended law, a Fast Track court in New Delhi sentences Uber cab driver Shiv Kumar Yadav life imprisonment for sexually assaulting a woman executive last year.
- While unleashing Microsoft's Future business partnership programme in Mumbai, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella announces his plans for the ambitious Digital India programme that will include an experimental technology pilot in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency of Varanasi.



4 November 2015

Jitu Rai bags the Silver medal in the men's free pistol in the Asian shooting championship in Kuwait City.

5 November 2015

Binge-watch—watching a large number of TV programmes in succession—named the 2015 Word of the Year by Collins Dictionary.



November 2015

6 November 2015

- The government plans to impose two new levies—a 0.5 % Swachh Bharat Cess on all services, now liable to service tax and a 2 % regional connectivity cess on international air travel and flights between metros and big cities.
- The Registrar of Societies in Tamil Nadu cancels the registration of Greenpeace India as a society, on the grounds that the institution had violated several provisions of the law.
- Underworld don Chhota Rajan is brought to New Delhi in a chartered plane from Indonesia.

7 November 2015

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announces an economic package of ₹ 80,000 crore for Jammu and Kashmir in Srinagar.



8 November 2015

- Millions of citizens vote in Myanmar's historic general elections to test whether the military's long-standing grip on power can be loosened, with Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's party expected to secure an easy victory.
- As the Nitish Kumar-Lalu Prasad duo wins a historic, thumping two-third majority, even reviving its junior partner, the Congress, the BJP-led NDA lose in a big way.

13 November 2015

Myanmar democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi's Opposition party clinches enough seats in Parliament to elect a President and form a government.

November 2015

14 November 2015

In a deadly terror strike suspected Islamic State gunmen launch a coordinated assault on Paris leaving 129 dead and 352 injured. The attack was carried out on six locations, one being the French national stadium Stade de France where France and Germany football teams were playing a friendly match before an 80,000-strong spectators. As many as 89 people were killed in the firing in Bataclan Theatre during a concert by the band The Eagles of Death Metal.

16 November 2015

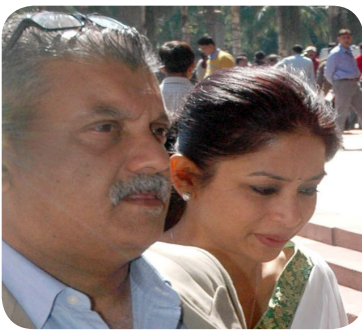
Veteran actor Saeed Jaffrey passes away at the age of 86 years.

17 November 2015

- Ashok Singhal (89), an international working president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad for over 20 years, passes away in Gurgaon.
- Hours after confirming for the first time that a bomb brought down a Russian charterjet over the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt more than two weeks ago that killed all 224 people aboard, Russia joins France in bombing Islamic State (IS) targets in Syria.

19 November 2015

The CBI arrests the former media magnate Peter Mukherjea and chargesheets Indrani Mukherjea in the sensational murder case of Sheena Bora.



20 November 2015

- Nitish Kumar sworn in as Bihar Chief Minister for the fifth time at a grand event attended mostly by non-BJP leaders. The two sons of RJD chief Lalu Prasad—Tejaswi and Tej Pratap—and 26 others also sworn in.

CURRENT EVENTS UPDATES

November 2015

20 November 2015

- At least 27 people are reported dead as Malian special forces, aided by the U.S. and French commandos, storm a luxury hotel in Bamako, Mali, where gunmen had held at least 170 people, including 22 Indians, hostage.
- During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit India and Singapore sign a joint declaration envisaging a "Strategic Partnership" which, besides broadening engagement in existing areas of cooperation, aims to catalyse new ones ranging from political, defence and security cooperation to economic, cultural and people-to-people contacts.

29 November 2015

Two-time defending champion P.V. Sindhu completes a hat-trick of women's singles title at the \$120,000 Macau Open Grand Prix Gold after defeating Japan's Minatsu Mitani in the final.



30 November 2015

- The much awaited Jan Lokpal Bill, the opposition to the tabling of which had led to the resignation of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal two years ago, finally tabled in the Delhi Assembly in the absence of any Opposition member.
- U.S. President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, representing the two top emitters of greenhouse gases in the world, make a firm commitment at the Paris Climate Change conference to work for change, and call for an agreement that would cut carbon emissions and pave the way for a global transition to a green economy.

December 2015

2 December 2015

- The incessant, record-breaking rainfall in Chennai with rivers swelling and submerging bridges and lakes in the suburbs overflowing their banks leaves several thousands of people homeless or stranded in their own homes without food, water and electricity.
- The sarangi maestro Ustad Sabri Khan (88) passes away

3 December 2015

Britain joined the air campaign against the Islamic State (ISIS) in its Syrian strongholds, hitting an oil field held by the outfit just hours after a decisive parliamentary vote authorised air strikes.

4 December 2015

The Aam Aadmi Party government's ambitious Jan Lokpal Bill was cleared in the Delhi Legislative Assembly with amendments suggested by India against Corruption crusader, Anna Hazare.

6 December 2015

India beat European champion and world no. 2, the Netherlands, to take Bronze at the Hockey World League Finals in Raipur.

7 December 2015

- In an embarrassment to the Congress, the Delhi High Court dismisses the appeals of party President Sonia Gandhi, Vice-president Rahul Gandhi and others seeking quashing of the summons issued to them by a trial court in the National Herald case.
- Venezuela's centre-right opposition, the Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) coalition, win control over the 167-seat legislature for the first time in 16 years.
- Latvia's first female Prime Minister Laimdota Straujuma announces her resignation after less than two years in office following a fallout within her centre-right party.
- Indian bowlers led by Ravichandran Ashwin showed outstanding perseverance to end South Africa's dogged resistance and register a comprehensive 337-run victory in the final cricket Test in Delhi, winning the four-match series by a historic 3-0 margin.

December 2015

9 December 2015

Seven years after the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, India and Pakistan agree to resume structured dialogue.



10 December 2015

- The Bombay High Court acquits Bollywood actor Salman Khan of all charges in the 2002 hit-and-run and drunk-and-drive case that killed one and injured four persons.
- Business-friendly conservative Mauricio Macri sworn in as Argentina's new President.
- The Nobel Peace Prize was presented to a group of four organisations that saved Tunisia's transition to democracy through dialogue, a method the laureates are keen to see applied in Syria and Libya.
- Mahela Jayawardene has been awarded honorary lifetime membership of MCC. Jayawardene became the 14th Sri Lankan to be awarded with MCC Honorary Life Membership

12 December 2015

- Charting a new course, India and Japan announce a series of military and strategic agreements and understandings.
- After 10 days of meetings, negotiations, exhibitions and side events at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP 21 at Le Bourget, in Paris, the participating 195 countries agree by consensus to the final global pact, the Paris Agreement, to reduce emissions as part of the method for reducing greenhouse gas and to do their best to keep global warming to well below 2°C.

CURRENT EVENTS UPDATES

December 2015

14 December 2015

Golfer Anirban Lahiri becomes the fourth Indian to win the Asian Tour Order of Merit title.



15 December 2015

- Y. Pranjala along with Tamara Zidansek of Slovenia win the doubles title in the Orange Bowl ITF Grade A junior tennis tournament in Florida (USA).

16 December 2015

- In a strong step to release the stranglehold of air pollution in Delhi, the Supreme Court imposes a ban on the registration of diesel-run private cars of the capacity of 2000 CC and above, and SUVs.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launches six Singapore satellites.
- India is willing to participate in military operations against the Islamic State (IS) if it is a United Nations-sanctioned operation carried out under the U.N. flag, said Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar.

18 December 2015

- Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik appoints Justice (retd.) Virendra Singh as Lokayukta of the State.
- The Centre appoints the former Defence Secretary, R.K. Mathur, as Chief Information Commissioner (CIC).



December 2015

19 December 2015

A Delhi court grants unconditional bail to Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Vice-president Rahul Gandhi in the National Herald case of cheating and misappropriation.

20 December 2015

After having slipped at the penultimate stage in the inaugural edition, Chennaiyin FC emerged triumphant this time around, beating FC Goa 3-2 in the Indian Super League (football) finals.



21 December 2015

- The Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, slammed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the Aam Aadmi Party for levelling charges of financial irregularities pertaining to his earlier role as the president of Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA).
- The youngest convict in the 16 December 2012 gang rape is released and moved to the care and protection of an NGO at an undisclosed location.
- FIFA president Sepp Blatter and UEFA boss Michel Platini banned from football for eight years for ethics violations, leaving the global game leaderless as it struggles with a swirl of corruption cases.

22 December 2015

- The Rajya Sabha clears the Juvenile Justice (Amendment) Bill, 2015, lowering the age of a legally defined juvenile from 18 to 16 in the case of heinous crimes. MPs vote in the presence of the parents of Delhi gang-rape victim.
- A chartered aircraft of the Border Security Force crashes near the Delhi airport minutes after the take-off, killing all 10 BSF personnel on board. Those dead included pilots, technicians and engineers, who were being flown to Ranchi for the repair and servicing of a Mi-17 V5 chopper stationed there.

December 2015

24 December 2015

Following the signing of 16 significant agreements between India and Russia during Prime Minister Modi's visit, including on nuclear cooperation, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Unit II of the Kudankulam atomic plant in Tamil Nadu, being built by Russia, will be commissioned within weeks and negotiations are at an advanced stage for Unit III and IV.

25 December 2015

In a diplomatic masterstroke, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his return from Moscow makes crucial stopovers to meet two important neighbours: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Afghanistan and Pakistan Prime Minister in Nawaz Sharif in Lahore.

29 December 2015

Upholding the controversial 'Liquor-Free Kerala' policy restricting the serving of liquor to five-star hotels in the State, the Supreme Court rules that the State governments be given a free hand to curtail or ban public consumption of alcohol to protect public health and nutrition.

30 December 2015

- Eminent Gujarati novelist, poet and critic Raghuvir Chaudhary chosen for the prestigious Jnanpith Award for 2015.
- Carcasses of more than 500 endangered Olive Ridley turtles spotted on the beaches of Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary in Kendrapada district in Odisha.

