

**Supreme Court gives U.P. govt. 4 weeks for Taj protection plan**

The Supreme Court directed the Uttar Pradesh government to place before it a vision document on protection and preservation of the TajMahal and asked why there was a “sudden flurry of activity” in the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ).

- The TTZ is an area of about 10,400 sq. km spread over the districts of Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, Hathras and Etah in U.P. and Rajasthan.
- The Court asked why leather industries and hotels were coming up in the TTZ when such activities were stopped earlier.
- The court also asked the State government to file within four week a vision document on protection and preservation of the 17th century mausoleum.

The court had in December last year said that a detailed and comprehensive vision document and plan with a futuristic perspective that could protect and preserve the iconic monument, its environs and the TTZ for at least a few hundred years, should be prepared.

**KailashYatra via Nathu La to resume**

China has confirmed restarting of the KailashMansarovarYatra through the Nathu La pass, the Ministry of External Affairs informed the Lok Sabha.

- The matter was raised by the Government with the Chinese government, including during the meeting of the External Affairs Minister with the Chinese Foreign Minister in December 2017.
- Subsequently, the Chinese government has confirmed resumption of Yatra on this route.

**Protect investors from unfair trading, says SC**

The Supreme Court asked the Centre to frame a more comprehensive legal framework to govern the securities market where ingenious means of manipulation affect gullible investors.

- Fairness, integrity and transparency are the hallmarks of the stock market in India. As the market grows, ingenious means of manipulation are also employed. In such a scenario, it is essential that SEBI keeps up with changing times and develops principles for good governance in the stock market which ensure free and fair trading the court observed

- The court said there is an imminent need to prevent instances of “synchronised trading” as they are fundamentally violative of transparent norms of securities trading.

A synchronised trade is a transaction wherein the buy and sell order quantities are identical, and are put through at exactly the same time on the trading platform.

### **Taxmen send one lakh notices to cryptocurrency investors**

The tax department had conducted a nationwide survey which showed \$3.5 billion worth of transactions on various cryptocurrency exchanges across India over a period of 17 months.

- Notices were served to People who have made investments [in cryptocurrency] and have not declared income while filing taxes and have not paid tax on the profit earned by investing

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had, in his Budget speech last week, stressed that cryptocurrencies were not legal tender.

However, industry players said the action taken by the Income Tax Department still did not mean that holding cryptocurrencies was illegal.

- the Finance Minister and the RBI have both clarified that cryptocurrencies are not legal tender, this means that you cannot use it in place of the rupee. But they did not say anything about investing in it as an asset.

India is a very attractive market for cryptocurrency companies, both domestic and international. A worldwide study of the market by Malaysian firm Pundi X, which is looking to enter the Indian market, found that India accounted for 10% of the global trade in cryptocurrencies.

### **Remit unclaimed insurance funds: IRDAI**

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has directed all insurers having unclaimed amounts of policyholders for a period of more than 10 years, as on September 30, 2017, to transfer the money to the Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF) by March 1 this year.

- Following an announcement in the Budget Speech 2016, the SCWF was established for promoting the welfare of senior citizens.
- Beyond a specified period, unclaimed amounts in small savings and other savings schemes of the Centre, in PPF, EPF, bank and Coal Mines PF accounts as well as life and non-life insurance schemes need to be transferred to the SCWF.

### **CCI slaps Rs. 136 cr. fine on Google**

The Competition Commission of India imposed a fine of Rs. 136 crore on search engine major Google for unfair business practices in the Indian market for online search.

Passing the order on complaints filed back in 2012, the regulator said the penalty was being imposed on Google for “infringing anti-trust conduct.” It was alleged that Google was indulging in abuse of dominant position in the market for online search through practices leading to search bias and search manipulation, among others.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

### **Khaleda Zia sentenced to five years in jail for graft**

Bangladesh Nationalist Party leader and three-time Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was jailed for five years after being found guilty in a corruption case by a Special Judge's Court in Dhaka.

- The court also awarded 10-year-sentences to Tarique Rahman — Ms. Zia's son and the party's exiled vice-chairman — and four others.

She was charged with misappropriating Taka 21 million in foreign donations received by the 'Zia Orphanage Trust'.

### **India rejects Maldives offer**

India rejected an offer by Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen to send a special envoy to discuss the ongoing emergency in the country, calling instead on the embattled President to first address its concerns over the suspension of constitutional rights in the Maldives.

- President Yameen has sent special envoys to what he called “friendly countries” — China, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.
- New Delhi had rejected the offer of an envoy because of protocol and scheduling reasons, but also because the government was unhappy with Mr. Yameen's declaration of emergency and the military crackdown that followed.

## **STATE-TELANGANA**

### **Mobile app planned to empower farmers**

As part of its tripartite agreement with Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University (PJTSAU) and Western Sydney University (WSU) Australia, Riverbridge Ventures India has decided to develop “GyanKisan” mobile application with a view to empowering farmers in Telangana by providing agricultural knowledge and market conditions.

- A meeting was held under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor of PJTSAU V. Praveen Rao with representatives of Riverbridge Ventures India and Athulya Ginige and S.K. Hooda of WSU joining in via video conference.
- They discussed assisting the team of Riverbridge Ventures in obtaining scientific knowledge relevant to locally grown crop varieties and associated best practices to be converted into actionable information and deliver it to farmers via mobile phones with the help of the proposed app.

A decision was taken to organise a workshop with policy makers, Krishi Vignana Kendra (KVK), District Agricultural Advisory and Transfer of Technology Centre (DAATTC) coordinators, agricultural extension officers and NGOs working on farmers issues. The workshop would explore how agriculture extension services could be transformed.

- It was also decided that academics from WSU would also participate in the workshop, which has been tentatively planned in March at PJTSAU.
- Further, an agreement was inked to send academics from PJTSAU to WSU. They would work together on the details associated with new scenarios that are to be trialled in Telangana.