

## SAARC Member States to Meet in Nepal This Week



Senior officials of the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will meet in Kathmandu this week to attend the Programming Committee.

- This will be the first meeting of the SAARC

member countries since the postponement of the 19th SAARC summit in Islamabad last November, officials said on Sunday.

- Nepal, current chair of the SAARC, had decided to postpone the SAARC Summit until further notice after four nations Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh and India decided to boycott the summit in Islamabad scheduled for November 9 and 10 last year.
- SAARC is a regional body founded in 1985 in South Asia, comprising Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

## Roger Federer Wins Australian Open Men's Title, Sania Mirza Loses Final



Roger Federer on 29 January 2017 won the 2017 Australian Open Men's Singles title.

- The 35-year-old Swiss defeated Rafael Nadal 6-4 3-6 6-1 3-6 6-3 to claim his 18th Grand Slam and fifth Melbourne title.

- Roger Federer is a Swiss professional tennis player.

- He is currently ranked world No. 10 by the Association of

Tennis Professionals (ATP). He has held the No. 1 spot in the ATP rankings for 302 weeks.

- He turned professional in 1998.
- He has won 18 Grand Slam singles titles, which is the most in history.
- He has won five Australian Open titles, seven Wimbledon titles, five US Open titles and one French Open title.
- He has won record six ATP World Tour Finals and played in the

**INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS**

**SPORTS**

finals at all nine ATP Masters 1000 tournaments.

## Delhi becomes one of the World's Busiest Airports



Delhi airport handled nearly 56 million passengers last year, joining the ranks of some of its busiest global peers such as Bangkok, Singapore and John F Kennedy International Airport in New York.

- All these airports have about 50 million passengers passing through annually.
- For Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, this was the highest

traffic growth — 21 per cent, year on year — in four years.

- An increase in the number of domestic passengers, foreign tourist arrivals and transit passengers fuelled the growth.
- Indira Gandhi International Airport serves as the primary civilian aviation hub for the National Capital Region of Delhi, India.
- Named after Indira Gandhi, a former Prime Minister of India, it is the busiest airport in the country in terms of passenger traffic since 2009.
- It is busiest airport in the country in terms of cargo traffic in the recent year overtaking Mumbai during late 2015.

## Sindhu and Sameer Wins Syed Modi International Badminton Championship

Olympic silver medallist P V Sindhu and National champion Sameer Verma



began the new season on a resounding note by winning the women's and men's singles crowns respectively at the USD 120,000 Syed Modi Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament.

- In fact, India scooped up three titles out of the five events in the tournament.

• Top seed Sindhu, who has been in rampaging form last season, brushed aside Indonesia's Gregoria Mariska in the summit clash, while Sameer, who had reached the finals of Hong Kong Super Series, defeated compatriot B Sai Praneeth 21-19 21-16 in a 44-minute final.

- The girl from Hyderabad led right from the start and never allowed her

**NATIONAL  
NEWS**

**SPORTS**

- younger opponent to pose any threat.
- She entered the break at 11-5 and 11-6 in the first and second games respectively and never looked back.

## **Government to Carry Out Comprehensive Census of Gangetic Dolphins**



For the first time, the government will carry out a comprehensive census of endangered Gangetic dolphins, ghariyals and turtles across the entire Ganges river system to get their official count.

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) will carry out the exercise through Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India (WII), an autonomous institution under Union Ministry of Environment and Forest, by February-end or early March.
- All the efforts of counting the number of dolphins in the Ganga until now were carried out in bits and pieces or in particular stretches of the river.
- The WII scientists will co-ordinate with states and NGOs for the study, he added.
- Uttar Pradesh government had in October 2015 had conducted a census for over a period of three days in Ganga's stretch in the state.

## **More than 3 km long fissure opens up in Arizona**



A gaping 3.2 kilometre long crack has opened up in the barren land of Arizona, possibly due to the withdrawal of groundwater for agricultural activities, say scientists who have warned that the fissure is likely continue growing.

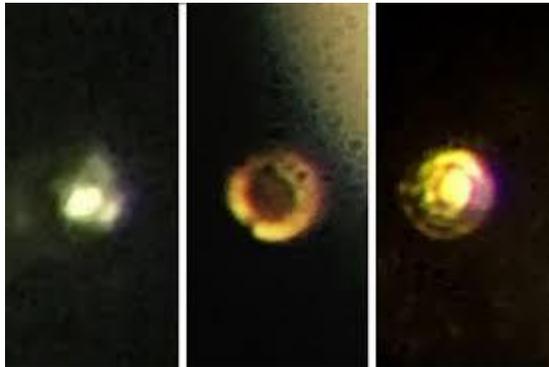
- A footage from an Arizona Geological Survey (AZGS) in the US drone showed the extent of the huge fissure splitting the barren land.

**NATIONAL  
NEWS**

**ENVIRONMENT**

- The crack is so big that it dwarfs people walking along its edges in the video.
- The northern part of the fissure, which is older and partially filled in, is shallow, while the southern portion is tens of feet deep in some spots, according to Joseph Cook, a geologist with the AZGS.
- Cook first spotted the crack in Google Earth imagery from December 2014. After mapping the fissure using GPS, the researchers got another look using a drone, Live Science reported.

## Solid Metallic Hydrogen Successfully Created by Harvard Scientists



Squeezed between two pieces of diamond, hydrogen has been transformed into a metallic form believed to exist inside giant planets like Jupiter.

- If some theoretical predictions turn out to be true, the new state of hydrogen could even be a solid metal that is metastable — remaining solid even after the crushing pressure is removed — and a superconductor, able to conduct electricity without resistance.
- Editors at Science declined to discuss the paper, but in a statement, Jeremy Berg, the editor in chief, said that submissions must pass rigorous review by experts and that only about 7 percent are published.
- Hydrogen is the lightest of elements; each atom consists only of one proton and one electron.
- In the ordinary conditions at Earth's surface, where the weight of air presses at 14.7 pounds per square inch, hydrogen atoms pair up into simple molecules.

**SCIENCE &  
TECHNOLOGY**

## Miss France Crowned Miss Universe 2016



France's Iris Mittenaere on 30 January 2017 was crowned the Miss Universe 2016. The pageant was held at the Mall of Asia Arena, Pasay, Metro Manila, Philippines.

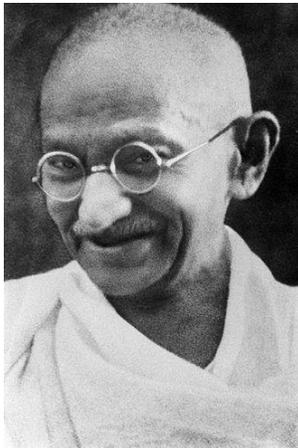
- Pia Wurtzbach of the Philippines crowned her successor Iris Mittenaere at the end of the event.

Miss Haiti Raquel Pélissier was announced the first runner-up while Miss Columbia Andrea Tovar was named the second runner-up in the pageant.

- India's Roshmitha Harimurthy could not even make it to the top 15.
- Born on 25 January 1993, Mittenaere is a French model.
- She is the second Miss Universe from France. France's Christiane Martel was crowned the Miss Universe in the year 1953.
- Mittenaere had represented Nord-Pas-de-Calais at the Miss France 2016. On 19 December 2015, she was crowned Miss France 2016.

## AWARDS

### On This Day



On 30 January 1948, the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu Nationalist, Nathuram Godse. Communal violence broke out in Punjab and Bengal after the Partition of India and Pakistan. Eschewing the official celebration of independence in Delhi, Gandhi visited the affected areas, attempting to provide solace. In the months following, he undertook several fasts unto death to promote religious harmony. The last of these, undertaken on 12 January 1948 when he was 78, also had the indirect goal of pressuring India to pay out some cash assets owed to Pakistan. Some Indians mistakenly thought Gandhi was too accommodating. Godse was one of them.

**ON THIS DAY**