

National:

K.K. Nair delighted with Sahitya Akademi prize

K.K. Nair, writer, who has jointly bagged the Sahitya Akademi Prize for Translation 2012. The Sahitya Akademi Prizes for Translations 2012 were announced in New Delhi. Mr. Nair shares the prize with Ashok Kumar, who works as a surgeon in Bangalore. They together translated Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's Malayalam novel 'Kayar' into Kannada. The Kannada translation is titled 'Hagga'.

Supreme Court gets three new judges

President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed Chief Justice of the Madras High Court M.Y. Eqbal, Chief Justice of the Karnataka High Court Vikramajit Sen and Justice of the Orissa High Court V. Gopala Gowda as Supreme Court judges. They are to be sworn in on December 24 by Chief Justice of India Altamas Kabir. Justice Eqbal (61), who hails from Jharkhand, will have a brief tenure of little over three years; Justice Sen (62), who is from Delhi, just three years and Justice Gowda (61) from Karnataka, a little over four years. After Justice Cyriac Joseph's retirement in January, there was no representation for Christians and Justice Sen will fill this vacancy. The present strength of the judges in the Supreme Court is 25, against the sanctioned strength of 31. With the elevation of the three new judges, it will be 28.

Pranab gives away awards for classical Tamil

President Pranab Mukherjee has conferred the Presidential Awards for Classical Tamil at a function at Rashtrapati Bhavan here. The Tolkappiyar Award for outstanding contribution in the field of Tamil studies was awarded to C. Govindarajanar. The award carries a certificate of honour, a memento and a one-time cash prize of Rs.5 lakh. Prof. Francois Gros, a French national, received the Kural Pitam Award for the year 2008-09. Prof. Gros has translated many Tamil classics into French and was the vice-president of the International Association of Tamil Research. The award includes a certificate of honour, a memento and a one-time cash prize of Rs. 5 lakh. Presidential Awards for Classical Tamil are instituted by the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, to give due recognition and honour to distinguished scholars who have made outstanding contribution to the development of Classical Tamil language and literature.

Haj panel pact with Saudi Arabia

The Haj Committee of India (HCOI) has signed an agreement with the Government of Saudi Arabia for setting up a long-term accommodation in the holy city of Makkah for Indians undertaking Haj pilgrimage. A three-member delegation of the HCOI, led by A. Aboobucker signed the agreement. The delegation included S. Shakir Hussain, Chief Executive Officer of the HCOI. The agreement will enable HCOI take up spacious premises on 99-year-long lease for the benefit of the Indian pilgrims. Over 1.25 lakh Muslims performed pilgrimage in 2012 through the HCOI organised programmes.

International:

China successfully conducts test run of high-speed train

China has successfully conducted a test run of the world's longest high-speed railway between Beijing and Guangzhou, ahead of the launch of the 2,298-km- long line on December 26. Running at an average speed of 300 km per hour, it only took two-and-a-half hours for the train to cover the 693 km distance from Beijing to Zhengzhou, that links the country's capital and the southern economic hub. This is the longest high-speed network after China launched the Beijing-Shanghai bullet train in 2011 which brought down travel time to around five hours covering over 1,300 km distance between two of China's largest cities.

Prince Harry kills Taliban commander in Afghan

Prince Harry who is an RAF helicopter pilot deployed in Afghanistan, has killed a Taliban leader in an airstrike, notching up his first 'kill'. The 27-year-old, the third in line to the British throne, was called in to provide air support to troops tracking a commander-level Taliban chief and hit the target with a 100 lb Hellfire missile fired from an Apache helicopter. It is the first time the prince has been involved in a fatal airstrike against a Taliban commander. Captain Harry Wales as he is known in the Army is a co-pilot gunner in the Apache unit which has the highest 'kill rate' in the war

Technology:

Higgs boson discovery biggest scientific breakthrough of 2012

The capture of the most wanted sub-atomic particle in physics - Higgs boson - has topped the chart of the year's ten biggest scientific breakthroughs. Scientists had been chasing the Higgs boson, nicknamed the 'God particle' for more than four decades. In July 2012 the team from the European nuclear research facility at CERN in Geneva announced the detection of a particle that fitted the description of the elusive Higgs. The boson is believed to give matter mass via an associated 'Higgs field' that permeates space. Without the property of mass, the universe we live in could not exist. Scientists used the world's biggest atom smashing machine, the Large Hadron Collider on the Swiss-French border, to track down the missing particle. Finding the Higgs topped the list of most important discoveries of 2012 released by Science, a prestigious scientific journal.

Business & Economy:

Rail wheel factory for Rae Bareli

The country's biggest forged wheel factory will be set up in Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh. With the transition to high-speed trains in the pipeline, the required wheels will be produced at this specialised unit to be set up by Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL) in three years at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,000 crore. An MoU was signed in the presence of Union Railway Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal and Steel Minister Beni Prasad Verma, who too hails from Uttar Pradesh. The factory will have an installed capacity to produce one lakh special grade wheels a year. It will be established close to the coach factory in Lalganj, being set up at an estimated cost of Rs. 2,600 crore.

S&P sees India's growth at 6.5 per cent in 2013

Global rating agency Standard & Poor's (S&P) has said that it expects India to grow by 6.5 per cent during 2013, amidst the possibility of global economic recovery continuing during the year. For China, S&P expects the growth rate to move back to the 8 per cent level in 2013, after it slipped to 7.4 per cent in the third quarter of 2012.

Sport:

Toure wins award

Manchester City's Yaya Toure won the 'African Footballer of the Year' award for a second successive time on Thursday

Maradona for Iraq

Former Argentina star Maradona is set to become the new coach of Iraq's national football team