

# **MANTHAN**

## **Current Affairs Supplement**

---

### **December, 2018**

---

**Registered / Corporate Office:**

**CL Educate Limited**, A - 45, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate, New Delhi – 110044  
Contact No. 011-41281100 / 0800

**[www.careerlauncher.com](http://www.careerlauncher.com)**   **[www.cleducate.com](http://www.cleducate.com)**

 **[/careerlauncher](https://www.facebook.com/careerlauncher)**

 **[@careerlauncher](https://twitter.com/careerlauncher)**

# Preface

---

**Dear Readers,**

The 'Current Affairs' section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the month for the upcoming exams like Banking, Insurance, CLAT, MBA etc. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfil aspirations.

Happy Reading!

**Best Wishes**

**Team CL**

# Contents

---

1.	<b>POLITY AND GOVERNANCE .....</b>	<b>1–32</b>
	• National	
	• International	
2.	<b>ECONOMY AND FINANCE.....</b>	<b>33–50</b>
	• Economy News	
	• Banks in News	
	• Firms in News	
3.	<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>51–59</b>
	• Inventions/Discoveries	
	• Health/ Disease	
4.	<b>ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>60–61</b>
5.	<b>SPORTS.....</b>	<b>62–68</b>
	• Sports Personalities in News	
	• Sport Events	
6.	<b>AWARDS.....</b>	<b>69–73</b>
7.	<b>PERSONS IN NEWS .....</b>	<b>74–76</b>
8.	<b>MISCELLANEOUS .....</b>	<b>77–88</b>
9.	<b>IMPORTANT DAYS .....</b>	<b>89–91</b>
10.	<b>QUESTIONNAIRE.....</b>	<b>92–134</b>
	• Questions	
	• Answer Key & Explanation	

## **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **National**



#### **‘India, Russia, China held second trilateral meeting on sidelines of G20 summit**

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese premier Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin held a trilateral meeting, the second among the three countries after a gap of 12 years, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit to discuss cooperation in various areas.**
- **The Russia-India-China meeting came hours after Prime Minister Modi, his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe and US President Donald Trump held their first trilateral meeting on the margins of the summit.**

#### **Air forces of the US and India to hold joint exercise 'Cope India 2019'**

- **Air forces of the United States and India are scheduled to participate in a 12-day joint exercise 'Cope India 2019' at two air force stations in West Bengal.**
- **The exercise will be held from December 3 to 14 at Air Station Kalaikunda and Air Station Arjan Singh (Panagarh).**
- **The exercise showcases efforts and commitment of the two nations to a free and open Indo-Pacific region.**

**Cope India** are a series of international Air Force exercises between the Indian Air Force and the United States Air Force conducted on and over Indian soil. The first such exercise, which required many months of preparation, was conducted at the air force station in Gwalior from February 16 through February 27, 2004, with the US Air Force withdrawing troops and aircraft on February 27. Exercise Yudh Abhyas, a joint Indo-US Military exercise which witnessed participation of an Infantry Battalion of Indian Army and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 23 Infantry Regiment of US Army concluded at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand on 29 September 2018.

#### **India to Chair Kimberley Process from 1st January 2019**

- **The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) Plenary 2018, was held in Brussels, Belgium, from 12th-16th November 2018. EU handed over the Chairmanship of KPCS to India from 1st January, 2019.**

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is the process established in 2003 to prevent "conflict diamonds" from entering the mainstream rough diamond market by United Nations General Assembly. The process was set up "to ensure that diamond purchases were not financing violence by rebel movements and their allies seeking to undermine legitimate governments."

#### **Andaman hosted 1st ever Indo-Indonesian biz forum as part of Indo-Pacific strategies**

- **The first ever India Indonesia Business forum (IIBF) was held at Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands as part of policies of Delhi and Jakarta to expand their strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific Region including Indian Ocean Region.**

- The forum aims to facilitate the commercial and people to people **linkages between Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India with Aceh and North Sumatera Province of Indonesia.**

This edition of IIBF is a step forward in the **continuing engagements between Aceh and Andaman**, which have commenced since July 2018, when the 1st Business Forum was held in Aceh. For that event, an **Indian delegation led by the Ambassador of India Pradeep Kumar Rawat** and comprising of members of Andaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and officials from Andaman and Nicobar Administration visited Banda Aceh, **capital of Aceh Province.**

### Digital Sky Platform launched – India to start registration of drones, pilots

---

- **Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS)**, popularly referred to as **drones**, are a technology platform with wide-ranging applications.
- **India had announced the release of its Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) to enable safe flying of RPAS in India.**
- **It also announced Digital Sky Platform**, a first of its kind that implements 'no permission, no take-off' (NPNT) – a novel system of software-based self-enforcement to minimize deviations from the CAR.
- **The regulations were to come in effect from December 1**, allowing the industry time to ready themselves for the launch. **Nano drones in India can start flying legally. For micro and above categories, operators and pilots are required to register on the Digital Sky Portal.**

The **Minister for Civil Aviation has constituted a task-force on the recommendation of Drone Policy 2.0** under the **chairmanship of the Minister of State.** This task-force which is expected to release their final report by the end of this year.

### Union Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan to lead the Indian Delegation at COP-24

---

- The **24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** is being held at **Katowice, Poland** from 2nd December 2018 to 14th December 2018.
- COP-24 is very significant as it is expected to **finalise guidelines for implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted in 2016.**
- **Union Environment Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan who is leading the 17 member Indian delegation** said on the eve of his visit, that India expects that COP-24 should be able to frame guidelines, which are pragmatic and gives due consideration to challenges and priorities of developing countries inter alia different starting points as compared to developed countries, their vulnerabilities, development priorities like eradication of poverty, food security, energy access, providing health infrastructure etc.

**United Nations Climate Change Conferences** are yearly conferences held in the framework of the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).** They serve as the formal meeting of the **UNFCCC Parties (Conference of the Parties, COP)** to assess progress in dealing with climate change, and beginning in the mid-1990s, to negotiate the **Kyoto Protocol** to establish legally binding obligations for developed countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. **From 2011 the meetings have also been used to negotiate the Paris Agreement as part of the Durban platform activities** until its conclusion in 2015, which created a general path towards climate action.

### Shri Sunil Arora takes over as new Chief Election Commissioner of India

---

- **Shri Sunil Arora assumed charge as the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India succeeding Shri O.P.Rawat.** Shri Rawat who demitted the office on 1st December, 2018 after completing his tenure.

- He is a **retired 1980 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Rajasthan cadre**. He also served as a **secretary to the Government of India** in two ministries. Arora assumed office as **one of the two Election Commissioners of India** on 31 August 2017.

**Election Commissioners of India** are members of **Election Commission of India**, a body **constitutionally empowered to conduct free and fair elections** to the national and state legislatures. The **Election Commissioners** are usually **retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers**. **Chief Election Commissioner of India** can be removed from his office by the **Parliament with a two-thirds majority** in both the **Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha** on the grounds of **proved misbehavior or incapacity**. Other **Election Commissioners** can be removed by the **President of India** on the recommendation of the **Chief Election Commissioner**. **Sukumar Sen** was the **first Chief Election Commissioner of India**, serving from **21 March 1950 to 19 December 1958**.

### Ramaphosa to be Republic Day guest

- **South African President Cyril Ramaphosa** will be **chief guest at India's 70th Republic Day celebrations**. Mr Ramaphosa was **invited to be the chief guest by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** when the **two leaders met on the sidelines of the G20 summit** in Argentina's capital **Buenos Aires**.
- **This year, in a first, the chief guest at Republic Day celebrations were the 10 heads of state from ASEAN or Association of Southeast Asian Nations**, a regional grouping of 10 Southeast Asian countries (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei).

The **seeds of a republican nation** were sowed at the **Lahore session of the Indian National Congress** at the midnight of **31st December 1929**. The session was held under the **presidency of Pt. Jawarhar Lal Nehru**. Those present in the meeting took a pledge to mark **January 26 as "Independence Day"** in order to **march towards realizing the dream of complete independence from the British**. The **Lahore Session** paved way to the **Civil Disobedience movement**. It was **decided that January 26, 1930 would be observed as the Purna Swaraj (complete Independence) Day**. Though India became a free nation on **August 15, 1947**, it declared itself a **Sovereign, Democratic and Republic state with the adoption of the Constitution on January 26, 1950**.

### India to host G-20 Summit in 2022

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has said that **India will host the G20 Summit in 2022**, when the country celebrates its **75 years of Independence**.
- Mr Modi invited leaders from across the world to come to India, the **world's fastest growing large economy**, and know its rich history and diversity and experience the warm Indian hospitality.
- Prime Minister said, he had **requested Italy if it can host the summit in 2021 and allow India to host the G-20 annual summit in 2022**.
- The **2018 G20 summit** was the **thirteenth meeting of Group of Twenty (G20)**, which was **held on 30 November and 1 December 2018 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina**. It was the **first G20 summit to be hosted in South America**.

The **G20 or Group of Twenty** is an **international forum for the governments and central bank governors from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union**. It was **founded in 1999**; the **G20 aims to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability**. Membership of the **G20 consists of 19 individual countries plus the European Union (EU)**.

### Special Forces of India, US complete tactical exercises of Vajra Prahar 2018

- The **Special Forces of India and United States** completed the **final manoeuvres** of their three-day **tactical exercise called 'Vajra Kayaa'** which is part of their joint military drill **'Vajra Prahar 2018'**.

- In a mock drill, **joint squads consisting of Indian and US troops** closed in on the mock up village after extensive recce and detailed planning.
- **Vajra Kayaa** was based on narrative of an imaginary country going into a civil war due to weak democratic structure and which has now been taken over by armed terrorists.

**Vajra Prahar** series of joint training and exercises are conducted alternatively in India and US annually between the Indian and US Special Forces. This edition is being conducted in India by the Special Forces unit of South Western Command. Though the exercise began in 2010, there was a gap of three years between 2012 and 2015. The last edition was held in Jodhpur in March 2017.

### EX SHINYUU Maitri-2018 with JASDF Commences

- The **Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF)** is in India for a bilateral air exercise **SHINYUU Maitri-18** with **Indian Air Force** from 03-07 Dec 18 at **A F Station Agra**.
- The theme of the exercise is **joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR)** on Transport aircraft.
- The **JASDF C2 aircraft** along with **aircrew/observers** are part of this first air exercise between the two Air Forces. **IAF** is participating with **An-32** and **C-17** aircraft with aircrew & observers.
- The focus of the exercise is set for the **IAF and JASDF crews** to undertake **Joint Mobility/ HADR operations**.

### India's first locomotive-less Train 18, breaches 180 kmph speed limit during test run

- **India's first locomotive-less train, known as Train 18**, has breached the **180 kilometres per hour speed limit** during a test run at **Kota-Sawai Madhopur section in Rajasthan**.
- When this **indigenously designed train** is made operational, it will become the country's fastest train.
- "**Train 18 is capable of touching 200 kilometres per hour** provided the rest of Indian Railways' system, such as tracks and signals, permit.
- **With 16 coaches**, the train will have the same passenger carrying capacity as that of the **Shatabdi Express**.

**Train 18** is an **Indian semi-high speed train**, an **intercity electric multiple unit**, a type of **self-propelled train without a separate dedicated locomotive**. It was designed and built by **Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai** under the Indian government's **Make in India Initiative** over a span of 18 months.

### PM Modi most followed world leader on Instagram

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has emerged as the most popular global leader on social media platform **Instagram** with **14.8 million followers**.
- According to a list published by online platform **twiplomacy**, **Mr Modi** is closely followed by **Indonesian President Joko Widodo** with **12.2 million followers**.
- **With 10 million followers**, **US President Donald Trump** is at the third position on photo-sharing platform.

**Instagram** (also known as **IG**) is a **photo and video-sharing social networking service** owned by **Facebook, Inc.** It was created by **Kevin Systrom** and **Mike Krieger**, and launched in **October 2010** exclusively on **iOS**. In **April 2012**, **Facebook** acquired the service for approximately **US\$1 billion** in cash and stock.

### National Commission for Women to support livelihood programmes in Northeast

- **National Commission for Women (NCW)** will support **Northeast livelihood programmes** for women, particularly for those in **younger age group**, through **Skill development** and **specialized training**, which can enable them to earn their living and also empower them as individuals.



- **National Commission for Women** can supplement its efforts and resources in carrying forward several of the women oriented projects which are already undertaken by the Ministry of Development of North-eastern Region and the NEC.

The National Commission for Women was set up as statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. The Central Government shall constitute a body to be known as the National Commission for Women to exercise the powers conferred on and to perform the functions assigned to, it under this Act. Ms. Rekha Sharma assumed the charge of Chairperson, National Commission for Women on August 7, 2018.

### The first ever Swadesh Darshan Project inaugurated in the state of Nagaland

- The “Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha Project” was inaugurated by Neiphiu Rio, Chief Minister of Nagaland, in the presence of KJ Alphons, Union Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism.
- The project “Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha” was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in November 2015 for Rs. 97.36 Crores. Under the project the Ministry has developed facilities like Tribal Tourist Village, Eco Log Huts, Open Air Theatre, Tribal Rejuvenation Centre, Cafeteria, Helipad, Tourist Interpretation Centre, Wayside Amenities, Last Mile Connectivity, Public Conveniences, Multipurpose Hall, Nature Trails, Trekking Routes etc.

This is the first project to be implemented in the state under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

### India gets first witness protection scheme

- The Supreme Court brought in place a witness protection regime in the country noting that one of the main reasons for witnesses turning hostile is that they are not given security by the State.
- A Bench of Justices A.K. Sikri and S. Abdul Nazeer said Witness Protection Scheme, 2018 will come into effect immediately across all States.
- Under it, witness protection may be as simple as providing a police escort to the witness up to the courtroom or, in more complex cases involving an organised criminal group, taking extraordinary measures such as offering temporary residence in a safe house, giving a new identity, and relocation at an undisclosed place.

Section 195 A of the Indian Penal Code deals with witness protection. Countries such as USA, United Kingdom, China, Italy, Canada, Hong Kong and Ireland have witness protection scheme. In 2003, Justice V Malimath Committee on criminal justice system had recommended enacting a separate witness protection law and in 2006, the Law Commission of India, in its 198th report, provided for a draft witness protection law.

### Ravi Shankar Prasad launches National Challenge ‘Ideate for India - creative solutions using technology’ for school students

- Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad launched National Challenge - ‘Ideate for India - creative solutions using technology’ for school students in New Delhi.
- The challenge will help empower the youth to become the next generation of innovators and technology creators. Over 10 lakh students will participate in the challenge.
- ‘Ideate For India’ national challenge is a joint collaboration between National e-governance Division and Intel India, supported by the Department of School Education and Literacy of Ministry of Human Resources Development.

Ravi Shankar Prasad is the current Union Minister holding Law and Justice and Electronics and Information Technology and he represents the state of Bihar as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha.



## Annual Startup India Venture Capital Summit 2018 held in Goa

- The **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)** in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the **Government of Goa**, is hosted the annual **Startup India Venture Capital Summit in Goa** on December 07, 2018.
- The theme of the Summit is **‘Mobilizing Global Capital for Innovation in India.’**
- **Government of Goa** is focused on building a vibrant startup ecosystem in the state. It aims to make the state, one of the most preferred start-up destinations in India, and ensure that **Goa features in the top 25 start-up destinations in Asia by 2025.**

**India has the world’s third largest startup base with more than 14,000 recognized Startups. More than 8,200 startups were recognized by DIPP in 2018 alone, leading to the creation of more than 89,000 new jobs this year, taking the total job creation contribution of recognized Startups to 1, 41,775.**

## Curtain Raiser: Sino-India Joint Exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018

- **Exercise Hand-in-Hand** is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India and China.
- The joint exercise for the year 2018 will be conducted from 10 to 23 December 2018 at Chengdu, China.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
- The exercise will involve **tactical level operations in an International Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorist environment under UN mandate.**
- The exercise will be conducted from 11 December 2018 in which both the contingents will establish a **Joint Command Headquarter** and conduct joint exercise on anti-terrorist operations.

## Indian Coast Guard conducts Exercise ‘Clean Sea-2018’ at sea off Port Blair

- The **Indian Coast Guard** has conducted the **Regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise** titled **‘Clean Sea - 2018’** at sea off Port Blair.
- **Coast Guard ships Viswasth, Vijith, Rajveer, Rajshri, 4 interceptor boats** and its **air assets Dornier and Chetak helicopters** participated in the exercise.

**Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** protects India's maritime interests and enforces maritime law, with jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India, including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone. The Indian Coast Guard was **formally established on 18 August 1978** by the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** of the Parliament of India as an independent Armed force of India. **It operates under the Ministry of Defence.**

## NITI Aayog launches Global Hackathon on Artificial Intelligence

- With the vision to further **expand the idea of ‘Artificial Intelligence, AI for All’** articulated in the **National AI Strategy**, **NITI Aayog** organises hackathons to source sustainable, innovative and technologically-enabled solutions to address various challenges in the development space.
- Taking the initiative forward, **NITI Aayog is now partnering with Perlin – a Singapore-based AI start up - to launch the ‘AI 4 All Global Hackathon’,** and is inviting developers, students, start-ups and companies to develop AI applications to make significant positive social and economic impact for India.

The **National Institution for Transforming India**, also called **NITI Aayog**, was formed via a resolution of the **Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015.** **NITI Aayog** is the **premier policy ‘Think Tank’** of the **Government of India**, providing both directional and policy inputs. The **current chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi**, current vice chairman is **Dr. Rajiv Kumar** and the current chief executive officer is **Shri Amitabh Kant.**

## Centre empowers Lt Governors, Administrators to set up Special Courts

- Lieutenant governors (LGs) and administrators of Union territories have been empowered by the central government to designate civil courts as special courts to adjudicate contracts relating to infrastructure projects.
- The Union Home Ministry passed an order to this effect.
- "In pursuance of the powers conferred under the Constitution, the President hereby directs that the Administrators of Union territories (whether known as Administrator or Lieutenant Governor) shall, subject to the control of the President also exercise the powers and functions of the state government under section 20B of the Specific Relief Act, 1963 (47 of 1963) in respect of their respective Union territories,".

Under Section 20B of the Specific Relief Act, 1963 (47 of 1963), the state government, in consultation with the chief justice of the high court, can designate one or more civil courts as special courts within the local limits of the area to exercise jurisdiction and to try a suit under this Act in respect of contracts relating to infrastructure projects.

## Piers placed for world's tallest railway bridge

- The Northeast Frontier Railway Construction Organisation has put in place tall piers near Manipur's Noney for the tallest railway bridge in the world.
- The bridge, across the valley of river Ijai, is part of the 111 km Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal project. Once completed, it will have a pier height of 141 m.
- The record for the tallest railway bridge is now held by the 139 m Mala Rijeka viaduct, Montenegro. "The total length of the bridge will be 703 metres. Its tall piers have been made with a specially designed technique to ensure efficient and continual construction

The 111 km long Jiribam-Imphal railway line passes through steep rolling hills of the Patkai region, passing through a number of deep gorges and crossing over several rivers flow at low ground levels. This will also be the longest railway tunnel in the North East. Three IITs of the country including Kanpur, Roorkee and Guwahati are also associated with this project for technical support and proof-checking of designs to ensure that the bridge is cost-efficient and sustainable. The Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal project was taken up in the year 2008 at the cost of Rs 13,809 crore.

## K Chandrasekhar Rao sworn in as the Chief Minister of Telangana

- Telangana Rashtra Samiti President K Chandrasekhar Rao was sworn-in as the Chief Minister of Telangana at Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad.
- This is the second time that he has become the Chief Minister of the state. In Telangana, Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS) has won 88 of the state's 119 seats in the recently held assembly elections.

Telangana is the newly formed 29th state of India with Hyderabad as its permanent capital in 2014. Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhara Rao is the first and the current Chief Minister of Telangana. E. S. L. Narasimhan is the Governor of Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Telangana is a landlocked state in the country.

## Russian Federation Navy Ships participated in INDRA NAVY 2018 at Visakhapatnam

- Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) Ships Varyag, Admiral Panteleyev and Boris Butoma arrived Visakhapatnam to participate in INDRA NAVY, the bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy exercise on 09 Dec 18.
- The 10th edition of exercise INDRA NAVY was conducted at Visakhapatnam from 09 to 16 December 2018. The primary aim of the exercise is to increase inter-operability amongst the two navies, develop common

understanding and procedures for maritime security operations. **Initiated in 2003, INDRA NAVY exercise** has matured over the years with increase in scope, complexity and level of participation.

**India and Russia have been engaged in joint naval drills since 2003. “Indra” Navy is a bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian and Russian navies and epitomizes the strategic relationship between the two countries. Exercise INDRA-2017, the first ever Tri Services Joint Exercise between Indian and Russian Armed Forces was conducted in the Eastern Military District of Russia from 19 to 29 Oct 2017.**

### Zoramthanga sworn in as the Chief Minister of Mizoram

- **Zoramthanga-led Mizo National Front government was sworn-in by Mizoram Governor Kummanam Rajasekharan**, following the state’s largest regional party’s victory in the November 28 elections to the 40-seat Assembly.
- **This was the third time the Zoramthanga was sworn in as the Chief Minister.** He had been the **chief minister for two consecutive terms from 1998 to 2008.** In Mizoram, **Mizo National Front (MNF) has won 26 of the state’s 40 seats.**

**Mizoram is a state in Northeast India, with Aizawl as its capital city.** The name is derived from **"Mizo", the name of the native inhabitants, and "Ram", which means land, and thus Mizoram means "land of the Mizos".** Like several other northeastern states of India, **Mizoram was previously part of Assam until 1972, when it was carved out as a Union Territory. It became the 23rd state of India, a step above Union Territory, on 20 February 1987, with Fifty-Third Amendment of Indian Constitution, 1986.** **Kummanam Rajasekharan is the current Governor of Mizoram.**

### India's first underwater museum to open off Puducherry coast

- **India is set to get its first underwater museum off the Puducherry coast**, giving a boost to tourism in the Union territory.
- **INS Cuddalore, a minesweeper decommissioned in March after it travelled 30,000 nautical miles in 30 years, will be turned into a museum.**
- **The minesweeper will be deployed in the seabed 7 km off Puducherry at a depth of 26 metres. The 60-metre long and 12-metre wide vessel will be a popular destination for scuba diving and snorkelling.** The Navy has agreed to gift the vessel to promote tourism in Puducherry

**INS Cuddalore was a modified Natya-class minesweeper of the Pondicherry class ships that were in service with the Indian Navy. Cuddalore was built by the Sredne-Nevskiy Shipyard at Saint Petersburg, Russia. Cuddalore was decommissioned on 23 March 2018 at the naval dockyard in Visakhapatnam.**

### First International Conference on Sustainable Water Management organised at Mohali

- **The first International Conference under the aegis of National Hydrology Project, Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation is organised by Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) during 10-11 December, 2018 at Indian School of Business (ISB), Mohali.**
- **The theme for the conference is ‘Sustainable Water Management’.** The theme of the Conference deals with **promoting integrated and sustainable development and management of Water Resources.**

**Sustainable water management is part of sustainable development; meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own water needs.** Achieving sustainable water management requires a multidisciplinary and holistic approach in which technical, environmental, economic, landscape aesthetic, societal and cultural issues are addressed.

### PM Modi inaugurated Partners’ Forum 2018

- **Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the fourth Partners’ Forum on 12th December at New Delhi.**

- The Government of India, in association with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), is hosted a two-day international conference on 12th and 13th December 2018, bringing together about 1500 participants from across 85 countries to improve the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents.
- Union Health Minister Shri J P Nadda also inaugurated the “Marketplace” at the Forum which is showcasing some of India’s best practices and innovations in reproductive maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCH+A); health system strengthening; and communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Partners’ Forum is a global health partnership launched in September 2005 to accelerate efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality, improve adolescent, child, newborn and maternal health. This partnership is an alliance of more than 1,000 plus members, across 10 constituencies in 92 countries: academic, research and teaching institutions; donors and foundations; health care professionals; multilateral agencies; non-governmental organizations; partner countries; global financing mechanisms and the private sector. The previous chapters were held in Johannesburg, South Africa (2014), New Delhi, India (2010) and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (2007). This is the second time India is hosted the Partners’ Forum.

### India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence inaugurated at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education

- European Union Ambassador to India, H.E. Mr. Tomasz Kozlowski inaugurates first-of-its-kind 'Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in European Studies' in India at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education's Department of European Studies as 60+ Indian institutions participating in EU-funded Erasmus projects meet.
- Under the Erasmus+ programme for Master degrees, a total of 319 scholarships were awarded to Master students from India between 2014 to 2018 in order to pursue an Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree (EMJMD).

Since the opening of the Erasmus programme to third countries 30 years ago, India is the largest recipient of the Erasmus funding in the world. Directly supporting Indian students, Erasmus has financed close to 5800 scholarships to Indian nationals over the years. Out of them, about 250 Erasmus+ alumni are from Karnataka and more than 25 from Manipal University itself. In the last 4 years since Erasmus Mundus upgraded into Erasmus+ almost 200 Indian universities have benefitted from various types of Erasmus funding.

### Delhi Police trains 2 lakh women, enters Limca Book of Records

- Delhi Police has entered the Limca Book of Records by training over two lakh women and girls under their self-defence programme in 2017.
- In 2002, Delhi Police initiated the programme with the training of only 57 women. This is not the first time Delhi Police's name will figure in the Limca Book of Records. In 2016, the Delhi Police had entered the Limca Book of Records for solving the biggest cash heist case of the country in November 2015 by recovering Rs. 22.49 crore of stolen money.

Limca Book of Records is an annual reference book published in India documenting human and natural world records. The world records achieved by humans are further categorised in education, literature, agriculture, medical science, business, sports, nature, adventure, radio, and cinema with Limca book of Records rules. Limca Book of Records is an extension of the Limca brand. It is the second book of records in the world after Guinness Book of World Records. The Limca Book of Records is published in three languages: English, Hindi and Malayalam. Limca Book of Records was first published in 1990, when the Limca soft drink brand was owned by Parle Bisleri.



## Kamal Nath sworn in as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

- Senior Congress leader **Kamal Nath** took oath as the **18th chief minister of Madhya Pradesh** in Bhopal. **Governor Anandiben Patel** administered the oath to him with the top leadership of the Congress in attendance.
- With Nath taking charge, the Congress has ended the **15-year-old rule of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)** in Madhya Pradesh. **Former chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan** was also present in the ceremony.
- The Congress has secured the support of a total of **121 MLAs, including SP and BSP legislators** as also of four independents, to cross the majority mark of **116 seats in the 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly**.

**Madhya Pradesh** (meaning **Central Province**) is a state in central India. Its capital is **Bhopal**. Nicknamed the "**Heart of India**" due to its geographical location in India. **Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan**. This state was the largest in India by area until **2000**, when its southeastern **Chhattisgarh** region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of **diamond and copper in India**. **Anandiben Patel** the current Governor of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh and former Chief Minister of Gujarat. She was the **first woman chief minister of the Gujarat state**.

## President Ramnath Kovind inaugurates Enterprise India Exhibition in Yangon

- The President of India, **Shri Ram Nath Kovind**, inaugurated the **Fifth Enterprise India Exhibition in Yangon** on the concluding day of his state visit to Myanmar.
- The President concluded his state visit to Myanmar with a visit to the **Dhamma Joti Vipassana Meditation Centre in Yangon**, an emblem of shared bilateral heritage. One of **India's most ancient techniques of meditation, Vipassana** was preserved by **Myanmarese monks and practitioners**. It is believed to have come back to India from Myanmar.

President commenced his engagements for the day with a visit to the historic **Shri Kali Temple in Yangon**. The temple goes back close to **150 years** and is a **unifying symbol for the entire Indian-origin community in Myanmar**. Subsequently the President visited the **mausoleum of Bahadur Shah Zafar**, an iconic figure during the uprising of **1857**. President Kovind became the second President of India to visit the mausoleum, after **Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in 2006**.

## 'HelpUsGreen' comes up with the world's first profitable solution to the monumental temple waste problem: 'flowercycling'

- **HelpUsGreen** is doing its part to clean up the **River Ganges** by recycling flowers from temples and mosques. Over eight million tonnes of flowers are discarded in the river every year for religious purposes in South Asia. This is contributing to the pollution of the River Ganges, which provides drinking water for over **420 million people**.
- **Uttar Pradesh-based 'HelpUsGreen'** has come up with the world's first profitable solution to the monumental temple waste problem: '**flowercycling**'.
- The startup collects **8.4 tonnes of floral waste from temples in Uttar Pradesh** on a daily basis. These sacred flowers are handcrafted into charcoal-free incense, organic vermicompost and biodegradable packaging material through its '**flowercycling**' technology.

**Indian initiatives** along with other **game-changing initiatives from 13 other countries** were honoured as winners of the **United Nations Climate Action Award** at a special ceremony at the **UN Climate Change Conference (COP 24)** in Katowice. According to the UN, **11,060 metric tonnes of temple-waste** has been flowercycled to date by the women working with the Indian initiative.

## Ashok Gehlot sworn in as the Chief Minister of Rajasthan

- Senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot took oath as the Rajasthan chief minister while state party Chief Sachin Pilot was appointed as his deputy in a ceremony that turned into a show of strength for Opposition unity.
- Governor Kalyan Singh administered the oath of office to Gehlot at the historic Albert Hall. Pilot took oath as a minister and was subsequently appointed as the deputy chief minister by the governor.

In the Republic of India, a **chief minister is the elected head of government of each of Twenty nine states and Delhi and Puducherry**. According to the Constitution of India, the **Governor is a state's de jure head, but de facto executive authority rests with the chief minister**. The **governor appoints and swears in the chief minister**, whose **council of ministers** are collectively responsible to the assembly. The **chief minister's term can last for the length of the assembly's life—a maximum of five years (except in Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly where it is maximum of six years)**.

Rajasthan is **India's largest state by area, Thar Desert**, also known as the **Great Indian Desert**; **More than 60% of the desert lies in the state of Rajasthan**, and extends into Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana. **Kalyan Singh is the current Governor of Rajasthan**. **India's first global counter terrorism and anti-insurgency centre will come up in Jaipur on a 50-acre land**.

## Jammu and Kashmir becomes first state to bring law against "Sextortion"

- **Jammu and Kashmir has become the first state in the country to have a law banning sexual exploitation of women** by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant.
- The **State Administrative Council (SAC) under the chairmanship of Governor Satya Pal Malik approved the 'Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018' and the 'Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018'**.
- The **Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 seeks to amend the Ranbir Penal Code, whereby specific offence under section 354 E is being inserted to provide for the offence of 'Sextortion'**,

**Jammu and Kashmir has special autonomy under Article 370 of the Constitution of India**. **Srinagar is the summer capital and Jammu is the winter capital**. **Mehbooba Mufti served as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, from 4th April 2016 to 19th June 2018**. She resigned on June 19 2018 after BJP withdrew support from the coalition government. **She was the first woman to hold the office**. **Mehbooba Mufti is India's second Muslim woman chief minister after Syeda Anwara Taimur of Assam**.

## India's first rail university and world's third to be dedicated to the nation

- **Vijay Rupani and Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal dedicated India's First Railway University, The National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), to the nation in Vadodara**.
- **The University aims to take Railways forward by providing training**. **The National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), a university in Vadodara, Gujarat is the third in the world after Russia and China**.

**The National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), a vision of the Honorable Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is India's first university focussed on transport-related education, multidisciplinary research and training**. **A Deemed to be University under the de Novo category, NRTI is specifically established to create a resource pool of best-in-class professionals for the railway and transportation sector**.

## Ex Aviaindra 2018 Commences on 10 Dec 2018

- **Ex AVIAINDRA**, a service specific exercise between Indian Air Force and Russian Federation Aerospace Force (RFSAF), is planned at Air Force Station Jodhpur from 10-21 Dec 2018.
- The exercise is unique wherein the foreign participant does not bring its air assets. In Russia, the IAF pilots flew alongside their Russian counterparts in RFSAF aircraft at Lipetsk from 17 Sep 18 to 28 Sep 18. The **second edition of Ex AVIAINDRA is aimed at exposing RFSAF and IAF pilots to single/multi aircraft missions in a Counter Terrorism Scenario** within the predefined scope. The 30 member RFSAF contingent comprises of fighter, transport and helicopter pilots.

The **inaugural IAF-RFSAF Ex AVIAINDRA** was conducted in 2014. **AVIAINDRA-2018** is the **second in the series of bilateral joint exercise between IAF-RFSAF**. The exercise is planned in two phases.

## Bhupesh Baghel sworn-in as the chief minister of Chhattisgarh

- In Chhattisgarh, the newly elected Congress legislature party leader **Bhupesh Baghel** sworn-in as the new chief minister of state.
- The Congress named **Mr. Baghel, a five-time MLA from Patan, to head the State Congress Legislature Party**.
- Mr. Baghel, who took charge as Congress State president after 2013 Assembly polls, was **credited for the massive victory of the party in the recent Assembly polls where Congress won 68 seats in the 90-member House**. The BJP, which was in power in the State since 2003, bagged just 15 seats in the elections.

**Chhattisgarh** was formed on 1 November 2000 by partitioning 10 Chhattisgarhi and 6 Gondi speaking southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. **Atal Nagar (Formerly Naya Raipur)** is serving as the administrative capital of the State and also caters to the infrastructural needs of industry and trade in the region. **Balram Das Tandon** is present **Ajit Pramod Kumar Jogi** served as the **first chief minister of the state of Chhattisgarh, India**. **Governor of Chhattisgarh**. **Raman Singh** served as **Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh** state since 7 December 2003 until 16 December 2018.

## Shree Saini from USA crowned Miss India Worldwide 2018

- **Indian-American Shree Saini** has been crowned **Miss India Worldwide 2018** at a pageant held in the **Fords City of New Jersey**.
- **Sakshi Sinha** from Australia and **Anusha Sareen** from United Kingdom were respectively declared first and second runner ups in the 27th annual global pageant for people of Indian origin.
- **Jeya Priya Pandian** from Malaysia and **Kavita Malhotra Pattani** from USA were declared the first and second runner ups of the **Mrs India Worldwide 2018** respectively.
- Organised by the New York-based **India Festival Committee (IFC)**, the pageant is said to be the **oldest and largest event for the Indian Diaspora community**.
- The next edition of the **Miss India Worldwide** will be held in **Mumbai** in 2019, said **Dharmatma Saran**, chairman and founder of the **India Festival Committee** that organises the pageant.

**Miss India Worldwide** is a beauty pageant which draws contestants from India and from among members of the Indian diaspora residing in other countries. The pageant started in 1990. It is conducted by **India Festival Committee (IFC)**, founded and headed by **Dharmatma Saran** in New York City, USA. **Simmi Chadha** from the United States was crowned the first ever **Miss India Worldwide** in New York City. **Simi** was the winner of **Miss India USA** pageant of the year 1990. **Poonam Chibber** of Canada became the **first Miss India Worldwide** winner to get crowned outside the United States.



## Niti Aayog organised 3rd edition of Women Transforming India awards 2018

- NITI Aayog is organised the **third edition of the Women Transforming India Awards 2018**. The event also marked **launching of the upgraded portal of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)**.
- The Women Transforming India Awards recognise and celebrate stories of exemplary women from across the country. This year's **theme is "Women and Entrepreneurship"**, and **fifteen winners have been chosen**.

The **National Institution for Transforming India**, also called **NITI Aayog**, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on **January 1, 2015**. NITI Aayog is the **premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India**, providing both directional and policy inputs. The **current chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi**, **current vice chairman is Dr. Rajiv Kumar** and the **current chief executive officer is Shri Amitabh Kant**.

## Pune District Court becomes first in India to accept e-payments

- After the **approval of the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court**, a **pilot project for e-payments of court fee**, judicial deposits, fines and penalties **started from the Pune District Court** complex in Shivajinagar on December 15.
- This will be the **first time such a facility is being started anywhere in the country**. Judicial officers said this will **help curb red-tapism and corruption and bring in transparency**.

The **Pune district and sessions court is the first in India to launch the e-payment system**. There will be **no extra charges for transactions till Rs 2,000**; over and above that, charges will be levied.

## Ujjwala LPG scheme to cover all poor households

- The Centre announced **expansion of one of its most popular subsidy programmes under which free cooking gas connections are provided to poor women**. It now plans the universal coverage of the Ujjwala scheme, which currently covers **5.86 crore households**.
- **Petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan** expressed confidence the **coverage will reach the 6 crore mark by December end**.

**Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** was launched by **Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi** on **May 1st, 2016** in **Ballia, Uttar Pradesh**. Under this scheme, **5 Cr LPG connections will be provided to BPL families with a support of Rs.1600 per connection** in the next 3 years. Ensuring women's empowerment, especially in rural India, the connections will be issued in the name of women of the households. Identification of the BPL families will be done **through Socio Economic Caste Census Data**.

## India's first military flight using Blended Bio-Jet Fuel Flown by IAF

- Experimental Test Pilots and Test Engineer from IAF's premier testing establishment ASTE flew **India's first military flight** using **blended bio-jet fuel** on the **An-32 transport aircraft**.
- The project is a combined effort of IAF, DRDO, Directorate General Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA) and CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum.

## IMPRESS scheme launched to promote Social Science Research in the country

- The Government has approved **"Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education by 2022"**, as per which the scope of institutions to be **funded through Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)** has been enlarged to **encompass School Education and Medical Education institutions**, apart from Higher Education.
- The **total authorized equity capital of HEFA has been raised to Rs.10,000 crore**, with the facility to leverage additional resources from the market, based on requirement.

Union HRD Minister **Prakash Javadekar** launched web portals for two schemes -- **IMPRESS** and **SPARC** -- with an aim to build an ecosystem of research in educational institutions. The objective of **Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)** is to identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on governance and society. Under IMPRESS, 1,500 research projects will be awarded for two years to support social science research in higher educational institutions. The **Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR)** will be the project implementing agency.

## J&K Governor sends report to Centre recommending imposition of President's rule

- **Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik** has sent a report to the central government recommending imposition of President's rule in the state after expiry of six month Governor's rule there on December 19.
- Governor's rule was imposed in J&K after the state plunged into political turmoil after the **BJP withdrew its 25 legislators from the PDP-BJP ruling coalition**, reducing PDP to minority. Subsequently, on November 21, Malik dissolved the 87-member state assembly minutes before PDP could realign and stake claim with the backing of arch rival National Conference and Congress to form the government.

Due to the special status enjoyed by J&K, Article 356 cannot be invoked to impose President's rule. But, as per section 92 of J&K constitution, the state is placed under Governor's rule for the first six months and Centre's rule can be extended by following it with President's rule. To complete the formality, **President Ram Nath Kovind** will issue a proclamation declaring that the powers of the state legislature shall be exercised by or under the authority of Parliament

## India's largest cancer institute launched at AIIMS' Jhajjar campus

- The **710-bed hospital** opened its OPD services around five years after its foundation stone was laid by the then prime minister **Manmohan Singh** in 2014.
- Three cancer patients were registered in the out-patient department (OPD) of **India's largest cancer institute**, the **National Cancer Institute (NCI)** at **Haryana's Jhajjar area**, after its soft launch. The hospital is expected to be fully operational by December 2020.

The institute has been modelled after **United States' National Cancer Institute (NCI)**. It is developed as the premier institute for all activities related to cancer in the country and will have the linkages with all regional cancer centres. The NCI will act as an apex body for the network of the SCIs and TCCCs and shall develop and mentor Cancer related activities.

## NITI Aayog releases Strategy for New India @ 75

- **NITI Aayog unveiled its comprehensive national Strategy for New India**, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23.
- It is a detailed exposition across forty-one crucial areas that recognizes the progress already made identifies binding constraints, and suggests the way forward for achieving the clearly stated objectives.
- The 'Strategy for New India @75' was released by the **Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley**, in the presence of **NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar**, Members **Dr Ramesh Chand** and **Dr VK Saraswat** and CEO **Shri Amitabh Kant**.

## Union Government to open Eklavya School in areas having significant tribal population

- Tribal Affairs Minister **Jual Oram** informed that every block with more than 50 per cent Schedule Tribe, ST population and at least 20 thousand tribal persons, will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022.
- As per census 2011, there are 564 sub-districts having more than 50 per cent ST population and at least 20 thousand tribal persons.

**Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS)** is a Government of India scheme for model residential school for Indian tribals (Scheduled Tribes, ST) across India. It was established by the Tribal Ministry. Ekalavya means self-learned person, is a character from the epic The Mahabharata. He was a young prince of the Nishadha Kingdom.

### Himachal, Kerala and T.N. top development index

- The NITI Aayog released the **Baseline Report of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index**, which comprehensively documents the progress made by India's States and Union Territories towards implementing the 2030 SDG targets.
- The **SDG India Index** acts as a bridge between these mandates, aligning the SDGs with the Prime Minister's clarion call of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, which embodies the five Ps of the global SDG movement – people, planet, prosperity, partnership and peace.
- **Himachal Pradesh ranks high on providing clean water & sanitation**, in reducing inequalities & preserving mountain ecosystem. **Tamil Nadu has a score 66, and is the top scorer on the goals to do with eradicating poverty** and also providing clean and affordable energy.
- **Kerala's top rank is attributed to its superior performance in providing good health**, reducing hunger, achieving gender equality & providing quality education
- **In UTs, Chandigarh leads because of its exemplary performance in providing clean water & sanitation**, affordable & clean energy, generating decent work & economic growth, & providing quality education.

The index comprises a composite score for each State and Union Territory based on their aggregate performance across 13 of the 17 SDGs. The score, ranging between 0 and 100, denotes the average performance of the State/UT towards achieving the 13 SDGs and their respective targets. The average Indian score was 57. The aim of the index is to instil competition among States to improve their performance across social indices as the States' progress will determine India's progress towards achieving the set goals by 2030.

### Haryana CM inaugurates Patanjali's World Herbal Forest Project

- **Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated World Herbal Forest Project in Morni Hill, 45 kilometres from Chandigarh.** The project is a collaboration of Patanjali and Haryana Government.
- The main aim of this project is to develop a forest of medicinal plants and give a boost to Ayurvedic products across the country. **C.R.I. has endeavoured** to offer energy efficient pumps through innovative design and technology.

**Haryana was carved out of the former state of East Punjab on 1 November 1966 on linguistic basis.** Among the world's oldest and largest ancient civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization sites located at Rakhigarhi village in Hisar district of Haryana. **Haryana is a landlocked state in northern India.** As per the 2011 Census, **Haryana has the lowest child sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years in the country.** According to the census, against 1,000 boys born, there were only 834 girls. The state capital of Haryana is Chandigarh, a Union Territory and also the capital of the neighboring state of Punjab. **Kaptan Singh Solanki is the current Governor of Haryana.**

### Defence Minister inaugurates Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region

- **Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, launched the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) Gurugram.**
- The **Indian Ocean Region is vital to world trade and economic prosperity of many nations as more than 75% of the world's maritime trade and 50% of global oil consumption passes through the IOR.**

Nirmala Sitharaman is currently a member of the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka. Nirmala Sitharaman became the first full-time Defence Minister to fly in a Sukhoi 30 MKI of the Indian Air Force. She is the first full-fledged woman defence minister of India. The first defence minister of independent India was Baldev Singh. She is the second woman since Indira Gandhi to hold this major post.

### India's longest rail-cum-road span Bogibeel Bridge flagged off by Prime Minister

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated the Bogibeel Bridge in Assam, to the nation. The bridge, which spans the River Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts of Assam, is of immense economic and strategic significance for the nation. At a massive public meeting in Kareng Chapori, on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, the Prime Minister also flagged off the first passenger train passing through the bridge.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlined the NDA government's focus on improving connectivity in the northeastern region while inaugurating the 4.94 km Bogibeel Bridge, India's longest rail-cum-road span, across the Brahmaputra. The Prime Minister appreciated all those involved in the construction of the bridge. He recalled that in May 2017, he had also dedicated the country's longest road bridge, the Bhupen Hazarika Bridge at Sadia in Assam, to the nation.

The project was conceived by the Rail India Technical Economic Services in 1973, and the foundation stone was laid by former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in January 1997. The strategic bridge, which connects Dibrugarh district on the river's south bank in Assam to Dhemaji district on the north bank, would not only improve the livelihoods of millions of people in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

### EC bans all kinds of tobacco in polling booths during 2019 Lok Sabha elections

- The Election Commission has banned all kinds of tobacco in polling booths during next year's general elections, in a bid to effectively implement tobacco control laws in the country.
- The Commission has asked all states and Union Territories to issue instructions to district electoral officers-cum-district magistrates to ensure prohibition of not just smoking, but also the use of chewable tobacco in all polling booths.
- The Commission's guidelines said all the polling booths in country to be declared tobacco free and not just smoke free and hence use of bidi, cigarette, gutkha, and chewable tobacco are prohibited in all polling booth.
- General elections are due to be held in India in March to April 2019 to constitute the 17th Lok Sabha.

Election Commissioners of India are members of Election Commission of India, a body constitutionally empowered to conduct free and fair elections to the national and state legislatures. The Election Commissioners are usually retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers. Chief Election Commissioner of India can be removed from his office by the Parliament with a two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on the grounds of proved misbehavior or incapacity. Other Election Commissioners can be removed by the President of India on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner. Sukumar Sen was the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, serving from 21 March 1950 to 19 December 1958.

### Delhi Police becomes first police force in country to digitise all malkhanas

- Delhi Police become the first police force in the country to digitize all malkhanas, rooms for keeping seized arms and ammunition, across every police station in the state, an official release said.
- Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik inaugurated the e-malkhana project of the remaining 10 districts at Chinamaya Mission.



Delhi bordered by Haryana on three sides and by Uttar Pradesh to the east. According to the 2011 census, Delhi city proper's population was over 11 million, the second-highest in India after Mumbai. Anil Baijal is the current & 21st Lieutenant Governor of Delhi. Arvind Kejriwal is the current and 7th Chief Minister of Delhi. The Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991 declared the Union Territory of Delhi to be formally known as the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

### Silao ka Khaja is the first Bihari dessert to get the GI (geographical indication) tag

- Geographical Indications Registry at Chennai has granted GI tag to Silao Khaja, the traditional delicacy of Nalanda district, Bihar.
- The layered crispy sweet traditional to Silao in Nalanda - Silao ka Khaja is the first Bihari dessert to get the GI (geographical indication) tag.
- The sweet consists of twelve to sixteen very thin dough-sheet placed over one another.

The documents submitted by the applicant for the GI tag mentions the findings of British archaeologist J D Beglar who visited Silao in 1872-73 according to which Khaja or 'Sweetmeat', as he calls it, dates back to the period of King Vikramaditya. Silao Khaja also finds mentions in many legends and one of them claims that this was the sweet which was offered to Gautam Buddha while he was on his journey from Rajgir to Nalanda.

### PM Modi released Rs 100 commemorative coin in memory of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a Rs 100 commemorative coin in the memory of the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the eve of his 94th birth anniversary.
- Several BJP top leaders including his long-time associate L K Advani, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and BJP president Amit Shah attending the event.

### Andhra, Himachal and Madhya Pradesh best performing states under maternity benefit programme

- Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were the top three performing states under the maternity benefit programme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.
- Minister of State for the Women and Child Development Ministry Virendra Kumar said the PMMVY is a centrally-sponsored scheme under which the cost sharing ratio between the Centre, states and the Union Territories with the legislation is 60:40.
- For the eight northeastern states and the three Himalayan states it is 90:10, and 100 per cent central assistance for the Union Territories without the legislation.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), previously Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), is a maternity benefit program run by the government of India. It was introduced in 2016 and is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for the first live birth. The Government of India has approved Pan-India implementation of PMMVY in all districts of the country w.e.f. 01.01.2017 under which the eligible beneficiaries gets Rs. 5,000/- under PMMVY and the remaining cash incentive as per approved norms towards Maternity Benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) after institutional delivery so that on an average, a woman gets Rs. 6000/.

### India's first music museum to be set up in Thiruvaiyaru

- India's first music museum will be set up with assistance from the Central Government in Thiruvaiyaru, Tamil Nadu, the birth place of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinity of Carnatic music.

- The other two of the **Trinity** are **Muthuswami Dikshitar** and **Syama Sastri**. The **Tyagaraja Aaradhana Music Festival** which is held annually in January in Thiruvaiyaru attracts musical talents from all over the world.

**Carnatic music** is a system of music commonly associated with South India, including the modern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu as well as Sri Lanka. **Tyagaraja**, also known as **Tyagayya** in Telugu, was a renowned composer of Carnatic music, a form of Indian classical music. He was prolific and highly influential in the development of the classical music tradition.

### PM Modi releases stamp and coin to commemorate Odisha's Paika rebellion

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** released a stamp and a coin to commemorate the **Paika rebellion of 1817** in Odisha.
- He also inaugurated the new campus of **IIT-Bhubaneswar**, built at a cost of Rs 1,660 crore, and launched a slew of projects worth Rs 14,523 crore for the state. The **Paika Rebellion**, many claim, was the first war of Independence against the British.

Pre-dating what has been popularly regarded as the first war of independence in 1857, the **Paika Bidroha (Paika Rebellion)** of 1817 in Odisha briefly shook the foundations of British rule in the eastern part of India. **Paikas** were essentially the peasant militias of the **Gajapati rulers of Odisha** who rendered military service to the king during times of war while taking up cultivation during times of peace. They unfurled the banner of rebellion against the British under the leadership of **Baxi Jagandhu Bidyadhara** as early as 1817 to throw off the British yoke.

### Kamal Nath expands Cabinet; state gets first Muslim minister in 15 years

- **Digvijay Singh's son Jaivardhan Singh** was among the 28 MLAs who were sworn in as the cabinet minister in **Madhya Pradesh**. **Governor Anandiben Patel** administered the oath to the new ministers at the Raj Bhavan in Bhopal.
- **Sajjan Singh Verma**, **Vijayalaxmi Sadho**, **Hukum Singh Karada**, **Govind Singh Rajput**, **Bala Bachchan**, **Pradeep Jayaswal**, **Imarti Devi** were among those sworn in as ministers. **Arif Aqueel** was the lone Muslim face in the new council of ministers. **Aqueel**, MLA from Bhopal North, is the first Muslim minister in the state after 15 years.

**Madhya Pradesh** (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its capital is **Bhopal**. Nicknamed the "Heart of India" due to its geographical location in India. **Madhya Pradesh** is the second-largest state in the country by area after **Rajasthan**. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern **Chhattisgarh** region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India.

### Andhra Pradesh, Telangana to have separate High Courts

- Following a Supreme Court order to the Centre to notify the bifurcation of the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana High Courts by January 1, President Ram Nath Kovind ordered the separation of the "common" Hyderabad High Court into the two separate High Courts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- Both the courts have already started function separately from January 1, 2019. The principal seat of the Andhra Pradesh High Court is **Amaravati**, the capital of the State. The High Court in Hyderabad functions separately as the High Court of the State of Telangana.
- Sixteen HC judges, including **Justice Ramesh Ranganathan**, who is now the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court becomes judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court from January 1. The new Telangana High Court will have a sanctioned strength of 10 judges.

**Governor E S L Narasimhan** administered the oath of office to **Acting Chief Justice C Praveen Kumar** and 13 other judges at a function held in the twin cities **Amravati** and **Vijayawada**, Andhra Pradesh. **Governor Narsimhan** also administered the oath of office to **Chief Justice Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnan** as the first Chief justice of **Telangana High Court** at Hyderabad. Judges were also administered oath of offices at

both Hyderabad and Amravati. **With this the total number of High Courts functioning in the country has risen to 25.** Till now, the high court at Hyderabad had been functioning as the common high court for both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

### Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana launched in Uttarakhand, making the hill state first in the country to offer universal health coverage

- Taking inspiration from the Centre's 'Ayushman Bharat' scheme, **Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat launched the 'Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana', making the hill state first in the country to offer universal health coverage.**
- Under the scheme, **each household in the state will be able to avail medical treatment of up to Rs 5 lakh annually.** The scheme will **benefit 23 lakh households and cover 1,350 critical diseases.** A total of 99 government and 66 private hospitals have been selected under the scheme, he added.

**Uttarakhand is often referred to as the Devbhumi, due to many Hindu temples and pilgrimage centres found throughout the state. On 9 November 2000, Uttarakhand became the 27th state of the Republic of India, being created from the Himalayan and adjoining northwestern districts of Uttar Pradesh. Trivendra Singh Rawat is the eighth and current Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. Baby Rani Maurya is serving as the seventh governor of Uttarakhand since 26 August 2018.**

### Central Railways introduces technology to eliminate manual examination of trains

- The mechanical branch of **Central Railways' Nagpur division has introduced a new state-of-the-art technology called Automated Train Examination System (ATES)** for the enhancement of train safety.
- **The system, developed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited, eliminates manual examination of trains and measures axle box temperature, wheel disc temperature and records the under-gear of rolling stock of running trains through infrared and other cameras.**

### NITI Aayog Releases Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts

- The NITI Aayog released the **Second Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts** which measures the **incremental progress made by them between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018, across six developmental areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.**
- The Surveys were carried out in **all Aspirational Districts** during the month of June 2018 **covering more than 1, 00,000 households.**
- **Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu has shown the most improvement overall, followed by Nuapada district in Odisha, Siddarthnagar in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar's Aurangabad and Koraput in Odisha.** These districts have championed the development narrative in fundamental parameters of social progress.
- Meanwhile, **Nagaland's Kiphire district, Jharkhand's Giridih, Chatra in Jharkhand, Hailakandi in Assam, and Pakur in Jharkhand have shown least improvement.**

**The Aspirational District Programme was launched by the Prime Minister on January 5, 2018. It aims to rapidly transform the districts that have shown relatively lesser progress in key social areas and have emerged as pockets of under-development, thereby posing a challenge to ensure balanced regional development. The first Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts was released in June 2018. It ranked the Aspirational Districts on improved performance across five developmental areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure, over the months of April and May 2018, on the basis of self-reported data.**



## Union Cabinet approves first Indian Human Spaceflight programme

- Union Cabinet has approved the **Gaganyaan Programme** with a **demonstration of Indian Human Spaceflight capability to low earth orbit** for a mission duration ranging from **one orbital period to a maximum of seven days**.
- A **human-rated GSLV Mk-III** will be used to **carry the orbital module** which will have necessary provisions for **sustaining a 3-member crew** for the duration of the mission.
- The **total fund requirement for the Gaganyaan Programme is within Rs.10, 000 crore** and includes cost of technology development, flight hardware realization and essential infrastructure elements. **Two unmanned flights and one manned flight will be undertaken as part of Gaganyaan Programme.**

Indian **Human Spaceflight Programme (HSP)** was created by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** to **develop the technology needed to launch crewed orbital spacecraft into low Earth orbit**. The **first crewed flight** is planned with a spacecraft called **Gaganyaan** for **December 2021** on a **home-grown GSLV-III rocket**.

## Indian Railways to build country's first vertical lift Pamban Bridge to reconnect Rameswaram with mainland India

- The **Indian Railways** has come up with a plan to **replace the 104-year-old British era Pamban Bridge** that connects **Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu** to mainland India. Touted to be **India's first vertical-lift bridge**, the **two-kilometre-long bridge** is being **planned at a cost of Rs 250 crore**, and will be **completed in four years**. The structure will be made parallel to the existing bridge.
- According to a railway official, the **bridge will have a 63-meter stretch**, which will lift up parallelly allowing ships to pass through. It will **comprise 100 spans of 18.3m and one navigational span of 63m**.

**Pamban Bridge** is a railway bridge which connects the town of **Rameswaram on Pamban Island** to mainland India. **Opened on 24 February 1914**, it was **India's first sea bridge**, and was the **longest sea bridge in India** until the opening of the **Bandra-Worli Sea Link** in 2010.

**Indian Railways (IR)** is the **fourth-largest railway network in the world by size**. **Piyush Vedprakash Goyal** is currently serving as the **Minister of Railways and Coal** in the Government of India. He was elected as the **BJP candidate from Maharashtra for the Rajya Sabha** on 3 June 2016.

## Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh released the list of top 10 performing police stations across the nation

- **Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh** released the list of **top 10 performing police stations across the nation** during the ongoing **DGP conference**. **On the top of the rank-list stands Kalu police station of Rajasthan**. Singh awarded trophies to the police officers of the top three police stations of India in 2018 at the conference.
- The **top three police stations in India for 2018** are **Kalu (Bikaner, Rajasthan), Campbell Bay (Andaman & Nicobar Islands) and Farakka (Murshidabad, West Bengal)**.

**Rajnath Ram Badan Singh** previously served as the **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** and as a **Cabinet Minister in the Vajpayee Government**. He has also served as the **President of the BJP** twice, **2005 to 2009 and 2013 to 2014**. He has been representing the **16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha** from **Lucknow constituency**.

## International



### Suu Kyi to be stripped of freedom of Paris award

- Paris city will strip Aung San Suu Kyi of her honorary freedom of the French capital over her failure to speak out against the crackdown on the Rohingya minority in Myanmar.
- Mayor Anne Hidalgo decided to revoke the honour because of the "multiple violations of human rights recorded in Myanmar and the violence and persecution by Myanmar's security forces against the Rohingya minority.
- Nobel peace laureate Suu Kyi, once feted as a democracy icon in the mould of Nelson Mandela for leading opposition to Myanmar's military junta, has fallen out of favour in the West over her inaction in the face of the crackdown on the mostly Muslim Rohingya.
- She has already been stripped of her honorary Canadian citizenship and her Amnesty International's "Ambassador of Conscience Award".

Aung San Suu Kyi is a Myanmar politician, diplomat, author, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1991). She is the leader of the National League for Democracy and the first and incumbent State Counsellor, a position akin to a prime minister. She is also the first woman to serve as Minister for Foreign Affairs, for the President's Office.

### Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa lays foundation stone for new parliament to be built outside Harare

- Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa laid the foundation stone for new parliament to be built with Chinese funds outside the capital Harare.
- The imposing circular complex will be built over 32 months by the Shanghai Construction group at Mount Hampden, north-west of Harare

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in southern Africa and Harare is the capital and most populous city of Zimbabwe. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa is serving as the third and current President of Zimbabwe since 24 November 2017.

### Leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador sworn in as Mexico president

- Leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been sworn in as the New Mexican President following his landslide victory in the July 1 presidential election.
- Lopez Obrador took oath before a crowd that included world leaders and a strong majority in both houses of Congress.

Mexico is a federal republic in the southern portion of North America. Mexico City or City of Mexico is the capital of Mexico. Mexican peso is the currency of Mexico. Andrés Manuel Lopez Obrador is serving as the current & 58th President of Mexico from 1 December 2018.

## Qatar to leave OPEC from January 2019

- **Qatar** has announced its **decision to leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** from January next year and focus more on the production of natural gas.
- **Qatar is the first Gulf country to leave the bloc of oil-producing countries.** The withdrawal decision reflects **Qatar's desire to focus its efforts on plans to develop and increase its natural gas production from 77 million tonnes per year to 110 million tonnes in the coming years.** **Qatar is the world's largest exporter of LPG.**

**Qatar is a country located in Western Asia, occupying the small Qatar Peninsula on the northeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. Doha is the capital and most populous city of the State of Qatar. Qatari riyal is the currency of the State of Qatar. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani is the current Emir of Qatar. Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani has been Prime Minister of Qatar since 26 June 2013.**

**Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is an intergovernmental organization of 14 nations as of February 2018, founded in 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela), and headquartered since 1965 in Vienna, Austria.**

## Asia Pacific Summit-2018 begins in Kathmandu

- The **Asia Pacific Summit-2018 began in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.**
- The **theme of two-day Summit is "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values".**

## UAE passport ranked most powerful globally

- The **UAE now has the world's most powerful passport, achieving the top ranking in an achievement hailed as a tribute to the legacy of the Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed, and the country's diplomacy.**
- The **number 1 spot in the global Passport Index was achieved just as the UAE celebrates its 47th National Day and its achievements since 1971.** The ministry launched the **UAE Passport Force initiative to place the Emirati passport on the list of the five most powerful passports in the world by 2021, but achieved this goal three years early.**
- The **UAE passport was in 27th position on the index in December 2016 and had risen to 4th place at the end of October.** The index, compiled by **Arton Capital**, ranks national passports based on the number of countries a holder can enter without a visa or by obtaining one on arrival. **Singapore ranks second with 166 countries.**

**Abu Dhab is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. UAE is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of UAE. .**

## US re-establishes permanent diplomatic mission in Somalia for first time in 27 years

- The **United States has reestablished a "permanent diplomatic presence" in Somalia for the first time in 27 years.**
- The **United States has based its diplomatic mission to Somalia in the capital of neighbouring Kenya since 2013, from where US diplomatic staff travel to Somalia to conduct official business.**

**Somalia is a sovereign state with its territory located in the Horn of Africa. Mogadishu is the capital and most populous city of Somalia. Somali shilling is the official currency of Somalia. Mohamed Abdullahi is the 9th and current President of Somalia. Hassan Ali Khairi is the current Prime Minister of Somalia.**

## China to build 20,000 forest villages

- China will increase its green cover by building 20,000 national forest villages by 2020 in the country.
- Faced with a problem of severe pollution, China has spent over \$100 billion on trees and its total forest cover area is almost 22%.
- China will continue to enhance the ecological environment in villages across the country, bring the green coverage rate in rural areas to 30% and build 20,000 national forest villages by 2020.

## Panama first in Latin America to join China's Belt and Road Initiative

- China's attempts to flex its increasing international clout scored a major victory earlier in December when the strategic Central American nation of Panama became the first in the region to officially agree to take part in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative.
- During a bilateral meeting between China's President Xi Jinping and his Panamanian counterpart Juan Carlos Varela, the countries, which only established diplomatic relations in 2017, announced 19 separate deals that saw China formally commit to providing several substantial loans for strategic investment in Panama, as well as other deals on tourism, trade, banking, and education.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an ambitious programme to connect Asia with Africa and Europe via land and maritime networks along six corridors with the aim of improving regional integration, increasing trade and stimulating economic growth. The name was coined in 2013 by China's President Xi Jinping, who drew inspiration from the concept of the Silk Road established during the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago – an ancient network of trade routes that connected China to the Mediterranean via Eurasia for centuries. The BRI has also been referred to in the past as 'One Belt One Road'. The BRI's geographical scope is constantly expanding. So far it covers over 70 countries, accounting for about 65 per cent of the world's population and around one-third of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

## Luxembourg offers free mass transit for all

- Luxembourg is a small country with big traffic jams. So when Prime Minister Xavier Bettel was sworn in for a second term earlier this week, his governing coalition promised free mass transit for all, which would make the country the first to offer such a benefit.
- Luxembourg is barely larger than a city-state, with a population of about 5, 60,000.
- But more than 1, 80,000 workers commute across the border from Belgium, France and Germany. The average salary, of just over €50,000, or \$56,000, is almost 40% higher than in France, for example.

Luxembourg is a small landlocked country in western Europe. Luxembourg City is the capital city of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and the country's most populous commune. The currency is Euro. Henri is the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, reigning since 7 October 2000. The City of Luxembourg with its old quarters and fortifications was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994 due to the exceptional preservation of the vast fortifications and the old city.

## Merkel loyalist elected ruling party leader

- Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, a close ally of Angela Merkel, won a tight race to succeed her as party leader, seeing off a longtime rival of the German chancellor.
- The contest, which required a runoff vote to secure a 52% majority for AKK, as she is known, is expected to increase the likelihood that Ms. Merkel will be able to see out her fourth term until 2021.
- AKK pledged to maintain continuity after 18 years of Merkel at the helm while opening up the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) to more grassroots democracy.



**Berlin is the capital and the largest city of Germany. Frank-Walter Steinmeier is currently serving as President of Germany. Angela Dorothea Merkel has been serving as Chancellor of Germany since 2005. The euro is the currency of Germany. Bundestag is the German federal parliament.** It can be compared to the lower house of parliament along the lines of the United States House of Representatives, or the House of Commons of the United Kingdom, with the Bundesrat, though a separate institution, having a similar role to the upper house of a bicameral parliament.

### Hamdan launches world's largest Arabic audio library

- **Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, has launched the Dubai Audio Library, the largest Arabic audio library in the world.**
- **The library, which targets seven million visually impaired people in the Arab world, is an initiative undertaken by the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) in collaboration with the website Bookshare.org.**
- **The launch of the initiative coincides with International Volunteers Day. Sheikh Hamdan marked the launch by uploading the first book to the Dubai Audio Library, Zayed Diwan, a collection of 87 poems written by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, paying tribute to the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan.**

**Dubai is the largest and most populous city in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). On the southeast coast of the Persian Gulf, it is the capital of the Emirate of Dubai, one of the seven emirates that make up the country. Dubai has attracted world attention through large construction projects and sports events, in particular the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa.**

### France arrests over 1,700 in 'yellow vest' protests, clashes continue

- **More than 1,700 people were arrested across France during the latest round of "yellow vest" protests, in which demonstrators clashed with riot police, the interior ministry said.**
- **Clashes broke out in several cities, including Marseille, Bordeaux, Lyon and Toulouse, during a fourth weekend of nationwide protests against rising living costs and President Emmanuel Macron in general.**

**The yellow vests movement is a political movement that began with a petition posted online in May 2018. The first mass demonstrations began in France on 17 November 2018 and soon spread to Wallonia, Belgium. Motivated by rising fuel prices, high cost of living and claims that a disproportionate burden of the government's tax reforms were falling on the working and middle classes, especially in rural and peri-urban areas, protesters have called for lower fuel taxes, reintroduction of the solidarity tax on wealth, a minimum wage increase, and Emmanuel Macron's resignation as President of France.**

### Khashoggi among journalists honoured by Time

- **Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was killed in Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul in October, was featured among a group of journalists who were named TIME magazine's "Person of the Year" for 2018. The magazine said these journalists – given the honorific "The Guardians" – helped expose "the manipulation and the abuse of truth" around the world.**
- **Apart from Khashoggi, the staff of the Capital Gazette newspaper in Maryland, Phillipine journalist Maria Ressa and the honor went to a series of journalists including Reuters journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo who the government of Myanmar convicted on Sept. 3 under the colonial-era Official Secrets Act in a case seen as a test of democratic freedoms in Myanmar.**

Time is an American weekly news magazine and news website published in New York City. It was founded in 1923 and originally run by Henry Luce. Nancy Gibbs was the managing editor from September 2013 until September 2017. She was succeeded by Edward Felsenthal, who has been Time's digital editor.

### Pakistan invites PoK minister, Indian diplomat leaves Saarc meeting

- An Indian diplomat left a SAARC meeting in Islamabad on protesting move by Pakistan to invite a Pakistan occupied Kashmir ((PoK) minister to speak at the event.
- This was the first such instance when Pakistan had invited PoK minister at a SAARC-related event. India might issue a demarche to Pakistan in this matter. Indian diplomat Shubham Singh left the meet after Pakistan invited the Chaudhary Muhammad Saeed to speak at the dais. The diplomat left the SAARC meet when Pakistan gave the platform to Saeed.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of nations in South Asia. Its member states include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.

### Israel becomes 38th member of international anti-money laundering body

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a leading organization in global combat against money laundering and terror financing, has accepted Israel as its 38th member.
- According to the audit report, Israel is one of the three leading countries in terms of the effectiveness of the fight against money laundering and terror financing, along with the United States and Britain.
- The Jewish state has now taken its place alongside 37 other members — including most of the G20, the world's 20 leading industrialized and emerging economies — just 16 years after being blacklisted by the organization.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

### US remain No.1, but Russia emerges as world's No. 2 arms producer

- A Swedish think tank says Russia has emerged as the world's second-largest arms producer after the U.S.
- Russia surpassed Britain, which had held the spot since 2002 and remains Western Europe's No. 1 arms maker.
- For the first time in the report's history, a Russian company — the Moscow-based and state-owned Almaz-Antey that makes advanced air defense systems among other things — was listed among the world's top 10 weapons companies.
- Overall, the U.S. continued to dominate the list with 42 companies accounting for 57 percent of total sales, including the world's largest arms producer, Lockheed Martin Corp.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, in its report of the world's 100 biggest armaments groups that the combined arm sales of Russian companies amounted to \$37.7 billion in 2017, or 9.5 percent of a total \$398.2 billion, recording 8.5 percent year-on-year growth.

### British PM Theresa May wins vote of confidence in her leadership of Conservative party

- British Prime Minister Theresa May has won a vote of confidence in her leadership of the Conservative Party. She got the support of 200 MPs while 117 MPs voted against her.

- The confidence vote was **triggered by 48 of her MPs, who are angry at her Brexit policy**. They said that her policy has betrayed the 2016 referendum result.

**London is the capital and most populous city of England and the United Kingdom. Pound sterling is the official currency of the United Kingdom. Theresa Mary May is serving as the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Elizabeth II is Queen of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms. She is the longest-lived and longest-reigning British monarch as well as the world's longest-reigning queen regnant and female head of state, the oldest and longest-reigning current monarch and the oldest and longest-serving current head of state.**

### Ranil wins vote of confidence in House

- A **majority of Sri Lankan parliamentarians** — including 14 from the opposition Tamil National Alliance (TNA) — **voted for ousted Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe as their preferred candidate to serve in the post.**
- The **motion moved by Sajith Premadasa, deputy leader of Mr. Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP), sought to demonstrate the support that the deposed leader has in the House.**

**President Maithripala Sirisena refusal to work with Mr. Wickremesinghe is at the heart of the political crisis gripping Sri Lanka for seven weeks now. In a widely-contested decision on October 26, Mr. Sirisena installed former President Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister, abruptly replacing Mr. Wickremesinghe.**

### Indian-American woman appointed to US body advocating religious freedom

- An **Indian-American woman lawyer was appointed to a top post in a US organisation, which advocates religious freedom.**
- **Anurima Bhargava, a civil rights lawyer, has been appointed as a Commissioner to the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bipartisan federal government entity established by the US Congress to monitor, analyse and report on threats to religious freedom abroad.**

### World's first floating nuclear plant operational in Russia

- **Akademik Lomonosov, the world's first "floating" nuclear power plant (FNPP) for installation in remote areas, has been started and brought to 10 per cent of its capacity, Russian state-run atomic energy corporation Rosatom announced.**
- It had **started up the first reactor unit of Lomonosov which would be towed to its final destination by next autumn, as scheduled. Rosatom are also the equipment suppliers and consultants for the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project in Tamil Nadu.**

**Floating nuclear plant (FNPP) is basically a mobile, low-capacity reactor unit operable in remote areas isolated from the main power distribution system or in places hard to access by land. They are designed to maintain both uninterrupted power and plentiful desalinated water supply in remote areas. The FNPP has a capacity of 70MW and is equipped with two reactors of 35MW each. According to Rosatom, an FNPP's operational life span is 40 years, with the possibility of being extended up to 50 years.**

### Rajapaksa resigned, Ranil Wickremesinghe sworn in as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

- **Former Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa has decided to vacate the office of Prime Minister — which he controversially held for seven weeks — paving the way for the return of ousted leader Ranil Wickremesinghe.**
- **Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Prime minister by President Maithripala Sirisena thus bringing an end to weeks long political crisis in the country.**



Sri Lanka is an island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka is separated from the India by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte is the official, administrative capital of Sri Lanka. Colombo is the commercial capital and largest city of Sri Lanka. Maithripala Sirisena is the current and 7th and current President of Sri Lanka, in office since January 2015. Sri Lankan rupee is the currency of Sri Lanka.

### Nations inch towards climate deal at UN summit

- Nations inched towards a deal to implement the Paris climate goals, after all-night negotiations over a plan to limit global temperature rises exposed a range of conflicts. **At the COP24 summit in Poland**, a senior negotiator said delegates from nearly **200 nations had reached a “landing zone” of agreement**.
- All countries, must agree to action that will **cap global temperature rises to “well below” two degrees Celsius** and stave off the worst effects of planetary warming, **and to a safer cap of 1.5 C if possible**.

**COP24** is the **informal name for the 24th Conference of the Parties** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change **took place** from 2-15 December 2018 **in Katowice, Poland**. The UNFCCC is a **“Rio Convention”** adopted at the **“Rio Earth Summit” in 1992**. The UNFCCC entered into force on **21 March 1994**.

### Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Sri Lanka's prime minister

- **Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Sri Lanka's prime minister** making remarkable comeback weeks after being **ousted by President Maithripala Sirisena** under controversial circumstances.
- **Sirisena had replaced Wickremesinghe with former president Mahinda Rajapaksa** following **differences over policy matters and other issues**. However, Rajapaksa failed to win a parliamentary majority and resigned as a government shutdown loomed.

Sri Lanka is an island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka is separated from the India by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte is the official, administrative capital of Sri Lanka. Colombo is the commercial capital and largest city of Sri Lanka. Maithripala Sirisena is the current and 7th and current President of Sri Lanka, in office since January 2015. **Ranil Wickremesinghe is the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka since 9 January 2015**. Sri Lankan rupee is the currency of Sri Lanka.

### Australia recognizes West Jerusalem as Capital of Israel

- **Australia** announced that it now **recognizes West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel**, and will move its Tel Aviv embassy once a peace settlement is reached.
- **“Australia now recognizes West Jerusalem, being the seat of the Knesset and many of the institutions of government, is the capital of Israel,”** Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australian said. The move follows the **lead of President Trump** who formally acknowledged the city as Israel's capital last year and moved the United States embassy there in May.

**Australia is the largest country in Oceania** and the world's sixth-largest country by total area. **Australia's capital is Canberra**, and its largest city is **Sydney**. **Scott Morrison is serving as the 30th and current Prime Minister of Australia**. Elizabeth II is the Head of the Commonwealth and **queen regnant of seven independent Commonwealth countries: the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon**.

### EU parliament approves Japan trade deal, dubbed world's largest

- The **European Parliament approved an accord with Japan** that has been dubbed the **world's biggest trade deal**, covering economies that represent a third of global GDP. The agreement will go into effect in February, and

has been celebrated as a victory for Europe as a free trade champion in the face of U.S. President Donald Trump's protectionism and the U.K.'s decision to leave the EU.

- This agreement is projected to increase exports between the two economies by 34 percent for the EU and 29 percent for Japan, liberalizing up to 99 percent of bilateral trade.

**President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker** said: "Almost five centuries after Europeans established the first trade ties with Japan, the entry into force of the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement will bring our trade, political and strategic relationship to a whole new level. It paves the way for the agreement to enter into force on 1 February 2019.

### UAE declares 2019 as the Year of Tolerance

- **UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan** declared 2019 as the 'Year of Tolerance', an extension of the **Year of Zayed** which has run this year.
- The leader said 2019 would highlight the **UAE as a global capital for tolerance**, instilling the values of co-existence and peace in local, regional and international communities. **In 2016**, the UAE Cabinet introduced the **first post of the Minister of State for Tolerance** and launched the **National Tolerance Programme**.

**Abu Dhab** is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. **Khalifa Al Nahyan** is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. **Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum** is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. **United Arab Emirates dirham** is the currency of the United Arab Emirates.

### France to introduce tax on global internet, technology firms

- **France will introduce its own tax on large internet and technology companies from January 1, 2019**, finance minister Bruno Le Maire said amid difficulties in finalising a new EU-wide levy.
- France has been pushing hard for a **new so-called "GAFA tax"** -- named after Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon -- to ensure the **global giants pay a fair share of taxes on their massive business operations in Europe**.

**France** is a unitary semi-presidential republic with its capital in Paris. **Emmanuel Macron** is serving as President of France and ex officio Co-Prince of Andorra since 14 May 2017. **Edouard Philippe** is serving as Prime Minister of France. The **euro** is the official currency of France. The **euro** is the second largest reserve currency as well as the second most traded currency in the world after the United States dollar.

### Belgium Prime Minister Charles Michel resigns over migration spat

- **Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel** has resigned amid pressure on his government over his support for the **UN global compact on migration**.
- The pressure increased after his **biggest coalition partner, the right-wing N-VA party**, quit the government over the issue.
- **Michel lost the backing of the party over his support for the UN migration pact**, a cause celebre for European anti-immigration parties.

**Belgium** is a sovereign state in Western Europe. The capital and largest city is **Brussels**. Belgium is a federal constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. **Philippe or Filip** is the **King of the Belgians**, having ascended the throne on 21 July 2013, following his father's abdication. The **euro** is the official currency of Belgium.

### Rajapaksa named leader of Opposition

- **Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa** was named the **Leader of Opposition in the Sri Lankan Parliament**.

- **Mr. Rajapaksa demanded** that he is to be made **Opposition leader**, since **his political grouping had the largest number of Opposition MPs**.
- He was **appointed the country's leader of the Opposition** as **Parliament** met for the first time since the **reinstatement of Ranil Wickremesinghe as prime minister**.

**Mahendra Rajapaksa** has served as **Member of Parliament (MP)** for **Kurunegala** since 2015. He served as the **President of Sri Lanka and Leader of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party** from 2005 to 2015. He served as **Prime Minister** from 6 April 2004 until his victory in the 2005 presidential election. He was sworn in for his first six-year term as president on 19 November 2005. He was re-elected for a second term on 27 January 2010. He was defeated in his bid for a third term in the 2015 presidential election by **Maithripala Sirisena**.

### UN members adopt Global Compact on Refugees

- An overwhelming majority of the **UN member states** voted in favour of the **Global Compact on Refugees**, affirming **international solidarity and cooperation** for **refugee protection** and **host community development**.
- The **compact on refugees**, aimed to **reduce the burden on host nations**, received 181 votes in favour from the 193-member Assembly; days after a **UN conference in Morocco** adopted a **similar compact on migration**.

**United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** is one of the six principal organs of the **United Nations**. Under the Charter, the **Security Council** has **primary responsibility** for the **maintenance of international peace and security**. It has **15 Members**, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter, all Member States are obligated to comply with Council decisions. The **permanent members of the United Nations Security Council** (also known as the **Permanent Five, Big Five, or P5**) are **China** (formerly the **Republic of China**), **Russia** (formerly the **Soviet Union**), **France**, the **United Kingdom**, and the **United States**. **Antonio Guterres** is a **Portuguese politician and diplomat** who is serving as the **ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations**. Previously, he was the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** between 2005 and 2015.

### Macedonian, Greek PMs get nominated for 2019 Nobel Peace Prize

- A **Tunisian Nobel Peace Prize** winner nominated **Macedonia and Greece's premiers** for the award for the **landmark name-deal** they struck earlier this year which still faces several major hurdles before it can be finalised.
- The **accord reached by Greek PM Alexis Tsipras and his Macedonian counterpart Zoran Zaev** in June aims to put to bed a decades-long row between the neighbours. They have been **nominated for signing the Prespa Agreement between the two countries**.

**Under the agreement**, the **Republic of Macedonia** would add **"North"** to its name in exchange for **Athens'** promise to **stop blocking the Balkan state from joining NATO and the European Union**. **Greece** has protested the name for nearly three decades because it **insists the Macedonia should apply solely to its own northern province**.

The **first Nobel Peace Prize** was awarded in 1901 to **Frederic Passy and Henry Dunant**; the **prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons** in 2017. The **Norwegian Nobel Committee** has decided to award the **Nobel Peace Prize for 2018** to **Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad** for their **efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict**.

### South Korea grain silo transformed into world's largest mural

- A dreary grain silo that was transformed into an enormous **colorful artwork** in **South Korea** has been named by **Guinness World Records** as the **largest outdoor mural in the world**.

- The painting, which depicts a young boy's journey into adulthood, covers the outside of giant storage containers in the port city of Incheon, west of Seoul, taking up 23,688sq/m.

Park Geun-hye was the first woman to be President of South Korea and also the first female president popularly elected as head of state in East Asia. She served as the 18th President of South Korea from 2013 to 2017. Moon Jae-in is serving as the 19th and current President of South Korea since 2017. Seoul is the capital and largest metropolis of South Korea. South Korean won is the currency of South Korea.

### Burundi names Gitega as the country's new capital

- Burundi declared the small central city of Gitega the country's new political capital in line with a presidential promise made a decade ago.
- The previous capital Bujumbura, on the north-eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, would in future function solely as the country's economic centre.

Burundi is a landlocked country in the African Great Lakes region of East Africa. The franc is the currency of Burundi. The World Happiness Report 2018 ranked Burundi as the world's least happy nation with a rank of 156. Pierre Nkurunziza has been President of Burundi since 2005. Gaston Sindimwo is serving as the First Vice President of Burundi.

### Nawaz Sharif gets jail for 7 years in corruption case

- A Pakistan court jailed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for seven years on graft charges that he says were politically motivated.
- An anti-corruption court in Pakistan sentenced ousted premier Nawaz Sharif to seven years in jail in the Al-Azizia Steel Mills graft case but acquitted him in the Flagship Investments case.
- The court ruled on two charges related to Sharif's assets: the ownership of the Al-Azizia Steel Mills in Saudi Arabia set up by Sharif's father in 2001, and Flagship Investments, a company established by his son, Hasan Nawaz, and owns luxury properties in Britain. The anti-corruption court said in its ruling that the three-time prime minister was unable to prove the source of income that led to his ownership of a steel mill in Saudi Arabia.

Nawaz Sharif served as the Prime Minister of Pakistan from 2013 until he was disqualified for life from office by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2017 in the high-profile Panama Papers case. He was Pakistan's longest-serving prime minister.

### Indonesia tsunami caused by collapse of volcano

- The deadly tsunami in Indonesia was triggered by a chunk of the Anak Krakatau volcano slipping into the ocean, officials have confirmed, amid calls for a new early warning system that can detect volcanic eruptions.
- At least 373 people were killed and many buildings were heavily damaged when the tsunami struck, almost without warning, along the rim of the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra islands late.

Krakatoa or Krakatau is a caldera situated in the Sunda Strait between the islands of Java and Sumatra in the Indonesian province of Lampung. The name is also used for the surrounding volcanic island group (Krakatoa Archipelago) comprising four islands: two of which, Lang and Verlaten are remnants of previous volcanic edifices destroyed in eruptions long predating the famous 1883 eruption and another, Rakata, being the remnants of a much larger island destroyed in the aforementioned eruption. In 1927, a fourth island, Anak Krakatau, or "Child of Krakatoa", emerged from the caldera formed in 1883. It is the current location of eruptive activity.



## Thailand becomes first country in Southeast Asia to legalize medical marijuana

- Thailand's legislature agreed to amend the country's drug law to allow the licensed medical use of **marijuana**, as well as **kratom**, a locally grown plant traditionally used as a stimulant and painkiller.
  - **Thailand is the first country in Southeast Asia to take such action**, which is also under consideration in neighboring Malaysia.
  - **Canada has become the second country after Uruguay to legalise possession** and use of recreational cannabis. **Medical marijuana has been legal in the country since 2001.**
- **Thailand** officially the **Kingdom of Thailand** and formerly known as **Siam** is a country **at the center of the Southeast Asian Indochinese peninsula**. The **capital and largest city is Bangkok**, a special administrative area. **Prayut Chan-o-cha** serves as the **Prime Minister** of Thailand. **Maha Vajiralongkorn is the King** of Thailand since 2016. The **baht** is the **official currency** of Thailand.

## First meeting of the Follow-up Committee between India, Afghanistan and Iran for operationalization of the Chabahar Agreement

- The **first meeting of the Follow-up Committee for implementation of the trilateral Chabahar Agreement** between **India, Afghanistan and Iran** at the level of Joint Secretary/ Director General was held on December 24, 2018 **held in the port city of Chabahar in Iran.**
- On the occasion, **India Ports Global Limited Company** opened its office and took over operations at the **Shaheed Behesti port at Chabahar**. It was decided to hold an event to promote and popularize the potential of Chabahar on 26 February 2019.

**Chabahar Port** is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman. It serves as Iran's only oceanic port. India-Iran-Afghanistan MoU and plans have committed at least \$21bn to Chabahar-Hajigak corridor, including \$85m for Chabahar port development by India.

## Nepal to rebuild Kathmandu's historic Dharahara tower

- **Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli** laid the **foundation stone for the reconstruction of the historic Dharahara tower in the heart of Kathmandu** which was destroyed during the 2015 earthquake.
- A joint venture of Chinese company GIETC and a local firm has won the contract to rebuild the 22-storeyed structure.

**Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli** is currently serving as the **Prime Minister of Nepal**. He was the **first elected prime minister under the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal**. Nepal is a **landlocked country in South Asia** located in the Himalaya. **Nepalese rupee** is the **official currency** of the **Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal**.

## Madagascar ex-leader Andry Rajoelina wins presidential run-off vote

- A former leader of Madagascar, **Andry Rajoelina**, has won the country's presidential run-off vote. He won nearly 56% to defeat another former president, **Marc Ravalomanana**.
- **Outgoing president Hery Rajaonarimampianina** was eliminated in the first round, getting just 9% of the vote.
- Both candidates had promised to boost the economy in a country where **75% of the population live in poverty**.

**Madagascar** is an island country in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of East Africa. **Antananarivo** also known by its colonial shorthand form **Tana**, is the **capital and largest city** of Madagascar. **Christian Louis Ntsay** is currently **Prime Minister of Madagascar**. The **ariary** is the **currency** of Madagascar.

## Saudi King Salman appoints new Foreign Minister

- Saudi Arabia's King Salman has appointed a new Foreign Minister as part of a major Cabinet reshuffle, following international fallout from the killing of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi.
- A royal decree has named Ibrahim al-Assaf as new Foreign Minister, demoting outgoing top diplomat Adel al-Jubeir to the position of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab state in Western Asia. Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East. Riyadh is the capital and most populous city of Saudi Arabia. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has been King of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques since 23 January 2015. Mohammad bin Salman is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, also serving as First Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs and Minister of Defense—the world's youngest office holder at the time. Saudi riyal is the currency of Saudi Arabia.

## India announces Rs 4,500 crore assistance to Bhutan

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a Rs 4,500 crore financial assistance to Bhutan for its 12th five-year plan after holding wide-ranging talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Dr. Lotay Tshering.
- The new five-year plan of Bhutan began this year and will continue till 2022. Hydropower cooperation with Bhutan is a key aspect of bilateral ties and that work on the Mangdechhu project will soon be completed.

Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia. Thimphu is its capital and largest city, while Phuntsholing is its financial center. Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck is the current reigning Druk Gyalpo or "Dragon King" of the Kingdom of Bhutan. Dr. Lotay Tshering is the current Prime Minister of Bhutan. Bhutan is the first country in the world to come up with a happiness index and linked it to development, which is otherwise based on GDP numbers. The ngultrum is the currency of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

## UNGA adopts Russian resolution on international information security

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a Russian resolution on international information security (IIS) titled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security."
- "Russia and India have joined their efforts for achieving democratic, inclusive and transparent United Nations negotiation process on security in the use of information and communications technologies," a press release from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation read.

## Pakistan Cabinet approves issuance of 'Panda bonds' in Chinese currency

- Pakistan's cabinet has approved the issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated bonds to raise loans from China's capital markets, as the country moved a step forward to give the Chinese currency a status at par with the US dollar.
- The 'Panda Bonds' was approved in a Cabinet meeting, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan. Finance Minister Asad Umar told the Cabinet that the interest rate may be over 5.5 per cent but the final price can only be determined at the time of launching the bond, it said.
- The Philippines has also raised RMB1.46 billion through renminbi-denominated bonds with an interest rate of 4.75 per cent. Since the Asia-Pacific nation has better credit rating than Pakistan, the country will have to pay nearly 1 per cent higher.

Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi is the 13th and current President of Pakistan. Pakistan is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Pakistani rupee is the currency of Pakistan.

## **ECONOMY AND FINANCE**



### **Economy News**

#### **FSSAI launches new campaign to eliminate Trans fats by 2022**

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched a new mass media campaign calling for the elimination of industrially produced trans-fat in the food supply.
- Called “Heart Attack Rewind”, the 30 second public service announcement (PSA) - the first mass media campaign of its kind – will support FSSAI’s global target of eliminating trans-fat in India by the year 2022, a year ahead of the global target by the World Health Organization (WHO) for complete elimination of trans fat.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India. The FSSAI has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India.

#### **Krishnamurthy Subramanian is the Chief Economic Adviser**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has cleared the appointment of Krishnamurthy Subramanian as the Chief Economic Adviser for three years.
- Mr. Subramanian, who did his Ph.D at the University Of Chicago Booth School Of Business in 2005 under Luigi Zingales and former CEA and RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, is also an alumnus of the IIT-Kanpur and the IIM-Calcutta.
- He is an associate professor at the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad. He was a member of the PJ Nayak Committee constituted by the RBI to examine corporate governance in banks in India and recommend changes to enhance governance in the sector.

Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) is the economic advisor to the Government of India. The CEA is the ex-officio cadre controlling authority of the Indian Economic Service. The CEA is under the direct charge of the Minister of Finance. JJ Anjaria is the first Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) of India.

#### **Salman Khan tops Forbes India Celebrity 100 list for third time in a row**

- Topping the Forbes India Celebrity 100 List seems to have become a habit for Salman Khan.
- On the back of Rs. 253.25 crore earned through his film releases, television appearances and brand endorsements between October 1, 2017, and September 30, 2018, the 52-year-old actor became India’s highest-paid celebrity on the list for the third consecutive year.
- What is heartening, though, is that a sportsperson is challenging an actor’s domination at the top for the first time. At No 2 is cricketer Virat Kohli, with Rs. 228.09 crore in earnings. Actor Akshay Kumar (Rs.185 crore) climbs up a spot to No 3.



## Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Priyanka Chopra join Angela Merkel on Forbes world's 100 most powerful women list

- IT stalwart **Roshni Nadar-Malhotra**, biotechnology pioneer **Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw**, media mogul **Shobhana Bhartia** and actor **Priyanka Chopra** have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by **Forbes** in a list topped by German Chancellor **Angela Merkel**.
- **Merkel**, a four-time Chancellor, retained the top spot in **The World's 100 Most Powerful Women 2018**.
- It is the **eighth** consecutive year and **13** times in total in the **15** years of the annual list she has topped.
- She is followed by **UK Prime Minister Theresa May**, who for the second year in a row has retained the **No 2** spot on the list. May is followed by **International Monetary Fund** managing director **Christine Lagarde** (No 3), **General Motors CEO Mary Barra** (No 4), and **Fidelity Investments CEO Abigail Johnson** (No 5).

**Forbes** is an **American business magazine**. Published **bi-weekly**, it features original articles on finance, industry, investing, and marketing topics. **Forbes** also reports on related subjects such as **technology, communications, science, politics, and law**. Its headquarters is located in **Jersey City, New Jersey**. **B. C. Forbes**, a financial columnist for the **Hearst papers**, and his partner **Walter Drey**, the general manager of the **Magazine of Wall Street** founded **Forbes magazine** on **September 15, 1917**.

## ADB, Centre sign 85 mn dollar loan to support Odisha skill development project

- The **Centre** and **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** have signed an **85 million dollar loan** to improve skill development eco-system in **Odisha**. An advanced skill training centre, the **World Skill Center (WSC)** will also be established in **Bhubaneswar** with the help of a loan.

**Asian Development Bank (ADB)** is a regional development bank established on **19 December 1966**, which is headquartered in the **Ortigas Center** located in the city of **Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines**. **Takehiko Nakao** is the current and ninth president of the **Asian Development Bank**.

## Centre forms six-member panel to sell 149 fields of ONGC, OIL to private companies

- The government has constituted a six-member committee to look at selling as many as **149** small and marginal oil and gas fields of state-owned **ONGC** and **OIL** to private and foreign companies to boost domestic output.
- The panel is headed by **NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar** and includes **Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha**, **Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg**, **Oil Secretary M M Kuttu**, **NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant** and **ONGC Chairman and Managing Director Shashi Shanker**.

## Kolkata-Patna becomes India's second container cargo sector on Inland Waterways

- After the success of **container cargo** being shipped from **Kolkata** to **Varanasi** earlier this year, **Bihar's capital Patna** will be witness to a new landmark in India's **Inland Water Transport (IWT)** sector with **16 TEUs** of container cargo (equivalent to **16 truckloads**) belonging to food giants **PepsiCo India** and **Emami Agrotech Ltd** from **Kolkata** reaching the city's **Gaighat IWT terminal** on river **Ganga** next week.

## India claims top Ten of World's Fastest-Growing Cities, Surat Lead

- When it comes to the **top 10 cities** for economic growth, **India** is set to dominate over the next two decades, according to **Oxford Economics**.
- **Surat**, a **diamond processing and trading center** in **Gujarat**, will see the fastest expansion through **2035**, averaging more than **9 per cent**. All of the **10** fastest over that period will be in **India**.
- **Aggregated gross domestic product** of all **Asian cities** will exceed that of all **North American and European urban centers** combined in **2027**.

## Cabinet approves Agriculture Export Policy to double farmer's income by 2022

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Agriculture Export Policy in line with the government's commitment to double farmer's income by 2022.
- Farmers will get the benefit of export opportunities through a stable trade policy regime. He said that policy will remove export curbs on most organic and processed food.

The Agriculture Export Policy has the vision to harness the export potential of Indian agriculture, through suitable policy instruments, to make India global power in agriculture and raise farmers' income. It aims at doubling the agricultural exports from present USD 30+ Billion to USD 60+ Billion by 2022 and reach USD 100 Billion in the next few years thereafter, with a stable trade policy regime.

## Australia becomes world's biggest LNG exporter for first time

- Australia has passed Qatar to become the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the first time.
- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the nation exported 6.55 million tonnes of LNG in November, compared to Qatar's 6.27 million tonnes.
- LNG is Australia's third-largest export commodity behind coal and iron ore, with exports of the three worth 165 billion Australian dollars (119.3 billion US dollars) in the 12 months to the end of October 2018.

## India to retain top position in remittances with \$80 billion: World Bank

- India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with its diaspora sending a whopping USD 80 billion back home, the World Bank said in a report.
- India is followed by China (USD 67 billion), Mexico and the Philippines (USD 34 billion each) and Egypt (USD 26 billion), according to the global lender.
- With this, India has retained its top spot on remittances, according to the latest edition of the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief.

## Sunil Mittal receives ESCP Europe's highest honour

- Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman, Bharti Enterprises, has been bestowed with the 'Doctor Honoris Causa' by ESCP Europe Business School, one of the premier global institutions, for his innovative entrepreneurship and contribution towards philanthropy in the field of education.
- He is the first Indian to be honoured with this distinguished recognition in ESCP Europe's near - 200 years history.

Sunil Bharti Mittal is an Indian Billionaire entrepreneur, philanthropist and the Founder & Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, which has diversified interests in telecom, insurance, real estate, education, malls, hospitality, agri and food besides other ventures. Bharti Airtel, the group's flagship company is one of the world's largest and India's largest telecom company with operations in 16 countries across Asia and Africa with a customer base of over 390 million. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian honor. On June 15, 2016, he was elected as Chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce.

## Nitin Gadkari flags off first container mainline vessel in Tuticorin

- Union Minister for road transport and highways and shipping, Nitin Gadkari, flagged off first container mainline vessel from Tuticorin, opening direct shipping route to eastern countries.
- The government will set up an industrial park at the port, similar to JNPT, to leverage on the "competitive Port tariff, improved infrastructure and customer friendly approach".

## Arundhati Bhattacharya to be SWIFT India Chairman

- **SWIFT India Domestic Services**, the local unit of **SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication)** global that facilitates international payments functions for banks, has **appointed Arundhati Bhattacharya**, former chairman of State Bank of India, as its chairman.
- **Bhattacharya**, who had served nearly four decades at the **State Bank of India**, would succeed **MV Nair** who retires after about five years of heading **SWIFT India**. This is an interesting time for **SWIFT** too as developments in financial technology space is throwing up new challenges for the institution.

**Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT)** provides a network that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in a secure, standardized and reliable environment. The SWIFT is a global member-owned cooperative that is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. It was founded in 1973 by a group of 239 banks from 15 countries which formed a co-operative utility to develop a secure electronic messaging service and common standards to facilitate cross-border payments.

## First ever agriculture export policy launched

- The **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** is creating an **action-oriented plan** which will highlight specific sector level interventions to **bolster India's march towards becoming a USD 5 trillion economy before 2025**.
- The focused plans will be on **boosting services sector contribution to USD 3 trillion, manufacturing to USD 1 trillion and Agriculture to USD 1 trillion**.
- The **Commerce Ministry** has formulated **India's first ever Agricultural Export Policy** with a focused plan to boost **India's agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022** thereby assisting the Agriculture Ministry in achieving its target of **USD 100 billion** and to **integrate Indian farmers** and the high quality agricultural products with global value chains and to double India's share in world agriculture.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has **created a corpus of USD 1 billion to boost 12 champion sectors for promoting their development, and realizing their potential**. These include Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT & ITeS), Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services.

## ECO Niwas Samhita 2018 - an Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings launched

- Giving a further fillip to India's energy conservation efforts, **Ministry of Power** has **launched the ECO Niwas Samhita 2018**, an **Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings (ECBC-R)**. The Code was launched on the occasion of **National Energy Conservation Day 2018**.
- The Code is **expected to assist large number of architects and builders** who are involved in **design and construction** of new residential complexes in different parts of the country. **Implementation of this Code will have potential for energy savings to the tune of 125 Billion Units of electricity per year by 2030**, which is equivalent to about 100 million ton of Co2 emission.

**National Energy Conservation Day** is celebrated every year on **14<sup>th</sup> December** by Ministry of Power in association with **Bureau of Energy Efficiency**. **BEE** is a statutory body under Ministry of Power which is **mandated to implement policy and programmes** in the area of **energy efficiency and conservation**. **India** has committed to **reduction of 33-35% GHG emission by 2030** as part of the document submitted to UNFCCC.

## Indian Ports Association Launches ‘PCS 1x’ to Increase Ease of Doing Business

- **Indian Ports Association (IPA)**, under the guidance of **Ministry of Shipping** launched the **Port Community System ‘PCS1x’**.
- **‘PCS 1x’** is a **cloud based new generation technology**, with user-friendly interface. This system seamlessly integrates **8 new stakeholders** besides the **19 existing stakeholders** from the **maritime trade** on a single platform.
- A **unique feature of ‘PCS1x’** is that it **can latch on to third party software** which provides services to the **maritime industry** thereby enabling the stakeholders to access wide network of services.

**Indian Ports Association (IPA)** was constituted in **1966** under Societies Registration Act, **primarily with the idea of fostering growth and development of all Major Ports** which are under the supervisory control of Ministry of Shipping. **IPA is headquartered in New Delhi.**

## India, China join hands to promote tea globally

- **Two apex industry organisations, Indian Tea Association (ITA) and China Tea Marketing Association (CTMA)**, have signed a memorandum of understanding to promote green and black tea consumption in major tea markets in **Europe, the U.S., Russia and West Asia**, besides India and China. The pact could also involve organisation of joint events.

## Surjit Bhalla resigns from EAC-PM

- **Eminent economist and columnist Surjit Bhalla** had resigned as **part-time member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** on December 1.
- The **six-member council** consists of eminent economists including **Bibek Debroy (Chairman)**, **Ratan P. Watal** (member secretary), **Rathin Roy** (part-time member), **Ashima Goyal** (part-time member) as also **Shamika Ravi** (part-time member).

**Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC)** is a **non-constitutional, non-permanent and independent body** constituted to give **economic advice** to the Government of India, specifically the Prime Minister. It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like **inflation, microfinance, and industrial output**. Currently **PMEAC chairman post is held by Bibek Debroy.**

## Global debt hits all-time high of USD 184 trillion: IMF

- The **International Monetary Fund** said that **global debt has reached an all-time high of 184 trillion US dollars** with the **United States, China and Japan** accounting for more than half of it.
- According to the IMF report, the **amount in nominal terms** is the **equivalent of 225 per cent of the world GDP in 2017.**
- **On average, the world's debt now exceeds 86,000 dollars per person**, which is more than two and half times the average income per-capita. IMF said it is striking that the most indebted economies in the world are also the richer ones.

The **IMF, also known as the Fund**, was conceived at a UN conference in **Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, in July 1944**. The IMF's **primary purpose** is to ensure the **stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other**. It is **headquartered in Washington, D.C., of "**. At present, **189 countries are the member countries in IMF**. The current **Managing Director (MD) and Chairman of the International Monetary Fund** is noted French lawyer and former politician, **Christine Lagarde**, who has held the post since **5 July 2011**.



## ADB signed 60 million loan pact to reduce floods, riverbank erosion in Assam

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a 60 Million dollar Loan Agreement in New Delhi to continue financing riverbank protection works, renovation of flood embankments, and community-based flood risk management activities in critically flood-prone areas along the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- The Tranche 2 loan is part of the 120 million dollar multi-tranche financing facility for the Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program approved by the ADB Board in October 2010.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966, which is headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines. Takehiko Nakao is the current and ninth president of the Asian Development Bank.

## Government adds Korean Won, Turkish Lira in list of currencies for exchange rates

- Indian government included two currencies -- Korean Won and Turkish Lira -- in the list of currencies for which it notifies the exchange rate for assessing the value of imports and exports.
- Currently, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) notifies exchange rates for 20 currencies for the purpose of valuation of imported and exported goods and it has been now decided to include two more currencies Won and Lira in the list.

## India's first private UAV factory comes up in Hyderabad

- India's first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) opened at Adani Aerospace Park in Hyderabad.
- Built by the Adani Group and Israel-based Elbit Systems, the 50,000 square feet facility will develop Hermes 900 medium altitude long-endurance UAVs for the Indian and global markets.

The plant has been built at Adani Aerospace Park, the first defence and aerospace complex of Adani Group, at Hardware Park on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The plant was inaugurated by Telangana's Home Minister Mohammad Mahmood Ali in the presence of Pranav Adani, Adani Enterprise Ltd, Karan Adani, CEO, Adani Ports.

## States Startup Ranking 2018 announced

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) announced results of the **first ever States' Start-up Ranking 2018 at an event in New Delhi. States have been identified as leaders across various categories** such as Start-up policy leaders, incubation hubs, seeding innovation, scaling innovation, regulatory change champions, procurement leaders, communication champions, North-Eastern leader, and hill state leader.
- On the basis of performance in these categories, the States have been recognised as the **Best Performer, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders, Emerging States and Beginners**, as follows: **Best Performer is Gujarat.**
- **Top Performers are Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, and Rajasthan, Leaders are Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Telangana, Aspiring Leaders are Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, Emerging States are Assam, Delhi, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand.**
- **Beginners states are Chandigarh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, and Tripura**

DIPP began this exercise from January, 2016. Fifty-one officers from States and Union Territories have been identified as "Champions", who have made significant contributions towards developing their State's Start-up ecosystem.



## Government to set up panel to look into tax issues faced by startups

- Union Government has decided to **set up an expert committee to look into all the taxation issues being faced by startups and angel investors.**
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement that no coercive action or measures to recover the demands of completed assessment under income tax would be taken" against such firms. It said the **committee of experts from IITs and IIMs will make recommendations on individual cases of recognised startups.**

## Federal Aviation Administration retains highest aviation safety ranking for India

- US regulator Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has **retained the highest aviation safety ranking for India.**
- FAA formally confirmed that **India's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) rating remains 'Category 1'.**
- **Category 1 means the carriers from the assessed state may initiate or continue service to the US in a normal manner and take part in reciprocal code-share arrangements with American carriers.**

## Logistics Development Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman EAC-PM

- The **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) constituted a Logistics Development Committee** under the **Chairmanship of Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman EAC-PM.**
- The committee was tasked to **assess key challenges in logistics development and associated commerce and suggest policy reforms for ease of doing trade in India.**

**Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC)** is a **non-constitutional, non-permanent and independent body** constituted to give **economic advice** to the Government of India, specifically the Prime Minister. It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like **inflation, microfinance, and industrial output.** Currently **PMEAC chairman post is held by Bibek Debroy.**

## Union Government to infuse Rs 83,000 crore in PSBs in next few months

- **Union Government will infuse 83000 crore in Public Sector Banks** in next few months in the current fiscal.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the **recapitalisation will enhance the lending capacity of state-owned banks and help them come out of the RBI's Prompt Corrective Action, PCA framework.**
- The **Reserve Bank has specified certain regulatory trigger points, as a part of prompt corrective action (PCA) Framework, in terms of three parameters, i.e. capital to risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR), net non-performing assets (NPA) and Return on Assets (RoA).** The PCA framework is **applicable only to commercial banks and not extended to co-operative banks, non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and FMI's.**

**Public Sector Banks (PSBs) or Nationalised Banks** in India are banks where a majority stake i.e. **more than 51% is held by a government.** In 1969 the Indian government nationalised 14 major private banks, one of the big bank was Bank of India. In 1980, 6 more private banks were nationalised. They **dominate the banking sector because of their large size and widespread networks.**

## India's stock market overtakes Germany to become 7th largest in the world

- **India's ascent on the global stage has claimed another victory after its stock market overtook Germany to become the seventh largest in the world.** It means, after the **U.K. leaves the European Union** in March, the bloc would have **only one country -- France -- among the seven biggest markets.**
- The **Asian giant edged past the equity market of Europe's largest economy for the first time in seven years,** according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

## GST cut on 17 items, 6 services

- The **Goods and Services Tax Council** cut rates on **17 items** and **six types of services** during its 31st meeting, leaving only one common use item — cement — in the 28% bracket.
- **Seven items** that saw tax rates being slashed from the **28% bracket** are **certain vehicle parts** used in agriculture, monitors and TVs up to 32 inches, retreaded tyres, power banks, digital cameras, videogame consoles (all from 28% to 18%), and parts and accessories for the carriages for disabled persons (from 28% to 5%).
- The **GST rate on cinema tickets above Rs. 100** was cut from **28% to 18%** and on tickets up to **Rs. 100** from **18% to 12%**.

The **GST tax** came into effect from **July 1, 2017** through the **implementation of One Hundred and First Amendment of the Constitution of India** by the Indian government. The tax replaced existing multiple cascading taxes levied by the central and state governments. The **GST has a four-tier structure** for taxation of services, **5, 12, 18 and 28 per cent**, in line with what has been done for goods. As per **Article 279A (1)** of the amended Constitution, the **GST Council has to be constituted by the President within 60 days of the commencement of Article 279A**. **GST Council is headed by Union Finance Minister**.

## Uzbekistan promotes 2019 as year of investment with India

- **Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev** in his annual address to the **Parliament announced 2019 as the ‘Year of Active Investment and Social Development’** in the backdrop of **proposed investments from India** to boost economy of this Central Asian country.
- He said that it would be a logical continuation of activities that **begun in 2018 under the program** of the **‘Year of support of active entrepreneurship, innovative ideas and technologies’**.

**Uzbekistan is a landlocked country—the only doubly landlocked one (i.e. surrounded solely by other landlocked countries)—in Central Asia and one of only two anywhere in the world (the other being Liechtenstein)**. **Tashkent** is the **capital and largest city** of Uzbekistan. **Shavkat Mirziyoyev** has been **President** of Uzbekistan since 2016. **Abdulla Aripov** is the **Prime Minister** of Uzbekistan, in office since 14 December 2016. The **so‘m** is the **currency** of Uzbekistan in Central Asia.

## NABCB Accreditation secures recognition in Asia- Pacific Region

- The **National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB)**, India’s national accreditation body, has secured equivalence for its accreditation programme for **Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) Certification Bodies** in Asia- Pacific region.
- It has **signed the Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) of the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC)** on 19 December 2018.
- **Any industry carrying ISO 45001 certificate with NABCB logo** will be **recognized in the Asia Pacific region**. The immediate beneficiary of this equivalence is the Indian Industry which is exporting products to various countries specially in the Asia Pacific region.

## Nepal caps expenditure of its citizens in India

- **Nepal imposed a monthly limit on the amount of Indian currency its citizen** can spend in India.
- The **Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB)** said a **visiting Nepali citizen would not be able to spend more than Rs. 1 lakh every month** while paying for goods and services in India and that the decision was taken to deal with the current account deficit of Nepal.

**Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB)** is the **central bank of Nepal** and was established on **26 April 1956**. It supervises the **banks and financial institutions (licensed by the Bank)** in Nepal and guides monetary policy. **Chiranjivi Nepal** is the **current Governor** of Nepal Rastra Bank.

## India perceives poorly, 12th on 'misperception index'

- According to the MORI Perils of Perception Survey 2018, done by Ipsos India, an independent market research company, **Indians stood at 12th rank in the "misperception index"**, behind several countries like, Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Chile and Argentina, among others.
- The **countries which performed poorer than India were Thailand, Mexico, Turkey, Malaysia, and Brazil**, which were ranked first in five, in that order.

## Sangeeta Verma joins as CCI member

- The **Competition Commission of India said Sangeeta Verma**, a former Indian Economic Services (IES) officer, has joined as its member. The CCI will now have its full strength, with one **chairperson Ashok Kumar Gupta and three members**. The other two members are Augustine Peter and UC Nahta.
- In April 2018, the Union Cabinet had approved "rightsizing" of antitrust watchdog Competition Commission by **reducing the number of its members to three from six**. Sangeeta Verma (IES: 1981) has joined the Competition Commission of India as member. She was administered the oath of office and secrecy by chairperson Ashok Kumar Gupta.

The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** was established under the Competition Act, 2002 for the administration, implementation and enforcement of the Act, and was duly constituted in March 2009. **Ashok Kumar Gupta** is the current Chairperson of Competition Commission of India.

## Government reviews guidelines for FDI in E- commerce

- **Government has reviewed guidelines for Foreign Direct Investment in E- commerce companies** to protect the interests of domestic players.
- It has taken host of steps and **barred e-commerce companies from selling products of the companies** in which they have stake.
- The **Commerce and Industry Ministry** has also **prohibited e-commerce companies** from entering into an agreement for exclusive sale of products.

## Banks in News

### ECB takes on PayPal with instant payment system

- The **European Central Bank** launched a new system aimed at **letting banks settle payments instantly across Europe**, helping them to **compete with PayPal** and other **global tech giants**.
- Developed in just over a year, the **ECB's TARGET Instant Payment Settlement (TIPS) system** will let **people and companies in Europe transfer euros to each other within seconds** and regardless of the opening hours of their local bank.
- **U.S. firms PayPal, Google, Facebook and Amazon, and China's Alibaba and Tencent** currently dominate such services in Europe.

**European Central Bank (ECB)** is the central bank for the euro and administers monetary policy of the Eurozone, which consists of 19 EU member states and is one of the largest currency areas in the world. It is one of the world's most important central banks and is one of the seven institutions of the European Union (EU) listed in the Treaty on European Union (TEU). The capital stock of the bank is owned by the central banks of all 28 EU member states. The Treaty of Amsterdam established the bank in 1998, and it is headquartered in Frankfurt, Germany. President of the ECB is Mario Draghi, former governor of the Bank of Italy.

### RBI moves to ease liquidity for non-banking finance firms

- In a move to **make more liquidity available to non-banking finance firms**, the Reserve Bank of India has **relaxed the securitisation norms by relaxing the minimum holding period requirement**.
- The move follows a demand from the government for a special window for NBFCs, to provide them liquidity support.
- RBI has decided to relax the Minimum Holding Period (MHP) requirement for originating NBFCs, as they are **now allowed to securitise loans with maturity of more than five years after holding them for six months on their books**, as compared to one year earlier.

### World Bank unveils USD 200 billion in climate action investment for 2021-25

- The **World Bank** has unveiled 200 billion US Dollars in climate action investment for 2021 to 2025, adding that this amounts to a **doubling of its current five-year funding**.
- The **World Bank** said the move, coinciding with a **UN climate summit meeting of some 200 nations in Poland**, represented a “significantly ramped up ambition” to **tackle climate change**, “sending an important signal to the wider global community to do the same.”
- The move coincides with a **UN climate summit in Katowice**. Developed countries are committed to **lifting combined annual public and private spending to USD 100 billion in developing countries by 2020 to fight the impact of climate change** — up from 48.5 billion in 2016 and 56.7 billion last year, according to latest OECD data.

The **World Bank** is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. The **World Bank Group** comprises five institutions managed by their member countries. It was established in 1944, the **World Bank Group** is headquartered in Washington, D.C. **Jim Yong Kim** has been serving as the 12th President of the **World Bank** since July 1, 2012. Together, **IBRD and IDA** form the **World Bank**, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. **IDA** focuses on the world's poorest countries, while **IBRD** assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries.



## RBI allows SIDBI to use existing Rs 1000-crore corpus for lending to MFIs

- India's institutional framework to support microfinance would get a boost with Reserve Bank of India clearing a proposal to dig in an existing Rs 1000-crore corpus for funding micro lenders.
- Small Industries Development Bank of India had kept this money for some other purposes and had recently sought RBI's approval for using it for microfinance sector.

**Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) set up on 2nd April 1990** under an Act of Indian Parliament, acts as the Principal Financial Institution for **Promotion, Financing and Development of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector** as well as for co-ordination of functions of institutions engaged in similar activities. **India's first sentiment index for micro and small enterprises (MSMEs) developed jointly by CRISIL & SIDBI.**

## State Bank of India ropes in Swapna Barman as brand ambassador for YONO

- State Bank of India has roped in Asian Games gold medalist Swapna Barman as brand ambassador for its digital app YONO.
- YONO, the bank's digital platform that makes both lifestyle and banking available through a single app, was launched exactly a year back.

**YONO (You Only Need One)** is an integrated digital banking platform offered by State Bank of India (SBI) to enable users to access a variety of financial and other services such as taxi bookings, online shopping, or medical bill payments. **YONO was launched on Friday 24 November 2017 by Arun Jaitley, the Finance Minister of India.**

**Swapna won gold medal in Heptathlon in Jakarta Asian Games** with a score of 6026 and is looking to **break the 6200 score barrier to qualify for Tokyo 2020 Olympics.**

## RBI to implement an Ombudsman scheme for digital transactions

- Reserve Bank of India has said that it will implement an Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions covering services provided by entities falling under Reserve Banks regulatory jurisdiction.
- According to the central bank, the scheme will be notified by the end of January 2019.

The **Banking Ombudsman Scheme** is introduced under the **Banking Regulation Act, 1949** by RBI with effect from 1995. Presently the **Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006 (As amended upto July 1, 2017)** is in operation. The **Banking Ombudsman** is a senior official appointed by the Reserve Bank of India to redress customer complaints against deficiency in certain banking services covered under the grounds of complaint specified under Clause 8 of the Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006 (As amended upto July 1, 2017). **All Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks are covered under the Scheme.**

## RBI proposes new method to benchmark floating rate of loans for MSMEs

- In a bid to ensure greater transparency, Reserve Bank has proposed that floating interest rates on personal, home, auto and MSMEs loans to be linked to external benchmarks like repo rate or treasury yields.
- Currently, banks follow system of internal benchmarks, including Prime Lending Rate, Benchmark Prime Lending Rate, Base rate and Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate. The new system is likely to become operational by 1st April 2019.

## SoftBank hires Facebook's Kirthiga Reddy to manage \$100 billion vision fund

- SoftBank hired Facebook Inc. executive Kirthiga Reddy as a partner at its \$100 billion Vision Fund, the first woman to join a group of just a dozen that oversees the world's biggest pool of technology investments.

- **Kirthiga Reddy has joined SoftBank Investment Advisors**, which manages the giant fund globally, to focus on frontier and enterprise technology globally.

**SoftBank Group Corp.** is a Japanese multinational holding conglomerate headquartered in Tokyo, Japan. The company is known for its leadership by founder Masayoshi Son. The logo of SoftBank is based on the **Kaientai**, a naval trading company that existed at the end of the Tokugawa shogunate, and is meant to represent a "21st century" version of their passion for the enterprise.

### Shaktikanta Das has been appointed as the 25<sup>th</sup> RBI Governor

- **Former economic affairs secretary Shaktikanta Das** was named and appointed as the 25th governor of the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** to succeed **Urjit Patel**, who quit abruptly amid a bitter dispute over the regulator's autonomy.
- The appointment means that the **central bank will once again be headed by a former Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer**. Patel, who had said he was resigning for personal reasons, and his predecessor **Raghuram Rajan** are economists.

**Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is India's central banking institution, which controls the **monetary policy of the Indian rupee**. It commenced its operations on **1 April 1935** in accordance with the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**. RBI was nationalised on **1 January 1949**. The inaugural officeholder was the **British banker Osborne Smith**, while **C. D. Deshmukh** was the first Indian governor. The bank's 15th governor, **Manmohan Singh**, later became India's 13th prime minister. The position is currently held by **Urjit Patel**, who took over from **Raghuram Rajan** on **4 September 2016**.

### An online portal "ENSURE" has been launched to connect with Direct Benefit Transfer

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare **Shri Radha Mohan Singh** launched a portal **ENSURE-National Livestock Mission-EDEG** developed by **NABARD** and operated under the **Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries**.
- On this occasion, he informed that the **National Livestock Mission** has been conceived by Modi government for the sustainable development of the livestock sector.
- Under the Mission's component called **Entrepreneurship Development and Employment Generation (EDEG)**, subsidy payment for activities related to **poultry, small ruminants, pigs etc.** through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** goes directly to the beneficiary's account.
- In order to make it better, simpler and transparent, the **NABARD has developed an online portal "ENSURE"** (<https://ensure.nabard.org>) so that the information related to beneficiary and processing of application can be made readily available.
- **Direct Benefit Transfer or DBT** is an attempt to change the mechanism of transferring subsidies launched by Government of India on **1 January 2013**.

**NABARD came into existence on 12 July 1982** by transferring the agricultural credit functions of RBI and refinance functions of the then **Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC)**. **NABARD** is headquartered at **Mumbai**. The Bank has been entrusted with "matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India".

### Government invokes never-used powers to make RBI Governor fall in line

- The government has invoked never-before-used powers under the **RBI Act** allowing it to issue directions to the central bank governor on matters of public interest, in a development that gives a new twist to the ongoing skirmish between RBI and the government.

- **Section 7 of the RBI Act empowers the government to consult and give instructions to the governor to act on certain issues that the government considers serious and in public interest.**
- **This Section had never been used in independent India till now.** It was not used even when the country was close to default in the dark days of 1991, nor in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis.

### RBI caps outstanding ECBs at 6.5% of GDP

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has announced a **cap for funds raised via external commercial borrowing (ECB) at 6.5% of the country's GDP.** Based on GDP figures for March 31, 2018, 'the soft limit works out to \$160 billion.

### RBI shortlists TCS, Wipro, IBM, 3 others for setting up Public Credit Registry

- The **Reserve Bank of India** has shortlisted six major IT companies, including **TCS, Wipro and IBM India**, to set up a wide-based digital **Public Credit Registry (PCR)** for capturing details of all borrowers and wilful defaulters.
- The other three shortlisted vendors are: **Capgemini Technology Services India, Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India, and Mindtree Ltd.** In June 2018, RBI had announced to set up a **Public Credit Registry** for India to **address information asymmetry, foster access to credit and strengthen the credit culture in the economy.** The **non-performing assets in the banking system** stand at about **Rs.10 trillion.**

The **proposed Public Credit Registry** will also include data from entities like capital markets regulator **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)**, the corporate affairs ministry, **Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN)** and the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** to enable banks and financial institutions to get a **360-degree profile of the existing as well as prospective borrowers on a real-time basis.**

### RBI launches survey to capture retail payment habits in 6 cities

- The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** will capture payment habits of individuals in six cities, including four metropolitan towns.
- For the purpose, the central bank has launched a '**Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHi)**'.
- According to RBI release, the survey will cover a sample of **6,000 individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds across six cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati.**

### Punjab National Bank launches special card for Kumbh Mela 2019

- **State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has launched a special card for **Kumbh Mela 2019.**
- The bank has **partnered with the Uttar Pradesh government to create a model for digitization** at this edition of Kumbh Mela.
- **Kumbh Mela or Kumbha Mela** is a **mass Hindu pilgrimage of faith in which Hindus gather to bathe in a sacred or holy river.** At any given place, the **Kumbh Mela** is held once in **12 years.**

**Punjab National Bank (PNB)** is an **Indian multinational banking and financial services company.** It is a **state-owned corporation based in New Delhi, India.** **Punjab National Bank** was **registered on 19 May 1894** under the Indian Companies Act, with its office in **Anarkali Bazaar, Lahore, in present-day Pakistan.** **Sunil Mehta** is the **current MD & CEO of PNB.** In **February 2018, PNB was part of India's biggest ever fraud** in which **two junior officers at a single branch had illegally steered \$1.77 billion in fraudulent loans to companies, most of them controlled by billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi.**

## P.V. Bharathi appointed MD and CEO of Corporation Bank

- P V Bharathi has been appointed as managing director and chief executive officer of the Corporation Bank, according to an order issued by the Personnel Ministry. Bharathi is at present Executive Director, Canara Bank.
- She will take over the charge on or after February 1, 2019 and remain in the post till March 31, 2020 - the date of her superannuation, the order said. In another order, the ministry said Birupaksha Mishra and Balakrishna Alse S has been appointed as executive director in the Corporation Bank and the Oriental Bank of Commerce, respectively.

Corporation Bank is a public-sector banking company headquartered in Mangalore, India. Corporation Bank came into being as Canara Banking Corporation (Udipi) Limited, on 12th March, 1906. The Founder President Khan Bahadur Haji Abdullah Haji Kasim Saheb Bahadur, committed to fulfill the long felt banking needs of the people

## Bimal Jalan to head six-member panel on RBI's economic capital framework

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in consultation with the government, has set up a six-member committee to review the economic capital framework of the central bank.
- Former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan will be the committee's chairman and former Deputy Governor Rakesh Mohan deputy chairman.
- The other members are Economic Affairs Secretary Subash Chandra Garg, RBI Deputy Governor N.S. Vishwanathan and two board members of the RBI — Bharat Doshi and Sudhir Mankad.

Bimal Jalan is a former Governor of Reserve Bank of India and was a nominated member of the Upper House of India's Parliament, the Rajya Sabha during 2003–2009.

## Sale of Electoral Bonds at Authorized Branches of State Bank of India (SBI)

- The State Bank of India (SBI), in the VII Phase of sale of Electoral Bonds, has been authorized to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches (as per list enclosed) w.e.f. 01.01.2019 to 10.01.2019.
- It may be noted that Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
- The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

An electoral bond is designed to be a bearer instrument like a Promissory Note — in effect, it will be similar to a bank note that is payable to the bearer on demand and free of interest. It can be purchased by any citizen of India or a body incorporated in India. Electoral Bond will be valid for 15 days from the date of issue and bonds will be issued in multiples of Rs.1, 000, Rs.10, 000, Rs.1 lakh, Rs.10 lakh and Rs.1 crore and will be available at specified branches of State Bank of India.

## PSBs approve loans worth over Rs 37,400 cr for MSME sector

- Public sector banks have approved more than 1.12 lakh loan applications of MSMEs worth of 37,412 crore rupees under the '59 minutes' loan scheme launched by the government last month.
- GST-registered Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can take loan up to one crore in just 59 minutes through 'psbloansin59minutes.com' portal.



**Public Sector Banks (PSBs) or Nationalised Banks in India are banks where a majority stake i.e. more than 51% is held by a government. In 1969 the Indian government nationalised 14 major private banks, one of the big bank was Bank of India. In 1980, 6 more private banks were nationalised. They dominate the banking sector because of their large size and widespread networks.**

### **Banks recover Rs 40,400 crore from defaulters: RBI report**

- **Banks have seen a significant improvement in recovery of stressed assets** helped by the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)** and amendments in the **Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests (SARFAESI) Act**, during FY18, according to the RBI data.
- In the **fiscal ended March 2018, banks recovered Rs 40,400 crore worth of bad loans as against Rs 38,500 crore recovered in FY17**. The various channels through which lenders recovered their bad loans include the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), SARFAESI Act, debt recovery tribunals (DRTs) and Lok Adalats.
- While banks recovered Rs 4,900 crore of bad loans through the IBC, **the amount recovered through SARFAESI was Rs 26,500 crore in FY18**, the RBI said in its annual report on Trends and Progress of Banking in 2017-18, released to over the weekend.

**Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India was set up on 1st October 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code). It is a unique regulator: regulates a profession as well as processes. It has regulatory oversight over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies and Information Utilities. It writes and enforces rules for transactions, namely, corporate insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation, individual insolvency resolution and individual bankruptcy under the Code. Dr. M. S. Sahoo is currently serves as Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.**

**Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI Act) is an Indian law. It allows banks and other financial institution to auction residential or commercial properties to recover loans. The first asset reconstruction company of India, ARCIL, was set up under this act.**

### **ESAF small finance bank gets RBI nod to operate as scheduled bank**

- **ESAF small finance bank** which received the **first banking license in Kerala** since independence has got **RBI approval to operate as scheduled bank**.
- This makes **Thrissur-based ESAF small finance bank (SFB) the fifth scheduled bank from Kerala**. ESAF micro finance institution, **started in 1992**, was one among the ten applicants to receive approval from **RBI to start banking operations in 2016**.

**Scheduled Banks in India refer to those banks which have been included in the Second Schedule of Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. RBI in turn includes only those banks in this Schedule which satisfy the criteria laid down vide section 42(6)(a) of the said Act. Banks not under this Schedule are called Non-Scheduled Banks. Every Scheduled bank enjoys two types of principal facilities: it becomes eligible for debts/loans at the bank rate from the RBI; and, it automatically acquires the membership of clearing house.**

## Firms in News

### IDFC Bank, Capital First complete merger

- Private sector lender IDFC Bank has completed the merger process with non-banking financial company Capital First following all the requisite approvals.
- Following the merger, the board of the bank, which has been renamed to IDFC First Bank, has been reconstituted with the appointment of Capital First founder and Chairman V. Vaidyanathan as the managing director and chief executive officer of the merged entity.

Capital First Ltd (CAPF) is a financial Institution in India providing debt financing to small entrepreneurs, MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) and Indian consumers. Capital First was founded in 2012 by V. Vaidyanathan.

IDFC First Bank is an Indian banking company with headquarters in Mumbai that forms part of IDFC, an integrated infrastructure finance company. The bank started operations on 1 October 2015. IDFC was incorporated on 30 January 1997 with its registered office in Chennai and started operations on 9 June 1997. In 1998 the company registered with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as a non-banking financial company and in 1999 it formally became a Public Financial Institution.

### 7-year-old is this year's highest-paid YouTube star with earnings of USD22 mn: Forbes

- With earnings of \$22 million, a seven-year-old boy from U.S. has become the highest-paid YouTube star, beating established adults like Daniel Middleton and Jake Paul, according to Forbes.
- Forbes' list of "Highest-Paid YouTube Stars 2018" is topped by Ryan of Ryan Toysreview, who makes his millions by reviewing everything from toys, cars, Legos through simple home-made videos that are then uploaded on his YouTube channel by his parents.
- The prestigious US business magazine said these short videos have made Ryan one of the most popular influencers online, with 17.3 million followers and a total of nearly 26 billion views since he and his parents launched his main channel, Ryan ToysReview, in March 2015.

The Forbes list includes American actor Jake Paul who comes in at the 2nd spot with earnings of USD 21.5 million, British gamer who specializes in Minecraft, DanTDM ranked 4th with earnings of USD18.5 million, Hawaii-native Markiplier ranked 6th with USD17.5 million earnings and Swedish gamer PewDiePie with USD 15.5 million earnings, who is ranked 9th.

### India-ASEAN InnoTech Summit in New Delhi, organised by FICCI

- Hon'ble Union Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, called upon the scientific community in India and ASEAN member states to intensify collaborative research in science, technology and innovation to address the economic and societal challenges being faced by the two regions.

### ICICI Securities, BSE launched 'instant payout' facility

- ICICI Securities, along with the BSE, has launched a facility wherein clients of the domestic brokerage entity would be able to receive the pay-out within 30 minutes of selling the shares.
- This is much quicker than the current system in which it takes at least two days after the transaction for investors to get the money in their bank account.

- The facility, called eATM, was launched and is available to all clients of ICICI Securities. The new service would have a cap of Rs. 50,000 per client a day, and would be applicable on about 600 stocks listed on the BSE.

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) is an Indian stock exchange located at Dalal Street, Mumbai. It was established in 1875. BSE is Asia's first stock exchange. BSE claims to be the world's fastest stock exchange, with a median trade speed of 6 microseconds.

### Hindustan Unilever board approves merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare India

- FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has approved the merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) through an all equity deal, valuing the total business of the latter at Rs 31,700 crore.
- The transaction is an all equity merger with 4.39 shares of HUL being allotted for every share in GSKCH India, which sells consumer healthcare products, including popular drink brand Horlicks.

Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) is an Indian consumer goods company based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is a subsidiary of Unilever, a British-Dutch company. HUL's products include foods, beverages, cleaning agents, personal care products and water purifiers. HUL was established in 1933 as Lever Brothers and, in 1956, became known as Hindustan Lever Limited, as a result of a merger among Lever Brothers, Hindustan Vanaspati Mfg. Co. Ltd. and United Traders Ltd.

### Paisabazaar will now tell you chance of your loan application approval on its platform

- Online lending marketplace Paisabazaar has launched a new feature by the name of 'Chance of Approval' on its website which will help its loan applicants choose the most suited lender on the platform.
- The company said that Credit Karma in the United States have a similar feature but claimed to be the first one in India to do so.

### Sandip Somany takes over as new FICCI President

- Sanitary ware firm HSIL's CMD Sandip Somany has been elected as the new President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director of the Apollo Hospitals Group, has now been elevated as the Senior Vice President of FICCI, whereas Uday Shankar, Chairman and CEO of Star India, has joined the chamber as the Vice President.

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. FICCI is established in 1927, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi by GD Birla and Purushottam Das Thakurdas. It is headquartered in the national capital New Delhi.

### C.R.I. Pumps wins the prestigious National Energy Conservation NEC Award 2018

- C.R.I. Pumps proves to the world that it is a leader in manufacturing energy efficient pumps by winning the National Energy Conservation Award 2018 in the Pumps category for the 4th time.
- C.R.I. is the highest contributor in the country for the projects of EESL (Energy Efficiency Services Limited) to replace the old inefficient pumps with 5 Star rated smart pumps with IoT.

C.R.I. – the name itself encapsulates the company's ethos: "Commitment, Reliability, Innovation". The company has conquered the global market by extending to over 120 countries with 11 wholly owned subsidiaries. C.R.I. is the world's fastest growing company is a Coimbatore based fluid management solution provider with global presence, catering to all types of Industrial and Institutional fluid application Pumps, Motors, Valves, Residential & Agriculture pumpsets, IoT Drives & Controllers, Pipes, Wires & Cables, Solar Systems.

## OBOPAY launches new generation pre-payment instrument for enterprise customers

- In an effort to empower enterprises with a comprehensive disbursement and payments solution, OBOPAY, the global financial technology company, announced the launch of a new generation pre-payment instrument in partnership with Federal Bank and Mastercard.
- The OBOPAY card is built as a one-stop solution that addresses all needs of the enterprise and users seamlessly and can be used at over three million Mastercard outlets in India.

## HDFC group surpasses Tata's in m-cap, becomes most valuable business house

- Financial services conglomerate HDFC group has become the most valuable business house in the country, surpassing Tata's, with the cumulative market valuation of its five listed companies surging to Rs 10.40 trillion (Rs 10, 40,689.89 crore).
- While HDFC group has five listed firms - HDFC Ltd, HDFC Bank, HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company, Gruh Finance Ltd and HDFC Asset Management Company- Tatas have nearly 30 listed companies on the bourses.

HDFC is a leading provider of Housing Finance in India. With our customised solutions we have fulfilled over 6.3 million dreams since inception. It was a Pioneer of Housing Finance in 1977. Mr. Deepak S. Parekh is the Chairman of the Corporation. MR. Keki M. Mistry is the Vice Chairman & Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation.

## Indian Oil, ONGC, NTPC most profitable PSUs in FY18

- Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC and NTPC emerged as the top three most profitable PSUs in 2017-18, while BSNL, Air India and MTNL incurred the highest losses for the second consecutive year.
- The Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18, which mapped the performance of central public sector units, revealed that the top ten loss making PSUs claimed 84.71 per cent of the total losses made by all the 71 CPSEs.
- The three star performers, including Indian Oil Corporation, Oil & Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and NTPC, contributed 13.37 per cent, 12.49 per cent and 6.48 per cent, respectively to the total profit earned by CPSEs during 2017-18, the survey revealed.

ONGC Videsh Ltd., a Miniratna Schedule "A" Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) of the Government of India under the administrative control of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas is the wholly owned subsidiary and overseas arm of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), the flagship national oil company (NOC) of India.

Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) is an Indian state owned oil and Gas Company with registered office at Mumbai and primarily headquartered in New Delhi. It is the largest commercial enterprise in the country.

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) is an Indian state-owned telecommunications company headquartered in New Delhi. It was incorporated on 15 September 2000 and assumed the business of providing telecom services and network management from the 1 October 2000. BSNL is India's oldest communication service provider. It has footprints throughout India, except for Mumbai and New Delhi, where telecommunications are managed by Mahanagar Telephone Nigam (MTNL).



## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**



### **SpaceX launches 64 satellites at one go**

- **SpaceX launched its Falcon 9 rocket, sending an unusual payload into space — 64 satellites at the same time, a U.S. record.**
- **The company headed by US tech billionaire Elon Musk marked another milestone in its bid to make rockets more re-usable, like airplanes: the blast-off used a recycled booster for the third time. A sculpture called Orbital Reflector by artist Trevor Paglen was also sent up.**
- **California-based SpaceX has landed more than 30 of these boosters back on Earth, and has begun re-using them on subsequent missions.**

Space Exploration Technologies Corp., doing business as SpaceX, is a private American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California. It was founded in 2002 by entrepreneur Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs and enabling the colonization of Mars. SpaceX has since developed the Falcon launch vehicle family and the Dragon spacecraft family, which both currently deliver payloads into Earth orbit. Elon Reeve Musk is a business magnate and investor. He holds South African, Canadian, and U.S. citizenship and is the founder, CEO, and lead designer of SpaceX; co-founder, CEO, and product architect of Tesla, Inc.; co-founder and CEO of Neuralink; and co-founder of PayPal. As of October 2018, he has a net worth of \$19.8 billion and is listed by Forbes as the 46th-richest person in the world.

### **NASA's spacecraft set to collect asteroid sample**

- **NASA's first-ever mission, called OSIRIS-REx, designed to visit an asteroid and return with a sample of its dust to the earth will soon reach its destination, Bennu, two years after launching from Cape Canaveral, Florida.**
- **Then, in 2020, it will reach out with its robotic arm and touch the asteroid in what NASA has described as a "gentle high-five," aiming to collect about 60 grams of material from the asteroid's surface, and return it to the earth for further study.**

OSIRIS-REx (Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security, Regolith Explorer) is a NASA asteroid study and sample-return mission. The mission's main goal is to obtain a sample of at least 60 grams (2.1 oz) from 101955 Bennu, a carbonaceous near-Earth asteroid, and return the sample to Earth for a detailed analysis. OSIRIS-REx was launched on 8 September 2016, and reached the proximity of Bennu on 3 December 2018.

### **India's heaviest satellite GSAT-11 successfully launched by Ariane-5 rocket to provide better broadband services**

- **The ISRO launched GSAT-11 satellite and put it successfully in earth orbit from Kourou Launch Zone, French Guiana in South America.**

- ISRO used the Ariane-5 VA246 heavyweight rocket of Arianespace for this mission.
- The GSAT-11 advanced communications satellite, produced by ISRO, will deliver multi-spot beam coverage over the Indian mainland and nearby islands bringing significant advantages to the user community.
- The GSAT-11 weighing 5,854 kg is the heaviest satellite built by ISRO.
- The GSAT-11 is the next generation high throughput communication satellite that will play a vital role in providing broadband services across the country.

### FAO Council approves India's proposal to observe International Year of Millets in 2023

- Food and Agriculture organisation, FAO Council has approved India's proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023.
- Millets consists of Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and minor millets together termed as nutri-cereals. In addition, the FAO Council has also approved India's membership to the Executive Board of the United Nations World Food Program for 2020 and 2021.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate arguments and debate policy. In 1951, FAO's headquarters were moved from Washington, DC, United States, to Rome, Italy. Jose Graziano da Silva is the current Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

### India successfully test-fires Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile Agni-5

- India successfully tested its long range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Agni-5, for its full range from Dr Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. The nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) has a strike range of 5,000 km, which can cover most of China.
- The Agni-5 is the most advanced missile in the Agni series, because of its navigation and guidance, warhead and engine.
- The missile has been made in a manner that after reaching the peak of its trajectory it will head down to the earth's surface, towards the target, with increased speed due to the gravitational pull.
- This is the fourth successful test of this missile. Previously the test of Agni 4 was unsuccessful. Having 17 meters length and 2 meters diameter the missile can hit the target from a distance of 5 thousand kilometres.
- The other Agni series missiles in India's armoury are the Agni-1 with 700km range, Agni-2 with 2,000km range, Agni-3 and Agni-4 with 2,500km to over 3,500km range.

The missile will eventually be inducted into the tri-service, Strategic Forces Command, which manages India's nuclear arsenal. With the Agni-5, India will become part of a small group of countries having ICBMs (range of 5,000-5,500 km) — only the US, China, Russia and France are known to have ICBMs.

### China launches rocket in attempt to land on far side of Moon for first time

- China has launched a historic space mission to the dark side of the Moon for first time. A Long March rocket carrying the Chang'e-4 lunar lander took off from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southern China.
- The mission, if all goes as planned, would mark the first time a rover has landed on the far side of the Moon. It demonstrates Beijing's growing ambitions as a space power to rival Russia, the European Union and the US. With its Chang'e 4 mission, China hopes to be the first country to make a soft landing, which is a landing of a spacecraft during which no serious damage is incurred.

The moon's far side is also known as the dark side because it faces away from Earth and remains comparatively unknown. It has a different composition than sites on the near side, where previous missions have landed.

## Voyager 2 has officially reached interstellar space, confirms NASA

- **NASA's Voyager 2** has become the **second human-made object in history** to reach the edge of our solar system, after the spacecraft exited the protective bubble of particles and magnetic fields created by the Sun.
- Its twin, **Voyager 1**, crossed this boundary in 2012, but **Voyager 2** — launched 41 years ago — carries a working instrument that will provide **first-of-its-kind observations of the nature of this gateway into interstellar space**.

**Voyager 2** is a **space probe** launched by **NASA** on **August 20, 1977**, to study the **outer planets**. Part of the Voyager program, it was **launched 16 days before its twin, Voyager 1**, on a trajectory that **took longer to reach Jupiter and Saturn** but enabled further encounters with **Uranus and Neptune**. It is the **only spacecraft** to have visited either of the **ice giant planets**.

## India gets submarine rescue system

- The **Indian Navy** joined a select group of naval forces in the world when it inducted its **first non-tethered Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV)** system at the **Naval Dockyard in Mumbai**.
- The **DSRV** is used to rescue crew members from submarines stranded under water in the high seas. The **DSRV** can be operated at a depth of **650 metres** and can rescue **14 people** at a time.
- The **state-of-the-art system** is also equipped with a **decompression chamber** that can accommodate submariners and a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), which can be used to beam images and provide immediate assistance.

## China launches first satellite for space-based broadband project

- **China** launched its **first communication satellite** to provide **broadband internet services worldwide** in an apparent bid to rival **Google** and other international firms.
- The **satellite** was launched from a **Long March 11** carrier rocket from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre** in north-western China and is the **first in the Hongyun project** planned by **China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp (CASIC)**.
- The **Hongyun project**, started in **September 2016**, aims to build a **space-based communications network** to provide **broadband internet connectivity** to users around the world, especially those in the underserved regions.

## ISRO successfully launches GSAT-7A satellite

- The **Indian space research Organisation (ISRO)** successfully launched **geostationary communication satellite GSAT-7A** onboard **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F11** from the **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC)** in **Sriharikota**.
- **GSAT 7A** was the **heaviest satellite** carried by **indigenous cryogenic stage**. An **ISRO team** led by **Chairman Dr K Sivan**, **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)** **S Somanath**, **U R Rao Satellite Centre (URSC)** **Director P Kunhikrishnan**, witnessed the launch.

The **GSLV-F11** is carrying **2250 kg GSAT-7A** and about 19 minutes later, **injected GSAT-7A into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)** of **170.8 km x 39127 km** which is very close to the intended orbit. **GSAT-7A** is the **39th Indian communication satellite** of **ISRO** to provide services to the **users in Ku-band over the Indian region**. **GSAT-7A** launch was the **7<sup>th</sup> mission** of **ISRO** from **SDSC** in the year **2018**. This was the **13<sup>th</sup> flight** of **GSLV-MkII**.

## Government Launches Asiatic Lion Conservation Project

- The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, **Government of India** has **launched the “Asiatic Lion Conservation Project”** with an **aim to protect and conserve the world's last ranging free population of Asiatic Lion** and its associated ecosystem.

- “The Asiatic Lion Conservation Project” will strengthen the ongoing measures for conservation and recovery of Asiatic Lion with the help of state-of-the-art techniques/ instruments, regular scientific research studies, disease management, Modern surveillance/ patrolling techniques.
- Asiatic lions that once ranged from Persia (Iran) to Palamau in Eastern India were almost driven to extinction by indiscriminate hunting and habitat loss. A single population of less than 50 lions persisted in the Gir forests of Gujarat by late 1890's.

The Asiatic lion is a *Panthera leo leo* population in India. Its range is restricted to the Gir National Park and environs in the Indian state of Gujarat. On the IUCN Red List it is listed under its former scientific name *Panthera leo persica* as Endangered because of its small size and area of occupancy. Asiatic lion was first described in 1826 by the Austrian zoologist Johann N. Meyer who named it *Felis leo persicus*.

### NASA's InSight Lander places first instrument on Mars

- NASA's Insight lander has deployed a seismometer on the surface of Mars, completing a major mission milestone that will allow scientists to peer into the Martian interior by studying ground motion also known as marsquakes.
- New images show the seismometer on the ground, its copper-coloured covering illuminated in the Martian dusk.

Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport (InSight) mission is a robotic lander designed to study the deep interior of the planet Mars. It was manufactured by Lockheed Martin, is managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and most payload instruments it carries were built by European agencies. The mission launched on 5 May 2018.

### SpaceX ends year with launch of its first US military satellite

- Elon Musk's SpaceX decided to end the year with the launch of its first US national security mission to date.
- The private space agency successfully launched the United States Air Force's first Global Positioning System (GPS) III satellite, nicknamed Vespucci, marking the last satellite launch of the year.
- SpaceX won the NSS contract with Air Force in 2016 and is scheduled to launch additional four GPS III missions on Falcon 9.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp., doing business as SpaceX, is a private American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company headquartered in Hawthorne, California. It was founded in 2002 by entrepreneur Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs and enabling the colonization of Mars. SpaceX has since developed the Falcon launch vehicle family and the Dragon spacecraft family, which both currently deliver payloads into Earth orbit.

### Hooda panel recommends creation of specialised information warfare units, restructuring of military intelligence

- The panel headed by former Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General (retired) DS Hooda has recommended that the Army and defence forces set up specialised information warfare units in the areas where we are carrying out counter-insurgency operations.
- The panel was set up by the government based on the recommendation of Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra about five months ago and utilise Lt Gen Hooda's expertise for carrying out a study on the restructuring of the armed forces.
- Lt Gen Hooda has also suggested restructuring of the cyber warfare operations. He has also recommended scaling down the size of regular Army by about 20 per cent and instead, have a reserve Army which can be called upon for warfighting in case of conflicts.



## Russia successfully tests hypersonic missile

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin** hailed final tests of a **hypersonic missile**, which he had earlier said would render existing missile systems obsolete.
- The **hypersonic missile** could fly at **20 times the speed of sound and manoeuvre up and down**, meaning that it could breach defence systems.

The final test comes after **U.S. President Donald Trump** announced plans to pull out of a key **Cold War-era nuclear weapons pact**, the **three-decade-old Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)**. Mr. Putin has laid out plans to develop missiles banned under the deal if the U.S. abandons it.

## China launches six Yunhai-2 satellites for atmospheric environment research

- **China** successfully sent **six atmospheric environment research satellites** and a **test communication satellite into orbit**. They were launched by a **Long March-2D rocket** from the **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center** in northwest China.
- The **six Yunhai-2 satellites** will be used to **study atmospheric environment, monitor space environment, prevent and reduce disasters** and conduct scientific experiments.
- The **test satellite, the first for the constellation Hongyan, meaning "swan goose" in Chinese**, will be used to verify the function of mobile communications in low earth orbit (LEO).
- The **constellation, designed to comprise hundreds of LEO satellites and a global data processing center, was developed by Aerospace Dongfanghong Development Ltd.** Shenzhen, a company under the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST).

**China National Space Administration (CNSA)** is the **national space agency of China**. It is responsible for the national space program and for planning and development of space activities. The **headquarters are in Haidian District, Beijing**. **Zhang Kejian** is the **Director** of the China National Space Administration.

## Inventions/Discoveries

### Most-distant solar system object ever discovered

- Scientists at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Washington, D.C., have **discovered the most-distant body ever observed in our solar system** — located **over 100 times farther than Earth is from the Sun**. The new object has been nicknamed **“Farout”**.
- Known formally as **2018 VG18**, the object is the first to be observed at a distance of more than **100 astronomical units** from the sun. **One AU is the distance from Earth to the sun, or about 93 million miles.**

**Farout is about 120 AU, or about 11 billion miles, from the sun.** If you could drive straight there at a steady 60 miles per hour, you'd be behind the wheel for more than **21,000 years**. **Farout is thought to be a roughly spherical object about 300 miles in diameter.** Its pinkish hue suggests that it is rich in ice, but little else is known about the object. **Pluto, which since 2006 has been considered a dwarf planet, is currently at a distance of about 34 AU.** It takes **Pluto about 248 years to complete one orbit of the sun.**

### IIT Bombay: New way to characterise thickness of layered 2D materials

- The **isolation of single sheets of carbon, known as graphene, was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2010.**
- This **discovery has ushered in an era of two-dimensional materials.** It offers immense possibilities in **building electronics using similarly thin films.**
- A family of materials that have been investigated in this area are the **transition metal dichalcogenides (TMDs), examples of which are molybdenum sulphide, molybdenum selenide, tungsten sulphide, tungsten telluride and so on.**

### In a first, baby born using uterus from a dead donor

- In a **medical first, a mother who received a uterus transplant from a dead donor gave birth to a healthy baby.**
- The **breakthrough operation, performed in September 2016 in Sao Paulo, Brazil,** shows that such transplants are feasible and could help thousands of women unable to have children due to uterine problems. The **womb transplant, lasting over 10 hours, took place in Sao Paolo in Brazil in September 2016.** The **baby was born in December 2017.**

### World's First Completely 3D Printed Bike Unveiled

- **NOWLAB and 3D printer manufacturer, BigRep have joined hands to develop the world's first completely 3D printed e-motorcycle, the NERA.** The name itself is derived from the slogan **"New Era",** which is what the 3D-printed motorcycle claims to usher in.
- **Everything on the NERA is made from additive manufacturing technology (better known as 3D printing), except the electronics.**
- The **NERA combines several innovations developed by NOWLAB, such as the airless tyre, functional integration and embedded sensor technology”.**

### Over 100 new exoplanets discovered

- An **international team of astronomers have discovered a cache over 100 new exoplanets using data from NASA’s Kepler Space telescope as well as ground-based observatories.**
- The team involving researchers at the **University of Tokyo and Astrobiology Center of the National Institutes of Natural Sciences investigated 227 exoplanet candidates based on data from second mission of NASA's Kepler Space Telescope (K2 mission), as well as using other space telescopes and ground-based telescopes.**

- They confirmed that **104 of them** are really exoplanets. Seven of the confirmed exoplanets have ultra-short orbital periods less than 24 hours.
- One of the reasons is the success of the **Kepler Space Telescope**, which launched in **2009** to search for exoplanets.

**Kepler was launched in 2009 with an objective to learn more about the number and frequency of planets in our galaxy, the telescope which is some 94 million miles away from Earth has continuously monitored over 150,000 stars in the Cygnus-Lyra region and has discovered over 4,600 planet candidates as per the data provided by NASA.**

### IIT researchers 3D bioprint load-bearing bones

- Researchers from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and IIT Kanpur have used a different approach to mimic the development biology pathway by which adult load-bearing, long bones are formed.
- The bone construct was fabricated by combining tissue **engineering and 3D bioprinting**. The study also helped in understanding the detailed gene expression and sequential signaling pathways that get **upregulated when embryonic-stage cartilage becomes bone-like cells**.

### World's oldest known plant virus discovered, it's 1000 years old

- Scientists have **discovered the world's oldest plant virus** dating back **1,000 years** after analysing **ancient corncoobs found at a Native American archeological site**.
- **Only a few RNA viruses** had been **discovered previously from archaeological samples**, the oldest dating from about 750 years ago.
- The **new discovery came as the research team examined ancient plant material from Antelope House**, an Ancestral Puebloan ruin located at **Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Arizona**.

**The Ancestral Pueblos who lived in the canyon planted crops such as maize, beans and squash. During the excavation of Antelope House by the National Park Service in the 1970s, more than two tons of plant refuse, in highly recognizable form, were recovered. Using carbon 14 dating, researchers confirmed that the age of the ancient samples was about 1,000 years old. While analysing cobs, the scientists isolated three nearly complete genomes of a previously unknown virus of the family Chrysoviridae, which infect plants and fungi.**

### Evidence of water discovered in 17 asteroids

- Japanese scientists have **detected evidence of water in 17 asteroids for the first time** using data from the infrared satellite **AKARI**.
- Researchers from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and University of Tokyo found that **water is retained in asteroids as hydrated minerals**, which were produced by chemical reactions of water and anhydrous rocks that occurred inside the asteroids.

### Super Earth discovered in constellation Cassiopeia

- Researchers at the University of Zurich in Switzerland have **discovered a new exotic planet outside our solar system in the constellation Cassiopeia. Located 21 light years away from us, this planet, dubbed HD219134 b, has a mass almost five times that of Earth, which is considered a so-called "super-Earth".**
- **Unlike the Earth, however, it most likely does not have a massive core of iron, but is rich in calcium and aluminium alongside magnesium and silicon. HD219134 b is one of three candidates likely to belong to a new exotic class of exoplanets.**

**A super-Earth is an extra solar planet with a mass higher than Earth's, but substantially below those of the Solar System's ice giants, Uranus and Neptune, which are 15 and 17 times Earth's, respectively. The term "super-Earth" refers only to the mass of the planet, and so does not imply anything about the surface conditions or habitability.**

## IISER Pune develops new model of evolution of bacterial colonies

- **Researchers from Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune** propose a change in the way epidemiologists estimate the growth and adaptation rate of bacteria.
- **Bacteria enter the body of a host organism** and multiply into billions. But the population is not steadily growing within the body. There are **periodic instances, known as bottlenecks**, when they are purged in huge numbers. This could be, for example, when the host sneezes or defecates.

## Railways Develops Robot USTAAD, to Check for Faults in Trains

- **To make trains safer by eliminating human errors**, Central Railway has **developed an AI-powered robot** which would click pictures and record videos of the under-gears of trains and send them to engineers for repairs and maintenance.
- The mechanical branch of Central Railway's Nagpur division has **developed the robot named USTAAD (Undergear Surveillance through Artificial Intelligence Assisted Droid)**, which examines parts of the coach in real time with a **HD camera and transmits them over WiFi**.

## Australian Open develops new extreme heat policy

- **Australian Open officials** has a **developed newly "heat stress scale,"** which takes into **account air temperature, radiant heat, humidity and wind speed**, will instead be applied along with more comprehensive measuring of conditions across Melbourne Park.
- The introduction of **heat-related breaks for male players** brings the tournament into line with the **U.S. Open** which was repeatedly forced to stop play earlier this year.

**Australian Open** is a tennis tournament held annually over the last fortnight of January in Melbourne, Australia. The tournament is the first of the four Grand Slam tennis events held each year, preceding the French Open, Wimbledon and the US Open. First held in 1905, the Australian Open is now the largest annual sporting event in the Southern Hemisphere.

## 'Virtual tumour' new way to see cancer

- **Scientists in Cambridge** have **built a virtual reality (VR) 3D model of cancer**, providing a new way to look at the disease. The VR system allows **multiple users from anywhere in the world to examine the tumour**.
- Researchers start with a 1mm cubed piece of breast cancer tissue **biopsy, containing around 100,000 cells**. The tumour is rebuilt using virtual reality. The **3D tumour can be analysed within a virtual reality laboratory**.

## Researchers make world's smallest tic-tac-toe game board with DNA

- **Researchers from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech)** have developed the **world's smallest tic-tac-toe game board with DNA**. The researchers used a technique for shaping structures out of strands of DNA, a process known as DNA origami.
- **Unlike previous techniques**, a structure once created could not be altered. However, the researchers could reshape an already-constructed DNA structure using this new technique. To demonstrate the powerful new technique, they used it to **play game of tic-tac-toe using a DNA board**.

**Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA)** is a molecule composed of two chains that coil around each other to form a double helix carrying the genetic instructions used in the growth, development, functioning, and reproduction of all known living organisms and many viruses. **DNA was first isolated by Friedrich Miescher in 1869. Its molecular structure was first identified by Francis Crick and James Watson at the Cavendish Laboratory within the University of Cambridge in 1953.**



## Health/ Disease

### Six new antibodies to combat Zika

- **Researchers, including one of Indian origin, have developed six Zika virus antibodies** which may help diagnose as well as treat the mosquito-borne disease that has infected over 1.5 million people worldwide.
- The antibodies “may have the dual utility as diagnostics capable of recognising Zika virus subtypes and may be further developed to treat Zika virus infection”.
- **Most infected people experience no symptoms or mild symptoms** such as a rash, mild fever and red eyes.

**Zika virus is a mosquito-borne flavivirus that was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in monkeys. It was later identified in humans in 1952 in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. The first recorded outbreak of Zika virus disease was reported from the Island of Yap (Federated States of Micronesia) in 2007. This was followed by a large outbreak of Zika virus infection in French Polynesia in 2013.**

### Scientists create bee vaccine to fight off ‘insect apocalypse’

- **Scientists in Finland have developed what they believe is the world’s first vaccine to protect bees against disease**, raising hopes for tackling the drastic decline in insect numbers which could cause a global food crisis.
- Bees are vital for growing the world’s food as they **help fertilise three out of four crops around the globe**, by transferring pollen from male to female flowers.
- **UN-led research in 2016 found that more than 40% of invertebrate pollinators**, particularly bees and butterflies, are facing extinction. The study also found that **16.5% of vertebrate pollinators are under threat.**

### Google s new AI model to help detect diabetic retinopathy

- **Google has developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model that can detect diabetic retinopathy with a level of accuracy on par with human retinal specialists.**
- **Verily, an Alphabet-owned company, is working on rolling out the diabetic retinopathy initiative in clinics in India**

**Google Inc. is an American multinational technology company that specializes in Internet-related services and products, which include online advertising technologies, search engine, cloud computing, software, and hardware. Google was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were Ph.D. students at Stanford University, California. It is now headquartered in California, USA. Pichai Sundararajan is the current chief executive officer (CEO) of Google Inc.**

### Novel ingestible capsule with Bluetooth can monitor health

- **Scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US have developed an ingestible, capsule controlled using Bluetooth wireless technology**, which can be customised to deliver drugs or monitor health over long periods of time. The capsule can reside in the stomach for at least a month, transmitting information and responding to instructions from a user’s smartphone.
- **Manufactured using 3D-printing technology**, the capsules could be deployed to deliver drugs to treat a variety of diseases, particularly in cases where drugs must be taken over a long period of time. They could also be designed to sense infections, allergic reactions, or other events, and then release a drug in response.

## **ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT**



### **India is the fourth highest emitter of CO2**

- A study has said **India is the fourth highest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, accounting for 7 per cent of global emissions in 2017.**
- **The top four emitters in 2017, which covered 58 per cent of global emissions, were China (27 per cent), the US (15 per cent), the European Union (10 per cent), according to the projection by the Global Carbon Project. The rest of the world contributed 41 per cent last year, it said.**

**India's emissions look set to continue their strong growth by an average of 6.3 per cent in 2018, with growth across all fuels — coal (7.1 per cent), oil (2.9 per cent) and gas (6.0 per cent), the study said. The top 10 emitters were China, the US, the EU, India, Russia, Japan, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia and South Korea.**

### **IISER Kolkata develops simulation to predict solar activity over 10 years**

- **Astronomers have observed sunspots on the surface of the Sun for nearly 400 years. It is known that sunspots follow a cyclic pattern of growing in number and disappearing in approximately 11 years, known as the sunspot cycle or the Sun's activity cycle.**
- **We are currently in the 24th sunspot cycle since the observation of this cycle began, in 1755.**
- **A team of researchers from IISER Kolkata have developed a way of predicting the intensity of activity in the next solar cycle (approximately from 2020 to 2031) using data spread over the last 100 years.**

### **Warming leads to water crisis in Himalayas: study**

- **Climate change is driving glaciers in the Himalayas to melt more rapidly than at any point in the last 10,000 years, and could soon cause water supply shortage in parts of India, Pakistan, and Nepal.**
- **Researchers from Ohio State University in the U.S. showed that climate change could have devastating effects on vulnerable residents in the Andes Mountains and the Tibetan plateau.**
- **The international research team dubbed the plateau the "Third Pole" because it contains the largest stores of freshwater in the world outside of the North and South poles.**

**By 2100, the best case scenario is that half of the ice will disappear. Worst-case scenario: two-thirds of it will. And you've got all those people depending on the glacier for water. Researchers showed that while water supply is declining, demand is rising because of growing populations.**

### **Blind amphibian to be named after US President Donald Trump**

- **A newly-discovered blind amphibian from Panama will be named after Donald Trump in recognition of the U.S. President's stance on climate change.**

- **EnviroBuild**, a U.K.-based sustainable building materials company, announced that it would be using **Dermophis donaldtrumpi** as the name for the amphibian with no legs and poor eyesight.

### IIT Hyderabad uses recycled material to reduce virgin asphalt for roads

---

- Two IIT Hyderabad professors and their graduate students have come up with an **innovative material to lay roads which reduces cost**, is environmentally friendly and also stronger than asphalt roads.
- This material — **reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP)** — uses a **mix of fly ash (a coal-combustion by-product)** with reclaimed asphalt concrete. It **reduces use of virgin asphalt by about 30%**.

### Another olive ridley nesting site soon

---

- The **Odisha forest department** is all set to **add another olive ridley mass nesting site** to its wildlife map.
- It has **started preparing the beach at the Bahuda river mouth in Ganjam district** to lure the endangered turtles to come over for mass nesting next year.
- Around 3-km stretch of the beach from **Sunapur to Anantpur at Bahuda rookery is being developed as a possible olive ridley mass nesting site**.
- The **Bahuda rookery is located around 20 km to the south of Rushikulya rookery coast**, a major mass nesting site of olive ridleys on the Indian coastline.

The **Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world**, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans. Though found in abundance, their numbers have been declining over the past few years, and the species is **recognized as Vulnerable by the IUCN Red list**. **To reduce accidental killing in India, the Orissa government has made it mandatory for trawls to use Turtle Excluder Devices (TEDs)**, a net specially designed with an exit cover which allows the turtles to escape while retaining the catch.

## **SPORTS**



### **Sports Personalities in News**

#### **Ridhima Dilawari wins maiden professional title**

- In Golf, **Ridhima Dilawari** captured her **maiden professional title** at the **Noida Golf Course**.
- She cruised to a five-shot win in the **17th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour**.

#### **Vinesh Phogat grabs 57-kg national title at Tata Motors Senior National C'ship**

- In Wrestling, **Vinesh Phogat** capped a highly successful season by **grabbing the 57-kilogram national title** at the **Tata Motors Senior National Championship** in **Gonda, Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Vinesh** has already **stamped her class at international level** by **winning the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games titles** and it was just about getting some match competition under her belt after missing the Worlds due to an elbow injury. On way to her sixth National title, Vinesh conceded just two points in five bouts.

#### **Lakshya and Ashmita emerge the champions**

- **Ashmita Chaliha** took down eighth seed **G. Vrushali** in the **women's singles final of the Tata Open India International Challenge**. Ashmita unsettled her rival with variations in pace to win 21-16, 21-13 in just 30 minutes.
- In the **men's final Lakshya Sen** took apart highly-rated **Kunlavut Vitidsarn** 21-15, 21-10 to take the crown.

**Tata Open India International Challenge** is an **international badminton tournament**, which is held **annually in India**. During its **first two editions**, it was a **domestic tournament**. Since **2010**, it became an **international tournament** with the grading of International Challenge.

#### **Raninder Singh Becomes First Indian To Be Elected ISSF Vice-President**

- **Raninder Singh** became the **first Indian to be elected as the vice-president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)** after voting results were declared in **Munich**.
- He will be one of the **four vice-presidents of the organisation**. The former trap shooter also **currently heads the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI)**.
- **Raninder** secured **161 votes** to be elected for the post while **Kevin Kilty of Ireland** received 162 votes. **Robert Mitchell from the United States** got **153 votes** while **Wang Yifu from Republic of China** was re-elected for the post after securing 146 votes.

#### **Atlawim Debebe of Ethiopia wins Pune International Marathon**

- It was again **all Ethiopian Show in Pune International Marathon**.



- **Atlawim Debebe** of Ethiopia won the Full Marathon with the timing of 2 hours 17 minutes 17 seconds. **Teshome Getachew** claimed second and **Bekele Asefa** third position. Both of them are also from Ethiopia.

### Ullas Narayan wins India's first international medal in ultra-running

---

- **Ullas Narayan** bagged the third position, completing 250 km, behind two Japanese runners **Yoshihiko Ishikawa** (253 km) and **Nobuyuki Takahashi** (252 km).
- **Ullas Narayan** became the first ever Indian individual medal winner in an international ultra-running event by clinching a bronze in the 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championship.

### Pawan Singh first Indian to be elected in ISSF's judges committee

---

- **Pawan Singh** has become the first Indian to be elected one of seven members of the Judges Committee of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF).
- Mr Singh also holds the post of the Joint Secretary General of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).
- Mr Singh got elected onto the seven members' Judges Committee for which 22 candidates from all over the world were in the fray. Members of the administrative council of ISSF voted to select the committee during the elections held at Munich

### Virat Kohli honoured by Bradman Museum

---

- **Virat Kohli** has received a special honour as a signed jersey that he donated after scoring his a hundred in the fourth Test at the SCG during India's tour of Australia in 2014-15 has been placed next to **Sachin Tendulkar's** portrait at the Bradman Museum.
- The Bradman Museum celebrates Sir Don Bradman's contributions to world cricket and tends to honour the greatest achievers of the game.
- Only a few special Indian cricketers like the legendary **Kapil Dev** and **Tendulkar** have a memento celebrating their achievements placed at the iconic museum.
- The Museum is also known as 'The Home of Cricket Memories.'

### Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric bags 2018 Ballon d'Or

---

- Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder **Luka Modric** has bagged the 2018 Ballon d'Or.
- He has become the first player other than former team-mate and now Juventus forward **Cristiano Ronaldo** or Barcelona's **Lionel Messi** to claim the award in more than a decade. Before Modric, both Messi and Ronaldo had won five Ballon d'Ors each.
- Modric had won the Golden Ball in this year's World Cup. He led Croatia to its maiden Cup Final before they lost to France in the summit clash.
- At the gala ceremony held in Paris Ronaldo came second behind Modric, while Messi finished fifth. Atletico Madrid frontman **Antoine Griezmann** was third, while PSG's teenage sensation **Kylian Mbappe** was fourth.

### Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah has become the quickest bowler to take 200 wickets

---

- Pakistan leg-spinner **Yasir Shah** has become the fastest bowler to reach 200 wickets in Test cricket, breaking Australia's **Clarrie Grimmett's** feat set 82 years ago.
- Yasir made the record in just his 33rd Test match - surpassing Grimmett's who took 36 Tests to reach the milestone against South Africa in Johannesburg in 1936.

## Kohli sets Asian record, Pant equals world record as India win in Adelaide

- Virat Kohli became the first India captain since Anil Kumble in 2008 to win a Test in Australia. Kohli becomes the first India captain to win the opening Test of a series in Australia.
- Kohli became the first Asian captain to win Tests in South Africa, England and Australia. The top-ranked Indian Test side has also become the first team from Asia to win.
- Rishabh Pant also had a record-setting day as he equalled the world record of Jack Russell and AB de Villiers for the most number of catches in Test by a wicketkeeper.
- With 11 catches in the Adelaide Test, Pant went past Wriddhiman Saha's Indian record of 10 catches in a match.

## Naomi Osaka's coach, Sascha Bajin, named WTA Coach of the Year

- Sascha Bajin was chosen as the first winner of the WTA Coach of the Year award after helping Naomi Osaka to her US Open title.
- The first season as a team for Bajin and Osaka produced her first WTA title at Indian Wells, then her first Grand Slam title in New York, where she beat Serena Williams in the final.
- Naomi Osaka is a professional tennis player who represents Japan. She is the reigning US Open champion in women's singles.

## ITTF award for Manika

- India's star paddler Manika Batra was bestowed with the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Breakthrough Star Award 2018.
- At this year's Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Manika won four medals including a historic women's singles gold, team gold, women's doubles silver (with Mouma Das) and mixed doubles bronze (with G. Sathiyan).
- She had also bagged the bronze in mixed doubles (with A. Sharath Kamal) at the 2018 Asian Games.

## Rajyavardhan Rathore flags off special marathon 'Soldierathon' in New Delhi

- On the occasion of Vijay Diwas, Sports Minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore flagged off a special marathon 'Soldierathon' at JLN Stadium in New Delhi.
- The marathon was organised in the honour of Martyrs and wounded Soldiers.

Colonel Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore AVSM is a former professional shooter. Rathore was appointed as a Cabinet minister with independent charge for Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports in 2017. Rathore, who replaced Vijay Goel, became the first sportsman to take charge of the sports ministry.

## PV Sindhu becomes first Indian to Win BWF World Tour Finals

- PV Sindhu made history becoming the first Indian to win the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals tournament.
- Sindhu came up against a familiar foe in Nozomi Okuhara in the title clash but unlike her previous meetings, the Indian superstar showed much more patience in her gameplay against the Japanese. This was critical to the Indian shuttler's cause as Okuhara was made to toil and given no breathing space as PV Sindhu claimed a 21-19, 21-17 win in the final for her first title of the year.

## Virat Kohli becomes first Indian skipper to score 1000 runs on foreign soil in a year

---

- Indian skipper Virat Kohli became the first Indian captain to reach the milestone of 1000 Test runs in a calendar year on foreign soil en route to his 25 Test century. He became only the third Indian after Mohinder Amarnath and Rahul Dravid to score a 1000 runs on foreign soil in a calendar year. Interestingly, he is only the third skipper after Bob Simpson and Graeme Smith to achieve the feat. Only Australian legend Don Bradman (68) had taken fewer innings to score 25 Test hundreds.
- Kohli also became the only Indian skipper to score 2000 Test runs in away matches. He is also the first Indian captain to score 2000 Test runs both in India and overseas.
- Virat Kohli is the second batsman after Sachin Tendulkar to score six hundreds in Australia in the last 70 years. With his sixth Test century in Australia, Virat Kohli also equalled Sachin Tendulkar's record of most Test centuries by an Indian Down Under.

## Joshna Chinappa bags record-equalling 16th national title, Mahesh wins maiden crown

---

- Squash star Joshna Chinappa equalled Bhuvneshwari Kumari's record of 16 national titles while Mahesh Mangaonkar won his maiden crown.
- In the two contrasting finals, Mahesh pipped Vikram Malhotra 11-4, 13-15, 11-2, 5-11, 15-13 while Joshna edged out Urwashi Joshi 9-11, 11-1, 11-6, 11-5.

## B.V.P. Rao is Archery association president

---

- The panel headed by B.V.P. Rao won the key positions in the election of the Archery Association of India.
- The election was held under the supervision of former Chief Election Commissioner S. Y. Quraishi. The secretary's post went to Maha Singh and D. K. Vidyarthi was elected the new treasurer.
- Archery Association of India (AAI) is the national governing body of archery in India. Its headquarters are located in New Delhi, and its current president is Vijay Kumar Malhotra.
- AAI came into existence on 8 August 1973 after archery was reintroduced to the Olympic Games in 1972.

## India's Vedangi Kulkarni becomes fastest Asian to cycle across globe

---

- Vedangi Kulkarni, a 20-years-old athlete from India's Pune has become the fastest Asian to cycle the globe. She cycled the 29,000 km distance required to qualify as bicycling across the globe.
- She started off from Australian city of Perth in July and will now be flying back to complete the record.

## Bala Rafique Shaikh Wins Maharashtra Kesari 2018

---

- Bala Rafique Shaikh achieved the Maharashtra Kesari 2018 title by defeating Abhijeet Katke of Pune in the wrestling duel held at Azad ground, Jalna, Maharashtra. He defeated Abhijeet Katke 11-3 in the one-sided match.

## Lewis Hamilton awarded Drivers' Driver of the Year

---

- After claiming a historic fifth World Drivers' Championship, Lewis Hamilton has added to an ever-growing list of accolades after taking home the inaugural Drivers' Driver of the Year.
- This was the first time the vote had been run by the F1 bosses, with seventeen of the 20 drivers taking part.
- Points were handed out based on F1's current system, with 25 points given to the top driver on each list.

## Shiffrin first woman to reach 50 World Cup wins with Courchevel victory

---

- American Mikaela Shiffrin became the youngest woman to win 50 World Cup ski races with victory in the slalom in the French Alps.

- The 23-year-old Olympic champion **becomes the first woman to secure a half a century of race victories** before her 24th birthday, which she will celebrate in March next year. **Sweden's Ingemar Stenmark leads the record for both men and women with 86 career successes.**

### Former Australia captain Ponting inducted into ICC Hall of Fame

---

- **Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting was formally inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.**
- To mark the occasion, **Ponting received his commemorative cap from compatriot ICC Cricket Hall of Famer.**
- **Ponting was named in the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame along with former India captain Rahul Dravid and England woman wicketkeeper-batter Claire Taylor during the ICC Annual Conference in Dublin in July.**

### Heena equals 10m air pistol world mark

---

- **Heena Sidhu shot a world record equalling 587 in women's 10m air pistol qualification** in the shooting National selection trials.
- **Anna Korakaki of Greece had earlier shot the record in the World Cup in Fort Benning, US.**

### Modric beats Djokovic to win Balkan athlete of the year

---

- **Croatia captain Luka Modric was named Balkan Athlete of the Year becoming only the second soccer player to scoop the prize after Bulgaria's former European Footballer of the Year Hristo Stoichkov in 1994.**
- **Ballon d'Or winner Modric won the Champions League and the FIFA Club World Cup** with his Spanish club Real Madrid as well as being instrumental in helping Croatia reaches the World Cup final in Russia.

### Marin Cilic pulls out of Tata Open Maharashtra

---

- **World number 7 Tennis player Marin Cilic pulled out Maharashtra Open tennis tournament.**
- **Maharashtra Open is a professional men's tennis tournament played on outdoor hard courts that takes place in Pune, India.**

### Virat Kohli breaks Rahul Dravid's long-standing overseas record

---

- **Indian skipper Virat Kohli snapped former captain Rahul Dravid's long-standing record of most runs scored by an Indian in a calendar year overseas, adding another feather to his illustrious cap.**
- **By scoring a blistering knock of 82 on day two of the third Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Kohli now has 1,138 runs to his name. Dravid held the record for scoring 1,137 runs in Tests away from home in 2002.**
- **With 82 runs in the third Test, has surpassed Rahul Dravid (1137) to register most number of runs in a calendar year in overseas Tests. Besides Kohli and Dravid, Mohinder Amarnath notched up 1,065 runs in 1983 while the great Sunil Gavaskar had scored 918 runs in 1971 to make the top four in the list.**

### Virat Kohli equals Sourav Ganguly's record of most overseas Test wins as India captain

---

- **Virat Kohli is now the joint-most successful Indian Test captain in overseas conditions** after Team India registered a historic win in the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). With the win at the MCG, India have now taken an unassailable 2-1 lead in the four-match series.
- The Boxing Day Test win at the MCG gave **Virat Kohli his 11th away Test win as captain in just 24 Tests and he went equal with Ganguly on the record, who had achieved 11 away Test wins in 28 Tests as captain.** On top of that, **Kohli became the first Indian captain to retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy in Australia.** India had defeated Australia 2-1 in the four-Test series during their tour of India in 2016/17.



## Jasprit Bumrah finishes 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats

- **India pacer Jasprit Bumrah finished 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats in the calendar year.** The fast bowler, who helped India win the third Test in Melbourne by 137 runs by picking up a nine-wicket haul, **took 78 wickets in this year. Bumrah took 48 wickets in 9 Tests, 22 wickets in 13 ODIs and 8 wickets in 8 T20I matches. He went past Kagiso Rabada, who has taken 77 wickets in 2018.** The South African took 52 wickets in 10 Tests, 23 wickets in 14 ODIs and 2 wickets in 2 T20Is.
- **For Bumrah, 48 wickets in his debut Test season is the highest by any pace bowler** and it is also a testimony to a lethal pace trio involving the veteran Ishant Sharma and the wily Mohammed Shami (2/71), who also played his part well.
- **The trio has collectively taken 134 away wickets (Bumrah 48, Ishant 40 and Shami 46) in a single calendar year eclipsing the 34-year-old record that stood in the name of the fearsome West Indies trio of Malcolm Marshall, Michael Holding and Joel Garner (130 wickets in away tours in 1984).**

## Sport Events

### AIBA set to introduce ‘protest system’ at 2019 men’s world championships

- The International Boxing Association (AIBA) is set to **introduce a “protest system” for coaches and boxers in next year’s world championship for men**, which will also be a **qualifier for the 2020 Olympics.**
- Its system of **scoring criticised by no less than the International Olympic Committee (IOC)**, the AIBA said a provision of protest will be **introduced at the 2019 world event to hold in Moscow.**

### Croatia clinch victory over France to win Davis Cup

- **Croatia dethroned holders France to win the Davis Cup for the second time as Marin Cilic beat Lucas Pouille in straight sets to seal the victory.**
- **Cilic won to secure the title for Croatia for the first time since 2005.**

The **Davis Cup** is the **premier international team event in men's tennis.** It is run by the **International Tennis Federation (ITF)** and is contested **annually between teams from competing countries** in a knock-out format. It is described by the organisers as the **"World Cup of Tennis"**, and the winners are referred to as the **World Champion team.**

### Budapest to host 2023 IAAF World Championships

- The **2023 IAAF World Championships** will take place in **Budapest.**
- In the past, the **Hungarian capital has held the European Championships in 1966 and 1998 as well as the IAAF World Indoor Championships in 1989 and 2004.**

### Delhi Daredevils renamed as Delhi Capitals

- **Delhi Daredevils was renamed as Delhi Capitals** with a hope that it would bring a change in fortunes of the franchise after a poor track record over the past 11 IPL seasons.
- **Co-owners Parth Jindal, representing JSW Sport, and Kiran Kumar Grandhi of GMR, unveiled the new name of the team.**

### Bhubaneswar to host one of Hockey Series Finals in 2019

- The **Capital of Odisha, Bhubaneswar** is set to host one of the three **Hockey Series Finals** to be held from June 6 to 16 next year.

- The Hockey Series is open to **national teams that are not playing in the Hockey Pro League.**

The **2018–19 Men's Hockey Series** is the inaugural season of the Hockey Series, a **field hockey championship for men's national teams**. The tournament is being **started in June 2018 and finish in November 2019**. This series is hosted in **12 cities across the world**.

## Khelo India Youth Games to be held in Pune from January 9, 2019

- After the resounding success of the **first edition of the Khelo India School Games** last year, the grassroot level hunt for sportspersons from across the country, is back in a bigger, better form. In its second edition, the games which is an initiative of the Central Government, has expanded in its scope, and will **allow participants to compete in two categories, (Under 17) and (Under 21), this year**. In its new form, the games, which will be **known as the Khelo India Youth Games**, also allows students from colleges and Universities to compete.
- The other highlight of this year's games is that the **national-level competition is moving out of the Capital** and will be **held in Maharashtra**, which bid for the games, along with **Assam and Jharkhand**. **This time, the games will be held in Pune, known as the city of students**, from January 9 - January 20, 2019.

## Warriors named Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of Year

- The **three-time NBA champion Golden State Warriors** are the **fourth team to be honored as Sports Illustrated's Sportsperson of the Year**.
- The Warriors join the **1980 U.S. hockey team, the 1999 U.S. Women's World Cup soccer squad and the 2004 Boston Red Sox** as the other team honorees.

## ICC ropes in Royal Stag as official sponsor

- The **International Cricket Council (ICC)** has roped in **Indian alcobev brand Royal Stag** as **official sponsor for the next five years**.
- The **partnership, which runs through 2023**, will cover international events, including the upcoming **big-ticket calendar events – the ICC Cricket World Cup, ICC T20 World Cup and ICC World Test Championship**.

**International Cricket Council** was founded as the **Imperial Cricket Conference** in **1909** by representatives from **England, Australia and South Africa**, renamed the **International Cricket Conference** in 1965. **Shashank Vyankatesh Manohar** is the **current chairman of the International Cricket Council**. **Syed Zaheer Abbas Kirmani** is the **current ICC president**. **David John Richardson** is **current CEO of the International Cricket Council**

## Men's Hockey: Belgium crowned new World Champions

- **In Hockey, Belgium has claimed their first ever World Cup title**. They **defeated Netherlands 3-2 in a dramatic shoot-out in the final of the Men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar**.
- Both the teams, goalless at full time, were at level 2-2 after five penalties. **Belgium has won the trophy after sixteen years**.
- The win proved to be **third time lucky for the Red Lions**, who **finished runners-up at both the Rio 2016 Olympic Games and the Euro Hockey Championships in 2017**. Earlier, the last edition champions **Australia** secured a **consolation bronze medal** after mauling **England 8-1**.

## 37th Senior National Rowing Championship begins in Pune

- The **37th Senior National Rowing Championship** started in the **Army Rowing Node in Pune**.
- The **Rowers for the World Championships-2019** will be selected from this event. **World Championship -2019** is the **first qualifying Championship for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics**.

## **AWARDS**



### **Sahitya Academy awards for 2018 announced**

- **Sahitya Akademi** announced its **annual Awards in 24 languages**. Seven books of poetry, six novels, six short stories, three of literary criticism and two of essays have won the Sahitya Akademi Awards, 2018.
- Those who have won the award for their **collection of poetry** include **Sananta Tanti** in Assamese, **Paresh Narendra Kamat** in Konkani, **S Ramesan Nair** in Malayalam and **Dr Rama Kant Shukla** in Sanskrit.
- Writers who won the awards for **short stories** include **Sanjib Chattopadhyay** in Bengali, **Mushtaq Ahmed Mushtaq** in Kashmiri and **Prof Bina Thakur** in Maithili.
- **Inderjeet Kesar** in Dogri, **Anees Salim** in English, **Chitra Mudgal** in Hindi are among the **awardees in the novel category**.
- **Tamil writer, traveller, essayist and scriptwriter S. Ramakrishnan** has won the **Sahitya Akademi Award for 2018** for his novel **Sancharam**, which captures the lives of nagaswaram players in karisal bhoomi – the arid land – of Tamil Nadu.

**Sahitya Academy Award** is a **literary honor in India**, which the **Sahitya Akademi**, India's National Academy of Letters, **annually confers on writers of the most outstanding books of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages (24 languages, including the 22 listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, along with English and Rajasthani)** recognised by the **Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi**. Established in **1954**, the award comprises a **plaque and a cash prize of Rs. 1, 00, 000**. The plaque awarded by the **Sahitya Akademi** was designed by the Indian film-maker **Satyajit Ray**.

### **Delhi minister Imran Hussain gets PETA 'Hero to Animals' award for banning Chinese manjha**

- **Delhi Minister of Food Supplies, Environment and Forest and Elections Imran Hussain** was awarded by the **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)-India** for banning the **Chinese manjha**, or the **glass-coated kite strings**, across Delhi -- on December 1.
- The award, named **'Hero to Animals'**, was also given to **three other individuals and companies** that have pushed animal rights forward.

**People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)** is an **American animal rights organization** based in **Norfolk, Virginia**, and led by **Ingrid Newkirk**, its international president.

## Laureates from Bangladesh and China to receive UNESCO/Emir Jaber al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

- Disabilities' advocate Vashkar Bhattacharjee (Bangladesh), and private sector enterprise, Tencent (China) will be awarded the UNESCO/Emir Jaber al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (2018/2019) in a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters on 3 December, International Day of Persons with disabilities.

## IIT-Mandi professor wins Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award

- An assistant professor from the Indian Institute of Technology-Mandi (IIT-Mandi), Rajanish Giri has been awarded the Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA) 2018.
- Giri is selected for his proposed innovative idea on Zika virus Capsid Folding and inhibitor discovery.
- Additionally, he has proven expertise in understanding and solving the fundamental problems of protein folding in various structured and Intrinsically Disordered Proteins. He was selected by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology.

## Rattan Lal honoured with Glinka World Soil Prize 2018

- Rattan Lal, a distinguished university professor of soil science at the Ohio State University, has won the Glinka World Soil Prize 2018 in a ceremony at the Rome headquarters of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for his outstanding contribution to sustainable soil management.

The Glinka World Soil Prize honors individuals and organizations whose leadership and activities have contributed, or are still contributing to the promotion of sustainable soil management and the protection of soil resources. The Glinka Prize is an annual award for dynamic change-makers dedicated to solving one of our world's most pressing environmental issue: Soil Degradation.

## Charlotte Prodger wins 2018 Turner Prize with film shot on iPhone

- Glasgow-based artist Charlotte Prodger won the 2018 Turner Prize, Britain's prestigious contemporary art award at Tate Britain, with an autobiographical film shot on a mobile phone.
- For the first time, all four works shortlisted for the annual prize were films.

## Ministry of New and Renewable Energy conferred Skoch Award for National Significance

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India has been conferred the Skoch Award for National Significance at an event held recently in New Delhi. The award was received by Secretary, Ministry of New Renewable Energy Shri Anand Kumar.
- The award has been conferred on the Ministry considering its purpose and critical role played in installing about 73 GW renewable energy capacity in the country. With 21 per cent of total installed capacity, within the year renewable energy grossed a magic figure of providing one billion units of electricity in the country.

## Malala Yousafzai to be honoured by Harvard University for promoting girls education

- Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai is being honored by Harvard University for her work promoting girls' education.
- Harvard's Kennedy School stated that Yousafzai was awarded the 2018 Gleitsman Award.
- Yousafzai became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 when she was recognized for her global work supporting schooling for all children.



## Novelist Amitav Ghosh wins Jnanpith Award

- Eminent novelist Amitav Ghosh has been chosen for this year's Jnanpith Award. The award is given to an author for "outstanding contribution towards literature".
- Mr. Ghosh's novels include Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, and the Ibis trilogy — Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke, and Flood of Fire — discussing the opium trade between India and China run by the East India Company.

Jnanpith Award is an Indian literary award presented annually by the Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their "outstanding contribution towards literature". Instituted in 1961, the award is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India and English with no posthumous conferral. The first recipient of the award was the Malayalam writer G. Sankara Kurup who received the award in 1965 for his collection of poems, Odakkuzhal (The Bamboo Flute), published in 1950.

## Salman Khan, Anurag Kashyap win at Asian Academy Creative Awards

- Bollywood star Salman Khan won the best entertainment host/presenter for "Bigg Boss", and Anurag Kashyap won best direction (fiction) for season one of Netflix's original series "Sacred Games" at the inaugural Asian Academy Creative Awards in Singapore.

## Janhvi Kapoor honoured by Norwegian Consulate

- Actress Janhvi Kapoor, who made her Hindi film debut with 'Dhadak', received the 'Arets Stjerneskudd' award as the rising talent of the year by the Royal Norwegian Consulate General along with her producer father Boney Kapoor

## French government honours Ashok Amritraj

- Producer Ashok Amritraj was honoured with the French Knight of the National Order of Merit.
- Mr. Amritraj has been the producer of Hollywood films such as Ghost Rider: Spirit of Vengeance with Nicholas Cage and 99 Homes starring Andrew Garfield.
- The former CEO of National Geographic Films and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador was lauded for his contribution to the world of cinema and Indo-French film industry.

## Best Woman Parliamentarian Award for Kanimozhi

- DMK MP Kanimozhi has been selected for the Best Woman Parliamentarian (Rajya Sabha) set up by Lokmat newspaper for 2018.
- A jury of eminent personalities headed by Murali Manohar Joshi selected her for the award and it was presented to her by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on December 13.

The Outstanding Parliamentarian Award is an award given by the Indian Parliamentary Group to an outstanding sitting Member of the Indian Parliament for overall contribution in the Indian Parliament. It was instituted in 1992 by Shivraj Patil, who was the Speaker of Lok Sabha from 1991 to 1996.

## Asma Jahangir honoured with UN Human Rights Prize for 2018

- Late Pakistan lawyer and human rights activist Asma Jahangir has been awarded the UN Human Rights Prize for 2018.
- Her daughter Munizae Jahangir received the prestigious award on behalf of her mother. Jahangir was announced as one of the four winners of the quinquennial prize.
- Other winners included women's rights activist in Tanzania, Rebeca Gyumi; activist for the rights of indigenous Brazilian communities, Joenia Wapichana, and Ireland's human rights organisation, Front Line Defenders.

The United Nations Prizes in the Field of Human Rights were instituted by United Nations General Assembly in 1966. They are intended to "honour and commend people and organizations which have made an outstanding contribution to the promotion and protection of the human rights embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in other United Nations human rights instruments". They were first awarded in 1968, and they have been given out at five-year intervals since then. The award ceremony traditionally takes place on 10 December, which the UN has designated Human Rights Day.

### Jeff Bridges to receive Cecil B. DeMille Award at Golden Globes

- Jeff Bridges will receive Cecil B. DeMille Award at Golden Globe Awards. Bridges will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award during the 76th annual awards ceremony on Jan. 6, 2019.
- The iconic US actor is best known for playing The Dude in 1998's The Big Lebowski and as Otis 'Bad' Blake in 2009's Crazy Heart, for which he won an Oscar for best actor..

Golden Globe Awards are accolades bestowed by the 93 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association beginning in January 1944 recognizing excellence in film and television, both domestic and foreign.

### Film on menstruation, set in rural India, joins Oscar race

- Period. End of Sentence, a short film about women in India fighting against the deeply rooted stigma of menstruation, has made it to the Oscar shortlist in the Documentary Short Subject category.
- Directed by award-winning Iranian-American filmmaker Rayka Zehtabchi, the film is created by The Pad Project, an organisation established by an inspired group of students at the Oakwood School in Los Angeles and their teacher, Melissa Berton.

### Shaan, Arijit get Bengal government music award

- Popular singers Shaan and Arijit Singh were handed over the 'Sangeet Mahasamman' award constituted by the West Bengal government at the inaugural session of the Bengal music and folk culture festival in Kolkata.
- The leading Bengali singers like Rupankar Bagchi, Raghab Chattopadhyay, Manomoy Bhattacharya, Saikat Mitra, Pratik Chowdhury and music director Debojyoti Mishra were also given the 'Sangeet Mahasamman' awards.

### Sonam Kapoor Named PETA India's 2018 Person of the Year

- Actress Sonam Kapoor, a vegan, has been named People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India's Person of the Year for 2018. In 2016, Sonam was named PETA India's Hottest Vegetarian Celebrity, and she earned a Compassionate Business Award from the group a year later for her cruelty-free handbag line.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is an American animal rights organization based in Norfolk, Virginia, and led by Ingrid Newkirk, its international president.

### PM announces Sardar Patel Award for National Integration

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi announced annual Sardar Patel Award for National Integration at the DGPs/IGPs Conference at Kevadia.
- This award would be given for outstanding efforts to further national integration.
- "Sardar Patel devoted his life towards unifying India. The Sardar Patel Award for National Integration would be a fitting tribute to him and will inspire more people to work towards furthering India's unity and national integration."

### Union Minister Suresh Prabhu confers Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award at the 55th Skoch Summit in New Delhi

---

- Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu has conferred the Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award at the 55th Skoch Summit in New Delhi.
- The Skoch Challenger Awards are the highest independently instituted civilian honours. The Commerce and Industry Minister was awarded for his contribution to reforms, particularly in the power sector reforms.

### Indian Railways bags 17 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2018'

---

- The Railways has bagged 17 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2018'.
- It participated in three categories - railway stations, hospitals and institutions - out of the five major categories in which awards are given covering different subsectors.
- Under 'transport' category, railways obtained 10 awards for subsector railway station. Under 'building' category, it bagged three awards for subsector Railway hospitals.

### Rafi Award conferred to late music composer Laxmikant and singer Usha Timothy

---

- The Mohammed Rafi Award has been bestowed upon late music composer Laxmikant Shantaram Kudalkar and playback singer Usha Timothy.
- The award was instituted by an NGO headed by Mumbai BJP Chief Ashish Shelar.

### Documentary wins award in Asia South East International Short

---

- "Finding Beauty in Garbage", a documentary film based on the garbage of Dibrugarh town in Assam has received the Best Short documentary film award in Asia South East International Short Film Festival at Phnom Penh in Cambodia, its producer said on Friday.
- The film festival was held at Phnom Penh recently. The Film which is based on the garbage of Dibrugarh town in upper Aasam has also been selected for special screening for this year's Short and Sweet Film festival Utah, USA, Ooty Film Festival and Bengal International Film festival, said Satyamam Dutta, the producer of the film.
- The seven minute film was produced, directed and scripted by Dutta who is an Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer presently posted in Dibrugarh.

### Naidu confers 'Champions of Change' award to Biren

---

- Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh conferred the 'Champions of Change' award by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu for exemplary leadership in bringing about transformation in governance in the Northeastern state at an event organized at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.

## PERSONS IN NEWS

### Indian-origin woman appointed head of South Africa's prosecuting authority

- Indian-origin lawyer Shamila Batohi has been appointed to head South Africa's prosecuting authority, the first woman to head the agency.
- She will start her new role as the National Director of Public Prosecutions in February 2019.

### Former Indian diplomat elected to UN's Socio-Economic Cultural panel

- A former senior Indian diplomat, Preeti Saran, has been elected unopposed to an Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).
- Saran was elected to the CESCR for a four-year term beginning on the 1st of January next year.

### IAS officer AN Jha appointed as Finance Secretary

- 1982-batch IAS officer AN Jha has been appointed as Finance Secretary.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet cleared Mr Jha's appointment after Hasmukh Adhia retired on the 30th of last month.

### Janet Jackson, Def Leppard, Nicks join Rock Hall of Fame

- Janet Jackson won her place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame when the pop singer was named as one of seven music acts to be getting a place in music history.
- Ms. Jackson, the sister of the late Michael Jackson, will join Stevie Nicks and British bands — Def Leppard, Roxy Music, Radiohead, The Cure and The Zombies — as the latest inductees.

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, located on the shore of Lake Erie in downtown Cleveland, Ohio, recognizes and archives the history of the best-known and most influential artists, producers, engineers, and other notable figures who have had some major influence on the development of rock and roll. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation was established on April 20, 1983, by Atlantic Records founder and chairman Ahmet Ertegun. In 1986, Cleveland was chosen as the Hall of Fame's permanent home.

### RBI Governor Urjit Patel quits

- In a surprising move, Reserve Bank of India's Governor Urjit Patel resigned citing personal reasons, amid tensions between the government and the central bank on various issues.
- According to sources, N.S. Vishwanathan, who is the seniormost among the four Deputy Governors, has been given charge till the government finds a successor. Mr. Vishwanathan was appointed as Deputy Governor in July 2016.

### CAG Rajiv Mehrishi appointed as Vice-Chair of UN Panel of Auditors

- Comptroller and Auditor General Rajiv Mehrishi has become the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors. The United Nations Panel of Auditors consists of External Auditors of the United Nations and its agencies.
- Presently, the panel consists of 11 countries -- India, Germany, Chile, Canada, France, Italy, Philippines, Ghana, Indonesia, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Currently, the panel is chaired by the Comptroller and Auditor General of the UK.

### Shri Bharat Bhushan Vyas takes Oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, UPSC

- Shri Bharat Bhushan Vyas, IAS took the Oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The Oath was administered by Shri Arvind Saxena, Chairman, UPSC.



## India's Prathamesh Maulingkar wins Mister Supranational 2

---

- Goa's Prathamesh Maulingkar has created history by becoming the first Asian/Indian to win this year's Mister Supranational title in a competition held in Poland.

## Manipur honour for boxer Mary Kom

---

- Manipur honoured boxing champion Mary Kom with the title 'Meethoileima' at a function in the Khuman Lampak Stadium.
- Chief Minister N. Biren Singh also gave her a cheque for Rs. 10 lakh.

## Brijendra Pal Singh nominated as new president of FTII

---

- The Information and Broadcasting Ministry nominated Brijendra Pal Singh as the new president of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Society and Chairman of Governing Council.
- Mr Singh is at present the Vice Chairman of the FTII Governing Council. The position was vacant after actor Anupam Kher stepped down in October this year.

## Philippines contestant Catriona Gray named Miss Universe

---

- Catriona Gray of Philippines clinched Miss Universe 2018 crown beating contestants from 93 other countries.
- Gray edged out first runner-up Tamaryn Green of South Africa and third-placed Sthefany Gutierrez of Venezuela.
- The office of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was quick to congratulate the winner. Gray is the fourth Filipina to be named Miss Universe.

## Diplomat Harsh Vardhan Shringla appointed new Indian Ambassador to US

---

- Seasoned diplomat Harsh Vardhan Shringla was appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United States.
- Mr Shringla, a 1984-batch Indian Foreign Service diplomat will succeed Navtej Sarna.

## IOA Secy Gen Mehta becomes president of South Asian fencing body

---

- Fencing Association of India (FAI) president Rajeev Mehta has been made the head of the South Asian body for a four-year term.
- FAI secretary general Bashir Ahmed Khan will also hold a similar post at the South Asian Fencing Federation.

## Trump names Mulvaney as new Chief of Staff

---

- President Trump abruptly named Mick Mulvaney, currently the director of the Office of Management and Budget, as acting White House chief of staff, elevating a conservative ideologue with congressional experience to steer the administration through a treacherous phase.
- Mulvaney replaces John F. Kelly, a retired four-star Marine Corps general who failed to impose discipline on a chaotic West Wing and was ousted by Trump after the president grew tired of Kelly's restrictive management.

## American Adventurer Colin O'Brady completes solo trek across Antarctica

---

- An American adventurer has become the first person to complete a solo trek across Antarctica without assistance of any kind.
- Colin O'Brady, took 54 days to complete the nearly 1,000 mile crossing of the frozen continent from north to south.

## Patrick Shanahan to replace James Mattis as US Defense Secretary

---

- **United States President Donald Trump** has announced that he will **replace Defence Secretary Jim Mattis** with his deputy **Patrick Shanahan** as acting Pentagon chief on January 1.

## Rahul Chhabra concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Somalia

---

- **Shri Rahul Chhabra** presently **High Commissioner of India** to the **Republic of Kenya** has been concurrently accredited as the next **Ambassador of India** to the **Federal Republic of Somalia**, with residence in Nairobi.

## Y.K. Sailas Thangal concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Liberia

---

- **Shri Y.K. Sailas Thangal (IFS:1996)**, presently **Ambassador of India** to the **Republic of Cote d' Ivoire**, has been concurrently accredited as the next **Ambassador of India** to the **Republic of Liberia**, with residence in Abidjan.

## Oscar and Grammy winning lyricist Norman Gimbel passed away

---

- **Norman Gimbel**, an **Oscar-and-Grammy-winning lyricist** has **passed away** in **Montecito, California**
- **Gimbel** was best known for writing the lyrics of **"Killing Me Softly With His Song"** and the English lyrics for **"The Girl From Ipanema"** with his writing partner **Charles Fox**. **Gimbel** was **inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame** in 1984.

## Legendary filmmaker Mrinal Sen passes away

---

- **Dadasaheb Phalke** award-winning **film director Mrinal Sen**, the last of the triumvirate of directing icons, **Satyajit Ray** and **Ritwik Ghatak**, passed away.
- The auteur, who started the **"new wave of Indian cinema"** with **"Bhuvan Shome"**, was one of the most acclaimed filmmakers to bring recognition to country's film industry on international platforms. **His 1982 Bengali film "Kharij"** won the jury prize at the **1983 Cannes Film Festival**.
- In a tribute to **Sen**, the **Cannes Festival in 2010** screened his restored masterpiece **"Kandahar"** (**"The Ruins"**) in their 'Cannes Classic' section, after it was restored frame by frame at the National Film Archives at Pune. He was a **member of the Rajya Sabha** from 1998 to 2003. **Sen's last film as a director "Aamaar Bhuvan"** (**"This, My Land"**) released in 2002.

## Former Nigerian President Shehu Shagari dies

---

- **Shehu Shagari**, **Nigeria's second president**, whose **civilian tenure** was sandwiched between two **military rulers** in an era rocked by coups, has passed away. **Shehu Shagari**, **Nigeria's second president**, whose civilian tenure was sandwiched between two military rulers in an era rocked by coups, has died.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### India's first indigenous film festival in Feb.

- India's first international indigenous film festival will take place in February next year in Odisha.
- An initiative of activist film collective Video Republic, that has been campaigning for indigenous communities in the State, the three-stop event will kick off in Bhubaneswar on February 19, move on to Puri from February 21 before culminating in an interaction with the adivasi communities at Niyamgiri.
- It will showcase films made by indigenous people or by non-indigenous filmmakers in collaboration with the indigenous communities.

### All new vehicles to come with pre-fitted high-security registration plates from April 2019

- "All new vehicles will be sold pre-fitted with High-Security Registration Plates - HSRP from the 1st of April next year".
- "The notification mandates that the high-security registration plate including the third registration mark shall be supplied by the vehicle manufacturers along with the vehicles manufactured on or after the 1st day of April, 2019 to their dealers and dealers shall place a mark of registration on such plates and affix them on the vehicle,".

### National Rail Museum & Madame Tussauds Wax Museum join hands to boost tourism

- National Rail Museum and Madame Tussauds Wax Museum have joined hands to provide combo offer to Delhi NCR tourists.
- As a part of the collaboration, a special discount of 35 per cent on ticket prices will be offered to Rail Museum visitors when they visit Madame Tussauds Museum.
- Similarly, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum visitors will be getting discount of 30 per cent on combo packages of National Rail Museum.

### Gujarat: CM approves Rs 50-crore fund for Science & Tech innovation

- Chief Minister Vijay Rupani approved a Rs 50-crore Science & Technology Innovation (STI) Fund to provide assistance up to Rs 50 lakh to central and state universities and colleges, recognised by UGC and AICTE, for a period of maximum three years, to develop latent talents and encourage research and development in strategic fields.
- "Gujarat thus becomes the first state to create such a fund for high-end technology and innovation, artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, polymers and special materials, among others,".

### Combined Guided Weapon Firing Exercise at Air Force Station Suryalanka

- Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa PVSM AVSM YSM VM ADC, Chief of the Air Staff arrived at Air Force Station Suryalanka on 07 Dec 18 on a two day visit to witness the combined guided weapons firing exercise of Surface to Air Missile.
- This was a first of its kind Exercise undertaken by the Indian Air Force in which firing of four different class of missiles – AKASH, SPYDER, OSA-AK-M and IGLA was successfully carried out on 05th, 07th and 08th Dec 2018 during day and night in an integrated networked environment.

### International conference on bears starts in Agra

- In Uttar Pradesh, more than 80 delegates from 11 countries are participated in an international conference on bears in Agra.

- The four-day conference is aimed at **sharing knowledge on principles of the welfare of bears and other wild animals in zoos, sanctuaries and rescue centres.**
- The conference has been **Hosted by Wildlife SOS in collaboration with Bear Care Group from the US and Canada.**

### NGT appoints former HC judge U C Dhyani to monitor Ganga cleaning

---

- The **National Green Tribunal** has appointed former Uttarakhand High Court judge, Justice U C Dhyani, as **head of the three-member committee** to oversee **rejuvenation work of the Ganga River.**
- A bench **headed by chairperson A K Goel** had earlier **named Justice Arun Tandon** as **head of the panel** which was set up on August 6 this year.

### India Water Impact Summit-2018 held from 5th December

---

- Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation **Shri Nitin Gadkari** **inaugurated India Water Impact Summit 2018**, being jointly organized by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and the **Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga)** from 5-7 December 2018 in **New Delhi.**
- The India Water Impact Summit is an annual event where stakeholders get together to **discuss, debate and develop model solutions for some of the biggest water related problems in the country.**

### Delhi government launches common mobility card for buses, metro trains

---

- The **Delhi government** launched a **common mobility card** which can be used by people for travelling in **metro trains, DTC and cluster buses.**
- The government will also launch an app through which commuters can **plan multi-modal trips, including buses and metro trains in the city.**
- Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) **Managing Director Mangu Singh** launched the 'rebranded' common mobility card named '**ONE**'.

### Gangotri, Yamunotri included under PRASAD scheme

---

- The **Centre** has included **Gangotri and Yamunotri** in **Uttarakhand**, **Amarkantak** in **Madhya Pradesh** and **Parasnath** in **Jharkhand** under a central scheme to **develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country.**
- With the new additions, the number of sites under the **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)** launched by the ministry in 2014-15 has now become **41 in 25 states.**

### Maharashtra CM Fadnavis launches SMART initiative for Agribusiness, Rural Transformation

---

- In a bid to **transform rural Maharashtra**, Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis** has **launched a unique initiative called "SMART"**, which stands for **State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation.**
- This **World Bank assisted project** aims to **revamp agricultural value chains**, with special focus on **marginal farmers across 1,000 villages.**

### Odisha's New Programme for Transparency, Awareness of Government Schemes

---

- The **programme, the Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability or PEETHA** aims to **improve transparency in the distribution of individual and social benefits.**
- **PEETHA** is a sub-scheme of the **Odisha government's flagship Ama Gaon Ama Bikas Yojana.**



## Kiren Rijju inaugurates All India Police Shooting Competition 2018 at Manesar

---

- Minister of State for Home **Kiren Rijju** inaugurated the **19th All India Police (AIPDM) Shooting Competition-2018** at **Manesar, Gurugram** in **Haryana**.
- The competition continued till 11th of this month. More than **750 participants** of **31 teams** of **State Police Forces** and **Central Armed Police Forces** are participated in the event.

## Mexico's Vanessa Poncede Leon wins Miss World 2018 crown

---

- Mexico's **Vanessa Ponce de Leon** won the coveted **Miss World 2018 crown** at a grand event held in the Chinese city, **Sanya**. Thailand's **Nicolene Pichapa Limsnukan** was declared the **runner-up**.
- **Former Miss World Manushi Chhillar** presented the **crown to the new winner** during the pageant in which **118 contestants** participated. **India's Anukreethy Vas** failed to make a mark at the **pageant** as she could not even make it to the top 30.

## PM hands over tricolour to Arunima Sinha on her expedition to Mount Vinson, Antarctica

---

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** handed over the **tricolour flag** to **Arunima Sinha**, marking the beginning of her expedition to **Mount Vinson, Antarctica**.
- **Arunima Sinha** is the **first female Divyang** to climb **Mount Everest**. **Arunima Sinha** had earlier conquered the highest peaks in five continents, becoming the **first female Divyang** to achieve the feat.

## Regional Conference on 'Good Governance- Focus on Aspirational Districts' begins in Thiruvananthapuram

---

- The **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)**, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India in association with **Government of Kerala** is organized a **Regional Conference** on **December 10- 11, 2018** at **Thiruvananthapuram** on **'Good Governance - Focus on Aspirational Districts'**.
- The **Governor of Kerala Shri Justice (Retd.) P. Sathasivam** inaugurated the 2-day event. The Department has organized 30 Regional Conferences till date.

## Five State Assembly elections results 2018

---

- The **Congress ends with its strongest finish in state elections in recent times - winning Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan**, and staking claim to **form government in Madhya Pradesh**, where it is just ahead of the **BJP** in a cliffhanger. The **Congress party** has made big gains in all three states.
- In **Chhattisgarh**, **Congress party** has won **68 of the state's 90 seats**, a two-thirds majority and a gain of 29 seats from last time. In **Rajasthan**, **Congress party** has won **99 of the state's 199 seats**. In **Madhya Pradesh**, **Congress party** has won **114 of the state's 230 seats**,
- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** congratulated **K Chandrashekhhar Rao** of the **Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS)** for his sweep of **Telangana** and the **Mizo National Front (MNF)** for winning **Mizoram**. In **Telangana**, **Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS)** has won **88 of the state's 119 seats**. In **Mizoram**, **Mizo National Front (MNF)** has won **26 of the state's 40 seats**.

## India, Nepal and Bhutan plan task force to protect wildlife

---

- The governments of **India, Nepal and Bhutan** are actively considering having a joint task force for allowing free movement of wildlife across political boundaries and checking smuggling of wildlife across the **Kanchenjunga Landscape**, a trans-boundary region spread across **Nepal, India and Bhutan**.
- The landscape stretches along the southern side of **Mount Kanchenjunga** and covers an area of 25,080 sq km spread across parts of eastern **Nepal (21%)**, **Sikkim and West Bengal (56%)** and western and southwestern parts of **Bhutan (23%)**.

## First National Workshop on Explosives Detection inaugurated at Pune

---

- The first National Workshop on Explosives Detection was inaugurated at High Energy Materials Research Laboratory Pune.
- A total of 200 delegates from different **DRDO labs, Army, CRPF, CISF, Police, Academic Institutes, Industry and other Security agencies** are attending the workshop.

## Tamil Nadu Government Launches 24-Hour Helpline for Women

---

- **Tamil Nadu government** launched a 24-hour helpline for women, among others, facing domestic violence and sexual harassment.
- **Chief Minister K Palaniswami** launched the initiative, developed at a cost of Rs. 62.70 lakh.
- Women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment at home or workplaces can **contact the toll-free helpline 181**, to get assistance ranging from police help, legal aid or medical services including ambulance, an official release here said.

## Shi Yomi becomes 23rd district of Arunachal Pradesh

---

- **Arunachal Pradesh** got its 23rd district with the formal inauguration of **Shi Yomi**, carved out of the West Siang district.
- Two more districts would be created, which would increase the total number of districts to 25.

## Home Ministry launches Twitter account to spread awareness about cybercrimes

---

- **Home Ministry** has launched a Twitter account to spread awareness about cybercrimes and normal precautions to be taken.
- The **Twitter handles - @CyberDost** - is aimed at enhancing people's basic knowledge about cybercrimes and precautions to be taken for prevention.

## UP Government decides to establish an umbrella university to be named after former PM late Atal Bihari Vajpayee

---

- The **Uttar Pradesh Government** has decided to establish an umbrella university to control all the medical and dental colleges and nursing institutions in the state.
- The university will be named after former Prime Minister late **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**.

## Two day Conference 'AYUSHCHARYA' on Dinacharya and Ritucharya for public health promotion organised at New Delhi

---

- **All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi** organized a National conference 'AYUSHCHARYA' on **Dinacharya (Daily Regimen)** and **Ritucharya (Seasonal Regimen)** for public health promotion" on 10th and 11th of December, 2018.
- The Minister of State for **AYUSH Shri Shripad Yesso Naik** delivered the valedictory address at the Conference and released the **Dinacharya booklet and AYUSHCHARYA Calendar-2019**. The 3rd Ayurveda Day was

dedicated to public health under which series of programmes were organised and the present conference was part of it.

**Shripad Yesso Naik is the current minister of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) and former Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare. He is the Member of Parliament from North Goa constituency, representing the Bharatiya Janata Party.**

## Netflix will debut first African original in 2019

- **Streaming giant Netflix will launch its first original series made in Africa in 2019. “#QueenSono — Africa's first Netflix original! A thrilling story about a kickass female spy.**

## Parliamentary panel objects to diversion of clean energy fund to compensate states for GST

- **A parliamentary panel, headed by BJP's Murli Manohar Joshi, has taken objection to the Centre's move to divert a large chunk of the Rs 86,440-crore National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) to compensate states for their revenue loss following the rollout of goods and services tax. Such a move, says the committee on estimates, will impact efforts to check global warming.**
- **In its report on the Performance of National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), the committee has expressed its “concern” that despite the coal cess helping generate substantial revenue, the fund was not made available to fuel clean energy initiatives, people aware of the content of the report. Even the low allocation, it observed, was not utilised, indicating “poor planning and execution” by the implementation agencies.**

## Three days Pratibha Parva organized in all primary and secondary schools

- **In Madhya Pradesh, three days Pratibha Parva, a programme to nurture talent in school children is organized in all primary and secondary schools.**
- **Around 70 lakh students of more than one lakh government schools will take part in this congregation of children.**
- **The aim of this programme is to assess the skill of students in quality education and strengthening the corrective academic efforts.**
- **"Pratibha Parva is an important programme of the School Education Department to improve the quality of elementary education.**
- **The Pratibha Parva began simultaneously in 1 lakh 14 thousand 609 primary and secondary schools of the state. More than 70 lakh children studying in Class 1 to 8 took part in the Pratibha Parva.**

## Jharkhand gets "Krishi Karman" award in rice category

- **Jharkhand has been selected for "Krishi Karman" award in the rice category from the Union Ministry of Agriculture.**
- **The award to be given away in February next year carries a cash prize of Rs 2 crore and a citation.**

## DD Kisan launches a first-of-its-kind reality show 'Mahila Kisan Awards'

- **DD Kisan launched a first-of-its-kind reality show 'Mahila Kisan Awards'. The show is being telecasted from 17th of this month and sees participation of women farmers from across the length and breadth of India.**
- **Speaking on the occasion, Prasara Bharati Chairman, A Surya Prakash congratulated the DD Kisan team for conceptualizing Mahila Kisan Awards.**
- **Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry Amit Khare added that the show will showcase talent from across the country where every participant is a winner and a source of inspiration on how to move ahead together.**

### The dossier on 'Monuments Forts of Deccan Sultanate' has been submitted to UNESCO for 2019-20 initiative

- At present, India has 42 sites listed under tentative list which is pre-requisite condition for inscription as World Heritage Sites.
- In this year, 'The Walled city of Jaipur' is under process for nomination of World Heritage Site.
- The dossier on 'Monuments Forts of Deccan Sultanate' has been submitted to UNESCO for 2019-20 initiative.

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris. **Audrey Azoulay** appointed as the **Director-general of the** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), becoming the **second female leader of the organization.**

### India, China hold first People-to-People Exchanges meeting

- External Affairs Minister Sushma and her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi co-chaired the first-ever meeting of India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges in New Delhi.
- India and China had decided to set up people to people mechanism during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in China.

### A UNESCO Category 2, International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography inaugurated at INCOIS, Hyderabad

- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment and Forests & Climate Change, **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the newly constructed International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOcean) Complex in the INCOIS campus at Hyderabad.
- Union Minister dedicated ITCOcean to the Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee who had contributed significantly to the growth of science and technology in the country.

### PM releases the book "Timeless Laxman

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi released the coffee table book "Timeless Laxman", based on the famous cartoonist RK Laxman.
- The book has been penned by cartoonist's daughter-in-law Usha Srinivas Laxman.

### "Changing India" authored by former PM Manmohan Singh launched

- Former PM Manmohan Singh launched his book 'Changing India'-a 6-volume collection of his speeches and writings.
- Changing India, a set of five volumes, is the definitive expression of Singh's perspectives on a wide range of economic, social, and political issues as they evolved over his long and eventful career. It covers a broad span of time, from his days in academia during the 1950s to 2014 when he completed two consecutive terms as Prime Minister.

### Mobile app for global aviation summit launched

- The civil aviation ministry along with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched an official mobile app for the global aviation summit to be held in Mumbai.
- The app named 'GAS 2019,' which is available on both play store and iOS, enables users to interact with the co-delegates and speakers besides providing a platform for networking through personal and group chats



## Prime Minister inaugurated a new Airport Complex, and an Integrated Command and Control Centre for the Kumbh Mela

---

- The **Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi** inaugurated a new Airport Complex, and an Integrated Command and Control Centre for the Kumbh Mela, at Prayagraj.
- The Prime Minister also performed Ganga Puja, and visited the Swachh Kumbh Exhibition. He visited the Akshay Vat in Prayagraj. He also dedicated to the nation, inaugurated, or laid the Foundation Stone for various development projects at Andawa in Prayagraj.

## Cabinet approves construction of new 4- Lane Bridge across river Ganga at Patna

---

- The Union Cabinet has **approved a new bridge across the Ganga River at Patna in Bihar**. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the **project for construction of 5.634 km long new 4 Lane Bridge parallel to the existing MG Setu on NH-19**.
- Cabinet also approved establishment of two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) one at Madurai in Tamil Nadu and another at Bibinagar in Telangana.

## Uttar Pradesh government presents supplementary budget

---

- **Finance Minister of the state Rajesh Agrawal** presented the second supplementary budget of the government which is around **8 thousand crores**.
- The **budget is aimed to provide the fund** for ongoing development works **related mainly to Kumbh 2019**.

## Vice President inaugurates a three-day Conference on Soft Power

---

- **Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated a three-day conference on **Soft Power in New Delhi**.
- **Soft power** has been defined as the ability of nations to shape the preferences and influence the behavior of other nations through appeal and attraction as opposed to coercion.

## 'Shiksha Setu': Haryana Launches App to Ensure Better Connectivity with College Students

---

- The **Haryana government** has **launched a mobile application to provide students information on attendance, fee, online admission and scholarships of all government colleges** of the state.
- The '**Shiksha Setu**' app would bring transparency in the department and college administration, while ensuring better connectivity between students, parents, teachers and officials.

## Dr Jitendra Singh launches iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training Programme)

---

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) **Dr Jitendra Singh** launched the **iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training Programme)** developed by Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.
- It will **augment the existing training mechanism with online module-based training** coupled with certification.
- This will make **training inputs available to government servant on site and on flexitime basis**.
- The **initiative aims at “Competent Civil Services for Good Governance”**. He also **launched Hybrid Course on Administrative Laws** developed by DoPT in collaboration with the premier law school, National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru.

## Maharashtra government approves Rs 4,089 crore for Tembhu irrigation scheme

---

- The **Maharashtra government** approved a sum of **Rs 4,089 crore for the Tembhu lift irrigation scheme in Satara district**. The project will benefit the perennially drought prone areas of Satara, Solapur and Sangli districts.

## Rs. 2,250-cr. scheme for farmers in Jharkhand

---

- Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das announced a Rs. 2,250-crore scheme to help 22.76 lakh medium and marginal farmers of the State double their income by 2022.
- The State government will give Rs. 5,000 per acre to 22.76 lakh medium and marginal farmers from the next financial year.
- “Under the new Mukhya Mantri Krishi Yojana, Rs. 2,250 crore will be spent. The scheme will start from the 2019-20 financial year”.

## “International Workshop on Integrated Protection of Civilians (IPOC) in UN Peacekeeping Operations”

---

- A Joint workshop between ICRC and CUNPK on “Integrated Protection on Civilians (IPOC)” in UN peacekeeping operations was conducted at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi from 17 – 21 Dec 2018.
- The seminar focused on Protection of Civilians (PoC), Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) and Child Protection (CP) issues on vulnerable populations and UN strategies to address the ongoing challenges.

## Odisha government announces Rs 10,000 crore schemes for development of farmers

---

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced a Rs 10,000-crore scheme for the overall development of farmers in the state.
- The state cabinet has approved the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, worth over Rs 10,000 crore, for the development of farmers in the state.
- “The KALIA will further accelerate agricultural prosperity in the state and reduce poverty.

## President of India inaugurates Centre of Excellence for Genetic Blood Disorders at Prathima Institute in Karimnagar

---

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Centre of Excellence for Sickle Cell Anaemia, Thalassaemia and Other Genetic Blood Disorders at the Prathima Institute of Medical Sciences in Karimnagar, Telangana.

## Railways launches new EMU train with 130 kmph speed

---

- The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) rolled out the mini version of Train 18 as it launched the new generation Mainline Electrical Multiple Unit (MEMU) with underslung equipment and some features from the Train 18.
- These new MEMUs which are capable of running at around 130 kilometres an hour also equipped with a CCTV surveillance system both inside the coaches and outside the driver's cab, a Talk Back system to enable passengers to talk to the driver in case of emergency and a GPS based passenger information and announcement system.

## India-China Film Festival concluded in New Delhi

---

- In order to strengthen people-to-people connect and deepen cultural understanding between the two countries, an India-China Film Festival organized during the first India-China High Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges from 22nd to 24th December, 2018. The three day Festival was organized at Siri Fort Auditorium II, New Delhi by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India.
- A total of seven films including four Chinese and three Indian Films will be screened during the Festival. The opening film of the Festival was ‘CZ12’ also known as ‘Chinese Zodiac’. The list of Indian films screened includes ‘Dangal’ (Hindi), ‘Maacher Jhol’ (Bengali) and ‘Ventilator’ (Marathi).

## **‘Sadaiv Atal’—Samadhi of Bharat Ratna & Former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee dedicated to the Nation**

---

- **“Sadaiv Atal’, the Samadhi of Bharat Ratna & former PM Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee** which was dedicated to the nation on 25th Dec, 2018-- reflects Atalji’s personality as a poet, humanist, statesman & a great leader.
- The central Samadhi platform comprises of nine square black polished granite solid stone blocks, capped with a ‘diya’ in the center. The number nine holds significance and represents the navarasas, navaratras and navagrahas.

## **Nitin Gadkari lays foundation stone of eleven projects for Yamuna rejuvenation**

---

- Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping **Shri Nitin Gadkari laid foundation stone of eleven projects for Yamuna Rejuvenation under Namami Gange Programme in New Delhi.**
- **A total of 11 projects** have been taken up under **Namami Gange Programme by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** to conserve the River Yamuna in Delhi. Most of the projects are for the sewerage infrastructure and are at various stages of implementation.
- **These projects under Yamuna Action Plan (YAP) III** are located in three drainage zones namely **Kondli, Rithala and Okhla in Delhi.**

## **Madhya Pradesh: Kuno notified as national park**

---

- **State government has declared Kuno National Park** with inclusion of an area spread along **404.0758 sq.km** in addition to the earlier notified area of 344.686 sq km making a **total of 748.7618 sq km area.**
- **Kuno National Park**, also called **Palpur-Kuno National Park** and **Kuno-Palpur** lies in the Sheopur district and Morena district of north western Madhya Pradesh, a state in central India.

## **President Ramnath Kovind launched 'Sadbhaav Utsav'**

---

- **President Ramnath Kovind visited Mumbai to launch 'Sadbhaav Utsav'.** He participated in the Wellness festival organised on the occasion of 100 year anniversary of the Yoga Institute. The programme was organised at **Bandra Kurla Complex's MMRDA ground.**

## **26th National Child Science Congress inaugurated by CM Naveen Patnaik**

---

- The **26th National Child Science Congress** has been inaugurated by the Chief Minister **Shri Naveen Patnaik in Bhubaneswar.**
- Inaugurating the Congress session, **Shri Patnaik** has said that the **progress of science is essential for the National growth and healthy Nation.**
- **Odisha government is organized various programmes for the development of scientific temper among students.**

## **Proposals of several states approved for implementation of Mahila Police Volunteer Scheme**

---

- The **Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs** has envisaged engagement of **Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in the States/UTs** who will act as a link between police and community and help women in distress. **All Chief Secretaries of States/UTs were requested to adopt this initiative in their respective States.**
- **Haryana is the first state to adopt the initiative at Karnal and Mahendergarh District** on a pilot basis under **Nirbhaya Fund** during the **financial year 2016-2017.** Further, the proposals of **Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh** have also been **approved for implementation of MPVs.**

## The 6th edition of Yuva Natya Samaroh

---

- The 6th edition of Yuva Natya Samaroh, a theatre festival of five young directors begins in New Delhi with some of the best modern, mythological as well as Parsi style drama.
- Organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad, Department of Art, Culture and Languages, Government of Delhi, the five-day festival was held at Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi.

## Government introduces Minimum Support Price for 17 new items of Minor Forest Produce; revises MSP for 23 items of MFP

---

- The Government has revised the Minimum Support Price of 23 items of Minor Forest Produce items and has introduced MSP for 17 new MFP items.
- The 23 items whose MSP has been revised include those Minor Forest Produce items which have been covered under the scheme since its inception in the year 2013-14.

## Assam: 3rd Edition of Dwijing Festival kicked off in Chirang

---

- The much-anticipated Dwijing Festival began at the Aie River Park, Hagrama Bridge in Chirang district, Assam. The 3rd edition of the festival was inaugurated by Assam Minister for Public Health Engineering (PHE) Rihon Daimary.

## MoU signed to develop a mobile Audio Guide App for five iconic sites

---

- The Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Shri. K J Alphons handed over a Memorandum of Understanding under the 'Adopt a Heritage' project to M/s Resbird Technologies for development of a mobile Audio Guide App for five iconic sites.
- The five iconic sites for which the mobile Audio Guide App is to be developed are Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Kaziranga (Assam), Colva Beach (Goa), Kumarakom (Kerala) and Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

## Keonjhar Police honours 10 Ashok Chakra recipient with postage stamps

---

- Under "My Stamp" scheme, Keonjhar Police in collaboration with India Post has issued 10 postage stamps, each featuring the Ashok Chakra Awardees from Police Department across the country. The step is a symbolic gesture in honour and memory of the ultimate sacrifice of heroes of the nation. Notably, the stamps issued by the district police are of Rs 5 denomination with a background picture of the Konark Sun Temple.
- Ashok Chakra" is India's highest peacetime gallantry medal. It is peacetime equivalent to "Param-Veer Chakra" and around 84 people have received Ashok Chakra so far.

## 12th Global Healthcare Summit inaugurated in Mumbai

---

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 12th Global Healthcare Summit organized by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in Mumbai.
- President addressed The Yoga Institute, Mumbai, which is celebrating its centenary.

## Cabinet approves Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012

---

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children.
- The Act defines a child as any person below eighteen years of age, and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child. The act is gender neutral.



### The book titled “Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From” was released

---

- The book titled “Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From” written by Tony Joseph, was released.
- "Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From" looks at **how and when modern humans first arrived in India; what evidence they left behind; who their descendants are today; who else followed them as migrants to this land; how and when farming started and the world's largest civilisation of its time was built; when and why this civilisation declined; and what happened next.**
- The **first modern humans arrived in India around 65,000 years ago as part of an Out of Africa migration** that populated the entire world ultimately. The genetic lineage of these first migrants that the book calls ‘First Indians’ still dominate the Indian population and accounts for 50-65 per cent of the Indian ancestry today.
- The **second major migration happened 9000 to 5000 years ago**, when agriculturists from the Zagros region of Iran moved into India's northwestern part and mixed with the **First Indians and helped speed up the farming experiments** that were already beginning in the subcontinent.

### 11th Bengaluru International Film Festival to kick start in February

---

- With a special theme of 'Nature's Fury,' The Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFES) is all set for its 11th edition, which will be held from February 07, 2019 to February 14, 2019, in Bengaluru.
- **Being organised by the Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy and Department of Information and Public Relations** of Government of Karnataka, the opening event of the festival will be held in the presence of National and International delegates, filmmakers and celebrities in Bengaluru at Banquet Hall, Vidhanasoudha.

### Rosogolla fest kicks off in Kolkata with the launch of postal stamp of the inventor

---

- A postal stamp dedicated to **Nabin Chandra Das, inventor of Rasogolla, West Bengal's spongy, syrupy round-shaped sweet**, was launched on the inaugural day of the three-day festival marking the 150th year of its invention.
- The fest, **Bagbazar-O-Rasogolla Utsob**, is being organised at Bagbazar Gourimata Udyan from December 28-30. West Bengal won the Geographical Indication (GI) for 'Banglar Rasogolla' on November 14, 2017, signifying that the specific variety of the spongy, syrupy sweet originated in its territory.

### NHRC launches toll-free helpline, facility to file complaint through CSC

---

- The NHRC launched a toll-free number and also a facility to file complaints through Common Service Centre (CSC), officials said. **Justice (retd) HL Dattu, the Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, unveiled the toll-free number -- 14433 --** at a brief ceremony at the Manav Adhikar Bhawan, the headquarters of the rights body.
- As a part of the collaborative programme with the Common Service Centre team, the NHRC, to begin with, has **shortlisted 750 Common Service Centres with at least one each in a district.** The service will be expanded to all the CSCs in a phased manner".

### Indian-American teenager wins Cornell University hackathon

---

- **An Indian-American teenager has won the inaugural “Digital Transformation Hackathon” at Cornell University** for designing a device to detect the actual pain level of a patient during a diagnosis.
- The **device designed by 17-year-old Mahum Siddiqi** and her team uses neurological activity occurring in one's brain to help doctors more efficiently determine someone's pain levels.

### Swachh Surveksahan award for GHMC

---

- The **Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation** was awarded **Best Capital City in the Solid Waste Management** in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings.
- According to a press release, the **Swachh Survekshan** survey ranks cities on various sanitation parameters. The **GHMC** was also at the **27th place** among **4,041 cities**.

### Centre brings booklet on cyber safety for school children

---

- The **booklet**, titled '**A Handbook for Students on cyber Safety**', also deals with the **problems of cyber bullying, cyber grooming and email fraud**. It advises teenagers against accepting friend requests from unknown people on social media.
- The **booklet explains various kinds of cyber-crimes** like **identity theft, job fraud, email spoofing** and how children can overcome them.



## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World AIDS Day- 1st December

- **World AIDS Day, designated on 1 December every year since 1988** is an international day **dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection** and mourning those who have died of the disease. Government and health officials, non-governmental organizations, and individuals around the world observe the day, often with education on AIDS prevention and control.
- More than **35 million people have died of HIV or AIDS**, making it one of the most destructive pandemics in history.

### Border Security Force celebrating its 54th Raising Day

- The **Border Security Force, BSF**, the sentinels of Indian borders with **Pakistan and Bangladesh** is celebrated its **54rd Raising Day on 1st December**.
- **Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju** attended the **main ceremony** at Chhawla Camp in New Delhi.

### International Day of Persons with Disabilities

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** is observed on **3, December 2018**.
- The annual observance of the Day was proclaimed in **1992**, by a **United Nations General Assembly** resolution.
- International Day of Persons with Disabilities **aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development** and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.
- The theme for this year is **‘Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality’**.
- The **United Nations** launched the **first-ever flagship report on disability and development "UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development 2018 - Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities"**.

### World Soil Day

- The **world soil day** is observed annually on **5th December** to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- The theme for this year's World Soil Day is - **'Be the Solution to Soil Pollution'**.

### International Civil Aviation Day: 7 December

- In **1996** the **United Nations General Assembly** proclaimed that **7 December** was to be the **International Civil Aviation Day**. The day has been celebrated by the **International Civil Aviation Organization** since **7 December 1994**, the **50th anniversary** of the signing the **Convention on International Civil Aviation**.
- The purpose of **International Civil Aviation Day** is to help generate and reinforce worldwide awareness of the **importance of international civil aviation** to the social and economic development of States, and of the unique role of **ICAO** in helping States to **cooperate and realize a truly global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind**.

### Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December

- **Human Rights Day** is observed every year on **10 December** – the day the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted, in **1948**, the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.
- This year, **Human Rights Day** marks the **70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being -- regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin,

property, birth or other status. It is the **most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.**

- This year the **Human Rights Day** was celebrated with the **theme “Stand Up For Human Rights”**.

## International Mountain Day: 11 December

---

- **International Mountain Day**, held each year on **11 December**, which was established by the **UN General Assembly in 2003** to encourage sustainable development in mountains, and **Mountain Day**, a national holiday in Japan as of 2016.
- The 2018 theme is: **“#Mountains Matter”**

## International Day of Neutrality: 12 December

---

- The **General Assembly** decided to declare **12 December the International Day of Neutrality**, and called for marking the day by holding events **aimed at enhancing public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations.**

## National energy conservation day

---

- **National energy conservation day** is celebrated every year by the people all over the India on **14th of December.**
- The **Energy Conservation Act in India** was executed by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** in the year **2001.**

## PM remembers brave soldiers who fought in 1971, on the occasion of Vijay Diwas

---

- The **Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi** has **remembered brave soldiers who fought in 1971**, on the occasion of **Vijay Diwas** on **16th December.** Their unwavering courage and patriotism ensured our country is safe.
- **Vijay Diwas** is commemorated every on **16 December in India** as it **marks its military victory over Pakistan in 1971 during the war for the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan.**

## International Migrants Day: 18 December

---

- **International Migrants Day** is observed on **18 December** in accordance with Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted on **4 December 2000.**
- In 2018, close to **3,400 migrants and refugees** already have lost their lives worldwide. **That is why Migration with Dignity is the theme of 2018's International Migrants Day.**

## International Human Solidarity Day: 20 December

---

- The **United Nations' (UN) International Human Solidarity Day** is annually held on **December 20** to celebrate unity in diversity. It also aims to **remind people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty, hunger and disease.**

## National Mathematics Day: 22 December

---

- In **2012**, the **Indian government** declared **22 December** to be **National Mathematics Day.** This was announced by **then, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh** on **26 February 2012** at **Madras University**, during the inaugural ceremony of the celebrations to mark the **125th anniversary of the birth of the Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan (22 Dec 1887- 26 Apr 1920).**
- Since then, **India's National Mathematics Day** is celebrated every **22 December** with numerous educational events held at schools and universities throughout the country.



## National Consumer Day 2018 with the theme “Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints”

---

- **Every Year 24th December** is observed as **National Consumer Day** with a specific theme in India. This year the **National Consumer Day** is celebrated with the theme “**Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints**”.
- **On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the president.** The Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution celebrated the National Consumer Day 2018.
- This year the National Consumer Day is being observed at a crucial time when the **Government is preparing to repeal the Consumer Protection Act 1986 and bring in a new Act with substantial changes** that will holistically cover all aspects of consumer grievance redressal, streamline functioning of Consumer fora to meet future challenges for more effective consumer protection.

## National Farmer's Day

---

- **National Farmer's Day** is observed on **December 23** in India and **October 12** in the United States of America.
- **National Farmer's Day** is celebrated in the honor of the former Prime Minister of India **Chaudhary Charan Singh**.

## Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday being celebrated as Good Governance Day

---

- **Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday** is celebrated as **Good Governance Day** across the country on **25th December 2018**. The day was **established in 2014 to honor the Bharat Ratna** by fostering awareness among the people on accountability in Governance and Government.
- Several programmes have been organised to mark the day. The **Samadhi of Mr Vajpayee - Sadaiv Atal** was dedicated to the nation.

## QUESTIONS

1. Recently, who inaugurated the second International Ambedkar Conclave in New Delhi as part of the commemoration of Constitution Day?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Ramnath Kovind  
(c) Shri Venkai Naidu (d) Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani
2. Recently, India, Russia, China held second trilateral meeting after 12 years on sidelines of G20 summit in:  
(a) Caracas (b) Helsinki (c) Buenos Aires (d) Brussels
3. Which of the following two countries are scheduled to participate in a 12-day joint exercise 'Cope India 2019' in West Bengal?  
(a) India and Russia (b) India and USA (c) India and Singapore (d) India and Australia
4. Recently, which among the following organized a day-long dialogue on "Health System for A New India: Building Blocks"?  
(a) Union Health Ministry (b) Bachpan Bachao Andolan  
(c) NITI Aayog (d) Both (b) and (c)
5. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 13th edition of CII Agro Tech India-2018 in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Chandigarh (c) Manali (d) Pune
6. Recently, the first ever India Indonesia Business forum (IIBF) was held at:  
(a) Port Blair (b) Silvassa (c) Kavaratti (d) Kohima
7. Recently, Indian Owl Festival, the country's first owl fest was held at:  
(a) Nagpur (b) Pune (c) Port Blair (d) Hyderabad
8. Sangai festival is an annual cultural festival organized every year in:  
(a) Nagaland (b) Mizoram (c) Manipur (d) Arunachal Pradesh
9. Who captured her maiden professional title at the Noida Golf Course recently?  
(a) Deepika Bharadwaj (b) Ridhima Dilawari  
(c) Deepshikha Baranwal (d) Neelima Mishra
10. India's first international indigenous film festival will take place in February 2019 in:  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Jharkhand (d) Odisha
11. Union Minister for Shipping, Surface Transport and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the second edition of Khasdar Mahotsav in:  
(a) Pune (b) Nagpur (c) Mumbai (d) Surat
12. The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is being held in:  
(a) USA (b) France (c) Poland (d) Russia
13. The Minister for Civil Aviation has constituted a task-force on the recommendation of Drone Policy \_\_\_\_\_ under the chairmanship of the Minister of State.  
(a) 2.0 (b) 3.0 (c) 4.0 (d) 5.0

14. The first Directorate General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAfMS) Military Medicine Conclave was held in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) Chennai (c) Hyderabad (d) New Delhi
15. Who inaugurated the hugely popular Hornbill Festival 2018 in Kohima?  
(a) President of India (b) Prime Minister of India  
(c) Union Home Minister (d) Union Finance Minister
16. Emmerson Mnangagwa is the current president of:  
(a) Kenya (b) Argentina (c) Zimbabwe (d) Zambia
17. Manuel Lopez Obrador has been sworn in as the new President of:  
(a) Cuba (b) Mexico (c) Norway (d) Denmark
18. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched a new mass media campaign calling for the elimination of industrially produced trans-fat in the food supply by:  
(a) 2020 (b) 2022 (c) 2025 (d) 2030
19. A novel anode developed by researchers at \_\_\_\_\_ for use in lithium-ion batteries has five times more capacity than carbon-based electrodes and can be fully charged in about 15 minutes.  
(a) Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Kolkata  
(b) Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mumbai  
(c) Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune  
(d) Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) New Delhi
20. Who capped a highly successful season by grabbing the 57-kilogram national title at the Tata Motors Senior National Championship in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh?  
(a) Vinesh Phogat (b) Sushil Kumar (c) Yogesh Yadav (d) Abhishek Singh
21. Who has been appointed as the head of the three-member committee to oversee rejuvenation work of the Ganga River?  
(a) Justice U C Dhyani (b) Justice Abhay Mahadeo Thipsay  
(c) Justice Aziz Mushabber Ahmadi (d) Justice Adarsh Sein Anand
22. Shri Sunil Arora assumed charge as the \_\_\_\_\_ Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India.  
(a) 21st (b) 23rd (c) 24th (d) 25th
23. Prime Minister Narendra Modi invited Cyril Ramaphosa to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations next year. He is the current President of:  
(a) Italy (b) France (c) South Africa (d) Cuba
24. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will host the G20 Summit in:  
(a) 2019 (b) 2020 (c) 2022 (d) 2023
25. The Special Forces of India and United States completed the final manoeuvres of their three-day tactical exercise called:  
(a) Vajra Action (b) Vajra Kayaa (c) Vajra Special (d) Vajra Impact
26. The Asia Pacific Summit-2018 has begun in:  
(a) Tokyo (b) New Delhi (c) Kathmandu (d) Beijing

27. The World Bank has unveiled \_\_\_\_\_ billion US Dollars in climate action investment for 2021 to 2025.  
(a) 100 (b) 150 (c) 200 (d) 500
28. The isolation of single sheets of carbon, known as graphene, was awarded the Nobel Prize in:  
(a) 2009 (b) 2010 (c) 2012 (d) 2013
29. Who has become the first Indian to be elected as the vice-president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)?  
(a) Raninder Singh (b) Gagan Narang (c) Vijay Kumar (d) Ronjan Sodhi
30. Tata Open India International Challenge is associated with which among the following sports?  
(a) Hockey (b) Badminton (c) Football (d) Tennis
31. Which of the following countries has announced its decision to leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January 2019?  
(a) Angola (b) Ecuador (c) Qatar (d) Saudi Arabia
32. India's first locomotive-less train, known as Train 18 will be provided the maximum speed of \_\_\_\_\_ in its commercial operations.  
(a) 100 Kms/hr (b) 135 Kms/hr (c) 160 Kms/hr (d) 300 Kms/hr
33. The bilateral air exercise SHINYUU Maitri-18 is held between the air force of:  
(a) India and Indonesia (b) India and China (c) India and Japan (d) India and Netherland
34. Which of the following has launched a facility "eATM" wherein clients of the domestic brokerage entity would be able to receive the pay-out within 30 minutes of selling the shares?  
(a) RBL securities and NSE (b) HDFC securities and BSE  
(c) Axis Securities and NSE (d) ICICI securities and BSE
35. Who is the head of the six member committee formed to look into the selling of small and marginal oil and gas fields of state-owned ONGC and OIL to private and foreign companies?  
(a) NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar (b) Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg  
(c) Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha (d) NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant
36. Recently 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change "COP24" started in:  
(a) Poland (b) France (c) Switzerland (d) Ireland
37. Recently, the Centre and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed an 85 million dollar loan to improve skill development eco-system in:  
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Jharkhand (d) Chhattisgarh
38. Name NASA's first-ever mission, which is designed to visit an asteroid and return with a sample of its dust to the earth.  
(a) DERISIS-Arex (b) ALGERIS-Dez (c) OSIRIS-Rex (d) POLARIS-Nes
39. Who is the first ever Indian individual medal winner in the 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championship?  
(a) Devij Narayan (b) Sushil Mahato (c) Ullas Narayan (d) Mayank Rahane



40. Recently, who has become the first Indian to be elected as one of seven members of the Judges Committee of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF)?  
(a) Deepak Rathi (b) Pawan Singh (c) Ambreesh Shukla (d) Susheel Sharma
41. Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated India Water Impact Summit 2018 in:  
(a) Hardwar (b) Kanpur (c) New Delhi (d) Varanasi
42. Who has been appointed as the brand ambassador by State Bank of India for its digital app YONO?  
(a) MC Mary Kom (b) Virat Kohli (c) Swapna Barman (d) Sachin Tendulkar
43. Recently, India-ASEAN InnoTech Summit was organised by FICCI in:  
(a) Kolkata (b) Mumbai (c) New Delhi (d) Gurugram
44. Recently, FMCG major \_\_\_\_\_ has approved the merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) through an all equity deal, valuing the total business of the latter at Rs 31,700 crore.  
(a) ITC (b) Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)  
(c) Patanjali Foods (d) Dabur India Ltd.
45. Recently, \_\_\_\_\_ and Madame Tussauds Wax Museum have joined hands to provide combo offer to Delhi NCR tourists.  
(a) Ministry of Culture (b) National Rail Museum  
(c) Delhi and Uttar Pradesh State Government (d) Both (a) and (b)
46. Name the common mobility card, which was launched by the Delhi government that can be used by people for travelling in metro trains, DTC and cluster buses.  
(a) ONE (b) SPECIAL-3 (c) MULTI SERVE (d) ASSET 5
47. Recently, ISRO launched India's heaviest satellite \_\_\_\_\_ and put it successfully in earth orbit from Kourou Launch Zone, French Guiana in South America.  
(a) GSAT-7 (b) GSAT-9 (c) GSAT-11 (d) GSAT-16
48. With earnings of \$22 million who has become the highest-paid YouTube star recently?  
(a) Daniel Middleton (b) Britney Spears (c) Ryan (d) Jake Paul
49. Who among the following footballer has bagged the 2018 Ballon d'Or recently?  
(a) Lionel Messi (b) Cristiano Ronaldo (c) Luka Modric (d) Antoine Griezmann
50. Which Indian cricketer has been placed next to Sachin Tendulkar's portrait at the Bradman Museum recently?  
(a) Rohit Sharma (b) Shikhar Dhawan (c) Ravichandran Ashwin (d) Virat Kohli
51. Which among the following has brought in place a witness protection regime in the country noting that one of the main reasons for witnesses turning hostile is that they are not given security by the State?  
(a) Parliament (b) Prime Minister Office (c) Supreme Court (d) Ministry of Law and Justice
52. Who has emerged as the most popular global leader on social media platform Instagram with 14.8 million followers?  
(a) Donald Trump (b) Vladimir Putin (c) Narendra Modi (d) Joko Widodo
53. Name the Indian-origin lawyer, who has been appointed to head South Africa's prosecuting authority thus becoming the first woman to head the agency.

- (a) Deepika Rajawat      (b) Sharmishtha Rana      (c) Ujjawala Singh      (d) Shamila Batohi
54. Which among the following Indian states has launched a unique initiative called "SMART" in a bid to transform the rural part of the state?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh      (b) Maharashtra      (c) Madhya Pradesh      (d) Chhattisgarh
55. Recently, in a medical first a mother who received a uterus transplant from a dead donor gave birth to a healthy baby. The transplant took place in:  
(a) Mexico      (b) Brazil      (c) China      (d) Germany
56. Which among the following has launched a new feature by the name of 'Chance of Approval' on its website which will help its loan applicants chose the most suited lender on the platform?  
(a) Paisabazaar      (b) Freecharge      (c) ICICI bank      (d) Reserve Bank of India
57. Recently, In a bid to ensure greater transparency, who has proposed that floating interest rates on personal, home, auto and MSMEs loans be linked to external benchmarks like repo rate or treasury yields?  
(a) Ministry of Finance      (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs  
(c) Reserve Bank of India      (d) Both (a) and (b)
58. Which state has launched the programme Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability or PEETHA which aims to improve transparency in the distribution of individual and social benefits?  
(a) Andhra Pradesh      (b) Karnataka      (c) Tamil Nadu      (d) Odisha
59. "World Soil Day" is celebrated across the world every year on:  
(a) 27th November      (b) 29th November      (c) 2nd December      (d) 5th December
60. Name the Tamil writer, who has won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2018 for his novel "Sancharam".  
(a) Kamal Santhanam      (b) Deepak Nair      (c) G.B. Mureeyer      (d) S. Ramakrishnan
61. Name the Indian, who is elected unopposed to an Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) recently.  
(a) Shashi Ranjan Jha      (b) Preeti Saran      (c) Navtej Sarna      (d) Mandeep Singh
62. According to the projection by the Global Carbon Project, India is the \_\_\_\_\_ highest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world in year 2017.  
(a) Second      (b) Third      (c) Fourth      (d) Seventh
63. Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the Agriculture Export Policy in line with the government's commitment to double farmer's income by year:  
(a) 2020      (b) 2021      (c) 2022      (d) 2025
64. Who among the following Indian actors topped the Forbes India Celebrity 100 list for third time in a row recently?  
(a) Amitabh Bachchan      (b) Aamir Khan      (c) Salman Khan      (d) Shahrukh Khan
65. Name the assistant professor from Indian Institute of Technology-Mandi (IIT-Mandi), who has been awarded the Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA) 2018.  
(a) Rajanish Giri      (b) Sulakshan Gaurav      (c) Amrendra Kumar      (d) Rakesh Thakur
66. The 2023 IAAF World Championships will take place in:  
(a) Helsinki      (b) Milan      (c) Budapest      (d) Brisbane

67. Who has become the fastest bowler to reach 200 wickets in Test cricket recently?  
(a) Hasan Ali (b) Yasir Shah (c) Ravichandran Ashwin (d) Imran Tahir
68. Recently, Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju inaugurated the 19th All India Police (AIPDM) Shooting Competition-2018 at:  
(a) Hyderabad (b) Manali (c) Manesar (d) Pune
69. Exercise Hand-in-Hand is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of:  
(a) India and Nepal (b) India and Thailand (c) India and China (d) India and Japan
70. The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is hosted the annual Startup India Venture Capital Summit in:  
(a) Haryana (b) Sikkim (c) Meghalaya (d) Goa
71. Who has been appointed as the new Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) for a period of three years?  
(a) Krishnamurthy Subramanian (b) Anuj Mudgal  
(c) Deepak Raheja (d) H.R.Khan
72. Which is the first Latin American country to join China's Belt and Road Initiative?  
(a) Cuba (b) Bolivia (c) Panama (d) Colombia
73. "All new vehicles will be sold pre-fitted with High-Security Registration Plates - HSRP from the:  
(a) 1st April 2019 (b) 1st January 2019 (c) 1st July 2019 (d) 31st August 2019
74. According to Oxford Economics, which of the following Indian cities will see the fastest expansion through 2035, averaging more than 9 per cent?  
(a) Lucknow (b) Ahmedabad (c) Surat (d) Pune
75. Recently, which of the following countries promised free mass transit for all, which would make the country the first to offer such a benefit?  
(a) Finland (b) Sweden (c) Uruguay (d) Luxembourg
76. Recently, Food and Agriculture organization (FAO) Council has approved India's proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in year:  
(a) 2020 (b) 2022 (c) 2023 (d) 2025
77. Name the artist, who won the 2018 Turner Prize, Britain's prestigious contemporary art award at Tate Britain, with an autobiographical film shot on a mobile phone.  
(a) Girard Lauter (b) Alex Muggale (c) Charlotte Prodger (d) Thomas Luke
78. Who has won the Glinka World Soil Prize 2018 recently?  
(a) Amrendra Prasad (b) Rattan Lal (c) Sandeep Mohapatra (d) Deepak Rana
79. International Civil Aviation Day is observed every year on:  
(a) 1st December (b) 4th December (c) 7th December (d) 8th December
80. Which of the following ministries has been conferred the Skoch Award for National Significance at an event held recently in New Delhi?  
(a) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change  
(b) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions  
(c) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy  
(d) Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises

81. Recently, Which of the following Indian states became the first to create a fund for high-end technology and innovation, artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, polymers and special materials among others?  
(a) Gujarat (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Maharashtra
82. Recently, World's largest Arabic audio library was launched in:  
(a) Abu Dhabi (b) Dubai (c) Sharjah (d) Doha
83. Recently, the Northeast Frontier Railway Construction Organisation has put in place tall piers near \_\_\_\_\_ Noney for the tallest railway bridge in the world.  
(a) Mizoram (b) Sikkim (c) Manipur (d) Nagaland
84. Name the first Indian, who has been bestowed with the 'Doctor Honoris Causa' by ESCP Europe Business School.  
(a) Azim Premji (b) Shiv Nadar (c) Gautam Adani (d) Sunil Bharti Mittal
85. Which of the following countries recently became the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the first time?  
(a) New Zealand (b) Russia (c) Australia (d) South Africa
86. According to a report by the World Bank, which of the following countries will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with its diaspora sending a whopping USD 80 billion back home?  
(a) Mexico (b) India (c) Philippines (d) Egypt
87. Recently, a team of researchers from which of the following have developed a way of predicting the intensity of activity in the next solar cycle (approximately from 2020 to 2031) using data spread over the last 100 years?  
(a) IISER Kolkata (b) IIT Delhi (c) ISM Dhanbad (d) IISc Bengaluru
88. Who among the following has been awarded with the 2018 Gleitsman Award recently?  
(a) Karan Thapar (b) Malala Yousafzai (c) Shashi Tharoor (d) Kailash Satyarthi
89. Who among the following topped the list of Forbes's World's 100 most powerful women?  
(a) Theresa May (b) Christine Lagarde (c) Angela Merkel (d) Malala Yousafzai
90. Who is the first woman to join Softbank group as a partner at its \$100 billion Vision Fund recently?  
(a) Kirthiga Reddy (b) Roshni Nadar-Malhotra  
(c) Shobhana Bhartia (d) Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
91. The first International Conference on Sustainable Water Management is organised by Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) in:  
(a) Nagpur (b) Mohali (c) New Delhi (d) Hyderabad
92. India is set to get its first underwater museum off the \_\_\_\_\_ coast.  
(a) Puducherry (b) West Bengal (c) Odisha (d) Andhra Pradesh
93. Who has won the coveted Miss World 2018 crown?  
(a) Julia Fiona Roberts (b) Emily Jean Emma Stone  
(c) Vanessa Ponce de Leon (d) Natalie Portman
94. The inaugural IAF-RFSAF Ex AVIAINDRA was conducted in:  
(a) 2013 (b) 2014 (c) 2015 (d) 2016



95. The "yellow vest" protest has been in the news; it is associated with which among the following countries?  
(a) China (b) France (c) USA (d) Mexico
96. Who has been appointed as the chairman of SWIFT India Domestic Services in December 2018?  
(a) Arundhati Bhattacharya (b) Pallav Mohapatra,  
(c) J Packirisamy (d) Karnam Shekhar
97. Which among the following countries has launched rocket in attempt to land on far side of Moon for first time?  
(a) France (b) USA (c) Mexico (d) China
98. Government of India in association with Government of \_\_\_\_\_ is organized a Regional Conference on December 10- 11, 2018 on 'Good Governance - Focus on Aspirational Districts'.  
(a) Gujarat (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Kerala
99. Human Rights Day is observed every year on:  
(a) 8 December (b) 9 December (c) 10 December (d) 11 December
100. Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) Ships Varyag, Admiral Panteleyev and Boris Butoma arrived \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in INDRA NAVY.  
(a) Visakhapatnam (b) Mumbai (c) Kolkata (d) Kochi
101. Name the state, which launched a 24-hour helpline 181 for women, among others, facing domestic violence and sexual harassment.  
(a) Kerala (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Karnataka (d) Odisha
102. Recently, Reserve Bank of India's Governor Urjit Patel resigned citing personal reasons. He was the \_\_\_\_\_ Governor of RBI.  
(a) 21st (b) 22nd (c) 23rd (d) 24th
103. Recently, "Shi Yomi" became the 23rd district of which of the following states of India?  
(a) Sikkim (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Nagaland (d) Assam
104. Name the only Indian actress, who made into 100 most powerful women in Forbes list released recently.  
(a) Deepika Padukone (b) Aishwarya Rai Bachchan  
(c) Priyanka Chopra (d) Aalia Bhatt
105. The indigenously built Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile Agni-5 has been recently test-fired successfully from Abdul Kalam island located in:  
(a) Odisha (b) Gujarat (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Karnataka
106. Recently, who became the first Asian captain to win Tests in South Africa, England and Australia?  
(a) Sarfaraz Ahmed (b) Angelo Matthews (c) Virat Kohli (d) Shakib Al Hasan
107. Who has been selected for the Best Woman Parliamentarian (Rajya Sabha) set up by Lokmat newspaper for 2018?  
(a) Smt. Jaya Bachchan (b) Smt. Misha Bharti (c) Ms., Saroj Pandey (d) Smt. Kanimozhi
108. Who won the best entertainment host/presenter at the inaugural Asian Academy Creative Awards in Singapore?  
(a) Amitabh Bachchan (b) Salman Khan (c) Javed Akhtar (d) Akshay Kumar
109. International Mountain Day is observed every year, on:  
(a) 5th December (b) 7th December (c) 9th December (d) 11th December

110. Who became the first Asian/Indian to win this year's Mister Supranational title in a competition held in Poland?  
(a) Prathamesh Maulingkar (b) Arjun Ranawat  
(c) Shreyash Mayurinker (d) Swadesh Rawat
111. Who among the following has been named by the TIME magazine as its "Person of the Year", in a cover story headlined "The Guardians and the War on Truth"?  
(a) Donald Trump (b) Theo Epstein (c) Jamal Khashoggi (d) Ava DuVernay
112. What is the name of the portal launched by Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Radha Mohan Singh, developed by NABARD and operated under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries?  
(a) READY (b) GUARANTEED (c) ENSURE (d) DECLARE
113. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the fourth Partners Forum in:  
(a) Kolkata (b) Chennai (c) New Delhi (d) Patna
114. Which of the following Indian ministries has formulated India's first ever Agricultural Export Policy with a focused plan to boost India's agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022?  
(a) Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (b) Ministry of Food Processing Industries  
(c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry (d) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
115. Which among the following states government has decided to establish an umbrella university to control all the medical and dental colleges and nursing institutions in the state?  
(a) Gujarat (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Uttarakhand (d) Assam
116. Recently, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a leading organization in global combat against money laundering and terror financing, has accepted Israel as its \_\_\_\_\_ member.  
(a) 17th (b) 25th (c) 38th (d) 42nd
117. Who has been appointed as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?  
(a) Rajiv Maharishi (b) Hasmukh Adhia (c) Aravind Subramanian (d) Shaktikanta Das
118. Name the eminent economist, who had resigned as part-time member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) recently.  
(a) Deepak Laakra (b) Surjit Bhalla (c) Amardeep Upadhyaya (d) Krishna Geetham
119. Which is the second human-made object in history to reach the edge of our solar system, after the spacecraft exited the protective bubble of particles and magnetic fields created by the Sun?  
(a) Voyager 2 (b) Eblassa 4 (c) Candid 6 (d) Autocar 7
120. In 2018, International Day of Neutrality is/ was observed on:  
(a) 21st November (b) 26th November (c) 5th December (d) 12th December
121. Who among the following has become the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors?  
(a) Rajiv Mehrishi (b) Hamukh Adhia (c) Deepak Arora (d) Navtej Sarna
122. Name the Bollywood actress, who received the 'Arets Stjerneskudd' award as the rising talent of the year by the Royal Norwegian Consulate General recently.  
(a) Bhumi Pednekar (b) Sara Ali Khan (c) Alia Bhatt (d) Janhvi Kapoor

123. Recently, British Prime Minister Theresa May has won a vote of confidence in her leadership of the \_\_\_\_\_ party.  
(a) Conservative (b) Labour (c) Liberal Democrats (d) Democratic Unionist Party
124. Recently, A National conference 'AYUSHCHARYA' on Dinacharya (Daily Regimen) and Ritucharya (Seasonal Regimen) for public health promotion was organized in:  
(a) Kolkata (b) New Delhi (c) Mumbai (d) Gurugram
125. Recently, India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence was inaugurated at:  
(a) Manipal Academy of Higher Education (b) Delhi University North Campus  
(c) Lovely Professional University (d) Amity International University
126. Which of the following States / Union territory police has entered the Limca Book of Records by training over two lakh women and girls under their self-defence programme in 2017?  
(a) Delhi (b) Haryana (c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Chandigarh
127. Recently, the International Cricket Council (ICC) has roped in which of the following Indian brands as official sponsor for the next five years?  
(a) Reliance Jio (b) Airtel (c) Tata Steel (d) Royal Stag
128. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's report, which is the world's largest arms producer?  
(a) Russia (b) USA (c) United Kingdom (d) Israel
129. Recently, the Indian Navy joined a select group of naval forces in the world when it inducted its first non-tethered Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system in:  
(a) Vizag (b) Mumbai (c) Mamugao (d) Chennai
130. Who among the following was bestowed with the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Breakthrough Star Award 2018?  
(a) Achanta Sharath Kamal (b) Sathiyam Gnanasekaran  
(c) Manika Batra (d) Mouma Das
131. Who among the following is new Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh?  
(a) Kamal Nath (b) Digvijaya Singh (c) Ajay Singh (d) Jyotiraditya Sinha
132. Recently, The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Fifth Enterprise India Exhibition in:  
(a) Doha (b) Yangon (c) Singapore (d) Male
133. Recently, Union Minister for road transport and highways and shipping, Nitin Gadkari, flagged off first container mainline vessel from \_\_\_\_\_ opening direct shipping route to eastern countries.  
(a) Vizag (b) Paradip (c) Tuticorin (d) Chennai
134. Name the Indian startup, which works to clean up river Ganga by recycling thousands of tonnes of floral waste from temples and has been honoured by the UN recently.  
(a) HelpUsGanges (b) HelpUsFlowers (c) HelpUsGreen (d) HelpUsClean
135. Name the Indian-American woman lawyer, who has been appointed as a Commissioner to the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).  
(a) Anandita Bannerjee (b) Deepa Rajawat (c) Anurima Bhargava (d) Alolika Chhatopadhyaya

136. Akademik Lomonosov is the world's first "floating" nuclear power plant (FNPP) located in:  
(a) Russia (b) Armenia (c) Ukraine (d) Siberia
137. Recently, International Monetary Fund said that global debt has reached an all-time high of \_\_\_\_\_trillion US dollars with the United States, China and Japan accounting for more than half of it.  
(a) 104 (b) 184 (c) 202 (d) 287
138. Recently, Centre and the Asian Development Bank signed a 60 Million dollar Loan Agreement to continue financing riverbank protection works in critically flood-prone areas along the \_\_\_\_\_river.  
(a) Lohit (b) Brahmaputra (c) Son (d) Indus
139. Which Indian city is set to host one of the three Hockey Series Finals to be held in June 2019?  
(a) Guwahati (b) Indore (c) Lucknow (d) Bhubaneswar
140. Who among the following has been appointed as the new president of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Society and Chairman of Governing Council?  
(a) Kiran Kumar (b) Deepak Parashar (c) Brijendra Pal Singh (d) Yogita Bali
141. Who has been announced as the new Chief Minister of Rajasthan recently?  
(a) Ashok Gehlot (b) Hanuman Beniwal (c) Sachin Pilot (d) Jitendra Singh
142. Name the eminent novelist, who has been chosen for this year's Jnanpith Award.  
(a) Amitav Ghosh (b) Krishna Sobti (c) Shankha Ghosh (d) Bhalchandra Nemade
143. Which of the following ministries has launched the ECO Niwas Samhita 2018, an Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings (ECBC-R)?  
(a) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (b) Ministry of Power  
(c) Ministry of Science and Technology (d) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
144. Which of the following has been declared as the winner of the Prime Minister's Trophy for the 'Best Performing Integrated Steel Plant' in the country for the performance year 2016-17.?  
(a) Bhushan Steel limited (b) Tata Steel Limited (c) JSW (d) SAIL
145. Which of the following companies has developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model that can detect diabetic retinopathy with a level of accuracy on par with human retinal specialists?  
(a) Google (b) Paytm (c) Facebook (d) Yahoo
146. Recently, Scientists in which of the following countries have developed the world's first vaccine to protect bees against disease?  
(a) Sweden (b) Ireland (c) Finland (d) Iceland
147. Name the person, who has been honoured with the French Knight of the National Order of Merit recently.  
(a) Ronnie Schrewala (b) Ashok Amritraj (c) A.R.Rehman (d) Ekta Kapoor
148. Which of the following channels launched a first-of-its-kind reality show 'Mahila Kisan Awards' recently?  
(a) DD National (b) ABP News (c) DD Kisan (d) AIR
149. According to Union Ministry of Agriculture, which of the following Indian states has been selected for "Krishi Karman" award in the rice category?  
(a) Chhattisgarh (b) Haryana (c) Jharkhand (d) West Bengal
150. In India, National energy conservation day is celebrated every year on:  
(a) 5th December (b) 7th December (c) 10th December (d) 14th December



151. Which is the first state in the country to have a law banning sexual exploitation of women by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant?  
(a) Gujarat (b) Jammu & Kashmir (c) Assam (d) Maharashtra
152. Recently, India's first rail university and world's .....was dedicated to the nation.  
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Seventh
153. Who is the newly sworn in as the ninth Chief Minister of Mizoram?  
(a) Tawnluia (b) Lalduhawma (c) Zoramthanga (d) Lal Thanhawla
154. The governments of India, Nepal and Bhutan are actively considering having a joint task force for allowing free movement of wildlife across political boundaries and checking smuggling of wildlife across\_\_\_\_\_ Wildlife landscape.  
(a) Cherrapunjee-Chitwan-Thimphu (b) HI-LIFE  
(c) Kanchenjunga Landscape (d) Hindu Kush Karakoram-Pamir
155. Recently, the first National Workshop on Explosives Detection was inaugurated in:  
(a) Nagpur (b) Kanpur (c) Jaipur (d) Pune
156. Recently, the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in:  
(a) Argentina (b) Fiji (c) Brazil (d) Poland
157. Which are the two currencies included by the government in the list of currencies for which it notifies the exchange rate for assessing the value of imports and exports?  
(a) Icelandic Krona and Israeli New Shekel (b) Korean Won and Turkish Lira  
(c) Afghan Afghani and Algerian Dinar (d) Armenian Dram and Bangladeshi Taka
158. Recently, India' first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) was opened in:  
(a) Bengaluru (b) Hyderabad (c) Lucknow (d) Raipur
159. Recently, Researchers from Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune propose a change in the way epidemiologists estimate the growth and adaptation rate of\_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Virus (b) Protozoa (c) Fungus (d) Bacteria
160. Recently, On the occasion of Vijay Diwas, Sports Minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore flagged off a special marathon 'Soldierathon' in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Bengaluru (d) Cochin
161. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated a new Airport Complex, and an Integrated Command and Control Centre for the Kumbh Mela, at:  
(a) Haridwar (b) Prayagraj (c) Varanasi (d) Rudraprayag
162. Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as prime minister of:  
(a) Sri Lanka (b) Bhutan (c) Myanmar (d) Thailand
163. In December 2018, which among the following countries has recognized West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel?  
(a) Austria (b) Australia (c) Argentina (d) Cuba

164. Who has been named as the acting Chief of Staff of the White House in December 2018?  
(a) Robert Brown (b) John Kelly (c) Martin John (d) Mick Mulvaney
165. The European Parliament approved an accord with \_\_\_\_\_ that has been dubbed the world's biggest trade deal, covering economies that represent a third of global GDP.  
(a) China (b) USA (c) Japan (d) India
166. Who has been crowned Miss India Worldwide 2018 at a pageant held in the Fords City of New Jersey?  
(a) Shree Saini (b) Jeya Priya Pandian  
(c) Kavita Malhotra Pattani (d) Priya Jayapal
167. Scientists from \_\_\_\_\_ have developed an ingestible, capsule controlled using Bluetooth wireless technology, which can be customised to deliver drugs or monitor health over long periods of time.  
(a) China (b) India (c) Israel (d) USA
168. Who has become the first Indian to win the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals tournament?  
(a) Saina Nehwal (b) Gutta Jwala (c) PV Sindhu (d) Ashwini Ponnappa
169. Who is the first Indian captain to reach the milestone of 1000 Test runs in a calendar year on foreign soil?  
(a) Rahul Dravid (b) Virat Kohli (c) Sourav Ganguly (d) M.S.Dhoni
170. In India, Vijay Diwas is commemorated every on:  
(a) 14 December (b) 15 December (c) 16 December (d) 17 December
171. Name the district court, which becomes the first in India to accept e-payments.  
(a) Gurugram (b) Pune (c) Udaipur (d) Panaji
172. Recently, the cabinet approved establishment of two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in:  
(a) Assam and Kerala (b) Tamil Nadu and Telangana  
(c) Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh (d) Madhya Pradesh and Haryana
173. Who has been newly sworn-in as the chief minister of Chhattisgarh?  
(a) T.S.Singhdev (b) Tamradhwaj Sahu (c) Bhupesh Baghel (d) Charan Das Mahant
174. Recently, UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan declared \_\_\_\_\_ as the Year of Tolerance.  
(a) 2019 (b) 2020 (c) 2021 (d) 2022
175. Recently, Catriona Gray of \_\_\_\_\_ clinched Miss Universe 2018 crown beating contestants from 93 other countries.  
(a) Philippines (b) South Africa (c) Maldives (d) South Africa
176. Who is the newly elected President of FICCI?  
(a) Sangita Reddy (b) Uday Shankar (c) Deepak Mathur (d) Sandip Somany
177. Recently, Scientists have discovered the world's oldest plant virus dating back 1,000 years after analysing ancient corncobs found at archeological site in:  
(a) South Africa (b) Australia (c) USA (d) Portugal
178. Name the country, which claimed its first ever World Cup title in Men's hockey.  
(a) India (b) New Zealand (c) Belgium (d) South Africa

179. Name the Indian woman squash player, who bagged record-equalling 16th national title recently.  
(a) Janet Vidhi (b) Joshna Chinappa (c) Geethika Rensil (d) Dipika Pallikal Karthik
180. Name the Indian singers, who were awarded the 'Sangeet Mahasamman' constituted by the West Bengal government at the inaugural session of the Bengal music and folk culture festival.  
(a) Asha Bhonsle and Vishal Dadlani (b) Shaan and Arijit Singh  
(c) Salim Suleiman and Neha Kakkar (d) Himesh Reshamiya and Tulsi Kumar
181. Which of the following Indian state's governor has sent a report to the central government recommending imposition of President's rule in the state after expiry of six month Governor's rule?  
(a) Nagaland (b) Sikkim (c) Manipur (d) Jammu & Kashmir
182. Which of the following countries will introduce its own tax "GAFA Tax" on large internet and technology companies from January 1, 2019?  
(a) Canada (b) France (c) China (d) North Korea
183. Recently, Charles Michel has resigned amid pressure on his government over his support for the UN global compact on migration. Charles Michel was the Prime Minister of:  
(a) Spain (b) Portugal (c) Belgium (d) Romania
184. Recently, Private sector lender IDFC Bank has completed the merger process with non-banking financial company \_\_\_\_\_ following all the requisite approvals.  
(a) Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited  
(b) HDB Financial Services Limited  
(c) Capital First  
(d) Bajaj Finance Limited
185. Recently, Scientists have discovered the most-distant body ever observed in our solar system located over 100 times farther than Earth is from the Sun. The new object has been nicknamed as:  
(a) Stitus (b) Wertuer (c) Gallouy (d) Farout
186. The 37th Senior National Rowing Championship is organized in:  
(a) Pune (b) Cochin (c) Vizag (d) Panaji
187. Name the actor, who will receive Cecil B. DeMille Award at Golden Globe Awards in January 2018.  
(a) Johnny Depp (b) Piers Brosnan (c) Jeff Bridges (d) Leonardo Di Caprio
188. Name the short film about women in India, which has made into the Oscar shortlist in the Documentary Short Subject category.  
(a) Down the Earth (b) Kaliyan  
(c) Period End of Sentence (d) Uplifters
189. Recently, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi released the coffee table book "Timeless Laxman", based on:  
(a) Cartoonist RK Laxman (b) Cricketer VVS Laxman  
(c) Cinematographer Laxman Utekar (d) Cricketer Laxman Sivaramakrishnan
190. International Migrants Day is observed every year on:  
(a) 11th December (b) 13th December (c) 15th December (d) 18th December

191. Recently, India's largest cancer institute was launched at:  
(a) Jhajjar (b) Ambala (c) Chandigarh (d) Gorakhpur
192. Which among the following unveiled its comprehensive national Strategy for New India, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23?  
(a) Finance Ministry (b) NITI Aayog (c) SEBI (d) RBI
193. Recently, Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram informed that every block with more than ..... Schedule Tribe population and at least 20 thousand tribal persons, will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022.  
(a) 50 per cent (b) 60 per cent (c) 75 per cent (d) 80 per cent
194. The 'Shiksha Setu' app which would bring transparency in the department and college administration was launched by which of the following states recently?  
(a) Punjab (b) Haryana (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
195. Recently, the Prime Ministers of Macedonia and Greece have been nominated for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for signing of \_\_\_\_\_ agreement between the two countries.  
(a) Prespa (b) Gullert (c) Anertes (d) Primpa
196. Recently, A dreary grain silo in which of the following country has been named by Guinness World Records as the largest outdoor mural in the world?  
(a) USA (b) Canada (c) Australia (d) South Korea
197. Which of the following counties scientists have detected evidence of water in 17 asteroids for the first time using data from the infrared satellite AKARI?  
(a) China (b) Japan (c) South Korea (d) Russia
198. Recently, A newly-discovered blind amphibian from Panama will be named after whom among the following?  
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Xi Jinping (c) Donald Trump (d) Vladimir Putin
199. Name the former PM Manmohan Singh's recent launched book, which is a 6-volume collection of his speeches and writings.  
(a) Changing India (b) The Turned Destiny (c) India that is Bharat (d) India Since 1991
200. Recently, Human rights activist Asma Jahangir has been awarded the UN Human Rights Prize for 2018. Asma Jahangir belonged to:  
(a) Bangladesh (b) Nigeria (c) Pakistan (d) India
201. The first-ever meeting of India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges is held in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Kolkata (c) Chandigarh (d) Chennai
202. Who among the following launched the iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training Programme) developed by Department of Personnel and Training?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Suresh Prabhu (c) Shri Ramnath Kovind (d) Dr Jitendra Singh
203. Union Minister for Science & Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the newly constructed International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOcean) Complex in:  
(a) Bengaluru (b) Hyderabad (c) Pune (d) Mumbai



204. Recently, The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) announced results of the first ever States Start-up Ranking 2018. Which is the Best performer state in the ranking?  
(a) Haryana (b) Gujarat (c) Rajasthan (d) Madhya Pradesh
205. Recently, US regulator Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has retained the highest aviation safety ranking for India as:  
(a) Category 1 (b) Category A+ (c) Category Special (d) Category Best
206. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a cap for funds raised via external commercial borrowing (ECB) at \_\_\_\_\_ of the country's GDP.  
(a) 3.2% (b) 4.1% (c) 5.7% (d) 6.5%
207. Recently, The government announced to infuse \_\_\_\_\_ crore in Public Sector Banks in next few months in the current fiscal.  
(a) 24000 (b) 43000 (c) 61000 (d) 83000
208. Who is the newly appointed next Ambassador of India to the United States?  
(a) Harsh Vardhan Shringla (b) Arvind Singh Raheja  
(c) Deepak Khajuria (d) Anand Purwar
209. Which is the official mobile app launched by civil aviation ministry along with the Airports Authority of India for the global aviation summit to be held in Mumbai?  
(a) GANG 2019 (b) GAS 2019 (c) CAG 2019 (d) HANG 2019
210. The United Nations' (UN) International Human Solidarity Day is annually held on \_\_\_\_\_ to celebrate unity in diversity.  
(a) December 13 (b) December 16 (c) December 18 (d) December 20
211. According to the recently launched Baseline Report of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index by NITI Aayog, which state ranks high in providing clean water, sanitation & preserving mountain ecosystem?  
(a) Jammu & Kashmir (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Sikkim (d) Uttarakhand
212. Which of the following Indian state government approved a sum of Rs 4,089 crore for the Tembhu lift irrigation scheme?  
(a) Telangana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Maharashtra (d) Karnataka
213. Recently, A Joint workshop between ICRC and CUNPK on "Integrated Protection on Civilians (IPOC)" in UN peacekeeping operations was conducted in:  
(a) Karnal (b) Panipat (c) New Delhi (d) Kolkata
214. Which of the following Indian state cabinet has approved the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, worth over Rs 10,000 crore, for the development of farmers in the state?  
(a) Odisha (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Haryana
215. Recently, Union government has decided to set up an expert committee to look into all the taxation issues being faced by:  
(a) MSME (b) Startups (c) RBI (d) Indian Industries
216. Recently, which company won the National Energy Conservation Award 2018 in the Pumps category for the 4th time?  
(a) India Pumps (b) Bharat Pumps (c) C.R.I. Pumps (d) Hindustan Pumps

217. Recently, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated World Herbal Forest Project in:  
(a) Chandigarh (b) Karnal (c) Gurugram (d) Rewari
218. Who has been appointed as president of South Asian fencing body recently?  
(a) Amardeep Kaushik (b) Ankur Bajaj (c) Prabh Deep Ujjwal (d) Rajeev Mehta
219. Recently, Researchers have discovered a new exotic planet outside our solar system in the constellation Cassiopeia which is located at about \_\_\_\_\_ away from us.  
(a) 11 light years (b) 16 light years (c) 21 light years (d) 26 light years
220. Recently, NASA's Insight lander has deployed a seismometer on the surface of:  
(a) Venus (b) Mars (c) Jupiter (d) Saturn
221. Recently, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) constituted a Logistics Development Committee under the Chairmanship of:  
(a) Nripendra Mishra (b) Hasmukh Adhia (c) Dr Urjit Patel (d) Dr. Bibek Debroy
222. Recently, the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Centre of Excellence for Sickle Cell Anaemia, Thalassemia and Other Genetic Blood Disorders in:  
(a) Karnataka (b) Telangana (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu
223. Recently, Goods and Services Tax Council cut rates on 17 items and six types of services during its 31st meeting, leaving only one common use item \_\_\_\_\_ in the 28% bracket.  
(a) Cement (b) TVs up to 32 inches (c) Digital Cameras (d) Retreaded Tyres
224. Which of the following countries launched its first communication satellite to provide broadband internet services worldwide in an apparent bid to rival Google and other international firms?  
(a) India (b) France (c) China (d) Japan
225. Which of the following IIT's professors have come up with an innovative material to lay roads which reduces cost, is environmentally friendly and also stronger than asphalt roads?  
(a) IIT Madras (b) IIT Hyderabad (c) IIT Jammu (d) IIT Mandi
226. Who among the following Bollywood actresses has been named People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India's Person of the Year for 2018?  
(a) Kirti Shanon (b) Kirti Kharbanda (c) Sonam Kapoor (d) Deepika Padukone
227. Recently, Indian Railways launched new EMU train with speed of around:  
(a) 110 kms/hr (b) 120 kms/hr (c) 130 kms/hr (d) 145 kms/hr
228. Defence Minister, Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, launched the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) in:  
(a) Hyderabad (b) Gurugram (c) Ahmedabad (d) New Delhi
229. Recently, India's stock market overtook Germany to become the \_\_\_\_\_ largest in the world.  
(a) Fourth (b) Fifth (c) Seventh (d) Tenth
230. The book "A Rural Manifesto - Realising India's Future through her Villages" is authored by:  
(a) Mrs Maneka Gandhi (b) Mr Rahul Gandhi (c) Mrs Sonia Gandhi (d) Mr Feroze Varun Gandhi

231. Recently, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi announced annual \_\_\_\_\_ Award for National Integration.  
(a) Atal Bihari (b) Deen Dayal Upadhyay  
(c) Sardar Patel (d) Shyama Prasad
232. Recently, Geographical Indications Registry at Chennai has granted GI tag to Silao Khaja, the traditional delicacy of:  
(a) Nalanda in Bihar (b) Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh  
(c) Asansol in West Bengal (d) Dhanbad in Jharkhand
233. Which among the following states were the top three performing states under the maternity benefit programme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana?  
(a) Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh  
(b) Haryana, Punjab and Goa  
(c) Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh  
(d) Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Sikkim
234. Who has been announced as the new US Defense Secretary by President Donald Trump?  
(a) Jim Mattis (b) Patrick Shanahan (c) Sushane Tereh (d) Amjister Derter
235. Recently, which of the following countries named Gitega as the country's new political capital?  
(a) Fiji (b) Burundi (c) Senegal (d) Angola
236. Who among the following has been awarded for his contribution to reforms, particularly in the power sector reforms at the Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award in New Delhi?  
(a) Shri Peeyush Goyal (b) Shri Narendra Modi (c) Shri Suresh Prabhu (d) Smt. Smriti Irani
237. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India has shortlisted six major IT companies for capturing details of all borrowers and wilful defaulters. Which of the following is not among the shortlisted companies?  
(a) IBM India  
(b) Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India  
(c) HCL  
(d) Mindtree Ltd.
238. According to the MORI Perils of Perception Survey 2018, done by IPSOS India, the present rank of India in misperception index is:  
(a) Third (b) Seventh (c) Ninth (d) Twelfth
239. Name the Indian athlete, who has become the fastest Asian to cycle the globe.  
(a) Deepika Rawat (b) Alankrita Srivastava (c) Roopali Dhar (d) Vedangi Kulkarni
240. National Mathematics Day is celebrated every year on:  
(a) 20th December (b) 21st December (c) 22nd December (d) 23rd December
241. India's first music museum will be set up with assistance from the Central Government in:  
(a) Tirunelveli (b) Thiruvaiyaru (c) Tirupur (d) Tiruchirappalli
242. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a stamp and a coin to commemorate the Paika rebellion of 1817 in:  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Tamil Nadu

243. What was the theme for National Consumer Day 2018?  
(a) Building digital world that consumer can trust (b) Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints  
(c) Go for Consumer Justice Now (d) Everything Upto the Mark for Consumers
244. Which of the following commemorative coins were released by Shri Narendra Modi in honour of former Prime Minister, Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee?  
(a) Rs 25 (b) Rs 50 (c) Rs 100 (d) Rs 150
245. Name the Samadhi of Bharat Ratna & former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, which was dedicated to the nation on 25th Dec, 2018.  
(a) Chir Atal (b) Sada Atal (c) Rahe Atal (d) Sadaiv Atal
246. Which of the following Indian banks has launched a special card for Kumbh Mela 2019?  
(a) State Bank of India (b) Canara Bank (c) Punjab National Bank (d) Bank of Baroda
247. Which of the following countries Air Force launched its first Global Positioning System (GPS) III satellite recently?  
(a) India (b) South Korea (c) Japan (d) USA
248. Who had achieved the Maharashtra Kesari 2018 title recently?  
(a) Bala Rafique Shaikh (b) Deewakar Purdhankar (c) Abhijeet Katke (d) Shivaji Deshmukh
249. Who among the following bagged 17 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2018'?  
(a) Indian Railways (b) Air Asia  
(c) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (d) GAIL
250. National Farmer's Day is celebrated every year in India, on:  
(a) 17th December (b) 19th December (c) 21st December (d) 23rd December
251. India's longest rail-cum-road span bridge was inaugurated in:  
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Assam (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
252. Arif Aqueel is sworn in as the first Muslim minister after 15 years in which of the following states of India?  
(a) Telangana (b) Bihar (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
253. Anak Krakatau volcano has been in the news, it is located in:  
(a) Japan (b) Indonesia (c) Maldives (d) China
254. P V Bharathi has been appointed as managing director and chief executive officer of:  
(a) Corporation Bank (b) Andhra Bank (c) Punjab National Bank (d) Indian Bank
255. Who among the following is not a member in the Competition Commission of India?  
(a) Sangeeta Verma (b) Augustine Peter (c) UC Nahta (d) Sunitha Sharma
256. Researchers from the \_\_\_\_\_ have developed the world's smallest tic-tac-toe game board with DNA.  
(a) California Institute of Technology (b) Oxford Institute of Technology  
(c) Harvard Institute of Technology (d) New Delhi Institute of Technology
257. Mikaela Shiffrin became the youngest woman to win 50 World Cup ski races with victory in the slalom in the French Alps. She hails from:  
(a) USA (b) Mexico (c) Germany (d) Argentina



258. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday is celebrated as Good Governance Day across the country on:  
(a) 20th December (b) 24th December (c) 25th December (d) 26th December
259. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh released the list of top 10 performing police stations across the nation. Which among the following police stations topped the list?  
(a) Kalu (b) Campbell Bay (c) Farakka (d) Guder
260. India-China Film Festival was organized during the first India-China High Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges in:  
(a) Beijing (b) New Delhi (c) Shanghai (d) Mumbai
261. The principal seat of the Andhra Pradesh High Court is:  
(a) Amravati (b) Vizag (c) Guntur (d) Tirupati
262. The Election Commission has banned all kinds of tobacco in polling booths during the:  
(a) 2019 Lok Sabha elections (b) 2024 Lok Sabha elections  
(c) 2022 UP Assembly elections (d) 2019 Andhra Pradesh Assembly elections
263. Recently, A total of 11 projects have been taken up under Namami Gange Programme by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) to conserve the River Yamuna in:  
(a) Agra (b) Mathura (c) Yamunotri (d) Delhi
264. Recently, 'Atal Ayushman Yojana' has been launched in:  
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Uttarakhand (d) Assam
265. Recently, the concerned state government has declared Kuno National Park. Kuno National Park is located in:  
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Assam
266. Which is the first country in Southeast Asia to legalize medical marijuana recently?  
(a) Cambodia (b) Philippines (c) Thailand (d) Vietnam
267. Recently, RBI launches survey to capture retail payment habits in 6 cities. Which of the following cities is not included among this list?  
(a) Guwahati (b) Hyderabad (c) Kolkata (d) Bengaluru
268. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in consultation with the government, has set up a six-member committee to review the economic capital framework of the central bank. Who among the following will be the chairman of this committee?  
(a) Bimal Jalan (b) Rakesh Mohan (c) N.S. Vishwanathan (d) Bharat Doshi
269. Name the former Australian player, who was formally inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame recently.  
(a) Michael Bevan (b) Adam Gilchrist (c) Matthew Hayden (d) Ricky Ponting
270. Recently, the Mohammed Rafi Award has been bestowed upon:  
(a) Usha Timothy (b) Talat Aziz (c) Usha Mageshkar (d) Sadhna Sargam

271. Recently, NITI Aayog released the Second Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts. Which among the following districts has shown the most improvement overall?  
(a) Koraput (b) Virudhunagar (c) Giridih (d) Kiphire
272. Recently, The Government has revised the Minimum Support Price of \_\_\_\_\_ of Minor Forest Produce items.  
(a) 12 items (b) 16 items (c) 19 items (d) 23 items
273. The Dwijing Festival is an annual river festival is celebrated in:  
(a) Nagaland (b) Manipur (c) Mizoram (d) Assam
274. President Ramnath Kovind has launched 'Sadbhaav Utsav' in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) Guwahati (c) Kanpur (d) Vellore
275. Recently, Ministry of Culture handed over a Memorandum of Understanding for development of a mobile Audio Guide App for five iconic sites. Which among the following sites is not included in the list?  
(a) Amer Fort (Rajasthan) (b) Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar)  
(c) Kumarakom (Kerala) (d) Khajuraho Temple (Madhya Pradesh)
276. Which of the following railway zones has introduced a new state-of-the-art technology called Automated Train Examination System (ATES) for the enhancement of train safety?  
(a) Northern Railway (b) South Central Railway  
(c) West Central Railway (d) Central Railway
277. Who among the following has been conferred the 'Champions of Change' award by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu for exemplary leadership in bringing about transformation in governance in the Northeastern state?  
(a) Sarbananda Sonowal (b) Himanta Biswa Sarma (c) Biplab Kumar Deb (d) N Biren Singh
278. Recently, Ibrahim al-Assaf has been named as new Foreign Minister of:  
(a) Bahrain (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Turkey (d) Kenya
279. The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited in:  
(a) Same Day (b) Seven Days (c) Fifteen Days (d) Twenty Eight Days
280. The Odisha forest department is all set to add another olive ridley mass nesting site at the mouth of river \_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Chitroptala (b) Bahuda (c) Kuakhai (d) Sileru
281. Who among the following inaugurated the 12th Global Healthcare Summit organized by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin?  
(a) Shri Ramnath Kovind (b) Shri Narendra Modi (c) Shri Venkaiah Naidu (d) Shri J.P.Nadda
282. Recently, Andry Rajoelina wins presidential run-off vote in:  
(a) Panama (b) Peru (c) Paraguay (d) Madagascar
283. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a \_\_\_\_\_ financial assistance to Bhutan for its 12th five-year plan.  
(a) Rs 1,500 crore (b) Rs 3,500 crore (c) Rs 4,500 crore (d) Rs 7,500 crore
284. According to the Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18, which mapped the performance of central public sector units, which of the following emerged as the top three most profitable PSUs in 2017-18?  
(a) GAIL, BHEL and SAIL (b) OIL, BHEL and IOCL  
(c) Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC and NTPC (d) GAIL, NTPC and NHPC

285. Recently, which of the following business house has become the most valuable business house in the country?  
(a) RIL (b) HDFC group (c) ICICI (d) Bharti Mittal group
286. Who among the following was named Balkan Athlete of the Year becoming only the second soccer player to scoop the prize recently?  
(a) Luka Modric (b) Dominik Livakovic (c) Hristo Stoichkov (d) Duje Caleta-Car
287. Who among the following won the Maharashtra Open tennis tournament?  
(a) Marin Cilic (b) Rohan Bopanna (c) Rafael Nadal (d) Andy Murray
288. Recently, Reserve Bank of India cleared a proposal to dig in an existing \_\_\_\_\_ corpus for funding micro lenders by SIDBI.  
(a) Rs 1000-crore (b) Rs 2500-crore (c) Rs 4000-crore (d) Rs 5000-crore
289. Who is the first person to complete a solo trek across Antarctica without assistance of any kind recently?  
(a) Colin O'Brady (b) Renington Sarsh (c) Amermerico Sentel (d) Jinguhao Guarez
290. World Braille Day is celebrated every year on:  
(a) 29th December (b) 31st December (c) 4th January (d) 7th January
291. The Indian Railways has come up with a plan to replace the 104-year-old British era touted as India's first vertical-lift bridge that connects Rameswaram in \_\_\_\_\_ to mainland India.  
(a) Kerala (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
292. Which of the following Police has become the first police force in the country to digitize all malkhanas, rooms for keeping seized arms and ammunition in December 2018?  
(a) Delhi Police (b) Chandigarh Police  
(c) Andhra Pradesh Police (d) Uttar Pradesh Police
293. Who has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Somalia in December 2018?  
(a) Shri Preveen Chhabra (b) Shri Rahul Chhabra (c) Shri Predeep Kumar (d) Shri Punkaj Jain
294. Which of the following panel has suggested that the Army and defence forces set up specialised information warfare units in the areas where we are carrying out counter-insurgency operations?  
(a) DS Hooda panel (b) K. Uday Panet panel (c) Dalbir Singh panel (d) Bikram Singh panel
295. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a \_\_\_\_\_ resolution on international information security (IIS) titled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security."  
(a) China (b) USA (c) Russia (d) Japan
296. ESAF small finance bank which received the first banking license in \_\_\_\_\_ since independence has got RBI approval to operate as scheduled bank.  
(a) Kerala (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
297. In December 2018, Scientists in \_\_\_\_\_ have built a virtual reality (VR) 3D model of cancer, providing a new way to look at the disease.  
(a) Harvard (b) Cambridge (c) Oxford (d) New Delhi

298. Indian skipper Virat Kohli surpassed former captain \_\_\_\_\_ long-standing record of most runs scored by an Indian in a calendar year overseas.  
(a) Rahul Dravid (b) Sourav Ganguly (c) M. S. Dhoni (d) Sachin Tendulkar
299. The book titled "Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From" written by:  
(a) Romila Thapar (b) Dwijendra Narayan Jha  
(c) Tony Joseph (d) Ramachandra Guha
300. A postal stamp dedicated to Nabin Chandra Das, inventor of Rasogolla was launched on the inaugural day of the three-day festival marking the 150th year of its invention. Which of the following states of India won the Geographical Indication (GI) for Rasogolla?  
(a) West Bengal (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
301. Which is the first state to adopt Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) on a pilot basis under Nirbhaya Fund?  
(a) Haryana (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Karnataka
302. How many people have received Ashok Chakra so far?  
(a) 75 (b) 79 (c) 84 (d) 95
303. Which of the following corporations was awarded Best Capital City in the Solid Waste Management in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings?  
(a) Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (b) Pune Municipal Corporation  
(c) Greater Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (d) Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation
304. Who has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Liberia in December 2018?  
(a) Arvind Kumar Sharma (b) Shri Y.K. Sailas Thangal  
(c) PM P.K. Mishra (d) Pradeep Kumar Sinha
305. Which of the following countries has approved the issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated bonds to raise loans from China's capital markets in December 2018?  
(a) India (b) Japan (c) Pakistan (d) USA
306. Which of the following countries promotes 2019 as the 'Year of Active Investment and Social Development' in the backdrop of proposed investments from India to boost economy of this Central Asian country?  
(a) Turkmenistan (b) Uzbekistan (c) Kazakhstan (d) Tajikistan
307. According to the RBI data, In the fiscal year ended March 2018, banks recovered Rs \_\_\_\_\_ crore worth of bad loans as against Rs 38,500 crore recovered in FY17.  
(a) 30,400 (b) 40,400 (c) 50,400 (d) 60,400
308. Virat Kohli is now the joint-most successful Indian Test captain in overseas conditions after Team India registered a historic win in the Boxing Day Test against Australia and he went equal with \_\_\_\_\_ on the record.  
(a) Rahul Dravid (b) Sourav Ganguly (c) M. S. Dhoni (d) Sachin Tendulkar
309. Who among the following Indian fast bowler finished 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats in the calendar year?  
(a) Jasprit Bumrah (b) Umesh Yadav (c) Mohammed Shami (d) Bhuvneshwar Kumar
310. Norman Gimbel, an Oscar-and-Grammy-winning lyricist passed away. Gimbel was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in:  
(a) 1975 (b) 1980 (c) 1984 (d) 1990



## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. b The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 2nd International Ambedkar Conclave in New Delhi as part of the commemoration of Constitution Day.
2. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese premier Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday held a trilateral meeting, the second among the three countries after a gap of 12 years, on the sidelines of the G-20 summit in Buenos Aires to discuss cooperation in various areas.
3. b Air forces of the United States and India are scheduled to participate in a 12-day joint exercise 'Cope India 2019' at two air force stations in West Bengal.
4. c The NITI Aayog organized a day-long dialogue on "Health System for A New India: Building Blocks", with national and international academia, practitioners, Indian policymakers and other stakeholders of the healthcare ecosystem.
5. b The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, visited Chandigarh to inaugurate the 13th edition of CII Agro Tech India-2018.
6. a The first ever India Indonesia Business forum (IIBF) was held at Port Blair in Andaman and Nicobar Islands as part of policies of Delhi and Jakarta to expand their strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific Region including Indian Ocean Region.
7. b The Indian Owl Festival, the country's first owl fest, was held at Pingori village in Purandar taluka of Pune from November 29.
8. c Sangai festival is an annual cultural festival organised by Manipur Tourism Department every year from November 21 to 30
9. b In Golf, Ridhima Dilawari captured her maiden professional title at the Noida Golf Course.
10. d India's first international indigenous film festival will take place in February next year in Odisha.
11. b Union Minister for Shipping, Surface Transport and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the second edition of Khasdar Mahotsav in presence of Bollywood actors Anil Kapoor and Jackie Shroff, at the Ishwar Deshmukh College of Physical Education in Nagpur.
12. c The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is being held at Katowice, Poland from 2nd December 2018 to 14th December 2018.
13. a The Minister for Civil Aviation has constituted a task-force on the recommendation of Drone Policy 2.0 under the chairmanship of the Minister of State.
14. d The first Directorate General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAfMS) Military Medicine Conclave was held in New Delhi.
15. c The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the hugely popular Hornbill Festival 2018 in Kohima, coinciding with the Formation Day of Nagaland.

16. c Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa laid the foundation stone for new parliament to be built with Chinese funds outside the capital Harare.
17. b Leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, has been sworn in as the new Mexican President following his landslide victory in the July 1 presidential election.
18. b The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched a new mass media campaign calling for the elimination of industrially produced trans-fat in the food supply by 2022.
19. c
20. a In Wrestling, Vinesh Phogat capped a highly successful season by grabbing the 57-kilogram national title at the Tata Motors Senior National Championship in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh.
21. a The National Green Tribunal has appointed former Uttarakhand High Court judge, Justice U C Dhyani, as head of the three-member committee to oversee rejuvenation work of the Ganga River.
22. b Shri Sunil Arora assumed charge as the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India succeeding Shri O.P.Rawat. Shri Rawat demitted the office on 1st December, 2018 after completing his tenure.
23. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi met South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on the sidelines of the G20 summit and invited him to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations next year.
24. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will host the G20 Summit in 2022, when the country celebrates its 75 years of Independence.
25. b The Special Forces of India and United States completed the final manoeuvres of their three-day tactical exercise called 'Vajra Kayaa' which is part of their joint military drill 'Vajra Prahar 2018'.
26. c The Asia Pacific Summit-2018 began in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. The theme of two-day Summit is "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values".
27. c The World Bank has unveiled 200 billion US Dollars in climate action investment for 2021 to 2025, adding that this amounts to a doubling of its current five-year funding.
28. b The isolation of single sheets of carbon, known as graphene, was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2010.
29. a Raninder Singh became the first Indian to be elected as the vice-president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) after voting results were declared in Munich.
30. b The Tata Open India International Challenge is an international badminton tournament, which is held annually in India. Ashmita Chaliha took down eighth seed G. Vrushali in the women's singles final of the Tata Open India International Challenge.
31. c Qatar has announced its decision to leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January next year and focus more on the production of natural gas.
32. c The Train 18 will only be allowed to run at a maximum speed of 160 kmph in its commercial operations.

33. c The Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) is in India for a bilateral air exercise SHINYUU Maitri-18 with Indian Air Force from 03-07 Dec 18 at A F Station Agra. The theme of the exercise is joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft.
34. d ICICI Securities, along with the BSE, has launched a facility wherein clients of the domestic brokerage entity would be able to receive the pay-out within 30 minutes of selling the shares.
35. a The panel is headed by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and includes Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, Oil Secretary M M Kuttu, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and ONGC Chairman and Managing Director Shashi Shanker.
36. a The 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: COP24, also known as the Katowice Climate Change Conference, is a conference being held between 2 and 14 December 2018 in Katowice, Poland.
37. b The Centre and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed an 85 million dollar loan to improve skill development eco-system in Odisha.
38. c NASA's first-ever mission, called OSIRIS-REx, designed to visit an asteroid and return with a sample of its dust to the earth will soon reach its destination, Benu, two years after launching from Cape Canaveral, Florida.
39. c Ullas Narayan became the first ever Indian individual medal winner in an international ultra-running event by clinching a bronze in the 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championship.
40. b Pawan Singh has become the first Indian to be elected one of seven member's of the Judges Committee of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF).
41. c Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari inaugurated India Water Impact Summit 2018, being jointly organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga) from 5-7 December 2018 in New Delhi.
42. c State Bank of India has roped in Asian Games gold medalist Swapna Barman as brand ambassador for its digital app YONO.
43. c India-ASEAN InnoTech Summit in New Delhi was organised by FICCI.
44. b FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) has approved the merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) through an-all equity deal, valuing the total business of the latter at Rs 31,700 crore.
45. b National Rail Museum and Madame Tussauds Wax Museum have joined hands to provide combo offer to Delhi NCR tourists.
46. a Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) Managing Director Mangu Singh launched the 'rebranded' common mobility card named 'ONE'.
47. c The ISRO launched GSAT-11 satellite and put it successfully in earth orbit from Kourou Launch Zone, French Guiana in South America.

48. c With earnings of \$22 million, a seven-year-old boy from U.S. has become the highest-paid YouTube star, beating established adults like Daniel Middleton and Jake Paul, according to Forbes. Ryan of "Ryan Toysreview" topped the list.
49. c Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric has bagged the 2018 Ballon d'Or.
50. d Kohli has received a special honour as a signed jersey that he donated after scoring his a hundred in the fourth Test at the SCG during India's tour of Australia in 2014-15 has been placed next to Sachin Tendulkar's portrait at the Bradman Museum.
51. c The Supreme Court brought in place a witness protection regime in the country noting that one of the main reasons for witnesses turning hostile is that they are not given security by the State.
52. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi has emerged as the most popular global leader on social media platform Instagram with 14.8 million followers.
53. d
54. b In a bid to transform rural Maharashtra, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has launched a unique initiative called "SMART", which stands for State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation.
55. b In a first, a miracle has happened in medical history. A mother whose uterus was transplanted from a dead donor gave birth to a healthy baby. The transplant took place in 2016 in Brazil.
56. a Online lending marketplace Paisabazaar has launched a new feature by the name of 'Chance of Approval' on its website which will help its loan applicants chose the most suited lender on the platform.
57. c
58. d The programme, the Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability or PEETHA aims to improve transparency in the distribution of individual and social benefits.
59. d World Soil Day is observed annually on 5th December to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources.
60. d Tamil writer, traveller, essayist and scriptwriter S. Ramakrishnan has won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 2018 for his novel Sancharam , which captures the lives of nagaswaram players in karisal bhoomi - the arid land - of Tamil Nadu.
61. b A former senior Indian diplomat, Preeti Saran, has been elected unopposed to an Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).
62. c A study has said India is the fourth highest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, accounting for 7 per cent of global emissions in 2017.
63. c The Union Cabinet has approved the Agriculture Export Policy in line with the government's commitment to double farmer's income by 2022.
64. c Salman Khan topped Forbes India Celebrity 100 list for third time in a row.

65. a An assistant professor from the Indian Institute of Technology-Mandi (IIT-Mandi), Rajanish Giri has been awarded the Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA) 2018.
66. c The 2023 IAAF World Championships will take place in Budapest.
67. b Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah has become the fastest bowler to reach 200 wickets in Test cricket, breaking Australia's Clarrie Grimmett's feat set 82 years ago.
68. c Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju inaugurated the 19th All India Police (AIPDM) Shooting Competition-2018 at Manesar, Gurugram in Haryana.
69. c Exercise Hand-in-Hand is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India and China.
70. d The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Government of Goa, is hosted the annual Startup India Venture Capital Summit in Goa on December 07, 2018.
71. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has cleared the appointment of Krishnamurthy Subramanian as the Chief Economic Adviser for three years.
72. c Panama first in Latin America to join China's Belt and Road Initiative.
73. a All New Vehicles to Come with Pre-Fitted High-Security Registration Plates From April 2019
74. c Surat, a diamond processing and trading center in Gujarat, will see the fastest expansion through 2035, averaging more than 9 per cent.
75. d Luxembourg is a small country with big traffic jams. So when Prime Minister Xavier Bettel was sworn in for a second term earlier this week, his governing coalition promised free mass transit for all, which would make the country the first to offer such a benefit.
76. c Food and Agriculture organisation, FAO Council has approved India's proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023.
77. c Glasgow-based artist Charlotte Prodger won the 2018 Turner Prize, Britain's prestigious contemporary art award at Tate Britain, with an autobiographical film shot on a mobile phone.
78. b Rattan Lal, a distinguished university professor of soil science at the Ohio State University, has won the Glinka World Soil Prize 2018 in a ceremony at the Rome headquarters of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for his outstanding contribution to sustainable soil management.
79. c In 1996, United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that 7 December was to be the International Civil Aviation Day.
80. c Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India has been conferred the Skoch Award for National Significance at an event held recently in New Delhi.
81. a "Gujarat thus becomes the first state to create such a fund for high-end technology and innovation, artificial intelligence, robotics, biotechnology, polymers and special materials, among others,".



82. b Shaikh Hamdan Bin Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of The Executive Council of Dubai, has launched the Dubai Audio Library, the largest Arabic audio library in the world.
83. c The Northeast Frontier Railway Construction Organisation has put in place tall piers near Manipur's Noney for the tallest railway bridge in the world.
84. d Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman, Bharti Enterprises, has been bestowed with the 'Doctor Honoris Causa' by ESCP Europe Business School, one of the premier global institutions, for his innovative entrepreneurship and contribution towards philanthropy in the field of education.
85. c Australia has passed Qatar to become the world's leading exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the first time.
86. b India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with its diaspora sending a whopping USD 80 billion back home, the World Bank said in a report.
87. a A team of researchers from IISER Kolkata have developed a way of predicting the intensity of activity in the next solar cycle (approximately from 2020 to 2031) using data spread over the last 100 years.
88. b Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai is being honored by Harvard University for her work promoting girls' education.
89. c IT stalwart Roshni Nadar-Malhotra, biotechnology pioneer Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, media mogul Shobhana Bhartia and actor Priyanka Chopra have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes in a list topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.
90. a SoftBank hired Facebook Inc. executive Kirthiga Reddy as a partner at its \$100 billion Vision Fund, the first woman to join a group of just a dozen that oversees the world's biggest pool of technology investments.
91. b The first International Conference under the aegis of National Hydrology Project, Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation is organised by Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) during 10-11 December, 2018 at Indian School of Business (ISB), Mohali on the theme 'Sustainable Water Management'.
92. a India is set to get its first underwater museum off the Puducherry coast, giving a boost to tourism in the Union territory.
93. c Mexico's Vanessa Ponce de Leon won the coveted Miss World 2018 crown at a grand event held in the Chinese city, Sanya. Thailand's Nicolene Pichapa Limsnukan was declared the runner-up.
94. b Ex AVIAINDRA, a service specific exercise between Indian Air Force and Russian Federation Aerospace Force (RFSAF), is planned at Air Force Station Jodhpur from 10-21 Dec 2018. The inaugural IAF-RFSAF Ex AVIAINDRA was conducted in 2014.
95. b More than 1,700 people were arrested across France during the latest round of "yellow vest" protests, in which demonstrators clashed with riot police, the interior ministry said.
96. a SWIFT India Domestic Services, the local unit of SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) global that facilitates international payments functions for banks, has appointed Arundhati Bhattacharya, former chairman of State Bank of India, as its chairman.

97. d China has launched a historic space mission to the dark side of the Moon. A Long March rocket carrying the Chang'e-4 lunar lander took off from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southern China.
98. d The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India in association with Government of Kerala is organizing a Regional Conference on December 10- 11, 2018 at Thiruvananthapuram on 'Good Governance - Focus on Aspirational Districts'.
99. c Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December - the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
100. a Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) Ships Varyag, Admiral Panteleyev and Boris Butoma arrived Visakhapatnam to participate in INDRA NAVY, the bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy exercise on 09 Dec 18.
101. b The Tamil Nadu government launched a 24-hour helpline for women, among others, facing domestic violence and sexual harassment.
102. d Urjit Ravindra Patel is an Indian economist, who served as the 24th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India from 4 September 2016 to
103. b Arunachal Pradesh got its 23rd district with the formal inauguration of Shi Yomi, carved out of the West Siang district.
104. c IT stalwart Roshni Nadar-Malhotra, biotechnology pioneer Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, media mogul Shobhana Bhartia and actor Priyanka Chopra have been named among the world's 100 most powerful women by Forbes in a list topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel.
105. a Dr. Abdul Kalam Island, formerly known as Wheeler Island, is an island off the coast of Odisha, India.
106. c Virat Kohli had to wait for seven long years to be part of a winning Test team in Australia.
107. d DMK MP Kanimozhi has been selected for the Best Woman Parliamentarian (Rajya Sabha) set up by Lokmat newspaper for 2018.
108. b Bollywood star Salman Khan won the best entertainment host/presenter for "Bigg Boss", and Anurag Kashyap won best direction (fiction) for season one of Netflix's original series "Sacred Games" at the inaugural Asian Academy Creative Awards in Singapore.
109. d International Mountain Day is observed on 11 December.
110. a Goa's Prathamesh Maulingkar has created history by becoming the first Asian/Indian to win this year's Mister Supranational title in a competition held in Poland.
111. c Time magazine named a group of journalists, including Jamal Khashoggi and a pair of Reuters journalists imprisoned by Myanmar, as its "Person of the Year", in a cover story headlined "The Guardians and the War on Truth."
112. c Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Radha Mohan Singh launched a portal ENSURE-National Livestock Mission-EDEG developed by NABARD and operated under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries.

113. c The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the fourth Partners' Forum on 12th December at New Delhi.
114. c The Commerce Ministry has formulated India's first ever Agricultural Export Policy with a focused plan to boost India's agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022 thereby assisting the Agriculture Ministry in achieving its target of USD 100 billion and to integrate Indian farmers and the high quality agricultural products with global value chains and to double India's share in world agriculture.
115. b The Uttar Pradesh Government has decided to establish an umbrella university to control all the medical and dental colleges and nursing institutions in the state.
116. c The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a leading organization in global combat against money laundering and terror financing, has accepted Israel as its 38th member.
117. d A day after the sudden resignation of Governor Urjit Patel, the Modi administration appointed former bureaucrat Shaktikanta Das as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at a time when the government and the central bank are apparently locked in a tussle over several important issues.
118. b Eminent economist and columnist Surjit Bhalla had resigned as part-time member of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) on December 1.
119. a NASA's Voyager 2 has become the second human-made object in history to reach the edge of our solar system, after the spacecraft exited the protective bubble of particles and magnetic fields created by the Sun.
120. d The General Assembly decided to declare 12 December the International Day of Neutrality, and called for marking the day by holding events aimed at enhancing public awareness of the value of neutrality in international relations.
121. a Comptroller and Auditor General Rajiv Mehrishi has become the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors.
122. d Actress Janhvi Kapoor, who made her Hindi film debut with 'Dhadak', received the 'Arets Stjerneskudd' award as the rising talent of the year by the Royal Norwegian Consulate General along with her producer father Boney Kapoor
123. a British Prime Minister Theresa May has won a vote of confidence in her leadership of the Conservative Party.
124. b All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi organized a National conference 'AYUSHCHARYA' on Dinacharya (Daily Regimen) and Ritucharya (Seasonal Regimen) for public health promotion" on 10th and 11th of December, 2018.
125. a India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at the Department of European Studies (DES) at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education.
126. a Delhi Police has entered the Limca Book of Records by training over two lakh women and girls under their self-defence programme in 2017.
127. d The International Cricket Council (ICC) has roped in Indian alcobev brand Royal Stag as official sponsor for the next five years.
128. b A Swedish think tank says Russia has emerged as the world's second-largest arms producer after the U.S.

129. b The Indian Navy joined a select group of naval forces in the world when it inducted its first non-tethered Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.
130. c India's star paddler Manika Batra was bestowed with the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Breakthrough Star Award 2018.
131. a Senior Congress leader Kamal Nath is the new Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.
132. b The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Fifth Enterprise India Exhibition in Yangon on the concluding day of his state visit to Myanmar.
133. c Union Minister for road transport and highways and shipping, Nitin Gadkari, flagged off first container mainline vessel from Tuticorin, opening direct shipping route to eastern countries.
134. c Uttar Pradesh-based 'HelpUsGreen' has come up with the world's first profitable solution to the monumental temple waste problem: 'flowercycling'.
135. c An Indian-American woman lawyer was appointed to a top post in a US organisation, which advocates religious freedom. Anurima Bhargava, a civil rights lawyer, has been appointed as a Commissioner to the US Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), an independent, bipartisan federal government entity established by the US Congress to monitor, analyse and report on threats to religious freedom abroad.
136. a Akademik Lomonosov is a non-self-propelled powership to be operated as the first Russian floating nuclear power station. The ship was named after Academician Mikhail Lomonosov.
137. b The International Monetary Fund said that global debt has reached an all-time high of 184 trillion US dollars with the United States, China and Japan accounting for more than half of it.
138. b The Centre and the Asian Development Bank, ADB signed a 60 Million dollar Loan Agreement in New Delhi to continue financing riverbank protection works, renovation of flood embankments, and community-based flood risk management activities in critically flood-prone areas along the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
139. d The Capital of Odisha, Bhubaneswar is set to host one of the three Hockey Series Finals to be held from June 6 to 16 next year.
140. c The Information and Broadcasting Ministry nominated Brijendra Pal Singh as the new president of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Society and Chairman of Governing Council.
141. a The Congress named 67-year-old Ashok Gehlot for the top post and nominated 41-year-old Sachin Pilot as his deputy.
142. a Eminent novelist Amitav Ghosh has been chosen for this year's Jnanpith Award.
143. b Giving a further fillip to India's energy conservation efforts, Ministry of Power has launched the ECO Niwas Samhita 2018; an Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings (ECBC-R). The Code was launched on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day 2018.
144. b Tata Steel Limited has been declared as the winner of the Prime Minister's Trophy for the 'Best Performing Integrated Steel Plant' in the country for the performance year 2016-17.

145. a Google has developed an Artificial Intelligence (AI) model that can detect diabetic retinopathy with a level of accuracy on par with human retinal specialists.
146. c Scientists in Finland have developed what they believe is the world's first vaccine to protect bees against disease, raising hopes for tackling the drastic decline in insect numbers which could cause a global food crisis.
147. b Producer Ashok Amritraj was honoured with the French Knight of the National Order of Merit.
148. c DD Kisan launched a first-of-its-kind reality show 'Mahila Kisan Awards'. The show will be telecast from 17th of this month and see participation of women farmers from across the length and breadth of India.
149. c Jharkhand has been selected for "Krishi Karman" award in the rice category from the Union Ministry of Agriculture.
150. d National energy conservation day is celebrated every year by the people all over the India on 14th of December.
151. b Jammu and Kashmir has become the first state in the country to have a law banning sexual exploitation of women by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant.
152. b The National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), a university in Vadodara, Gujarat is the third in the world after Russia and China.
153. c Mizo National Front (MNF) president Zoramthanga was sworn in as the ninth Chief Minister of Mizoram beginning his third stint at the helm of the State.
154. c The governments of India, Nepal and Bhutan are actively considering having a joint task force for allowing free movement of wildlife across political boundaries and checking smuggling of wildlife across the Kanchenjunga Landscape, a trans-boundary region spread across Nepal, India and Bhutan.
155. d The first National Workshop on Explosives Detection was inaugurated at High Energy Materials Research Laboratory Pune.
156. d The 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held in the Polish city of Katowice from 2 to 14 December 2018.
157. b The government included two currencies -- Korean Won and Turkish Lira -- in the list of currencies for which it notifies the exchange rate for assessing the value of imports and exports.
158. b India's first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) opened at Adani Aerospace Park in Hyderabad.
159. d Researchers from Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Pune propose a change in the way epidemiologists estimate the growth and adaptation rate of bacteria.
160. b On the occasion of Vijay Diwas, Sports Minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore flagged off a special marathon 'Soldierathon' at JLN Stadium in New Delhi.
161. b The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated a new Airport Complex, and an Integrated Command and Control Centre for the Kumbh Mela, at Prayagraj.



162. a Ranil Wickremesinghe was sworn in as Sri Lanka's prime minister making remarkable comeback weeks after being ousted by President Maithripala Sirisena under controversial circumstances.
163. b Australia announced that it now recognizes West Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, and will move its Tel Aviv embassy once a peace settlement is reached.
164. d President Donald Trump announced that his Budget Director Mick Mulvaney will step in as acting Chief of Staff to replace John Kelly, amid indications that Mr. Trump is struggling to fill the key post.
165. c The European Parliament approved an accord with Japan that has been dubbed the world's biggest trade deal, covering economies that represent a third of global GDP.
166. a Indian-American Shree Saini has been crowned Miss India Worldwide 2018 at a pageant held in the Fords City of New Jersey.
167. d Scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the US have developed an ingestible, capsule controlled using Bluetooth wireless technology, which can be customised to deliver drugs or monitor health over long periods of time.
168. c PV Sindhu made history becoming the first Indian to win the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals tournament.
169. b Indian skipper Virat Kohli became the first Indian captain to reach the milestone of 1000 Test runs in a calendar year on foreign soil en route to his 25 Test century. He became only the third Indian after Mohinder Amarnath and Rahul Dravid to score a 1000 runs on foreign soil in a calendar year.
170. c The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has remembered brave soldiers who fought in 1971, on the occasion of Vijay Diwas on 16th December. Vijay Diwas is commemorated every 16 December in India as it marks its military victory over Pakistan in 1971 during the war for the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan.
171. b After the approval of the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court, a pilot project for e-payments of court fee, judicial deposits, fines and penalties started from the Pune District Court complex in Shivajinagar on December 15.
172. b Cabinet approved establishment of two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) one at Madurai in Tamil Nadu and another at Bibinagar in Telangana.
173. c In Chhattisgarh, the newly elected Congress legislature party leader Bhupesh Baghel sworn-in as the new chief minister of state.
174. a UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan declared 2019 as the Year of Tolerance, an extension of the Year of Zayed which has run this year.
175. a Catriona Gray of Philippines clinched Miss Universe 2018 crown beating contestants from 93 other countries.
176. d Sanitary ware firm HSIL's CMD Sandip Somany has been elected as the new President of FICCI.
177. c Scientists have discovered the world's oldest plant virus dating back 1,000 years after analysing ancient corncobs found at a Native American archeological site.
178. c In Hockey, Belgium has claimed their first ever World Cup title.

179. b Squash star Joshna Chinappa equalled Bhuvneshwari Kumari's record of 16 national titles while Mahesh Mangaonkar won his maiden crown.
180. b Popular singers Shaan and Arijit Singh were handed over the 'Sangeet Mahasamman' award constituted by the West Bengal government at the inaugural session of the Bengal music and folk culture festival in Kolkata.
181. d Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik has sent a report to the central government recommending imposition of President's rule in the state after expiry of six month Governor's rule there on December 19.
182. b France will introduce its own tax on large internet and technology companies from January 1, 2019. France has been pushing hard for a new so-called "GAFA tax" -- named after Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon -- to ensure the global giants pay a fair share of taxes on their massive business operations in Europe.
183. c Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel has resigned amid pressure on his government over his support for the UN global compact on migration.
184. c Private sector lender IDFC Bank has completed the merger process with non-banking financial company Capital First following all the requisite approvals.
185. d Scientists have discovered the most-distant body ever observed in our solar system - located over 100 times farther than Earth is from the Sun. The new object has been nicknamed "Farout".
186. a The 37th Senior National Rowing Championship started in the Army Rowing Node in Pune.
187. c Jeff Bridges will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award during the 76th annual awards ceremony on Jan. 6, 2019
188. c Period. End of Sentence, a short film about women in India fighting against the deeply rooted stigma of menstruation, has made it to the Oscar shortlist in the Documentary Short Subject category.
189. a The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi released the coffee table book "Timeless Laxman", based on the famous cartoonist RK Laxman.
190. d International Migrants Day is observed on 18 December in accordance with Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, adopted on 4 December 2000.
191. a India's largest cancer institute was launched at AIIMS Jhajjar campus.
192. b NITI Aayog unveiled its comprehensive national Strategy for New India, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23.
193. a Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram informed that every block with more than 50 per cent Schedule Tribe, ST population and at least 20 thousand tribal persons, will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022
194. b The Haryana government has launched a mobile application to provide students information on attendance, fee, online admission and scholarships of all government colleges of the state.
195. a The Prime Ministers of Macedonia and Greece, Zoran Zaev and Alexis Tsipras, have been nominated for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize. They have been nominated for signing the Prespa Agreement between the two countries.
196. d A dreary grain silo that was transformed into an enormous colorful artwork in South Korea has been named by Guinness World Records as the largest outdoor mural in the world

197. b Japanese scientists have detected evidence of water in 17 asteroids for the first time using data from the infrared satellite AKARI.
198. c A newly-discovered blind amphibian from Panama will be named after Donald Trump in recognition of the U.S. President's stance on climate change.
199. a
200. Late Pakistan lawyer and human rights activist Asma Jahangir has been awarded the UN Human Rights Prize for 2018.
201. a External Affairs Minister Sushma and her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi co-chaired the first-ever meeting of India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges in New Delhi.
202. d Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dr Jitendra Singh launched the iGOT (Integrated Government Online Training Programme) developed by Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.
203. Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment and Forests & Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the newly constructed International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOcean) Complex in the INCOIS campus at Hyderabad.
204. b On the basis of performance in these categories, the States have been recognised as the Best Performer, Top Performers, Leaders, Aspiring Leaders, Emerging States and Beginners, as follows: Best Performer is Gujarat.
205. a FAA formally confirmed that India's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) rating remains 'Category 1'.
206. d The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a cap for funds raised via external commercial borrowing (ECB) at 6.5% of the country's GDP.
207. d The government will infuse 83000 crore in Public Sector Banks in next few months in the current fiscal.
208. a Seasoned diplomat Harsh Vardhan Shringla was appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United States.
209. b The app named 'GAS 2019,' which is available on both play store and iOS, enables users to interact with the co-delegates and speakers besides providing a platform for networking through personal and group chats
210. d The United Nations' (UN) International Human Solidarity Day is annually held on December 20 to celebrate unity in diversity. It also aims to remind people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty.
211. b Himachal Pradesh ranks high on providing clean water & sanitation, in reducing inequalities & preserving mountain ecosystem.
212. c The Maharashtra government approved a sum of Rs 4,089 crore for the Tembhu lift irrigation scheme in Satara district.
213. c A Joint workshop between ICRC and CUNPK on "Integrated Protection on Civilians (IPOC)" in UN peacekeeping operations was conducted at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi from 17 - 21 Dec 2018.

214. a The state cabinet has approved the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme, worth over Rs 10,000 crore, for the development of farmers in the state.
215. b The government has decided to set up an expert committee to look into all the taxation issues being faced by startups and angel investors.
216. c C.R.I. Pumps proves to the world that it is a leader in manufacturing energy efficient pumps by winning the National Energy Conservation Award 2018 in the Pumps category for the 4th time.
217. a Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar inaugurated World Herbal Forest Project in Morni Hill, 45 kilometres from Chandigarh. The project is a collaboration of Patanjali and Haryana Government.
218. d Fencing Association of India (FAI) president Rajeev Mehta has been made the head of the South Asian body for a four-year term.
219. c Researchers have discovered a new exotic planet outside our solar system in the constellation Cassiopeia. Located 21 light years away from us, this planet, dubbed HD219134 b, has a mass almost five times that of Earth, which is considered a so-called "super-Earth".
220. b NASA's Insight lander has deployed a seismometer on the surface of Mars, completing a major mission milestone that will allow scientists to peer into the Martian interior by studying ground motion also known as marsquakes.
221. d The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) constituted a Logistics Development Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman EAC-PM.
222. b The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the Centre of Excellence for Sickle Cell Anaemia, Thalassemia and Other Genetic Blood Disorders at the Prathima Institute of Medical Sciences in Karimnagar, Telangana.
223. a The Goods and Services Tax Council cut rates on 17 items and six types of services during its 31st meeting, leaving only one common use item - cement - in the 28% bracket.
224. c China launched its first communication satellite to provide broadband internet services worldwide in an apparent bid to rival Google and other international firms.
225. b Two IIT Hyderabad professors and their graduate students have come up with an innovative material to lay roads which reduces cost, is environmentally friendly and also stronger than asphalt roads.
226. c Actress Sonam Kapoor, a vegan, has been named People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India's Person of the Year for 2018.
227. c The new MEMUs which are capable of running at around 130 kilometres an hour also equipped with a CCTV surveillance system both inside the coaches and outside the driver's cab, a Talk Back system to enable passengers to talk to the driver in case of emergency and a GPS based passenger information and announcement system.
228. b Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, launched the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) Gurugram.
229. c India's ascent on the global stage has claimed another victory after its stock market overtook Germany to become the seventh largest in the world.

230. d A Rural Manifesto sparks a national conversation on rural distress, highlighting the potential solutions to putting the village economy on an even keel, while exploring how the vast majority of India ekes out a living. In this heartfelt and timely book, covering facets of the Indian rural economy, Feroze Varun Gandhi shines a bright light on the travails of the marginal farmer and asks searching questions on why the rural economy remains in doldrums, six decades after Independence.
231. c Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi announced annual Sardar Patel Award for National Integration at the DGPs/IGPs Conference at Kevadia.
232. a Geographical Indications Registry at Chennai has granted GI tag to Silao Khaja, the traditional delicacy of Nalanda district.
233. c Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were the top three performing states under the maternity benefit programme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.
234. b United States President Donald Trump has announced that he will replace Defence Secretary Jim Mattis with his deputy Patrick Shanahan as acting Pentagon chief on January 1.
235. b Burundi declared the small central city of Gitega the country's new political capital in line with a presidential promise made a decade ago.
236. c Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu has conferred the Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award at the 55th Skoch Summit in New Delhi.
237. c The Reserve Bank of India has shortlisted six major IT companies, including TCS, Wipro and IBM India, to set up a wide-based digital Public Credit Registry (PCR) for capturing details of all borrowers and wilful defaulters. The other three shortlisted vendors are: Capgemini Technology Services India, Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India, and Mindtree Ltd.
238. d According to the MORI Perils of Perception Survey 2018, done by Ipsos India, an independent market research company, Indians stood at 12th rank in the "misperception index", behind several countries like, Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Chile and Argentina, among others.
239. d Vedangi Kulkarni, a 20-years-old athlete from India's Pune has become the fastest Asian to cycle the globe. She cycled the 29,000 km distance required to qualify as bicycling across the globe.
240. c India's National Mathematics Day is celebrated every 22 December with numerous educational events held at schools and universities throughout the country.
241. b The country's first music museum will be set up with assistance from the Central Government in Thiruvaiyaru, Tamil Nadu, the birth place of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinity of Carnatic music.
242. b Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a stamp and a coin to commemorate the Paika rebellion of 1817 in Odisha.
243. b The Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution celebrated the National Consumer Day 2018 with the theme "Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints" at Kothari Auditorium, DRDO Bhawan in New Delhi.
244. c PM Modi released Rs 100 commemorative coin in memory of Late former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee



245. d "Sadaiv Atal", the Samadhi of Bharat Ratna & former PM Sh Atal Behari Vajpayee which will be dedicated to the nation on 25th Dec, 2018-- reflects Atalji's personality as a poet, humanist, statesman & a great leader.
246. c State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) has launched a special card for Kumbh Mela 2019.
247. d Elon Musk's SpaceX decided to end the year with the launch of its first US national security mission to date.
248. a Bala Rafique Shaikh achieved the Maharashtra Kesari 2018 title by defeating Abhijeet Katke of Pune in the wrestling duel held at Azad ground, Jalna, Maharashtra. He defeated Abhijeet Katke 11-3 in the one-sided match.
249. a Indian Railways bags 17 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2018'
250. d National Farmer's Day is observed on December 23 in India and October 12 in the United States of America. National Farmer's Day is celebrated in the honor of the former Prime Minister of India Chaudhary Charan Singh.
251. b The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated the Bogibeel Bridge in Assam, to the nation. The bridge, which spans the River Brahmaputra between Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts of Assam, is of immense economic and strategic significance for the nation. At a massive public meeting in Kareng Chapori, on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra, the Prime Minister also flagged off the first passenger train passing through the bridge. India's longest rail-cum-road span, across the Brahmaputra.
252. c Digvijay Singh's son Jaivardhan Singh was among the 28 MLAs who were sworn in as the cabinet minister in Madhya Pradesh. Arif Aqueel was the lone Muslim face in the new council of ministers. Aqueel, MLA from Bhopal North, is the first Muslim minister in the state after 15 years.
253. b The deadly tsunami in Indonesia was triggered by a chunk of the Anak Krakatau volcano slipping into the ocean, officials have confirmed, amid calls for a new early warning system that can detect volcanic eruptions.
254. a P V Bharathi has been appointed as managing director and chief executive officer of the Corporation Bank, according to an order issued by the Personnel Ministry. Bharathi is at present Executive Director, Canara Bank.
255. d The Competition Commission of India said Sangeeta Verma, a former Indian Economic Services (IES) officer, has joined as its member. The CCI will now have its full strength, with one chairperson Ashok Kumar Gupta and three members. The other two members are Augustine Peter and UC Nahta.
256. a Researchers from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) have developed the world's smallest tic-tac-toe game board with DNA. The researchers used a technique for shaping structures out of strands of DNA, a process known as DNA origami. Unlike previous techniques, a structure once created could not be altered.
257. a American Mikaela Shiffrin became the youngest woman to win 50 World Cup ski races with victory in the slalom in the French Alps. The 23-year-old Olympic champion becomes the first woman to secure a half a century of race victories before her 24th birthday, which she will celebrate in March next year.
258. c Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday is celebrated as Good Governance Day across the country on 25th December 2018.
259. a Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh released the list of top 10 performing police stations across the nation during the ongoing DGP conference. On the top of the rank-list stands Kalu police station of Rajasthan. Singh awarded trophies to the police officers of the top three police stations of India in 2018 at the conference.

260. b In order to strengthen people-to-people connect and deepen cultural understanding between the two countries, an India-China Film Festival organized during the first India-China High Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges from 22nd to 24th December, 2018. The three day Festival was organized at Siri Fort Auditorium II, New Delhi by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India.
261. a The principal seat of the Andhra Pradesh High Court is Amaravati, the capital of the State.
262. a EC bans all kinds of tobacco in polling booths during 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
263. d A total of 11 projects have been taken up under Namami Gange Programme by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) to conserve the River Yamuna in Delhi.
264. c 'Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana' has been launched in Uttarakhand.
265. c Madhya Pradesh State government has declared Kuno National Park with inclusion of an area spread along 404.0758 sq.km in addition to the earlier notified area of 344.686 sq km making a total of 748.7618 sq km area.
266. c Thailand becomes 1st country in Southeast Asia to legalize medical marijuana.
267. b According to RBI release, the survey will cover a sample of 6,000 individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds across six cities including Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati.
268. a Former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan will be the committee's chairman and former Deputy Governor Rakesh Mohan deputy chairman.
269. d Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting was formally inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.
270. a The Mohammed Rafi Award has been bestowed upon late music composer Laxmikant Shantaram Kudalkar and playback singer Usha Timothy.
271. b Virudhunagar district in Tamil Nadu has shown the most improvement overall, followed by Nuapada district in Odisha, Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar's Aurangabad and Koraput in Odisha. These districts have championed the development narrative in fundamental parameters of social progress.
272. d The Government has revised the Minimum Support Price of 23 items of Minor Forest Produce items and has introduced MSP for 17 new MFP items.
273. The much-anticipated Dwijing Festival began at the Aie River Park, Hagrama Bridge in Chirang district of Assam.
274. a President Ramnath Kovind visited Mumbai to launch 'Sadbhaav Utsav'.
275. d The five iconic sites for which the mobile Audio Guide App is to be developed are Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Kaziranga (Assam), Colva Beach (Goa), Kumarakom (Kerala) and Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).
276. d The mechanical branch of Central Railways' Nagpur division has introduced a new state-of-the-art technology called Automated Train Examination System (ATES) for the enhancement of train safety.
277. d Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh conferred the 'Champions of Change' award by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu for exemplary leadership in bringing about transformation in governance in the Northeastern state at an event organized at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.

278. b Saudi Arabia has named Ibrahim al-Assaf as new Foreign Minister, demoting outgoing top diplomat Adel al-Jubeir to the position of Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.
279. a The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.
280. b Around 3-km stretch of the beach from Sunapur to Anantpur at Bahuda rookery is being developed as a possible olive ridley mass nesting site.
281. a The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 12th Global Healthcare Summit organized by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in Mumbai.
282. d Madagascar ex-leader Andry Rajoelina wins presidential run-off vote.
283. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a Rs 4,500 crore financial assistance to Bhutan for its 12th five-year plan after holding wide-ranging talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Dr. Lotay Tshering.
284. c Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC and NTPC emerged as the top three most profitable PSUs in 2017-18, while BSNL, Air India and MTNL incurred the highest losses for the second consecutive year.
285. b Financial services conglomerate HDFC group has become the most valuable business house in the country, surpassing Tatas, with the cumulative market valuation of its five listed companies surging to Rs 10.40 trillion (Rs 10,40,689.89 crore).
286. a Croatia captain Luka Modric was named Balkan Athlete of the Year becoming only the second soccer player to scoop the prize after Bulgaria's former European Footballer of the Year Hristo Stoichkov in 1994.
287. a World number 7 Tennis player Marin Cilic pulled out Maharashtra Open tennis tournament.
288. a India's institutional framework to support microfinance would get a boost with Reserve Bank of India clearing a proposal to dig in an existing Rs 1000-crore corpus for funding micro lenders.
289. a Colin Brady took 54 days to complete the nearly 1,000 mile (1,600-kilometer) crossing of the frozen continent from north to south.
290. c World Braille Day is celebrated every year on 4 January.
291. c The Indian Railways has come up with a plan to replace the 104-year-old British era Pamban Bridge that connects Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu to mainland India. Touted to be India's first vertical-lift bridge, the two-kilometre-long bridge is being planned at a cost of Rs 250 crore, and will be completed in four years. The structure will be made parallel to the existing bridge.
292. a Delhi Police become the first police force in the country to digitize all malkhanas, rooms for keeping seized arms and ammunition, across every police station in the state, an official release said.
293. b Shri Rahul Chhabra presently High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Kenya, has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Somalia, with residence in Nairobi.
294. a The panel headed by former Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General (retired) DS Hooda has recommended that the Army and the Air Force should sort out their issues such as the ownership of attack helicopter and utilisation of air defence assets which are common for both the services in a big way.

295. c The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a Russian resolution on international information security (IIS) titled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security."
296. a ESAF small finance bank which received the first banking license in Kerala since independence has got RBI approval to operate as scheduled bank.
297. b Scientists in Cambridge have built a virtual reality (VR) 3D model of cancer, providing a new way to look at the disease. The VR system allows multiple users from anywhere in the world to examine the tumour.
298. a Indian skipper Virat Kohli snapped former captain Rahul Dravid's long-standing record of most runs scored by an Indian in a calendar year overseas, adding another feather to his illustrious cap. By scoring a blistering knock of 82 on day two of the third Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Kohli now has 1,138 runs to his name. Dravid held the record for scoring 1.137 runs in Tests away from home in 2002.
299. c The book titled "Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From" written by Tony Joseph, was released.
300. a A postal stamp dedicated to Nabin Chandra Das, inventor of Rasogolla, West Bengal's spongy, syrupy round-shaped sweet, was launched on the inaugural day of the three-day festival marking the 150th year of its invention. West Bengal won the Geographical Indication (GI) for 'Banglar Rasogolla' on November 14, 2017.
301. a The Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Home Affairs has envisaged engagement of Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) in the States/UTs who will act as a link between police and community and help women in distress. All Chief Secretaries of States/UTs were requested to adopt this initiative in their respective States. Haryana is the first state to adopt the initiative at Karnal and Mahendergarh District on a pilot basis under Nirbhaya Fund during the financial year 2016-2017.
302. c Under "My Stamp" scheme, Keonjhar Police in collaboration with India Post has issued 10 postage stamps, each featuring the Ashok Chakra Awardees from Police Department across the country. Ashok Chakra" is India's highest peacetime gallantry medal. It is peacetime equivalent to "Param-Veer Chakra" and around 84 people have received Ashok Chakra so far.
303. a The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation was awarded Best Capital City in the Solid Waste Management in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings.
304. b Shri Y.K. Sailas Thangal presently Ambassador of India to the Republic of Cote d' Ivoire, has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Liberia, with residence in Abidjan.
305. c Pakistan's cabinet has approved the issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated bonds to raise loans from China's capital markets.
306. b Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev promotes 2019 as the 'Year of Active Investment and Social Development' in the backdrop of proposed investments from India to boost economy of this Central Asian country.
307. b According to the RBI data, In the fiscal year ended March 2018, banks recovered Rs 40,400 crore worth of bad loans as against Rs 38,500 crore recovered in FY17. An Indian-American teenager has won the inaugural "Digital Transformation Hackathon" at Cornell University for designing a device to detect the actual pain level of a patient during a diagnosis.

308. b Virat Kohli is now the joint-most successful Indian Test captain in overseas conditions after Team India registered a historic win in the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). The Boxing Day Test win at the MCG gave Virat Kohli his 11th away Test win as captain in just 24 Tests and he went equal with Ganguly on the record, who had achieved 11 away Test wins in 28 Tests as captain.
309. a India pacer Jasprit Bumrah finished 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats in the calendar year. The fast bowler, who helped India win the third Test in Melbourne by 137 runs by picking up a nine-wicket haul, took 78 wickets in this year. Bumrah took 48 wickets in 9 Tests, 22 wickets in 13 ODIs and 8 wickets in 8 T20I matches. He went past Kagiso Rabada, who has taken 77 wickets in 2018.
310. c Norman Gimbel, an Oscar-and-Grammy-winning lyricist, has died. The songwriter passed away on December 19 at his home in Montecito, California. Gimbel was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1984.

