

Current Affairs Capsule for LIC AAO/Repco Exam 2019 – Part 1



SBI Clerk (Pre + Mains) 2019

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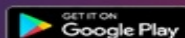


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Important Days

Date	Important days	Theme
December 1	World AIDS Day (WAD)	Know your status
	BSF along with Pakistan and Bangladesh celebrated its 54th Raising Day	Duty Unto Death
December 2	World Computer Literacy Day	
	The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	
December 3	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality
December 4	Indian Navy Day	
December 5	International Volunteer Day (IVD)	
December 7	Armed Forces Flag Day	
December 9	International Anti-Corruption Day 2018	Together, We Are United Against Corruption
December 10	Human Rights Day	Stand Up For Human Rights
December 11	International Mountain Day	
December 14	National Energy Conservation Day	
December 16	Vijay Diwas	
December 18	Minorities Rights Day	
December 20	International Human Solidarity Day 2018	
December 22	National Mathematics Day	
December 23	Kisan Diwas or Farmer's Day	
December 24	National Consumer Day	Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints

Date	Important days	Theme
January 1	Global Family Day	-
January 4	World Braille Day	-
January 9	Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	-
January 10	World Hindi Day	-
January 12	National Youth Day	Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building
January 15	Army Day	-
January 21	Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura's statehood day	-
January 24	National Girl Child Day	-
January 24	Uttar Pradesh foundation day	-
January 25	National Voters Day	No Voter to be left behind
January 26	Republic Day	-
January 26	International Customs Day	SMART borders for seamless Trade
January 28	Data privacy day	

Date	Important days	Theme
February 2	World Wetlands Day	-
February 4	World Cancer Day	I Am and I Will
February 10	National Deworming Day	-
February 11	International Day of Women and Girls In science	Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth
February 12-18	National Productivity Week	Circular Economy for Productivity & Sustainability
February 13	World Radio Day	Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace'
February 13	National Women's Day	-
February 20	World Day of Social Justice	If You Want Peace & Development, Work for Social Justice
February 21	International Mother Language Day	Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation
February 24	Central Excise Day	-
February 28	National Science Day	Science for people and people for science

Important Banking News

RBI

RBI relaxes rules for NBFCs to sell or securities their loan books to ease persistent stress in sector

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed rules for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) to sell or securities their loan books in bid to ease persistent stress in the sector. RBI has relaxed minimum holding period (MHP) requirement for originating NBFCs, in respect of loans of original maturity above 5 years, to receipt of repayment of six monthly installments or two quarterly installments. Earlier, they had to hold these assets for at least one year. However, relaxation on MHP will be allowed when NBFC retains 20% of book value of these loans. RBI also has prescribed certain Minimum Retention Requirement (MRR) for NBFCs for availing the relaxed norms. The relaxed dispensation will apply to securitization/ assignment transactions carried out during six months.

WhatsApp awaits RBI approval to expand its payment services in India

- WhatsApp sought Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approval that it can expand its payments services to all its 200 million users in India. The messaging app is waiting for a regulatory clearance to launch full-fledged payments operations in India. It has been almost two years since it first began discussions with the government on its payments services plans.

Reserve Bank of India moves to ease liquidity for non-banking finance firms

- Reserve Bank of India in a move to make more liquidity available to non-banking finance firms (NBFCs) issued a circular to relax the securitization norms by relaxing the Minimum Holding Period (MHP) requirement. The NBFC sector is facing liquidity shortage after Infrastructure Leasing & Finance Services, a core investment company, started defaulting on loans. The cost of funds gone up for the non-banking finance firms putting pressure on profitability.

RBI to introduce Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced to introduce 'Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions' to provide cost-free mechanism to redress grievances of customers related to digital transactions. The scheme will be notified by end of January 2019. It will cover services provided by entities falling under RBI's regulatory jurisdiction. The scheme is being implemented taking into consideration rise in digital mode for financial transactions which is gaining traction in the country.

Reserve Bank of India has imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore to Indian Bank for violating cybersecurity norms

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore on Indian Bank for violating cybersecurity norms. The contravention is with regard to RBI's directions on Frauds - Classification and Reporting by Commercial Banks.
- "This penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 taking into account the failure of the bank to adhere to the aforesaid guidelines and directions issued by RBI," the release said.

RBI caps ECB limit at 6.5 per cent of GDP

- After a series of relaxations in the external commercial borrowings (ECB) norms, RBI announced a cap of 6.5 per cent of GDP at current market prices giving lot more headroom for raising money overseas. RBI has been decided in consultation with the Government of India to have a rule-based dynamic limit for outstanding stock of ECB at 6.5 per cent of GDP at current market prices, last month central bank reduced mandatory hedging provision to 70 per cent from 100 per cent for loans with maturities between three and five years.

TCS, Wipro, IBM among firms shortlisted by RBI 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 PCR will also include data from entities like market regulator Sebi, 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 to soon release new Rs. 20 note

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will soon introduce Rs. 20 notes with additional features, The central bank has already issued new-look currency notes in the denominations of Rs 10, Rs 50, Rs 100, and Rs 500, besides introducing Rs 200 and Rs 2000 notes after demonetisation, The Rs 20 notes accounted for 9.8% of the total number of currency notes in circulation at the end of March 2018, Earlier this year, RBI released new Rs 100 note which has the impression of Gujarat's Rani-ki-Vav (Queen's stepwell). In 2014, UNESCO approved this 11th-century wonder at Patan (Gujarat) as a World Heritage Site.

Mumbai based City Co-op Bank allowed Its customer to withdraw up to Rs. 5,000 from accounts

- The Reserve Bank of India has modified its directive in the case of the Mumbai-based The City Co-operative Bank, allowing its depositors to withdraw a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,000 of the total balance in every savings bank or current account or any other deposit account, against Rs. 1,000 earlier

RBI Allows SIDBI to Use Existing Rs. 1000-crore Corpus for Lending to MFIs

- Reserve Bank of India cleared a proposal to give existing Rs 1000-crore corpus to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for funding micro finance institutions (MFIs), The development bank will now use the money to offer soft loans to MFIs on a condition that end borrowers should get loans at 15-17% rate, which is significantly lower than the prevailing 20-22% market rate.

RBI launches Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHi) 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, The central bank has launched a 'Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHi)', The survey will cover a sample of 6,000 individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds across six cities -- Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati.

January

RBI Allowed one-time restructuring of loans to MSME sector

- Reserve Bank of India allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt up to Rs. 25 crore for the companies which have defaulted on payment but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets, The decision will help the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are facing cash crunch in the wake of demonetisation and GST implementation.

RBI issued fresh guidelines on limiting the customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions

- Reserve Bank of India has issued fresh guidelines on limiting the customer liability for unauthorised electronic payments involving Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs). RBI stated that, the rules are applicable to all authorised non-bank PPI issuers such as Paytm, Mobikwik, PhonePe and Oxigen, among others. In case of third-party breach,

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the customer will not lose any money if reported within three days. Fraud is reported within 4-7 days, then the customer liability is same as the transaction value, or Rs. 10,000 per transaction, whichever is lower. PPI issuer shall credit the amount within 10 days.

Nepal's central bank asked RBI to Make Rs. 200, Rs. 500, Rs. 2000 currency notes legal in country

- The Nepal Rastra Bank asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country. As of now, the RBI has only allowed the circulation of Indian currency notes of Rs 100 and less in Nepal and provides exchange facilities for bills of these denominations. The NRB stated that country's banking system, including banks, financial institutions and NRB, hold Indian currency denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 worth Rs 48 million.

Sri Lanka's Central Bank gets \$400 million swap from RBI

- Sri Lanka's Central Bank stated that the Reserve Bank of India has agreed to provide USD 400 million under a swap arrangement to boost the island nation's reserves.
- The RBI has agreed to provide the funds under its SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Swap Facility.

RBI makes changes in Gold Monetisation Scheme

- The Reserve Bank of India has changed its Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), 2015 to make charitable institutions, Central Government, State Government or any other entity owned by Central Government or State Government eligible to deposit under the scheme.
- The government had launched the GMS in 2015 to mobilise the gold held by households and institutions in the country. The scheme allows bank's customers to deposit their idle gold holdings for a fixed period in return for interest in the range of 2.25-2.50%.

RBI fined Rs. 1 crore fine on Bank of Maharashtra

- The Reserve Bank of India imposed a Rs. 1 crore penalty on state owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) for non-compliance of Know Your Customer guidelines and fraud classification norms.
- This penalty has been imposed taking into account the failure of the bank to adhere to directions issued by the RBI.

Reserve Bank of India to inject Rs 37,500 crore through OMO in February

- Reserve Bank of India will inject Rs 37,500 crore into the system through purchase of government securities in February to increase liquidity. RBI has been decided to conduct purchase of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMOs) for an aggregate amount of Rs 375 billion in the month of February 2019 through three auctions of Rs 125 billion each during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th week. There will be no auction during the first week due to the scheduled Monetary Policy Committee meeting

RBI released December 2018 Financial Stability Report

Overall assessment of systemic risks

- India's financial system remains stable, and the banking sector shows signs of improvement, even though the global economic environment and the emerging trends in financial sector pose challenges.

Financial Institutions: Performance and risks

- Credit growth of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) has improved between March 2018 and September 2018, driven largely by private sector banks (PVBs).
- The asset quality of banks showed an improvement with the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of SCBs declining from 11.5 per cent in March 2018 to 10.8 per cent in September 2018.
- Under the baseline scenario, GNPA ratio may decline from 10.8 per cent in September 2018 to 10.3 per cent in March 2019.
- Analysis of the financial network structure for the period September 2017 – September 2018 reveals a shrinking inter-bank market and increasing bank linkages with asset management companies-mutual funds (AMC-MFs) for raising funds and with NBFCs/Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) for lending.

Global and domestic macro-financial risks

- The global growth outlook for 2018 and 2019 remains steady although the underlying downside risks have risen.
- Spill-over risk to emerging economies engendered by tightening of financial conditions in Advanced Economies, protectionist trade policies and global geopolitical tension has significantly increased.

- The gradual monetary policy normalisation in advanced economies (AEs) as also the uncertainty in global trade regime may adversely affect capital flows to emerging markets (EMs) and exert upward pressure on EM interest rates and corporate spreads.
- On the domestic front, growth of gross domestic product (GDP) showed slight moderation in Q2:2018-19 while inflation remains contained.
- In domestic financial markets, structural shifts in credit intermediation and the evolving interconnectivity between banks and the non-banks call for greater vigilance.

February

Reserve Bank of India lifts lending curbs on three public sector banks

- RBI lifted lending curbs on three public sector banks (PSBs), Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce to exit the PCA framework following capital infusion by the government and a decline in net non-performing asset ratio.
- Eight public sector banks -Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and Dena Bank still remain under PCA framework, which imposes lending restrictions and prevents them from expanding
- Last month, the government announced infusion of Rs. 28,615 crore into seven public sector banks (PSBs) through recapitalisation bonds. Out of the seven state owned banks, Bank of India got the highest amount of Rs 10,086 crore, followed by Oriental Bank of Commerce Rs 5,500 crore and Bank of Maharashtra (Rs 4,498 crore).
- PSBs have also made a record recovery of Rs 60,726 crore in the first half of the current financial year

RBI imposed penalties on Axis Bank, UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank

- The RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 2 crore each on UCO Bank and Axis Bank, and Rs. 1 crore on Syndicate Bank.
- Penalty of Rs. 2 crore has been imposed each on Axis Bank and UCO Bank for non-compliance of norms related to payment through cheques
- In another case, a penalty of Rs. 20 lakh has been imposed on Axis Bank for contravention of the directions related to detection and impounding of counterfeit notes.
- The penalty on Syndicate Bank has been imposed for violation of guidelines related to checking fraud and managing risk

RBI imposed a penalty of Rs. 1 crore fine on Union Bank of India

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs. 1 crore on Union Bank of India for delay in exchange of information regarding the conduct of the borrower's account with other lenders.
- The Banking Regulation Act, 1949 confers power on Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Section 47(A) to impose penalties if there has been any default or contravention.

Sixth Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement: Repo Rate Reduced to 6.25%

- On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent with immediate effect
- Reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5 per cent.

Repo Rate	6.25%
Reverse Repo Rate	6.00%
MSF Rate	6.50%
Bank Rate	6.50%
CRR	4%
SLR	19.25%

RBI removed Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank, Dhanlaxmi Bank from PCA framework

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) removed three commercial banks -Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank and Dhanlaxmi Bank from the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework allowing them to resume their normal lending activities. With the removal of Allahabad Bank and Corporation Bank, six public sector banks are still under the PCA framework. Bank of India (BoI), Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) were taken out of PCA framework on January 31

RBI raised collateral-free farm loan limit to Rs 1.6 lakh

- RBI raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs. 1.6 lakh from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers. RBI also set up an internal working group to review agriculture credit and arrive at a "workable solutions and policy initiatives". Currently, the banks are mandated to extend collateral-free agricultural loans up to Rs. 1 lakh. This limit was fixed in the year 2010.

RBI doubles the limit of 'bulk deposit' from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 2 crore

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to raise the criteria for 'bulk deposits' for banks to Rs. 2 crore from the current Rs. 1 crore, to provide more operational freedom to lenders to raise funds. Interest rates on bulk deposits are marginally higher than on smaller-amount fixed deposits for similar maturity period. The instructions regarding bulk deposits were last reviewed in January 2013 and defined as single rupee deposits of Rs 1 crore and above.
- The proposal was suggested by the National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Ltd. (NAFCUB). RBI also proposed that banks would maintain their bulk deposit interest rate cards in the core banking system for supervisory review.

RBI imposed monetary penalty on seven banks

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 1.50 crore each on Allahabad Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Indian Overseas Bank, and Rs. 1 crore on Andhra Bank.
- The penalty has been imposed on the public sector banks (PSBs) for non-compliance with various directions issued on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, classification and reporting of frauds, and on restructuring of accounts
- The central bank also imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 20 lakh each on HDFC Bank, IDBI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance with various directions issued by the RBI on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms / anti-money laundering (AML) standards

RBI imposed monetary penalty on 3 banks

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 1.50 crore on Oriental Bank of Commerce and Rs. 1 crore each on Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.
- The penalty has been imposed on the banks for non-compliance with various directions issued on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, classification and reporting of frauds, and on restructuring of accounts.

RBI lifts cap on FPI investments in corporation bonds

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lifted the 20% limit on investments by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encouraging more foreign investments
- In April 2018, RBI was stipulated that FPI should not have an exposure of more than 20% of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate

RBI to give Rs. 28,000 crore to Government as interim dividend

- The Reserve Bank has announced that it will transfer an interim surplus of 28,000 crore rupees to the central government for the half-year ended 31st December 2018.
- With this interim transfer, the government will get a total Rs. 68,000 crore from the central bank in the current fiscal.
- The RBI had transferred Rs. 40,000 crore to the government in August 2018. This will be the highest receipt from RBI in a single financial year for the government, exceeding the Rs 65,896 crore it received in FY16 and Rs 40,659 crore in FY18.

State Bank of India December

State Bank of Mauritius gets RBI approval for subsidiary

- Mauritius based SBM group granted a license by Reserve Bank of India to operate SBM Bank (India) Limited through Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS) mode under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 with effect from December 1, 2018. Now at present SBM operate its branches in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Ramachandrapuram since 1994. It plans to open six new branches in Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Jaipur by next year.

Jan

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SBI Card and Etihad Guest tie-up to launch premium card for international travel

- SBI Card and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways, have joined hands to launch a travel specific Visa credit card for members and Indian travellers. This is the first international co-brand partnership of SBI Card, the country's second largest credit card issuer. The card will be available in two variants, Etihad Guest SBI Card and Etihad Guest SBI Premier Card, will bring an unmatched value proposition to Etihad Guest members and international travellers from India. It has been launched against the backdrop of increasing international travel in the country. Travel is now a key spend category for Indian consumers, with 33 per cent of overall card spends in the SBI Card portfolio made within the travel industry.

State Bank of India set to own 15% in Jet Airways

- India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) is set to swap part of its loans into a stake of at least 15 per cent in Jet Airways. The airline's founder and chairman Naresh Goyal stake cut to below 20 per cent from 51 per cent
- Etihad Airways PJSC, the foreign partner with a 24 per cent stake, is expected to infuse additional funds to take its holding to more than 40 per cent

February

RBI imposed fine of Rs. 1 crore on State Bank of India

- Reserve Bank of India has slapped Rs 1 crore penalty on the country's largest lender for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers. The Banking Regulation Act, 1949 confers power on Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Section 47(A) to impose penalties if there has been any default or contravention.

SBI reduced home loan interest rate by 5 basis points

- Country's largest lender State Bank of India announced a cut in interest rates by 5 basis points on its home loans up to Rs 30 lakh.
- Now the home loan rates up to Rs. 30 lakh stands at 8.70%

ADB

Centre and ADB sign 926 million loan agreement to operationalize two lines of Mumbai Metro

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 926 million dollar loan agreement to operationalize two lines of the Mumbai Metro Rail System. It is the single largest infrastructure project loan in ADB history approved by the ADB Board. It will help fund lines 2A (Dahisar to D.N. Nagar), 2B (D.N. Nagar-Bandra-Mandale), and 7 (Dahisar-East to Andheri-East), totaling about 58 kilometres,
- Once operational by the end of 2022, an estimated two million passengers a day will use the two new lines and will travel in improved safety and comfort. It will also reduce emissions from vehicles, with carbon dioxide emissions expected to fall by about 166,000 tons a year.

India and ADB sign 26 million dollar loan pact for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 26 million dollar loan agreement to provide additional financing for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh town of Assam under the ongoing Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program.
- The ongoing loan of 51 million dollars under the Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program is helping to improve water supply infrastructure in Guwahati and solid waste management and drainage infrastructure in Guwahati and Dibrugarh.
- Additional Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs (Fund Bank and ADB), Sameer Kumar Khare and India Resident Mission of ADB, Hoe Yun Jeong signed the agreement in New Delhi

ADB to invest USD 50 mn in solar project developer Avaada

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has inked an agreement to invest USD 50 million in solar energy project developer Avaada Energy Pvt Ltd to help the company scale up rapidly. The investment will come equally from ADB's Ordinary Capital Resources and Leading Asia's Private Infrastructure Fund (LEAP).
- LEAP is a funding arrangement provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which is administered by ADB. The project will contribute to the strategy of the government to increase the share of renewable energy generation capacity from about 20 per cent in 2018 to 40 per cent by 2030.

It will also help to reduce India's emission intensity of its gross domestic product by 33-35 per cent by 2030. The investment contributes to ADB's goal to provide cumulative climate finance of USD 80 billion from 2019 to 2030.

ADB committed \$3 billion in sovereign loans to India in 2018

- ADB committed to provide USD 3 billion in sovereign loans to India in 2018, the highest level of assistance since sovereign operations began in the country in 1986.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB), owned by 68 member countries, committed a total of USD 3.88 billion, including sovereign loans and co-financing during the year ended December 2018.

World Bank

India signed USD 25.2 million loan agreement with the World Bank

- The Government of India, the State Government of Chhattisgarh and the World Bank signed \$25.2 Million Loan Agreement to support the State's Reforms in Expenditure Management. This support will cover Expenditure Planning, Investment Management, Budget Execution, Public Procurement and Accountability.
- The Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program, which is the First Bank-Financed State-Level Project in Chhattisgarh in nearly a decade, will also help the State strengthen its Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Tax Administration Systems.

India signed loan agreement with World Bank Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project

- India signed a loan agreement with the World Bank for 96 Million US dollars for additional financing of Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project.
- The 96 million dollars loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a 5-year grace period and a final maturity of 15 years.
- The World Bank has been supporting the State Government since 2014 to restore housing and rural connectivity and to build the resilience of communities. The additional financing of 96 million dollars will further help in the reconstruction of bridges, road and river bank protection works, and in the construction of a training facility for the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF)

India and World Bank Signs \$137 Million Loan Agreement for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)

- India, The World Bank and representatives of 5 state governments of India and implementing agencies signed the loan agreement for additional financing of \$137 million for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)
- That will help rehabilitate and modernize over 220 selected large dams in the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.
- In 2010, the Bank's Board approved \$350 million to finance the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project to improve the safety and sustainable performance of over 220 selected dams in India.

OTHER BANKING NEWS

December

Brahm Dutt was appointed as an Interim Chairman Yes Bank

- Yes Bank Ltd has named one of its independent directors Brahm Dutt as the bank's part-time non-executive independent chairman after former Finance Secretary Ashok Chawla resigned from the position. Brahm Dutt is a former bureaucrat and is one of the oldest members of Yes Bank's board.

OBOPAY Card: new generation pre-payment instrument for enterprise customers launched by OBOPAY, Federal Bank and MasterCard

- OBOPAY, the global financial technology company, announced the launch of a new generation pre-payment instrument called- OBOPAY Card-in partnership with Federal Bank and MasterCard. It is built as a one-stop solution that facilitates easy disbursements and payments by enterprises. The multi-wallet facility that allows dedicated payments and allocation of money for various purposes, The 'Split transaction' feature which provides payment flexibility to users and multiple payment scenarios among many others. Card to card money transfer, making online payments, withdrawing cash at ATMs. This card can be used for multiple payments such as bank accounts for using salary, digital wallets for payments, food coupons for food coupons, insurance cards for an insurance claim.

Government authorizes public sector bank CEOs to request for look-out circulars against wilful defaulters

- To check willful defaulters and fraudsters from fleeing the country, the government has now authorized CEOs of public sector banks (PSBs) to make request for issuance of look-out circulars (LOCs) against suspects.

Capital First merges with IDFC Bank to create IDFC First Bank.

- IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company (NBFC) Capital First have announced completion of their merger, creating a combined loan asset book of Rs 1.03 lakh crore for the merged entity IDFC First Bank. "IDFC Bank and Capital First merged effective 18th December 2018. Merged entity to be called IDFC First Bank, subject to shareholders' approval," the firms said in a joint statement.

Bandhan Bank is in talks with HDFC Ltd to buy its subsidiary Gruh Finances

- RBI has asked the bank to reduce its promoter holding from current 82.28 percent to 40 percent by August 2018, The deal will take Bandhan Bank's market capitalization from Rs 63,000 crore to Rs 88,000 crore.
- HDFC Ltd currently holds 57.86 percent stake in Gruh Finance

Govt to infuse Rs 83,000 crore in public sector banks

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said the government will infuse Rs 83,000 crore in public sector banks in the next few months of the current fiscal. The government had earlier announced infusion of Rs. 65,000 crore in PSBs in 2018-19, of which Rs 23,000 crore has already disbursed. The government sought Parliament's approval for infusion of an additional Rs 41,000 crore in the state-owned banks through the second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants. This would enhance the total recapitalization in the current fiscal from Rs 65,000 crore to Rs 1.06 lakh crore

PNB launches special card for Kumbh Mela

- 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 to be held at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India from January to March 2019

Corporation Bank, Bank of India to resume lending from FY20 on pick-up in liquidity: Kotak Sec

- Government announced another round of capital infusion into public sector banks (PSBs), Bank of India and Corporation Bank seem to be the frontrunners among the four-five PSBs to resume normal lending operations outside the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework from FY2020, The government has sought Parliament's approval for an additional round of capital infusion worth Rs 41,000 crore into PSBs for FY2019

Radiant Life to Merge With Max Healthcare

- Radiant Life Care Ltd., backed by private equity firm KKR, agreed to merge with Max Healthcare Ltd. in a complex deal that will make the combined entity India's third-largest hospital and diagnostics company, The merged entity will operate over 3,200 beds through 16 hospitals across India and will be among the top three by revenue and the fourth-largest by beds, The combined entity will be valued at Rs. 7,242 crore.

PM Modi releases Rs. 100 commemorative coin in memory of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- On the event of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 94th birth anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a Rs. 100 commemorative coin in the memory of the former premier, Coin features Emblem on India on the front side, portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the reverse, It weighs 135 grams and is made of 4 metals viz. Silver(50%), Copper (40%), Zinc (5%) and Nickel (5%).

Yes Bank to use data analytics to offer right mix of products

- With an increasing focus on retail customers, Yes Bank is now churning data to understand customer behaviour and offer a right mix of products based on a predictability model, The bank has already diversified into retail segment and now harnessing data analytics to come up with models that help understand customer behavior

Government to infuse Rs. 28,615 crore in 7 PSBs

- The government is likely to infuse Rs 28,615 crore into seven public sector banks (PSBs) through recapitalization bonds by the end of this month. Out of these seven PSBs, Bank of India is likely to get the highest amount of Rs 10,086 crore, followed by Oriental Bank of Commerce, which might get Rs 5,500 crore through recapitalization bonds, Bank of Maharashtra Rs. 4,498 crore, UCO Bank Rs. 3,056 crore and United Bank of India Rs. 2,159 crore.

ICICI topped in list of banks penalizing staff for fraud in 2015-2017

- According to Reserve Bank of India between 2015 and 2017, private lender ICICI Bank penalized the highest number of employees for defrauding bank assets in the last three year out of 60 scheduled commercial banks operating in India, Followed by State Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.

HDFC group surpasses Tata group 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 Rs 10.40 lakh crore,

HDFC group has five listed firms - HDFC Ltd, HDFC Bank, HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company, Gruh Finance Ltd and HDFC Asset Management Company.

ESAF Small Finance Bank is now scheduled bank

- ESAF Small Finance Bank Ltd has received the RBI's approval for inclusion in the second schedule of the RBI Act, 1934, within two years of its commencement of operations, ESAF Small Finance Bank the fifth scheduled bank from Kerala.

Banks recover Rs. 40,400 crore from defaulters

- According to the RBI Annual Report Trends and Progress of Banking in 2017-18, Banks have recovered Rs. 40,400 crore worth of bad loans through IBC, SARFAESI Act, debt recovery tribunals (DRTs) and Lok Adalats in the fiscal ended 31 March 2018. Banks recovered Rs. 40,400 crore worth of bad loans as against Rs. 38,500 crore recovered in FY17. Banks recovered Rs. 4,900 crore of bad loans through the IBC, the amount recovered through SARFAESI was Rs26,500 crore in FY18.

January

Allahabad Bank, SBI Life Join hand for Bancassurance Partnership

- State-owned Allahabad Bank has tied up with SBI Life Insurance to sell the policies of the insurer from over 3,200 branches, the tie-up, one of the largest Bancassurance partnerships in the country, 3,238 branches of Allahabad Bank across the country offer SBI Life's range of protection, wealth creation and savings products to its customers.

RBI allows Paytm Bank to restart account opening

- Paytm Payments Bank has received the green light from the Reserve Bank of India to restart opening accounts for its customers, Paytm Payments Bank had stopped enrolling new customers from 20 June following an audit by RBI, which made certain observations about the process the company follows in acquiring new customers and its adherence to know your customer (KYC) norms.

Complaints registered at Banking Ombudsman surge 25% in FY18

- The number of complaints registered at banking ombudsman offices have seen a 25% increase in the fiscal year 2018. The banking ombudsman offices in tier-1 cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad accounted for more than 57% of the total complaints received. 97% of the Complaints were resolved in 2017-18, up from 92% a year earlier. Most complaints received against public sector banks were pension-related while most complaints received against private banks were for credit cards discrepancies.

HDFC Mutual Fund piped ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund to become largest AMC in India

- HDFC Mutual Fund has piped ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund to become the country's largest asset management company (AMC) after a gap of over two years. As of December-end, HDFC MF manages assets to the tune of Rs 3.35 lakh crore, while those of ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 lakh crore.
- SBI MF is at the third slot with AUM of Rs 2.64 lakh crore, followed by Aditya Birla Sun Life MF Rs 2.42 lakh crore, and Reliance MF Rs 2.36 lakh crore.

Bharti AXA Life delivers policy, renewal premium receipts via WhatsApp

- Private sector insurer Bharti AXA Life Insurance has started delivering policies and renewal premium receipt to customers via instant messaging platform WhatsApp. Bharti AXA Life Insurance, a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and French Insurance major AXA.

Public Sector lender Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance signed Bancassurance pact

- Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance have signed a pact to offer a comprehensive financial planning solution to its customers. This partnership will see over 3000 branches of Syndicate Bank offer SBI Life's diverse range of insurance products to its customers.

ICICI Bank, Small Business FinCredit join hands to provide loans to MSMEs

- Private lender ICICI Bank has joined hands with Small Business FinCredit (SBFC) to jointly offer loans worth Rs 1 crore to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), for tenure of 15 years per customer.
- Under the pact, the bank will co-originate loan against property with SBFC at a mutually settled ratio.

AGS Transact Tech set to launch QR-based cardless withdrawals at white-label ATMs

- Payment solutions provider AGS Transact Technologies has initiated cardless cash withdrawals, based on quick response (QR) code on its white-label ATMs (WLAs).
- AGS Transact operates white-label ATMs under the 'OnGo' brand name.

UBI, Srei Equipment Finance enter pact for MSME sector finance

- United Bank of India and Srei Equipment Finance has entered into an agreement for financing the MSME and agriculture sectors. Under the pact, UBI would leverage its low-cost loans with Srei to enable purchase of equipment and vehicles in a seamless manner.

Centre amalgamates three regional rural banks into a single Bank

- The Centre has amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks (RRB) Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank into a single RRB with effect from January 1. The sponsor banks of the RRBs are National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab and Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank.

IRDAI fines United India Insurance Company Rs 5 lakh for violating claims settlement

- IRDAI slapped a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on United India Insurance Company for violating norms regarding the settlement of motor claims.
- The insurer also violated file and use guidelines issued by the Authority,

Government allowed Iranian bank to open branch in Mumbai

- The government has allowed an Iranian bank to open a branch in Mumbai.
- Iran's Bank Pasargad will open its branch within the next three months.

Cabinet approved recapitalisation of Export-Import Bank of India

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the recapitalization of EXIM Bank.
 - Issuance of Recapitalization Bonds by Government of India to the tune of Rs.6,000 crore for capital infusion in Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).
 - The equity will be infused in two tranches of Rs. 4,500 crore in FY 2018-19 and Rs.1,500 crore in FY 2019-20 respectively.
 - The Cabinet also approved an increase in the authorized capital of Exim Bank from Rs. 10,000 crore to Rs. 20,000 crore. The recapitalisation bonds will be on the lines issued to Public Sector Banks.

SoftBank to acquire 40% stake in FirstCry for \$400mn

- Japanese conglomerate SoftBank is reportedly set to invest \$400 million to acquire a 40% stake in Pune-based baby products startup FirstCry at a valuation of around \$600-700 million.
- This comes after previous reports claimed that FirstCry may raise at least \$150 million at an \$800-900 million valuation from SoftBank.
- FirstCry was founded in 2010 by Supam Maheshwari and Amitava Saha.

LIC completes 51% controlling acquisition in IDBI Bank

- The country's largest life insurer LIC has completed acquisition of 51% stake in the IDBI bank, making it the lender's majority shareholder. The deal had received approval from the Union Cabinet in August last year.
- It was completed through a combination of preferential allotment and open offer of equity. IDBI Bank has about 1.5 crore retail customers and about 18,000 employees.

ICICI Bank launches premium savings account for men

- ICICI Bank has launched a new premium savings account for upwardly-mobile male customers, named 'The ONE'. It is available in two variants - Magnum and Titanium. It offers the account holder with a range of benefits including the option of opting for health and term life insurance. It also waives the processing fees for home loans for account holders. When the customer opens the account, the bank provides an Amazon Gift Card on specified debit card spends, using which they can join Amazon Prime.
- The account holders of the Titanium variant will also receive a complimentary one-year subscription of Zomato Gold.

National Company Law Tribunal approves merger of Tata Teleservices with Bharti Airtel

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved Bharti Airtel's acquisition of Tata Teleservices' (TTSL) mobility business. The merger, which is subject to the approval of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) now, will help Airtel to strengthen its 4G network and compete with Reliance Jio and come closer to number one player, Vodafone-Idea, in terms of market share. Airtel will get additional spectrum pool of 178.5 MHz in the 1800, 2100 and 850 MHz bands all widely used for 4G out of this merger.

YES Bank ties up with Maharashtra to onboard fair price shops as BCs

- The Maharashtra government has partnered with private sector lender YES Bank, under its e-PDS State programme, to onboard fair price shops (FPS) as Business Correspondent Agents. As part of the initiative, the lender will engage

fair price shops to provide banking services such as small-value cash deposits into any bank account, including domestic remittances and withdrawal from any bank account via Aadhaar-enabled payment system. Such shops will also be able to collect digital payments through Aadhaar-enabled payments for ration, and will also offer value-added services such as bill payments and mobile recharges.

ICICI Bank, top arranger of bond issues this fiscal

- ICICI Bank has become the top arranger of bond issues for the period between April and December 2018. According to data from Prime Database, the private sector bank helped Indian firms raisers. Rs. 95,856.10 crore through bonds and non-convertible debentures through 107 issues. This was followed by Axis Bank, which helped India Inc raise Rs. 93,296.27 crore from such instruments through a total of 101 issues. According to the data, Indian companies raised a total of Rs. 3.65 lakh crore from bonds and NCDs through 1,547 issues between April 1 and December 31 last year.

DHFL raises Rs. 1,375 crore via securitisation financing

- Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd has raised Rs. 1,375 crore from funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management. L.P. Oaktree is a leading global alternative investment management firm with assets under management of about \$124 billion
- DHFL intends to further reduce its real estate project finance exposure through more such transactions in the future

IndiaFirst Life Insurance buys 9 percent stake in CSC e-Governance Services

- IndiaFirst Life Insurance has bought nine per cent stake in CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. IndiaFirst Life Insurance is a joint venture between Bank of Baroda, Andhra Bank and Legal and General (UK)
- CSC is an integral part of Digital India initiative of the government under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The financial inclusion journey, the two entities have worked towards enabling village-level entrepreneurs for reaching out to the last mile customers with tailored solutions

FDI grew 18% in FY18 to Rs 28.25 lakh crore: RBI data

- According to RBI data on 'Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies, 2017-18', foreign direct investment (FDI) during the previous fiscal grew 18 per cent to Rs 28.25 lakh crore. FDI increased by Rs 4,33,300 crore, including revaluation of past investments, during 2017-18 to reach Rs 28,24,600 crore in March 2018 at market value
- Overseas direct investment (ODI) by Indian companies increased by 5 per cent to Rs 5.28 lakh crore
- The census showed that Mauritius continued to be the largest source of FDI in India (19.7 per cent) followed by the US, the UK, Singapore and Japan.
- In case of overseas investment by Indian companies, Singapore (17.5 per cent) was the major destination, followed by the Netherlands, Mauritius and the US

NABARD fix 2019-20 priority sector lending target at Rs. 1,01,378 crore for Telangana

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has fixed the total priority sector credit potential for Telangana at Rs. 1,01,378.60 crore for 2019-20
- This represents a 9 per cent increase over the target for 2018-19 which at was at Rs. 83,389 crore
- NABARD has released its State Focus Paper at the State Credit Seminar, this serves as a guiding document for banks and state government

February

Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launched Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan for small and marginal farmers

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) launched Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan to offer financial credit services to small and marginal farmers. The product provides collateral free loans to individuals with amount ranging from Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 2 lakh. With this Ujjivan becomes the first bank to offer loans for agriculture and allied activities such as dairy purchase and maintenance, post-harvest transportation, farm implements purchase, fishery, sheep rearing, sericulture, floriculture etc. The product is launched in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Odisha

Government revised GDP growth from 6.7 to 7.2 per cent

- The government revised its forecast for GDP growth for 2017-18 to 7.2% from the earlier estimate of 6.7%. It also revised the actual growth rate in 2016-17 to 8.2% from the 7.1% estimated earlier
- The revisions were made by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in its First Revised Estimates of National Income, Consumption Expenditure, Saving and Capital Formation for 2017-18
- The government has also estimates GDP growth to be at 7.2 per cent for the current financial year

Lendbox receives NBFC - peer-to-peer (P2P) certification from RBI

- Delhi based P2P Lending platform, Lendbox has received its NBFC - Peer-to-Peer (P2P) certification from the RBI. NBFC-P2P is a new class of NBFCs, for non-banking institutions which carry on the business of Peer to Peer Lending in adherence to the guidelines released by Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Lendbox began operations in November 2015 and is one of India's largest P2P Lending platforms with almost 200,000 registered users and a loan book size of almost 40 crores.

Asian Development Bank buys 14% stake in Annapurna Finance

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has bought a 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs. 137 crore, reinforcing the belief that India's microfinance sector is on course to attracting long-term funds from global lenders and investors. The expansion of equity will help the firm expand its loan portfolio in asset classes such as MSME and affordable housing. ADB has backed MFIs to help achieve its broader objective of reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific. The investment by ADB will expand Annapurna's net worth to Rs 580 crore.
- This was Annapurna second equity expansion in as many years, following OIJIF's Rs 155-crore investment in June last year. OIJIF is backed by State Bank of India and State General Reserve Fund of Oman.

Two RRBs to be merged to form Tamil Nadu Grama Bank

- The Ministry of Finance has announced the amalgamation of two regional rural banks in Tamilnadu- Pallavan Grama Bank, sponsored by Indian Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank, sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) into a single regional rural bank in the state and name the new entity as Tamil Nadu Grama Bank
- The amalgamated regional rural bank Tamil Nadu Grama Bank will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank, with its head office at Salem. The amalgamation would be effective from 1 April.

Fitch Group arm projects fiscal deficit to slip to 3.6% in 2019-20

- Fitch Solutions, the research arm of Fitch Group, projected the government's fiscal deficit to overshoot the budgeted target by 0.2 per cent to 3.6 per cent of GDP in 2019-20 fiscal. Fitch Solutions revised its forecast for the central government fiscal deficit to come in at 3.6 per cent of GDP in FY 2019-20, from 3 per cent previously

FDI declines 11% to \$22.66 billion during April-September

- According to commerce and industry ministry, Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India has declined 11 per cent to \$ 22.66 billion during April-September period of the current fiscal. The foreign fund inflows during April-September 2017-18 stood at \$ 25.35 billion.
- Key sectors that received maximum foreign investment during the first six months of the fiscal include services (\$4.91 billion), computer software and hardware (\$2.54 billion), telecommunications (\$2.17 billion), trading (\$2.14 billion), chemicals (\$1.6 billion), and automobile industry (\$1.59 billion)
- Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-September 2018-19 with \$8.62 billion inflow, followed by Mauritius \$3.88 billion
- FDI had increased at a five-year low growth of 3 per cent at \$ 44.85 billion in 2017-18.

Fino Payments Bank introduced sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank

- Fino Payments Bank (FPB) has announced the launch of a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB). As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), payment banks can only take deposits upto Rs. 1 lakh per account. The partnership would allow customers to seamlessly transfer the excess amount from their account in Fino Payments Bank (FPB) to Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB) (partner bank) account.

IBA issues guidelines to waive off various fees to Kisan Credit Card

- The Indian Banking Association (IBA) issued advisory guidelines requesting banks to waive off the processing, documentation, inspection, ledger folio charges and all other service charges for crop loans up to Rs 3 Lakhs or for the Kisan Credit Card Scheme. Agriculture Ministry stated that, there are over 21 crore small and marginal farmers in the country and providing them timely and affordable credit is the key to attaining inclusive growth.
- The Kisan Credit Card Scheme aims at providing adequate and timely credit support from the banking system to the farmers to meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, investment credit requirements for agriculture and allied activities and other needs. The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme is a credit scheme introduced in August 1998 by Indian banks. This model scheme was prepared by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the recommendations of R.V.GUPTA committee

EPFO hikes provident fund interest rate by 0.1% to 8.65%

- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) hiked the interest rate on employees' provident fund by 10 basis point from 8.55 per cent to 8.65 per cent for the 2018-19 fiscal year
- Central Board of Trustees (CBT) headed by the Union labour minister is the highest decision making body of the EPFO that finalises rate of interest on PF deposits.
- The proposal approved by the trustees would now go to the finance ministry for its approval

Government to infuse Rs. 48,239 crore in 12 PSU banks for 2018-19

- The government approved the infusion of Rs. 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks to help them meet regulatory capital requirements and boost overall growth. With this latest of capital infusion, the government has now provided Rs. 1, 00,958 crore out of the Rs. 1.06 lakh crore bank recapitalisation plan.
- Allahabad Bank will receive Rs. 6,896 crore, Union Bank will receive Rs. 4,112 crore, Bank of India Rs. 4,638 crore, Bank of Maharashtra Rs. 205 crore, Corporation Bank Rs 9,086 crore, Andhra Bank Rs. 3,256 crore, Syndicate Bank Rs. 1,603 crore, Punjab National Bank Rs. 5,098 crore and Central Bank of India Rs. 2,560. The government also infuse Rs. 2,839 crore in United Bank and Rs. 3,330 crore in UCO Bank

Foreign direct investment during April-December 2018-19 falls 7% to USD 33.49 billion

- Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India falls by 7 per cent to USD 33.49 billion during April-December in the current fiscal. Foreign fund inflows during April-December 2017-18 stood at USD 35.94 billion. The key sectors received the maximum foreign investment during the nine months of the fiscal. Services USD 5.91 billion, computer software and hardware USD 4.75 billion, telecommunications USD 2.29 billion, trading USD 2.33 billion, chemicals USD 6.05 billion, and the automobile industry USD 1.81 billion. Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-December 2018-19 with USD 12.97 billion inflow

Syndicate Bank to bring down NPA in the current year

- Syndicate Bank to bring down NPA in the current year. The bank is aiming at bringing down the gross NPA to below 12% and the net NPA to below 6% in the current year from the existing level of 12.5 and 6.5 % respectively.
- The bank has made a profit in the third quarter after loss in the previous quarters of FY 19. The bank is planning to launch employee share purchase scheme in the first week of March. The scheme offers shares of the bank at a discount ranging from 23 to 25 % with lower grade employees getting maximum discount. The bank is expecting to raise Rs 500 to 600 crore from the process.

RBI to soon put into circulation Rs. 100 bank notes in new series

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will shortly put into circulation new series Rs. 100 denomination bank notes bearing the signature of New Governor Shaktikanta Das. The design of these notes is similar in all respects to the Rs. 100 bank notes in circulation currently. All bank notes in the denomination of Rs. 100 issued by the RBI in the past will continue to be legal tender

Kotak Mahindra Bank raises foreign investment limit

- Kotak Mahindra Bank has raised the limit on total shareholding of foreign institutional investors and foreign portfolio investors in the company to 45 percent from 43 percent.
- The hike in the shareholding limit comes after central bank directive on reducing its Chief Executive Uday Kotak's stake in the bank.

April – January Fiscal deficit touches 121.5% of FY19 target

- India's fiscal deficit during April-January stood at Rs. 7.7 lakh crore or 121.5% of the budgeted estimate of Rs 6.24 lakh crore for 2018-19. The gap between the government's revenue and expenditure had stood at 113.7% in January 2018. While presenting the Interim Budget earlier this month, the government had revised the fiscal deficit target for FY19 to 3.4% of GDP from 3.3%.

BoB ties up with German KfW for USD 130m to refinance solar units

- State-run Bank of Baroda has tied up with Germany's KfW Development Bank for funding of USD 113 million to refinance solar projects.
- The tie-up is part of an Indo-German Solar Energy Partnership signed in 2015

ICICI Bank introduced super-premium credit card Emerald

- ICICI Bank has launched a super-premium credit card, the ICICI Bank Emerald Credit Card, in two variants – American Express and Mastercard. The Emerald Credit Card is targeted at salaried customers with a minimum income of Rs 3 lakh a month and self-employed customers with an annual income tax return of at least Rs 30 lakh.

IDBI Bank, LIC ink bancassurance pact

- IDBI Bank will now have to offer LIC's insurance products at its branches. IDBI Bank and Life Insurance Corporation of India have signed a bancassurance agreement under which the lender will offer LIC's insurance products at its branches. IDBI Bank as a corporate agent of LIC would get a window to provide LIC's entire gamut of insurance offerings to the bank's 1.80-crore customer base spread over 1,800 branches across the country.

DCB Bank launches Open Banking for gen-next banking solutions

- DCB Bank announced the launch of its Open Banking Platform as part of efforts towards creating a collaborative ecosystem with enterprises, fintechs and app developers, and enhancing customer-service delivery.
- Over 20 start-ups, fintechs, merchants, enterprises and developers will partner with DCB Bank for access to its Open Banking Platform APIs as well as collaboration on innovation and customer centric products.

NTPC inks Rs 2,500 crore loan pact with HDFC Bank

- State-run power giant NTPC has signed an agreement with HDFC Bank for a Rs 2,500 crore loan to part finance capital expenditure. The loan is extended at an interest rate linked to three-month marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) of the bank. The loan has a door-to-door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC

PSU Banks bad loans decline to Rs. 8, 64, 433 crore in April-Dec FY19

- Bad loans of public sector banks declined by more than Rs 31,000 crore to Rs 8,64,433 crore in the first nine months of the current fiscal as compared to end of March 2018. Non Performing Assets (NPAs) or bad loans of the banks stood at Rs 8,95,601 crore at the end of previous fiscal. NPAs declined as a result of the government's 4Rs strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms

HDFC ERGO Launched the first-of-its-kind 'Trip Protector' Policy

- HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's third-largest non life insurance provider in the private sector, launched the Trip Protector insurance policy, a pioneering policy in the non-life insurance segment in India.
- In the event of a cancellation, either a flight or hotel booking, Trip Protector insurance policy will safeguard travellers financially against the cost of cancellation levied by Hotels or Airlines. The policy is initially offered to customers of HDFC Bank on the purchase of Airline tickets or Hotel Bookings done using their individual HDFC Bank credit cards

Important Financial & Economy Affairs December

Growth rate of 8 infrastructure sectors slows down to 4.8% in October 2018

- According to index of eight core industries released by Ministry of Commerce and Industry, growth rate of eight infrastructure sectors slowed down to 4.8 per cent in October 2018. This was mainly due to contraction in production of crude oil, natural gas and fertilizer. It had recorded growth rate of 5% in October 2017. During April-October 2018-19, eight sectors recorded a growth rate of 5.4% against 3.5 per cent in the same period last year.

India is the fastest growing e-commerce market: Report by Bain & Company

- According to the report, India's online retail market had a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 53% from 2013 to 2017. This rapid growth is due to heavily discount-driven e-commerce marketplaces, improvement in delivery infrastructure and increased smartphone penetration and data usage. India's total e-commerce retail sales in 2017 were nearly \$20 billion. As per the studies, another \$50 billion of online e-commerce could be introduced by adding new users and bringing back the currently inactive old users. India was in 8th rank in terms of online retail penetration among 11 countries.

Global debt reached all-time high of USD 184 trillion, says IMF

- Debt worldwide reached a record-high of \$184 trillion in nominal terms, a nearly 222 per cent of the GDP in 2017, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). On average, the world's debt now exceeds \$ 86,000 per person more than 2 times the average income per-capita. The world's top three borrowers - the US, China and Japan accounted for more than half the debt.

Forex reserves decline by \$613.9 million to \$393.12 billion

- According to the RBI data The country's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$613.9 million to \$393.12 billion on account of a fall in foreign currency assets, The reserves had touched a record high of \$426.028 billion in the week to April 13, 2018, The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dipped by \$7 million to \$1.45 billion, The country's reserve position with the IMF also decline by \$12.5 million to \$2.617 billion

33 Items Moved From 18% GST Slab To 12%, 5%

- GST, the government's biggest tax reform, sets rates from 28 per cent to 5 per cent on most items, The Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council cut rates of 33 items from 18 per cent to 12 per cent and 5 per cent, Earlier the government had said that 99% of items can be moved under 18 per cent GST.

GST Council cuts rates on 23 items, rationalizes 28% slab

- 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. The reduced rates are likely to come into effect from January 1, 2019, Monitors and TV screens up to 32 inches and power banks will attract 18 per cent GST, as against 28 per cent earlier, Movie tickets costing up to Rs. 100 cut to 12 per cent, from 18 per cent, tickets over Rs. 100 to attract 18 per cent GST, against 28 per cent earlier, GSTN chairman - Ajay Bhushan Pandey (Revenue Secretary)

NCLT helps recover Rs. 800 bn in 2018

- As per estimates, the IBC has helped address stressed assets worth approximately Rs. 3 trillion directly or indirectly since the new law came into force in December 2016, In 2019, the NCLT is expected to finalize corporate insolvency resolution process of several stressed assets through its 11 functional benches across India. These cases would include Essar Steel, Bhushan Power & Steel, Videocon Group, Monnet Ispat, Amtek Auto, Ruchi Soya, Lanco Infratech, Jaypee Infratech among others

Foreign Direct Investment in non-conventional energy sector touches \$ 3.2 billion

- According to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion Foreign Direct Investment in the non-conventional energy sector totalled \$ 3,217.43 million in the April 2015 to June 2018 period, Renewable Energy Capacity reaches about 74GW as on November
- As per Global Status Report-2018 of REN21 (Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century), India ranked 5th in Renewable Power Capacity (including hydropower) and 4th (not including hydropower) as of end 2017

Fiscal deficit touches 115% of Budget estimate in the first eight months

- The Centre's fiscal deficit has exceeded 114 per cent of the Budget estimate over the first eight months of the current fiscal, The government spent over Rs.16.31 lakh crore in April-November, more than 66 per cent of the Budget estimate. At the same time, it earned only about Rs.9 lakh crore during the period, nearly 49 per cent of the Budget estimated, Fiscal deficit target of 3.3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the current fiscal from 3.53 per cent of the previous year.

7th tranche of electoral bonds sale to kick off from January 1

- Finance Ministry state that the seventh tranche of electoral bonds sale will take place from January 1-10
- The government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme in January this year. Electoral bonds are being pitched as an alternative to cash donations made to political parties as part of efforts to bring transparency in political funding
- Registered political parties that have secured not less than 1 per cent of the votes polled in the last election of the Lok Sabha or legislative assembly will be eligible to receive electoral bonds, SBI is the only authorized bank to issue such bonds. A person can buy electoral bonds, either singly or jointly, with other individuals. An electoral bond will be valid for 15 days from the date of issue. No payment would be made to any payee political party if the bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period
- The bonds are issued in multiples of 1000, 10000, 1lakh, 10 lakh, 1 crore

January

Government sets up export promotion cell for MSMEs

- The MSME ministry has established an export promotion cell to create a sustainable ecosystem for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), The ministry has also proposed to formulate a governing council that will be chaired by secretary of the MSME ministry, The Cell would evaluate readiness of MSMEs to export their products and services, recognise areas where improvements are required in order to be able to export effectively and efficiently and integration of MSME into global value chain.

SEBI allowed custodial services in commodity market

- Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed custodial services in the commodity derivatives market, which would enable participation of institutional investors, including mutual funds, in the segment. SEBI stated that under the new framework, existing custodians will be permitted to add commodities as an asset class and provide physical delivery of both the securities and commodities. Currently, the regulation on custodian of securities provides safekeeping of securities, gold or gold related instruments, title deeds of real estate and services incidental.

Growth to remain in 7-7.5% range in next few years: PM advisory panel

- The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, headed by NITI Aayog Member Bibek Debroy stated that India's economic growth is expected to remain in the range 7-7.5 per cent in the next few years. The growth rate can be easily increased by 1 per cent by addressing structural problems through reforms. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in its latest forecast pegged the growth at 7.2 per cent for 2018-19. The EAC-PM is an independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

India to surpass UK in world's largest economy rankings in 2019: PwC

- India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, to become world's fifth largest economy, according to a report by global consultancy firm PwC.
- As per the report, while the UK and France have regularly switched places owing to similar levels of development and roughly equal populations, India's climb up the rankings is likely to be permanent.
- PwC's Global Economy Watch report projects real GDP growth of 1.6 per cent for the UK, 1.7 per cent for France and 7.6 per cent for India in 2019. According to World Bank data, India became the world's sixth largest economy in 2017 surpassing France and was likely to go past the UK which stood at the fifth position. The US was the world's largest economy with a size of 19.39 trillion dollars, followed by China at 12.23 trillion dollars at the second place in 2017.

Maharashtra FM-led GoM to look at issues related to lottery under GST

- A ministerial panel headed by Maharashtra Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar will examine uniformity of taxation on lottery under GST or other issues arising out of it. Under GST, state-organised lottery falls under the 12 percent tax slab while state-organised lottery attracts 28 percent tax. The panel will also examine any other issue related to enforcement, including the legal frame work, in order to curb evasion of tax on lottery and suggest appropriate tax rate to address the problem. The GoM for lottery will submit its report to GST Council in next its meeting for approval.

GST on Haj reduced from 18% to 5%

- GST on Haj has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent and this will significantly lower the air fare thus saving Haj pilgrims' 113 crore rupees this year
- For the first time since the independence that 2,340 women from India will go on 2019 Haj without Mehram

SEBI proposed relaxed norms for REITs, InvITs to increase access to investors

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a new framework for REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and InvITs (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) in order to provide flexibility to the issuers in terms of fund raising and increasing the access of these investment vehicles to investors
- Under the proposal, minimum allotment and trading lot for publicly issued REITs and InvITs will be reduced
- It has been proposed that the leverage limit for InvITs will be increased from the existing 49 per cent to 70 per cent
- SEBI had notified REITs Regulations in 2014, allowing setting up and listing of such trusts which are very popular in some advanced markets
- At the time of initial/follow-on issue, the minimum application and allotment lot shall be of 100 units and the value of one such lot shall be within the range of Rs 15,000-20,000
- The minimum subscription from any investor in an initial offer and follow-on public offer is not less than Rs 2 lakh for REIT, and Rs 10 lakh in case of InvIT
- The prescribed trading lot for the purpose of trading of units of the REIT on the stock exchange is Rs 1 lakh, while the same is Rs 5 lakh for InvIT
- SEBI has proposed a separate framework to enable unlisted privately placed InvITs, the minimum investment by an investor should not be less than Rs 1 crore

ORGANISATION	GDP RATE	
	2018-2019	2019-2020
India Ratings	7.2%	7.5%
World Bank	7.3%	7.5%
Central Statistics Office (CSO)	7.2%	

Ratings

Fitch affirms India's rating at BBB- with stable outlook for 13th year in row

- Fitch retained India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, with stable outlook, saying a weak fiscal position continues to constrain its rating.
- This is the 13th year in a row that global rating agency Fitch has rated India at 'BBB-'. It had last upgraded India's sovereign rating from 'BB+' to 'BBB-' with a stable outlook on August 1, 2006. Fitch expects growth of 6.8 per cent in the current fiscal and 7.1 per cent in the next. Fitch Ratings is a subsidiary of Hearst Corporation.

WTO trims global trade growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6% from 3.7%

- The World Trade Organization forecast that the Global trade growth is expected to be lower in 2019 than it was last year. The WTO had in its preliminary estimates predicted a 3.7 percent expansion of trade for this year, but has revised that down to 2.6 percent, marking a decline on the three-percent growth recorded in 2018.
- In its forecast report in September 2018, the WTO had lowered the global 2018 and 2019 trade growth to 3.9 and 3.7 percent, respectively.

ADB cuts its India GDP growth forecast for 2019-20

- According to Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2019, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered India's growth forecast for 2019-20 to 7.2 per cent from 7.6 per cent estimated earlier.
- The growth rate in FY 2020-21 likely to be 7.3 per cent.
- Recent policy measures by the government to improve the investment climate and boost private consumption and investment will help India to lift economic growth in the next two fiscal years. India will remain one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world this year given strong household spending and corporate fundamentals.
- Consumer price inflation is expected to rise to 4.3% in FY2020 and 4.6% in FY2021. The current account deficit is expected to widen a bit to 2.4% of GDP in FY2020 and 2.5% of GDP in FY2021.

World Bank Projects India's GDP to Expand 7.5% in FY20

- India's GDP growth is expected to accelerate moderately to 7.5 percent in fiscal year 2019-20.
- The Economy driven by continued investment strengthening, particularly private-improved export performance and resilient consumption. The real GDP growth is estimated at 7.2 percent in financial year 2018-19, Meanwhile, agriculture growth was robust at 4 per cent.

IMF cuts India GDP growth forecast to 7.3% for 2019-20

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut India's GDP growth forecast for 2019-20, following similar action by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- In India, growth is projected to pick up to 7.3% in 2019 (2019-20) and 7.5% in 2020 IMF said in its World Economic Outlook report.
- Both ADB and RBI last week cut their 2019-20 growth projection for India to 7.2% from 7.4% earlier.
- The Central Statistics Office (CSO) to trim its 2018-19 forecast to 7% in February from 7.2% estimated in the previous month.

Important Business News December

Microsoft passes Apple to become most valuable company

- Microsoft has surpassed Apple as the most valuable US company with a market value of about \$812 billion. Apple's market cap was about \$1 billion less. In August 2018, Apple became the first US company with a \$1 trillion valuation. Under CEO Satya Nadella, Microsoft has made a years-long bet on cloud computing.

HAL developed a Light Utility Helicopter which achieves important milestone of flying at 6 km altitude

- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) indigenously developed Light Utility Helicopter achieved important milestone of flying at 6 Km altitude in Bengaluru. It is 3-ton class new generation helicopter designed and developed by indigenously Rotary Wing Research and Design Center (RWRDC) of HAL. It will replace ageing fleet of Cheetah and Chetak helicopters used by Indian Armed Forces.

Amazon India signed MoU with FISME to empower MSME sector

- Amazon India partnered with the Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) to encourage MSMEs to sell products online through e-commerce. Amazon.in will collaborate with FISME to conduct various events and workshops across the country to educate MSME. B2C exports to enable them to sell across multiple international locations.

Sonata Software to acquire U.S. headquartered Sopris Systems

- Sonata Software, an IT software services and solutions provider, announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire U.S.-headquartered Sopris Systems, a Microsoft Dynamics 365 enterprise partner. The firm hasn't yet disclosed the value of the deal yet. Sopris specializes in helping project-centric and field services companies improve business performance.

Ola will boost Vogo's supply by investing in 1,00,000 scooters on the Vogo platform, worth \$100 million

- Vogo, a scooter sharing start-up, has partnered with Ola, the ride-hailing company. Ola will boost Vogo's supply by investing in 1,00,000 scooters on the Vogo platform, worth \$100 million. Vogo's offerings will also be available for Ola's customer base of over 150 million, directly from the Ola app. Every Vogo scooter comes with an Internet of Things (IoT) device that allows the customer to access the key via a one-time password (OTP).

Telecom ministry announced that 5G services likely to be rolled out by August 2019

- Department of Telecommunication (DoT) said it expects to complete processes for 5G spectrum auction by August 2019 and the services will be rolled out by 2020. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) recommended auction of about 8,644 MHz of telecom frequencies at an estimated total base price of Rs 4.9 lakh crore, which includes radio waves for 5G services. The roll out of 5G services in India will have an impact of USD 1 trillion on the economy.

India, South Korea agree on redoubling trade to 500bn USD by 2030

- South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha and her Indian counterpart Sushma Swaraj agreed to redouble bilateral trade to 50 billion USD by the year 2030. Both the leaders met here at the Jawaharlal Nehru Bhavan and reviewed multifaceted cooperation under the Special Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

Trai imposes Rs 56 lakh penalty on telecom operator

- Telecom regulator Trai has imposed penalty of Rs 56 lakh on telecom operators in the first half of this year for failing to meet call drop benchmark. According to the data shared by Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India imposed highest penalty of Rs 22 lakh on Tata Teleservices, The regulator imposed penalty of Rs 10 lakh and Rs 12 lakh on Idea in first and second quarter of 2018, respectively. It imposed penalty of Rs 2 lakh and Rs 4 lakh on BSNL during the first and second quarter, respectively

10 central agencies now authorised to intercept information on computers

- Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba issued an order authorising ten central agencies with "interception, monitoring and decryption of any information generated, transmitted, received or stored in any computer, The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order enabling the Intelligence Bureau, Narcotics Control Bureau, Enforcement Directorate, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Central Bureau of Investigation, National Investigation Agency, Cabinet Secretariat (R&AW), Directorate of Signal Intelligence (For service areas of Jammu & Kashmir, North-East and Assam only) and Commissioner of Police, Delhi to intercept information stored on any computer device

L&T Construction bags orders worth Rs 2,360 Crore in Andhra and MP

- The construction arm of infrastructure major Larsen and Toubro (L&T) has bagged orders worth nearly Rs. 2,360 Crore for rural development projects, L&T's Water and Effluent Treatment and Transportation Infrastructure Business have secured order worth Rs. 1,281 Crore from the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (AP CRDA), Another turnkey order worth Rs. 1,076 Crore has been secured by Water and Effluent Treatment Business from the Madhya Pradesh Jal Nigam Maryadit (MPJNM) for the execution of multi village rural water supply schemes in Jabalpur, Narsinghpur, Seoni and Damoh districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Maersk unit to open India's first green warehouse for chemicals in Pune

- PM Terminals Inland Services, a unit of Danish transport giant AP Moller Maersk Group, is to open India's first environment approved inland container depot (ICD) for handling chemicals in Pune, The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has given APM Terminals Inland Services blanket approval to store 35,000 tonnes of chemicals of all types, except explosives and radioactive chemicals

January

Kia Motors India set to begin trial production

- Kia Motors is eighth largest automotive company in the world
- Kia Motors, the South Korean global automotive major, is all set to commence trial run of its \$1 billion greenfield plant in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. The company's first car from the plant, SP2i, a sports utility vehicle showcased at the Auto Show as a SP concept, is poised to be rolled out by July this year for sale in India
- Kia motors along with the auto ancillaries from South Korea is one of the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India in automobile sector. The Greenfield facility will have installed capacity of 300,000 vehicles annually from day one

February

Paytm Acquired Noida-Based NightStay

- Indian payments conglomerate Paytm Acquired hotel booking platform Nightstay, launching the domestic hotel bookings on its platform for an undisclosed amount. The digital payments brand owned by One97 Communications is set to invest Rs. 500 crores to scale up its operations and expand the hotel-booking portfolio
- In the first phase of hotels launch, the company has partnered with over 5,000 hotels across the budget, luxury and business segments. NightStay co-founder and CEO Nasr Khan will be leading the newly launched hotel-booking category at Paytm

PNB MetLife introduced P.V. Sindhu as brand ambassador

- The Punjab National Bank associated life insurance company, PNB MetLife has introduced the ace shuttler PV Sindhu as its brand ambassador. Sindhu will support various initiatives under project Damini, a CSR initiative intended to empower girls at every stage of the journey into womanhood.

Indostar Capital Finance to buy India Infoline Finance's Commercial Vehicle Finance Business

- IndoStar Capital Finance Ltd (IndoStar) , a non-banking finance company, has signed a binding agreement to acquire the Commercial Vehicle (CV) finance business of India Infoline Finance Ltd (IIFL Finance), a subsidiary of IIFL Holdings Ltd.

Swiggy acqui-hires Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io

- Online food ordering and delivery firm Swiggy announced it has acqui-hired Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io an artificial intelligence (AI) startup, for an undisclosed sum. Acqui-hiring refers to buying out a company or an entity primarily for the skills and expertise of its staff, rather than for its products or services. The team at Kint.io will join the company to boost its computer vision technology and superior consumer experience. The founding members of Kint.io, Pavithra Solai Jawahar, and Jagannathan Veeraraghavan, will join the Swiggy team

Adani Group wins bids to operate five Airports for 50 years

- Gautam Adani's Adani Group has won bids to operate five out of six airports, put up for privatisation by the central government, for the next 50 years. The AAI chose the winner on the basis of "per-passenger fee" offered by the bidders. The Airports are Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow, Mangaluru and Jaipur airports

Facebook acquired GrokStyle virtual search start-up to boost AI capabilities

- Facebook acquired US-based virtual search startup GrokStyle, to enable users shop better using artificial intelligence capabilities, for an undisclosed amount.
- San Francisco Based GrokStyle was founded in 2015

Government relaxes Angel Tax norms for Start-ups

- In a move to provide relief to and boost investments into start-ups in India, the government has decided to simplify the process for them to get exemptions under the Income Tax Act 1961. The government has increased the age cap for start-ups from 7 to 10 years. It will also recognize an entity as a start-up if its turnover for any of the financial years since its incorporation or registration does not exceed Rs. 100 crore instead of the existing Rs. 25 crore. Currently the limit for tax exemption is Rs. 10 crore.

Important Cabinet Approvals December

- Hike in MSP for Copra by more than Rs.2000 per quintal for 2019 season
- Listing of 7 unlisted CPSEs on Stock Exchange

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- Telecommunication Consultants (India) Ltd.[TCIL]
- RailTel Corporation India Ltd.
- National Seed Corporation India Ltd. (NSC)
- Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited (THDC)
- Water & Power Consultancy Services (India) Limited [WAPCOS Ltd.]
- FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals (India) Limited [FAGMIL]
- Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL)
- Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012
- Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2018
- Setting up of the National Commission for Homeopathy Bill, 2018
- Setting up of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018

January

- MoU between India and Japan on Development of Advanced Model Single Window.
- MoU on Maritime issues between India and Denmark
- Signing of the TOR provide tax assistance to Swaziland
- Creation of the post of Vice Chancellor for National Rail & Transport Institute set up in Vadodara, Gujarat
- Bilateral Swap Arrangement between India and Japan.
- MoU between India and France on technical bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy

Cabinet approves the creation of National Bench of GSTAT

- The Union Cabinet approved the creation of the National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal.
- It will be presided over by the President and shall consist of one technical member (Centre) and one technical member (State). The National bench would be set up in New Delhi. It also approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Kuwait for the cooperation on recruitment of domestic workers.
- Over 3 lakh Indian domestic workers, of which 90,000 are women, in Kuwait would to be benefited by the move.
- The Cabinet also gave its nod for the extension of Delhi metro corridor from Dilshad Garden to New Bus Adda, Ghaziabad. The total distance of the extended line would be 9.41 km.

Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Kuwait on recruitment of domestic workers

- Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the recruitment of domestic workers.
- It provides a framework for cooperation on matters related to domestic workers deployed in Kuwait and provides safeguards for them. The MoU is initially valid for a period of five years and incorporates provision for automatic renewal. Around three lakh Indian domestic workers deployed in Kuwait will benefit from the decision.

February

1. MoU between India and Malaysia for Mutual Cooperation in the field of Company Secretaryship
2. MoU between India and Election Management Bodies of Namibia and Panama
3. MoU between India and Norway on India-Norway Ocean Dialogue
4. MoU between India and Brazil on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy
5. MoU between India and Maldives for Establishing Mutual Cooperation to Improve the Ecosystems for Agribusiness
6. MoU between India and the UAE on Development cooperation in Africa
7. Signing of Agreement between India and Ukraine for cooperation in Agriculture and Food Industry
8. MoU between India and Finland in the field of Biotechnology
9. MoU between India and Uzbekistan for promoting Bilateral cooperation in the area of e-Governance
10. Establishment of Circuit Bench of Calcutta High Court at Jalpaiguri
11. Introduction of National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 in the Parliament
12. Establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for Conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny
13. Proposal for Official Amendments to the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018
14. Abolition of Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman and Indirect Tax Ombudsman

15. Framework Agreement between India and Indonesia on cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes
16. MoU between India and Morocco for setting up of a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism
17. MoU between India and Finland on Cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space
18. Proposal for leasing out of 1.61 acres of land at Alipur, Delhi, owned by Delhi Milk Scheme to Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium for setting up of Kisan Mandi
19. Proposal for allotment of land measuring 30 acres to Pasteur Institute of India for establishment of New Viral Vaccine Manufacturing Unit at Coonoor, Tamil Nadu
20. Extension of tenure of the National Commission for SafaiKarmacharis beyond 31.3.2019 for three years
21. Introduction of Registration of Marriage of NRI Bill 2019
22. Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Argentina in tourism
23. Revision in the list of Scheduled Tribes of Chhattisgarh
24. Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Saudi Arabia on establishing a mechanism for Investment Infrastructure in India
25. Memorandum of Understanding between India and Saudi Arabia on cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs matters
26. Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Saudi Arabia in the field of tourism
27. Continuation of Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Up-gradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20
28. Minimum Support Price for Raw Jute for 2019-20 season hiked to Rs.3950/- from Rs.3700/- per quintal by the Cabinet

Important State Wise National News

Andaman and Nicobar

Capital - Port Blair; Governor - Admiral D K Joshi

December

3 Andaman And Nicobar Islands To Be Renamed During PM's Visit

- Three islands in Andaman and Nicobar will be given new names by the government, the latest in the list of places being renamed across the country. Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island will be renamed as Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island, Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep respectively

January

Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair declared as an authorized Immigration Check post

- Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair has been declared as an authorized Immigration Check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers. This decision of the Union Government will open up the Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities. The announcement was made by Information, Public Relations and Tourism Division of Andaman and Nicobar Administration.

February

Assam launched PRANAM Commission to protect parents of government employees

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the PRANAM Commission, a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill, for protection of parents of state government employees.
- The Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) is an effort to protect elderly parents of government employees in their times of need.

Assam

Capital – Dispur; CM – Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor – Jagdish Mukhi

December

Assam's Bogibeel Bridge Opens

- The Bogibeel Bridge in Assam has a two-line railway track on the lower deck and a three-lane road on the top deck. It will reduce the Delhi to Dibrugarh train travel time by about three hours. The bridge, which also happens to be Asia's second longest rail-and-road connector, has a lifespan of around 120 years. It is India's longest rail road bridge,
- Total length of the bridge is 4,940 m. Foundation stone of Bogibeel Bridge was laid by then Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda in 1997. The bridge over the Brahmaputra river in the north eastern Indian state of Assam between Dhemaji district and Dibrugarh district.

3rd Dwijing Festival begins in Assam

- The 3rd Dwijing Festival starts on the banks of Aie river at Chirang district of Assam. Adventure sports, food mart, cultural events, traditional games are being organized in the 12 day long event.

January

Assam approves 10% quota for economically weaker sections of general class

- The Assam Cabinet has approved 10% quota for the economically weaker sections of the general category in government jobs and education. The meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal also approved the guidelines for disbursement of Rs. 5,000 each to five lakh farmers of the state under the Mukhya Mantri Krishi Sa Sajuli Yozana for purchase of farm tools and implements. The Cabinet approved a loan amount of ₹95 crore from NABARD. The loan amount will be utilised to construct and strengthen embankments, dykes and other infrastructure across the state. The Cabinet also approved incentives for government doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers under Ayushman Bharat and Atal Amrit Abhiyan.

February

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- The Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) is an effort to protect elderly parents of government employees in their times of need.

Andhra Pradesh

Capital – Amravati; CM – Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy; Governor - ESL Narasimhan

December

India's first private UAV factory inaugurated in Hyderabad

- India's first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) was inaugurated by Telangana's Home Minister Mohammad Mahmood Ali at Adani Aerospace Park in Hyderabad, Telangana. The 50,000 square feet facility has been built by the Adani Group and Israel-based Elbit Systems.

January

Polavaram project enters Guinness Book of World Record

- The Polavaram multipurpose irrigation project entered the Guinness Book of World Records by pouring 32,000 cubic metres of concrete in 24 hours during the work of dam construction. Work on the project, being undertaken by the private sector Navayuga Engineering Co Ltd, is being conducted with extraordinary speed to make the dam ready for irrigation purposes by June. The project beat the existing record of 21,580 cubic metres which was achieved by Abdul Wahed Bin Shabib, RALS Contracting LLC and Alfa Eng. Consultant (all UAE), in Dubai between May 18 and 20 in 2017. Polavaram Project is an under construction multi-purpose irrigation project on the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh government to provide 100 units free power to MBCs

- Andhra Pradesh government will provide 100 units free power to the Most Backward Classes (MBCs)
- The government give aid of up to Rs 15 lakhs for foreign education of BCs, also setting up a Jyotiba Phule memorial centre with Rs 100 Crores, and set up 69 new gurukul schools in addition to the existing 106 gurukul schools

February

PM Modi dedicates Visakhapatnam SPR facility to the nation

- Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the 1.33 million metric tonnes of Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) facility of the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL) built at a cost of Rs. 1,178 crore
- He also inaugurated Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited's Vashishta and S1 development project located in the Krishna-Godavari Offshore Basin. Modi also laid the foundation stone for setting up of a new terminal of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Krishnapatnam. It will be built at a cost of Rs 700 crore.

India's first district cooling system to be built in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh

- UAE-based international cooling provider (Tabreed) has entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh government to build, India's first district cooling system in the state's new capital Amaravati. The agreement is for a contracted cooling capacity of **20,000 refrigeration tonnes**. This will be the Tabreed's first plant outside its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market

Arunachal Pradesh

Capital – Itanagar; CM – Pema Khandu; Governor - B. D. Mishra

December

Arunachal touches record high revenue generation

- The Arunachal Pradesh government has created a record of a total revenue generation of Rs. 1,598.49 crore in 2017-18, reaching a new high in the last 30 years. The revenue generation was Rs. 1,253.57 crore in 2016-17, registering an increase of Rs. 326.39 crore from its previous collection that stood at Rs. 927.23 crore

January

Country's longest single lane steel cable bridge opened in Arunachal Pradesh

- India's longest 300 metre single lane steel cable suspension bridge was inaugurated by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu. The bridge across the Siang River at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named Byorung Bridge. It will reduce the distance from Yingkiong to Tuting town by almost 40 km. The earlier road length was 192 km.

February

'Boori Boot Yullom' festival begins in Arunachal Pradesh

- The Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is celebrating its fortnight-long Boori Boot Yollo festival. Boori Boot Yollo is observed in the month of February every year to welcome spring and a successful harvest. During the festival, people invoke God to bless them with prosperity and seek protection from any kind of disease. This festival is celebrated particularly in two districts of Arunachal, Upper Subansiri and Lower Subansiri district

PM Modi launched a dedicated channel 'DD Arunprabha' for Arunachal Pradesh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a dedicated 24x7 Satellite channel, 'DD Arunprabha' for Arunachal Pradesh. DD Arunprabha is the Doordarshan's second channel for the northeastern region, DD Northeast was the first one.
- Modi also laid the foundation stone of Film and Television Institute (FTI). The permanent campus of the institute will come up at Jollang-Rakap (Jote) in Arunachal Pradesh.

Bihar

Capital – Patna; CM – Nitish Kumar; Governor - Lalji Tandon

December

Cabinet approves construction of New 4 – Lane Bridge across river Ganga on NH-19 at Patna in the State of Bihar on EPC Mode

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved construction of a new 4 lane bridge across river Ganga on NH-19 at Patna parallel to existing MG Setu. The Construction of 5.634 km long bridge across river Ganga is expected to be completed by January 2023 with a capital cost of Rs. 2926.42 crores

February

Bihar 1st state to deploy dog squad to check liquor smuggling

- Bihar has become the first state in the country to have raised a special dog squad to detect liquor consignment.
- As many as 20 liquor-tracker dogs which were imparted training for nine months in Hyderabad have been deployed in nine police ranges in the state. Bihar had banned liquor in the state in 2016.

Bihar government approved 10 % quota for weaker sections in general category

- Bihar government has approved 10 percent quota for weaker sections in general category in jobs and educational institutions. The reservation is meant for individuals whose annual income is below 8 lakh rupees and who possess less than 5 acres of agriculture land. Other states which have implemented the reservation Bill - Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam. Parliament recently passed the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, approving 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker section in general category

3-day Krishi Kumbh to begins at Motihari in Bihar

- Bihar Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh jointly inaugurated the Krishi Kumbh in Bihar. This is the largest Krishi Kumbh of Eastern India. Over fifteen thousand farmers across different states and about two hundred agricultural scientists are participating in the Kumbh. There will be 14 technical sessions during three day Krishi Kumbh. The objective of Krishi Kumbh is to promote modern techniques and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmer's income. This Kumbh will be meeting point for policymakers, government, media, industries and other stakeholders to share knowledge discuss problems and presenting solutions for geometric progression growth of the agriculture in India.

Bihar government announced universal old age pension scheme

- Bihar government has announced a universal old age pension scheme - Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna (MVPY) for all people above 60 years of age. The scheme will come into force from the 1st of April this year.
- Except those who are retired from the government service, all other people above 60 years will be eligible for 400 rupees monthly pension irrespective of caste, religion or community. Currently old age pension scheme is applicable to only the BPL category. The Chief Minister also announced a pension of 6,000 rupees for journalists above 60 years of age.

Chhattisgarh

Capital – Atal Nagar; CM – Bhupesh Baghel; Governor - Anandiben Patel

December

Bhupesh Baghel to become the new CM of Chhattisgarh

- Bhupesh Baghel, who is also the president of Chhattisgarh Pradesh Congress Committee, will be the new chief minister of Chhattisgarh state. Bhupesh Baghel has been named as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) by the newly elected legislators in Raipur on 16th December 2018.

Goa

Capital: Panaji; CM: Manohar Parrikar; Governor: Mridula Sinha

January

Goa Cabinet approves Rs. 2,000 fine for drinking in public

- The Goa Cabinet has approved a proposal to impose a fine of Rs. 2,000 on people who drink alcohol or cook in public and a fine of Rs. 10,000 if a group of people is doing so. Offenders who do not pay the fine will face up to three months' imprisonment. The amendment is expected to be tabled during the Assembly session.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated Atal Setu in Goa

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated four-lane, 5.1 kilometre long "Atal Setu", the third Cable Bridge across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa. The bridge is a joint venture between the GSIDC (Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation) and Larsen and Toubro. Atal Setu Bridge is the third longest cable stayed bridge in the country. The construction lasted over four and a half years, having started on June 14, 2014, total worth of the project is over 600 crore Rupees

Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar; CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Om Prakash Kohli

January

Gujarat becomes 1st state to implement 10% quota to EWS

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has announced that his government will implement the 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections of the general category with immediate effect, His announcement comes less than a week after Parliament passed a constitutional amendment bill to facilitate 10 per cent reservation for upper castes in higher education and employment, The 10% quota will be applicable for higher education and govt job, Not applicable for recruitment/admission that have already started.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 9th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat global investors' summit-2019 at Mahatma Mandir Gandhinagar, Gujarat, Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev addressed the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. More than 30 thousand international and Indian delegates including the Heads of State from 5 countries are participating in the summit. Apart from this, 11 international organizations are participating as partner organizations for the Summit.

Theme	Shaping a new India
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Gujarat government signs around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over Rs 56,000 crore in various sectors

- Gujarat government has signed around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over 56,000 crore rupees in various sectors on the first day of the three-day Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit.
- China-based Tsingshan group has committed to invest 21,000 crore rupees to set up a steel plant and a facility to manufacture car batteries.
- Besides this mega agreement, MoUs worth over 35,000 crore rupees were also signed during the opening day of the three-day business conclave.

Haryana

Capital – Chandigarh; CM - Manohar Lal Khattar; Governor - Satyadev Narayan Arya

December

Haryana opens National Cancer Institute

- The National Cancer Institute (NCI) in Jhajjar, Haryana, which is also India's largest cancer hospital, opened for public service with the formal inauguration to be held in January. The NCI, which is a project under Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) will be headed by Dr G.K. Rath who is also the chief of Institute Rotary Cancer hospital at AIIMS.

'Shiksha Setu' Mobile App launched by Haryana Government

- Haryana Government has launched a mobile app named as 'Shiksha Setu' with an aim to help the students of the state. The 'Shiksha Setu' App will help in bringing transparency in the Education Department and in the administration of colleges in the state. Also, the connectivity between students, parents, teachers and administration will be improved through this mobile application.

Haryana to rename childcare institutes as Jagannath Ashrams

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar announced to name all the Child Care Institutes being run in the state as 'Jagannath Ashrams'. The Chief Minister made this announcement while addressing the people during a dance competition organised by women wing of All India Vaish Federation, in Karnal

February

Haryana government approved new MSME, Pharma policies to boost development

- The Haryana government approved new policies for MSME and pharmaceutical sectors with a view to boosting the industrial growth and attracting investment in the state.
- Haryana Pharmaceutical Policy 2019, aiming to attract investment in the pharmaceutical sector to the tune of Rs 2,000 crore and to generate 25,000 new jobs, and establish a state-of-the-art Pharma Park at Karnal and to develop Haryana into a hub for pharmaceutical manufacturing.
- Haryana Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Policy 2019, It enables access to finance to MSMEs, promote entrepreneurship through start up and incubation support, support for revival of sick enterprises and enhance competitiveness through ease of doing business

Himachal Pradesh

Capital – Shimla; CM - Jai Ram Thakur; Governor - Acharya Devvrat

Himachal Pradesh approves 10% general category quota

- Himachal Pradesh has approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for economically weaker sections in the general category, becoming the fourth state to do so.
- Gujarat, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are the three other states to implement the reservation.
- The amendment was approved by the Parliament on January 9 and by President Ram Nath Kovind on January 12.

Tashigang in Himachal Pradesh is world's highest polling station

- Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village at an altitude of 15,256 feet, is now the highest polling station in the world. Located around 29 km from the India-China border, this polling station covers two villages of Tashigang and Gete. As per the revised electoral rolls, the two villages have 48 voters, of which 30 are men and 18 women.

Jammu & Kashmir

Capital – Jammu (winter) Srinagar (summer); CM - Vacant; Governor - Satya Pal Malik

December

Foundation Stone of Institute of High-Altitude Medicinal Plants (IHAMP) laid in Jammu and Kashmir

- Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH Shri Shripad Yesso Naik and Union Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Dr. Jitendra Singh laid the foundation stone of Institute of High Altitude Medicinal Plants (IHAMP) with an estimated cost of Rs. 100 crore at Bhaderwah in District Doda in Jammu & Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir Becomes first State To Bring Law Against Sextortion

- Jammu and Kashmir become the first state in the country to enact a law banning sexual exploitation of women "by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant", Under Section 354E of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC). Any person committing the offence of sextortion shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term not be less than three years, but may extend to five years and with fine.

Jammu and Kashmir to come under President's rule from 20th December

- President's rule will be imposed in Jammu and Kashmir from 20 December with President Ram Nath Kovind signing a proclamation to give effect to the recommendation of the state Governor Satya Pal Malik. Kovind has signed the proclamation based on the proposal sent by the ministry following a report by the state governor.

January

Jammu and Kashmir government to provide cattle to BPL families

- The Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to give away cattle received from the military farms to the families living below the poverty line. The decision was taken here at a meeting of defence representatives and officers of animal husbandry department, chaired by advisor to the Governor Khurshid Ahmed Ganai, regarding the handing over of cattle to state government after the closure of military farms. The military dairy farms at Nowshera, Udampur and Jammu have a total of 1917 cattle heads of different types.
- The advisor directed officers of animal husbandry department to prepare a plan for the distribution process with special preference to SC/ST families.

Jammu and Kashmir government sets up panel for school infrastructure

- The Jammu and Kashmir's administration has set up a panel for implementation of saturation of toilets, drinking water and electricity in government schools in the state. The General Administrative Department (GAD) has ordered constitution of district-level committee on this issue. A five-member committee will be headed by the district development commissioner as chairman.
- The committee will prepare a detailed project report after undertaking actual assessment of deficient schools on the minimum requirement basis. The panel will monitor the works executed by different agencies, including public health engineering, power development department and engineering wing of the School Education Department and to ensure completion of works by February 28.

Jammu and Kashmir Governor gives nod to bill for reservation to Paharis

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik gave his assent to the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill, 2014, granting reservation to people belonging to the Pahari community in government jobs.
- The amendment provides for addition of a separate category for the persons belonging to the Pahari community, clan or tribe having distinct, cultural, ethnic and linguistic identity among the Socially and Educationally Backward classes (other than Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes).

February

Jammu and Kashmir government grants Divisional Status to Ladakh region

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik granted Ladakh a divisional status, thus creating three administrative units of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the State. The J&K government has approved the creation of a separate administrative and revenue division for Ladakh. It will comprise Leh and Kargil districts, with headquarters at Leh. Earlier, Ladakh was a part of the Kashmir division. Kashmir valley geographically the smallest division at 15,948 sq. km, Jammu division at 26,293 sq. km and Ladakh, the biggest division, at 86,909 sq. km

Jammu and Kashmir government to give monthly stipend and jobs for those who Shun militancy

- Draft on Reintegration proposes a monthly stipend of Rs. 6000 and jobs for those who Shun militancy by the Jammu and Kashmir government. The reintegration policy draft proposes a monthly stipend of Rs 6,000 for a militant who surrenders 'to encourage him to join the mainstream'.

The new Reintegration policy draft is under the consideration of Jammu and Kashmir administration headed by Governor Sathya Pal Malik. Militants found to have been involved 'in heinous crimes' won't get the proposed benefits

Jharkhand

Capital – Ranchi; CM - Raghubar Das; Governor - Draupadi Murmu

December

Jharkhand Announces Rs. 2,250 Crore Scheme to Help Farmers

- Rs. 2,250 crore will be spent under the new Mukhya Mantri Krishi Yojana.
- The state government will give Rs. 5,000 per acre to 22.76 lakh medium and marginal farmers from the next financial year, The state government will give Rs. 5,000 per acre those farmers having less than one acre will also get Rs. 5,000 and the upper limit is five acres.

January

PM Modi inaugurated 6 irrigation projects in Jharkhand

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated six irrigation projects, including the Rs 2,391.36 crore Mandal dam that will provide irrigation to 19,604 hectare in Palamau and Garhwa districts. The Mandal dam, work on which began in 1972, but has been stalled since 1993, will be built on North Koel river under Barwadih block in Latehar district.

MIB to extend support for organizing 2nd Jharkhand International Film Festival at Ranchi

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will extend support for organizing second Jharkhand International Film Festival at Ranchi in Jharkhand to promote and showcase the Best of Indian cinema. The three-day Film Festival will be held from 1st of next month. The objective of promoting the Festival is to encourage states that have showcased potential of promoting cinema. The aim of the scheme is to promote good films reflecting the changes and challenges and opportunities of society and to provide an opportunity of exposure to regional films to new trends in cinema.

Karnataka

Capital – Bengaluru; CM – Kumarasamy; Governor - Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala

December

EU Ambassador Opens India's first CoE at Manipal Academy of Higher Education

- India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence established by the European Union was inaugurated at the Department of European Studies (DES) at Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal by Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to India and Bhutan, Tomasz Kozlowski. The award comes with a grant of €1,00,000 to pursue India-EU interdisciplinary studies in culture, literature, education and society.

Kaiga Power Station-1, Karnataka has created a world record for the longest uninterrupted operation for 941 days

- Karnataka's Kaiga Power Station-1 has created a world record for the longest uninterrupted operation for 941 days, thereby breaking the earlier record of 940 days by the United Kingdom. Heysham-2 Unit-8 of the U.K. had held the earlier record of the longest uninterrupted operation (940 days) among all nuclear power reactors (of all technologies) in the world. Kaiga Generating Station (KGS-1) equalled the world record on Sunday and broke it on Monday, thus creating history. While KGS-1 is a Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR), Heysham-2 Unit-8 is an Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR).

Global telecom to set up research centre in Bengaluru

- Global telecom, British Telecommunications giant, said it plans to set up a research centre in Bengaluru in partnership with the Indian Institute of Science. The British Telecom Indian Research Centre will focus on the development of artificial intelligence, mobility and cyber-security technologies for use in the company's programmes, products, and services.

Entrepreneurship scheme Samruddhi launched in Karnataka

- Entrepreneurship scheme Samruddhi launched in Karnataka. The main objective is to impart skill development and benefit aspiring, young citizens from rural and tier II cities.

Cabinet approves filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Karnataka

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Karnataka by overseas National Oil Companies (NOCs).

Bangalore tops the index for the most congested city

- Bangalore tops the index for the most congested city, and Mumbai in the second position, while Pune follows in the seventh place, according to a recent research published under the US-based organization, National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER).

Centre approved additional assistance of Rs 546.21 crore from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to Karnataka

- Centre approved additional assistance of Rs 546.21 crore from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to Karnataka. This decision was taken during a High-Level Committee meeting, chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi, to consider the additional Central Assistance to Karnataka affected by floods in 2018.

The Karnataka government has launched an initiative 'DataCity'

- The Karnataka government has launched an initiative 'DataCity' in partnership with France-based utility company Suez and a start-up accelerator Numa to foster innovation and solve global challenges. DataCity will be an international open innovation programme to bring city authorities, corporates and start-ups to address cities' challenges and develop solutions using data and technology.

Government inks \$75 million loan with ADB to improve Urban Services in 4 Karnataka Towns

- Union Government has inked \$75 million loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Karnataka Integrated Urban Water Management Investment Program. Under it 24 x7 water supply will be provided in Karnataka's four coastal towns of Kundapura, Mangalore Puttur and Udupi and improve sanitation infrastructure for Mangalore town. It will be tranche 2 loan agreement of this program.

Karnataka Cabinet approved a grant of Rs.8,037.87 crore for development works

- The Karnataka State Cabinet approved a grant of Rs.8,037.87 crore for the development works in the city under the Chief Minister's Nava Bengaluru Scheme.

Karnataka to offer Rs.425/quintal bonus over MSP for tur growers

- Karnataka is offering a bonus of Rs.425 per quintal for tur (redgram) growers, over and above the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs.5 675 for the pulses crop. The total pay-out for tur growers will be Rs.6100 a quintal for the 2018-19 season, A maximum quantity of 10 quintals will be procured from each farmer, Tur has been planted on about 15.29 lakh hectares in the State and the total production is expected to be around 10.19 lakh tonnes.

January

India's first agromet forecast center inaugurated in Dharwad, Karnataka

- Union Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, and Environment Dr Harsha Vardhan inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC) in Dharwad, Karnataka.

- This is country's first agromet forecast centre which will provide accurate information on weather. About 25 lakh farmers in the region would get information on various platforms including SMS, Whatsapp, social networking sites and community radio stations.

Kerala

Capital – Thiruvananthapuram; CM – Pinarayi Vijayan; Governor – P.Sadasivam

December

Kerala has become the India's first state to have four international airports

- Kerala has become the first state in India to have four international airports with the inauguration of the Kannur airport on December 9, 2018. The Kannur airport is spread across over 2,000 acres and can handle around 2,000 passengers at a time. The runway is currently 3,050m long and will be extended to 4,000m.

January

India's largest startup ecosystem inaugurated in Kerala

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated a 1.8 lakh square feet facility housing incubation set ups across a string of segments in modern technology. The Integrated Startup Complex under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) includes the ultra modern facilities of Maker Village that promote hardware startups, the BioNest that promotes medical technologies, BRINC which is the country's first international accelerator for hardware startups.
- The Kerala state government intends to expand its incubation space further and after the completion of three more projects, Kerala will have a total startup and incubation space of 5 lakh Sq ft. This will be one of the largest incubation facilities in the world.

PM Narendra Modi dedicated Kollam bypass in Kerala to the Nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 13-km Kollam bypass of National Highway 66 to the nation
- Kollam Bypass will reduce travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram. This is the first National Highway project in the country taken up on a 50:50 Centre-State partnership. The 13 kilometre long two lane bypass is constructed at a cost of 352 crore rupees. It has three major bridges over the Ashtamudi lake, having a total length of 1540 metres and an underpass

PM Modi dedicated Kochi Refinery project to Nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex of BPCL in Kochi to the nation,
- The integrated refinery is a modern expansion complex and would transform the Kochi Refinery as the largest PSU refinery in the country with world class standards. Modi also inaugurated Mounded Storage Vessel at IOCL LPG bottling plant in Kochi, Kerala. Mounded Storage Vessel, IOCL LPG Bottling Plant has a total storage capacity of 4350 MT. He also laid the foundation stone for a petrochemical complex at the refinery and a skill development institute at Ettumanoor.

Kerala to launch 'Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme'

- The Kerala government will soon launch a 'Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme' to provide regular pension to Non Resident Keralites on a onetime payment of Rs 5 lakh. There are 2.1 million migrants from Kerala across the world whose estimated total annual remittances to the state has been found to be Rs 85,092 crore. Investments ranging from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh being deposited as a whole or as six instalments paid within three years
- Each beneficiary will be entitled to receive pensions ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000 every month, three years after the final deposit has been made at a dividend rate of 12%.

'Operation Olympics' commenced in Kerala

- Operation Olympics', an expert programme to train athletes in 11 disciplines has commenced in Kerala
- The Kerala sports department and the state sports council are preparing the 123 athletes, who are participating in the programme, for the Olympics. The objective of 'Operation Olympics' is to provide international standard training with the help of eminent trainers from both India and abroad. The programme includes expert training in athletics, boxing, cycling, swimming, shooting, wrestling, badminton, fencing, rowing and archery

February

Kerala State sets up Price Monitoring and Research Unit

- Kerala has become the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO). The move comes more than five years after the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories.

Union Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons inaugurated the 'Eco Circuit' Project in Kerala

- K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism inaugurated the project 'Development of Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta – Gavi – Vagamon - Thekkady' under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism
- This Eco Circuit project was sanctioned in December 2015 for Rs. 76.55 crores. Major works carried out under the project includes Eco Adventure Tourism Park at Vagamon, Cultural Centre at Kadamannitta, Idukki. Swadesh Darshan scheme is one of the flagship schemes of Ministry of Tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country
- The scheme was launched in 2014 -15 and as on date the Ministry has sanctioned 77 projects worth projects for Rs. 6131.88 Crore to 30 States and UTs.

Madhya Pradesh

Capital – Bhopal; CM – Kamal Nath; Governor – Anandiben patel

December

Madhya Pradesh notified Kuno as national park

- Madhya Pradesh government to notify Kuno as a 'national park' in compliance with the last condition imposed by a Supreme Court-appointed committee for the much awaited 'translocation of Asiatic lions from Gir in Gujarat. 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.

January

Madhya Pradesh Government to Create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department)

- Madhya Pradesh Government announced that it is going to create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department) by merging several existing department, The 'Anand Vibhag' (Department of Happiness) set up by the previous government in the state, a first in the country, would be incorporated into the new department.
- The proposed Adhyatmik Vibhag (Spiritual Department) going to be formed by merging Dharmik Nyas Evam Dharmasv Department (Religious Trust and Endowment Department), Anand Vibhag (Happiness Department) in addition to the Directorate of Religious Trust and Endowment, Madhya Pradesh Teerth Evam Mela Pradhikaran and Rajya Anand Sansthan.

Madhya Pradesh Government bans purchase of new vehicles, ACs

- Chief Minister Kamal has put a ban on the purchase new vehicles and air conditioners (ACs) by the government departments along with a slew of other items. Also, the expenditure incurred on office furniture, books, magazines, stationery, guest expenses, press and publication, consultancy, sanitation, security, and other such heads has been limited. Hospitals, hostels, Anganwadis, shelter homes have been kept out of the purview of the latest directive of the Finance Department.

The Bhopal Literature and Art Festival inaugurated at Bharat Bhavan

- Bhopal's first literature festival organised by the Society for Culture and Environment inaugurated at Bharat Bhavan, The literary event will see participation by over 70 writers and artists attending the festival.

Madhya Pradesh launched Rs.50,000 crore farm loan waiver scheme

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched his government's Rs 50,000 crore farm debt waiver scheme named 'Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana'. in Bhopal. It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers in the state.
- Farmers, who have registered themselves to pay GST and are paying income tax, cannot avail benefits under this scheme.

Bhopal to become India's first city to have crematorium for cows

- India's first crematorium for cows will soon be built in Bhopal.
- Bhopal Municipal Corporation is now looking for a piece of land for the construction of the crematorium.
- Moreover, for the safety of the animal, temporary cowsheds (gaushalas) will also be set up in villages, highways, panchayats and municipalities across the region

Madhya Pradesh government launched Employment scheme for urban youth

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath announced the launch of the 'Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' for youths from the economically weaker sections in urban areas
- Under this scheme, 100 days of employment will be provided to youths from economically weaker sections in urban areas. They will also be given skill training

February

Madhya Pradesh government makes it mandatory for industries to hire 70% locals

- Madhya Pradesh state government has made it mandatory for all industries to provide seventy percent of the jobs to locals. The government has decided to set up training sessions and employment fairs in each district to register unemployed youths. Youth will be first provided a stipend and later jobs under state's 70 percent clause.

Madhya Pradesh government launched 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana'

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched state's flagship scheme 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' (MYSY). The scheme guarantees 100 days of employment a year to urban youth along with a stipend of Rs. 4,000 a month. Only those youths, whose family's annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh and who are in the age group of 21-30 years, are eligible for the scheme

Maharashtra

Capital – Mumbai; CM – Devendra Fadnavis; Governor – Vidyasagar Rao

December

World Bank assisted project SMART launched in Maharashtra

- Maharashtra Government has launched World Bank assisted State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation (SMART) Project to transform rural Maharashtra. This project aims to revamp agricultural value chains, with special focus on marginal farmers across 1,000 villages. This initiative is in line with Union Government's step towards doubling farmers' income by 2022.

India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence was opened in Mumbai

- India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence established by the European Union was inaugurated at the Department of European Studies (DES) at Manipal Academy of Higher Education in New Delhi by Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to India and Bhutan, Tomasz Kozlowski.

Maharashtra was recently imposed with a penalty of Rs.1 lakh for not coming up with a new building for the district and sessions court

- The Bombay High Court imposed Rs.1 lakh penalty on the State government for not coming up with a new building for the district and sessions court in Sangli, a city in Sangli district, Maharashtra, despite many extensions.

Maharashtra government launched Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Schools

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis launched the Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee International School on the occasion of 94th birth anniversary of the late prime minister. The school is affiliated to the Maharashtra International Education Board (MIEB), which the state government had set up with an aim to achieve higher education standards.

January

PM Modi inaugurated infrastructure projects in Solapur, Maharashtra

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched road and underground sewerage system projects developed at an investment of Rs 1,100 crore in Solapur. Modi inaugurated the four laned section of Solapur - Tuljapur - Osmanabad of NH-211 (New NH-52).
- Modi also laid the foundation stone for 30,000 houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the total cost of the project is Rs 1811.33 crore.

World Orange Festival inaugurated in Nagpur

- The second World Orange Festival will be organised in Nagpur
- The festival, while offering its famed oranges to the world, will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export. Agricultural experts and scientists from various countries will participate in the workshops and guide farmers.

10th edition of India Rubber Expo 2019 inaugurated in Mumbai

- Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the 10th edition of the India Rubber Expo 2019 in Mumbai
- The three day event being held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre is one of the most anticipated events in the rubber industry's calendar.

All-woman political party launched in Maharashtra

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- An all-woman political party was launched in Mumbai under the banner of National Women's Party (NWP). The party aims to field candidates in half of the state's 48 Lok Sabha constituencies. The party has also been launched in Delhi and Karnataka. The first ever women's political party unveiled its agenda and stated they would demand 50 per cent reservation for women in elected bodies, including in Lok Sabha.

Maharashtra cabinet approves Rs. 25 crore for Divyangs

- In a move that will benefit around 650 Divyang (differently-abled) people in the state, the Maharashtra cabinet gave its approval to provide Rs. 25 crore aid to them as part of a scheme. Each Divyang person will get a financial help of Rs 3.75 lakh to purchase eco-friendly vehicles and start mobile vehicle shops. The decision is aimed at making the differently-abled persons financially independent.

Maharashtra government launched special scheme to curb infant deaths

- The Maharashtra government launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths. State child development Minister Pankaja Munde distributed baby care kits to the children born in primary health centres and government hospitals. The scheme is applicable only for the first child and will benefit around four lakh women across the state Women.
- Each kit contains a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail-cutter, gloves, socks, among other things. The cost of the kit is around Rs. 2,000. The state government has allocated Rs 20 crore for the scheme.

February

Maharashtra government sets up panel to review welfare schemes for tribals

- The Maharashtra government has set up a committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state. The 17-member committee, headed by former MLA and Shramjeevi Sanghatna president Vivek Pandit, will undertake the study of various works done for providing employment opportunities, minimum wages and proper livelihood to tribals. The committee will suggest measures to ensure that children in tribal regions were not deprived of education. The committee will hold its meetings every three months and submit its recommendations to the government

Maharashtra government sets up transgender welfare board

- The Maharashtra government has formed a Transgender Welfare Board to provide formal education, employment opportunities, conduct health programmes and give legal help to the community.
- Eligible third gender students would be provided hostel accommodation under the Babasaheb Ambedkar Swadhar Scheme. Under this scheme, Rs. 48000-60000 would be given as scholarship annually. The board would implement skill development programmes to help educated transgenders get jobs.

Maharashtra government hikes bonus for paddy farmers to Rs. 500 per quintal

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis increased the bonus for paddy cultivation from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per quintal.
- Fadnavis also waived annual lease for fishing in ponds up to 500 hectares of area.

Manipur

Capital – Imphal; CM - Nongthombam Biren Singh; Governor – Najma Heptulla

December

Manipur Assembly Passed Anti-mob Violence Bill

- The Manipur Assembly has passed a bill which recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence,
- It recommends a rigorous life imprisonment term if the crime results in the death of a victim. The Assembly also passed the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2018

Meghalaya

Capital – Shillong; CM - Conrad K Sangma; Governor – Tathagata Roy

February

Meghalaya government to rename Dikkibandi stadium after P A Sangma

- The Meghalaya Cabinet has decided to rename the Dikkibandi stadium in Tura town after former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno A Sangma. The Dikkibandi Stadium formerly known as MP stadium

- Purno A Sangma served as Chief Minister of Meghalaya from 1988 to 1990

Mizoram

Capital – Aizawl; CM -Zoramthanga; Governor – Kummanam Rajasekharan

February

Mizoram government bans import of pigs and piglets

- Mizoram government has banned import of pigs and piglets to prevent outbreak of a disease that has cost the lives of thousands of swines in the state. The porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) has cost the lives of over 10,000 swines in Mizoram since 2013 and it is believed that it happened due to import of pigs and piglets from Myanmar where the disease was known to be prevalent

Nagaland

Capital – Kohima; CM -Neiphiu Rio; Governor – Padmanabha Acharya

December

Nagaland launched GPS mapping of government schools and personnel location system in the state

- Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio launched GPS Mapping of Government Schools and Personnel Location System in Kohima. This would help in computerization and digitization of records of all the government schools.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 10-day-long Hornbill Festival of Nagaland at Naga Heritage Village Kisama on 1st December 2018. More than 60,000 people have visited the Hornbill Festival. The assistant director of Tourism department (Statistics) T. Khakihe Sumi said that altogether 63,032 visitors with 780 foreigners have visited the picturesque venue.

The Nagaland government has recently signed pact with Estonian academy to enlighten the state people on the e-governance

- The Nagaland government has recently signed pact with Estonian academy to enlighten the state people on the e-governance models prevailing in the world. The main objective of the 5-year agreement with the e-Governance Academy of Estonia is to work together to develop and expand scientific collaboration on setting up e-Governance Academy in Nagaland.

New Delhi

Capital – New Delhi; CM -Arvind Kejriwal; Governor – Anil Baijal

December

Delhi government has launched 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana' for senior citizens

- The Delhi government has recently launched the 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana' for senior citizens -- which offers free travel packages on five religious circuits for senior citizens from the national capital.

February

"Sopan 2019" The Festival of Young Musicians and Dancers held in New Delhi

- Music and dance festival 'Sopan 2019' has started, to encourage young and upcoming artistes to take up traditional art, in New Delhi. It is organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad and the Delhi government in association with New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). These six day long festival is an opportunity for upcoming talents from vocals and instruments to dance forms to set an audience base for themselves

Delhi government presents Rs. 60,000 crore budget for 2019-20

- Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia presented a Rs 60,000 crore budget for 2019-20 in the Assembly. Allocation of Rs. 100 crore for providing Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers as recommended by the Swaminathan Commission. Rs. 15,000 crore allocated for education sector. A total of 375 crore rupees have been set aside for 100 mohallah clinics and Rs. 6,380 crores have been made in the budget for Municipal corporations of Delhi.

Delhi government launched bike ambulance services

- Delhi government has launched bike ambulance services to ensure health assistance reaches on time in the congested areas of the national capital. The bike ambulances, which will be called the "First Responder Vehicles", will have a portable oxygen cylinder, first aid kit and dressing materials, air-splints, GPS and a communication device. Against the sanctioned funds of Rs 40 lakh, the project was completed at Rs 23 lakh

Odisha

Capital – Bhubaneswar; CM – Naveen Patnaik; Governor – Prof Ganeshi Lal

December

India's first international indigenous film festival will take place in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- In February 2019, India's first international indigenous film festival will take place in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The fest is 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 on February 19 and 20, moving on to Puri from February 21 to 23 to eventually culminate in an interaction with the adivasi communities at Niyamgiri.

Government, ADB sign USD 85 million loan agreement to support skill development in Odisha

- The Union Government has signed an \$85 million loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank to improve the skill development eco-system in Odisha and establish an advanced skill training center, the World Skill Center, in the state's capital city Bhubaneswar.

Odisha CM announces Rs 10 cr for building Odiya Cultural Centre in Surat

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced financial aid of Rs 10 crore for establishment of Odiya Cultural Centre in Gujarat's Surat for their social celebrations.

Odisha Announces Rs 10k-Crore KALIA Scheme for Farmers

- Odisha government today announced Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme for supporting small and marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers in the state.
- As part of the scheme, the government has decided to provide small and marginal farmers financial support of Rs 10,000 per year at the rate of Rs 5000 each for Kharif and Rabi seasons, livelihood support for landless households at Rs 12,500 per each family will also be ensured through this scheme

State government will also provide life insurance support to cultivators and landless labourers through a cover of Rs 2, 00,000. Provision for additional personal accident cover of Rs 2, 00,000 has also been made under the scheme

January

Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik announced interest free loans for women Self Help Groups

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced interest free loans of up to Rs.3 lakh for women self help groups (WSHGs) in the state. There are around six lakh women self help groups in Odisha. The initiative will benefit about 70 lakh women in the state. The chief minister also distributed financial assistance of Rs. 3,000 each to six lakh WSHGs as part of the state government's efforts to digitally empower women. Launched a scheme to distribute Rs. 15,000 seed money per group to three lakh new self-help groups. He announced incentives of Rs. 500 per month for anganwadi workers and Rs. 200 for helpers.

Odisha launched free LED bulb distribution scheme

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Ama Ghare LED' (LED bulbs in our houses) scheme which will benefit about 95 lakh families in the State. Each beneficiary family will get four LED bulbs free of cost under the scheme, LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS).
- Distribution of the bulbs will be started at the PEETHA (Peoples Empowerment – Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives) schemes on January 15, Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL) will be implementing the scheme and the bulbs will be distributed through camps and PDS outlets across the State.

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced "Jiban Sampark" project

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced "Jiban Sampark" project in partnership with UNICEF India to generate awareness about the development and welfare initiatives of state government among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of the state. The announcement was made after Patnaik inaugurated the annual tribal fair popularly known as "Adivasi Mela" the annual event which has 180 stalls to showcases tribal market, food, agriculture produces and forest products

- The Jiban Sampark's focus areas will include skill development, empowering communities, cooperation and innovation among the groups of 75 tribal communities in the country, 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups residing in remote and far off areas of 12 district in Odisha

February

Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for Rs 2,345 crore highway projects in Odisha

- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for three highway projects worth over Rs. 2345 crore rupees. The projects including four-laning of the 41.7-km Talcher-Kamakhyanagar section of NH 200/23 (new NH 53) at a cost of Rs 795.18 crore. 51.1-km Kamakhyanagar-Duburi section of NH 200 (new NH 53) at a cost of Rs 761.11 crore and 39.4-km Duburi-Chandikhole section of NH 200 (new NH 53) at a cost of Rs 789.23 crore.

Odisha government launches boat ambulance service for remote areas

- The Odisha government has launched a boat ambulance service to ferry patients to hospitals in remote areas at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore. Six boat ambulances, being added to the road fleet for now, will be part of the '108' ambulance service. Two boat ambulances each have been sanctioned for Malkangiri and Kendrapara districts, and one each for Koraput and Kalahandi

Odisha to provide free sanitary napkins to 17 lakh girl students

- Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik announced his Government's decision to launch a scheme under which sanitary napkins will be provided free of cost to girl students of government and government-aided schools in the state. The scheme called Khushi will benefit 17 lakh girl students from Class VI to XII. In addition to this, the state government will also expand social marketing of sanitary napkins for women and girls in the community at subsidised rate

Skill Development Minister inaugurated Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Odisha

- Union Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Inaugurated a "Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Skill Saathi is a career counselling initiative of the National Skill Development Corporation, under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, to create awareness about the Skill India Mission and guide candidates by providing them with information on career paths and opportunities. The conclave mobilised over 2 lakh candidates who were counselled across 427 locations covering all blocks and urban local bodies, across 30 districts in the state.

Odisha cabinet approved State Film Policy 2019

- With an aim to promote Odia films and create a conducive eco-system for production of films in the region, the state government rolled out Odisha State Film Policy-2019. The policy will promote quality Odia films, facilitate film tourism in the state, establish Odisha as a destination for film shooting and improve screen density in the state
- To encourage filmmakers to shoot in Odisha, a subsidy upto Rs. 2.5 crore will be provided to English/Hindi/International/other language films that promote Odisha, its culture, heritage, tourist destinations

Odisha Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for Subarnarekha port

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of the Subarnarekha port in Balasore district of Odisha.
- The proposed port is being developed by Tata Steel and Creative Port Development Pvt. Ltd, which would own 51% and 49% stakes in the project respectively. The Port Estimated to be constructed at a cost of Rs. 5,000 crore
- Patnaik also attended the Talasari festival and addressed a large gathering of youth in Balasore

Odisha government launched KALIA Chhatra Bruti scholarship scheme

- Odisha government has launched the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) Chhatra Bruti scholarship for the children of farmers, who studying in government professional colleges on merit
- The state government will bear all expenditure including course fees, hostel fees and mess fees under Kalia scholarship. The Kalia scholarship funds would be directly sent to the bank accounts of the eligible students through DBT.

Punjab

Capital—Chandigarh; CM—Amarinder Singh; Governor—V.P. Singh Badnore

January

Punjab government to set up development authority for Anandpur Sahib

- The development authority for Anandpur Sahib will be set up to execute the development plans in the wake of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November this year. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh made this announcement at Anandpur Sahib. The authority would be established on the pattern of Dera Baba Nanak Development Authority

February

Indus River Dolphin declared Punjab's State aquatic animal

- Punjab government declared the endangered Indus river dolphins, one of the world's rarest mammals, as the state's aquatic animal. The decision was taken at the meeting of the state board for wildlife chaired by chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh. At present, there are only around 1,800 of these in the Indus in Pakistan. Their population in the Beas is between 8 to 10. The chief minister also gave approval to declare the Kanjli Wetland and the holy Kali Bein River as a wildlife conservation reserve to mark the historic 550th birth anniversary of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev.

Punjab to build Jallianwala memorial with soil from its 13k villages

- To commemorate 100 years of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Punjab government has decided to build a memorial in Amritsar with soil from all 13,000 villages of the state. The memorial is being built to "eulogize the immense contribution of Punjabis in the national freedom struggle". The spot for the memorial is yet to be identified.

Rajasthan

Capital – Jaipur; CM – Ashok Gehlot; Governor - Kalyan Singh

December

A statue of former Indian captain MS Dhoni has been unveiled at Jaipur Wax Museum, situated at Nahargarh Fort

- Jaipur Wax Museum, situated at Nahargarh Fort, marked its second anniversary by unveiling a wax statue of cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni. Weighing 56 kg, of which 19 kg is wax and the rest is fibre, the statue is five feet and nine inches tall, and is designed by sculptor Susanta Roy.

Rajasthan International Film Festival' will be held from 19 to 23 January 2019 at Jaipur

- The 5th Rajasthan International Film Festival organized by RIFF Film Club is going to be held from January 19th to 23rd, 2019 at Inox Jaipur. This event will be screening Feature Films, Short Films, Documentary Films and Animation Films. Founder & CEO of Rajasthan International Film Festival Mr. Somendra Harsh
- This year one special category has been decided as The Mahatma on Celluloid

January

Rajasthan government to issue 1Lakh power connections to farmers by June

- Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot has directed officials to issue one lakh electricity connections by June to farmers who have deposited the demand money. He also asked them to expedite the work on solar energy to provide households in remote areas with electricity. He further asked them to ensure no power cuts in domestic connections between 7am-11am, and 6pm-10pm.

12th Jaipur literature festival begins

- 12th Jaipur literature festival, considered to be the Kumbh of Literature, held in Jaipur. Around 500 authors, literateurs and thinkers are participating in the five-day event. Writers from 17 languages are participating this time and the youngest author is just 10 years old. The festival is to host many well-known personalities including Prasoon Joshi, Javed Akhtar, and many others.

February

Union Minister Rathore inaugurated Passport Service Centre at Kotputli, Rajasthan

- Union Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore inaugurated a Passport Service Centre at Kotputli in Rajasthan. This center would provide a number of services to the local people at their home. He also inaugurated a solar plant at a school in Kotputli, Rajasthan. Solar power generated by this plant would fulfill the energy requirements of the school and people residing in the area will also be benefitted by the power generated by this plant

Rajasthan government announced monthly allowance scheme for educated, unemployed youth

- Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot announced the monthly allowance scheme for educated, unemployed youth from March 1. Through this scheme unemployed boys will receive Rs. 3,000 while girls will get an assistance of Rs. 3,500

as monthly unemployment allowance. The new scheme is likely to benefit one lakh educated youth in the state and cost the exchequer Rs 525 crore

International annual Desert festival held in Jaisalmer

- The 40th International Annual Desert Festival held on the sand dune, Rajasthan
- The three-day festival, exhibits rich cultural heritage of the desert state, commenced with a colourful procession from Gadisar lake fort. The festival is organised by the Rajasthan tourism and district administration.

Rajasthan assembly passed a bill to scrap minimum qualification for local polls

- Rajasthan Legislative Assembly passed Rajasthan Municipalities (Amendment) Bill, 2019, and The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to remove the minimum education criterion for panchayat and civic polls candidates. The previous BJP government had introduced the minimum qualification of class 10 for Zila Parishad/Panchayat member election, and class 5 or 8 class for the post of sarpanch.

Sikkim

Capital – Gangtok; CM – Prem Singh Tamang; Governor – Ganga Prasath.

January

Sikkim will become first state to roll out Universal Basic Income

- Sikkim becomes the first state in the country to introduce the scheme called the Universal Basic Income (UBI).
- Universal basic income (UBI) is a model for providing all citizens of a country with a given sum of money, regardless of their income, resources or employment status, this scheme is alternative to social welfare programmes with benefits towards reducing poverty.

Sikkim launches 'One Family, One Job' scheme

- Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling launched the 'One Family One Job' scheme which entitles one government job for every family in the state, Sikkim has become the first state in the country to carry out such an exclusive programme for the people who would now be entitled to state government employee benefits.

First Swadesh Darshan project inaugurated in Sikkim

- Shri. K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism inaugurated the project “Development of North East Circuit in Gangtok, Sikkim. The project implemented under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India was sanctioned by the Ministry in June 2015 for Rs. 98.05 Crores
- Under this scheme, the Government is focussing on development of quality infrastructure in the country with objective of providing better experience and facilities to the visitors on one hand and on other hand fostering the economic growth. Ministry has sanctioned 16 projects for Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD

February

Sikkim signs MoU with Microsoft for digital learning

- Microsoft India entered into a pact with the Sikkim state government to improve the education system in the state by boosting digital literacy and the knowledge of new-age technology among students and teachers in government schools. As part of the collaboration, Microsoft would support the state in integrating IT content in the state board curriculum and build student capacity besides building teacher capacity through the Microsoft Educator Network and Innovative Educator Program

Tamil Nadu

Capital – Chennai; CM – Edapadi Palanisamy; Governor – Banwarilal Purohit.

December

Centre approves release of Rs. 353 crore to Tamil Nadu as relief

- The Centre has approved the release of Rs 353.70 crore to Tamil Nadu as assistance for the damage caused by Cyclone Gaja on November 15 and 16, during which 12 districts of the state were severely affected. Further, assistance will be provided from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), based on the final report of the Inter-ministerial Central Team (IMCT).

Tamil Nadu state government launches 24-hour helpline 181 for women

- Tamil Nadu Government launched a 24-hour toll-free helpline number 181 for women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment to get assistance ranging from police help, legal aid or medical services including an ambulance.

Tamil Nadu fishermen get NavIC-powered ISRO Gadgets

- The Tamil Nadu government has distributed 200 NavIC- powered satellite-enabled communication devices developed by ISRO to 80 fishing boat groups in Tamil Nadu. These gadgets will help the Tamil Nadu fishermen to get cyclone and weather updates on a real-time basis.

Nasscom partners with IIT Madras for skill development

- Nasscom, IT industry body, announced its partnership with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras for reskilling students and employees in the Information Technology sector and IT-enabled Services (ITeS). The partnership is aimed at building an able workforce to support the industry and other stakeholders. Nasscom aims to get India accelerated on the path to becoming the global hub for talent for the new emerging technologies like AI (Artificial Intelligence), IoT (Internet of Things), cyber security, big data, cloud and blockchain.

Chariot festival celebrate in Madurai Meenakshi temple in Tamil Nadu

- The unique Chapparam (Chariot) festival, that symbolizes the importance of preserving all kinds of food and fodder, was celebrated with traditional rituals and festivities in the famous Madurai Meenakshi temple, in Tamil Nadu. Cooked rice, which is distributed among devotees, are taken home and preserved because it signifies prosperity for the whole year. Another specialty of the festival is that the chariot of Goddess Meenakshi is pulled by lady devotees alone.

January

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launches nursery classes in government schools

- A scheme introducing nursery classes in State run schools was launched by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. The classes would be conducted jointly by the School Education Department and the Social Welfare Department in all 32 districts. The scheme, with Montessori education as the basis, is expected to benefit about 52,900 children in 2,381 anganwadi centres located in State-run middle schools. The schools would be managed by headmasters of middle schools and would be under the administrative control of officials of the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

2-Day Global Investors Summit begins in Chennai

- The two-day Global Investors Summit, being organised by Tamil Nadu government, held in Chennai. It is being participated by about five thousand delegates from industries in India and abroad. In the inaugural event, the Adani Group Chief Executive Officer Karan Adani committed an investment of 12 thousand crore rupees in its Kattuppalli port expansion project. The Ford Motors inaugurated its Global Technology and Business Facility at its sprawling Sholinganallur campus in Chennai. More investment commitments are expected to be made during the ongoing two-day interactions.

Deals worth Rs. 3 lakh crore signed at Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meet

- Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniswami announced the state has signed agreements amounting to over Rs. 3 lakh crore during the second edition of the Global Investors Meet (GIM). Some of the biggest investors included Chennai Petroleum, Hyundai Motor India and MRF. MoUs worth Rs. 30,000 crore were signed between the government and nearly 12,000 small businesses.

PM Modi laid foundation stone for AIIMS Madurai in Tamil Nadu

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, AIIMS at Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Narendra Modi also inaugurated the Super Speciality blocks of government medical college hospitals in Madurai, Tirunelveli and Thanjuvar built at a total cost of Rs.450 crores contributed by the Centre and Rs. 85 crores contributed by the State. Modi also inaugurated 12 Passport Seva Kendra across Tamil Nadu. The Institute is to be built within 45 months at an allocated budget of Rs. 1,264 crores
- AIIMS, Madurai will be a 750 bedded hospital with 30 Emergency/Trauma beds, 75 beds in the ICU & Critical Care unit, 215 beds in Super Specialty unit, will also offer 100 MBBS seats.

February

Tamil Nadu becomes first state to get second Coast Guard district headquarters

- Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters Thoothukudi. The first district headquarters is Chennai. Second Coast Guard district headquarters Inaugurated, by state Governor Banwarilal Purohit, with an aim to augment security mechanism on the eastern coast and the state in particular

NGT imposed Rs. 100 crore fine on Tamil Nadu government for its failure to prevent pollution of the Adyar and Cooum rivers and the Buckingham Canal.

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) has slapped a whopping Rs. 100 crore on Tamil Nadu government for its failure to prevent pollution of the Adyar and Cooum rivers and the Buckingham Canal.
- The Bench comprising the Chairman Adarsh Kumar Goel, Judicial member Justice K. Ramakrishnan and expert member Nagin Nanda directed the constitution of a joint committee comprising of representatives of CPCB, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Madras School of Economics, National Environmental Engineering Research Institute and the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to assess the causes and quantum of damage to the environment as well as further steps required for restoration of environment

Drainage cleaning robot introduced in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

- A drainage-cleaning robot has been introduced for the first time at the Chennai city corporation as part of efforts to rid of manual scavenging. The robot named Bandicoot has been introduced at a cost of 18 lakh rupees
- Drainage cleaning could be detected by viewing the blockages on the screen. The robot could be taken to any place in the corporation area

Telangana

Capital – Hyderabad; CM – Chandrasekhar Rao; Governor – ESL Narashiman.

December

The Telangana government and British Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation

- The Telangana government and British Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation and support the knowledge ambitions and economic growth of Telangana. The signatories, Alan Gemmell, Director, British Council India, and Mr. Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Information Technology, signed the MoU in the presence of Chief Secretary S.K. Joshi.

President of India Inaugurates Centre of Excellence for Genetic Blood Disorders at Prathima Institute in Karimnagar

- The President of India, 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

January

Telangana to give Rs. 25 lakh each to families of Pulwama martyrs

- Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao announced Rs. 25 lakh assistance to families of each of the 40 CRPF jawans martyred in the Pulwama terror attack.
- The Assembly and Council adopted a resolution condemning the attack and expressing sympathy with the families and martyrs.

Uttarakhand

Capital – Dehradun; CM – Trivendra Singh Rawat; Governor – Baby Rani Maurya

December

Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana launched in Uttarakhand

- Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana' has been launched in the hill state. Under the scheme, each household in the state will be able to avail medical treatment of up to 5 lakh rupees annually, The scheme will benefit 23 lakh households and cover 1,350 critical diseases. Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat distributed scheme-related golden cards to beneficiaries.

January

Uttarakhand's first tulip garden in Pithoragarh

- Uttarakhand's first tulip garden will come up over 50 hectares of forest land in Pithoragarh district at a cost of Rs 50 crore. The garden to be developed by the ONGC, under its corporate social responsibility programme (CSR) in over

50 hectares of forest land near Chandak hill top. The proposed tulip garden will be the country's second after the one located in Srinagar (J&K)

February

Himalayan Cloud Observatory set up in Tehri district to monitor cloud activities

- A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Tehri district to receive forecast and monitor cloud burst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimise the damage. The Observatory has been established in the SRT campus and is currently in the testing period.
- This is the second observatory in the country to monitor cloud activities by the Indian Science and Technology Department and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur that can function in high-altitudes.

Uttar Pradesh

Capital – Lucknow; CM – Yogi Adityanath; Governor – Ram Naik

December

Uttar Pradesh has planned to introduce a new software to curb cheating in board exams

- The Uttar Pradesh State government has designed a new software and a four-step process initiated to check the menace of copying in the Uttar Pradesh Board exams. The aim is to curtail the use of unfair means by students while making efforts to improve the quality of education. This process will begin from 7th February 2019.

Uttar Pradesh Government to constitute board to discuss issues related to GST

- Uttar Pradesh to discuss issues related to GST, It will have 3 vice presidents, 11 non-government members and 9 ministerial members all nominated by Chief Minister. The board will hold meetings in every three months to comprise the government about the problems and suggestions regarding GST, Government also has decided to give extraordinary pension to the police personnel who fall into a coma in the line of duty, government has decided to constitute a board comprising members from the business community and government officials

January

Uttar Pradesh becomes 3rd state to approve 10% general category quota

- Uttar Pradesh government approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker sections in general category.
- Gujarat and Jharkhand are the two other states to incorporate the additional quota.
- The Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed by the Parliament on January 9 and was approved by President Ram Nath Kovind on January 12.

Uttar Pradesh cabinet renames Mughalsarai tehsil as Deendayal Upadhyay

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet approved the proposal of renaming the Mughalsarai tehsil as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, the co-founder and president of Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

- Many places in the state have witnessed change in names in the recent past under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government.
- In August last year, the iconic Mughalsarai Railway station got officially renamed as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Junction. On October 16 last year, Allahabad was formally rechristened to Prayagraj.

Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebratory day observed (starting in 2015) on 9 January by the Republic of India to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January 1915.
- Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas began at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth will be the chief guest.

Uttar Pradesh government approved construction of Ganga expressway to connect Prayagraj with western UP

- Uttar Pradesh state cabinet approved construction of a four lane Ganga Expressway connecting Prayagraj to Western Uttar Pradesh which would cost about 36,000 crore rupees. Ganga Expressway will be 600 kilometres long and can be expanded to six-lane in future. New Ganga Expressway will be the longest expressway in the world
- The state cabinet also gave approval to 291 kilometres long Bundelkhand Expressway will be constructed at a cost of 8864 crore rupees

February

Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur laid foundation stone of Mega Food Park in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh

- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid foundation stone of a Mega Food Park in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. The Mega Food Park is being set up in over 57 acre of land at a cost of around 121 crore rupees. The Centre has also approved a financial assistance of 50 crore rupees to the project.
- The Park will provide direct and indirect employment to five thousand persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers

West Bengal

Capital – Kolkata; CM – Mamta Benerjee; Governor - Keshari Nath Tripathi

December

NGT imposed Rs.5 crore fine on West Bengal government

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed a fine of Rs.5 crore on the West Bengal government as it failed to take steps to improve the air quality of Kolkata and Howrah. Subhas Datta, the petitioner, said that the cost has been imposed for failing to comply with an earlier order of the NGT in August 2016.

January

West Bengal Government Announced two Initiatives for Farmers

- The West Bengal government announced two welfare initiatives for farmers, Both initiatives, which are part of the 'Krishi Krishak Bondhu' scheme. The first of the two initiatives will provide Rs 2 lakh to the family of a deceased farmer,
- Under the second initiative, farmers would get Rs 2,500 twice a year for growing a single crop on one acre of land,

Other National News

December

UNESCO adds Jamaican reggae, Georgian wrestling and Japanese rituals in coveted list of intangible heritage

- UN cultural agency UNESCO has added six new elements viz. Jamaican reggae, Georgian wrestling and Japanese ritual into its coveted list of “intangible heritage”. They were added at UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage meeting held in Mauritius

Slovenia became the first North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Country with the female Army Chief

- Slovenia became the first North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Country with the female Army Chief after appointment of Major General Alenka Ermenc to the post of Head of its Army. The 55 years Old former Army Commander, Alenka Ermenc started her military career in 1991 when Slovenia won independence from former Yugoslavia. Alenka Ermenc was serving as the Army's Deputy-chief of Staff before as appointment to the post of Army Chief.

Maldives Parliament has passed a motion with the required three-fourths majority to repeal

- Maldives Parliament has passed a motion with the required three-fourths majority to repeal the age limit of the presidential candidacy. The motion, which proposed to repeal the constitutional amendment banning those above 65 years of age from contesting the presidential elections, was passed 72 members voting in its favour in 85-member Majlis.

The United Kingdom has reached a post-Brexit aviation agreement United States

- The United States and the United Kingdom's delegations have wrapped up discussions on a bilateral aviation agreement that would take effect after Brexit, when the existing US- EU agreement will no longer apply to the United Kingdom. The agreement also opens all-cargo service opportunities and covers the British overseas territories and crown dependencies.

Australia become first country to recognise orphanage trafficking as slavery

- Australia becomes the first country in the world to recognize ‘orphanage trafficking’ as a form of modern slavery. Children from smaller countries are recruited in orphanages in the West for the purpose of profit through foreign aid.

Aung San Suu Kyi will be stripped of Freedom of Paris award over her failure to speak out against a crackdown on Myanmar's Rohingya minority

- Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel peace laureate & Myanmar leader, will be stripped of Freedom of Paris award over her failure to speak out against a crackdown on Myanmar's Rohingya minority.

Qatar to withdraw from OPEC in January 2019

- Qatar decided to withdraw its membership from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January 2019. The announcement was made by Qatar's Energy Minister, Saad al-Kaabi at a press conference in Doha.

UK has amended its weapons bill to ensure right to possession of kirpans by Sikhs

- The UK government has confirmed an amendment to a new weapons bill going through the Parliament to ensure that it would not impact the right of the British Sikh community to possess and supply kirpans, or religious swords.

UK's Cambridge Dictionary has recently declared "Nomophobia", as People's Word of the year 2018

- The UK's Cambridge Dictionary has recently declared "Nomophobia", the word that describes the stress and anxiety caused by being separated from your mobile, as People's Word of the year 2018. The word is defined as the fear or worry at the idea of being without your mobile phone or unable to use it. Based on the results of a popular vote, Nomophobia was chosen over the other shortlisted words - 'gender gap', 'ecocide' and 'no-platforming'.

Union Cabinet approves implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam on river Ravi in Punjab

- Union Cabinet has approved implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam Project on river Ravi in Punjab. It also has approved central assistance of Rs. 485.38 crore (for irrigation component) over five years period from 2019 to 2023. The project will be implemented by Punjab Government with central assistance. It will be completed by June 2022.

SC approves Centre's Witness Protection Scheme

- Supreme Court has approved Witness Protection Scheme 2018 and directed Union and State Governments to enforce the same. This scheme was framed by Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in response to PIL seeking protection for witnesses.

Cabinet approves launch of National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems

- Union Cabinet has approved launching of National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS). It will be implemented by Department of Science & Technology under Ministry of Science and Technology for period of five years. The objective of Mission is to address ever increasing technological requirements of the society. It also takes into account international trends and road maps of leading countries for next generation technologies.

According to the Yahoo Year in Review list Narendra Modi has retained the position of top newsmaker in India in the year 2018

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was once again the top newsmaker in India in the year 2018, according to the Yahoo Year in Review list. Modi has featured at the top of the list for at least a couple of years now and is followed this year by Congress president Rahul Gandhi. Former Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra wrote his way into the list with third position after landmark verdicts on triple talaq and Article 377.

India has recently signed an ascension pact to the 30-member Trans Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN)

- India has recently signed an ascension pact to the 30-member Trans Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN) at Italian Naval Headquarters in Rome, Italy. The pact will give India the access to information on ships which pass through the Indian Ocean region that will greatly help the security forces in keeping a tab on any suspicious activity. The multilateral construct comprises 30 countries & is steered by Italy. The IOR is India's backyard and first respondent to any crisis situation.

As per the study of Royal Society Open Science, Dracula ant is the fastest animal on earth

- In a study, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, scientists found that the Dracula ant possesses the fastest animal movement on record. With speeds of up to 90 metres per second or 200 miles per hour, the ants can snap-jaws and power up their mandibles by pressing the tips together.

Government notifies Flight and Maritime Connectivity Rules, 2018

- The Union Government has notified Flight and Maritime Connectivity Rules, 2018, thereby allowing phone calls and internet on flights and ship voyage within India's territory. The Indian and foreign airlines and shipping companies that are operating in India can provide in-flight and maritime voice and data services by partnering with an Indian telecom company having a valid licence. The rules regarding this will be called as the Flight and Maritime Connectivity Rules, 2018.

Operation Oliva: Coast Guard launches operation to safeguard turtles

- The Coast Guard launched an exercise along the serene sea waters of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Odisha to protect the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles. The Coast Guard 'Operation Oliva' exercise as part of its annual mission to ensure the safe mid-sea sojourn of breeding Olive Ridley sea turtles.

MMRDA terminated LTSE and took over Monorail

- The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) terminated the contract of Larsen & Toubro and Scomi Engineering (LTSE) for the Mumbai Monorail. MMRDA took over the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) of the Monorail. The move ends months of speculation about the future of the transport system, which has been plagued with issues. LTSE was an independent company in which L&T and Scomi Engineering had 55% and 45% stake respectively. L&T was to complete the civil works of the project, while Scomi Engineering was to provide rolling stock and handle the O&M.

Cabinet approves AIIMS for Madurai in Tamil Nadu and Bibinagar in Telangana

- The Union Cabinet approved setting up of two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Madurai, Tamil Nadu, at a cost of Rs 1,264 crore and at Bibinagar, Telangana, at a cost of Rs 1,028 crore. It will be set up under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

Central Hall of Parliament to have portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- The Central Hall of Parliament will soon have a portrait of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. A decision to this effect was taken by the Committee on Installation of Portraits/Statues of National Leaders and Parliamentarians in the Parliament House Complex, chaired by Speaker Sumitra Mahajan.

The Department of Post has issued a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla

- The Department of Post has issued a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla in New Delhi on 18th December 2018. The stamp was released as a tribute to the contribution made by Rajkumar Shukla in the launch of Champaran Satyagraha in the year 1917.

Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) to procure anti plagiarism software

- The Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) announced that it has decided to procure anti-plagiarism software. The move is after it stumbled upon cases of students copy pasting articles as part of their thesis. It said that all thesis and dissertations submitted by students will be checked for plagiarism. The university, however, is yet to decide on the modalities of which software will be procured, but will be seeking expert opinion on the technical specifications and will call for tender.

CCEA approves setting up of Eklavya Model Residential Schools

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has given its approval for the revamped Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) scheme. Under this, Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) will be set up in every block where Scheduled Tribes population is more than 50% and has at least 20,000 tribal persons.

Power ministry mandates use of smart prepaid meters from April 2019

- The government has mandated the use of smart prepaid electricity meters in the country beginning April next year, as it looks to complete the transition over the next three years. Smart meters are a part of the overall advanced metering infrastructure solutions (AMI) aimed at better demand response designed to reduce energy consumption during peak hours. government is procuring smart and prepaid meters from State-owned Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)

Government Mulls Additional Rs 7,400 Crore Soft Loan to Sugar Mills

- The government is considering an additional soft loan of Rs 7,400 crore to sugar mills for creating ethanol capacity under a recently launched scheme. The food ministry is also considering tweaking the scheme to ensure that non-molasses-based distilleries are also able to avail soft loans under the scheme launched in June for expansion and setting up of new ethanol plants. India, the world's second biggest producer, is likely to produce 31.5 million tonnes of sugar in 2018-19 marketing year, slightly lower than 32.5 MT last year

Pan-India clean air programme set to roll out with Rs. 300 cr

- The Centre has earmarked Rs. 300 crore for implementation of the upcoming National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) for financial year 2018-19 and 2019-20. Overall cost of taking multiple air pollution abatement measures in 102 cities across the country. The NCAP is a pan-India national level strategy to tackle increasing air pollution problems in a comprehensive and time-bound manner. The Centre has set a mid-term (five-year) target to reduce air pollution by 20-30% by 2024, taking 2017 as base year

Information Technology [Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules] 2018

- The proposed amendments in the draft of the Information Technology [Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules] 2018, Rule 3(9) is bound to force social media platforms like Whatsapp, Facebook and Twitter to remain vigilant and keep users on their toes before posting or sharing anything that is deemed as “unlawful information or content”. The draft rules, which propose amendments to the Information Technology Act, have stated that an intermediary will be any platform that has more than 50 lakh users in India or is in the list of intermediary specified notified by the government

62% of SEZs are operational and have created 20 lakh jobs

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry data show that 230 out of the 373 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in India are operational and have provided employment to as many as 20 lakh people, Tamil Nadu tops the chart of operational SEZs with 75 per cent of its SEZs functioning without any hitch. It has 52 SEZs of which 39 are operational. Kerala, West Bengal, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh are the States where more than 70 per cent SEZs are functioning. Not a single SEZ is operational in the four States of Goa, Nagaland, Jharkhand and Manipur. The government had constituted a Group under the Chairmanship of Baba Kalyani to study the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Policy of India.

Andhra Pradesh, Telangana to have separate high courts from January 1

- The government of India has released a gazette notification for the bifurcation of the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad into the High Court of Telangana and the High Court of Andhra Pradesh. The new High Court for Andhra Pradesh will be the 25th High Court in the country. The new Andhra HC is expected to function from a temporary structure in the state's capital till a permanent building is set up at the 'Justice City' being planned in Amaravathi.
- Justice Ramesh Ranganathan, who is at present the Chief Justice of Uttarakhand High Court, will head the new high court. He will be the first chief justice of the latest high court. It will have 15 judges besides the chief justice.

Centre tightens e-commerce rules

- The government stated that e-commerce companies would be barred from selling products sourced from firms in which they have stake in or control over. Commerce Ministry stated that FDI is not permitted in inventory-based model of e-commerce. The inventory-based model of e-commerce is when the inventory of goods and services is owned by the e-commerce entity and sold to consumers directly. The marketplace model is when an e-commerce company simply provides an information technology platform in order to act as a facilitator between the buyer and the seller.

Bhutan PM to visit India

- Bhutan Prime Minister Lotay Tshering will be on a three-day visit to India, This is Tshering's first visit to the country since taking charge last month. The ministers of Foreign Affairs, Economic Affairs and other senior officials will be accompanying the Bhutanese prime minister.

All Indian airports set to install body scanners from 2019

- Airports in India will be able to use body scanners from next year and spare “clean” passengers physical frisking.
- The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is soon going to come out with technical specifications of these scanners and then airports can install and machines meeting those norms, The scanners to be used in India will be customized for Indian ‘conditions’ so that it can penetrate the layers of clothes unique to the country.

Centre extends deadline for update National Register of Citizens (NRC)

- The Centre has given an extension of six months to complete the ongoing exercise for updating the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam by June 30, The Registrar General of India Sailesh stated that the decision has been taken as the exercise to enumerate citizens in the NRC, a list of Assam's residents, could not be completed within the specified date of December 31, 2018.

Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation of 11 projects for Yamuna Rejuvenation

- Union Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone of 11 projects for Yamuna Rejuvenation under Namami Gange Programme in New Delhi. These projects under Yamuna Action Plan III are located in three drainage zones namely Kondli, Rithala and Okhla in Delhi.

Milk output likely to cross 180 million tonnes in FY19

- The country's milk production is expected to surpass the 180-million tonne mark in the current financial year. The government has increased export subsidies to 20 per cent, these benefits are likely to be extended through March 2019. India is the largest producer of milk followed by the United States of America.

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. ATES also checks every train passing through the track on which it is installed and immediately warns about hot axle and brake binding cases

India announces Rs. 4,500 crore assistance to Bhutan

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced Rs. 4,500 crore financial assistance to Bhutan, for its 12th five year plan after holding wide ranging talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering. Tshering arrived on his first foreign visit to India after taking charge as PM of the Himalayan nation.

Centre approves Rs. 10,000 crore for human space mission

- The Union Cabinet approved Rs 10,000 crore budget for the proposed human spaceflight mission (Gaganyaan), ISRO's Gaganyaan will help India become the fourth nation to independently send humans to space. ISRO hopes to deploy its biggest rocket, the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III), from the Sriharikota space port in Andhra Pradesh. Three Indian astronauts will be sent to space for up to seven days by 2022, as part of India's ambitious Gaganyaan project by ISRO.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the International Rice Research Institute in Varanasi

- Prime Minister inaugurated the International Rice Research Institute's South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC) campus in Varanasi. The centre will serve as a hub for rice research and training in South Asia. The major aim of IRRI is to improve livelihood and nutrition, abolishing poverty, hunger, and malnutrition among those countries which depend on rice-based agri-food systems, This was 6th IRRI SARC campus.
- IRRI Director General - Dr. Matthew Morell

Dharmendra Pradhan launches Ujjwala sanitary napkin initiative

- Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched the Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin initiative in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The Ujjwala Sanitary Napkins initiative by three oil marketing companies – IOCL, BPCL and HPCL.
- Under this programme, 100 manufacturing units will come up at the common services centres (CSCs) covering 93 blocks in all 30 districts of the state at an estimated cost of Rs. 2.94 crore. The Central scheme will be a counter to the Odisha government's Khushi scheme, in which sanitary napkins are provided free of cost to female students of government and government-aided schools in the state.

January

Government Extends CLSS for MIG scheme till 31st march, 2020

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for Middle Income Group (MIG) Scheme has been extended by another 12 months till 31.03.2020, Till December 30 this year, around 3,39,713 beneficiaries have availed the CLSS under the PMAY (Urban), Under the CLSS, the MIG beneficiaries with an annual income of above Rs 6 lakh and up to Rs 12 lakh would get an interest subsidy of four per cent on a 20-year loan component of Rs 9 lakh.
- Those with an annual income exceeding Rs 12 lakh and up to Rs 18 lakh would get interest subsidy of three per cent.

ISRO Launched Samwad with Students Programme

- As part of the enhanced outreach programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a new platform named Samwad with Students (SwS) was launched in Bengaluru, The Indian Space agency will engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme, During the inauguration in Bengaluru yesterday, 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools interacted with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan about the Indian Space Programme and their benefits to the common man.

All houses in 25 States Electrified under Saubhagya Yojana

- The country achieved yet another milestone in the power sector with completion of electrification in 100% households in 25 states at year end. Only about 10.48 lakh households are left to be electrified in 4 states - Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh. The central government launched 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' (Saubhagya) in September 2017 to achieve the goal of universal household electrification in the country by 31 March, 2019

Parliament passed National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- The Indian Parliament passed the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, following the approval of the Rajya Sabha. The Lok Sabha had already passed the Bill on July 23, 2018. The Bill seeks to amend the

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National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act, 1993. That bill seeks to retrospectively grant recognition to certain institutions running teacher education courses as well as grant retrospective permission to start new courses.

- The Bill was introduced by the Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar in Lok Sabha on December 18, 2017.

Indian Oil Corporation will commission its first liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu

- Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm stated that, it will commission its first Rs. 5,151 crore worth liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu. This is the first LNG import terminal IOC has built on its own, it holds 95 per cent stake in the Ennore LNG import terminal. Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) has 5 per cent. The firm is also working on laying a 1,385 km natural gas pipeline originating from the Ennore terminal to Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu via Pudukkottai.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education amendment Bill passed in Parliament

- Parliament has passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The Lok Sabha had already passed the bill seeking to further amend the Right to Education Act, 2009. The existing policy under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, prohibits schools from detaining students till they complete elementary education. The Bill seeks to amend the Right to Education (RTE) Act to abolish the "no-detention" policy in schools.

National Green Tribunal imposes Rs 100-crore fine on Meghalaya government

- The National Green Tribunal has imposed a fine of 100 crore rupees on Meghalaya government for its failure to curb illegal coal mining in the state. The amount of the fine has to be deposited with the Central Pollution Control Board within two months. The action comes after a high-level committee submitted an adverse report to a bench headed by NGT chairperson AK Goel.

Indian Panorama Film Festival inaugurated in New Delhi

- A 10-day long Indian Panorama Film Festival began at Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi. Indian Panorama Film Festival, being organized by Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of I&B, was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of I&B, Shri Amit Khare. The opening feature film 'Olu' directed by Shri Shaji N Karun.

World Book Fair inaugurated in Delhi

- The 27th New Delhi World Book Fair inaugurated at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Human Resources Development Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the 9-day annual event. All India Radio is the radio partner for the fair.
- To mark Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, there will be special book exhibition of books on and by Mahatma Gandhi. More than 600 publishers will display books at more than 1350 stalls at the fair.
- The theme of this year is 'Readers with Special Needs'.

Government launched nationwide cleanliness survey 'Swachh Survekshan 2019'

- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, launched the 'Swachh Survekshan 2019', the fourth edition of the annual nationwide cleanliness survey of urban India in New Delhi. The Swachh Survekshan 2019 aims to evaluate the achievements in the cleanliness level in urban areas of the country.
- The survey will cover 40 crore people across over four thousand towns and cities. Swachh Survekshan 2019, completely digital and paperless survey, will be completed in a record time of 28 days.

Central Government launched Green-Ag project

- The Government of India launched a Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project, namely Green-Ag, in partnership with FAO. The overall objective of the project is to catalyse the transformative change of India's agricultural sector to support achievement of national and global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes of five states, namely Madhya Pradesh (Chambal landscape), Mizoram (Dampa landscape), Odisha (Similipal landscape), Rajasthan (Desert National Park landscape) and Uttarakhand (Corbett-Rajaji landscape).

Archaeological Survey of India declared 6 monuments as 'protected and of national importance'

- The Ministry of Culture announced that Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) declared 6 monuments as 'protected and of national importance' under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, in 2018. No new monument was included in the list of sites of national importance in 2016 and 2017. The last monument to be included in the list, in 2015, was the Vishnu Temple in Nadavayal in Kerala's Wayanad district.
 1. 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra,
 2. The Group of Temples in Ranipur Jharail in Bolangir district of Odisha,
 3. 2 Mughal era monuments in Agra- Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana,

4. The Neemrana Baori in Alwar district of Rajasthan,
5. The Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.

Government allocated Rs. 10,900 cr for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next 4 years

- The Union Government has allocated 10,900 crore rupees for the development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in the next four years. Dr Sivan stated that Chandrayan Mission will be launched within three months. It will land in one part of the Moon which is still unexplored. The human space flight Gaganyaan is planned to be launched by 2022, the 75th anniversary of Independence.

Cabinet approved restructuring of National Health Agency as “National Health Authority”

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the restructuring of existing National Health Agency as "National Health Authority" for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). The National Health Authority would be empowered with full autonomy, accountability and the mandate to implement PM-JAY through an efficient, effective and transparent decision-making process by aligning the accountability with responsibility.

High-level committee set up to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord

- Government had notified the High Level Committee (HLC) for implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord. The clause envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, should be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the people of Assam. Retired IAS officer M.P. Bezbaruah is chairman of the 9 member Committee. The committee will examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

NAFED to set up 100 bio-CNG plants via PPP with Rs 5,000-cr

- Farm cooperative major NAFED announced setting up 100 bio-CNG manufacturing facilities using agri waste such as stubble through public private partnership (PPP) with an estimated investment of Rs 5,000 crore. The first three centres will come up in Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, which is the largest sugarcane producing state where waste from sugar mills is available in abundance. An agreement has already been signed with 4-5 private investors like Reliance, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and technology provider. Another agreement has been signed with Indian Oil for purchase of bio-CNG from the plants at a rate of Rs 48 per kg.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg in India on 3-Day Visit

- Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg has arrived in New Delhi on a three-day state visit to India. She was accompanied by senior officials from her government and a large business delegation. She will participate in the Indo-Norwegian Business Conference. Solberg will also deliver the Inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue.

Cabinet approved 10% quota for economically backward in general category

- The Union Cabinet approved a 10 per cent reservation for 'economically backward' upper castes in government jobs. The government has announced reservation in jobs for those belonging to the upper castes and earning less than Rs 8 lakh per year. A bill to amend Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution will be moved in the Parliament to this effect.

International Kite Festival 2019 inaugurated in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- Nine day long international kite festival was inaugurated at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, by the Governor OP Kohli. Ahmedabad has been hosting this international kite festival since 1989, this grand event is a part of the celebrations for Makar Sankranti (also called Uttarayan). About 500 kite fliers 13 different states of the country and 19 cities of Gujarat are also taking part.

Lok Sabha passed Citizenship Amendment bill

- The Lok Sabha has passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. The bill relaxes this 11 year requirement to 6 years for persons belonging to the all the six religions from the three countries. Under the 1955 Act, requirements for citizenship by naturalisation is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months,

Private FM channels allowed to carry All India Radio news

- Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd.) launched the sharing of All India Radio News with private FM broadcasters. Private FM channels can now carry All

India Radio News free of cost on trial basis up to 31st May this year. News Services Division of All India Radio has permitted its news bulletins in English and Hindi to be carried in unaltered form by Private FM Channels as per certain terms and conditions.

GST ministerial panel approved Kerala levying 1% cess for 2 years

- The ministerial panel under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi approved levy of 1% 'calamity cess' by Kerala for a period of two years to fund rehabilitation work in the state hit by floods. The goods and services, which will attract the 1% cess, would be decided by Kerala and any other state considering to do the same would have to approach the council. The council also suggested to the GST Council to allow additional borrowing over the permitted limit by states hit by natural calamity.
- The GST law provides for levy of special taxes for a specified period to raise additional resources during any natural calamity or disaster.

HRD Ministry Introduced a 70 Point Grading Index to Assess the Quality of School Education

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has introduced a 70 point grading index to assess the quality of school education offered by states. State performance grading will be done wherein the states will be marked out of 1,000 scores on 70 parameters. This will give the correct picture of where every state stands. There will be a fair competition to improve each other's performances.

Andaman to be First Island to operate seaplanes under UDAN- 3

- According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, islands in Andaman will soon be connected by seaplanes. The ministry has approved operations on 13 water aerodrome routes, under the regional connectivity scheme Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN). Five are from Andaman, while the others are from dams in Gujarat and coastal areas in Kerala.
- UDAN-RCS, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional airport development and "Regional Connectivity Scheme" (RCS) of Government of India.

University Grants Commission to set up CARE to refine and strengthen research publication

- UGC decided to set up Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) to refine and strengthen research publication. With an aim to refine and strengthen the University Grants Commission (UGC) approved list of journals
- The good quality Research Journals in disciplines under Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages, Arts, Culture, Indian Knowledge Systems etc., will be maintained by CARE and referred to as 'CARE Reference List of Quality Journals'. UGC has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. P. Balram, to review its quality mandate relating to promotion of Research and to review the existing M.Phil/ Ph.D Regulations.

PM Modi will inaugurate the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 21st January

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 21st January, at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the three days long event will attract many eminent persons of Indian origin from the world over, Minister of state in External Affairs General V K Singh stated that, the first day of the Divas will be dedicated to the youth, There will be seven sessions in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programme.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated once in every two years to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their root
- During the Convention, selected overseas Indians are also honored with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to recognize their contributions to various fields both in India and abroad

Cabinet Approves 3 New AIIMS in Gujarat, Jammu And Kashmir

- The Union cabinet has given its approval for establishment of three new AIIMS at Samba in Jammu, Pulwama in Kashmir and Rajkot in Gujarat, These All India Institutes of Medical Sciences will be set up under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, The objective is to establish the new AIIMS as Institutions of National Importance for providing quality tertiary healthcare, medical education, nursing education and research in the region,
- Establishment of new AIIMS involves creation of Hospital, Teaching Block for medical and nursing courses, residential complex and allied facilities/services,
- AIIMS New Delhi is governed by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Act, 1956

National Informatics Centre Command & Control Centre inaugurated

- Minister for Electronics and IT (MeitY) Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated the National Informatics Centre (NIC)'s Command and Control Centre (CCC), Prasad also inaugurated the Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (AI) developed by the NIC to help government departments improve efficiency in their service technically like photo verification of beneficiaries for grant of services in large-scale projects, distribution of subsidies etc.

- NIC has been offering Data Centre and Cloud services to the Government. Currently, it has 4 National Data Centres and 30 Mini Data Centres across the country hosting over 10,000 e-Governance applications.

6 states signed agreement for Renukaji dam multipurpose project

- Six states Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh signed an agreement for construction of Renukaji Dam Multi Purpose Project, Agreement on water sharing was signed on 28 August 2008.
- Renukaji Dam project has been conceived as a storage project on the Giri river (tributary of the Yamuna) in Sirmour district of Himachal. It envisages construction of 148 m high rock-filled dam for supply of 23 cumec water to Delhi and other basin states, Three projects are proposed to be constructed on the Yamuna and two of its tributaries, Tons and Giri, in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of the Upper Yamuna Basin.
- These include Lakhwar project on the Yamuna in Uttarakhand, Kisau on the Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal, and Renukaji on the Giri in Himachal.

VP Naidu inaugurated 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai.
- Theme of Summit is New India Rising to Global Occasions
- The summit is expected to build new partnerships and explore investment opportunities in sectors like Artificial Intelligence, big data, food processing, defence, aeronautics, renewable energy and tourism.
- The Partnership Summit 2019 is being organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Maharashtra Government and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Government launched Web Wonder Women Campaign

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has launched an online campaign, '#www : Web WonderWomen'.
- The Campaign aims to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media, the Campaign has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in association with the NGO Breakthrough and Twitter.

Government launched National Clean Air Programme

- Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) aiming to reduce toxic particulate matter by 2024,
- With 2019 as its first year, Centre has set a mid-term (five-year) target to reduce air pollution by 20-30% by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year, the Environment Ministry has announced a budget of Rs 300 crore for two years to tackle air pollution across 102 cities, which have been identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for not meeting the pollution standards set by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Rajyavardhan Rathore launched National Youth Parliament Festival 2019

- Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col Rajyavardhan Rathore launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 at New Delhi, The theme of the festival is Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and contribute to policy
- The Ministry has decided to organise the youth festival at every district of the country so that the youth between the age group of 18 to 25 years can participate and discuss and debate about how to make a New India, the festival will be held at District, State and National level to select the best speakers, maximum of 50 best speakers from the digital screening and 50 best speakers from walk in process will be shortlisted by the screening committee to participate in the District Youth Parliament.

Government launched 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace' initiative

- The Union Government launched the 'Womaniya on Government e Marketplace (GeM)', an initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to sell handicrafts, handloom, accessories, and other products directly to Government departments and institutions, GeM is an online platform of the ministry for procurement of goods and services by government departments, public sector units, and other agencies.
- GeM was setup in 2016 and has 731,431 product categories, with 180,862 registered sellers and 32,114 government buyers.

Government Launched two National level Initiatives in the field of science communication

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with Doordarshan (DD), Prasar Bharati launched two science communication initiatives, DD Science and India Science
- Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the initiative.

- DD Science is an one hour slot on Doordarshan National channel, which will be telecast Monday to Saturday from 5 pm to 6pm, India Science is an internet based channel, which is available on any internet-enabled device, and will offer live, scheduled play and video-on-demand services.

Government approves inducting women as jawans in Army's Military Police

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has approved induction of women as jawans in the Army's Corps of Military Police. "
- The women will be inducted in graded manner to eventually comprise 20% of total Corps of Military Police.
- Their roles would include probing rape and molestation cases, assisting the Army wherever required, searching or frisking women, among other duties.

PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai.
- The museum spread across two adjacent buildings will not only cater to the needs of film critics and enthusiasts but also enthrall visitors through visuals, graphics, interactive

Aparna Kumar becomes 1st woman IPS officer to reach South Pole

- Aparna Kumar has successfully reached the South Pole after covering 111 kilometres of walking on the snow.
- She also carried equipment weighing 35 Kilograms along with her.
- She has already scaled the top six mountain peaks of the six continents of the globe. She became the first woman IPS officer to reach the South Pole.

2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 to be held in Goa from Jan 23

- The 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 on the Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products will be held in Goa from 23rd January. AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik will inaugurate the three day forum.
- 20 countries will participate in the event. This forum will strengthen regulatory framework worldwide, to assure that the users of Homoeopathy could have wider access to quality-assured homeopathic medicines

Indians over 65 and under 15 can now visit Nepal and Bhutan with Aadhaar

- Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 years travelling to Nepal and Bhutan, according to a Home Ministry communiqué. Indians other than those in the two age brackets will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighbouring countries, for which no visas are needed, said the communiqué issued recently. Indian citizens going to Nepal and Bhutan don't need a visa if they have a valid passport, a photo identity card issued by the government of India or an election ID card issued by the Election Commission, it added.
- Earlier, persons over 65 and under 15 could show their PAN card, driving licence, Central Government Health Service (CGHS) card or ration card, but not the Aadhaar, to prove their identity and visit the two countries

Central government considering paying farmers cash instead of subsidies: Report

- India is considering a plan to transfer cash to farmers to ease their financial burden instead of offering subsidies.
- Central government is planning to combine all farm subsidies, including fertilizer costs, and instead pay farmers cash. The additional cost will be limited to 700 billion rupees (\$9.8 billion) annually after a full roll-out of the program. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had budgeted 701 billion rupees for farm subsidies in the year ending March 31.

PM Modi inaugurates Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Subhash Chandra Bose museum at the iconic Red Fort in New Delhi to mark the leader's 122nd birth anniversary. He also inaugurated the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum on the Jallianwala Bagh and World War I, the Museum on 1857- India's first war of Independence and Drishyakala-Museum on Indian Art within the Red Fort complex. The Museum on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army provides a detailed account of Subhash Chandra Bose and the history of Indian National Army.
- It also showcases various artefacts related to Subhash Chandra Bose and INA. The artefacts include wooden chair and sword used by Netaji, medals, badges, uniforms and other artefacts related to INA.

Ayush Minister Shripad Naik inaugurates 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019

- Minister of State for Ayush Shripad Naik inaugurated the 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 in Panaji, Goa. The central government is committed to promoting all disciplines under Ayush including homoeopathy. Around 150 delegates from 21 countries are participating in the event.

10% quota in government jobs applicable from February

- Central government jobs and services which come up from February onwards will have to implement the 10% quota for economically weaker sections (EWS), the Union ministry of personnel, grievances and pensions has notified.

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- An order passed by the ministry refers to an office memorandum of the social justice ministry, which mentions the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act 2019, that provides 10% reservation to the EWS category in jobs as well as educational institutions. Persons who are not covered under the existing scheme of reservations and whose family income is below Rs 8 lakh are identified as EWS for the benefit of reservation.

Lt Kasturi becomes 1st woman to lead all-men contingent on Republic-Day

- Lieutenant Bhavana Kasturi has become the first woman to lead an all-men Army contingent in Republic Day parade by leading the Indian Army Service Corps contingent.
- An all-women Assam Rifles contingent was also part of the parade for the first time.

I&B Ministry to increase advertisement rates by 11% to private TV channels

- Information and Broadcasting Ministry has decided to revise the advertisement rates offered by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) to private TV channels.
- The revision would lead to an increase in rates of around 11 per cent over the rates of 2017 in respect of most of the private TV channels. It could be of higher percentage for some others, as per their reach and TV ratings. Differential rate structures for news and non-news channels will be offered, depending upon their overall reach in the country.

India's 1st Geographical Indication Store opened in Goa

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu inaugurated India's 1st Geographical Indication (GI) Store at Goa International Airport in Dabolim. The store is located on the first floor on Departure Terminal, and jointly set up by Airports Authority of India and The Cashew Export Promotional Council of India
- Currently there are 270 GI registered products in the country. Products from the self-help groups, artisans and farmers' produce will be also displayed on the airport at a concessional rate

Western Railway provides segways to RPF personnel to enable stricter patrolling

- The Western Railway has provided segways, the two-wheeled, self-balancing and battery powered electric vehicles, to the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel deployed at major railway stations in Mumbai
- The vehicle will help the RPF in keeping an eye on every nook and corner of the railway stations, specially on long platforms, this is the first of its kind initiative by the Indian Railways

Train 18 named Vande Bharat Express

- India's first indigenously built engineless semi high speed train, Train 18, has been named Vande Bharat Express
- The train is set to run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 kmph. The 16 coach train, built in 18 months at a cost of Rs 97 crore by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, is regarded as a successor to the 30 year old Shatabdi Express.

India and China signed protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China

- India and China have signed the protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China. The protocol was signed during the recent visit of Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan to Beijing
- Dr. Wadhawan also had bilateral meeting with Vice Minister of General Administration of China Customs, Zhang Jiwen for examining market access and quarantine issues for India's agriculture and allied products

National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) to organize the first edition of Night at the Museum

- National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi organized the first edition of Night at the Museum. The event organised in collaboration with the India Art Fair from 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM. Highlight objects include works of art of Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Raja Ravi Verma, Nandalal Bose and Jamini Roy. NGMA aims to conduct Night at the Museum as a regular activity and will organise it on the last working day of every month

ICAR launched National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP)

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country. It is inaugurated at the fourth Convention of 2-day "Agrivision-2019" organized by Vidyarthi Kalyan Nyas in Pusa, New Delhi
- ICAR has launched Rs 1100 crore ambitious National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP), this project will be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government on a 50:50 basis. In addition, a four year degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry has been declared a professional degree
- Rajendra Agriculture University has been upgraded as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University to strengthen the government's effort to bring green revolution in Eastern India including North East
- Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has been set up in Barhi, Jharkhand on the lines of IARI, Pusa New Delhi, and another IARI is being set up in Assam

- To promote the participation of students in agricultural business, Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) scheme is being run, under which practical experience of agriculture and entrepreneurship is provided to undergraduate students

Government renamed DIPP as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has been renamed as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with a mandate to deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others. The newly named department under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will look into matters related to promotion of internal trade, including retail trade, welfare of traders and their employees. The President gave his nod to bring internal trade matters under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

PM Modi dedicated National Salt Satyagraha Memorial to the nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha memorial monument to recall the historic Dandi Yatra on Mahatma Gandhi's death anniversary. Mahatma Gandhi began the march from Ahmedabad to Dandi near Surat on March 12th 1930 against the ban on Indians producing or selling salt. The memorial has statues of Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March. The cost of Memorial is Rs. 110 Crores.

February

Horticulture production to hit record 315 MT this year

- The agriculture ministry released the final estimates for 2017-18 and the first estimates for 2018-19 of area and production of horticulture crops. As per the final estimates of 2017-18, horticulture production stood at record 311.7 MT, which is 3.7 per cent higher than the previous year and 10 per cent higher than the past five years' average production. The area under coverage rose to 25.87 million hectares from 25.43 million hectares. The production of fruits is estimated at 97.35 MT, while that of vegetables at about 187.5 MT.

India's tourism sector registers 19% growth in 2018

- The country's tourism sector fetched 234 billion US Dollar revenue last year, registering a growth of over 19%. This revenue was contributed by 87 per cent domestic and 13 per cent foreign tourists.
- According to the 2018 report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC), India is ranked third in the tourism sector

Department of post to soon set up its own insurance company

- Department of post will soon set up its own insurance company which will deal with its business of two products Postal life insurance and Rural Postal Life Insurance. Union Minister of state for Communications Manoj Sinha stated that the proposal has been moved to Cabinet
- Target to set up Passport Seva Kendra in all Lok Sabha constituencies will be achieved by end of February

Piyush Goyal launches the IEA's 'The Future of Rail' report

- Minister of Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal launched the report "The Future of Rail" of International Energy Agency (IEA). "The Future of Rail" the first-of-a-kind report analyses the current and future importance of rail around the world through the perspective of its energy and environmental implications. The report reviews the impact of existing plans and regulations on the future of rail and explores the policies that could help to realise an enhanced future of the railways.

PM Modi dedicates 294 km long electrified railway lines in West Bengal, to the nation

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Railway electrification of 294-km long Andal-Sainthia-Pakur-Malda and Khana-Sainthia sections in West Bengal. Electrification of this section will enable ease of transportation of coal, stone chips and ballast to North and North East India in a seamless manner. He also dedicated the twenty kilometre long Hijli- Narayangarh third line to the Nation

India-Monaco Business forum held in New Delhi

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, addressed the India-Monaco Business Forum in New Delhi. Bilateral trade between India and Monaco in 2017-18 was USD 3.01 million, and there is immense potential to scale up the bilateral trade between the two nations. Monaco is ranked 106th among foreign direct investor in India (from April 2000 to June 2018) with USD 2.51 million FDI equity inflow

India's steel production increased by over 14 million tonnes in 3 years

- The total steel production in the country has increased from 88.98 MT in 2014-15 to 103.13 MT in 2017-18. The Government has notified the National Steel Policy, 2017 and the Policy for Providing Preference to Domestically

Manufactured Iron and Steel (DMI&SP) in Government procurement. According to World Steel Association (worldsteel) India has jumped ahead of Japan to become world's second largest steel producing country in the world. Crude steel production of India in 2018 stood at 106.5 MT, an increase of 4.9 percent from 101.5 MT in 2017

NBHC released kharif crop estimates for the year 2018-19

- National Bulk Handling Corporation (NBHC) has released kharif crop estimation for the year 2018-19 which shows that basmati rice production is expected to decline by 9.24% to 5.18 million metric tonne. The pulses production is projected to drop marginally to 9.10 million tonne from 9.35 million tonne last year. Total oilseeds production is estimated to be 19.87 million metric tonne which is 5.36 % lower than last year's of 21 million metric tonne.

NGT imposed Rs. 25 lakh fine on U.P. government

- The National Green Tribunal imposed a cost of Rs. 25 lakh on the Uttar Pradesh government for failing to stop dumping of sewage and untreated water in the Upper Ganga Canal.
- A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the urban development ministry to deposit a performance guarantee of Rs. 35 lakh.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation launched Shehri Samridhi Utsav

- Shehri Samridhi Utsav, an initiative of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA), launched with an aim to extend the outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), to the most vulnerable, showcase its initiatives and facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes. Through Shehri Samridhi Utsav, SHG members across cities are being linked to national government schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and National Nutrition Mission. A major highlight of Shehri Samridhi Utsav is the National Exhibition cum sale of SHG products and National Street Food Festival being organized in New Delhi.

India and Germany join hands on water and waste management

- 3rd Indo-German Working Group for cooperation on water and waste management concluded in New Delhi
- Indian delegation was led by Additional Secretary in the Environment Ministry Anil Kumar Jain while the German Delegation was headed by Director-General for Water Management and Resource Conservation, Dr. Regina Dube

Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen launched 'Darwaza Band - Part 2' campaign in Mumbai

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) launched the '**Darwaza Band -Part 2**' campaign for sustainability of the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of villages across the country. The campaign was launched by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in Mumbai in the presence of brand ambassador Amitabh Bachchan.
- The 'Darwaza Band- Part 2' campaign is supported by the World Bank. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) or Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a nation-wide campaign in India for the period 2014 to 2019 that aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, and rural areas.
- The objectives of Swachh Bharat include eliminating open defecation through the construction of household-owned and community-owned toilets, the mission aims to achieve an "open-defecation free" (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 90 million toilets in rural India at a projected cost of Rs. 1.96 lakh crore (US\$30 billion).
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ("gramin" or 'rural'), operates under the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ('urban'), operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

HRD Ministry launched Operation Digital Board

- The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry launched Operation Digital Board on the lines of Operation Blackboard to provide better digital education in schools. Under the initiative, 7 lakh classrooms of 9th, 10th and 11th standards and 2 lakh classrooms of colleges and Universities will be equipped with digital boards in the next three years. It aims to converting a class room into a digital class room and in addition to availability of e-resources at any time and at any place to students

PM Modi dedicates 'National War Memorial' to nation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National War Memorial near India Gate in New Delhi.
- The memorial honours soldiers who have laid down their lives in the service for the country since Independence.
- More than 25,000 soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces have made the supreme sacrifice to defend the country's sovereignty and integrity.

Union Minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launches national programme to eliminate viral hepatitis

- Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launched a national programme aimed at eliminating viral hepatitis, recognized as an important public health problem.
- The minister of state for health launched the National Action Plan - Viral Hepatitis at Mumbai in presence of Amitabh Bachchan, the goodwill ambassador for hepatitis, WHO South-East Asia Region.

Government launched online portal Rail Drishti Dashboard

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi
- Rail Drishti Dashboard, an online portal to keep people informed about ongoing Railway works

Rajnath Singh inaugurated Waste to Wonder Park in Delhi

- The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated "Waste to Wonder" Park in Delhi. The park has been built by South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC). It is the first-of-its-kind tourist attraction in the world, with the replicas of the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro, Rome's Colosseum, and the Statute of Liberty which were opened for the public at the inauguration. The SDMC has installed solar trees and rooftop panels that will generate 50 KW powers to lighten the park

PM unveiled world's largest Bhagwad Gita at ISKCON Temple

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled world's largest Bhagwad Gita prepared by ISKCON Temple devotees in New Delhi on the occasion of Gita Aradhana Mahotsav. Measuring over 2.8 meters and weighing more than 800 kilogram. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is a worldwide confederation of more than 400 temples and runs 100 vegetarian restaurants and a wide variety of community serving projects.

Andhra Pradesh gets new railway zone called 'South Coast Railway' in Vishakhapatnam

- Indian Railways will be making a new zone in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh named 'South Coast Railway', Railway Minister Piyush Goyal. The present divisions, including Guntakal, Guntur and Vijaywada and Waltair division will be split into two and will have the headquarter at South Coast Railway.
- Goyal added that a part of the Waltair division will be converted into a new division with its headquarter at Rayagada, Odisha.

5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet held in Delhi

- 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet held in Delhi
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen co-chaired the meeting. The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh arrived in New Delhi on a four day visit to India. It is the first high-level visit from Bangladesh since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's victory in the parliamentary elections in December last year

Smriti Irani launched India Size project in Mumbai

- Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai. A first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country. India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.
- India size project will benefit manufacturers, consumers and generate data which will help tap into the potential of the sector

Health ministry notified eight medical equipment as 'drugs'

- To regulate medical and diagnostic devices in India, The health ministry has notified eight medical equipments including all implantable devices, as "drugs" under Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, with effect from April 1, 2020. The medical equipment include all implantable medical devices, CT scan, MRI equipment, defibrillators, dialysis machine, PET equipment, X-ray machine and bone marrow cell separator

India and Norway launched initiative to combat Marine Pollution

- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change signed a letter of Intent establishing the India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative together with the Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Indian and Norwegian governments agreed to work more closely on oceans by signing a MoU and establishing the India-Norway Ocean Dialogue during the Norwegian Prime Minister's visit to India in January.
- Norway and India will share experiences and competence, and collaborate on efforts to develop clean and healthy oceans, sustainable use of ocean resources and growth in the blue economy

India's First Aqua Mega Food Park commissioned in Andhra Pradesh

- Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. The park is promoted by Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd. It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The Mega Park has been set up in 57.81 acres at a cost of Rs 122.60 crore.

AYUSH Ministry launched e-AUSHADHI portal

- Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik launched the *e-AUSHADHI* portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs. This e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.
- The Minister informed that timelines will be fixed for processing of application through this portal with SMS and e-mail status updates at each step of the process.

Government implemented new pension scheme Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PMSYM)

- Government implemented new pension scheme Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PMSYM)
- Under the scheme workers of the unorganised sector will receive a minimum assured pension of Rs. 3000 per month after attaining the age of 60 years. Around 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged in the unorganized sector in the country. The workers whose monthly income is fifteen thousand rupees per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18 to 40 years are eligible for the scheme

Expert committee recommends Rs. 9,750 monthly national minimum wage

- The 7-member expert panel headed by V V Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI) Fellow Anoop Satpathy submitted its report titled "Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage",
- The expert committee recommended a uniform national minimum wage of Rs. 375 per day or Rs. 9,750 per month or region-wise minimum wages ranging from Rs. 8,892 - Rs. 11,622 per month for five regions, with supplementary house rent allowance of Rs. 1,430 per month for urban workers
- This wage-level is irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations for a family comprising 3.6 consumption units. The Present is National Minimum Wage Rs. 4,576.

Dera Baba Nanak land check post designated as immigration centre

- The Centre designated Dera Baba Nanak land Check post in Gurdaspur district of Punjab as an authorised immigration checkpoint to exit and entry for visiting Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan.
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone of the Dera Baba Nanak-Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at an event at Mann village in Gurdaspur district. The Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara is located on the banks of the Ravi river.

India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre inaugurated in Kolkata

- Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated the India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal. This facility is the first of its kind in the country and having a 23 metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors. It is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture at a cost of Rs 20 crore.
- The Science City is operated by the National Council of Science Museums under the Ministry of Culture.

Rajnath Singh launched pan-India number 112 for women safety

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi launched a range of citizen safety initiatives in New Delhi. It includes the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), for women safety in 16 states and Union territories. The service has already been launched in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Persons in distress can dial a pan-India number **112**. Under this system, all the states have to set up a dedicated Emergency Response Centre (ERC)
- A citizen may Press power button on a smartphone thrice quickly to activate a panic call to ERC. In case of a feature phone, long press on number 5 or 9 on the phone keypad will activate the panic call. The ERCs are connected to District Command Centres and the Emergency Response Vehicles. An amount of over 321 crore rupees has been provided for this initiative through the Nirbhaya fund

Rajnath Singh inaugurated cyber crime fighting facility

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the national cyber forensic lab (NCFL) and the Delhi Police's cyber crime unit Cyber Prevention, Awareness & Detection Centre (CyPAD). Both the cybercrime fighting units are based in a complex at Dwarka, New Delhi. NCFL is part of the Union Home Ministry's Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center. CyPAD of Delhi Police deal with crypto-currency frauds and international tech-supported frauds.

14th Agricultural Science Congress inaugurated in New Delhi

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Animal Welfare Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated the 14th Agricultural Science Congress in New Delhi. A four-day event aims to doubling farmers' income by 2022
- Theme of 14th Agricultural Science Congress is 'Innovations for Transformation'. The event being organised by the National Academy of Agricultural Science (NASS), Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI). The Congress, organised once every two years, About 2,000 delegates from 17 countries are expected to attend the event

79th Indian History Congress to be held in Bhopal

- The 79th Indian History Congress (IHC) will be held at Barkatullah University in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh from February 26. This session was earlier scheduled at Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) from December 28. but it was cancelled by the local hosts due to financial reason. This is the second time the IHC would be held in Madhya Pradesh, Earlier it was hosted in 2011. Over 1,000 delegates including prominent historians are expected to participate in the IHC in Bhopal. Indian History Congress was established in 1935 and this is the largest professional and academic body of Indian historians. It promotes and encourages scientific study of Indian history

Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu launched 'SWAYATT' on GeM in New Delhi

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, launched SWAYATT in New Delhi
- SWAYATT is an initiative to promote Start-ups, women and youth advantage through e-transactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM). This will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace the national procurement portal.

Textiles Minister Smriti Zubin Irani launched four projects in North East for the development of Silk Sector

- Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, launched four projects in North East for the development of silk sector through video conference in New Delhi
- Smriti Irani inaugurated Muga silk seed production centre in Tura, Meghalaya, silk printing and processing unit in Agartala, Tripura. Eri spun silk mill in Sangaipat, Imphal. Development of sericulture in Mamit, Mizoram.
- The Minister also inaugurated new office buildings of Weavers Service Centres (WSC) in Indore, Madhya Pradesh and Kannur, Kerala.

Saudi Arabia becomes 73rd nation to join international solar alliance

- Saudi Arabia signed the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) becoming the 73rd country to join the India-led renewable energy organisation
- International Solar Alliance (ISA) was unveiled by PM Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande in 2015.

PM Modi flags off world's first diesel to electric converted locomotive

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the first ever diesel-to-electric converted locomotive at the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in Varanasi. The 10,000HP freight locomotive has been converted from two units of old diesel locomotives of 2600HP each with indigenous technology
- The feat was achieved in record time with the help of engineers from Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW), and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL).
- The work on the project began on December 22, 2017 and from concept to execution of the conversion of the diesel locomotive to electric was carried out in just 69 days

Important International News December

Japan government has recently enacted controversial law to accept foreign blue-collar workers

- On December 8, the Japanese government enacted a new law to bring more blue-collar foreign workers into the country, in a controversial move to address chronic labour shortages. Under the new law, Japan plans to bring in 345,000 foreign workers in construction, food services, nursing and other sectors for 5 years.

Luxembourg become the world's first country to make all its public transport free by 2019

- Luxembourg is set to become the first country in the world to make all its public transport free by 2019. The move is aimed at addressing environmental issues and the problem of traffic congestion. Apart from providing free public

transport, Luxembourg also intends to legalise cannabis and introduce two new public holidays. Earlier, Luxembourg introduced free transport for all people under the age of 20.

Israel become a permanent member of Financial Action Task Force

- Israel became a full member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an international body set up to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other threats to the international financial system. 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.

Scientists from the Fujian Normal University in China developed a "rewritable" paper

- Scientists from the Fujian Normal University in China developed a "rewritable" paper that can be drawn or printed on over and over again by changing the temperature. The new material consisted of three layers in a sandwich-like structure where the text could be changed or wiped clean over 100 times by changing the temperature.

Australia became the world's leading exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for the first time

- Australia surpassed Qatar to become the world's leading exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for the first time. This was announced according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics which stated that Australia had exported 6.55 million tonnes of LNG in November 2018 compared to Qatar's 6.27 million tonnes.

The world's largest Arabic audio library launched Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

- Crown Prince of Dubai, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, launched the Dubai Audio Library, the largest Arabic audio library in the world, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Japan has selected the Chinese character for 'disaster' as its defining symbol for 2018

- Japan on 12 December selected the Chinese character for 'disaster' as its defining symbol for 2018, a year that saw the country hit by deadly floods, earthquakes and storms.

Russia has sent two Tu-160, strategic bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons, to Venezuela

- Russia has sent two Tu-160, strategic bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons, to Venezuela in an apparent show of support to President Nicolas Maduro's regime. Russia is a major political ally of Venezuela, which has become increasingly isolated in the world under growing sanctions led by the United States and the European Union, which accuse Maduro of undermining democratic institutions to hold onto power while overseeing an economic and political crisis that is worse than the Great Depression.

The EU Parliament has recently approved the world's largest free trade deal with Japan

- The European Parliament has approved the world's largest free trade deal between Japan and the European Union (EU). The EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement will go into effect in February 2019. It will remove duties on almost all agricultural and industrial products as well as open up the service sector and procurement. It also moves to eliminate non-tariff barriers to trade. It includes standards of labor, safety, environment, consumer protection and, for the first time, a specific commitment to the Paris climate agreement.

World's first "floating" nuclear power plant was opened 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% of its capacity, Russian state-run atomic energy corporation Rosatom announced. An 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.

India signs bilateral annual Haj agreement with Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage next year

- Haj agreement 2019 was signed between India and Saudi Arabia by Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, and Haj and Umrah Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. This year more than 2,100 women have already applied to go to Haj without 'Mehram' (male companion) after the Modi Government had lifted the ban on women going to Haj without Mehram last year and they had also been exempted from the lottery system.

Zambia has joined as a member of International Solar Alliance

- India has welcomed Zambia as a member of the International Solar Alliance, with Vice President Venkaiah Naidu expressing hope for an early ratification of the Framework Agreement by Zambia.

Trump orders US military to create 'Space Command'

- United States President Donald Trump on Tuesday (Dec 18) ordered the creation of "Space Command", a new organisational structure within the Pentagon that will have overall control of military space operations. The

command will be separate from Mr Trump's goal to build an entirely new branch of the military called "Space Force", which has not received approval from Congress.

United Arab Emirates President declares 2019 as Year of Tolerance

- United Arab Emirates (UAE) President H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan has declared 2019 to be the "Year of Tolerance." to highlight UAE as the Global Capital of Tolerance, instilling the values of co-existence and peace in local, regional and international community's The Year of Tolerance will focus on "Five Pillars".

USA pulls out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

- Russia has confirmed that the United States of America has decided to cancel the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty signed between Russian and the USA in 1987. The USA had already announced the withdrawal decision from the INF treaty in October 2018.

UAE to deposit \$3 billion in State Bank of Pakistan

- The UAE will deposit \$3 billion (Dh11 billion) in the State Bank of Pakistan to support the country's financial and monetary policy. The Abu Dhabi Fund for Development said it will deposit the money over the next few days to enhance liquidity and monetary reserves of foreign currency at the Bank

Burundi names Gitega as new capital

- Burundi declared the small central city of Gitega the country's new political capital
- The government "has just adopted an historic bill making Gitega the political capital and making Bujumbura the economic capital

China launches first satellite for broadband communication

- China launched its first satellite as part of the Hongyun Project, a low-orbit broadband communication satellite system, A Long March-11 rocket carrying the low Earth-orbit satellite took off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China at 7.51 am and successfully entered its orbit, 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.

India, Afghanistan and Iran meet for Chabahar Agreement

- The first meeting of the Follow-up Committee between the three South-Asian nations was held at the port city of Chabahar in Iran, India Ports Global Limited company opened its office and took over operations at the at Chabahar on this occasion, The next Follow-up Committee meeting, followed by the 2nd Coordination Council Meeting the level of Secretaries/ Deputy Ministers, will held in India in 2019

Government extends ban on import of milk products from China for 4 months

- The government has further extended the ban on import of milk and its products, including chocolates, from China for four months till April 23 next year, according to a notification of the commerce ministry, The ban was first imposed in September 2008 and later extended from time to time, The ban was imposed on apprehensions of presence of melamine in some milk consignments from China. Melamine is a toxic chemical used for making plastics and fertilizers
- India is the world's largest producer and consumer of milk. It produces around 150 million tonne milk annually.

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, Nepali citizen would be unable to spend more than Rs.1 lakh per month while paying for goods and services in India and that the decision was taken to address the country's current account deficit, The policy applicable to prepaid, credit and debit cards of Nepali banks.
- Central bank of Nepal - Nepal Rastra Bank

Russian military successfully tests hypersonic missile

- Russia has successfully conducted its final test of a hypersonic glider capable of carrying nuclear warheads, The weapon, dubbed Avangard, detaches itself from a rocket after being launched and glides back to Earth at speeds faster than the speed of sound.

Israel to allow medical marijuana exports

- The Israeli Parliament (the "Knesset"), passed the 16th amendment to Dangerous Drugs Ordinance on December 25, that concerns the governance and regulatory aspects of exporting medical cannabis from Israel, Israel will become the third country, after the Netherlands and Canada, to take its medical cannabis global, The Israeli medical cannabis company iCAN predicts the global industry will reach \$33 billion in the next five years.

World's first plastic-free passenger flight takes off

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- Portuguese charter airline Hi Fly made history when they flew the first flight without any single-use plastic.
- The flight from Lisbon to Natal, Brazil was the first of four trials that won't use any single-use plastic on board. Many of the items on-board that are typically plastic were substituted with a more eco-friendly alternative.

China's Chang'e-4 probe Geared to Land on Dark Side of the Moon

- A Chinese space probe Chang'e-4 is moving into position to land on the dark side of the moon for the first time,
- China launched the Chang'e-4 probe earlier this month, carried by a Long March-3B rocket. It includes a lander and a rover to explore the surface of the moon. The probe is carrying seeds for an experiment in cultivating vegetables in a closed environment on the lunar surface. It's also equipped with a panorama camera and measuring devices.

January

The U.S. and Israel Quit the U.N.'s Cultural Agency UNESCO

- The United States and Israel officially quit the U.N.'s educational, scientific and cultural agency,
- UNESCO is best known for its work to preserve heritage, including maintaining a list of World Heritage sites, and programmes to promote education in developing countries. Before The US has pulled out of UNESCO in 1984 because it viewed the agency as mismanaged, corrupt, and used to advance Soviet interests. The US rejoined in 2003.

China Building "Most Advanced" Naval Warships for Pakistan

- China is building the first of four 'most advanced' naval frigates for Pakistan as part of a major bilateral arms deal to ensure 'balance of power' in the Indian Ocean. The warship will be capable of anti-submarine and air-defence operations. The ships are of the Type 054AP class, meaning that it is based on the Type 054A of the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).

Tropical Storm Usman hits Philippines

- Storm Usman hit the Bicol region in Manila
- The tropical depression, locally named Usman, brought heavy rains, causing catastrophic flooding and triggering deadly landslides.

Trump Signed Asia Reassurance Initiative Act into Law

- U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which passed the U.S. Senate earlier in December. The act establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region. Specifically, the ARIA will authorize \$1.5 billion in spending for a range of U.S. programs in East and Southeast Asia and develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes.

Guatemala to withdraw from UN backed anti corruption commission

- Guatemala was withdrawing from a United Nations backed anti corruption commission and giving its prosecutors a day to leave the country. President Jimmy Morales accused the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, commonly known as CICIG, of polarising the country and putting its security at risk. The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, or CICIG, was established over a decade ago with the authority to conduct independent investigations and work with the country's prosecutors.

First ever India-Central Asia Dialogue to be held in Uzbekistan

- The first India-Central Asia Dialogue will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on January 12 and 13. The Dialogue will be co-chaired by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj and the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov.
- India-Central Asia Dialogue, with the participation of Afghanistan, is expected to strengthen India's engagement, including political, economic, development partnership and cultural, with all the Central Asian countries and take it to a new level.

US launched new innovation initiative at Raisina Dialogue 2019

- The United States Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) launched a new innovation initiative at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. The initiative, titled "Fair Value for Innovation".
- That will examine economic underpinnings that would enable breakthrough innovation, and explore how policymakers can harness innovation capital in India and around the globe through research, advocacy, partnerships, and programs. The Raisina Dialogue is India's most influential conference on geopolitics and geo economics, convened by the Observer Research Foundation and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

Japan launches satellite for world's 1st artificial meteor shower

- Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has launched Tokyo-based startup Star-ALE's mini-satellite aimed to deliver the world's first artificial meteor shower.

- The satellite carries 400 tiny balls, which the startup says will be enough for 20-30 events, that will glow as they rush down the atmosphere on being released. ALE plans to deliver its first show in Hiroshima in early 2020.

Government signs agreements for Development Assistance Loans of Rs 3420 crore with JICA

- Japan will give a loan of Rs. 3,420 crore to India for the construction of the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) and for Japan-India cooperative actions towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India.
- The programme to promote SDGs in India focusses especially on social development.
- The loan agreements were signed between the Government of India and Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Nepal's central bank bans use of Indian currency notes

- Nepal's central bank has banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations.
- Under the new regulation issued, Nepali citizens cannot carry these denominations to countries other than India.
- Similarly, Nepalis are also not allowed to bring such notes from other countries. Indian notes of 100 or below, however, are allowed for trading and conversion.
- On December 13, the Nepal Cabinet had decided to publish the notification in the Nepal Gazette not to allow people to carry Indian currency notes above 100 denominations in Nepal.

Rio de Janeiro will be World Capital of Architecture for 2020: UNESCO

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has announced that the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro will be the World Capital of Architecture for 2020.
- Having defeated Paris and Melbourne, Rio will be the first city to receive the title under a program launched together by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) in November last year.
- The city will host the World Congress of UIA, in July 2020, an event that occurs every three years.
- According to UNESCO, the World Capital of Architecture is intended to become an international forum for debates about pressing global challenges from the perspectives of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning and architecture.

Israel, US successfully test ballistic missile interceptors

The Israel and US countries have successfully tested ballistic missile interceptors deployed at Israeli airbases. The tests came a day after the latest deadly exchange of fire between Israel and Iranian forces operating in Syria. The Arrow 3 interceptor system, designed to shoot down missiles above the atmosphere, was deployed at air force bases across Israel two years ago.

Saudi Arabia builds its 1st ballistic missile factory

- Saudi Arabia, which does not currently possess nuclear weapons, has built its first-known ballistic missile factory.
- Satellite images reviewed by the experts appeared to show a rocket-engine production and test facility. The factory is reportedly in the same location as the al-Watah missile base which first became public in 2013.

Pakistan government declared sugarcane juice as the "national drink" of the country

- Government of Pakistan has declared sugarcane juice as the nation juice of Pakistan
- The announcement came after the government conducted a Twitter poll where people were asked to decide on the country's national drink with two other options orange and carrot besides sugarcane.

Dubai airport retains its position as world's busiest airport in 2018

- Dubai International Airport has retained its position as the world's busiest airport for the fifth consecutive year in a row in 2018. Indian travellers emerging as the largest source of traffic for the airport, accounting for more than 12.2 million travellers. Most of them coming from the Indian cities of Mumbai, Delhi and Cochin. The annual customer tally at Dubai's main transit hub increased by 1 per cent to 89.1 million last year from 88.2 million in 2017
- The number of flights fell 0.3 per cent to 408,251 during 2018 while the average number of passengers grew slightly by 1.3 per cent to 226 people per plane

US imposed sanctions on Venezuela's state owned oil group

- The Trump administration imposed sweeping sanctions on Venezuelan state owned oil firm PDVSA
- Aimed at severely curbing the OPEC member's crude exports to the United States and at pressuring socialist President Nicolas Maduro to step down

Syria signed long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran

- Syria has signed a long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran. The new agreement covers the industrial, agricultural, service, infrastructure and energy sectors among others
- Syria government also reached an agreement with Iran on the banking sector as well as establishing an electricity generating station in the coastal city of Latakia

Suman Kumari becomes first Hindu woman judge of Pakistan

- Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman in Pakistan to be appointed as a civil judge. She passed her LLB examination from Hyderabad and did her masters in law from Karachi's Szabist University
- Suman, who hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot, will serve in her native district
- Ratna Bhagwandas Chawla became the first Hindu woman elected to Pakistan's Senate in 2006
- Last year, Krishna Kumari Kohli, a Hindu woman became the first non Muslim female to win a women reserved seat in Senate of Pakistan

UAE and Saudi central banks launch common digital currency called 'Aber'

- The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called "Aber" which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies. The UAE central bank will establish an additional means for the central financial transfer systems of the two countries and enable banks to directly deal with each other in conducting financial remittances. The use of the currency will be restricted to a limited number of banks in each state

February

Italy, UN, launched Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development

- Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has opened a new centre, set up by the government in partnership with the UN to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa. The new centre is located near the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome
- It will help develop and scale up innovative solutions for sustainable development, implement the goals of the UN's 2030 Agenda and the landmark 2015 Paris Climate Agreement to end reliance on fossil fuels and cap global warming.

2019 is the International Year of the Periodic Table

- The United Nations announced 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements to highlight its first publication in 1869. The periodic table was first designed by the Russian scientist Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev. The announcement by the United Nations will help to raise the profile of how chemistry can provide solutions to global challenges in agriculture, education, energy and health.

Sri Lanka celebrating its 71st Independence Day

- The National Day of Sri Lanka is celebrated on **4 February** to commemorate its internal political independence from British rule on that day in 1948. The main function will be held at Galle face grounds in Colombo where President Maithripala Sirisena will be chief guest. Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih will attend the function as guest of honour. A total of 545 prisoners have been granted Presidential pardon to mark the occasion and will be released

Thailand makes Siamese fighting fish national aquatic animal

- Tiny, testy and eye-catching with a colourful fin plumage, the Siamese fighting fish was named Thailand's national aquatic animal
- Thailand's official national animal is the elephant.

Macedonia signs accord to join NATO

- Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance between 29 North American and European countries.

Australian Rat becomes the first mammal to go extinct

- A small brown rat of northern Australia is the world's first mammal to become extinct due to climate change. It was found only on a small sand island near the coast of Papua New Guinea
- The Australian government has officially listed the Bramble Cay melomys as extinct

International Paralympics Committee lifts Russia's doping ban

- The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) lifts the ban on Russian Para athletes by March 15, under certain conditions. Russia has been barred from international competitions since August 2016. Russia had met 69 of its 70 reinstatement criteria

Abu Dhabi included Hindi as third official court language

- Abu Dhabi has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.

- The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) stated that, it has extended the adoption of interactive forms of statement of claims filed before courts by including Hindi. The move was aimed to provide foreigners with better access to justice, without a language barrier.

Macedonia officially changed its name to North Macedonia

- The country formerly known as the Republic of Macedonia officially changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia on paper ending a decades-long dispute that should pave the way for NATO membership
- Macedonia was internationally known as FYROM – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia because Greece objected to the use of Macedonia, the name used for its own northern region. After declaring independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the country chose the name Macedonia.

J.P. Morgan becomes first U.S. Bank with a Cryptocurrency

- JPMorgan Chase & Co, America's largest bank, is launched its own Cryptocurrency
- The cryptocurrency, called "JPM Coin," which has a fixed value redeemable for one U.S. dollar
- The bank operates a massive wholesale payment business, with more than \$6 trillion in client funds transferred each day. The crypto-currency, which runs on blockchain technology, has been used successfully to move money between the bank and a client account.

Iran unveiled first semi-heavy missile-equipped submarine

- Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has unveiled the first Iranian made semi-heavy submarine. The submarine named 'Fateh' ('Conqueror' in Persian), capable of being fitted with missile. The Fateh has subsurface-to-surface missiles with a range of about 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles), capable of reaching Israel and U.S. military bases in the region

'Festival of India' begins in Nepal

- A month-long 'Festival of India' began in Kathmandu to familiarise the new generation of the country about the similarities between the two countries.
- Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Rabindra Adhikari and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri jointly inaugurated the event. The festival, organised by the Indian Embassy and Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, is being held in Kathmandu and other major cities of Nepal from February 19th to March 21st.

Important Appointments

December

National Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Sunil Arora	New Chief Election Commissioner
2.	David Tait	Next CEO World Gold Council
3.	Andrs Manuel Lpez Obrador	First leftist president of Mexico
4.	T.S Vijayan	Independent director of Yes Bank
5.	Ravindra Kumar Verma	Technical Member in the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity
6.	Dr. Ajay Bhushan Pandey	The Revenue Secretary in the Finance Ministry
7.	Krishnamurthy Subramanian	The new Chief Economic Advisor (CEA)
8.	Preeti Saran	Asia Pacific seat on the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
9.	Kirthiga Reddy	SoftBank's first venture partner at its \$100 billion Vision Fund
10.	Rajiv Mehrishi	Vice-Chair of UN Panel of Auditors for 2019
11.	Arundhati Bhattacharya	SWIFT India Chairman

12.	Sascha Bajin	First-ever recipient of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Coach of the Year Award
13.	Mary Kom	"Meethoileima" by the Manipur Government
14.	DMK MP Kanimozhi	Best Woman Parliamentarian (Rajya Sabha) for 2018
15.	Jamal Khashoggi	Time magazine's 2018 "Person of the Year"
16.	Kamal Nath	The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh
17.	Ashok Gehlot	The Chief Minister of Rajasthan
18.	Sachin Pilot	Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan
19.	Brijendra Pal Singh	New president of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)
20.	Uday Shankar	Head Disney-Star merged entity in India
21.	Pranab K. Das	CBIC Chairman
22.	Uday Shankar	Vice President of FICCI
23.	Charles Michel	Resignation from the post Belgium's Prime Minister
24.	Nageswara Rao	Promoted to the rank of an Additional Director by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.
25.	WV Raman	Head coach Indian women's cricket team
26.	Nilanjan Roy	Infosys chief financial officer
27.	P.V. Bharathi	MD &CEO Corporation Bank
28.	Sangeeta Verma	Competition Commission of India member
29.	Chacko Purackal Thomas	Tata Coffee MD &CEO
30.	C A Kuttappa	India's chief boxing coach
31.	Bijay Kumar	IL&FS deputy MD
32.	Air Marshal Rajeev Sachdeva	Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff
33.	Ambika Prasad Panda	Chairman and Managing Director of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL)
34.	Sudhir Bhargava	New Chief Information Commissioner
35.	Yashwardhan Kumar Sinha, Vanaja N Sarna, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Suresh Chandra	Information Commissioners in Central Information Commission

International Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Salom Zurichishvili	First female President of Georgia

2.	Surjit Bhalla	Resigned from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Economic Advisory Council
3.	Ranil Wickremesinghe	Prime Minister of Sri Lanka
4.	Harsh Vardhan Shringla	Next Indian Ambassador to US
5.	Andry Rajoelina	Madagascar President
6.	Sheikh Hasina	Bangladesh Prime Minister

Resignation

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1	James Mattis	Resigned as US Defence Secretary

January

National Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Pramod Kumar Singh	Competition Commission of India secretary
2.	V K Yadav	Chairman, Railway Board
3.	Justice AK Sikri	The Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).
4.	Saurabh Kumar took	Chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board
5.	Hemant Bhargava	Interim Chairman of LIC
6.	Pankaj Sharma	RBL Bank Chief Operations Officer
7.	Justice T B N Radhakrishnan	First Chief justice of Telangana High Court.
8.	Vikram Misri	India's new envoy to China
9.	Kumar Rajesh Chandra	Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)
10.	Birendra Prasad Baishya	Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics
11.	Ajit Mohan	Managing Director and Vice President, Facebook India
12.	Brahm Dutt	Yes Bank non executive part time chairman
13.	Daniel Hughes Callahan	Additional and Independent Director of TCS
14.	Mohammed Ali Qamar	Women's Boxing Team Coach
15.	B Sriram and Rama Bijapurkar	ICICI Bank independent director
16.	Agyey Kumar Azad	Executive Director of Punjab National Bank
17.	Piyush Goyal	Interim Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister
18.	Ravneet Gill	MD and CEO of Yes Bank
19.	Ronojoy Dutta	IndiGo CEO
20.	Parthasarathi Mukherjee	Lakshmi Vilas Bank MD and CEO (Reappoint)
21.	Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar	Vice Chief of Navy Staff (VCNS)
22.	Dilip Sadarangani	part time Chairman of Federal Bank
23.	Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Nayan Choubey	Member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)

International Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Jair Bolsonaro	Brazil President
2.	David Norquist	US deputy defence secretary

3.	Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa	Chief Justice of Pakistan
4.	Shri Pranav R Mehta	Global Solar Council
5.	Nicolas Maduro	Venezuelan President
6.	Su Tseng-chang	Prime Minister of Taiwan
7.	Manu Sawhney	ICC CEO
8.	Andry Rajoelina	President of Madagascar
9.	Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah	Malaysia's new king
10.	Poonam Khetrapal Singh	Director of World Health Organization South-East Asia
11.	Sunjay Sudhir	India's Ambassador to Maldives

Resignation

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Madan B Lokur	Supreme Court judge (retired)
2.	Kevin Sweeney	US Department of Defence chief of staff
3.	Jim Yong Kim	World Bank President (from 1 February, 2019)
4.	Harendra Singh	Indian men's hockey coach
5.	Ashok Chawla	Chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India
6.	Stephen Constantine	Indian football team's head coach
7.	BK Divakara	Executive Director (ED) of Central Bank of India

Malaysia's King Muhammad V becoming first monarch to resign before completing tenure

- Malaysia's King Muhammad V resigned, the first time a monarch has stepped down from the throne before completing their five year tenure.
- The resignation comes barely a week after the king resumed his duties after spending two months away on medical leave.

February

National Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra	Director General of NCC (DGNCC)
2.	Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar P	Western Naval Command Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief
3.	Ajai Kumar	Interim MD-CEO of YES bank
4.	Rishi Kumar Shukla	CBI director
5.	Pradeep Singh Kharola	Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation
6.	Rahul Jain	General Manager of Integral Coach Factory (ICF)
7.	Shri Sailesh	Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs
8.		
9.	Ruchira Kamboj	Ambassador of India to Bhutan
10.	Salil Gupte	Boeing India President
11.	DIPP secretary Ramesh Abhishek	Secretary, Civil Aviation Ministry
12.	India's boxing chief Ajay Singh	President of the Foundation Board for Better Boxing of AIBA
13.	Justice DK Jain	First Ombudsman for BCCI
14.	Tarun Sridhar (Secretary of Department of Animal Husbandry and	Secretary, Department of Fisheries

	Dairying)	
15.	Sushil Chandra	Election Commissioner
16.	SN Ghormade	Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command
17.	Ashwani Lohani	Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Air India
18.	Derrick Pereira	Head coach of the Indian Under-23 football team
19.	Pramod Chandra Mody	Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)
20.	Sandeep Mohan Bhatnagar and Ashok Kumar Pandey	CBIC members
21.	Anirban Mukherjee	PayU India CEO

International Appointments

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Sanjiv Ranjan	India's Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia
2.	Nilambar Acharya	Nepal's ambassador to India
3.	Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi	Chairman of the African Union
4.	Ricky Ponting	Assistant coach of Australia's men's cricket team
5.	Saudi Arabia's Reema bint Bandar	First female ambassador to the United States.
6.	Indra Nooyi	Amazon board of directors
7.	Muhammadu Buhari	Re-elected as Nigerian President
8.	William Barr	US Attorney General
9.		

Resignation

Sl.No	Person	Designation
1.	Mohammad Javad Zarif	Iranian Foreign Minister
2.	Harshil Mehta	Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL) CEO

Important Awards and Honors

Awards and Honors

Sl.No	Awards	Winners
1.	2018 Sahitya Academy Award for the Kashmiri language	Mushtaq Ahmad Tantray
2.	Skoch Award for National Significance	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
3.	Glinka World Soil Prize 2018'	Rattan Lal
4.	DSCI Excellence Award 2018 for cyber security education	IIT Kharagpur
5.	DBT Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA) 2018	Dr. Rajanish Giri
6.	International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Breakthrough Star Award 2018	Manika Batra
7.	UN Climate Action Award at the 2018 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 24)	Help Us Green

8.	Krishi Karman award	Jharkhand
9.	French Knight of the National Order of Merit	Ashok Amritraj
10.	PETA India's 2018 Person of the Year	Sonam Kapoor
11.	'Suvarna Chakoram' award at Kerala film festival	Iranian Film Dark Room
12.	Prime Ministers Trophy for the Best Performing Integrated Steel Plant for the year 2016-17	Tata Steel
13.	The Jnanpith Award	Amitav Ghosh
14.	UN Human Rights Prize for 2018	Late lawyer and human rights activist Asma Jahangir
15.	Mrs.India Worldwide 2018	Mandeep Kaur Sandhu
16.	Top Indian star of 2018, by the global film and TV website IMDB	Deepika Padukone
17.	"Sangeet Mahasamman" award by the West Bengal government	Shaan and Arijit Singh
18.	The Skoch Challenger Awards	Union Minister Suresh Prabhu
19.	Mohammed Rafi Award	Laxmikant Shantaram Kudalkar, singer Usha Timothy
20.	Balkan Athlete of the Year Award 2018	Luka Modric
21.	Tansen Samman	Manju Mehta (Sitarist)
22.	'Champions of Change' award	Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh
23.	America's Most Admired Man	Barack Obama
24.	ICC 'Women's Cricketer' and 'ODI Player of the year'	Smriti Mandhana

Twelve children's books of Lauren Myracle have been shortlisted for The Hindu Young World-Goodbooks Awards

- Twelve children's books have been shortlisted for The Hindu Young World-Goodbooks Awards. This awards will recognize the children's books published in India. The books were categorized into 4 categories (i) Best Picture Book (Story), (ii) Best Picture Book (Illustration), (iii) Best Book (Fiction) (iv) Best Book (Non-Fiction). Under every category, three books have been shortlisted. The awards are being given for the fourth consecutive year. The winners will be announced at The Hindu Lit for Life in January 2019.

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

- Transport category (Sub-sector railway station): Under this category, India railways obtained 10 awards
- Building category (Sub-sector Railway hospitals): Under the building category, Indian railways bagged 3 awards
- Institution category (Sub-sector state PWD, CPWD and PHED): Under this particular category, Indian railways won 4 awards

DIPP Swachh Bharat Grand Challenge Awards Presented

Sector – Air

1 st Prize	Maclec technical project laboratory pvt. Ltd
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Sector – Sanitation

1 st Prize	Altersoft Innovations India Private Limited
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Sector – Waste

1 st Prize	Sanshodhan An E-Waste Exchange Private Limited
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Sector – Water

1 st Prize	REVV Environmental Solutions Pvt Ltd
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Madhya Pradesh's Divya Patidar Joshi crowned Mrs. India 2018 title

The Mrs. India My Identity Beauty Pageant 2018 finale was held in Delhi and Divya Patidar Joshi was crowned with the prestigious honour, Divya defeated 24 promising contestants and won all the rounds of Beauty with Brain contest along with Best Cat Walk title

January

French World Cup champions awarded Legion of Honour

- The players in France's football team which last year won the World Cup have been awarded the Legion of Honour in the New Year's honours list. The 23 players, including star strikers Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, each received France's top medal for their part in beating Croatia in the World Cup final in Moscow.
- The French team that won the 1998 World Cup also received the Legion of Honour.

IIT Professor Awarded For Contribution towards Development of Geo-Spatial Science

- The Indian Society for Remote Sensing conferred the National Geospatial Award for Excellence to IIT professor Jayanta Kumar Ghosh for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications. Mr Ghosh, a professor at the civil engineering department of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Roorkee, He was conferred the National Geospatial Award for Excellence-2017 (Life Time Achievement Award) at the Space Application Centre in Ahmedabad. The award comprised a citation, a medal and Rs. 1 lakh.

India's Arunima Sinha becomes world's first woman amputee to climb highest peak of Antarctica

- Arunima Sinha, the first female amputee to have conquered Mt Everest, created another record as she became world's first woman amputee to climb highest peak of Antarctica. Her aim was to climb all the continents' highest peaks and hoist the national flag of India. She has already done six peaks: Everest in Asia, Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus in Europe, Kosciuszko in Australia, Aconcagua in Argentina and Carstensz Pyramid (Puncak Jaya) in Indonesia.

Low budget debut 'The Rider' as best picture of 2018

- The National Society of Film Critics chose Chloe Zhao's low-budget debut feature, The Rider, as best picture of 2018. Director Alfonso Cuarón's "Roma" won the most awards as best picture runner up, best foreign language film and for best cinematography. Cuarón also got the award for best director. The film critics society was founded in 1966, electing its voting critics from newspapers and other major U.S. media outlet

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion received 'Exhibitor of the Year Award'

- DRDO pavilion received 'Exhibitor of the Year Award' at 106th Indian Science Congress held at Lovely Professional University (LPU), Phagwara, Punjab
- The DRDO Pavillion at the mega science expo was inaugurated by Governor of Punjab Shri VP Singh Badnore and Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan

India bags Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at New York Times Travel Show 2019

- India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019, It is the largest travel show in North America which held in New York. The Ministry of Tourism participated as the 'Presenting Partner' in the New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019)
- A high level delegation led by Tourism Ministry Secretary Yogendra Tripathi and a number of stakeholders from India's tourism industry participated in the Show

Tamil Nadu bags FSSAI award for Swasth Bharat Yatra

- Tamil Nadu was declared as the 'Best State Overall' for exemplary participation in the Swasth Bharat Yatra, Madurai and Sivakasi won the awards for the best performing districts, while the State also bagged 17 awards in various other categories. Swasth Bharat Yatra is 100 day consumer outreach programme organised by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which was launched to amplify its Eat Right India initiative
- The Yatra, a cyclothon saw the involvement of 10 lakh participants and reached to around 2.5 crore people across various States and UTs
- Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra were adjudged the Best States with population above 3 crore
- Punjab, Goa and Delhi were recognised as the Best States having population less than 3 crore.

- Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand were given special awards for their participation despite their hilly and difficult terrain

Awards	Winners
Minister Devineni Umamaheswar Rao	Central Board of Irrigation and Power Award
Wahengbam Lamnganba (Manipur)	National Bravery Award
Polavaram project	Guinness Book of World Records
Mohamed Salah	African Football Player of the Year
Adi Godrej	ICSI's Lifetime Achievement Award
Namita Gokhale	Sushila Devi Literature Award
Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng	European human rights award
Prime Minister Narendra Modi	Philip Kotler Presidential award
Wrestler Vinesh Phogat	Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award
India born Dr. Rattan Lal	Japan Prize
Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh, Bhupen Hazarika	Bharat Ratna
Nari Shakti (women empowerment)	Hindi word of the year 2018 by Oxford Dictionaries
Dhirendra Nath Chakraborty	Assam Republic Day journalism award
Tamil translation of The Life of an Unknown Man Book	Romain Rolland Book Prize for literary translation

76th Golden Globe Awards 2019 complete list

Motion Picture Category

Best Motion Picture Drama	Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Motion Picture – Musical or Comedy	Green Book
Best Actor – Drama	Rami Malek for “Bohemian Rhapsody”
Best Actress – Drama	Glenn Close for “The Wife”
Best Actor – Musical or Comedy	Christian Bale for “Vice”
Best Actress – Musical or Comedy	Olivia Colman for “The Favourite”
Best Director	Alfonso Cuarón for “Roma”
Best Screenplay	Brian Hayes Currie, Peter Farrelly and Nick Vallelonga for “Green Book”
Best Original Score	Justin Hurwitz for “First Man”
Best Original Song	Shallow (A star is Born)
Best Animated Feature Film	Spider-Man: Into the Spider –Verse
Best Foreign Language Film	Roma (Mexico)

Television Category

Best Television Series, Drama	The Americans
Best Television Series – Musical/Comedy	The Kominsky Method

Best Actress in Television Series – Drama	Sandra Oh (Killing Eve)
Best Actor in Television Series – Drama	Richard Madden (Bodyguard)
Best Actress in Television Series – Musical/Comedy	Rachel Brosnahan (The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel)
Best Actor in Television Series – Musical/Comedy	Michael Douglas (The Kominsky Method)

Government conferred Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015-2018

The government announced the names of the winners of the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015-2018, which were last conferred to the Indian Space Research Organisation in 2014.

- It is given to individuals and institutions for their contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
- 2015 - Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari won the award for rural development and education
- 2016 - The award has been jointly given to Akshaya Patra Foundation for providing mid-day meals to children across the country and Sulabh International for its work towards emancipation of manual scavengers
- 2017 - The award will be given to Ekai Abhiyan Trust for its contribution to education for rural and tribal children
- 2018 - The award will be given to Nippon Foundation chairman Yohei Sasakawa for his role in leprosy eradication.

SAG - Screen Actors Guild Awards 2019

- “Black Panther” took home the top award for best performance by a cast in a motion picture at the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Awards
- On the TV front, “This Is Us” nabbed the ensemble award for drama,
- While “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” won the comedy prize.

S. No	Category	Winner
1.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role	Rami Malek, “Bohemian Rhapsody”
2.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role	Glenn Close, “The Wife”
3.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role	Mahershala Ali, “Green Book”
4.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role	Emily Blunt, “A Quiet Place”
5.	Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture	“Black Panther”
6.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries	Darren Criss, “Assassination of Gianni Versace”
7.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries	Patricia Arquette, “Escape at Dannemora”
8.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series	Jason Bateman, “Ozark”
9.	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series	Sandra Oh, “Killing Eve”
10.	Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Comedy Series	Tony Shalhoub, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”
11.		Rachel Brosnahan, “The

	Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series	Marvelous Mrs. Maisel
12.	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series	"This Is Us"
13.	Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Comedy Series	"The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"
14.	Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Comedy or Drama Series:	"Glow"
15.	Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture	"Black Panther"

February

Sl.No	Awards	Winners
1.	SBI's UK head Sanjiv Chadha	'Freedom of the City of London' award
2.	playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar	Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) lifetime Achievement Award
3.	Freance - Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour)	Francois Laborde
4.	Allan Border medal (Australian cricket's highest individual honor)	Pat Cummins (Australia)
5.	Belinda Clark award	Alyssa Healy (Australia)
6.	PETA Ocat Award (Best Directoor)	Bradley Cooper for 'A Star Is Born'
7.	Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television	Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta
8.	EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2018	Siddhartha Lal, MD and CEO, Eicher Motors
9.	Israel's Dan David Prize	Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam (category of "Past Time Dimension")
10.	2019 Martin Ennals Award	Abdul Aziz Muhamat
11.	Football Ratna Award	Sunil Chhetri

Oscar Awards 2019

- 91st Academy Awards (Oscars) has been announced at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood& Highland Center, the USA.
- Rami Malek won the Best Actor for "Bohemian Rhapsody", Olivia Colman won Best Actress for 'The Favourite' and Filmmaker Alfonso Cuarón won the Best Director award for 'Roma' at the 91st Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

Category	Winner
Best Picture	Green Book
Best Actor in a Leading Role	Rami Malek for Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Actress in a Leading Role	Olivia Colman for The Favourite
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Mahershala Ali for Green Book
Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Regina King for If Beale Street Could Talk.
Best Animated Feature	Spiderman: Into the Spider Verse
Best Cinematography	Alfonso Cuarón for Roma
Best Costume Design	Ruth Carter for Black Panther
Best Directing	Alfonso Cuarón for Roma

Best Documentary Feature	Free solo
Best Documentary Short	Rayka Zehtabchi and Melissa Berton for Period. End of Sentence
Best Film Editing	John Ottman for Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Foreign Language	Roma (Mexico)
Makeup & Hairstyling	Greg Cannom, Kate Biscoe and Patricia Dehaney for Vice
Best Music Original Score	Ludwig Goransson for Black Panther
Best Music Original Song	Lady Gaga, Mark Ronson, Anthony Rossomando and Andrew Wyatt for SHALLOW from A Star Is Born
Best Production Design	Hannah Beachler (Production Design); Jay Hart (Set Decoration) for Black Panther
Best Short Film Animated	Domee Shi and Becky Neiman-Cobb for Bao
Best Short Film Live Action	Guy Nattiv and Jaime Ray Newman for Skin
Best Sound Editing	John Warhurst and Nina Hartstone for Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Sound Mixing	Paul Massey, Tim Cavagin and John Casali for Bohemian Rhapsody
Best Visual Effects	Paul Lambert, Ian Hunter, Tristan Myles and J.D. Schwalm for First Man
Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay)	Charlie Wachtel & David Rabinowitz and Kevin Willmott & Spike Lee for Blackkkklansman
Best Writing (Original Screenplay)	Nick Vallelonga, Brian Currie, Peter Farrelly for Green Book

President Conferred 'Gandhi Peace Prize'

YEAR	AWARDEES	LOCATED AT	FIELD
2015	Vivekananda Kendra	KANYAKUMARI, TN	Rural Development, Education and Development of natural resources.
2016	Akshaya Patra Foundation and Sulabh International	BENGALURU, KARNATAKA	1. For Providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India 2. Sulabh International for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers
2017	Ekal Abhiyan Trust	KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL	For Providing Education for Rural and Tribal Children in remote areas pan India, Rural Empowerment, Gender and Social Equality
2018	Yohei Sasakawa (Goodwill Ambassador of	Japan	His contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across

	the World Health Organisation for Leprosy Elimination)		the world.
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BAFTA Awards 2019

- **72nd edition** of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards were presented
- Legendary British actress Joanna Lumley hosted the show in London's Royal Albert Hall.
- "The Favourite" took the most awards with seven, including both actress categories for Rachel Weisz and Olivia Colman and best original screenplay, though "Roma" nabbed the top prize for best film
- The leading actor prize went to Rami Malek for "Bohemian Rhapsody" while favorite Mahershala Ali was lauded for "Green Book."

Category	Winner
Best film	Roma
Best Outstanding British film	The Favourite
Best Actress	Olivia Colman (The Favourite)
Best Actor	Rami Malek (Bohemian Rhapsody)
Best Director	Alfonso Cuaron (Roma)
Best Costume Design	Sandy Powell (The Favourite)
Best Film Not in the English Language	Roma
Best Special Visual Effects	Black Panther
Best Outstanding Debut By A British Writer, Director or Producer	Beast
Best Cinematography	Alfonso Cuaron (Roma)
Best Supporting Actor	Mahershala Ali (Green Book)
Best Original Screenplay	The Favourite (Deborah Davis, Tony McNamara)
Best Original Music	A Star is Born
Best Adapted Screenplay	BlackKkklansman (Spike Lee, David Rabinowitz, Charlie Wachtel, Kevin Willmott)
Best Rising Star	Letitia Wright
Best Supporting Actress	Rachel Weisz (The Favourite)
Best Makeup and Hair	Nadia Stacey (The Favourite)
Best Editing	Hank Corwin (Vice)
Best Sound	Bohemian Rhapsody
Best British Short Film	73 Cows
Best Production Design	The Favourite
Best Animated Film	Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse
Best British Short Animation	Roughhouse
Best Special Visual Effects	Black Panther
EE Rising Star Award	Letitia Wright
Best Documentary	Free Solo
BAFTA Fellowship	Thelma Schoonmaker

Grammy Awards 2019

- **The 61st Annual Grammy Awards ceremony** was held at Staples Center in Los Angeles.
- The show was hosted by Alicia Keys, She has won 15 Grammys in her career.

Category	Winner
Album of the Year	Golden Hour, Kacey Musgraves

Record of the Year	Childish Gambino, "This Is America"
Song of the Year	Childish Gambino, "This Is America"
Best New Artist	Dua Lipa
Best Music Film	"Quincy"
Music Video/Film	Childish Gambino, "This Is America"
Producer of the Year, Non-Classical	Pharrell Williams
Best Pop Solo Performance	Lady Gaga, "Joanne"
Best Pop Duo/Group Performance	Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper, "Shallow"
Best Country Album	Kacey Musgraves, "Golden Hour"
Best Pop Vocal Album	Ariana Grande, "Sweetener"
Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album	Willie Nelson, "My Way"
Best Rap/Sung Collaboration	Childish Gambino, "This Is America"
Best Rap Song	Drake, "God's Plan"
Best Rap Album	Cardi B, Invasion of Privacy
Best Rock Performance	Chris Cornell, "When Bad Does Good"
Best Rock Song	St. Vincent, "Masseduction"
Best Rock Album	Greta Van Fleet, "From the Fires"
Best Recording Package	St. Vincent, "Masseduction"
Best Song Written for Visual Media	Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper - "Shallow"
Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media	Ludwig Göransson, "Black Panther"
Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media	"The Greatest Showman"
Best Comedy Album	Dave Chappelle, "Equanimity & the Bird Revelation"
Best Dance/Electronic Album	Justice, "Woman Worldwide"
Best Dance Recording	Silk City & Dua Lipa, "Electricity"

De Goede and Van Doren won 2018 FIH world's best players award

- Netherlands' Eva de Goede and Arthur Van Doren of Belgium were named as the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) Players of the Year for 2018.
- De Goede, 29, was named the Female Player of the Year, world champions Belgium's Van Doren, 24, was picked up as the Male Player of the Year for a second consecutive time.

Other Awards

Person	Category
Vincent Vanash (Belgium)	Men's Goalkeeper of the Year
Maddie Hinch (England)	Female Goalkeeper of the Year
Arthur de Sloover (Belgium)	Male Rising Star of the Year
Shane McLeod (Belgium)	Male Coach of the Year
Alyson Annan (Netherland)	Female Coach of the Year
Michelle Meister (Germany)	Female Umpire of the Year
Marcin Grochal (Poland)	Male Umpire of the Year
Luciana Von Der (Argentina)	Emerging women player

Laureus World Sports Awards 2019 Monaco

- The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year.

Category	Winner	Country	Sports
Sportsman of the year	Novak Djokovic	Serbia	Tennis
Sportswoman of the year	Simone Biles	USA	Gymnastics
Comeback of the year	Tiger Woods	USA	Golf
Breakthrough of the year	Naomi Osaka	Japan	Tennis
Action sportsperson of the year	Chloe Kim	USA	Snowboarding
Team of the year	France World Cup Team	France	Football
Academy exceptional achievement award	Eliud Kipchoge	Kenya	Running
Lifetime achievement award	Arsene Wenger	France	Football (Manager)
Spirit for sport award	Lindsey Vonn	USA	Skiing
Sportsperson of the year with a disability	Henrieta Farkasova	Slovakia	Skiing

Jharkhand-based NGO Yuwa wins Laureus Sport for Good honour

- Jharkhand based NGO Yuwa won the Laureus Sport for Good award. Yuwa works for girl empowerment and became the third Indian entry to receive this honour. The NGO, was founded in rural Jharkhand in 2009 by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson Gastler, runs a football program in rural Jharkhand covering 450 girls.
- Laureus Awards for the first time in 2004 when the Indian cricket team and its Pakistani counterpart shared the Sport for Good honour for resuming bilateral ties despite tensions between the two countries.
- Magic Bus from India won the Laureus Sport for Good award in 2014.

Yes Bank wins 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018

- Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced YES BANK as winner in “**Innovation in Data Science**” category for their industry-first project “Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)”. 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 hosted by Government of Goa at Entertainment Society of Goa, Panaji.
- Aegis Graham Bell Awards (AGBA) has been promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain. Yes-EEE is a customer engagement program for the Bank’s Relationship Managers to give them the most relevant communication point for interaction with the customer

Lifetime Achievement Award for G.R. Karthikeyan

- G.R. Karthikeyan, father of India’s first Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan, **was honoured with the** Lifetime Achievement award and Raghul Rangasamy was named the Upcoming Motorsports Person of the Year and received the Raymond Gautam Singhanian Trophy at the FMSCI Annual Awards in Mumbai
- FIA president Jean Todt was the chief guest and handed over the awards.

NFDC to be felicitated by MSME ministry for promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs

- The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) has been named a winner under the 'miniratna' category by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. This has been done as part of endeavour by Ministry of MSME to felicitate select CPSEs to recognize their exemplary work towards promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs.
- National Film Development Corporation Ltd. (NFDC), incorporated in the year 1975, was formed by the Government of India with the primary objective of planning and promoting an organized, efficient, and integrated development of the Indian film industry

PV Sindhu becomes first woman to co-pilot Made-In-India Tejas at Aero India 2019 in Bengaluru

- Ace shuttler PV Sindhu flew in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, at the Aero India 2019 air show in Bengaluru.
- Ms Sindhu, who is among the youngest to co-pilot the HAL-manufactured fighter jet, waved as she climbed into the two-seater trainer variant of the aircraft.

Important Committees December

Committee	Heads
To look at selling of OIL, ONGC fields to private companies	Rajiv Kumar Committee
Head of the group constituted by the government to vet the recommendations of a high-level panel on stressed power projects	Arun Jaitley
Government Forms Panel Under BBB to Select MD for PSU Insurance Firms	Banks Board Bureau (BBB) chairman B P Sharma.
High Level Committee to Review National Indicator Framework for Sustainable Development Goals	Chief statistician Pravin Srivastava
Economic Capital Framework	Bimal Jalan

Jan

Person	Committee
Former Sebi chairman U.K. Sinha	Expert Committee on Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)
UIDAI's former Chairman Nandan Nilekani.	To boost digital payments
Dr. Sankar De	Research Advisory committee
Nitin Patel (convener of the GoM)	To boost the real estate sector under the GST regime
Pravin Kutumbe	To identify systemically important insurers

EPFO's central board of trustees notifies new committees

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation has notified new finance, investment and audit committee (FIAC), the pension and EDLI implementation committee (PEIC) and the exempted establishments' committee (EEC)
- All the three committees will continue to have central government representatives as well as two representatives each of the employers and the employees and domain experts
- FIAC will oversee investments made by portfolio managers and ensure timely investment of PF kitty for optimum returns
- PEIC will review the function of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 and the Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976 as well as consider amendments to the existing schemes
- The EEC will oversee the working of exempted establishments and move suggestions for CBT for improvement in the working of these exempted establishment

Madras HC Forms Committee to Weed out Invasive Plant Species

- The Madras High Court has set up an expert committee to find a solution to root out invasive species of plants from the Western Ghats, Committee will be headed by Cherukuri Raghavendra Babu, chairman of Expert Committee on Invasive Species, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai
- It has also directed the panel to file a report on the ways to weed out such species within two months.

Feb

Punjab government sets up committee to boost dairy sector

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh announced a high-powered committee to prepare a comprehensive action plan to boost the dairy sector with the aim of supplementing the income of farmers in a result-oriented manner. The committee would consist of Chairman State Farmers Commission, Director Animal Husbandry, Director Dairy Development, a representative of Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU). It will suggest measures to promote diversification of agriculture with the aim of enhancing farmers' income from allied sources.

Government sets up committee to explore prepaid payments by discoms to generator companies

- The government has constituted a committee under the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), On the recommendation of Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, to explore prepaid payments by state electricity distribution companies to power

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plants. The formed committee consists of the chairman of distribution companies of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, and representatives from Union power ministry and power associations to look into problems of delayed payments from distribution companies to power generators.

Important MOU December

India, China inked protocol on hygiene & inspection requirements for exports

- A protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements for the exports was signed in New Delhi during the visit of Chinese Vice Minister, General Administration of Customs of China Hu Wei who is leading a six-member delegation to India. The move would enable India to commence export of fish meal and fish oil to China.

NABARD signed USD 100 mn agreement with UNFCC approved Green Climate Fund to boost USD 250 mn worth solar power project

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) signed a loan agreement worth USD 100 mn with Green Climate Fund (GCF) to boost rooftop solar power capacity projects through the private sector participation. The Total corpus of the project is USD 250 mn, which will be executed by Tata Cleantech Capital Ltd.

India, Japan Exchange of Notes and Loan Agreements

- The Notes were exchanged between Dr. C.S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs, Union Ministry of Finance and Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India on Japanese official development assistance loan for three projects.
 - 1) Chennai Metro Project (Phase 2) (I) for Japanese Yen (JPY) 75.519 billion
 - 2) Program for Japan-India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals in India for JPY 15.000 billion
 - 3) Project for Dairy Development for JPY 14.978 billion.

NFAI, FTII sign MoU for transfer of land for film storage

- The National Film Archives of India (NFAI) and the Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for transfer of three acres of land for the construction of a storage facility for films and film material. The land belonging to FTII at their Kothrud campus in Pune will be transferred to NFAI

Tourism Ministry Signs MOU to Develop a Mobile Audio Guide App for Five Iconic Sites

- The Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism K J Alphons handed over a Memorandum of Understanding to Resbird Technologies under the 'Adopt a Heritage' project for the development of a mobile audio guide application 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)

January

IIT Bombay and public sector oil companies inked a MOU

- IIT Bombay and public sector oil companies inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up Centre of Excellence in Oil, Gas and Energy. The MoU was signed by heads of Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), GAIL India Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL), Oil India Ltd and Engineers India Ltd.

AAI signs MoU with SAMEER for boosting communication

- Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) for joint research programs in the field of Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).
- AAI and SAMEER, an autonomous research and development (R and D) institute under MeitY have entered into an overarching MOU that will provide a platform for Collaborative Research for both the Organizations to work together.
- The MOU, on the one hand, will provide for the transfer of skill by SAMEER experts in the areas of Radio Frequency, Millimetre Wave and Antenna-related solutions to AAI domain experts, while on the other hand, it will pave way for exposure for the SAMEER researchers to the challenging Aviation field.

Indian Army signed MOU with Punjab National Bank

- A MoU was signed between the Indian Army and PNB on the Defence Salary Package. The signing ceremony was chaired by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar and was attended by top dignitaries of PNB headed by Mr Naveen Kumar. Salient features of the improved and updated MoU are free 'RAKSHAK PLUS' Scheme for serving pers and veterans, overdraft facility range from Rs 0.75 to 3.0 lakhs, multicurrency 'At Par' cheques, instant credit of outstation cheques, preferential allotment of lockers at concessional AMC and free SMS alerts.

NHAI to collaborate with Oil Marketing Companies for issuance of FASTags

- Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI, is signing MoUs with state-run Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPC, and HPC). It will ensure availability of FASTags at petroleum outlets across India. In the first phase, the tags will be available across 50 Fuel Station in Delhi NCR, which will subsequently be expanded to outlets across India.
- IHMCL has been mandated to implement the National Electronic Toll Collection Program (NETC) in the country. The company launched the program under the brand name "FASTag" in April 2016. IHMCL is also planning the launch of two mobile applications MyFASTag and IHMCLPOS. These apps will enable customers to link the FASTags with their preferred bank account, recharge the FASTag via UPI platform, and also ensure that the tags are bank neutral.

IRCTC offers free travel insurance for air travellers

- The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation has announced that passenger booking air ticket using its website irctc.co.in can avail free of cost travel insurance of Rs 50 lakh. IRCTC tied up with Bharti AXA General insurance company to provide free travel insurance. This facility will be available for passengers irrespective of the class of tickets and for both domestic and international flights. The insurance will provide them financial protection against accidental death and total or permanent disability. The premium for insurance will be borne by the IRCTC to secure its passengers from any untoward incident during the journey.

BEE and CPWD signed MOU on promoting energy efficiency in buildings

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for co operation in building energy efficiency, BEE and CPWD will cooperate on promoting designs and construction of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) compliant new buildings, star rating of CPWD managed buildings across the country with no registration or renewal fee, awareness on energy efficiency in building sector and support for capacity building of CPWD officials in ECBC.
- In the first stage, approximately 150 buildings will be taken under a star rating scheme to promote energy efficiency in CPWD managed buildings, the Central Public Works Department under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the Bureau of Energy Efficiency is an agency of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power created in March 2002 under the provisions of the nation's 2001 Energy Conservation Act.

February

Ministry of Coal signs a MoU with Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland

- Ministry of Coal entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland. The MoU has been signed between Sh. Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Coal and Mines and Mr. Grzegorz Tobiszowski, Secretary of State, Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland. The objective of this MoU is to foster relations in the field of coal mining and clean coal technologies through the already established Joint Coal Working Group as well as research institutes and academia between the two countries.

Indian Coast Guard signed MoU with AAI for maritime search and rescue

- Indian Coast Guard and the Airport Authority of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding, at Coast Guard Regional Headquarters in Port Blair, for coordination in the aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations. MOU with Airport Authority of India (AAI) is aimed at strengthening mutual interactions, interoperability and validating procedures during conduct of search and rescue operations jointly by the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) Kolkata, Airport Authority of India (AAI) and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Port Blair.

BEL signs Teaming Agreement with Hughes India for Helicopter SATCOM solutions

- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Hughes India entered into a Teaming Agreement for design, development, supply, installation, integration and commissioning of Satellite Communication solutions for helicopters.
- Hughes India is a majority owned subsidiary of Hughes Network Systems, LLC, USA. Hughes India is the largest satellite service operator in India providing a comprehensive range of broadband networking technologies, solutions, and services for businesses and governments.

India, Sri Lanka signed MoU to establish business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna

- India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, through grant of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees from India.
- The MoU was signed by High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Secretary, Ministry of Development Strategies and International Trade Mr. S. T. Kodikara in Colombo. The centre will provide opportunities and enhance the enabling environment for Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other professional services in the Northern region inhabited by minority Tamils

MoUs signed between India and South Korea

- MoU on release of commemorative postal stamp on Queen Hur (Suriratna)
- MoU on Start-up Cooperation
- MoU between Korean National Police Agency and MHA on Combating Transnational Crime And Developing Police Cooperation
- MoU between Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and Prasar Bharti on Cooperation in Broadcasting
- MoU between National Highways Authority of India and Korea Expressway Corporation

IIT-M ties up with THSTI to address public health issues

- IIT-Madras has entered into an agreement with Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) to address public health issues and predict adverse pregnancy outcomes using technology.
- A research collaboration agreement was signed during a conclave held here on 'Transforming Maternal and Child Healthcare Using Data Science'. The objective is to apply advanced analytical approach for prediction of adverse pregnancy outcomes, evaluate maternal and childhood consequences of exposure to environmental pollutants, among others.

FAGMIL signed MoU with Himachal Pradesh Government to establish White cement Plant Project

- FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited (FAGMIL) signed MoU with Himachal Pradesh Government to establish a white cement plant near village NohraDhar in Sirmour district, Himachal Pradesh, at a project cost of approximately Rs. 605 crores. It will be the 4th white cement plant in the country. The installed capacity of the plant would be 0.3 million tonnes per annum and it will generate the direct employment of approximately 150 persons. The plant is expected to be commenced by the year 2022
- FAGMIL is a Government of India Undertaking, under the administrative control of Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India. It is engaged in mining and marketing of mineral gypsum in Rajasthan.

GeM and CCI signed MOU to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace

- Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace. GeM is a state-of-the-art national public procurement platform of Ministry of Commerce and Industries, which has used technology to remove entry barriers for bonafide sellers and has created a vibrant e-marketplace with a wide range of goods and services.
- Competition Commission of India is a statutory body of the Government of India, responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition.

India and Bangladesh signed MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh civil servants

- India and Bangladesh have signed an MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Servants at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) an institute under the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, over the next 6 years.
- The MOU was signed between the NCGG and the Ministry of Public Administration, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. The NCGG is planning to conduct 15 training programs in 2019 each of 2 weeks duration. The trainee officers will undergo training at the NCGG Mussoorie centre.

ICAI signs pact with Invest India to promote foreign investment

- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has signed a pact with Invest India to promote foreign investments in the country and Indian investments abroad. Invest India is a government agency that promotes and facilitates investment in the country. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by ICAI President Naveen N D Gupta and Invest India MD and CEO Deepak Bagla.

EIL and Mongolia signed MOU for Project Management Consultancy for oil refinery

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- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Engineers India Ltd and Mongolia for Project Management Consultancy for oil refinery. Engineers India Ltd, a PSU under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- The MOU was signed on the sidelines of PETROTECH-2019 event at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The MoU is for Project Management Consultancy services for construction of an oil refinery plant in Mongolia by EIL.
- Government of Mongolia is in process to set-up 1.5 MMTPA greenfield crude oil refinery in Sainshand province, under Line of Credit (LoC) extended by Government of India

NTPC signed a pact with SBI for Rs. 5000 crore term loan

- State-owned power giant NTPC has signed a term loan agreement for Rs. 5,000 crore with State Bank of India
- The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank. This loan has a door to door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC

NITI Aayog signed Statement of Intent with the MSDF to document systemic transformation in education

- NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent with the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) to codify, document and share best practices to improve learning outcomes in public school education through systemic reforms, based on their collective experiences of working with various state governments in India
- The SOI was signed in the presence of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, by Alok Kumar, Adviser (HRD), NITI Aayog and Barun Mohanty, Managing Director (International), MSDF.

India signed a legal agreements with the World Bank

- The Government of India, Government of Himachal Pradesh and the World Bank signed a \$40 Million Loan Agreement to help bring clean and reliable drinking water to the citizens of the Greater Shimla area
- The Shimla Water Supply and Sewerage Service Delivery Reform Programmatic Development Policy Loan is expected to improve water supply and sanitation (WSS) services in and around the iconic hill city of Shimla. The \$40 Million Loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a 4-year grace period and a maturity of 15.5 years.

GS1 India signed MoU with Government eMarketplace

- GeM and GS1 India Sign MoU to Empower Buyers to Make Informed Choice
- This MoU will enable GeM's buyers and vendors to access accurate and standardised information on attributes of thousands of products across categories, empowering them to make more informed decisions. GS1 India, a standards organisation set up by the commerce and industry ministry. GeM will access product data from GS1 India's DataKart, the National repository of information on attributes of millions of retail products in the country.

Indian Oil Corporation signed USD 1.5 billion deal to buy US crude oil

- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has signed an annual deal worth USD 1.5 billion to import 3 million tonnes of crude oil in the fiscal year beginning April 1. This is the first time Indian refiner has signed an annual contract since the country in 2017 began importing crude oil from the US. India first imported US crude oil in October 2017, and since then oil firms have been buying oil from that country on a tender basis.

Important Summit & Conference December

The first-ever Sustainable Blue Economy Conference 2018 held in New Delhi

- The first-ever Sustainable Blue Economy Conference 2018 was held in Nairobi from November 26 to 28 with theme 'The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'. The global conference was organized by Kenya, with Canada and Japan as co-hosts. Over 4,000 participants from around the world participated in it.

Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 2nd International Ambedkar Conclave in New Delhi

- 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. The Conclave is being organized by the Forum of SC and ST Legislators and Parliamentarians and the Dr. Ambedkar Chamber of Commerce.

South Asia Youth Peace Conference held in New Delhi

- The three day South Asia Regional Youth Peace Conference was held in New Delhi as part 150th birth anniversary celebrations of father of nation Mahatma Gandhi. It was organised by Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) and STEP (Standing Together to Enable Peace). It was inaugurated by Krishna G Kulkarni, great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi.

India, China inked protocol on hygiene & inspection requirements for exports

- A protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements for the exports was signed in New Delhi during the visit of Chinese Vice Minister, General Administration of Customs of China Hu Wei who is leading a six-member delegation to India. The move would enable India to commence export of fish meal and fish oil to China.

COP24: 24th Conference of Parties to UNFCCC begins Katowice, Poland

- The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began at Katowice, Poland. COP-24 is expected to finalise guidelines for implementation of Paris Agreement adopted in 2016.

80th Session of Policy Commission Meeting of World Customs Organisation held in Mumbai

- The 80th Session of Policy Commission of World Customs Organization (WCO) was held Mumbai, capital of Maharashtra. It is being organized by WCO and hosted by Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), under Union Finance Minister.

India Water Impact Summit 2018 held in New Delhi

- The India Water Impact Summit-2018 was held in New Delhi. It was jointly organized by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga).

The Conference on 'Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code - A New Paradigm for Stressed Assets' was held in New York, United States of America (USA)

- A conference on the theme 'Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India - New Paradigm for Stressed Assets' was held at the Indian Consulate in New York. The conference was organised by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) jointly with the Consulate General of India, New York, USA.

Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration for year 2018 was held in Marrakech

- The Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was held in Marrakech, Morocco on 10th and 11th of December, 2018. It is the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. The global compact is non-legally binding.

Dharmendra Singh Gangwar was inaugurated Uncrowned Glory - An exhibition of Ethnic Ornaments of Himachal Pradesh inaugurated in New Delhi

- Dr Dharmendra Singh Gangwar, Additional Secretary & Financial Advisor, Ministry of Culture inaugurated the third exhibition of the 2nd series of collection titled "Uncrowned Glory - An exhibition of Ethnic Ornaments of Himachal Pradesh" in National Museum, New Delhi.

39th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit was held in Riyadh

- The 39th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit was inaugurated by the King Salman of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh. It was announced at the conclusion of the summit that the 40th Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit will be held in the United Arab Emirates.

9th India-ROK Joint Commission Meeting Held in New Delhi

- The ninth meeting of the India-Republic of Korea (ROK/ South Korea) Joint Commission will be held in New Delhi during the South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha's official two-day from December 18 to 19 in New Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 106th Indian Science Congress

- The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) has been organising the event annually to bring together science fraternity from across the world to discuss innovations and researches. This year, six Nobel laureates from countries like Germany, Hungary, England and others will be participating in the science congress to make it the largest such gathering of its kind in the world. The 106th Science Congress to be hosted by Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Jalandhar, Punjab from January 3 to 7, 2019, The theme of the Summit is FUTURE INDIA – Science and Technology

12th Annual ISDSI Conference held in SPJIMR, Mumbai

- 12th Annual Indian Subcontinent Decision Sciences Institute (ISDSI) conference commenced in SPJIMR, Mumbai.
- The 12th ISDSI conference at SPJIMR will bring leading researchers and practitioners together in the decision sciences area and promises to throw up many interesting ideas and discussions.
- The theme of Conference 'Data Driven Decision Making at the Digital Age'
- SPJIMR- S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research

26th National Children's Science Congress held in Bhubaneswar

- The National Children's Science Congress is an Endeavour to inculcate the spirit of scientific research among the children, Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated 26th edition of National Children's Science Congress in Bhubaneswar. It is for the second time that the National Children's Science Congress is being organized in Odisha. Earlier, the mega event was held in 2015.
- The theme of the NCSC this year — Science, Technology and Innovation for a Clean, Green and Healthy Nation

42nd Indian Social Science Congress Inaugurated At KIIT, Odisha

- The 42nd Indian Social Science Congress was inaugurated by Dr. Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur in Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology campus, Indian Social Science Congress is the annual meet of social scientists organized by Indian Social Science Academy (ISSA), The theme of the congress is 'Human Future in Digital Era'.
- President, Indian Social Science Academy - Prof. Binod C. Agrawa

January

PM Modi to inaugurate 106th Indian Science Congress in Jalandhar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 106th Indian Science Congress at Lovely Professional University in Phagwara near Jalandhar, Punjab. The theme of this five-day mega event is 'Future India: Science and Technology'. Three Nobel laureates will participate in this conference.

Kochi to host Advertising Association global summit in February

- The International Advertising Association (IAA) will host the IAA World Congress at will be held at the Lulu International Convention Centre in Kochi from February 20 to 22, 2019. The world congress is held every alternate year, This is the first time an Indian city is hosting the summit,

Theme of the summit	BrandDharma'
IAA world president	Srinivasan Swamy.

First Global Aviation Summit to be held in Mumbai on Jan 15

- The first ever two day Global Aviation Summit 2019 with the theme of 'Flying For All' will open on January 15, 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The summit organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation along with FICCI, the first GAS-2019 will discuss how to ride this strong tailwind of growth and pave the way forward for the aviation sector.
- The summit is supported by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Federal Aviation Administration of US (FAA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), Airports Council International (ACI) and Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA).

4th Raisina Dialogue inaugurated in Delhi

- The fourth edition of the Raisina Dialogue inaugurated in New Delhi. Norway Prime Minister Erna Solberg delivered inaugural address in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation is organizing the flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.
- The theme of the Dialogue this year is "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes".
- The Dialogue will bring together over 600 delegates from 93 countries, including influential political leaders, strategic thinkers, policy practitioners, technology innovators, business representatives and academics.

National Consultation on Child Protection' held in New Delhi

- The First 'National Consultation on Child Protection' for 2019 was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The meeting was organized to follow up on the exercise of monitoring of the CCIs by States/UTs, to deliberate upon various aspects of child protection and to take stock of the efforts made by States/UTs regarding improvements in the Child Care Institutions.

6th 'Women of India Organic Festival' Inaugurated in Chandigarh

- The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development is organising the sixth edition of the festival.
- Three-day 'Women of India Organic Festival' will begin at Leisure Valley in Sector-10 here on Saturday to celebrate and promote women farmers and entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India, the Women of India Organic Festival has been held annually in New Delhi since 2015, and makes its debut in Chandigarh this year, through this festival, the Ministry aims to educate people about its various initiatives and schemes relating to women and children.

Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand

- To mark employment generation for 1.06 lakh youths in a year, Government of Jharkhand organized Global Skill Summit - 2019 in Ranchi during which appointment letters were given to all the candidates, Jharkhand is the only state in the country where three global summits were organized in a row merely in four years
- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship today attended the summit

29th Indian Paint Conference - 2019 inaugurated in Agra

- 29th Indian Paint Conference - 2019 inaugurated in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, this would be the largest trade show of the estimated INR 500 billion (50,000 Crore) Indian Paints & Coatings industry.
- The theme of the Conference is 'Paints Pe Charcha – Naye Aayaam'.
- Apex body of the country's paint industry - Indian Paint Association (IPA)

4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) in New Delhi

- Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, chaired the 4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) in New Delhi
- Suresh Prabhu informed that the Government of India has formulated an Agricultural Export Policy for the first time with a focused plan to boost India's agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022.
- CTDP was constituted in July 2015, to ensure a continues dialogue with State Governments/UTs on measures for providing International Trade enabling environments. It also seeks to create a framework for making States/ UTs active partners in boosting India's export.

9th International Micro irrigation conference inaugurated in Aurangabad

- Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, is organised the 9th International Micro Irrigation Conference at Aurangabad in Maharashtra, The conference is held in association with International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Indian National Committee on Surface Water (INCSW) and WAPCOS Limited, a CPSE under the Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.
- The theme of the conference is "Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture".

Global Aviation Summit 2019 inaugurated in Mumbai

- The Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu on January 15, 2019 inaugurated the Global Aviation Summit 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra, The theme of the Global Aviation Summit 2019 is 'Flying for all' especially the next 6 Billion', The two-day summit is being organised by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airport Authority of India (AAI) in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

BES EXPO 2019 inaugurated in New Delhi

- Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare and TRAI Chairman RS Sharma inaugurated the 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 in New Delhi. Nearly 300 companies from 25 countries are displaying their products at the Expo

World Economic Forum held in Davos

- The annual meet of World Economic Forum (WEF) begin in Davos. World leaders from across the globe will flock to the ski resort town on the Swiss Alps for five days to discuss what's ailing the world amid fears of the global economy sleepwalking into a crisis. Those expected to attend include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Swiss President Ueli Maurer, Japan's Shinzo Abe, Italy's Giuseppe Conte and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu among more than 30 heads of states/government, as also CEOs of global corporations, central bankers, economists, civil society leaders, media heads, celebrities and heads of international organisations like IMF, WTO, OECD and World Bank, among more than 3,000 participants. More than 100 CEOs from India are expected to participate in the meet. Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and filmmaker Karan Johar are also going to be a part of session which would be open for public.

February

13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition 'PETROTECH-2019' to be organised from 10th to 12th February, 2019

- PETROTECH-2019**, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, is all set to be inaugurated on February 10, 2019

- Over 95 Energy Ministers from partner countries have been invited by the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas to participate in the Conference
- The three day mega event will showcase the recent market and investor friendly developments that have taken place in the India's oil and gas sector. Along with the Conference, the event will have a concurrent Exhibition spread over 20,000 square meters at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida

'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference inaugurated in Chennai

- Dr. M. Manikandan, Minister for Information Technology, Government of Tamil Nadu, inaugurated 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference. The 37th edition of the conference is the largest Industry-Institute Interaction Event of Asia, Organized by ICT Academy. Theme of the event - "Fostering India for Industry 4.0",

International Spice Conference 2019 held in Hyderabad

- International Spice Conference 2019 held in Hyderabad. The International Spice Conference aims to provide a platform for all stakeholders of the industry including the business houses, the spice associations, the policymakers, the farmers and the end users, to address and interact. Theme of the conference is "Challenges of Change: Redefining the Value Chain"

67th Annual Armed Forces Medical Conference organised by AFMC, Pune

- Armed Forces Medical College, Pune organised the 67th Annual Armed Forces Medical Conference. The conference was inaugurated by Lt Gen Bipin Puri, Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services. The four-day conference will be organised under the overall supervision of Surg Vice Admiral Ravi Kalra NM, VSM, director and commandant. The conference is the largest gathering of armed forces medical personnel and the only multi-specialty conference of its kind in the country. A highlight of the conference will be a special session on innovations and creativity in health care practice and delivery within the Armed Forces.

WLPGA 2019 ASIA LPG summit held in New Delhi

- Union Minister for petroleum and natural gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, inaugurated the **2019 Asia LPG summit in New Delhi**. The summit is being organized by the World LPG Association (WLPGA) in association with major Indian public-sector oil companies (OMCs) Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum, and Bharat Petroleum
- The two-day 'WLPGA Asia LPG Summit', focusing on 'LPG – Energy for Life'
- India is the 2nd largest consumer of liquified natural gas (LPG) in the world.

BPRD organized 2nd National Conference of Micro Missions of National Police Mission

- Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) organized the 2nd National Conference of Micro Missions of National Police Mission in New Delhi.
- The two day Conference, inaugurated by former governor of Jammu and Kashmir N. N. Vohra, discuss the issues of Skills and Competence at the grass-root level, Attitudinal Changes in Police, Gender Sensitization, harnessing technology and Community Policing

NITI Aayog organized the conference on Future of Indian Banking

- Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, inaugurated the Future of Indian Banking conference with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation).
- The conference aims to increase and elevate the discourse on the banking sector in India, and help develop insights to inform the continued evolution of the Indian banking sector for optimally supporting the growing credit needs of the Indian economy.

Health Minister inaugurated 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit

- Health Minister JP Nadda inaugurated the 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit in New Delhi
- The global intergovernmental meeting on digital health is being hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP).
- The summit will provide an opportunity to support governments and health system reformers to improve the health and well being of their citizens through digital technologies

American members of US-India CEO Forum announced

- The first meeting of the US-India CEO forum will be held in New Delhi on February 14. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has announced the names of the American private sector members of the US-India CEO Forum among whom are MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga and Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf. The US CEOs serve two-year terms and are selected from respondents to a Federal Register Notice calling for CEO-level applicants to the US Section of the Forum. It will be co-chaired by Ross and Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil

Aviation Suresh Prabhu. James Taiclet, chairman, president, and CEO, American Tower Corporation will be the US private sector co-chair of the forum.

‘Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference held in New Delhi

- Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference held in New Delhi. The conference was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to discuss issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies.
- The Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh delivered the keynote address at the ‘Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference

India to host 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS)

- The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS) is going to be hosted by India during 15th to 22nd February, 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat. CMS an environmental treaty under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme. India has been a Party to the CMS since 1983. The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision-making organ of this convention. The Union Environment Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the Logo and Mascot (GIBI) along with website for the international event, in New Delhi

7th session of World Government Summit held in Dubai

- Seventh session of World Government Summit held in Dubai with the participation of more than 4,000 people from 140 countries. The World Government Summit is a neutral, non-profit organization at the intersection of government and innovation. The World Government Summit is a global platform dedicated to shaping the future of governments worldwide. Each year, the Summit sets the agenda for the next generation of governments

Third Indo-German Environment Forum held in New Delhi

- Under the chairmanship of Honourable Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, Dr. Harsh Vardhan and his German counterpart Federal Environment Minister Svenja Schulze, The third Indo-German Environment Forum was held in New Delhi. The theme of the forum is "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy". The one-day event through panel discussions and parallel sessions focuses on challenges, solutions and necessary framework conditions of air pollution control, waste management and circular economy as well as implementation of NDCs and SDGs based on Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 of UN respectively.
- Around 250 representatives of ministries, business and science as well as non-governmental organizations participated in the forum,

First Annual Conference of Media Units under I&B Ministry organized in New Delhi

- The First Annual Conference of Media Units working under Information & Broadcasting Ministry was organized at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Union Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore chaired the Conference. The focus of the Conference was on ensuring synergy between the Media Units in their day to day functioning. The participants also discussed the ways of using Social Media to reach target audience groups and push the boundaries of communication outreach in terms of geographical and cultural barriers.

First LAWASIA Human Rights conference 2019 was held in New Delhi

- **LAWASIA**, in association with the **Bar Association of India** hosted its 1st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference in **New Delhi** with a motive to explore a broad range of human rights issues of relevance in the Asia Pacific region
- The theme of the conference was “State Power, Business and Human Rights: Contemporary Challenges”.
- The conference was aimed at providing unique opportunity for lawyers and associated professional members to exchange insights and expertise on topics of significant importance to all

CREDAI YouthCon- 19 annual Youth Conclave held in New Delhi

- PM Modi addressed the CREDAI’s YouthCon – 19 event at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi. The event is organized by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI)
- CREDAI YouthCon is the annual Youth Conclave of CREDAI, held to bring together the future of the real estate Industry in India. The CREDAI Youth Wing or CYW was formed to bring together the next generation of real estate builders and developers in order to nurture them to become better professionals
- CREDAI, Established in 1999, is the apex body representing real-estate developers from over 200 cities in India.

Fifth International Dam Safety Conference to be Held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- The 5th International Dam Safety Conference 2019 is held in Bhubaneswar as a joint initiative of the Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank under aegis of the ongoing World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) as a part of institutional strengthening.

- Dam Safety Conferences are being organized as an annual event in different DRIP States in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies and leading academic institutes to provide a common platform for all stakeholders including non-DRIP States. Globally India ranks third after China and the USA in terms of the number of large dams with 5264 large dams in operation and 437 large dams under construction.

National Conference on Unani Medicine Concluded in New Delhi

- The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur in the presence of Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Union Minister for Minority Affairs. The two-day National Conference on Unani Medicine organized by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) as a part of 3rd Unani Day Celebration concluded in New Delhi. Theme of the conference was 'Unani Medicine for Public Health'.
- The conference witnessed exchange of MoU for scientific collaboration in Unani Medicine between the CCRUM and Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi

Asia's largest early Childhood Conference - Early Ed Asia 2019 held in Jaipur

- Early Ed Asia 2019 the two day educational event was held at the City Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- This was the first time such a conference was held in India with over 6000 eminent early childhood educators, policy-makers, researchers and other stakeholders from India and foreign countries. The motto of the conference was 'Our Children. Our Future'. The conference will bring together the brightest minds in Early Childhood Education on to discuss the latest trends in teaching and research to provide a stronger foundation to children.

World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 held in New Delhi

- The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) was inaugurated by vice president Venkaiah Naidu at New Delhi.
- Theme of the summit was 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: delivering on our promise'. Prime Minister of Fiji Frank Bainimarama was honoured with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award 2019 for his outstanding contributions towards sustainable development in Fiji.

ASCEND Kerala 2019 conference held in Kochi

- Kerala government inaugurated the Ascend 2019 conference in Kochi.
- 'ASCEND KERALA 2019' is an event planned to showcase the various initiatives undertaken by the Government of Kerala as part of the Ease of Doing Business reforms. The initiatives would make the state a top investment destination and empower entrepreneurs to launch their enterprises in a speedy and hassle-free manner
- Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan released the 'Invest Kerala Guide' at the inaugural session of the event. Union minister of commerce & industries and civil aviation Suresh Prabhu was the chief guest at the opening ceremony.
- The government also launched the two software applications, K-swift (Kerala single window interface for fast, transparent clearances) and intelligent building plan management system (IBPMS). K-swift an online clearance mechanism has been developed to simplify and speed up issuance of clearances from departments or agencies for launching enterprises in the state.

4th Agri Leadership Summit held at Sonipat in Haryana

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated the 4th Agri Leadership Summit at the proposed International Fruit and Vegetable Terminus in Ganaur, district Sonipat in Haryana
- The theme of the summit is "Entrepreneurship & Agri Business; Agri Allied – A Promising Sector and Agri Service-Direct Marketing". The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind addressed the closing ceremony of the Summit. He also presented the Haryana Kisaan Ratna Puraskar and the Haryana Krishi Ratna Puraskar.

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the International Conference & Exhibition on Energy and Environment

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment – Challenges and Opportunities (ENCO-2019) in New Delhi. This conference was organized by CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research, Dhanbad
- The 3 day conference aims to deliberate and identify the R&D needs to innovate new techniques, technologies and applications for clean, safe, symbiotic sustenance of society, environment, energy and industries

One Health India Conference Inaugurated in New Delhi

- Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the One Health India Conference 2019 in New Delhi. The conference plans to launch India's new One Health Initiative - an intersectoral approach to tackling the most urgent health threats in India as well as in low and middle income countries across South and South East

Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The main objective of the conference is to formulate a roadmap for the response, preparedness, and management of current regional, national and global health challenges using a One Health collaborative approach.

4th India-ASEAN Expo summit begins in New Delhi

- The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit inaugurated in New Delhi
- This is a flagship event of Department of Commerce, being organised with FICCI to carry forward the momentum and to further strengthen India-ASEAN relations under the Act-East Policy. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises of Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Cambodia and Brunei. Trade Ministers of ASEAN Countries, Secretary General of ASEAN and business delegations will participate in the New Delhi Expo and Summit.

Eighth World CSR Congress 2019 held in Mumbai

- Eighth World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress 2019 held in Mumbai
- World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress (World CSR Congress 2019) popular meeting about Entrepreneurship, Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Social Development. Dr. Soumitro Chakraborty, Chief Executive Officer, Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt. Ltd. (Fiinnovation) was honoured with 'CEO of the year' award
- This congress witnessed participation from 33 countries and recognized the efforts of individuals and organizations

International Vision Zero Conference held in Mumbai

- Heeralal Samariya, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment inaugurated the three days Conference on the VISION ZERO to promote occupational safety and health in Mumbai. The conference provides a forum for promoting safety and health at work by exchanging knowledge, practices and experience.
- The Conference has been organized by Directorate General Factory Advice and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI), Ministry of Labour and Employment, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV)

Important Mobile App and Web Portal December

eDrishti software launched to help Railways Minister keep track of punctuality of trains

- Indian Railways unveiled 'eDrishti' software that will help Union Railway Minister to keep track of punctuality of trains as well as freight and passenger earnings and much more from anywhere in the country. The software has been developed by Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) to help Minister keep track of all information related to Indian Railways, one of the world's largest rail networks.

Smartworks, a leading workspaces player, introduced 'Smart Mitri', a female AI robot, which will be Smartworks' in-house productivity mascot

- Smartworks, a leading workspaces player, introduced 'Smart Mitri', a female AI robot, which will be Smartworks' in-house productivity mascot. It will play an influential role in handling the overall office management for the facility, ranging from the visitor system to being a counsellor eventually.

@CyberDost has been launched by the Union Government to spread awareness about cyber crimes

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

Chuppi Tod app launched in Bihar against child marriage, sexual harassment

- A mobile application "Chuppi Tod" (break your silence) was launched in Patna to fight the rampant social evil of child marriage and sexual harassment. Launched by noted women rights campaigner Prashanti Tiwari, the application will educate women and girls on the evils of sexual harassment and child marriage.

Mobile app for global aviation summit launched

- The civil aviation ministry along with the Airport Authority of India launched an official mobile app named 'GAS 2019,' which is available on both play store and iOS, for the global aviation summit to be held in Mumbai next month.

January

Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App launched by North Central Railway

- The North Central Railway (NCR) has launched a mobile application to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela starting from January 15, 2019. 'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App' will provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the period. The app will provide a link to the user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets. A photo gallery, containing pictures of previous Kumbh Melas can also be accessed through the app.

'Police-E-Eye' app Launched

- The Coimbatore city traffic police launched a mobile application 'Police-E-Eye' for the public to report traffic violation. The application will enable public to take pictures of traffic rule violators and upload them for the police to view and take actions. The app was developed by a seven-member team of Aveon Infotech.

Roshni an Android Mobile app developed by IIT Ropar helps the visually impaired recognise Indian currency notes

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, has developed an app to help the Visually Impaired recognise currency notes. "Roshni" was the first Android app that worked successfully with new INR currency notes.
- The app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands. The user has to bring the currency note in front of phone camera and the app would provide audio notification intimating the currency notes denomination to the user. The app, developed by Dr Puneet Goyal, assistant professor and his students Mandhatya Singh, Joohi Chauhan and R Ram.

February

National Testing Agency (NTA) launched mobile application for mock tests

- The National Testing Agency (NTA) has launched a mobile application through which students can practice or take mock tests on their smartphones. The candidates who are appearing for JEE Main, NEET or NTA NET exams will be able to practice for these competitive exams using an official app. National Testing Agency, the newly formed organisation which conducts Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) main for undergraduate engineering admissions and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions. The NTA recently conducted two competitive examinations under its supervision, the first edition of JEE Main 2019 in January and National Eligibility Test (NET) in December last year.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana App launched on Google play store

- The world's largest cashless health insurance scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), popularly known as the Ayushman Bharat is now active on Google Playstore to access scheme details. Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Scheme, which will cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya run by Yojana National Health Authority (NHA).

Chennai city Police Launched Mobile App 'DigiCop'

- Tamil film actor Vijay Sethupathi launched the mobile App 'DigiCop' of the Chennai police department. The application was developed by Nasscom. Using the App, people can track the status of stolen two-wheelers and cell phones. The details of 18,000 stolen mobile phones are stored in the App. So next time someone is buying a phone from a second hand shop they can verify if the phone is stolen or genuine. Using DigiCop App, people can verify IMEI, report lost two-wheelers and phones, know the nearest police station, police news and traffic alerts.

IWAI launched a new portal LADIS for real-time information

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal LADIS (Least Available Depth Information System) for real-time information on available depth on stretches of National Waterways.
- LADIS will ensure that real-time data on least available depths (LADs) is disseminated for ship, barge and cargo owners so that they can undertake transportation on national waterways (NWs) in a more planned way.

Hardip Singh Puri launched the PMAY-U Mobile Application

- Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep S Puri launched the PMAY (U) Mobile Application.
- The Mobile Application will allow beneficiaries to capture and upload high resolution photographs of completed houses along with their families and a 30 – 60 seconds video clip where beneficiaries share their stories of owning a house under PMAY (U). The PMAY (U) mission was launched on 25th June 2015 with the aim to provide houses to every eligible urban household in India by the year 2022.

Infosys launched learning app 'InfyTQ' for engineering students

- Infosys the country's 2nd largest IT firm has launched its next-generation digital platform called 'InfyTQ' that aims to offer learning and engagement experiences for engineering students
- InfyTQ is a free platform open to all engineering students in their third and fourth year across India
- This platform available on both mobile and desktop includes content, courses, and news as well as online assessments and certification.

Department of Justice launched tele-law Mobile Application

- Union Minister for Law and Justice and IT Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad launched a tele-law mobile application that is integrated with a dashboard and an application called Nyaya Bandhu.
- The application will benefit 73,000 PLVs of National Legal Service Authority and State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) in the country who will be associated under the tele-law service. This mobile application is integrated with a Dashboard created to confirm and register the pre-registered cases, to enable online interface between the beneficiary and the panel lawyer through video conferencing and telephone facility

Important Defence News December

Konkan 18: India, UK naval exercise held in Goa

- The naval exercise Konkan 18 between India and United Kingdom will be conducted from November 28 to December 6, 2018 off Goa with units participating from both navies. The harbour phase is scheduled from November 28 to November 30 2018 followed by the sea phase from 2-6 December, 2018.

Ex Cope India 18, the bilateral military exercise between IAF and the U.S., began

- The Air Forces of India (IAF) and the U.S. began the 'Ex Cope India-18', a 12-day military exercise, in the Kalaikunda and Panagarh air bases in West Bengal. The aim is to enhance operational coordination and to provide operational exposure and undertake the mutual exchange of best practices towards enhancing operational capability.

India, China to hold joint military exercises 'Hand in Hand' from December 10

- The militaries of China and India would hold a joint 14-day drill from December 10 in southwest China's Chengdu city to improve their capabilities in fighting terrorism and promote mutual understanding. The 7th India and China joint military exercises - 'Hand in Hand' - will focuss on counter-terrorism operations. The exercises will be held after a gap of one year as both the sides were locked in a 73-day standoff in Doklam in the Sikkim sector of the border in 2017.

NASA is set to launch VISIONS-2 rocket to get a closer look at the how the earth's atmosphere is leaking into space.

- NASA is set to launch VISIONS-2 rocket to get a closer look at the how the earth's atmosphere is leaking into space. The VISIONS-2 mission, Visualizing Ion Outflow via Neutral Atom Sensing-2, is scheduled to be launched on December 4.

Clean Sea-2018: Indian Coast Guard conducts Exercise at sea off Port Blair

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has conducted Regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise titled 'Clean Sea-2018' at sea off Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) Islands. The objective of exercise was to ascertain preparedness of ICG, resource agencies and other stakeholders in responding to major oil spill in line with provisions of National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP). ICG ships Viswath, Vijith, Rajveer, Rajshri, 4 interceptor boats and its air assets Dornier and Chetak helicopters participated in the exercise.

GSAT-11: India's heaviest satellite launched from French Guyana

- Indian Space Research and Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched India's heaviest and most-advanced communication satellite GSAT-11 into space. It was launched on board of Ariane 5 VA-246 rocket from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana.

The 10th Edition of the bilateral exercise between the Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) started at Visakhapatnam.

- The 10th Edition of the bilateral exercise between the Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) started at Visakhapatnam. The Maritime exercise will conclude on December 16. The Primary aim of the exercise is to increase interoperability amongst the two navies, develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations. This Year's edition of exercise would be held in two phases, The Harbour phase would be held at Visakhapatnam from 9-12 December and the Sea phase would be held from 13-16 December in the bay of Bengal.

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Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Air Defence Drills, Surface firings, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations and tactical procedures will be the thrust of exercises at sea.

Agni-5 missile successfully test-fired

- Nuclear capable surface to surface Agni-5 ballistic missile was successfully test-fired from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast. It was user associated trial of missile undertaken by strategic force command along with DRDO scientists.

Indian Air Force conducted an exercise "Cross Bow 18"

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) conducted combined guided weapons firing of Surface-to-Air Missiles from the Air Force Station located at Suryalanka, Andhra Pradesh. The first-of-its-kind exercise for the Air Force was code-named 'CROSS BOW-18'. CROSS BOW-18 saw the successful firing of four different classes of missiles like Akash, Spyder, OSA-AK-M and IGLA.

The Indian Navy launched its first Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system in Mumbai

- The Indian Navy launched its first non-tethered Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai.

NASAs InSight spacecraft snaps its first selfie from Mars

- NASA's InSight spacecraft has used a camera on its robotic arm to take its first selfie, a mosaic made up of 11 images. This is the same imaging process used by Curiosity rover mission, in which many overlapping pictures are taken and later stitched together. Visible in the selfie is the lander's solar panel and its entire deck, including its science instruments.

The Indian Navy bought Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) for Rs.1,000 crore from U.K.-based James Fisher Defence (JFD)

- The Indian Navy launched 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 underwater in the high seas. The cost of one system is Rs.1,000 crore.

ISRO to launch communication satellite GSAT-7A

- India will launch its latest communication satellite, GSAT-7A aboard Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle on December 19, 2018 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. GSAT-7A, which weighs about 2,250 kg, is the 35th communication satellite built by ISRO.

Indra Navy-18 Joint Exercise concluded between India and Russia

- Indra Navy-18, a bilateral naval exercise, between India and Russia concluded on 16th December 2018. It was a 4-day maritime exercise that took place in the Bay of Bengal.

Scientists discover 'Farout,' the most distant solar system object ever seen

- Astronomers had discovered the most distant object ever seen in the solar system — and it's so far away that they nicknamed it "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.

Military Communication Satellite GSAT-7A successfully launched by ISRO

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched the communication satellite GSAT-7A on 19th December 2018 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. GSAT-7A weighing 2250 kg was launched using Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F11).

Design for Small Satellite Launch Vehicle

- ISRO's Vikram Sarabhai Space centre has completed the design for the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV), the baby rocket billed as the quickest way to space for small size satellites, The SSLV will stand 34 meters tall, 10 meters shorter than the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle(PSLV) and around 15 meter shorter than the Mk-II version of the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle(GSLV)

India Successfully Test-Fires Nuclear-Capable Agni-IV Missile

- India successfully test-fired its nuclear capable long range ballistic missile Agni-IV, with a strike range of 4,000 km, The strategic surface-to-surface Agni-IV missile was flight tested from launch complex-4 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Dr Abdul Kalam Island, This was the 7th trial of Agni-IV missile. The last trial conducted by the strategic force command (SFC) of the Indian Army from the same base on January 2, 2018 was successful. Agni-IV missile is 20 meter long and weighs 17 tonnes; it is equipped with state-of-the-art guiding, navigation and communication systems.

Indian Navy launches Information Fusion Centre to boost maritime security

- An aim to strengthen maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Indian Navy has launched its Information Fusion Centre (IFC) that will share information on vessels of interest with other friendly nations, IFC is based at the Indian Navy's Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) at Gurugram in the National Capital Region. IMAC is the single point centre on Indian Navy, linking all the coastal radar chains to generate a seamless real-time picture of the nearly 7,500km coastline

Indian coast guard ship in UAE for joint training exercises

- The Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Vikram is on a goodwill visit to the UAE, and will be conducting joint training exercises with the UAE Coast Guard, Simulated search and rescue operations, law enforcement, and activities regarding safety of life and property at sea are some of the training activities that the ICG will undertake with the UAE coastal protection authorities

Indian Navy commissions Naval hospital INHS Sandhani

- A naval hospital ship, the INHS Sandhani, has been commissioned at Naval station Karanja in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, INHS Sandhani, is tenth Naval hospital, at the Naval station Karanja in Uran, The Navy had earlier commissioned its ninth hospital 'INHS Navjivani' at the Indian Naval Academy in Kerala's Ezhimala.

Coast Guard deploys faster vessels for enhanced security in Sir Creek with Pakistan

- To enhance surveillance capabilities and protect against any infiltration activities from the Pakistan side in the Sir Creek area, the Indian Coast Guard today deployed two new hovercrafts at its new facility in Jakhau in Gujarat. Sir Creek area in the Kutch district of Gujarat has been used by the infiltrators from Pakistan to enter the Indian Territory. The Creek has been a contentious issue between India and Pakistan. The hovercraft operate at high speeds between 30-40 knots (around 50-60 kilometres) per hour and can be highly useful in hot pursuit of any suspicious boat or individuals in the waters.

S.No	Name of the countries		Name of exercises
1	India	Kyrgyzstan	Khanjar IV (Special forces)
2	India	Nepal	Surya Kiran XI (Military)
3	India	Singapore	Bold Kurukshetra (Military)
4	India	Oman	Al Nagah-Ii II (Military)
5	India	Mongolia	Nomadic Elephant XII (Military)
6	India Army Chetak Corps		Thar Shakti (Military)
7	India	Nepal	Surya Kiran XII (Military)
8	India	USA	Yudh Abhyas (Military)
9	India	Sri Lanka	Mitra Shakti (Military)
10	India	Russia	Indra (Tri service)
11	India	Kazakhstan	Prabal Doztyk (Military)
12	India	Bangladesh	Sampriti

			(Military)
13	India		DANX (Naval and special forces)
14	India	Myanmar	IMBAX (Military)
15	India	UK	Ajeya Warrior (Military)
16	India	Seychelles	Lamitye 2018
17	India	Pakistan	Peace Mission 2018' multi-nation counter-terror exercise
18	India	Korea	SAHYOG- HYEOLYEOG 2018
19	India	Kyrgyzstan	KHANJAR-V
	India	China	Hand In Hand

January

Defence industries received Rs 1.21 cr FDI during 2014-18

- India's defence sector received Rs 1.21 crore foreign direct investments during 2014-18, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry C R Chaudhary stated that, FDI equity inflow of Rs 12,146,180 has been reported in the sector namely 'Defence Industries' during the period 2014-2018.
- As per the current policy, in defence sector, foreign investment beyond 49 percent has been permitted through approval route.

Indian Navy set new navy base in Port Blair

- Indian Navy's new airbase INS Kohasa, set to boost Andaman archipelago defence, 100 miles north of Port Blair in the strategically located Andaman and Nicobar islands. The facility was earlier known as INS Shivpur and has been renamed as INS Kohasa after the extension of facilities at the base. This will be India's fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the archipelago. The base will initially operate choppers and Dornier short-range surveillance aircraft.

Army Tech Seminar (ARTECH 2019) held in New Delhi

- Indian Army organised the Army Technology Seminar-2019 in New Delhi.
- Theme of the seminar is "Disruptive Impact of Emerging Technologies on Land Warfare"
- The seminar was aimed to bring together stakeholders in the military, academia and industry to provide perspective on the available and emerging technologies, the event was attended by Dr Subhash Bhamre, Raksha Rajya Mantri, Gen Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff, Shri Ajay Kumar, Secretary Department of Defence Production and other dignitaries from Ministry of Defence.

India - Myanmar joint training exercise inaugurated in Chandimandir

- The second edition of the India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19, commenced at Chandimandir Military Station, headquarters of the Western Command, The aim of this joint training programme, spread over six days, is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations peace keeping operations under the UN flag. The exercise includes participation of 15 officers from Myanmar Army and 15 officers from the Indian Army.

Army plans to buy over 3,000 anti-tank guided missiles from France

- The Indian Army is planning to purchase over 3,000 Milan 2T anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) from France in a deal worth over Rs. 1,000 crore. The decision to procure Milan 2T ATGMs is a stopgap arrangement while the Army gets its own homegrown third-generation ATGM in its arsenal. Milan 2T has a range of over two kilometres.
- Indian Army has a requirement of around 70,000 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) of various types and around 850 launchers of different types even as it is looking for third-generation ATGMs with a longer range than that of its existing Milan-2T and Konkurs ATGMs. India had last year scrapped a programme to buy the Spike ATGM from Israel in view of the indigenous developments in this direction.

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissions new Naval Air Base INS Kohassa

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- Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissioned the new Naval Air Base 'INS Kohassa' at Diglipur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The new Naval Air Base will enhance our maritime capability along with keeping the northern part of Andaman sea and the area under surveillance. Commander-in-Chief, Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN) Vice Admiral Bimal Verma was also present on the occasion. The new airbase, named 'INS Kohassa' at Diglipur, will be used to handle operations of helicopters and small aircraft like the Dornier. The airport at Diglipur will be utilised for both Defence and civil aircraft.

DRDO successfully test-fires Barak 8 LRSAM missile

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired Barak 8 LRSAM (Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile) from naval warship INS Chennai off the coast of Odisha. The missile (directly) hit a low flying aerial target. The Barak 8 LRSAM missile defence system has been jointly developed by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries.

Ministry of Defence Launched 'RDP INDIA 2019' Mobile App

- As a new initiative in sync with the Digital India campaign of the Government, Ministry of Defence had launched a mobile app 'RDP India 2019' on the Republic Day. With the intent of making available the highlights of the Republic Day event, not only to the spectators at Rajpath, but also to the general public all over the world. This app contains information about the Parade on Rajpath, New Delhi, including Order of the March, details of the tableaux presented by different States and Ministries, children cultural performances, fly past and names of recipients of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.

February

DAC approved indigenous construction of 6 submarines worth Rs. 40,000 crore

- The Defence Acquisitions Council, DAC chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved indigenous construction of six submarines worth 40,000 crore rupees. It is the second project under the Ministry's ambitious strategic partnership model aiming to boost the government's Make in India' program.
- The first project to get the government's nod for implementation under the new model was the acquisition of 111 utility helicopters for the Navy at a cost of over 21,000 crore rupees in August last year
- Defence Acquisitions Council has also approved the acquisition of about five thousand MILAN Anti Tank Guided Missiles for the Army

Israel Aerospace Industries announced agreement worth \$93 million with Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard

- Israel Aerospace Industries announced entering into agreements worth \$93 million for providing Naval MRSAM (Medium Range Surface to Air Missile) systems to India. The contracts for the air defence system were entered with the Indian Navy and the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL)
- They involve follow up orders for a range of maintenance and other services for various sub-systems of IAI's advanced MSRAM ADS

Pakistan Successfully Test-Fires Short-Range Ballistic Missile Nasr

- Pakistan Army successfully test-fired the short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile "Nasr" with a strike range of about 70 km
- Nasr is a high precision, shoot and scoot weapon system with the ability of in-flight maneuverability

Defence Ministry approves procurement of 73,000 assault rifles from US

- The Defence Ministry has cleared a long-pending proposal of the Army to procure around 73,000 assault rifles from the US under fast track mode. Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved procurement of the Sig Sauer rifles which will be used by troops deployed along the nearly 3,600-km border with China. The US-manufactured rifles will replace the Insas rifles.

DAC approved acquisition of defence equipment worth Rs. 2700 crore

- The Defence Acquisition Council has approved the acquisition of defence equipment for about 2700 Crores rupees. The Defence Acquisition Council, is the highest decision-making body for defence purchase, was chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Council granted approval for procurement of three cadet training ships for the Indian Navy which would be utilised to provide basic sea training for officer cadets including women officer under trainees. The ships would be capable of undertaking hospital ship duties, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, undertaking search and rescue (SAR) missions

US approved sale of two missile defence systems for Air India One

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- The Trump administration approved purchase of the two systems known as Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCAM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS) for an estimated cost of \$190 million. that will enhance the security of planes flying the prime minister and the president. The purpose of the LAIRCM programme is to protect large aircraft from man-portable missiles. Once installed, the LAIRCAM system increases crew-warning time, decreases false alarm rates and automatically counters advanced intermediate range missile systems
- SPS will facilitate a more robust capability into areas of increased missile threats

INS Trikand participated in multinational training exercise “Cutclass Express 2019”

- INS Trikand, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multinational training exercise ‘CUTCLASS EXPRESS – 19’. The aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean
- Naval Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from a number of East African countries were jointly trained by mentors from USA, India, and Netherlands, with support of international organisations like the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and European Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR)
- The exercise was conducted in two phases. The first, called the Command Post Exercise (CPX) was conducted from Jan 27 to Feb 2. The second phase called the Final Training Exercise (FTX) was conducted from Feb 3-5. The closing ceremony of the event was held at the Djibouti Naval Base

Indigenously developed "Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)" missile system was successfully flight tested in Odisha

- The second indigenously developed ‘Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)’ propulsion-based missile system was successfully flight tested in Odisha by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- Unlike conventional rockets that carry propellant and oxidizer, Ramjet uses the air as an oxidizer just like a jet engine. Therefore the weight of the fuel required is eliminated
- The first flight of SFDR, developed under a joint Indo-Russian R&D project, was tested in 2018. It had achieved the speed of Mach 3.

Hina Jaiswal becomes IAF's First Woman Flight Engineer

- Hina Jaiswal from Chandigarh, became the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force. Hina was commissioned in the Indian Air Force’s engineering branch in 2015. She completed a six-month Flight Engineer course from 112 helicopter unit, Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru
- A flight engineer is the member of an aircraft’s flight crew who monitors and operates its complex aircraft systems requiring a specialised skill set

OFB gets nod for producing long-range artillery gun 'Dhanush'

- The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has received clearance from the Indian Army and the Ministry of Defence for production of 114 'Dhanush' long range artillery guns. 'Dhanush' is the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India. It is the product of joint efforts by the OFB and the Army with contributions from the DRDO, DGQA, Bharat Electronics Limited, SAIL and several private enterprises.

PM Modi inaugurated Asia’s biggest air show ‘Aero India- 2019’ in Bengaluru

- 12th edition of Asia's premier Air show 'Aero India-2019' begins at Yelahanka air force station, Bengaluru
- The five-day long biennial event Aero India-2019, will showcase India's air defence prowess, and also act as a platform for aviation companies, the defence sector and government to forge new alliances and contracts
- Sixty-one aircraft would be on display and 403 exhibitors are participating in the aero India show. Over 600 companies, including 295 Indian and 328 foreign ones, are participating in the exhibition.

S.No	Name of the countries		Name of exercises
1.	Bangladesh	India	‘Sampriti 2019’
2.	Pakistan	-	Multinational maritime exercise 'AMAN-19'
3.	India (Deolali Camp near Nashik)	-	"Exercise Topchi"
4.	India (Jaipur, Rajasthan)	-	disaster relief joint Exercise ‘Rahat’

5.	India (Pokhran, Rajasthan)	-	Indian Air Force's exercise 'Vayushakti 2019'
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Important Science and Technology

ISRO becomes first agency to use fourth stage of rocket as orbital platform

- The fourth and final stage of the rocket normally turns into debris after ejecting a satellite. This time, the workhorse PSLV DL's fourth stage, with a satellite built by school students strapped to its back, will continue orbiting the earth at a distance of 450km above it for six months. The latest Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) take off from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh on a mission to help India notch up one more first in space technology. It will make use of the final stage of rocket as orbital platform for a satellite

ISRO launches student-made satellite Kalamsat-V2 into space

- ISRO's rocket was mainly to put into orbit a 740 kg satellite named Microsat-R that will be used to take high-resolution photographs of the earth. This satellite will be used by the Indian Defence research team.
- The satellite was launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and was successfully placed into orbit. Onboard the PSLV was the world's lightest satellite that was built by Indian students. This satellite weighs just 1.2Kgs and is named Kalamsat v2. The satellite cost the student team around Rs. 12 Lakhs, but ISRO launched it into orbit for free. The 1.2Kg Kalamsat v2 was prepared in 6 days, and was under development since the last 6 years. The 20+ team of students at Space Kidz India were headed by Srimathy Kesan.

ISRO set to launch GSAT-31 from French Guiana

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has planned to launch the GSAT-31 communication satellite, from the French Guiana on 6th February, to replace INSAT-4CR. The satellite will be used for high-speed internet, telecommunication services and broadcasting.
- The 2,600 KG-satellite GSAT-31 will be launched in the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-MK III)

Scientists create AI based system that translates thoughts into speech

- Scientists have created an artificial intelligence (AI) based system that directly translates thoughts into intelligible, recognisable speech. The technology developed by researchers from Columbia University in the United States. The research will help people who cannot speak regain their ability to communicate with the outside world.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated India's first humanoid police robot KP-BOT

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated KP-BOT, first humanoid police robot in India, in Thiruvananthapuram. The robot ranked as Sub-Inspector and it will perform duties of the front office of police headquarters. It'll receive the visitors, issue identity cards and allot time for them and direct them to different places according to their needs. KP-Bot has been developed by State Police Cyberdome in cooperation with Asimov Robotics, a Kochi-based startup firm

SpaceX launches world's 1st private Moon lander for Israel

- Elon Musk-led aerospace startup SpaceX deployed Israel's first Moon lander mission aboard its Falcon 9 rocket, making it the world's first such fully-private mission. 'Beresheet' (Hebrew for 'in the beginning') is set to land on the Moon on April 11. If successful, Israel will become only the fourth nation to have achieved a controlled touchdown on the Moon.

NASA launches website to check daily weather on Mars

- NASA has launched a website to share the daily weather report of Mars with its temperature, atmospheric pressure and wind speed collected by the InSight lander.
- Temperature on Mars regularly drops below -90°C and rarely rises above -9°C, the data revealed.

ISRO to launch defence satellite 'Emisat' in March for DRDO

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch an electronic intelligence satellite 'Emisat' for the DRDO in March.
- ISRO will also launch 28 third-party satellites and will demonstrate its new technologies like three different orbits with a new variant of 'Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle' rocket in March.

Israel to launch its first moon mission

- Israel is to launch its first moon mission, sending an unmanned spacecraft to collect data to be shared with NASA

- The 585-kilogram Beresheet spacecraft is to lift off atop a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Mission control will be in Yehud, near Tel Aviv. The \$100-million project will measure the lunar magnetic field to help understanding of the moon's formation

Signalchip launched India's first indigenous semiconductor chips for 4G LTE, 5G NR modems

- Bengaluru-based Signalchip launched India's first semiconductor chips for 4G LTE and 5G NR modems.
- The company launched four chips as part of its SCBM34XX and SCRF34XX/45XX series, code-named 'Agumbe'.
- These chips also support positioning using India's own satellite navigation system, NAVIC. Founder and CEO of SIGNALCHIP Himanshu Khasnis

BHEL installed first solar electric vehicle charging station

- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has set up its first solar electric vehicle charger on the Delhi-Chandigarh Highway. The first in a series of charging station on the entire 250 kilometer stretch was inaugurated by A R Sihag, secretary, Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) in the presence of BHEL Chairman Atul Sobti in Sonapat, Haryana.
- The project is covered under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicles in India (FAME) scheme of Department of Heavy Industry (DHI).
- Recently the Cabinet government approved FAME II scheme with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of three years. To be implemented from April 1, 2019, the scheme envisages setting up of about 2700 charging stations across the country so that at least one charging station is available in a grid of 3x3 km².

ISRO launched Yuva Vigyani Karyakram for school children

- Indian Space Research Organisation has launched "Yuva Vigyani Karyakram", a "Young Scientist Programme" for the School Children to be studying in the ninth standard. The programme aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.
- "Catch them young" residential training programme will be of around two weeks duration during summer holidays with a proposal to select 3 students from each State and Union Territory, covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.

People in Japan temple unveiled a robot 'Goddess'

- A 400-year-old Kyoto-based temple has unveiled a robotic avatar of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Kannon, in an attempt to keep the younger generation connected with Buddhism.
- The robot named 'Mindar', can join its hands and move its eyes and torso while delivering 25-minute-long sermons to worshippers

NASA announced world's first all-female spacewalk

- NASA announced Two NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch are scheduled to carry out the first ever all female spacewalk in history on March 29.
- Both will walk outside the International Space Station (ISS) as members of Expedition 59, on a mission to replace batteries installed last summer. 35 years after the first woman performed a spacewalk. They will receive ground support from flight director Mary Lawrence and Kristen Facciolo of the Canadian Space Agency in NASA's Johnson Space Center in Texas.

China launches new communications satellite 'ChinaSat 6C', marks 300th mission

- China sent a new communications satellite into orbit from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. The "ChinaSat 6C" satellite was launched by a Long March-3B carrier rocket. It will provide high-quality radio and TV transmission services.
- The satellite was developed by the China Academy of Space Technology, and will be operated by the China Satellite Communications Co, Ltd. The launch marks the 300th mission of the Long March carrier rocket series developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

IIT Madras developed 'NERO' for generating potable water from air

- The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) will develop a device called 'NERO' to generate potable water from atmospheric air. For this project, IIT Madras has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Teerthaa, a private sustainable technology company. The solar thermal energy powered device will produce about 4 to 5 litres of potable water per day.

IIT Kharagpur students created an mobile app to detect fake currency notes

- Students from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur have developed an image processing application which can detect counterfeit currency. The application, which can be installed on smartphones, can be used by people

at various touch points thus reducing chances of fraud. The app would then perform verification of its authenticity with the help of 25 features that have been extracted from both the sides of the note.

IBM creates Blockchain-based global payment network

- Information Technology (IT) major IBM has created a Blockchain-based global payment network that transmits monetary value in the form of digital assets, commonly known as cryptocurrencies or 'stable coins'.
- The payment network called World Wire uses the Stellar protocol that reduces intermediaries and allows users to accelerate settlement time. World Wire has already enabled payment locations in 72 countries, with 47 currencies and 44 banking endpoints.

SAIL launched Smart Garbage bins made of steel

- Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has launched smart garbage bins made of stainless steel. These smart garbage bins will be able to send a signal to the garbage collection vehicle about the 'fill-up' position of the bin, aiding better cleaning and lower human intervention.
- The environment-friendly garbage bins will be made of SAIL SALEM stainless steel. These will be installed in underground Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) pits at the Smart Garbage Station. This will help prevent the spread of stink and diseases.

Flipkart introduces robot-based sortation technology

- Flipkart has introduced a robot-based sortation technology — Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) at its Soukya sortation center in Bengaluru. The Soukya set-up involves over 100 self-guided bots that automatically sort packages to the right customer pincodes by identifying encoded information on each package.
- It can process up to 4,500 shipments in an hour and can be scaled over five times with minimal changes. The AGVs will help Flipkart meet ever-growing customer and scale demands, ensuring faster delivery and an enhanced experience for online shoppers.

Vega Rocket Launches Earth-Watching PRISMA Satellite for Italy

- Italy's new Earth-observation satellite named PRISMA (Precursore Iperspettrale della Missione Applicativa) launched from the Guiana Space Centre by 98 foot (30 meters) tall Vega rocket which was developed by the joint venture of Italian Space Agency and the European Space Agency.
- PRISMA (an Italian acronym for Hyperspectral Precursor of the Application Mission) is designed to provide information about environmental monitoring, resources management, pollution and crop health.
- The satellite includes a medium resolution camera that can view across all visual wavelengths, as well as a hyperspectral imager that can capture a wider range of wavelengths between 400 and 2500 nanometers

ISRO to launch 29 satellites including EMISAT on first of April

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on the first of April. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C45 will take off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.
- EMISAT has been developed for monitoring radar network by India. EMISAT, weighing 436 kg, is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement. It will be placed in an orbit of about 753 km altitude. Indian Institute of Space Science (IISc) and the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation are the other two institutions that will have their devices on the experimental platform.

India successfully conducts A-SAT missile test under 'Mission Shakti'

- Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test, under Mission Shakti from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. A DRDO-developed Ballistic Missile, Defence Interceptor Missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a Hit to Kill mode.
- The missile travelled a distance of almost 300 km from earth and hit the target within three minutes of its launch. With this achievement, India has now become the only fourth nation after US, Russia and China to have such capability.

Facebook launches tools to boost election engagement

- Social-networking site Facebook launched two new India-specific tools 'Candidate Connect' and 'Share You Voted' to boost civic engagement on its platform during the general elections that commence in April.
- While 'Candidate Connect' will help people learn more about candidates, the 'Share You Voted' will provide people with polling information and enable them to announce and celebrate their vote.

IIT-Delhi researchers develop AI-based detector for malaria, TB, cervical cancer

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) here have developed an artificial intelligence (AI)-based low-power electronic hardware system that can help in detecting malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal parasite and cervical cancer in a few milliseconds.
- The research focuses on building a neuromorphic system which can be used for healthcare access in resource-constrained areas with limited access to human specialists. The portable device is trained to detect microorganisms in the biological samples. It was built on Raspberry Pi, a tiny computer attached to an infrared-sensitive camera

IIT Madras converts petroleum waste toluene into useful product

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has successfully converted petroleum waste-product toluene into benzoic acid. Benzoic acid is used as a food preservative (E210) and medicine for fungal/bacterial infection.
- Toluene is converted into benzoic acid through selective and controlled oxidation in the presence of a catalyst — binaphthyl-stabilised platinum nanoparticles (Pt-BNP).

Tesla builds its 'largest energy storage system in Asia'

- Tesla has developed its 'largest power storage system in Asia' at Osaka train station in Japan to reduce energy demand and provide emergency backup power to trains in Japan.
- It has installed a bank of 42 Powerpacks at a train station in Japan's Osaka that can provide sufficient backup power to safely move a train and its passengers to the nearest station in the event of a power outage.

GAIL, BHEL tie up for development of solar power projects

- Maharatna public sector units GAIL India Ltd and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) have inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects.
- The MoU is aimed at building a closer strategic partnership between the two state-owned companies for jointly pursuing commercial solar power projects through participation in tariff and viability gap funding based competitive bidding process.
- India has set a target to achieve 100 GW of solar power by 2022 so that all citizens can have round-the-clock access to uninterrupted electricity.

China launches new data relay satellite

- China launched the first of its new-generation data relay satellites as part of the preparatory work for the nation's next manned space missions. The Tianlian II-01 was lifted off at a Long March 3B carrier rocket at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province.
- The spacecraft is the first in China's second generation of data relay satellite, adding its entry into service will substantially improve the country's space-based data relay capability.
- The satellite is developed by the China Academy of Space Technology under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. The launch marks the 301st mission of the Long March carrier rocket series. China launched its first data relay satellite, the Tianlian I-01, in April 2008

Google Unveils Hybrid Cloud Platform Anthos

- Google launched Anthos, a new open platform from Google Cloud, that lets users run applications from anywhere.
- Anthos allows users to run applications, unmodified, on existing on-premise hardware or on the public cloud, and is based on the Cloud Services Platform that Google announced last year.

First-ever real image of a black hole released

- Scientists have captured the first direct image of a black hole, using Event Horizon Telescope observations of the center of the galaxy M87 (**Messier 87**), 55 million light-years from the Earth.
- The image which has been captured by a network of eight telescopes across the world
- The image shows the event horizon, a bright ring formed as light bends in the intense gravity around the black hole that is 6.5 billion times more massive than the Sun.

Stratolaunch Flies World's Largest Plane for the First Time

- Stratolaunch, the private launch company founded by the late billionaire Paul Allen, has just flown the world's largest aircraft for the first time. The massive airplane, which has a wingspan bigger than a football field and is designed to launch rockets from the air, took off on its maiden test flight from the Mojave Air and Space Port in Mojave, California

India's sub-sonic cruise missile 'Nirbhay' successfully test fired from Odisha

- India successfully test-fired its first indigenously designed and developed long-range sub-sonic cruise missile 'Nirbhay' from a test range in Odisha. The missile is equipped with a Ring Laser Gyroscope (RLG) based guidance,

control and navigation system. It is also armed with a MEMS- based Inertial Navigation System (INS) and the GPS system. The Nirbhay missile also has capability of striking a multiple targets at a time.

- The missile is nuclear capable, can be equipped with 300kg warhead. It has an ability to reach speed of 0.6-0.7 Mach and can be deployed from multiple platforms. The missile weighs 1,500 kg, width of 0.52 meters and has a wingspan of 2.7 metre.

Nepal successfully launches its 1st satellite NepaliSat-1 into space

- Nepal successfully launched its first satellite NepaliSat-1 into space from Virginia in the United States. The satellite, developed by two Nepalis -- Abhas Maskey and Hariram Shrestha -- at Japan's Kyushu Institute of Technology. NepaliSat-1 is a low orbit satellite. It will be stationed at the International Space Station for a month and then it will be sent to orbit the earth.
- The satellite will take photographs on a regular basis to gather geographical information of the country. It weighs 1.3 kilograms, making it a small satellite with limited capability.

Sri Lanka's 1st satellite 'Raavana-1' launched into space

- Sri Lanka's first satellite 'Raavana-1' was launched into space from NASA's Flight Facility on Virginia's east shore. 'Raavana 1' weighs around 1.05 kg and the lifespan of the satellite is around one and a half years.
- The satellite was designed and built at the Kyushu Institute of Technology in Japan by two Sri Lankan research engineers.

NASA astronaut to set record for longest spaceflight by a woman

- NASA astronaut Christina Koch is going to have her mission on the International Space Station (ISS) extended to 328 days. This would set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman. Koch arrived at the space station on March 14 and now is scheduled to remain in orbit until February 2020. She will eclipse the record of 288 days set by former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson in 2016-17
- The longest single spaceflight by a NASA astronaut is 340 days, set by former NASA astronaut Scott Kelly during his one-year mission in 2015-16.

First Marsquake detected by NASA's InSight mission

- The American space agency's InSight lander appears to have detected its first seismic event on Mars.
- It is the first seismic signal detected on the surface of a planetary body other than the Earth and its Moon.
- "Marsquake" could either be movement in a crack inside the planet or the shaking from a meteorite impact.
- It aims to identify multiple quakes, to help build a clearer picture of Mars' interior structure.

Japan creates first artificial crater on asteroid

- Japanese scientists have succeeded in creating what they called the first-ever artificial crater on an asteroid, a step towards shedding light on how the solar system evolved.
- The announcement comes after the Hayabusa2 probe fired an explosive device at the Ryugu asteroid early this month to blast a crater in the surface and scoop up material, aiming to reveal more about the origins of life on Earth.

Important Ranking and Indexes December

Index	Rank
Highest emitter of CO ₂ (carbon dioxide) in the world	4
World's top recipient of remittances in 2018	1
Climate Change Performance Index	11
WEF's Gender Gap Index	108

Andhra, Himachal, Madhya Pradesh best performing states under maternity benefit programme: WCD

- 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.

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Indian Aviation Sector retains highest safety audit standard in 2018

- Indian aviation sector maintained the highest safety audit rating in 2018 from global auditors, International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), India has been, provisionally, given 74 percent marks by ICAO and has maintained Category 1 (highest category) under International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) by FAA in 2018.

NITI Aayog to release SDG India Index - Baseline Report 2018

- Government think tank NITI Aayog came out with a baseline index of Indian states' performance on various UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), It found the states of Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Pondicherry, are among the front-runners, SDGs are a set of 17 goals across social, economic and environmental spheres that would transform the world into a better place by 2030. Kerala's top rank is attributed to its superior performance in providing good health, reducing hunger, achieving gender equality and providing quality education, Himachal Pradesh has surged to the top backed by its success in providing clean water and sanitation, in reducing inequalities and preserving the mountain ecosystem, Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, did well in reducing poverty and providing affordable and clean energy to people.

Three Indian-origin students among Time magazine's 25 most influential teens of 2018

- Three Indian-origin students have been named among the 25 most influential teens of 2018 by Time magazine for making a mark across numerous fields. Indian-American Kavya Kopparapu, Rishab Jain, and British-Indian Amika George are among the group who have become inspirations for youngsters across the world due to their spectacular achievements through their work and passion.

DIPP Announces State-Wise Startup Rankings: Gujarat Named Best Performer

- Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has awarded Gujarat as the best performer in Start-up Ranking 2018, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Odisha and Kerala were rated as top performers.

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. NABCB, a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India, is responsible for accreditation of certification/inspection bodies as per applicable international standards under an international system of equivalence. NABCB is the third accreditation body in the Asia Pacific Region to become internationally equivalent in the region, the other two being the accreditation bodies of Hong Kong and Mexico.

NITI Aayog released second Delta Ranking of Aspirational districts

- NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant released the Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme.
- The ranking measures the incremental progress made by 111 Aspirational districts during June to October this year across six key development sectors. The development areas include health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure.
- Top three districts in the ranking of Aspirational districts
- Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu), Naupada (Odisha) and Sidharthnagar (Uttar Pradesh)
- Three least improved Aspirational districts
- Pakur (Jharkhand), Hailakandi (Assam) and Chatra (Jharkhand)

Sector	Most improved district	Least improved district
Education	Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu)	Pakur (Jharkhand)
Health and nutrition	Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh)	Chatra (Jharkhand)
Agriculture and water resources	Sitamarhi (Bihar)	Giridih (Jharkhand)

Indian Oil, ONGC, NTPC most profitable PSUs in FY18

- According to the Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18 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, Contributed 52.15 per cent of the total loss incurred by CPSEs in 2017-18.
- There were 339 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) in 2017-18, out of which 257 were in operation. Remaining s of the CPSEs were under construction.

January

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India to grow by 7.5% in 2019; Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

- A settled goods and services tax (GST), improving credit availability and capacity expansion from increasing investment in infrastructure are among seven key drivers that will help Indian economy grow 7.5% next year.
- Growth Outlook for 2019', CII stated that amid growing global vulnerabilities of trade wars and US monetary tightening, India shines as the fastest growing major economy with robust gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 that is expected to continue to expand in 2019.

Andhra Pradesh tops ACT's Ease of Doing Business index

- Andhra Pradesh has topped the survey of Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI), Singapore's 2018 Ease of Doing Business (EDB) Index ABC Rankings for economies of 21 states of India, while Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place respectively. Andhra Pradesh rose from the 5th rank in 2016 to the top spot in 2018.
- Ease of Doing Business (EDB) index is based upon three parameters called ABC, Attractiveness to Investors, Business Friendliness and Competitiveness Policies.

Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19: CSO

- First advance estimates of national income released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19, higher from 6.7% in the previous fiscal, mainly due to improvement in the performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The income earned by an average Indian doubled in seven years, from Rs 63,642 per year in 2011-12 to Rs 1.25 lakh in 2018-19.

India is set to become world's third largest consumer market: World Economic Forum

- India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030. The report titled 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market - India' also noted that growth of the middle class will lift nearly 25 million households out of poverty. Consumer spending in India is expected to grow from 1.5 trillion US dollar at present to six trillion US dollar by 2030. The report stated that, with the annual GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent, India is currently the world's sixth largest economy.

India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List of Most Powerful Passports

- Henley Passport Index periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year, Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries,
- The ranking is based on the extensive and exclusive data collected from the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) which maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal ranked further low at 104, 102 and 94 respectively

Economist Intelligence Unit 2018 Democracy Index

- Norway topped and India has ranked at 41st place on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Global Democracy Index, The EIU Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.
- The Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture, Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime.

India among the most trusted nations globally: Report

- India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media. The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report, which was released, ahead of the World Economic Forum meet in Davos, noted that the Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52. China topped the Trust Index among both the informed public and the general population segments. India was at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.

JNPT becomes India's only port to be ranked among world's top 30

- The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has become India's only port to get listed among the top 30 global container ports. The JNPT, India's premiere container port got listed amongst the top 30 container ports globally, as per the latest Lloyds Report. JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking.
- This is a validation of all the efforts and strategic initiatives being implemented at JNPT in order to enhance overall port efficiency

India ranks sixth in GDPR readiness index: Cisco

- Around 65 per cent of Indian businesses and organisations are better prepared for the European Union's (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), making India the sixth best prepared nation to deal with the new data privacy regulation which all organizations operating within the European Union and European Economic Area are mandated to comply with. The rankings were part of the 'Data Privacy Benchmark Study' for 2019 put out by technology giant Cisco. As per the report 59% of organizations across the world reported meeting all requirements or most of the requirements, 29% expect to do so within a year while 9% will take more than a year.

India replaces Japan as second largest steel producer

- According to World Steel Association (worldsteel) India has replaced Japan as world's second largest steel producing country. China is the largest producer of crude steel accounting for more than 51 per cent of production
- "India's crude steel production in 2018 was at 106.5 MT, up by 4.9 per cent from 101.5 MT in 2017. Japan produced 104.3 MT in 2018, down 0.3 per cent compared to 2017

Global Corruption Index: India 78th Rank

- According to the annual index by global watchdog Transparency International, India has improved its ranking on a global corruption index in 2018 by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41
- In the list of 180 countries, China and Pakistan lagged far behind at 87th and 117th position, respectively
- Denmark is the least corrupt country followed by New Zealand. Somalia, Syria and South Sudan are the most corrupt countries in the world
- Transparency International Headquarters - Berlin, Germany
- Managing Director -- Patricia Moreira

India's unemployment rate hit four decade high of 6.1% in 2017-18

- As per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labour force survey (PLFS) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18. It is highest level since 1972-73
- The report further stated that unemployment was higher in urban areas 7.8% as compared to 5.3% in rural areas of the country
- For educated rural females, the unemployment rate ranged between 9.7% to 15.2% between 2004-05 to 2011-12, which rose to 17.3 per cent in 2017-18,
- In case of rural educated males, the joblessness rate surged to 10.5 per cent in 2017-18 from 3.5 - 4.4% between 2004-05 to 2011-12

February

Index	Rank 2019	Based on
US Chamber's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) ranks - Global Intellectual Property (IP) Index	36	45 indicators
FIFA Rankings	103 – India 1 – Belgium	-

World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 report released by ILO

- The International Labour Organization released World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 report. According to the report, unemployment rates will fall to 4.9% in 2019 and remains steady in 2020. Global unemployment among young people (between 15-24) stood at 11.8 per cent, higher than other age groups
- In the global labour market 2 billion out of 3.3 billion people worked keeping their economic security at risk in informal employment. The unemployment rate increased from 5 to 5.6% between 2008-09

Important Schemes and Programs

December

FSSAI launches Heart Attack Rewind Campaign for elimination of industrially produced trans-fat

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched media campaign "Heart Attack Rewind", calling for elimination of industrially produced trans-fat in the food supply. It will support FSSAI's global target of eliminating

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trans-fat in India by 2022, a year ahead of global target by World Health Organization (WHO). It is in line with FSSAOI's objective to get Freedom from 'Trans Fat: India@75'.

Maharashtra government has launched 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. The initiative will support post-harvest value chain and bring efficiency to benefit economy at large.

The 2nd edition of Military Literature Festival (MLF) 2018 was held in Chandigarh

- The 2nd edition of Military Literature Festival (MLF) 2018 was held in Chandigarh with an aim to offer an opportunity for the younger generation to get acquainted with India's glorious military heritage. It also brought a host of cultural activities, food cuisines and competitions to the public. Besides, marshal dances, weapons display, medallion gallery, artists' corner, cultural activities and exhibitions, food and cuisine, book fair, children's Saragarhi Samvadh are amongst other activities to reverberate the minds of participants and visitors with tales of India's soldiers during the three-day event.

Ministry of Agriculture has launched ENSURE - National Livestock Mission

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Radha Mohan Singh launched a portal 'ENSURE'- National Livestock Mission-EDEG developed by NABARD and operated under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries. The NABARD has developed an online portal "ENSURE" (ensure.nabard.org) so that the information related to beneficiary and processing of the application can be made readily available.

National Challenge for Youths, "Ideate for India - Creative Solutions using Technology", in New Delhi.

- Union Minister for Electronics & IT, Law & Justice, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, launched a National Challenge for Youths, "Ideate for India - Creative Solutions using Technology", in New Delhi. The Challenge has been designed and launched by: The National e-Governance Division, Ministry of Electronics & IT in collaboration with Intel India, with support from the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Human Resource Development. The DoSE&L will propagate the challenge to State Education Departments, NVS, KVS and CBSE authorities.

ECO Niwas Samhita 2018 Launched By Power Ministry

- 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 (14th December) in the presence of Chief Guest Smt. Sumitra Mahajan, Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha.

Cabinet approves expansion of beneficiaries list under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Shri Narendra Modi cleared the proposal of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas to expand the list of beneficiaries under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.
- The people who were not covered under the scheme on account of their name not included in either in Socio-economic caste census (SECC) list or in the list of the seven identified categories – SC/ST households, beneficiaries of Pradhan Matri Awas Yojana (AAY) Gramin, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Forest dwellers, Most backward classes (MBC), Tea and Ex-Tea Garden tribes, people residing in islands/river islands.

Government launches Asiatic Lions Conservation Project

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the 'Asiatic Lion Conservation Project' with an aim to protect and conserve the population of Asiatic Lion. The minister said the total budget of the project for the next three years will be funded through a centrally sponsored scheme, the Development of Wildlife Habitat, with the contributing ratio of 60:40 for central and state share.

January

Global Report on Trafficking in Persons Launched

- UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a latest Global Report on "Trafficking in Persons".
- According to the latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, The number of human trafficking victims is on the rise, while armed groups and terrorists are trafficking women and children to generate funds and recruit,
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a United Nations office that was established in 1997, as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office.

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Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates UNNATI of ISRO in Bengaluru

- Minister of State in Department of Space Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated UNNATI programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru. UNNATI, a capacity building programme on Nanosatellite development, is an initiative by ISRO to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE-50)
- UNNATI - Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly and Training programme

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Important Books and Authors December

Books	Authors
Timeless Laxman ,based on the life and times of legendary cartoonist, the late R.K. Laxman.	Usha Srinivas Laxman
God of Sin: the Cult, the Clout and Downfall of Asaram Babu	Ushinor Majumdar

January

Rajya Sabha Vice Chairman launched 'A Crusade Against Corruption' book

- Vice-Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh Narayan Singh launched Manohar Manoj` s book ‘A Crusade Against Corruption’ in New Delhi.

Malala Yousafzai pens new book on refugee girls

- Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai pens a new book, titled ‘We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World.

February

Books	Authors
Quality, Accreditation & Ranking – A Silent Revolution in the Offing in Indian Higher Education”	Dr H Chaturvedi
“Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India”	Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram
“What Marx Left Unsaid” - Production of Skills by Means of Skills	Dr. Malay Chaudhuri, Dr. Arindam Chaudhuri and Che Kabir Chaudhuri
'Simplicity & Wisdom'	Dinesh Shahra

Important Sports News Cricket

Shubhankar Sharma has become the fifth and the youngest Indian golfer to clinch the Asian Tour Order of Merit

- On December 8, Shubhankar Sharma has become the fifth and the youngest Indian golfer to clinch the Asian Tour Order of Merit after a groundbreaking year of achievements. With this achievement, He joined the exclusive club of Indians who have achieved the feat in the past - Jyoti Randhawa (2002), Arjun Atwal (2003), Jeev Milkha Singh (2006 and 2008) and Anirban Lahiri (2015).

Ricky Ponting Inducted Into ICC Hall of Fame

- Former Australian captain Ricky Ponting became the 25th player from his country to be inducted into the ICC hall of fame, 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, He was received his commemorative cap from compatriot ICC Cricket Hall of Famer Glenn McGrath during the tea break on the opening day of the third Test against India at the MCG.

Jasprit Bumrah Becomes Highest International Wicket-Taker in 2018

- India pacer Jasprit Bumrah finished 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats in the calendar year, He has picked up 78 wickets across all formats in 2018, The South African Bowler Kagiso Rabada, has taken 77 wickets in 2018.

USA Cricket becomes ICC's 105th member

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) Tuesday announced USA Cricket as its 105th member.
- As a Member of the ICC, USA Cricket is now eligible to receive funding in accordance with the ICC Development Funding Policy and can sanction domestic and international cricket in the United States, The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the global governing body of cricket. It was founded as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909 by representatives from Australia, England and South Africa, It was renamed as the International Cricket Conference in 1965, and again renamed as International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1989.

Albie Morkel announced retirement from all formats of cricket

- South African allrounder Albie Morkel announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, putting an end to nearly 20-year of professional cricketing career.
- Morkel played one Test, 58 ODIs and 50 T20Is for his country, scoring 1412 runs and picking up 77 wickets across formats.

Bengal's Satyarup Siddhanta Becomes World's Youngest Mountaineer to Climb 7 Peaks, 7 Volcano Summits

- Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta climbed Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley, to become the youngest man in the world to have climbed the seven highest volcanic peaks, Mr Siddhanta hails from Haridevpur in South Kolkata and is a software engineer by profession. He holds the record of conquering several summits such as Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mt Elbrus in Europe, Mt Denali in Alaska and Mt Monc Blanc in France.

Kohli became first player to win all three top ICC awards in single year

- Virat Kohli has become the first player to win all three major annual ICC awards in a single year for his performances in 2018. Kohli was named Men's Test Player of the Year for the first time, while he also won Cricketer and ODI Player of Year awards. He was also named captain of Test and ODI teams of 2018

21-yr-old Rishabh Pant named ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of 2018

- India's 21-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has been named the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year 2018. Last year, Pant became the first Indian wicketkeeper to score a Test hundred in England and equalled the record for most catches taken in a Test, with 11 in Adelaide in December. Pant is the third Indian to be honoured with this award.

Mohammed Shami is the fastest Indian bowler to reach 100 ODI wickets

- Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets, during the first one-dayer against New Zealand at Napier. Shami reached the milestone in his 56th match, with the wicket of opener Martin Gupthill.
- The Indian record was previously held by Irfan Pathan, who got there in his 59th match, against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi in 2006. The world record is currently held by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who needed only 44 games to reach the mark. Some of the other Indians in the list include Zaheer Khan (65 matches), Ajit Agarkar (67 matches) and Javagal Srinath (68 matches).

Shikhar Dhawan becomes second quickest Indian to 5000 ODI runs

- India's opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan became the second fastest Indian to 5000 ODI runs in the first ODI between India and New Zealand at McLean Park in Napier. He also became the fifth fastest overall while joining legendary left-hander Brian Lara in the list. Dhawan surpassed the likes of Sourav Ganguly and Graeme Smith while matching Lara to become the joint-fastest left-handed batsman. Earlier, Dhawan had become the second fastest Indian, behind Kohli, and sixth quickest overall to reach 4000 ODI runs during an ODI series at home against Sri Lanka in 2017. Dhawan had brought up 4000 runs in the 94th innings of his ODI career

Botha announces immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket

- Former South Africa all-rounder Johan Botha has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket. Botha played for South Africa in five test matches, 78 one-day internationals and 40 T20 Internationals from 2005 to 2012. Botha captained the Proteas in 10 ODIs and took the team to the No. 1 ranking after they defeated Australia 4-1 in Australia in 2009.

Wasim Jaffer becomes 1st player to score 1,000 runs in a Ranji season twice

- Wasim Jaffer went past 1000 runs this season for Vidarbha a decade after scoring 1260 runs for Mumbai. He is the first batsman in Ranji Trophy history to score over 1000 runs in a season twice. In 2008-09, Wasim Jaffer had scored 1260 runs for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy. This season, Jaffer has scored over 1000 runs for Vidarbha. Jaffer is the only Asian batsman to score 2 first-class double hundreds after turning 40

West Indies captain Holder 3rd player to hit Test double ton batting at no. 8

- Windies captain Jason Holder slammed 202*(229) in the second innings of the first Test against England, becoming only the third batsman in Test cricket history to score a double ton batting at number eight.
- Pakistan's Wasim Akram (257* against Zimbabwe, 1996) and Imtiaz Ahmed (209 against New Zealand, 1955) are the other two batsmen to have achieved the feat.

ICC announced a five year global partnership with Coca-Cola

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a five year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer Coca-Cola Company. Coca-Cola the exclusive non-alcoholic beverage partners of the ICC until 2023.
- The five-year agreement includes the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales, the ICC men's and women's T20 World Cups in Australia in 2020, the ICC Women's World Cup 2021 in New Zealand and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in India in 2023, among other tournaments.

Mithali Raj becomes first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs

- Mithali Raj, India's One-day International (ODI) captain becoming the first female cricketer to play 200 ODIs. The Indian captain also holds the record for most runs scored in ODIs with 6,622 runs including 7 centuries and 52 half centuries. She already holds the record for the most-capped women's cricketer in the history of the game. Mithali Raj had achieved the milestone when she played her 192 ODI of the career

India's Smriti Mandhana becomes number 1 in latest ICC women's ODI rankings

- Indian opener Smriti Mandhana has climbed three spots in the batters' list to become number one in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings. Ellyse Perry is second in the rankings, while another Aussie Meg Lanning is third. Indian ODI skipper Mithali Raj has slipped to the fifth position. In the ODI Bowler's rankings, veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami is fourth, with Poonam Yadav at eighth, and fellow spinner Deepti Sharma at ninth.
- Deepti is fourth in the All-rounders standings and is the sole Indian in the top-10.

Ishan Kishan becomes first Indian wicketkeeper-captain to score T20 century

- Jharkhand batsman Ishan Kishan became the first Indian wicketkeeper-captain to score a century in T20 format.
- The left-handed batsman achieved the milestone in Jharkhand's 2nd Syed Mushtaq Ali fixture against Jammu and Kashmir.

Sri Lanka first ever Asian team to win Test series in South Africa

- Sri Lanka became the first Asian side to win a Test series in South Africa.
- Chasing a target of 197, Sri Lanka had a 137-run deficit to deal with at the start of Day 3 with eight wickets in hand.
- Kusal Mendis and Oshada Fernando ensured that the visitors don't lose any more wickets.
- They won the Test by eight wickets and thus sealed the series 2-0. It also ended South Africa's run of seven consecutive series wins at home.

Pakistan's Sana Mir becomes first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is

- Former captain of the Pakistan women team Sana Mir has become the first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is. Sana Mir is one of Pakistan's most senior women cricketers and has been representing the country since 2005. The 33-year-old reached the milestone when she walked into the field for the ongoing third and final T20I

against West Indies in Karachi. Mir is the only sixth woman from around the world to play 100 T20Is. West Indian Deandra Dottin leads the list with 109 T20Is

21-year-old Mayank Markande becomes India's 79th T20I cricketer

- Leg-spinner Mayank Markande became the 79th cricketer to represent India in T20I cricket, achieving the feat against Australia in the first T20I at Visakhapatnam.
- Markande, who plays for Punjab in domestic circuit and Mumbai Indians in IPL, has taken 99 wickets in 47 professional matches across formats.
- Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batsman Peter Handscomb is making his T20I debut for Australia.

Sanath Jayasuriya banned from cricket for two years

- Former Sri Lanka captain and World Cup winner Sanath Jayasuriya was handed a two-year ban from all forms of cricket by the International Cricket Council's (ICC) anti-corruption code
- This was after Jayasuriya refused to co-operate with investigations surrounding corruption activities in Sri Lanka

Gayle 1st batsman in the world to smash 500 sixes in int'l cricket

- Windies' 39-year-old opener Chris Gayle has become the first ever batsman to smash 500 sixes in international cricket and the second batsman to slam 300 ODI sixes.
- Gayle smashed 14 sixes during his 97-ball 162-run knock against England in fourth ODI to reach 506 international sixes. He has hit 98 sixes in Tests, 305 in ODIs and 103 in T20Is.

Vidarbha lift their second consecutive Ranji Trophy

- Vidharbha lifted the Ranji Trophy for the second time in a row, defeating Saurashtra by 78 runs at Nagpur
- Vidarbha became the sixth team to win back to back Ranji Trophy titles. Left arm spinner, Sarwate was adjudged man of the match.

Ranji champion Vidarbha beat Rest of India to retain Irani Cup

- Ranji champions Vidarbha beat Rest of India at the **Jamtha Stadium** in **Nagpur** to retain the Irani Cup
- Vidarbha has now become the third team after Mumbai and Karnataka to clinch two Irani Cup titles in a row
- Vidarbha captain - Faiz Fazal

Chris Gayle announced retirement from One-day Internationals

- West Indian batsman Chris Gayle has announced retirement from One-day Internationals after the ICC World Cup 2019. The 39-year old left-hander has scored 9,727 ODI runs, second only to the legendary Brian Lara among West Indians in 284 matches. He needs 677 more runs to surpass Lara as the West Indies' all-time record ODI run scorer. The World Cup will be held in England and Wales from 30th May to 14th July 2019

Football

FIFA Rankings: Belgium top by one point

- FIFA rankings have been released, with the World No. 1 spot being decided by a single point. Meanwhile, the Socceroos remain steady in their position
- Belgium will end the year as No. 1 ahead of world champions France in the global rankings.
- Belgium have 1,727 points by FIFA's calculations to 1,726 for France. Brazil are third on 1,676.

Real Madrid 4-1 Al Ain: Club World Cup final

- Goals from Luka Modric, Marcos Llorente, Sergio Ramos and an own goal helped Real Madrid to lift their third consecutive title. The 2018 FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2018 presented by Alibaba Cloud was the 15th edition of the FIFA Club World Cup.

Egypt to host 2019 Africa Cup of Nations

- Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has announced. It will be the fifth time Egypt to host the African Cup of Nations. Egypt beat South Africa, the only other nation to bid, by 16 votes. Original host nation Cameroon was stripped of staging duties because of slow preparations.
- Egypt will use eight stadiums during the tournament, hosting in five different cities: Alexandria, Ismailia, Port Said, Suez and the capital Cairo.

Qatar defeat Japan to secure first ever Asian Cup Football

- Qatar won its first soccer title by beating four-time champion Japan 3-1 in the Asian Cup final. Qatar's Almoez Ali became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup. This was the first time that Japan lost in an Asian Cup final.

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Others

India's Manav Thakkar settled for a bronze medal in the U-21 Men's singles category in the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF)

- India's Manav Thakkar settled for a bronze medal in the U-21 Men's singles category in the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Challenge Belgosstrakh Belarus Open held in Minsk, Belarus. Manav Thakkar lost to Russia's Denis Iwonin in the semifinals by 2-3 to miss out on the gold. Zhao Zihao of China won the gold medal in the U-21 singles category by defeating Denis Iwonin of Russia.

UNESCO accepted Korean wrestling as one of the world's most treasured cultural practices

- UNESCO accepted a joint bid for Korean wrestling to be recognized as one of the world's most treasured cultural practices. This bids a new step in their reconciliation efforts of North and South Korea. The two Koreas had originally filed separate applications for their traditional form of wrestling to be recognized on the UN agency's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Raninder Singh becomes first Indian to be elected ISSF Vice President

- The elections were held during the General Assembly meeting of ISSF in Munich in which Raninder secured 161 votes to make it to the coveted position. The 51-year-old Raninder is currently the president of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).

Magnus Carlsen retains World Chess Championship 2018 title

- World number one Norwegian Magnus Carlsen has retained his World Chess Championship title, beating US opponent Fabiano Caruana in a tie-breaker event. Carlsen's peak rating of 2882, achieved in 2014, is the highest in history. Carlsen became World Champion in 2013 by defeating Viswanathan Anand.

Ullas Narayana won India's first international medal in ultra running

- Ullas Narayana became the first Indian individual medal winner in an international ultra running event by winning bronze in the 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championships in Taipei, Taiwan.

Eliud Kipchoge and Caterine Ibarguen have been named male and female world athletes of the year at the IAAF Athletics Awards 2018

- Kenyan distance runner Eliud Kipchoge and Colombian long & triple jumper Caterine Ibarguen have been named male and female world athletes of the year at the IAAF Athletics Awards 2018. The pair were honoured by the IAAF at the Grimaldi Forum in Monaco.

Prathamesh Maulingkar has won the trophy of Mister Supranational 2018

- Prathamesh Maulingkar from India has created history by becoming the first Asian/Indian to win 2018 Mister Supranational title in a competition held in Krynica-Zdroj, Poland. He defeated 37 contestants from all over the world in the final round to win the coveted title.

2019 Khelo India Youth Games will be held Pune

- Khelo India Youth Games-2019 will be held in Pune of Maharashtra in January. Sports Minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore announced that 9000 youth will participate in this edition of the game. Under Khelo India programme, the government is providing scholarships to 1500 students from across the country. Last year around 3500 school children had participated in the event. In this edition of Khelo India Youth Games university players will also take part.

Shubhankar Sharma became the youngest and the fifth Indian to win the Asian Tour Order of Merit in golf

- Shubhankar Sharma became the youngest and the fifth Indian to win Asian Tour Order of Merit in golf. The Indian won it even before the finish of the last two events of the year. Before Sharma, Jyoti Randhawa (2002), Arjun Atwal (2003), Jeev Milkha Singh (2006 and 2008) and Anirban Lahiri (2015) had achieved the feat.

PV Sindhu wins maiden BWF World Tour Title

- PV Sindhu, the 2016 Rio Olympic silver medallist, created history on 16th December 2018 as she became the first Indian to win the BWF World Tour Finals. She defeated Japan's Nozomi Okuhara, the 2017 world champion, by 21-19 21-17 in the final match that lasted for an hour and two minutes. Earlier, Sindhu defeated Ratchanok by 21-16, 25-23 in the semi-finals to enter the finals of the season-ending BWF World Tour tournament.

Belgium wins Hockey World Cup 2018 Title

- Belgium Hockey team won their first ever World cup title on 16th December 2018 after they defeated The Netherlands in sudden death. Belgium, which also won a silver medal in Rio Olympics 2016, made history by beating the opponents by 3-2 in the penalty shoot-out after finals ended without any goal.

Djokovic and Halep wins 2018 ITF world champions

- Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep have been named as the 2018 International Tennis Federation (ITF) world champions by the governing body of global tennis. World number one Djokovic receives the honour from the ITF for the sixth time, while it is the first year that Romania's top-ranked Halep has been recognized. Djokovic had a maximum speed of 36.02kph, better than anyone else but was second to Andy Murray in terms of average speed, the Brit scoring 15.89 kph as compared to Djokovic's 14.89 kph. Halep, the former French Open finalist, had a maximum speed with 23.04 kph while World No. 1 Angelique Kerber's average speed at 14.27 was the highest.

Marathon runner Apoorva Chaudhary sets a national record

- Apoorva Chaudhary, the 28-year old ultra runner from Bijnor in Uttar Pradesh, created a national record by completing 176.8 km in the women's 24-hour event at the NEB 24 Hour Stadium Run held at New Delhi under the aegis of Athletics Federation of India.

The International Tennis Federation announced Serbia's Novak Djokovic as the 2018 ITF World Champion.

- The International Tennis Federation announced Serbia's Novak Djokovic as the 2018 ITF World Champion. The ITF World Champions will receive their awards at the 2019 ITF World Champions Dinner on Tuesday 4 June, in Paris, during Roland Garros.

BWF Rankings: PV Sindhu jumps three spots

- Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu has climbed 3 spots to Number 3 in the latest world badminton rankings
- She moved up after claiming a 21-19, 21-17 win against Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in last week's BWF World Tour Finals in Guangzhou, China

Pune's Vedangi cycles around the globe in 159 days

- Having spent 159 days on her bicycle covering 300 km daily Kulkarni, who is from Pune's Nigdi area, completed the mandatory 29,000km required to qualify for bicycling across the globe, She was the fastest woman in Asia to cycle across the globe.

Third edition of women's national boxing championships held in Karnataka

- Third edition of women's national boxing championships begins in Vijayanagara, Karnataka
- With close to 250 entries received from 31 states and institutions, pugilists will compete in all 10 weight categories.
- Boxing Federation of India, President - Ajay Singh

80th National Table Tennis Championship begins in Cuttack

- The 80th National Table Tennis Championship began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha. As many as 35 teams, including 550 players from different parts of the country are participating in the mega championship. Odisha State Table Tennis Association (OSTTA) is hosting the championships after a gap of 18 years.

Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic won the Hopman Cup for the second time

- Switzerland's Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic secured a 2-1 victory over Germany's Angelique Kerber and Alexander Zverev to win the Hopman Cup for the second year in a row. In a rerun of 2018 final, Federer beat Zverev to give the Swiss an early 1-0 lead. Wimbledon champion Kerber then overcame Bencic to level the tie. However, the Swiss claimed a tight win in the mixed doubles to claim their fourth Hopman Cup title.
- Twenty time Grand Slam champion Federer is the first player to win three Hopman Cups - twice with Bencic and once with Martina Hingis, in 2001.

Second edition of Khelo India Youth Games inaugurated in Pune

- The second edition of Khelo India Youth Games officially inaugurated in Pune, Maharashtra. More than 9000 players from different states will participate in 18 different games at Khelo India Youth Games. Khelo India Youth Games is a part Khelo India which is the revamped national programme for development of sports in India.
- Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), formerly Khelo India School Games (KISG), held annually in January or February.

Sydney and Brisbane Chosen to Host ATP Cup In 2020

- The debut of the ATP Cup will take place in January 2020.
- Australian cities Sydney and Brisbane have been announced as the first two host locations for the newest team event in men's tennis.

- With more than 100 players from 24 nations vying for \$15 million in prize money and 750 ATP Ranking points.

Mary Kom attained number one position in AIBA rankings

- M C Mary Kom has attained number one position in the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) latest world rankings. Mary Kom is placed top of the charts in the 48kg weight division with 1700 points.
- The 36-year-old will have to jump to 51kg in pursuit of her 2020 Olympic dream as 48kg is not yet included in the Games roster

Maharashtra tops the medal tally with 37 golds at the Khelo India Youth Games in Pune

- Maharashtra had 111 medals in its kitty with 37 gold, 31 silver and 43 bronze. Delhi continues to follow second with 35 gold and Haryana too maintains its third position with 29 gold.
- Ten year old Abhinav Shaw became the youngest gold medallist in shooting, He teamed up with Mehuli Ghosh to help West Bengal win the 10m air rifle mixed team event.

Bengaluru Raptors clinch PBL title

- Bengaluru Raptors beat Mumbai Rockets 4-3 in the final of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru to win their maiden title.
- Kidambi Srikanth, Vu Ji Trang (Trump match) and men's doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Satiawan won their matches for Bengaluru Raptors.

8 year old Kartik Singh becomes youngest to win Junior World title in golf

- Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under 8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.
- He finished 8th at the US kids junior world championship 2017, Pinehurst, the USA in 7 year category.

Shakil Ahmed sets world record in Indoor rowing

- Asian Cup Gold medallist Shakil Amed set up a world record in indoor rowing by completing 1,00,000 (one lakh) metres in above 40 years category.
- Shakil began his record setting indoor rowing feat in Salt Lake stadium complex and achieved the milestone of covering 1,00,000 metres of simulated distance in 10 hours.

1st National EMRS National Sports Meet, 2019 Began at Hyderabad

- The 1st National Level Sports Meet for the students of Eklatya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) was inaugurated by Shri Jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs at G.M.C Balayogi Stadium, Hyderabad
- The Minister also launched an app 'EMRS Sports Meet' dedicated on the occasion. The event has a participation of 1777 students comprising of 975 boys and 802 girls representing 20 States of the country.
- Government has decided to establish EMRS in every block with more than 50% or more tribal population and 20,000 or more tribal persons by the year 2022 thereby around 462 schools will be set up in addition to the 288 EMRSs already sanctioned.

Ex-captain Sardar Singh named in Hockey India selection committee

- Former captain Sardar Singh has been included in a 13-member Hockey India selection committee.
- The team will be headed by BP Govinda, a member of the 1975 World Cup-winning team.

Ankita Raina wins ITF's tournament in Singapore

- India's Ankita Raina has won the International Tennis Federation's 25,000-dollar Women's tournament in Singapore, Ankita defeated top seed and world number 122 Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands, 6-3, 6-2.
- She toppled four seeded players in the tournament to win her first title of the season and eighth overall.
- Ankita came into the tournament after competing at the Qualifiers of the ongoing Australian Open. She will play two more tournaments before gearing up for the Fed Cup, starting in the first week of next month at Astana, Kazakhstan.

Sam Stosur and Zhang Shuai win Australian Open women's doubles title

- Former US Open women's singles winner Sam Stosur teamed up with Zhang Shuai to overcome defending champions Timea Babos and Kristina Mladenovic to claim the Australian Open women's doubles title.
- This was the 34-year-old Australian's first Grand Slam title on home soil since 2005. Notably, this was Zhang's first Grand Slam title of any kind.

Novak Djokovic beats Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open title

- Novak Djokovic defeated Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open Men's Singles title at Melbourne. World No.1 outplayed the second-ranked Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in a largely one sided match

- In Women's Singles, Japan's Naomi Osaka clinched her maiden Australian Open Grand Slam Singles title in Melbourne. Osaka defeated Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic 7-6, 5-7, 6-4 in the summit clash

Saina wins Indonesia Masters after injured Marin limps out of final

- Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal won her first Indonesia Masters title after three-time world champion Carolina Marin limped out of the final due to a leg injury.
- The Spaniard was leading 10-4 in the first game, after she retired with injury.

Kartik Sharma wins New South Wales Men's Amateur Golf Champion

- India's Kartik Sharma won the New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship in Australia. Kartik notched up a magnificent win over Australia's Nathan Barberie in the scheduled 36 hole final to emerge as champion
- The Gurgaon golfer has been playing for India since the age of 10 as part of the National Squad. Kartik had also won the Indian golf union western India amateur golf championship 2018

73 year old Frenchman wins solo round the world sailing race

- Frenchman Jean-Luc van den Heede won the round-the-world Golden Globe race without the help of modern technology after 211 days at sea
- Jean-Luc Van Den Heede arrived Les Sables d'Olonne in western France in his 35 foot yacht Matmut, the first boat to finish the 30,000 mile Golden Globe race.

Vani Kapoor becomes first Indian to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA)

- Vani Kapoor became the first Indian to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after coming through its first-ever Qualifying Tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Ballarat, Australia. Vani Kapoor finished tied-12th in the first-ever Australian LPGA Qualifying Tournament. The top-20 from a field of 81 earned playing rights on the Australian LPGA

INS Dronacharya wins Kochi area boat pulling regatta trophy

- The Boat Pulling Regatta is one of the most prestigious and traditional naval sporting activities conducted by the Navy. The boats had to cover a distance of 1.6 km in the Ernakulam Channel
- The INS Dronacharya team won the Regatta trophy in the Kochi Area Pulling Regatta 2019 of the Southern Naval Command (SNC) held in the Ernakulam. Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) School & Diving School secured the runners up position. The boats used in the regatta are 27 feet long 'whalers' a type of seaboat - each having a crew of five 'pullers' (rowers) and one coxswain (helm)

Haryana Hammers beat defending champions Punjab Royals to lift PWL 4 title

- Haryana Hammers won the fourth edition of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) as they outclassed Punjab Royals 6-3 in the summit clash at the Gautam Buddha University indoor stadium
- Riding on Aleksander Khotsianivski, Ali Shabanov, Kiran, Ravi Kumar and Anastasia Nichita's dominating performance, the runners-up in the last three editions, Haryana Hammers, turned the tables on the defending champions Punjab Royals winning all the first five bouts of the evening to clinch the title

India's Ramit Tandon wins Seattle Open

- Indian squash player Ramit Tandon defeated Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini in the finals to win the Seattle Open, a Professional Squash Association challenger squash Tour event
- The Indian won 11-4, 11-7, 2-11, 11-2 for his first PSA title in 2019 and fourth title overall in his career.

Manpreet Pawar named Player of the Year 2018 by Asia Hockey

- Indian hockey player Manpreet Pawar was named as the Male Player of the Year 2018 by the Asian Hockey Federation. The Indian women's team striker Lalremsiami bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.
- The Indian men's team was awarded the Best Performance of The Year after being the only Asian side to reach the World Cup's top-eight in Bhubaneswar.

Abhijeet Gupta wins Cannes International Open trophy

- Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta finished with 7.5 points to win the Cannes International Open
- He took an easy draw with Pier Luigi Basso of Italy in the ninth and final round. This was Gupta's first solo International tournament victory. Abhijeet had also tied for the first place at the Delhi International open in January

Prajnesh Gunneswaran reached career best 94th Rank

- India's Prajnesh Gunneswaran achieved his career-best ranking, rising three places to 94th in the latest list.

- Ramkumar Ramanathan dropped nine spots to 137, while Yuki Bhambri further slipped to 171.
- In Doubles rankings, Rohan Bopanna remained at 38th and Divij Sharan at 39th, while Leander Paes rose two spots to 73rd.
- In the Women's rankings, Ankita Raina continued to be the top-placed Indian at 164, followed by Karman Thandi at 207 and Pranjala Yadlapalli at 293

Hungary's Veronika Major wins gold medal at ISSF World Cup

- Hungary's Veronika Major won a gold medal at the ongoing ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
- She bagged the medal in 10-metre air pistol event.
- Taipei's Chia Ying Wu won a silver medal, with 238.4 points Korean Bomi Kim came third, with 218.3 points.

Mirabai Chanu won gold at EGAT Cup in Thailand

- World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand. Chanu won the 48kg category gold with an effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event.
- The 24-year-old Manipuri lifted 82 kg in snatch and 110 kg in clean and jerk to finish on top of the podium.

9th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2019 Begins In Hisar, Haryana

- The 9th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2019 begins in Hisar's AstroTurf International Hockey Stadium, Haryana Agricultural University.
- RSPB will begin their campaign against Hockey Rajasthan in the Pool A opening match during the 11-day domestic extravaganza

Corentin Moutet clinched Chennai Open ATP Challenger title

- France's Corentin Moutet has clinched the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tournament title after beating Andrew Harris of Australia 6-3, 6-3 in the singles final.
- It was the second Challenger title for Moutet, who received \$7,200 and 80 ATP points.

RSPB lift Senior National Men's Hockey title

- Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) lifted the 9th Senior National Men's Hockey Championship crown at Gwalior. RSPB beat defending champion Punjab 3-2 and claim the gold medal
- Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) beat Punjab & Sind Bank 4-1 to clinch the bronze medal.

Senior National Badminton Championships begin in Guwahati

- The 83rd edition of Senior National Badminton Championships begin in the Assamese city of Guwahati
- Defending champion Saina Nehwal and last edition's runner-up PV Sindhu will be the biggest attractions in Women's Singles. The Men's Singles will be without defending champion HS Prannoy and runners-up Kidambi Srikanth who are suffering from injuries. This is the first time the Nationals is returning to the North-East since Guwahati last hosted it in 2010

Jamie Chadwick became the first female driver to win the MRF championship

- Jamie Chadwick from England made history by becoming the first female driver to win the MRF challenge after scoring a triple win in the final round of the season in Chennai.
- Chadwick ended the championship with 280 points, including two bonus points for the fastest lap in the last race
- Chadwick became the first woman to win a British F3 race in August

Clouded Leopard will be mascot for National Games 2022 in Meghalaya

- Meghalaya's state animal Clouded Leopard will be the mascot for the National Games 2022
- This decision was taken at the first National Games 2022 executive committee meeting chaired by Meghalaya Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Banteidor Lyngdoh. Meghalaya will be the third northeastern state after Manipur (1999) and Assam (2007) hosted the National Games

Prajnesh Gunneswaran 3rd Indian to reach top-100 in ATP rankings

- Prajnesh Gunneswaran broke into men's singles top-100 for the first time in his career with a jump of six places to 97th Rank. He is only third Indian player to break into the top-100 in the past decade after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri. In the doubles, Rohan Bopanna stayed put at 37 and was followed by his partner Divij Sharan at 39.

83rd Senior Badminton Nationals:

Saina wins Women's singles Title, Sourabh Verma bags Men's singles Title

- Saina Nehwal beats PV Sindhu in the women's final of the **83rd Yonex Sunrise** Senior Badminton National Championship, claiming her second successive and fourth overall (2006, 2007, 2018, 2019) Nationals title, in

Guwahati. In men's single, Sourabh Verma completed a hat-trick of titles, claiming the men's singles crown after defeating young Lakshya Sen in straight games of 21-18, 21-13. The singles winners were awarded prize money of Rs. 3.25 lakhs while the runners-up got Rs. 1.7 lakhs. Each of the singles semi-finalists and the quarter-finalists got richer by Rs. 62500 and Rs. 27500 respectively.

Mary Kom named as brand ambassador of PUMA

- Six-time world women boxing champion MC Mary Kom was named as a brand ambassador for global sportswear giant PUMA for a two-year period. Mary Kom is now PUMA India's new ambassador for their women's training category and will be representing the brand in marketing campaigns.
- She will lead PUMA's #DoYou conversation that aims to motivate women across the nation to be strong and accomplish their goals

Important Obituaries Dec

Person	Field
George HW Bush	41st president of the United States in 1989
Jagdish Thakkar	Public Relations Officer (PRO) in the prime minister's office and senior journalist
Pandit Arun Bhaduri	Famous classical singer Pandit
Tulsi Giri	Former Nepalese Prime Minister
Dipali Borthakur	Assamese Singer (Nightingale of Assam)
Hanif Hamgam	Afghanistan comedian
Nirupam Sen	Veteran Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader and former West Bengal minister
Jai Narain Prasad Nishad	Former Union minister and Janata Dal (United) leader
Nirendranath Chakraborty	Bengali poet
Sulagitti Narasamma	social worker
Hamidi Kashmiri	Urdu poet and former vice-chancellor of the University of Kashmir
Amos Oz	Israel author
Mrinal Sen	Bengali film maker

Jan

Sl.No	Person	Field
1.	Kader Khan	An Afghan-born Indian-Canadian film actor
2.	Larry Roberts	ARPAnet lead, early internet pioneer
3.	C H Loknath	Kannada actor
4.	Ramakant Achrekar	Cricket coach
5.	Dibyendu Palit	Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee
6.	Harold Brown	Former U.S. Defence Secretary
7.	Lenin Rajendran	Veteran Malayalam filmmaker
8.	Sir Michael Atiyah	British mathematician
9.	Raghubir Singh Bhola	Former India hockey player
10.	Bhanu Prakash Singh	Former Union minister, ex-Goa Governor
11.	Krishna Sobti	Hindi writer
12.	Michel Legrand	French composer
13.	George Fernandes	Former Defence Minister

Feb

Person	Field
Hiten Bhaya	Former Planning Commission member and ex-director of IIMC
Ramesh Bhatkar	Marathi actor
Priyanath Dey	freedom fighter and former Odisha MLA
Harihar Karan	Senior Congress leader and former minister of Odisha
Ladu Kishore Swain	Odisha MP
John Dingell	US congressman
Albert Finney	Oscar nominee and British actor
Mahesh Anand	Bollywood Actor
Former England football team goalkeeper	Gordon Banks
Chemistry Nobel Prize Winner	Manfred Eigen
Raj Kumar Barjatya	Bollywood film producer
Pratik Choudhury	Bengali singer and music composer
Rajendran	Tamil Nadu, sitting Lok Sabha member from AIADMK
Kodi Ramakrishna	Veteran Telugu film director
Francis D'Souza	Former deputy chief minister of Goa and BJP MLA
Andrea Levy	British author
Bruno Ganz	Swiss actor
Sibghatullah Mojaddedi	Former Afghan interim president and ex-Jihadi leader
Namvar Singh	Hindi writer
William E. Butterworth III	American military veteran and novelist
Wallace Smith Broecker	Climate scientist