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NATIONAL NEWS

CBFC wants ‘Gujarat‘ out of Amartya Sen film

- National Award-winning filmmaker Suman Ghosh said the CBFC, in a letter, had sought the removal of the word “Gujarat” from his documentary on Nobel laureate Amartya Sen.

- The documentary is named *The Argumentative Indian*

- The words CBFC Kolkata had objected to were — cow, Hindu, Hindutva and Gujarat.

Bengal unveils official State emblem

- The official emblem of West Bengal was unveiled by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

- Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Chief Minister emphasised the importance of the “individuality” of every State. *Designed by Ms. Banerjee, it features the Ashoka emblem on top.*
• “We had to do this [create the State emblem] 70 years after Independence because it has never been thought of before. No one here thought that every State should have its individuality,” the CM said at the State Secretariat Nabanna.

• She also said that the Bengal government received the Centre’s approval for the emblem.

T.N. on top in higher education enrolment

• Tamil Nadu has emerged as the leader in the country in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education, according to the All India Survey on Higher Education report (2116-2017), released by Minister of Human Resource Development

• GER for higher education is calculated for the age group 18-23. The ratio measures total enrolment irrespective of age, expressed as a percentage to the eligible population (18-23 years) in a given academic year.

• With a female GER of 45.6%, the State is just behind two Union Territories, Chandigarh and Delhi. Among men, again Tamil Nadu at 48.2% tops the list followed by the UTs of Chandigarh and Delhi.

Come July, label mandatory for food certified as ‘organic’

• The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) had issued regulations that required food companies selling organic produce to get certified with one of the two authorities — National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) or the Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India).
• Labelling on the package of organic food shall convey full and accurate information on the organic status of the product.

• Such product may carry a certification or quality assurance mark of one of the systems mentioned above in addition to the Food Safety and Standard Authority of India’s organic logo.

After four decades, India gets a Kashmiri film

• *Kashmir Daily* is based on the theme of drug addiction and unemployment in Kashmir.

• Producer and director of the film is Hussein Khan.

Budget session from Jan. 29

• The budget session of Parliament will begin on January 29.

• Union Budget will be presented on February 1.

• Ram Nath Kovind will address the two Houses on January 29, and the Economic Survey will be tabled the same day.

Karnataka tops foreign students’ list

• Karnataka has the maximum number of international students, while Bengaluru district has the most number of colleges in the country.

Finally, IIMs can award degrees

• The Lok Sabha passed the much-awaited Indian Institute of Management Bill, 2017 thereby declaring the top management institutions — Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) — as Institutions of National Importance.

• Following the passage of the Bill, these institutes will now be able to grant degrees to students, as against post-graduate diplomas that are awarded currently.

Netanyahu to gift Modi a desalination jeep
• Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will present his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, THE GAL-MOBILE water desalination and purification jeep.

• Gal-Mobile is an independent, integrated water purification vehicle, designed to produce high-quality drinking water. It can be useful during natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes, for military use in difficult terrain and in rural areas to provide potable water.

Telangana to consider water release to Karnataka

• The Telangana government has assured Karnataka that it will consider release of water from out of its allotment in Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (RDS) to meet the latter State’s water crisis for both irrigation and drinking purposes.

PVC-based plastic banned in Goa from May 30: Parrikar

• PVC-based plastic will be banned from May 30 and no plastic packaging will be allowed in the state from December, Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar said.

Electoral bonds for political donations notified

How to donate to parties

Electoral bonds will be available for purchase for 10 days each in the months of January, April, July and October

- Such bonds can be purchased by any Indian citizen or a body incorporated in India
- Can be bought for any amount in multiples of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh, and ₹1 crore
- Can only be bought from specified SBI branches
- Purchaser must pay from KYC-compliant bank account
- Bonds will not carry the name of the payee and will be valid for 15 days
- Can be used for donation to a registered political party only
- Can be encashed only through that party’s bank account

• “Electoral bonds would be a bearer instrument in the nature of a promissory note and an interest-free banking instrument.”
Electoral bonds can be purchased for any value in multiples of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 10 lakhs, and Rs. 1 crore from any of the specified branches of the State Bank of India.

The bonds will have a life of 15 days during which they can be used to make donations to registered political parties that have secured not less than 1% of the votes polled in the last election to the Lok Sabha or Assembly.

The bonds shall be available for purchase for a period of 10 days each in the months of January, April, July and October, with an additional 30 days to be specified by the Central government in the year of a general election.

**Inland Waterways Authority of India signs project agreement with the World Bank**

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) signed a project agreement with the World Bank even as the latter entered into a US $ 375 million loan agreement with the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance for Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP).

The signing of the Agreement follows the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, for the implementation of the US $ 800 million JMVP for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1 (River Ganga) from Varanasi to Haldia.

**Zojila tunnel**

The 14-km long Zojila tunnel will be constructed by the IRB Infrastructure Developers in Jammu & Kashmir state.

Zoji la tunnel on Srinagar-Leh section connecting NH-1A in Jammu and Kashmir.
• After completion, it will be the longest tunnel of South Asia. The tunnel will provide all weather connectivity between Kashmir and Ladakh region.

• On completion, it will be Asia’s largest 2-lane bi-directional tunnel.

**Sarbananda Sonowal Launches Free CT Scan Services In Assam’s Majuli**

• Assam launched a free CT Scan service under the *Chief Minister Free Diagnostic Services* programme at the Shri Shri Pitambar Dev Goswami Civil Hospital in Majuli island.

• Majuli is world’s largest river island. It is also the home constituency of Sarbananda Sonowal.

**PM Modi’s “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” song**

• The theme conceived by Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, “Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat” has been released as a national integration song composed by music legend Pandit Bhajan Sopori and music maestro Abhay Rustum Sopori, celebrating 69th Republic Day of India.

• Another unique feature of the song is that it introduces 3 new voices Shahbaz Gul and Masrat-Un-Nisa from Kashmir, and Iqbal S Qureshi from Gujarat.

**Rajya Sabha Sets A Record: Venkaiah Naidu Hails 'Cooperation' Of MPs**

• The Rajya Sabha made history. For the first time, all Zero Hour submissions, all Special Mentions were fully completed.

**Women can perform Haj alone, says PM**

• Muslim women can perform Haj without Mehram or male guardian highlighting his government's attempt at facilitating women's travel for Haj pilgrimage without a male companion.

**Yasin Malik takes up prisoners' cause**

• Yasin Malik, chief of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front wrote an open letter to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to highlight the conditions of Kashmiri prisoners

**Dalai lama offers prayer at Maha bodhi temple**
Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama offered prayer at the Maha Bodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, where Gautama Buddha attained enlightenment about 2500 years ago.

The Dalai Lama came to Gaya, Bihar after concluding his tour of Sarnath in Varanasi, where Buddha had delivered his first sermon after enlightenment.

Padmavati controversy

1. December 2017
   a) The CBFC sought the opinions of two historians Professor BL Gupta and Prof RS Khangarot on the film Padmavati.
   b) CBFC chief Prasoon Joshi cleared Padmavati with minor modifications, a new title that is from 'Padmavati' to 'Padmaavat', and a U/A certificate. The makers were asked to add a disclaimer stating that the film does not glorify the banned practice of Sati.

2. January 2018
   a) New release date announced: A few days after CBFC cleared it with a U/A certificate, Padmaavat had a new release date on 25 January.
   b) Padmaavat banned in states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat despite clearance by the CBFC. Reports claimed that the Himachal Pradesh government also banned Padmaavat in the state, but in an interview, chief minister Jai Ram Thakur denied the claims.
   c) Post ban, Padmaavat makers challenged ban in Supreme Court three judge bench comprising Justice Dipak Misra, Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud. Harish Salve, who represented Viacom 18 Motion Pictures, the producers of Padmaavat, argued that if states are banning films, they are putting the federal structure of India in grave danger.
d) **Supreme Court stays ban, Padmaavat to release across India:** Supreme Court suspended the ban on Padmaavat in four states — Rajasthan, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana — days before the film’s release on 25 January.

3. **Padmaavat released on 25th January, 2018**
   a) **Padmaavat** stars Deepika Padukone (as Rani Padmini), Ranveer Singh (as Sultan Allauddin Khilji) and Shahid Kapoor (as Maharawal Ratan Singh). Director Sanjay Leela Bhansali
   
   b) The movie is an adaptation of Padmaavat, an epic poem written in the 16th century by poet Malik Muhammad Jayasi.

   c) In the poem, the Sufi Jayasi speaks of Padmavati, princess of Sinhaldweep in Sri Lanka, and Ratansen, the King of Chittor. After hearing of the princess’ beauty from Hiraman, a parrot, the king, who is already married to Nagmati, embarks on an arduous journey to Sinhaldweep, and later marries the princess.

   d) But there is a twist: Devpal, another king, too, has heard of Padmavati's unmatched beauty and covets her. A battle ensues between the two kings. Meanwhile, a banished courtier seeking vengeance tells Alauddin Khilji of Padmavati and he marches to Chittor. But upon his arrival, he sees that the princess has committed jauhar.

4. **26th January**
   a) The Supreme Court agreed to hear pleas for initiating contempt of court action against the Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan governments and Karni Sena members for aggravated incidents of violence, even against schoolchildren, in the background of the release of Padmaavat.

   b) The petition was filed by activist Tehseen Poonawala and Supreme Court advocate Vineet Dhanda.

   c) The petition said the violence and the lack of efforts on part of the State authorities to neither prevent nor control it amounted to contempt of the court’s January 18 order, which said the State was obliged to protect the fundamental right of free speech and creative rights.

   d) The state has been repeatedly reminded of its duty to protect freedom of expression, most notably in S. Rangarajan v. P. Jagiivan Ram (1989), when the Supreme Court held that the government cannot cite the possibility of violence to prohibit a film’s screening.

**Panic button at Uttar Pradesh**

- A pilot project to test ‘panic button’ feature on mobile phones to ensure women safety will kick-start from Uttar Pradesh on January 26, Union minister Maneka Gandhi said.
In April, 2016, the Department of Telecommunications had, through a gazette notification, made it mandatory for mobile manufacturers to provide panic buttons in cell phones by January, 2017.

The order said the phones will have to have the panic button in the form of numeric key 5 or 9 to invoke emergency calls. Smart phones without the facility of an emergency call, too, will have to have the same provision, or allow use of power on or off button as the panic button. However, implementation of the order was delayed by a year for various reasons.

A smartphone user will have to download a mobile application which will send alerts if a victim long presses the panic button on the phone.

**Ujh Multipurpose project**

The Central Water Commission\(^1\) has submitted a detailed project report (DPR) of the Ujh multi-purpose project to the Jammu and Kashmir government for evaluation. The project will store around 0.65 million acre-feet (MAF) of water of the river Ujh (a tributary of river Ravi) to irrigate nearly 30,000 hectares of land and produce more than 200 MW of hydro-power.

Under the Indus Waters Treaty, water of river Ravi is allocated to India.

On 19 September 1960, India and Pakistan signed the Indus Waters Treaty in Karachi. This treaty is a water-distribution treaty between the two countries on sharing the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries. The deal was brokered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (which later became the World Bank)

**Fun facts**

2. They flow through the states of Punjab, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Sindh in Pakistan.
3. During the partition of the country, conflicts arose as to how to share the bountiful waters of the Indus River basin.
4. The source of all the rivers lay in India while Pakistan was dependent on these waters as its chief source of water for irrigation.
5. On 19 September 1960, India and Pakistan signed the Indus Waters Treaty in Karachi. This treaty is a water-distribution treaty between the two countries on sharing the waters of the Indus River and its tributaries. The deal was brokered by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (which later became the World Bank).

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\(^1\) Central Water Commission is a premier Technical Organization of India in the field of Water Resources as an attached office of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
As per this treaty, the eastern rivers Sutlej, Beas and Ravi are controlled by India; and the western rivers Indus, Chenab and Jhelum are governed by Pakistan. That means India has unrestricted usage rights over the eastern rivers. And, India should allow unrestricted flow of the western rivers into Pakistan.

1. *India-Pak Disputes Connecting Indus: Timeline*

- 1948: India cuts off supply in most canals that went to Pakistan. But restores it later.
- 1951: Pakistan accuses India of cutting water to many of its villages.
- 1954: Word Bank comes up with a water-sharing formula for two countries.
- 1984: Pakistan objects over India building Tulbul barrage on Jhelum. India stops it unilaterally.
- 2007: Pakistan raises concern over Kishanganga hydroelectric plant.
- 2008: Lashkar-e-Taiba starts campaign against India. Its chief Hafiz Saeed accuses India of water terrorism.
- 2010: Pakistan accuses India of choking water supply consistently.
- 2016: India reviews working of Indus Waters Treaty linking it with cross-border terrorism (Uri attack).

NEW BOOK ON 2G SCAM

- A Raja’s is the author of the book ‘2G Saga Unfolds’
- In his book ‘2G Saga Unfolds’, Raja slammed the then CAG Vinod Rai saying the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General was "severely compromised" by Rai

INX MEDIA MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

- The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued fresh summons to Karti Chidambaram, son of senior Congress leader P Chidambaram, in connection with the INX Media money laundering case.
- The agency has alleged that Mr Karti received money from INX Media for using his influence to manipulate a tax probe against it in a case of violation of
Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) conditions to receive investment from Mauritius.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH DECLARED OPEN DEFECATION FREE

- Arunachal Pradesh emerged as the second state in the Northeast, after Sikkim, to be declared Open Defecation Free.

- The project undertaken under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) SBM (G) saw the light of day only after the state government extended an incentive of Rs 8,000 per toilet.

JAWANS AND TERRORISTS KILLED IN ATTACK ON CRPF CAMP IN PULWAMA

- Heavily armed terrorists launched a pre-dawn suicide attack on a Central Reserve Police Force camp in Pulwama district of south Kashmir, killing and injuring the personnel of the force.

MY ENCOUNTER WITH THE BIG CAT AND OTHER ADVENTURES IN RANTHAMBORE
My encounter with the big cat and other adventures in ranthambhore is written by daulat singh shaktawat

Even multiple tiger attacks didn't take away the fighting spirit of daulat singh shaktawat – a forest officer, who has set uncountable examples of courage and bravery.

INDIA SETS IN MOTION SWACHH SURVEKSHAN, THE WORLD’S LARGEST CLEANLINESS SURVEY

Largest Cleanliness Survey in the world would be conducted from January 4 to March 10 so as to evaluate the achievements of Swachh Bharat Mission in urban areas.

Surveyers will reach out to more than 200 urban local bodies on the first day and the entire exercise is expected to be completed by March. For the first time, the Swachh Survekshan survey will assess all the 4,041 towns in the country and cover a population of about 400 million people.

V.K. Jindal is the mission director of Swachh Bharat Mission at the ministry of housing and urban affairs.

In its third iteration, the yearly cleanliness survey, that arose as a mechanism to evaluate progress as well as deficiencies in waste management in urban areas, has undergone several changes in response to criticism.

Under the first survey, Swachh Survekshan-2016, 73 cities with more than 1 million population and all the state capitals were ranked. Mysuru had topped the list.

In the 2017 survey, 434 cities with over 100,000 population and all the state capitals were ranked. Indore had emerged as the cleanest city.
The 2018 survey is the first such pan-India exercise.

85TH SIVAGIRI PILGRIMAGE CELEBRATIONS AT SIVAGIRI MUTT IN KERALA

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 85th annual Sivagiri pilgrimage celebrations at Sivagiri Mutt in Kerala via video conferencing.
- The Sivagiri Mutt is a major spiritual-cum-pilgrim centre of the Ezhava community in Kerala and was established by Sri Narayana Guru, who propagated the message of 'One Caste, One Religion and One God for Mankind'.

REPUBLIC DAY 2018: THE 10 ASEAN LEADERS TO BE CHIEF GUESTS THIS YEAR

- 69th Republic Day parade in 2018 was attended by 10 heads of state from ASEAN or Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a regional grouping of 10 Southeast Asian countries.
Leaders from the 10 ASEAN nations -- Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei were the chief guests at Republic Day 2018.

Just as the presence of U.S. President Barack Obama as the chief guest at Republic Day in 2015 sent a signal to the rest of the world, the ASEAN leaders’ participation has a resonance of its own.

Former External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh also maintains that hosting 10 chief guests at the Republic Day parade is a unique event. “We have hosted multiple heads of states as in 1983 when we hosted the NAM summit and more recently in the India-Africa Summit.

Other than the all-woman BSF contingent on motorcycles, India’s long-range sub-sonic cruise missile Nirbhay will be showcased for the first time. The weaponised Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH), Rudra, will also be part of the fly-past for the first time.

Nirbhay, with a range of over 1,000 km, is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation and was successfully test-fired last November after some initial failures.

The chief guest at India's first Republic Day on January 26, 1950 was the President of Indonesia, and since then, five other Southeast Asian leaders have chief guests at the Republic Day parades.

Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia since 2014, is the first in his country without a high-ranking political or military background. Prior to becoming president, he served as the Governor of the Indonesian capital, Jakarta.

Lee Hsien Loong, the third current Prime Minister of Singapore has been in office since 2004. Mr Lee is the eldest child of Singapore's first first Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew.

Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of Vietnam and member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Nguyen Xuan Phuc became the Prime Minister in 2016, at the 11th working session of the 13th National Assembly.

Dato Sri Mohammad Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia was sworn into office in 2009. He is the eldest son of Abdul Razak Hussein, Malaysia's second Prime Minister and nephew of Hussein Onn, Malaysia's third Prime Minister.

General Prayut Chan-o-cha, a retired Royal Thai Army officer and current Prime Minister of Thailand, heads Thailand's military junta. He came to power after a military coup in 2014.

Aung San Suu Kyi, State Councillor of Myanmar serves as the country’s de facto leader and has been in office since 2016. She was also the recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Rodrigo Duterte is the President of Philippines, who took office in 2016. The 71-year-old is the oldest in his country to assume presidency.
• **Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah**, Sultan of Brunei is also the first and current Prime Minister of Brunei. He acceded to the throne after the abdicatration of his father Omar Ali Saifuddien III.

• **Thongloun Sisoulith**, the Prime Minister of Laos, previously served as the Deputy Prime Minister of Laos, from 2001 to 2016. He was also the country’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2006 to 2016.

• **Hun Sen**, Prime Minister of Cambodia has been in office since 1985. He is Cambodia’s longest serving head of government.

**MINISTRY GIVES FINAL NOD FOR BARAK MISSILES, BOMBS**

• The Defence Ministry gave the final approvals for the procurement of 131 Barak missiles for the Navy and 240 precision-guided munitions (PGM) for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

• The 240 KAB-1500 PGMs will be procured from Rosoboronexport of Russia at a cost of Rs 1,254 crore.

**BARGARH GEARS UP FOR DHANU YATRA**

• The western Orissa town of Bargarh is gearing up for the famous annual Dhanu Yatra that will begin on January 1.

• The 11-day cultural extravaganza is globally known as world's largest open-air theatre.

• The festival will begin with enactment the marriage of Vasudev and Devaki followed by the birth of Krishna to conclude with the death of King Kansa.

**IPFT TEAM TO MEET RAJNATH OVER SEPARATE STATE DEMAND**

• Indigenous People’s Front of Tripura (IPFT) demands to Convert the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council (TTAADC) into Tipraland – a separate State for indigenous people.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS (NRC)**

• Assam is the only State in the country that prepared an NRC in 1951 following the census of that year and has become the first State to get the first draft of its own updated NRC.

• The National Register of Citizens (NRC) contains names of Indian The NRC was prepared in 1951, after the Census of 1951. It was prepared by recording particulars of all the persons enumerated during that Census.

• The NRC is being prepared to identify illegal migrants in Assam.

• On the expiry of the midnight of December 31, the draft NRC pertaining to 2.38 crore claims will be published as per the apex court

• Government termed fixing of the deadline (Dec 31, 2017) by apex court as judicial overreach-an “encroachment” into the executive domain.
• Top ULFA\(^2\) rebel leader Paresh Baruah's name figures in the first draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) even as names of many prominent politicians of Assam did not find a place in it.

BACKGROUND

• In 2005, another agreement was signed between the Centre, the then TarunGogoi government in Assam and the AASU where it was decided to update the NRC that was first published after the Census data of 1951 in post-Partition India.

• In July 2009, Assam Public Works (APW), an NGO, petitioned the Supreme Court for identification of Bangladeshi foreigners in the State and deletion of their names from the voters’ list.

• The NRC, 1951, is updated in Assam with the names of applicants whose names appear in NRC, 1951, or any electoral rolls of the State up to midnight of March 24, 1971 and their descendants and all Indian citizens including their children and descendants who have moved to Assam post March 24, 1971.

• The time frame (Dec 31, 2017) for the publication of the NRC draft was set by the Supreme Court, which has been monitoring the entire process of updating the 1951 NRC in Assam.

• **Assam Movement** (or Assam Agitation) (1979-1985) was a popular movement against (identification and expulsion) illegal immigrants (mostly Bangladeshis) in Assam. The movement, led by All Assam Students Union (AASU) and the 'All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad' (AAGSP)

• The agitation program ended in August 1985 following the **Assam Accord**, which was signed by leaders of AASU-AAGSP and the Government of India. The agitation leaders formed a political party, Asom Gana Parishad

BENGAL PLEDGES A MILLION BODIES TO SCIENCE

• Ganadarpan, A body created in 1986 after 35 friends pledged to donate their bodies for medical research, becomes Eastern India’s oldest organisation facilitating body donation.

• It was founded by Braja Roy.

TMC CELEBRATES 20TH FOUNDATION DAY ACROSS BENGAL

• Trinamul Congress celebrated its 20th foundation day on 1 January 2018. All India Trinamul Congress (formal) was formed on January 1, 1998 with an aim to oust the then left front regime.

ODISHA GOVERNMENT RELEASES CALENDAR IN BRAILLE

\(^2\) The United Liberation Front of Assom was founded on 7 April 1979 in Sivasagar, Assam by some youths which included Paresh Baruah, Arabinda Rajkhowa, Anup Chetia, Pradip Gogoi, Bhadreshwar Gohain and Budheswar Gogoi. The organisation’s purpose was to engage in an armed struggle to form a socialist Assam.
The visually impaired in Odisha will get Braille Dinapanjhika 2018, this year’s Odia calendar and almanac in the Braille format, printed and published by Computerised Braille Press in Berhampur.

Apart from days and dates as per Gregorian calendar, this Braille calendar in Odia also provides information about important days in the Hindu calendar such as purnima, amavasya, and samkranti.

ANDHRA PRADESH WORKING WITH INTERPOL TO GET A RED SANDERS SMUGGLERS EXTRADITED.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID) will take the help of the Interpol to extradite the wanted red sanders smugglers hiding in different countries.

On 7 April 2015, Andhra Pradesh Police shot twenty suspected woodcutters in the Seshachalam forest in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Red sanders, red sandalwood is found at Southern Eastern Ghats mountain range of South India.

MG RAMACHANDRAN’S PROPERTY NEAR PALAKKAD KERALA WILL BE CONVERTED INTO A MEMORIAL.

MG Ramachandran's property near Palakkad Kerala will be converted into a memorial.

Marudur Gopalan Ramachandran, popularly known as M.G.R., was an Indian actor, filmmaker and politician who served as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu for ten years between 1977 and 1987.

Bhitarkanika national park

The 145-sqkm Bhitarkanika National Park, located in the delta of rivers Brahmani, Baitarani and Dhamara in Odisha’s Kendrapara district imposed a ban on tourist entry for a week in view of for the annual census of estuarine crocodiles.

First Telugu woman to scale Mt. Aconcagua
G.R. Radhika, Addl. SP (Chittoor), climbed Mount Aconcagua (6,962 meters) in Argentina on December 30, thus becoming the first Telugu woman to climb the highest peak in South America. Speaking to The Hindu, Ms. Radhika expressed her thanks to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) for financial support and the State police for encouragement to complete the mission.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)

- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known in English as Doctors Without Borders, is an international humanitarian non-governmental organization (NGO) best known for its projects in war-torn regions and developing countries affected by endemic diseases.
- In 2015, over 30,000 personnel — mostly local doctors, nurses and other medical professionals, logistical experts, water and sanitation engineers and administrators — provided medical aid in over 70 countries.
- Founded- 20 December 1971;
- Location- Geneva, Switzerland

Clash mars bicentenary of Bhima-Koregaon battle

- There was a caste conflict in Bhima Koregaon and Wadhu Budruk in Maharashtra recently.
- Bhima Koregaon is a tiny village in Pune.
- A battle in Koregaon took place between British troops and Marathas (Peshwa Bajirao II) on January 1, 1818 and the English won
- Vijay Sthamb - The East India Company erected the Vijay Sthamb (victory pillar) in memory of the battle and it includes the names of the Mahar soldiers.
- Dr B R Ambedkar had also visited it repeatedly and had emphasized the Mahars's defeat of the Peshwa
- Wadhu Budruk is a village near Bhima Koregaon, is where Sambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji, was cremated.
- As the legend goes, killed by the Mughals in 1689, Sambhaji’s body was mutilated and thrown into a river by Aurangzeb.
Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga.

- Jagdishpur-Haldia & Bokaro-Dhamra Natural Gas Pipeline (JHBDPL) project is also known as Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga.
- The 2,655 km project aims to connect the eastern states to the national gas grid.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and West Bengal are the beneficiary states.
- The project will usher Industrial development in East India by supplying environmentally clean natural gas to fertiliser and power plant, refineries, steel plants and other industries.

Salary of HC and SC judges

- 7th Pay Commission report for officers of all-India services, will come into force retrospectively from January 1, 2016. Once the hike is effected, the salary of judges will be on a par with those of the bureaucrats following the implementation of the recommendations of the 7th Pay panel.
- Once the bill is cleared by Parliament and becomes a law, the Chief Justice of India will get a monthly salary of Rs 2.80 lakh from the present Rs one lakh. Similarly, judges of the Supreme Court and chief justices of the high courts will draw a monthly salary of Rs 2.50 lakh from the current Rs 90,000.
- The High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2017 (originally 1958) also seeks to revise the rates of house rent allowance with effect from July 1, 2017 and the rates of sumptuary allowance with effect from September 22, 2017.
- A bill to hike the salaries of judges of the Supreme Court and the 24 high courts by over two folds was introduced in the Lok Sabha to
- The judges of the high courts, who get Rs 80,000 per month now, will get Rs 2.25 lakh per month, the bill states.
- Justice A.K Mathur headed the Seventh Pay Commission.

MPs panel proposes proxy voting for migrant workers

- Parliamentary panel on External Affairs headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor raised questions on why electoral provision meant for NRIs should not be extended to others.

Nirmala Sitharaman undertakes sortie in IAF fighter jet Sukhoi 30 MKI

- Sitharaman, the country's first full-time woman defence minister undertook a sortie in the Indian Air Force (IAF) frontline combat jet, Sukhoi 30 MKI, from the Jodhpur airbase in Rajasthan.
- The sortie lasted 30 minutes.
The defence minister did so to review operational preparedness and combat capabilities.

The Sukhoi 30 MKI, twin-engine **Russian-made fighter** jet, has a two-seat cockpit and is a nuclear-capable aircraft.

**Committee constituted by Karnataka government recommends separate state flag**

The State has constituted a nine-member committee headed by Principal Secretary, Department of Kannada and Culture, to study and submit a report to the government on the possibility of “designing a separate flag for Karnataka and providing it a statutory standing.”

The committee was constituted following representation from Patil Puttappa and Bheemappa Gundappa Gadada to the government. They urged the government to design a separate flag for Kannada ‘naadu’ and accord statutory standing for that.

When asked about the **Constitutional and legal position of the State having its own flag**, former Advocate-General of Karnataka Ravivarma Kumar cited S.R. Bommai v/s Union of India (Supreme Court 1994) case. “In Bommai’s case, the Supreme Court has declared that federalism is a basic feature of the Constitution and States are supreme in their sphere. This being the Constitutional position, there is no prohibition in the Constitution for the State to have its own flag. However, the manner in which the State flag is hoisted should not dishonour the national flag. It has to be always below the national flag.

The committee has recommended **new tricolour having yellow (at top), white (in middle) and red (at bottom) colorus, with state’s emblem Gandaberunda (a two-headed mythological bird) in centre.** It has changed pattern of earlier unofficial flag having yellow and red which is unofficially used now. The white colour in new flag symbolizes peace and captures Karnataka’s image the best, while other two colours are synonymous with Kannada identity.

Currently, unofficial yellow and red ‘Kannada flag’ is hoisted in state on 1 November every year to commemorate state formation day. It was designed by Veera Senani Ma. Ramamurthy in the 1960s.
• Jammu and Kashmir is only state having its own flag as it enjoys special powers under Article 370 of Constitution. It had adopted its own flag in 2015.

Railway Authority Apologises For Posting Wrong Picture Of Jagannath Temple

• The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) tendered an apology for posting a picture of an 'ISKCON temple' as 'Puri Jagannath Temple' at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) in Mumbai.

• The issue was raised by priests of Sri Jagannath Temple after a servitor of Puri Jagannath temple, during his recent visit to Mumbai, found an ISKCON temple photo in place of the 12th century shrine in Puri.

Government to revisit Malimath report on criminal justice system

• A 2003 report of a Malimath Committee on reforms in the criminal justice system recommended admissibility of confessions made before a police officer as evidence in a court of law is being revisited by the Centre.

• The Committee on Reforms of the Criminal Justice System, or the Justice Malimath Committee, was constituted by the Home Ministry in 2000 by then Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani

• The Committee also suggested constituting a National Judicial Commission and amending Article 124 to make impeachment of judges less difficult. “The Committee however, feels that the aberrations in the conduct of judges can be checked or even corrected if the problem is noticed at the earliest and efforts made to correct them.
It had suggested that Section 54 of Evidence Act be substituted by a provision to the effect that in criminal cases, evidence of bad character and antecedents is relevant.

Gandhi Exhibition Coming Soon to Melbourne

A digital interactive exhibition celebrating the life and achievements of Mahatma Gandhi will be displayed in Victoria, which home to the largest number of people with Indian heritage in Australia.

This is to celebrate the special bond Victoria shares with India following the recent release of the new Victoria’s India Strategy: Our Shared Future.

Hike launches new product ‘Total’ to allow users access to essential services without data

Hike Messenger has come out with a mobile operating system ‘total’ that will offer services such as messaging and recharging without using data, targeting the lower end of smartphone users to better take on leader WhatsApp.

Hike Total uses USSD (unstructured supplementary service data), a technology that transmits information through GSM network channels, which are normally used to make voice calls and send messages.

Doctor created a record for the longest number of years on dialysis, before he got a kidney transplant.
Robin Eady, dermatologist and survivor extraordinaire, created a record for the longest number of years on dialysis, before he got a kidney transplant.

When he passed away in August 2017 at the age of 76, he left a legacy of hope, motivation and determination for millions of renal failure patients, as the longest surviving kidney patient in the world.

Citing shortage, Karnataka rejects TN's request to release Cauvery water

- The Karnataka government rejected Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswamy's request to release 7 tmc ft of water from the Cauvery River, citing a shortage of water in the state.

- The Tamil Nadu CM stated that the water is to make up for the shortfall in the Mettur reservoir and will be used as drinking water and also for irrigating crops in the Cauvery delta in Tamil Nadu. The CM stated that the water from Karnataka was required at the critical crop growth maturity stage, namely milky and dough stage.

- The long-standing dispute over Cauvery river water was settled by the Supreme Court with the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, which declared the final award on how the water must be shared between the three states of TN, Karnataka and Kerala.

Karnataka sees alarming rise in H1N1 cases:

- A chicken was found dead on 29 December at a chicken shop in (suburban) Dasarahalli area and it was confirmed after lab tests that the bird was infected with the H5N1 avian influenza virus.

- H5N1 virus-infected birds spread the virus through their saliva, mucus, and faeces. Although the virus does not usually infect people, it can cause fever, diarrhoea and respiratory illnesses in some affected people.
Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre in New Delhi

- The Union Home Ministry will set up Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), an apex coordination centre in New Delhi to deal with cybercrimes.

- It also has asked States to establish similar mechanism in every district and released funds for setting up of cyber-forensic training laboratory-cum-training centre for police officials in each State.

- It also has released funds to Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Scheme.

New app to clear junk vehicles off roads

- The Delhi government aims to launch a dedicated app ‘Khatara Gadi (Junk Vehicle) app’ to check the presence of junk vehicles parked on city roads in accordance with the provisions of the Capital's first comprehensive parking policy.

- The move is in line with the soon-to-be-notified Delhi Maintenance and Management of Parking Rules, 2017, which aims to enforce strict fines and even start criminal proceedings against vehicle owners found in violation of its provisions.

- The policy mandates impounding of junk vehicles — that is, petrol vehicles that are over 15 years old and diesel vehicles more than 10 years old. Besides tying up with a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) with the wherewithal to dispose such vehicles at a facility coming up in Greater Noida, the policy also aims to empower private entities to take up their disposal.

Book by Sheila Dixit “Dilli Meri Dilli: Before and After 1998” released
- **The book titled “Dilli Meri Dilli: Before and After 1998”,** beautifully traces the evolution of the Indian capital over the centuries and showcases its tremendous transformation since the beginning of the new millennium.

- The book is **published by Palimpsest Publishers.** It includes comments by people like Mark Tully, E Sreedharan and Sunita Narain among others.

- In her book, Sheila Dixit’s perspective towards Delhi was not as its Chief Minister but as its resident who has lived almost her entire life there. She has been the Chief Minister of Delhi for 15 years.

**Lifeline for Jewish cemetery likely**

- **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** is likely to promise help to develop a **143-year-old Jewish cemetery in Vadodara into a memorial and tourist attraction** when he visits Gujarat along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

- On a six-day tour of India, the Israeli Prime Minister will be visiting Gujarat where he and Prime Minister Modi will hold a roadshow and visit Mahatma Gandhi’s Sabarmati Ashram.

**Operation Digital Board in the offing**

- **The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)** passed a resolution to take steps towards **Operation Digital Board on the lines of Operation Blackboard of 1987**, which was started with the purpose of providing minimum basic facilities to all primary schools.
• The idea of Operation Digital Board is aimed at providing better digital education in all schools. This will offer new opportunities and new ways of teaching and learning to schools.

Megalithic era sarcophagus unearthed at Viyur

• A rare sarcophagus (stone coffin), said to be 2,000-year old from the Iron Age–Megalithic era, was discovered from a rock-cut cave at Viyur village of Kollam, near Koyilandy, in Kozhikode district.

Was Purandara Dasa born in a Malnad village?
There is much speculation about where Purandara Dasa, regarded as the pitamaha of Carnatic music, was born.

Now, an expert committee constituted by Kannada University, Hampi, has come to the conclusion that it was most likely a small village called Kshemapura (now called Keshavapura) at Araga hobli in Tirthahalli taluk of Shivamogga district.

The committee comprising research scholars and musicologists has said that there is enough evidence to believe this place, which was a major province of the Vijayanagara empire, was the birthplace of the saint.

However, it has also recommended further research. Till now, some have been arguing that the saint-poet was born in Purandaragadh, near Pune in Maharashtra, and finally settled in Hampi.

Jallikattu must go on, says AWBI official

After the jallikattu at Palamedu in Madurai district, AWBI official said that the sport must continue since it was part of the culture and tradition. “There is also the need to protect the native breeds of bulls...If we are not able to continue this traditional sport, are we going to give to our next generation, asked S.K. Mittal

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami will witness jallikattu at Alanganallur

India can appeal in match-fixing case

India has won the right to appeal the decision by a U.K. court to deny the extradition request for Sanjeev Chawla, wanted in relation to the South Africa-India cricket match-fixing scandal.

The case will now move to the High Court in London.
The Crown Prosecution Service confirmed that permission had been granted for the appeal, following the decision by Westminster Magistrates Court Judge Rebecca Crane to deny the request last October.

The judge concluded there was a prima facie case against Mr. Chawla for his “role in the fixing of cricket matches played between India and South Africa during the tour of the South African Cricket Team to India under the captaincy of Hansie Cronje in February-March 2000”

Mallya case: The hearing to extradite Vijay Mallya will continue on January 22, when the defence is expected to conclude its challenge to the admissibility of certain evidence by the prosecution, followed by the prosecution’s rebuttal.

60th anniversary of the arrival of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in India.

Events are upcoming to mark the 60th anniversary of the arrival of the Dalai Lama and Tibetans in India.

“India has to be cautious about China’s plans in Doklam. China has traditionally maintained that Tibet is the palm and the five fingers are Bhutan, Nepal, Arunachal [Pradesh], Ladakh and Sikkim.

Disaster warning system for Odisha by March

The Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS), a project that aims at establishing a fool-proof communication system to disseminate disaster warning up to the community level, is expected to be commissioned by this March.

The EWDS for last mile connectivity is being implemented under a World Bank project.

2017 was the hottest year on record without an El Niño, thanks to global warming

2017 was the second-hottest year on record according to Nasa data, and was the hottest year without the short-term warming influence of an El Niño event.

Average temperatures were 1.1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial level.

2017 was the second or third warmest year: UN
• 2017 was the second or third warmest on record behind 2016, and the hottest without an extra dose of heat caused by an El Niño event in the Pacific Ocean, the United Nations (UN) reported.

Rural Kerala frontrunner in Internet access, rural Bengal at the bottom of the heap

• According to Pratham’s Annual Status of Education Report, 2017, Rural Kerela is at top position in terms of the rural youth’s access to the Internet while eastern State of West Bengal seems right at the bottom in terms of the rural youth’s access to the Internet, computers and mobiles.

9 more cities selected for ‘Smart City’ mission

• The government has allocated Rs 12,824 crore to be invested in 409 projects to make these cities ‘Smart Cities.

• Of the nine cities, 3 are from Uttar Pradesh, 1 from Bihar, 1 from Tamil Nadu, 1 from Daman & Diu, 1 from Arunachal Pradesh and 1 from Lakshadweep.

• Here’s are the nine cities announced on Friday:
  1. Silvassa, Dadra and Nagar Haveli
  2. Erode, Tamil Nadu
  3. Diu, Daman & Diu
  4. Biharsharif, Bihar
  5. Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh
  6. Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh
  7. Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh
  8. Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh
  9. Kavaratti, Lakshadweep

Soon, you can make calls while flying

• The authority recommended that mobile communication on aircraft (MCA) systems be operated with a minimum height of at least 3000 meters above ground level to avoid causing harmful interference to ground-based mobile networks.

• However, flyers will be able to access Internet through onboard Wi-Fi when electronic devices are permitted to be used only in-flight/airplane mode.

Look into atrocities against Dalits, tribals.

• The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) asked the Rajasthan government and other stakeholders to look into the issues of atrocities
against Dalits and tribals and denial of rights to them. It said that an atmosphere should be created to enable them to voice their concerns.

- NHRC chairperson Justice H.L. Dattu and members, former judges Pinaki Chandra Ghose and D. Murugesan.

**Office of profit: EC wants 20 AAP MLAs disqualified**

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**What the law says**

**Article 102(1)(a)** says a person shall be disqualified from being a member of either House of Parliament if he holds any office of profit, among other grounds.

**Article 103** says if a question arises whether a member has incurred such disqualification, it will be referred to the President's decision. The President shall obtain the Election Commission's opinion and act accordingly.

**Article 191(1)** contains a similar provision for MLAs and MLCs in the States. Legislators in Delhi are covered by corresponding provisions in the Government of National Capital Territory Act, 1991.

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- Article 102(1) in The Constitution Of India 1949 states that a person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of either House of Parliament if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State, other than an office declared by Parliament by law not to disqualify its holder.

- Article 103 of Constitution states that If any question arises as to whether a member of either House of Parliament has become subject to any of the disqualifications mentioned in clause (1) of Article 102, the question shall be referred for the decision of the President and his decision shall be final. Before giving any decision on any such question, the President shall obtain the opinion of the Election Commission and shall act according to such opinion.

- Article 191(1) in The Constitution Of India 1949 states that A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of the Legislative Assembly or Legislative Council of a State if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State specified in the First Schedule, other than an office declared by the Legislature of the State by law not to disqualify its holder.
INS TARINI

The Navy’s first all-woman crew of Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini hoists the tricolour after crossing Cape Horn through the Drake Passage, one of the most difficult stretches to navigate.

West Bengal to join hands with Sulabh International

The West Bengal government said it would join hands with social organisation Sulabh International to ameliorate the misery of those ‘tiger widows’, whose husbands were killed by tigers in the Sunderbans.

- The hapless widows have been branded as “swami-kheko” (husband-eaters) by their superstitious in-laws.
- The Sunderbans is the world’s largest mangrove forest located between India and Bangladesh.

The real Padman
• Amit Virmani’s Menstrual Man is a documentary about Arunachalam Murganantham’s fascinating journey into producing affordable sanitary napkins for the poor.

Goa village evacuated

• Hundreds of residents in Goa’s Chicalim village evacuated from their homes after a tanker carrying ammonia overturned on a highway connecting Vasco City to Panaji.

• The tanker, heading from Mormugao Port Trust to Zuari Industries Limited, overturned on the highway and gas started leaking from it.

My Special Aflac Duck

• My Special Aflac Duck is a companion comfort robot, built collaboratively by insurance company Aflac, and health and research specialists Sproutel.

• It is a robot duck, specifically designed to help children affected by cancer to cope with the illness.

Two Meghalaya churches say no to Tourism Ministry package

• The Catholic Church and the Mawkhar Presbyterian Church have said they would give a miss to the package announced by Union Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons on January 8.

• Mr. Alphons had announced the package for development of places of worship across the State under the ‘Swadesh Darshan’ scheme of the Tourism Ministry. A total of 48 places of worship have been included under the scheme.
Facebook to let users rank reliability

- Facebook has announced that it will ask its two billion users to rank their trust in news sources, in its latest attempt to combat the spread of misinformation on the social network.

- The change comes as the online giant seeks to address charges that it has failed — along with Google and Twitter — to prevent the spread of bogus news, most strikingly ahead of the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Centre urged to check spread of BG-III cotton

**Ground scenario**

**No protocols to certify herbicide tolerance in cotton seed now**

- Telangana produces one-crore Bt cotton seed packets (450 grams each) meeting 40% needs of the country
- Telangana farmers use 80 lakh to 95 lakh packets of 10 varieties of cotton hybrid seed, including Bt

- Telangana using provisions of Prevention of Dangerous Activities Act against spurious seed sellers
- Unauthorised herbicide tolerant cotton seed (BG-III) polluting biodiversity
- Cotton is being cultivated in over 19 lakh hectares in Telangana this year (2017-18)
- Guidelines needed on sale of glyphosate, a herbicide
• **Telangana government** has requested the Centre to formulate protocols and guidelines at the earliest to take steps to check the spread of herbicide tolerant variety cotton seed, popularly known as BG-III, which is not cleared by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC), and is harming the biodiversity in the country.

• Leader of the visiting team, chief scientific officer in DBT, V.S. Reddy, complimented the efforts of Telangana government in highlighting the issue at national-level.

**Now, LGBT community has a fallback mechanism**

• Queerythm is a Community Based Organization, that advocates and campaigns for the rights of gender and sexual minorities.

• The Government of Kerala has begun to address the rights of the LGBTIQ community by unveiling India’s first transgender policy.

**Campaign on compulsory registration of marriages**

• The Telangana government has decided to launch an awareness campaign across the State to sensitise people of all religions on compulsory registration of marriage.

**The Paigah’s necropolis**

• The Maqbara Shams-ul-Umara, now better known as the Paigah Tombs, belongs to a family which was ranked only second to the Nizam of Hyderabad and to whom it was allied through matrimony.

• It is in Hyderabad. Charminar is also built in Hyderabad.

• The word Paigah, which means pomp and rank in Persian, was a title given by the second Asaf Jahi Nizam of Hyderabad to the estate of Nawab Abul Fateh Taig Jung Bahadur in appreciation of the royal services rendered by him. The nawab was also conferred with the title of Shams-ul-Umra, which gives the tombs their name.

• The first tomb, built in the 18th century and of Makrana marble, is that of Shams-ul-Umra, or the Sun of the Nobles, himself.

• The architectural style inside the tombs and galleries is a mix of Rajasthani, Deccani and Persian, while the design on the roof is Moorish.

**Bharat Ke Veer anthem unveiled**

• Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched here the official anthem of Bharat Ke Veer, an initiative with a corpus to help the families of paramilitary troopers killed in the line of duty.

• The anthem, sung and composed by Kailash Kher.

*Kashmir Singh*
Kashmir Singh was accused of spying for India and was imprisoned for nearly 35 years in the Pakistan. Never once, during his incarceration, through all the torture he underwent, did Mr. Singh admit to spying.

He received a rousing welcome when he came back in 2008, and shocked everybody when he later declared that he had indeed spied for the country, having been trained and deployed by the military intelligence (MI).

Green the Red Campaign

Under this campaign, Sustainable Menstruation Kit with eco-friendly products — menstrual cups, cloth pads, period panties — will be sent to the PMO to create awareness

Bicycle rally creates awareness on fuel conservation

The bicycle rally organised by the Indian Oil Corporation Limited to highlight the importance of oil and gas conservation here evoked good response.

The rally was held under the aegis of Petroleum Conservation and Research Agency (PCRA), Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and was part of the ‘Saksham’, the oil and gas conservation month (16th January – 15th February 2018)

Saksham (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav) is an annual flagship event of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Govt. of India, with active involvement of the Oil & Gas PSUs along with other stakeholders like State Governments, for creating focused attention on fuel conservation through people centric activities and to sensitize the masses about the conservation and efficient use of petroleum products leading to better health and environment.
Second OPV for Coast Guard launched

- The second Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV), part of a series of seven such vessels, was launched at the L&T shipyard, Kattupalli.
- The OPV was fully indigenously designed and built by a private yard.
- The first OPV was launched on October 27 last and is likely to be inducted into the Coast Guard in March.

Max Mueller Bhavan launches the DAMned Art project to raise public awareness on restoring river

- The DAMned Art project is one of the initiatives of Goethe Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan to encourage citizens' dialogue on the river and showcase the potential of art to bring in social change.

NGO on a mission to rejuvenate Tamirabharani

- In an effort to rejuvenate the Tamirabharani river that plays a critical role in the livelihood, culture and the economy of south Tamil Nadu, the Environmentalist Foundation of India (EFI) has begun an extensive outreach programme involving the communities living along the river.

Sensor-based technology to testify genuineness of organic crops

- Adopting this technology that involves use of sensors in the soil, where the crop is grown, to record various parameters, including the nature of inputs provided.
• This technology is set to be tried on a pilot basis in Karnataka for the first time.

• The sensor-based technology would not only inform consumers about the authenticity of organic character, but would also indicate to farmers about the condition of crops at various stages of growth.

**Khandu inaugurates World War II Memorial Museum in Arunachal**

• Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated the World War II Memorial Museum in the state’s Changlang district bordering Myanmar.

• Built by the Union Culture Ministry, the Rs 2.25 crore museum in memory of those who laid down their lives in WWII is located adjacent to the historic Stilwell Road and is expected to boost international and domestic tourist inflow especially from Southeast Asian countries.

**Manipal Hospitals observed the World Ambulance Day**

• The Manipal Hospitals observed the World Ambulance Day on 8th January by launching 'give way save a life' campaign recently.

• The objective of the campaign is to educate and sensitize the citizens on the concept of giving way to an ambulance in their daily walks of life.

**FIRST JALLIKATTU IN COIMBATORE**

• Chettipalayam is the place where the first jallikattu in Coimbatore district will be held on January 28.

**Fourth tiger estimation begins in A.P.**

• Fourth All-India Tiger estimation began in the Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve (NSTR).

• The app, Monitoring System For Tigers – Intensive Protection and Ecological Status (M-StrIPES) is being used for the first time to avoid human error involved in the traditional recording of the pugmarks and other signs,

**Taiwan forum to put an end to tomato pest**

• The World Vegetable Center (WVC), a Taiwan-based horticulture research forum, has embarked on the ambitious mission of putting an end to the menacing pest ‘tuta absoluta’ which is found to be affecting the large expanses of tomato farms in Madanapalle region, considered the largest tomato-growing belt in India.

• It is for the first time that an eco-friendly pest management system has been launched in Madanapalle region to protect the predominant crop of tomato, and to bring happiness and high yield to the farmers.

**An app to report roadkill in wildlife habitats**
‘Roadkills’ app launched on January 21 by the WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TRUST, will help citizens to report wildlife deaths due to accidents by uploading geo-tagged photographs to a public forum.

This can be used to identify crucial road or rail stretches that urgently require mitigation measures.

Roadkills’, an easy-to-use android app, accesses location information from phones and permits users to upload photographs of a dead wild animal on a road or railway line.

**Richest 1% own 82% of world’s wealth, says Oxfam’s report**

Oxfam’s report titled ‘Reward Work, Not Wealth’ found that the **richest 1% in the world owns more wealth than the whole of the rest of humanity; 82% of all growth in global wealth in the last year went to the top 1%**, while the bottom half of the world’s population saw no increase at all.

Oxfam is an **international confederation of charitable organizations** focused on the alleviation of global poverty.

**Suzuki Motorcycle kicks off #CaughtWithoutHelmet campaign**

In a bid to **promote safe-riding habits and encourage two-wheeler riders to wear a helmet while riding**, Suzuki Motorcycle India has launched a new CSR campaign #CaughtWithoutHelmet.

Aimed at young riders, the campaign encourages bystanders to stimulate the behavioural change, by clicking pictures of those who aren't wearing one and uploading them on Facebook, with the hashtag #CaughtWithoutHelmet.

**Karnataka registers transgender marriage**

Nearly four years after the **Supreme Court recognised the rights of transgender persons**, and a few months after the approval of a policy by the State Cabinet, The first marriage of a transgender person in Karnataka was registered in Bengaluru.

**Transgender rights activist Akkai Padmashali married Vasudev V. on January 20, 2017.**
Puthuvype island people opposed only to LPG storage facility, says forum leader

- Speakers at a public discussion on the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) terminal and storage facility on Puthuvype Island *expressed the opinion that the storage facility for LPG should not be established in the area.*

- The speakers also referred to a recent study by a group under the aegis of *Salim Ali Foundation* on the LPG project on Puthuvype Island and its impact on people and environment.

Some Indian languages are facing threat of extinction

- Speaking at Sahitya Sambhrama recently, linguist Ganesh Devy *said languages like Mangeli and Karwa are on the verge of extinction.*

- Of 6,000 languages in the next 30 years, 4,000 will disappear, he said.

Biodiversity panels by March

- *National Biodiversity Authority Act* mandated the formation of *Biodiversity Management committees* which would look after the biodiversity resources such as conservation, development, and sustainable use.

- *Only Goa and Kerala* had formed them.

- *Tamil Nadu* has agreed to form local-level biodiversity management committees *by March*

Hadiya issue

- A 24-year-old Hindu woman, Akhila, who converted to Islam and took a new name, Hadiya, is at the centre of a *'love jihad' controversy that has rocked Kerela.* While Hadiya, now living in confinement in her parents’ home, insists she took the step on her own, her family argues she is the victim of so-called *'love jihad,' in which it is alleged that Muslim men attract, convert and marry Hindu women.*
• Her father, an ex-serviceman and an atheist, was upset by the conversion and filed a complaint at the local police station and a habeas corpus petition in the Kerala High Court in 2016. After Ms. Hadiya’s subsequent marriage to Shefin Jahan last December, her father Asokan K.M., filed another petition in the court.

• On May 24, the High Court nullified the marriage, ordered a probe into it and sent her back to her parental home with a directive that she should not interact with outsiders. It observed that she was a “weak and vulnerable girl capable of being exploited.

• The Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice Deepak Mishra has, prima facie, found that the High Court had no authority to annul the inter-religious marriage between Mr. Jehan and Ms. Hadiya.

• In August, the Supreme Court asked the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to probe whether there was a wider pattern in the alleged ‘love jihad’ case in the State.

• The Kerala government rejected the NIA probe in an affidavit, saying the police were competent to handle the issue and that there was no evidence of coercion or forced conversion.

**Fraud cases in India surged 21% in 2017**

• According to Kroll Annual Global Fraud & Risk Report 2017-18, India witnessed the highest incidence of fraud globally across three categories — theft of physical asset or stock (40%), IP theft, piracy or counterfeiting (36%) and corruption and bribery (31%)

• Cybersecurity remained an area of concern with 84% of Indian respondents saying they had experienced a cyberattack in the past 12 months, indicating an 11% point rise from 2016 (73%).

**Noida girl Srishti Kaur wins Miss Teen Universe 2017**
• **Srishti Kaur, 19**, from India was crowned **Miss Teen Universe 2017** at the sixth edition of the pageant held in the Ruben Dario National Theatre in Managua, the capital city of Nicaragua.

• Samantha Pierre from Canada was crowned the first runner up and and Ary Trava from Mexico was the second runner up.

• Srishti also went ahead to win the Best National Costume Award.

**25th World Population Prospects**

• According to *World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision* released by United Nations on Jun 21, 2017, the population of India is expected to surpass that of China by year 2024.

• India's population is projected to **touch 1.5 billion in 2030**, according to a UN forecast.

• The 2017 Revision of World Population Prospects is the 25th round of official UN population estimates and projections.

• In its 24th round of estimates released in 2015, it was projected that the population of India will surpass that of China's by 2022.

**Campaign to popularise water conservation in Kerela**

• WAVE campaign was launched and aimed at becoming a part of every person's water utilisation.

• The idea is to **propagate water conservation and reduce water pollution**

**Five-year jail term for Lalu in fodder case**

• Former Bihar chief minister Lalu Yadav and his longtime aide, Jagannath Mishra were **sentenced to five years in jail and a Rs. 5 lakh fine each** in a third fodder scam case.

• Mr Yadav is already serving a jail term in the second fodder scam case. Verdicts in two more cases against him are expected over the next few months.

• The fodder scam involved the embezzlement of more than Rs. 970 crore in government funds during Lalu Yadav's term as the Chief Minister of undivided Bihar from 1990 to 1997.

• The latest case involves the siphoning of Rs. 33.67 crore from the Chaibasa treasury against an allocation of Rs. 7.10 lakh in 1992-93. Mr Yadav was named as the main conspirator by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

**Wayanad warned of KFD outbreak**
- Presence of the virus in tick samples collected from forest areas
- District Collector S. Suhas has issued an advisory to the public, especially villagers on the fringes of forests, against the outbreak of Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), also known as monkey fever, in Wayanad district.

SAARC can learn from ASEAN': Kishore Mahbubani
- One of Singapore's best known diplomats and now an academic, Kishore Mahbubani's latest book *The ASEAN miracle* advocates a Nobel peace prize for the regional grouping

Sushma Swaraj Inaugurates Bharat-ASEAN Maitri Park In Delhi
• External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj the Bharat-ASEAN Maitri Park in the national capital, a day ahead of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit.

• ASEAN Secretary General Le Luong Minh also attended the event, held at the Tughlaq Crescent, in the heart of Lutyens’ Delhi.

HPV vaccine gets immunisation nod

• The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI), an advisory body that recommends vaccines for India’s Universal Immunization Programme (UIP), has given the green signal to the introduction of the Human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine in the UIP.

• However, the decision of who will make the HPV vaccines, will depend on the outcome of a 2012 Supreme Court case.

• HPV vaccines have been at the centre of a controversy in India since 2009, when a clinical trial conducted by the American non-profit PATH, in partnership with the Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat governments, went wrong

Maharashtra bans sale of tobacco at shops selling FMCG items

• The Maharashtra government banned the sale of tobacco at shops selling fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) items to ensure that children don’t consume tobacco.

• The goods include packaged food and other consumables.

Indian-origin ‘Jihadi Sid’ put on U.S. list of global terrorists

• The U.S. included Indian-origin British citizen Siddhartha Dhar in the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists. Dhar left the U.K. in 2014 and joined the Islamic State in Syria.

• He was a leading member of the now-defunct terrorist organisation, Al-Muhajiroun
Modify order on taking Aadhaar for bail: SC

- The Supreme Court asked the Chhattisgarh High Court to modify in 10 days its order directing trial courts to mandatorily take copies of the Aadhaar card for releasing an accused on bail.
- The order of the High Court had created much hue and cry, as a large number of accused continued to languish in jails despite getting bail, but not getting release warrants due to delay in Aadhaar verification.

Numma Oonu' to feed the needy in city

- This Republic Day, Kochi will join the cities across the world serving up free meals to the needy.
- ‘Numma Oonu’, a free meal programme, will be launched by the Ernakulam district administration in association with the district unit of Kerala Hotel and Restaurant Association and Petronet LNG Foundation on January 26.

Prove toddy is not liquor: SC tells Kerala

- The Supreme Court asked the Kerala government to prove that toddy could not be considered liquor for being exempted from the court’s ban on liquor sale within 500 metres of the National and State Highways nationwide.
- Appearing before a Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, counsel for Kerala and senior advocate V. Giri called toddy a “milled liquor.” He said the scarcity of space in the small and heavily populated State made it almost impossible to shift toddy-shops away from the highways.

Assam to introduce digital budget on March 12

- The Assam Assembly will introduce digital budget in its next session, doing away with the traditional printed booklet form practice.
- Apart from digital budget, the Assembly session will also see exclusive 'Members Hour', a year-long calendar, 'Best Legislator Award', setting up of a Pay Commission for MLAs' salary and fellowships for research work on history of the Assembly.
For the legislators to highlight major problems in their constituencies, **there will be a 'Member Hour'** every Tuesday with the Minister of the concerned department replying to the MLAs’ questions.

The Speaker also mooted the idea of a 'Best Assembly Reporter Award' for the encouragement of the journalists to report well on the House proceedings.

**Mahadayi River Row**

- Karnataka has locked horns with Goa over the Mahadayi river sharing issue to supply water for Hubballi and Dharwad towns for drinking water through Kalasa-Banduri canal
- Karnataka is seeking release of 7.56 tmcft water by Goa from the Mahadayi river for the Kalasa-Banduri Nala project, being undertaken to improve the drinking water supply to Hubballi-Dharwad and districts of Belagavi and Gadag in the northern region.
- **The Kalasa-Banduri Nala (diversion) project involves building barrages across Kalasa and Banduri, tributaries of Mahadayi River, to divert 7.56 tmcft to the Malaprabha river** which supplies drinking water needs of the region.
- Kanakumbi is the site of the Kalasa-Banduri Nala project in Karnataka.
- Nargund in Gadarpur district, is the epicentre of Mahadayi agitation.

**Jats to join Marathas, Patels in quota fight**
• Jats will join Patels and Marathas in their fight to get reservation in government jobs and admission to State-run educational institutes

• Leaders from these three communities will meet in Delhi on February 25 and on the next day, announce the programme for a joint agitation, All India Jat Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti chief Yashpal Malik said.

• He said that their demands include reservation for Jats in government jobs, in admissions to educational institutes and release of community members who are lodged in jails for protesting in the past.

• Mr. Malik said that on February 18 'Balidan Diwas' (sacrifice day) would be observed in Rohtak and several other places in Haryana, and also in Delhi, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

**Paltry disbursal of Nirbhaya fund**

• The Union government has released Rs. 20 crore for the Central Victim Compensation Fund (CVCF) under the Nirbhaya Scheme to various States and Union Territories.

• This is only 10% of the total corpus of Rs. 200 crore allocated for the scheme.

**Oxford Dictionary chooses 'Aadhaar' as Hindi word of 2017**

• Oxford Dictionaries has chosen 'Aadhaar' as the Hindi word of 2017.

• The word gained popularity due to Aadhaar card, which was in news last year and is likely to remain in highlight this year as well.
• The announcement was made at a session "Oxford Dictionaries' Hindi Word of the Year" during the ongoing Jaipur Literature Festival.

Mahamastakabhisheka event

• Shravanabelagola, the Jain pilgrimage centre, is set to welcome thousands of visitors for Mahamastakabhisheka, the head anointment of Gomateshwara statue, scheduled for February 17 to 26.

• A separate township is meant for Jain saints and it is called Thyagi Nagar. There are separate townships for volunteers, media persons, and devotees.

• The Mahamastakabhishekha is held once in 12 years

Mission Kakatiya

• Mission Kakatiya programme of Telangana is launched for revival of chain-link-tank system as part of the restoration of about 46,000 minor irrigation tanks.

KTR pitches for Telangana’s Open Data Policy

• The Telangana government’s Open Data Policy stands out not just for its transparency, but for the high quality of data collected as well as the scope it offers to derive meaningful insights or to build AI-based solutions.

Kerala woman leads jumma prayers
Breaking centuries of Shariat convention, a Muslim woman led the jumma prayers at a remote village in Kerala’s Malappuram district.

Jamida K., popularly known as ‘Jamida Teacher’, became the first Indian Muslim woman Imam to lead jumma prayers at Cherukode village, near Wandoor.

Kasganj Violence

Kasganj violence took place on January 26, 2018, in Kasganj, a district in Western Uttar Pradesh, when 22-year-old student of commerce named Chandan Gupta died in communal clashes that broke out in a Muslim-majority locality of Kasganj during an unauthorized "Tiranga bike rally" organised by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, the student wing of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party in the state to mark the 69th Republic Day.

Uttar Pradesh would be the theme state for 32nd surajkunda festival.

Uttar Pradesh would be the theme State for the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts fair, beginning from the first week of February at Faridabad in Haryana.

The 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela to be held in Faridabad district from February 2 to 18 this year will be a ‘child-friendly event’ and highlight zero tolerance towards child rights violation,
Odisha calls for uniform CSR spending across districts

- In order to have uniform spending under Corporate Social Responsibility across districts, the Odisha government held a meeting with top corporates to discuss institutionalisation of CSR activities.
- The State government has launched the ‘GO CARE’ (Government of Odisha CSR Administration and Responsive Engagement) portal for uniform spending of funds.

MPEDA ties up with Swiss cooperative

- COOP Cooperative, one of Switzerland’s leading retail and wholesale companies, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) to develop export-oriented organic aquafarming in India to cater to the growing demand for organic seafood products across the European Union.

Environmental Performance Index, 2018

- India ranks low in the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2018, slipping from rank 141 in 2016, to 177 in 2018. The assessment is done of 180 countries.
- The latest global Environmental Performance Index (EPI) was released by Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.
- The EPI ranks countries on 24 performance indicators across 10 issue categories.

Announce 2018 as ‘Small Millets Year’: farmers’ association

- The Tamilnadu Vivasayigal Sangam (non-political) has urged the government to announce 2018 as ‘Small Millets Year’ as was recommended by geneticist and international administrator M.S. Swaminathan.

Mysuru Guinness World Record for Yoga

- Mysuru entered the Guinness World Records for the single-largest gathering for mass yoga performance.
- A mass ‘Surya Namaskar’ was conducted by the Mysuru Yoga Okkoota.
- No rethink on enforcing use of ISI-mark helmets in Mysuru.
The Mysuru city police have said that there will be no rethink on enforcing the rule that makes wearing of helmets bearing ISI mark mandatory by two-wheeler riders and those riding pillion in the city.

The deadline given by the Mysuru city police for two-wheeler riders and those riding pillion to purchase ISI-marked helmets expires on January 31.

New book asserts Netaji died in 1945 crash

Author Ashis Ray's findings in Laid to Rest: The Controversy over Subhash Chandra Bose's Death have been endorsed by Netaji's only living child and heir Anita Pfaff, who has urged Japan and India to conduct DNA testing on the remains at the Renkoji shrine of Tokyo for final confirmation.
Arumughaswamy Commission critical of Sasikala's actions

- Author Ashis Ray's findings in Laid to Rest: The Controversy over Subhash Chandra Bose's Death have been endorsed by Netaji's only living child and heir Anita Pfaff, who has urged Japan and India to conduct DNA testing on the remains at the Renkoji shrine of Tokyo for final confirmation.

Cockfights: High Court slams officials for inaction

- A Division Bench of the Hyderabad High Court comprising Acting Chief Justice Ramesh Ranganathan and Justice MSK Jaiswal said that the AP government machinery did not act properly to stop cockfights during the Sankranti season this year and lamented that people's representatives were openly mocking at its orders.

- The Bench was dealing with a PIL filed by K. Ramachandra Raju.

‘Padmaavat’ banned in Malaysia by censor board.

- The Sanjay Leela Bhansali-directed Padmaavat has been banned in Malaysia by the country's censor board as the film touches on the “sensitivities of Islam.”

Telangana: Pay Rs 500 for a day's stay in Sangareddy jail

- Feel the Jail’ is launched for people who want to spend time behind the bars and experience the feeling of being under detention.
• Tourists visiting a colonial-era jail in Medak district of Telangana can now get a first-hand experience of prison life by paying a fee of Rs 500 for a day’s stay.

• Dentist Kenny Ng and restaurateur Kelvin Ong from Selangor in Malaysia are on a five-day visit of India to enable them to ‘Feel the Jail’ for 48 hours in Sangareddy Old Jail complex.

World’s youngest liver transplant recipient meets her surgeon

• Twenty years ago, Ms. Baebhen Schuttke, then just five days old, underwent a liver transplant at King’s College Hospital in London, where her transplant surgeon was Mohamed Rela, now with Gleneagles Global Health City.

• She was the youngest recipient in the world.

Kudimaramathu scheme in Tamil Nadu

• The State government decided to allow minor irrigation tanks in urban areas to be converted into water storage structures.

• Mr. Satyagopal gave an update on the Kudimaramathu scheme of the government, launched in April 2017.

• The government had allocated Rs. 100 crore to dredge 1,519 water bodies across the State. The silt was then given to farmers.

Model system of administration needed: Rai

• Emphasising the need to put a model system in place, Vinod Rai — chairman of the Committee of Administrators running Indian cricket — said the cleaning up process needs to be sustained in the longer run.

Ajai Vikram Singh Committee

• Under the committee’s recommendations, the promotions to the rank of Colonel, who is a battalion Commanding Officer, would be granted on completion of 26 years of service and promotion of officers to the time-based rank of Lt Colonels on completion of 13 years of service from the present 18 years
Cow vigilantism: court seeks reply from 3 States

- The Supreme Court asked the governments of Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to respond to a plea seeking contempt action against the States for not complying with the court’s order to take stern steps against cow vigilantism.

- A Bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, acting on a contempt petition filed by Tushar Gandhi, the great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, asked the States to respond by April 3.

Telangana’s sammakka-saralamma jatara

- The historic Sammakka-Saralamma jatara at Medaram would begin on the full moon day of Magha Masam as per the Hindu lunar calendar.

- The tribal deity Saralamma, in the form of a vermilion casket, would be brought to Medaram from Kannenapalle village, located about four km away, on January 31 evening.

Rajasthan gives 1% quota to Most Backward Classes

- The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Rajasthan has issued orders for granting 1% reservation to the Most Backward Classes, comprising Gujjars and four other nomadic communities, within the 50% ceiling mandated by the Supreme Court.

- The overall reservation in the State stood at 49% before the decision. Along with Gujjars, nomadic communities Banjara, Gadia-Lohar, Raika and Gadariya were included among the Other Backward Classes for quota in the government jobs and educational institutions.

Colistin in chicken
• **Colistin** is **administered to chicken** in India as a **growth promoter**.

• The use of a last-hope antibiotic like colistin is leading to worldwide drug resistance.

• Colistin is used to treat infections that have become resistant to other drugs.

**Government on orange passports**

Citizens **who fall under the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category** will soon have **passports with orange jackets**, instead of the dark blue that has so far been the colour of all passports under the ECR and non-ECR categories. **ECR passports are mainly given to non-matriculate workers who wish to work in the Gulf countries and in Southeast Asia.**

• On January 12 MEA did away with printing of the last page of the passport that contains the names of the parents of the passport applicant

• The **idea of orange jackets for ECR passports**, meant for **migrant workers to the Gulf countries** and a few other southeast Asian countries had **drawn criticism from the Opposition**.

**Odisha mulls exclusive varsity for the disabled**

• **The Odisha government is contemplating setting up an exclusive university for people with disabilities in order to assist students in higher studies** and produce professionals for the disability sector.

• Odisha does not have an institute of higher learning for persons with disabilities. “**Except for Utkal University, Berhampur University and Ravenshaw University**, no other institution has even a disability cell to assist students in higher learning
Darwin’s evolution theory wrong: Minister

- Union Minister Satyapal Singh has claimed that Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution of man is “scientifically wrong” and it needs to be changed in school and college curriculum.
- “Since the time man was seen on Earth he has always been a man,” he told

A look at Alanganallur, after jallikattu ban was lifted

- The wall adjacent to the ‘vaadivasal’ (the bull’s entry point) in the jallikattu arena at Alanganallur in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu carries a painting of a person holding on to the hump of a bull, accompanied by the caption ‘The venue of Alanganallur's world famous jallikattu.’

Indra Gandhi assassination case

- Supreme Court has ordered the formation of another team to investigate 186 cases arising out of the pogrom that took place in the aftermath of Indira Gandhi’s assassination on October 31, 1984.
- The new Special Investigation Team (SIT) will comprise Shiv Narayan Dhingra, a retired judge of the Delhi High Court, Rajdeep Singh, a retired police officer, and Abhishek Dular, a serving police officer.
- A government-appointed Special Investigation Team has been functioning since February 2015. It was constituted on the recommendation of a committee headed by Justice G.P. Mathur.
- A Supreme Court Bench, headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra and comprising Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud, has been hearing a writ petition filed by S. Gurlad Singh Kahlon since 2016.
- The petitioner, a member of the Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, wanted the SIT’s investigation monitored by the court to ensure justice to the victims.

Papers on Hyderabad Nawab go missing
• ‘50-year-old records related to the government’s recognition of Nawab Mir Barkat Ali Khan as the ‘ruler of Hyderabad State’ were missing.

• Information Commissioner Yashovardhan Azad has also marked a copy of his order to the Union Home Secretary with the recommendation that a committee should be constituted to identify such files of historical importance and ensure that they were handed over to the National Archives.

• “It would also be in order that the process of transfer of files to the Archives, which was initiated in 1981, is monitored in the correct fashion so that chronology is maintained in the transfer of files.

Kashmiri doctor first woman to set icy tracks on fire

Sharmeen Mushtaq Nizami, 40, a doctor by profession, will become the first woman to hit the icy tracks of Gulmarg at the second race-on-snow event in Kashmir

Purohit moves SC in Malegaon case

• Lieutenant Colonel Shrikant Prasad Purohit moved the Supreme Court against a Bombay High Court order dismissing his plea to quash a decision by a special court to take cognisance of offences against him in the 2008 Malegaon blasts case without a “valid sanction” for prosecution.

• “The Special Court is likely to proceed with the framing of charges against the petitioner [Purohit] and others under the offences punishable under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.
Three northeastern States go to polls in February

**Bench strength**

A look at the results of the last Assembly elections in the three States going to the polls in February

**The Assembly elections in Tripura** will be held on February 18, **while Meghalaya and Nagaland** will go to the polls on February 27. Counting in all the three States will be held on March 3.

The notification for the Tripura elections will be issued on January 24. The nominations can be filed till January 31.

In Nagaland and Meghalaya, the notification will be issued on January 31, while the last date for filing of nominations is February 7.

The Commission said that **voter-verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) devices** would be used along with the electronic voting machines at all the polling stations in the three States.

**Face recognition for Aadhaar validation**

- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) said it will enable Aadhaar authentication using face recognition from July 1 onwards. However, this feature will be used only in “fusion mode”, along with one more existing mode of authentication such as fingerprint, iris or one-time password (OTP).

**Government ends Haj subsidy from this year**

- Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi announced the Centre would phase out subsidies for the annual Haj pilgrimage, two months after his Ministry had taken the decision.

- The Centre’s decision followed a 2012 Supreme Court order asking that subsidies for the Haj be phased out by 2022 and the money saved (around ₹450 crore annually) diverted to more welfare-oriented activities.
**INTERNATIONAL**

Australian lifesaving drone makes its first rescue

- A pair of Australian swimmers became the first people to be rescued in the ocean by a drone when the aerial lifesaver dropped a safety device to distressed teens caught in rough seas, thereby making it the world-first drone surf rescue.

**INDIA TO BUY 240 KAB-1500S FROM RUSSIA**

1. India would purchase **240 KAB-1500 laser-guided bombs for Indian Air Force (IAF)** at a cost of Rs 1,254 crore from Russia's Rosoboron export. The precision-guided bombs\(^3\) and laser-guided bombs\(^4\) will be procured for Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jets.

2. This procurement will address the deficiency of Precision Guided Munitions in the IAF arsenal, besides enhancing the offensive capabilities of the IAF.

3. The KAB-1500 is comparable to America's Paveway II and Paveway III series and has been used by the Russian Air Force during its intervention in Syria.

**INDIA TO BUY BARAK MISSILES FROM ISRAEL**

1. Defence Ministry has confirmed that it would buy **131 Barak Missiles for Indian Navy** and associated equipment from Israel's Rafael Advanced Defence Systems at a cost of Rs. 460 crore.

2. Israeli-built Barak short-range SAMs are installed on most of the front-line warships, including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.

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\(^3\) A precision-guided munition (PGM, smart weapon, smart munition, smart bomb) is a guided munition intended to precisely hit a specific target, to minimize collateral damage and increase lethality against intended targets.

\(^4\) A laser-guided bomb (LGB) is a guided bomb that uses semi-active laser guidance to strike a designated target with greater accuracy than an unguided bomb. First developed by the United States during the Vietnam War, laser-guided bombs quickly proved their value in precision strikes of difficult point targets.
3. These missiles are surface to air missiles designed to be used as a ship-borne anti-missile defence system against anti-ship missiles.

4. Barak also known as LR-SAM or as MR-SAM is an Indian-Israeli surface-to-air missile (SAM), both maritime and land-based versions of the Barak exist.

5. The other deals include procurement of expendable Bathy thermograph systems for the Navy to detect temperature changes under water.

INDIA CANCELS $500-MILLION DEAL FOR ISRAELI SPIKE ANTI-TANK MISSILES

1. India has cancelled a $500-million (Rs 3,177 crore) deal to buy 1,600 Spike anti-tank guided missiles from Israeli state-owned defence company Rafael Advanced Defence Systems

2. Antitank guided missiles (ATGM) is the most sophisticated missile amongst a variety of rockets and missiles employed against armoured vehicles. It can be directed to a target by several different guidance systems, including laser guiding, television camera, or wire guiding.

3. The fire-and-forget technology of advanced ATGMs such as the U.S. Javelin and the Israeli Spike, allows a soldier to select the target through an optical or infrared viewer attached to the missile’s launch tube. Once fired, the missile flies to the target without further action from the operator

4. Spike is a man-portable "fire and forget' missile built by Israel's state-run firm, Rafael Advanced Defence Systems, which can hit moving targets such as a tank.

INDO-PAK ON NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS

1. India and Pakistan exchanged a list of nuclear installations that the two countries have under a three-decade-old bilateral pact to maintain transparency and avoid attacking each other's nuclear facilities

2. The agreement on the "prohibition of attack against nuclear installations" was signed on December 31, 1988, and entered into force on January 27, 1991.
3. According to the pact, India and Pakistan must exchange an updated list showing nuclear installations and facilities on January 1 every year. This (January 02, 2017) exchange was the 27th consecutive exchange of the nuclear file—the first exchange took place on January 1, 1992.

**2017- SAFEST YEAR IN HISTORY OF COMMERCIAL AIRLINES**

1. 2017 was the safest year in history for commercial airlines, according to industry research.

2. There were no passenger jets crashes anywhere in the world, separate reports by Dutch consultancy To70 and The Aviation Safety Network found.

**ISRAEL ON JERUSALEM**

1. Israel’s parliament passed a law that bars ceding any part of Jerusalem to a foreign power without the approval of a supermajority of lawmakers

2. It is a move that threatens to further hinder prospects of peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

3. A 2014 law already requires a supermajority in parliament or a national referendum for Israel to ratify an agreement that stipulates the conceding of territory under Israeli law, namely East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights

1. **HISTORY**

   a) Israel considers the whole of Jerusalem to be its united capital

   b) While the Palestinians see East Jerusalem, which Israel captured in the 1967 war and subsequently annexed, as the capital of a future state.

   c) Most of the international community does not recognise Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem.

**H-1B visa**

- The United States has no plans under consideration to discontinue the extension of H-1B visas beyond six years, when beneficiaries wait for permanent residency, or green card, authorities clarified.

- AC-21 or the American Competitiveness in the Twenty First Century Act is the law passed by the U.S Congress in 2000, which also governs the extension of H-1B visas.

- Section 104(c) of AC-21, provides for H-1B extensions beyond the 6 year limit.

- The H-1B is a visa in the United States under the Immigration and Nationality Act, which allows U.S. employers to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.

- If a foreign worker in H-1B status quits or is dismissed from the sponsoring employer, the worker must either apply for and be granted a change of status,
find another employer (subject to application for adjustment of status and/or change of visa), or leave the United States.

**North and South Korea unifying for the Winter games is a much-needed good news story for the Olympic movement**

- **The two Koreas will field a combined women’s ice hockey team and march together under one flag at next month’s Winter Olympics in the South, Seoul.**

- North and South Korea have been talking since last week — for the first time in more than two years — about the Olympics, offering a respite from a months-long standoff over Pyongyang’s pursuit of nuclear and missile programmes, although Japan urged caution over the North’s “charm offensive”.

- **The two Koreas will compete as a unified team in the Olympics for the first time, though they have joined forces at other international sports events before.**

**World Social Protection Report 2017-19: Universal social protection to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**

- World Social Protection Report 2017-19 is prepared by ILO.

- **This ILO flagship report** provides a global overview of recent trends in social protection systems, including social protection floors. Based on new data, it offers a broad range of global, regional and country data on social protection coverage, benefits and public expenditures on social protection.
2017 the most expensive year on record for disasters in the United States

- **Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria combined** with devastating Western wildfires and other natural catastrophes to make **2017 the most expensive year on record for disasters in the United States**, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

- **Hurricane Harvey**, which sparked **extreme flooding in Houston** and the surrounding area in **August and September**, caused $125 billion in damage, the year’s most expensive disaster.

- **Hurricane Maria**, which **in September** set off a fatal and ongoing humanitarian crisis in the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico and elsewhere, caused $90 billion in damage.

- **Hurricane Irma raked across the Caribbean and hit Florida in September**, causing $50 billion in total damage.

**Leading Kosovo Serb politician shot and killed in Mitrovica**

- **A leading Serb politician ‘Oliver Ivanovic’ in northern Kosovo** was shot and killed raising ethnic tensions in the region and halting **EU-mediated talks between Kosovo and Serbia on the day they were due to resume**.

- Assailants opened fire on him close to the offices of his political party in the Serb-controlled northern city of Mitrovica. He was taken to a hospital but doctors were unable to save him.

**Pope in Chile seeks forgiveness for sex abuse scandals**
Pope Francis expressed his “pain and shame” over a sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church in Chile, seeking forgiveness for a crisis that has scarred its credibility and left many faithful sceptical of reform.

The US-based NGO Bishop Accountability said ahead of the visit that almost 80 Roman Catholic clergy members had been accused of sexually abusing children in Chile since 2000.

Catholics have been upset with Pope Francis’ 2015 appointment of Bishop Juan Barros to head the small diocese of Osorno in south-central Chile. Barros has been accused of protecting his former mentor, Father Fernando Karadima, whom a Vatican investigation found guilty in 2011 of abusing teenage boys over many years.

**NASA drops astronaut from mission**

- NASA has bumped an astronaut off an upcoming spaceflight, a rare move for the space agency so close to launch.

- Astronaut Jeanette Epps was supposed to rocket away in early June, and would have been the first African-American to live on the International Space Station. NASA announced it was pulling Ms. Epps off the mission but did not disclose why.

- She has been replaced by her backup, Serena Aunon-Chancellor.

**Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s visit to India**

- In 1992, India established diplomatic ties with Israel
• In 2003, when Ariel Sharon became the first Israeli Prime Minister to visit India

• In 2015, President Pranab Mukherjee visited Israel

• In 2017 when Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Israel.

• Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was here to address the Israel-India Business Summit.

• Mr. Netanyahu also made the traditional trip to the Taj Mahal, and a symbolic journey to Mumbai's Chabad House, one of the sites of the 26/11 terror attacks where Israeli citizens were among those killed.

• Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, along with 11-year-old Moshe Holtzberg who was orphaned in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, unveiled the living memorial at the Nariman House in Colaba

• Mr. Netanyahu’s case, made at a speech inaugurating the Foreign Ministry’s annual Raisina Dialogue, was that the two countries have a “natural partnership” and a “natural friendship” that also caters to their need for hard power.

• The Israeli government is pushing for a free trade agreement (FTA) with India to boost trade and investments.

Mission Mexico wall: A portion of the new steel border fence that stretches along the U.S.-Mexico border in Sunland Park, New Mexico

• Mr. Trump said the U.S. needs a wall “to help stop the massive inflow of drugs from Mexico, now rated the number one most dangerous country in the world”.
U.S. asks Pakistan to prosecute ‘terrorist’ Saeed

- The U.S. said that it has told Pakistan clearly that Hafiz Saeed is a “terrorist” and should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Xi’s ‘thought’ to enter China’s Constitution

- China’s Communist Party proposed to engrave President Xi Jinping’s guiding philosophy in the country’s Constitution, further cementing his status as its most powerful leader in decades.

- Mr. Xi’s ‘thought’ was already enshrined in the Communist Party constitution at the 19th Party Congress in October, elevating him to the same status as modern China’s founder Mao Zedong.

- The architect of China’s economic reforms, Deng Xiaoping, is the only other leader whose name appears alongside his guiding principle in both the state and party Constitutions.

- A major outcome of the 19th Party Congress was the decision to establish an anti-graft agency, the National Supervisory Commission.

- The forthcoming amendment would need to “enshrine the major theoretical points and major principles and policies stipulated by the 19th Party Congress — especially Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era — into state law,”

London council votes for ‘Trump-free zone’

- A local council in east London has voted in favour of declaring its area a “Trump-free zone” if the U.S. President was to visit the U.K.

India admitted to Australia Group

- The Australia Group is an informal group of countries (now joined by the European Commission) established in 1985 (after the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in 1984) to help member countries to identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons

- India joined the Australia Group, saying the membership will be mutually beneficial.

- The Australia Group decided to admit India as its 43rd participant.

- India’s entry into the Australia Group shows our export controls and safeguards for biological and chemical agents, equipments and technologies meet the benchmarks established by the international community.

- India joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in 2016 and the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) last year.

U.S. worried over closing of Pak. radio station
• The U.S. has expressed concern over Islamabad’s decision to shut down the U.S.-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Radio Mashaal for airing content “against the interest of Pakistan.”

Iran nuclear deal

• Most UN and western sanctions on Iran were lifted two years ago under the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and key world powers.

ANC could force Zuma to quit as President: report

• Mr. Ramaphosa succeeded Zuma as African National Congress head last month, making him likely to replace Mr. Zuma as the country’s next President.

• Mr. Zuma’s presidency has been tainted by a series of corruption allegations, all of which he denies.

Pak. Taliban claims it killed Benazir Bhutto
• The Pakistani Taliban has claimed responsibility for the assassination of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 2007, saying it killed her as she allegedly planned to collaborate with the U.S. against the ‘mujahideen’ if she returned to power, says a book by the banned terror group.

• The Daily Times reported that no group had claimed responsibility for Bhutto’s murder until the claim in the Taliban’s Urdu-language book titled ‘Inqilab Mehsood South Waziristan — From British Raj to American Imperialism’.

• Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan leader Abu Mansoor Asim Mufti Noor Wali wrote the book and published it on November 30, 2017, as per details in the book.

**Ban on women buying alcohol in Lanka returns**

• Sri Lanka’s President Maithripala Sirisena has ordered the reinstatement of ban on women buying alcohol and being employed in places where the drinks are produced and sold.

• President’s order came days after Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera revoked the 38-year ban.

• The ban had been in force since 1979, the early years of Sri Lanka embracing an open market economy. Many businesses had ignored the ban and employed women to serve alcohol and sold alcohol to them.

• Liberalising alcohol consumption has been a sensitive issue in Sri Lanka, where the Buddhist clergy play a dominant role in society. However, liquor consumption is not banned in Sri Lanka and many Sri Lankans consume alcohol.

**U.S. violated our sovereignty: China**

• USS Hopper is US’s missile destroyer warship.
The USS Hopper sailed within 12 nautical miles of Huangyan Island on the night of January 17 without alerting Beijing referring to the shoal by its Chinese name.

Also known as Scarborough Shoal, the ring of reefs lies about 230 km (140 miles) from the Philippines in the South China Sea, where Beijing’s claims are hotly contested by other nations.

The USS Hopper recently entered the U.S. Navy’s 7th Fleet area of operations, where the ship is on an “independent deployment.

China seized Scarborough Shoal in 2012 after a brief standoff with the Philippine navy. The shoal is also claimed by Taiwan.

**Poland wants sanctions against Russia to go on**

Russia’s annexation of Crimea has violated international law and India should be cautious about Moscow’s intentions in South Asia, says Marek Magierowski, Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland.

He said that Poland was not in favour of spreading Russophobia [anti-Russia sentiment] but stressed that Russia had been undertaking hostile military measures against Eastern Europe apart from using aggressive propaganda.

**Turkish troops enter Syria to fight Kurdish militia**

Turkish ground troops entered Syria to push an offensive against Kurdish militia as rocket fire hit a border town in apparent retaliation.

Turkey operation “Olive Branch” seeking to oust from the Afrin region of northern Syria the Peoples’ Protection Units (YPG), which Ankara considers a terror group.

**Apple joins Malala Fund for girls’ education**

Seeking to strengthen girls’ education in India and other countries, technology giant Apple has teamed up with the Malala Fund, led by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai, to double the number of grants awarded to the children.

**US Embassy will be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem**

U.S. Vice-President Mike Pence told Israel’s Parliament that the U.S. Embassy will be moved from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem by the end of 2019.

Jerusalem is Israel’s capital and as such President [Donald] Trump has directed the State Department to immediately begin preparations to move the United States Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem,

**Sister-state agreement with Zurich canton**
The Andhra government has entered into a sister-state agreement with the Canton of Zurich.

The agreement will promote collaborations through exchange of experience and information, joint cooperation plans, industry-specific programmes and projects, establishment of joint expert groups and work, implementation of skill development of an educational nature and regular expert-level consultation.

Japan for greater ties with India in food processing

Japanese Ambassador to India Kenji Hiramatsu said there was plenty of room to expand India-Japan ties, especially in food processing, urban development, environment and sanitation as well as medicine.

Volcanic Eruption in Japan

Mount Kusatsu-Shirane, a volcano in central Japan, injured by flying rocks during a sudden eruption.

Kuwait govt. grants general amnesty to expatriates

The Kuwait government has granted a general amnesty to expatriates living in that country without valid visas. The amnesty from January 29 to February 22 was granted through a decree issued by the Ministry of Interior of Kuwait.

The amnesty envisaged that illegal residents or overstaying immigrants could leave the country during the above period through any port without getting permission from any authority and not paying any penalty.

Those who leave the country during the period will be allowed to enter Kuwait again if they meet the regular conditions of entry and not banned for any reason.

Iceland's pay parity move hailed

Iceland which has become the first country to make it illegal to pay men more than women.
• Iceland has been widely praised for introducing legislation on January 1 that imposes fines on any company or government agency with over 25 staff without a government certificate demonstrating pay equality.

• The move is part of a bid to eradicate the gender pay gap by 2022 in the Nordic nation, where 38% of parliamentarians are women.

**Cate Blanchett to head Cannes film festival jury**

**Cate Blanchett**, a two-time Oscar-winning actor who is prominent in a Hollywood campaign to tackle sexual harassment in the workplace, will head the jury at this year's Cannes film festival **this year**

• **She becomes 12th woman to lead jury**

**Zimbabwe's Mugabe 'under house arrest' after army takeover**

• Zimbabwe's military has placed President Robert Mugabe under house arrest in the capital Harare, South African President Jacob Zuma says.

**Khaleda Zia sentenced to 5-year jail term over graft charges**

• A Bangladesh Court sentenced former Prime Minister and the country's main opposition leader Khaleda Zia to five years in prison on corruption charges.
Amid heightened security across Bangladesh, the special judge’s court convicted the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson of embezzling $252,000 in foreign donations for the Zia Orphanage Trust.

The Shape of Water tops Oscar nominees

Guillermo del Toro’s lavish monster romance “The Shape of Water,” a modestly budgeted fantasy about a mute janitor who falls in love with an imprisoned sea creature, became the year’s most decorated movie, receiving 13 nominations, including for best picture and Guillermo del Toro’s directing.

U.S. diplomat quits Rohingya committee, slams Suu Kyi

Veteran U.S. diplomat Bill Richardson has resigned from an international panel set up by Myanmar to advise on the Rohingya crisis, saying it was conducting a “whitewash” and accusing the country’s leader Aung San Suu Kyi of lacking “moral leadership”.

Mr. Richardson, a former Clinton administration cabinet member, quit as the 10-member advisory board was making its first visit to western Rakhine State, from where nearly 700,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled in recent months.

The Advisory Board for the Committee for Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State was set up by Myanmar last year, to advise on enacting the findings of an earlier commission headed by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Trump willing to testify under oath in Russia probe

U.S. President Donald Trump declared that he’s “looking forward” to being questioned under oath in the special counsel’s probe of Russian election interference and Mr. Trump’s possible obstruction in the firing of the FBI director.

That includes the firing of FBI Director James Comey and discussions preceding the ouster of White House National Security Adviser Michael Flynn.
Mr. Trump said he would be willing to answer questions under oath in the interview, which special counsel Robert Mueller has been seeking but which White House officials had not previously confirmed the President would grant.

EU court bars 'gay test' for asylum seekers

Hungarian immigration officials should not have put a Nigerian asylum seeker through psychological tests to determine whether he was telling the truth that he was gay.

Effectively of barring use sexual orientation testing as an invasion of “the most intimate aspects” of life

It was among the first countries hit by a wave of more than a million people who entered the EU via Greece in 2015 after taking to flimsy boats crossing the Mediterranean from Turkey.

FBI 'warned' Kushner on Murdoch’s ex-wife


Marriage equality law passes Australia's parliament in landslide vote
- **Australia’s parliament has legislated for marriage equality**, passing a bill almost unanimously to allow two people, regardless of sex, to marry.

- **Australia**, which changed the law in 2004 to say that marriage is only between a man and a woman, **now becomes the 25th country to recognise same-sex marriage**.

- **Australia’s first legal same-sex marriage has just taken place between a female couple Amy and Lauren**.

- By legalizing same-sex marriages on **April 1, 2001, Netherlands** became a pioneer among the world’s countries, as it was the **First Nation to grant the same-sex couples this basic human right at a national level**.

- On June 1, 2003, **Belgium became the second country** in the world to legalize same sex marriages. Following years of heated debates and significant protests by Belgian gay-rights organizations,

- **The first legal gay marriage in the world was in Amsterdam on April 1, 2001, according to Pink Families**.

- In July of 2010, **Argentina** became **the first Latin American country** to legalize same-sex marriages, attributing Argentine gay people the same marital rights as the nation’s heterosexuals.

**Tito’s legendary, rusting yacht to be converted into museum**

- **The now-dilapidated yacht of late Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito** is set for a new chapter as a museum.

- **Galeb (Seagull in Croatian)** was, in its heyday, an icon of Yugoslavia, carrying the charismatic communist president on business around the globe
Fire Destroys Valuable Artifacts At Jakarta’s Maritime Museum

- The Maritime Museum (Museum Bahari) in Jakarta caught on fire, destroying some of the valuable collection of historic artifacts on display after they were consumed by the fire.

- According to the Maritime Museum Head Husnison Nizar, the extent of the fire and losses it caused makes it the biggest fire the museum has ever experienced.

- Museum Bahari is located in the old Sunda Kelapa harbour area of Penjaringan, North Jakarta, and is housed in historic buildings constructed by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. The museum exhibitions focus on the maritime history of Indonesia and the importance of the sea as it relates to the economy of present-day Indonesia.

Bermuda repeals same-sex marriage in world first

- Bermuda became the first country in the world to repeal a law allowing gay couples to marry.
Bermudans were first granted the right to same-sex marriages after a **Supreme Court ruling in May 2017** but the decision outraged many on the socially conservative island, including church leaders, and thousands protested outside parliament.

**World Bank chief economist Paul Romer quits over Chile comments**

- **Paul Romer** stepped down as the World Bank’s chief economist after he came under fire for saying that Chile’s rankings in a closely watched Doing Business report may have been deliberately skewed under socialist President Michelle Bachelet.
- Mr. Romer’s resignation, just 15 months after taking the job, was announced in an internal note that was posted by **World Bank president Jim Yong Kim** and seen by Reuters.

**10,000-year-old ‘crayon’ discovered in England**

- Archaeologists have discovered one of the earliest examples of a ‘crayon’ — possibly used by our ancestors 10,000 years ago for applying colour to their animal skins or for artwork.
- The ochre crayon was discovered near an ancient lake, now blanketed in peat, near Scarborough, North Yorkshire in England. An ochre pebble was found at another site on the opposite side of the lake.
- Ochre is an important mineral pigment used by prehistoric hunter-gatherers across the globe. **The latest findings suggest people collected ochre and processed it in different ways during the Mesolithic period.**

**Cape Town’s water crisis highlights city’s rich-poor divide**

- **Day Zero** is approaching as South Africa’s showcase city of Cape Town prepares to turn off most water taps amid the worst drought in a century.
- Experts have said causes of the city’s water shortages include climate change and huge population growth. The local reliance on reservoirs, while projects such as desalination plants were largely left to the future, has been hurt by three straight years of drought.
- Scientists are watching how authorities cope, **as this would be the world’s first major city to go dry**
Cambodia backs anti-terror efforts

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cambodian counterpart, Samdech Hun Sen inked four pacts, including the one to improve cooperation in the prevention and investigation of crimes and legal assistance in criminal matters and another on a line of credit from India to finance Cambodia’s Stung Sva Hab water resources development project for $36.92 million.

DURATION OF HOLDING PRESIDENTIAL POST: SIRISENA

- The Sri Lankan Supreme Court’s ruling that President Maithripala Sirisena’s term will end when he completes five years in office comes as no surprise.

- Three years since President Sirisena assumed charge, President Sirisena sought judicial opinion on whether he can continue in office until 2021. A five-year term for Mr. Sirisena would expire in January 2020, before four and a half years of Parliament’s life.

- The 19th Amendment, passed in April 2015, stipulated a five-year term for the President. It stated ‘the persons holding office respectively, as the President and Prime Minister on the day preceding April 22, 2015 shall continue to hold such office after such date, subject to the provisions of the Constitution as amended by this Act’.
• Now the doubt on the retrospective effect of the legislation.

• President Sirisena, who assumed charge on January 9, 2015, had already commenced the six-year term when the 19th Amendment came into effect.

White oil’: Saudi Arabia seeks place on tourism map

• Saudi Arabia will soon begin issuing tourist visas, opening up one of the last frontiers of global tourism -- a sector touted as the desert kingdom’s "white oil" -- as it steps up diversification efforts to wean itself off its crude oil dependence.

• But the country, known for sex segregation and its austere dress code, is seen as an unlikely destination for global tourists aside from Muslim pilgrims visiting holy sites in Mecca and Medina.

• Sri Lanka has increased the fine on foreign vessels fishing in its territorial waters by amending its existing Fisheries Act of 1979.

• A set of amendments to the Foreign Fishing Boats Regulation Act of 1979, came in effect increasing fines on foreign vessels trespassing into Sri Lankan waters.

• In the last decade, the Palk Bay Fisheries conflict between Tamil Nadu fishermen and their counterparts in the war-affected north in Sri Lanka emerged a major strain in diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Russia’s Opposition leader Alexei Navalny held after protests

• The Kremlin's top critic Alexei Navalny has slammed Russia’s March presidential election, as a sham meant to “re-appoint” Vladimir Putin on his way to becoming “emperor for life”.

• Alexei Navalny is barred from running in the presidential election.
Within hours of taking the oath, Mr. Trump signed an executive order aimed at “minimising the economic burden” of Obamacare “pending repeal.” Mr. Trump was vocal against his predecessor’s affordable healthcare Act.

Acting Attorney General Sally Yates was removed from her post after she instructed government law officers not to defend the presidential order that put restrictions on people from seven Muslim-majority countries travelling to the U.S.

Michael Flynn, Mr. Trump’s pick for National Security Advisor, had to quit within a month of his appointment after his name figured in the Russian hacking scandal.

FBI director James Comey was dismissed “for his way of handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation.”

Mr. Trump chose Riyadh as his first official destination abroad for a Middle East Summit. This was followed by Jerusalem, West Bank, the Vatican, NATO Summit in Brussels and G7 meet in Sicily.

Opted out of the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership that took shape after nearly a decade of negotiations.

Pulled out of the Paris Accord in which countries decided to work together to limit global warming.

Mr. Trump officially recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and also declared the U.S. Embassy will move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Republicans ensured safe passage of Mr. Trump’s $1.5 TRILLION TAX OVERHAUL IN both Houses of Congress, making it the first legislative victory of Mr. Trump in the first year of his presidency. The tax code, a first in 30 years, includes permanent tax breaks for corporations and temporary tax cuts for individuals.
• Journalist Michael Wolff published ‘Fire and Fury’, an account of the first 100 days of the Trump Presidency.

World’s biggest flooded cave found in Mexico, explorers say

Sac Aktun underwater cave system is believed to be the biggest flooded cave on the planet, a discovery that could help shed new light on the ancient Maya civilization.

The Gran Acuifero Maya (GAM), a project dedicated to the study and preservation of the subterranean waters of the Yucatan peninsula, said the 347-km cave was identified after months of exploring a maze of underwater channels.

Hong Kong bans activist’s candidacy
One of Hong Kong’s best-known democracy activists, Agnes Chow was banned on from standing as lawmaker in the by-elections scheduled for March.

Agnes Chow, 21, a former leader of the mass Umbrella Movement protests of 2014 that called for political reform, had her nomination rejected because she supports self-determination for the semi-autonomous city.

Marijuana legalised in California (recreational use) and New Jersey (medical use)

1. *California* has become the largest state in the US to legalise recreational cannabis use. As of 1 January 2018, adults aged over 21 can possess up to an ounce (28 grams) of the drug and can grow up to six *marijuana* plants at home.

2. New Jersey’s new Governor, Phil Murphy, made access to medical marijuana easier in the Garden State a few weeks later after California did.

3. *California* legalised recreational marijuana use, having cleared the way for medical marijuana in 1996.

4. Twenty-nine States in the U.S. now allow marijuana for medical purposes, while eight have legalised its recreational use. As the acceptance of marijuana is growing, so are the opportunities to invest in it.

All borders to be fenced, says Rijiju

- By the end of 2018 or early 2019, smart fencing will be deployed all along the Indo-Bangladesh and Indo-Pakistan border to prevent infiltration and illegal migration.

- Smart border fencing technology has been introduced in some pockets in the Bangladesh and Pakistan border.

Opposition seeks to oust Maldives leader

1. The Opposition Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) have asked the Supreme Court to remove the President Abdulla Yameen and investigate corruption allegations against him.

2. The signatories include the country’s first democratically elected leader Mohamed Nasheed, who lives in exile since he was jailed on terrorism charges in a case widely seen as politically motivated.

3. They accuse Mr. Yameen of “unprecedented corruption, including unjust enrichment from appropriation of state properties and funds for personal benefit, for the benefit of his family and political associates.

Fire and fury book
• Fire and Fury: Inside the Trump White House is a 2018 book by Michael Wolff details the behavior of U.S. President Donald Trump and the staff of his 2016 presidential campaign and White House.

Kirobo

1. Kirobo is Japan's first robot astronaut, developed by University of Tokyo and Tomotaka Takahashi, to accompany Koichi Wakata, the first Japanese commander of the International Space Station.

2. A twin to Kirobo, named Mirata, was created with the same characteristics. Mirata will stay on Earth as a backup crew member.
3. A robot that acts as a friend for lonely astronauts in space has today been honoured with two Guinness World Records titles.

4. Kirobo, a small android able to have conversations in Japanese, has set records for **first companion robot in space** and **highest altitude for a robot to have a conversation** following an 18-month stay onboard the International Space Station.

**Casey Affleck withdraws from presenting the best actress award at the Oscars**

- CASEY Affleck has withdrawn from presenting the best actress award at the Oscars - bucking a longstanding ceremony tradition - in the wake of sexual assault allegations made against him.

- In 2010, Amanda White and Magdalena Gorka, the producer and cinematographer on his poorly-received directorial debut, mockumentary *I'm Still Here*, sued Affleck for what they described as repeated sexual harassment.

- Tradition dictates that **best actor winners present the following year's award for best actress**, and vice-versa.

- He won **ACTOR IN A LEADING ROLE for his role in Manchester by the Sea** in Oscars, 2017.

**Pakistan extends Thar Link Express for 3 years**

- The **Government of Pakistan** has agreed to extend the agreement of the Rail link between Munabao (India) – Khokhrapar (Pakistan) for another three years from 1 February 2018 to 31 January 2021.

- The weekly train connects Jodhpur and the bordering region of Rajasthan with the province of Sindh in Pakistan.

- The agreement to run the Thar Link Express was signed in 2006 and is one of the cheapest means of transport between the two rival countries.
GOVERNMENT POLICY

UDAN 2 to link 73 airports, helipads

- The Centre said 73 underserved and unserved airports and helipads would be connected under the phase 2 of the regional connectivity scheme UDAN.

- The States with maximum number of airports and helipads which will see activation under UDAN 2 scheme include Uttarakhand (15), Uttar Pradesh (9), Arunachal Pradesh (8), Himachal Pradesh (6), Assam (5) and Manipur (5).

- UDAN-RCS, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional airport development and "Regional Connectivity Scheme" (RCS) of Government of India, with the objective of "Let the common citizen of the country fly", aimed at making air travel affordable and to promote economic growth.

Schemes to promote milk production

1. Government of India is implementing Rashtriya Gokul Mission, National Dairy Plan- I to supplement the efforts of States in promoting milk production.

2. National Dairy Plan-I has focus on development and conservation of indigenous breeds of cattle and buffalo through implementation of progeny testing and pedigree selection programme.

3. 6 indigenous breeds of cattle (Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Kankrej, Tharparkar and Hariana)
4. 6 buffalo breeds (Murrah, Mehsani, Jaffarabadi, Nili Ravi, Pandharpuri and Banni)

CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE FACILITIES FOR THE JUDICIARY

1. The Union Cabinet approved the continuation of the centrally sponsored scheme for development of infrastructure facilities for the judiciary. The scheme will be implemented beyond the 12th Five Year plan (i.e., 2012 to 2017) till March 31, 2020 at a cost of Rs 3,320 crore. **Under the scheme, court halls and residential accommodation will be constructed for judicial officers of the district and subordinate courts.**
**LEGAL NEWS**

**Playing of national anthem in cinema halls optional: Supreme Court**

- The **playing of national anthem in cinema halls before screening of movies is optional**.

- **Earlier order (November 30, 2016):** The Supreme Court had ordered the playing of the anthem mandatory in cinema halls before the screening of a film.

- The PIL was filed before the Supreme Court by **Shyam Narayan Chouksey** seeking a direction that the national anthem be played in all cinema halls before the start of screening of a film.

**Women can join Territorial Army, says HC**

- “Women are eligible for recruitment and appointment to the Territorial Army under Section 6 of the Indian Territorial Army Act, 1948,” a Bench of Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal and Justice C. Hari Shankar said.

- Territorial Army is an organisation of volunteers who receive military training in order to be mobilised for the country’s defence in case of an emergency.

- Section 6 of the Territorial Army Act lays down rules on who is eligible for enrolment in the Territorial Army, which is also known as the second line of defence after the regular Army. The High Court said the words “any person” in Section 6 shall include both men and women.
• The court order came after a PIL was filed by lawyer Kush Kalra seeking to quash the provisions in the Territorial Army Act which prohibit gainfully employed women from being recruited in the force.

Constitution Bench to look at adultery law

• The Supreme Court referred to a Constitution Bench a plea to decide if the pre-Independence provision of adultery in the Indian Penal Code, Section 497, treats a woman as a commodity owned by her husband and violates the constitutional concepts of gender equality and sensitivity.

• A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, said it was time to reconsider the consistent view from 1954 onwards that the penal provision was necessary to uphold family ties.

• Section 497 mandates that if a man has sexual intercourse with another’s wife without the husband’s “consent or connivance”, he is “guilty of the offence of adultery and shall be punished.”

• The court had issued notice on December 8, 2017 on a petition filed by Joseph Shine, represented by advocates Kaleeswaram Raj and Suvidutt M.S.

• Joseph Shine v. Union of India is the petition challenging the constitutional validity of the criminal prohibition on adultery under Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code.

Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016

• The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 is an Act of the Parliament of India which seeks to protect home-buyers as well as help boost investments in the real estate industry.

• The important provisions of the RERA came into force on May 1, 2017

• Dr. Girija Vyas introduced Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation

• The Act establishes Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) in each state for regulation of the real estate sector and also acts as an an adjudicating body for speedy dispute redressal.

• The new law states that the Regulatory Authority should endeavour to dispose of the complaints within 60 days from the date of filing. However, the Authority can take more time and is only required to record the reasons for not completing the proceeding within the 60 day period.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND REMAINS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017.

• Parliament has recently passed Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Bill, 2017.
The Bill permits construction of public works in ‘prohibited areas’ for public purposes.

The Act defines a ‘prohibited area’ as an area of 100 meters around a protected monument or area.

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was introduced in Lok Sabha on July 18, 2017 by the Minister of Tourism and Culture, Dr. Mahesh Sharma. The Bill amends the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.

The Act defines a ‘prohibited area’ as an area of 100 meters around a protected monument or area. The central government can extend the prohibited area beyond 100 meters. The Act does not permit construction in such prohibited areas, except under certain conditions. The Act also prohibits construction in ‘prohibited areas’ even if it is for public purposes.

TRIPLE TALAQ VOID

Supreme Court of India bench headed by Justice Khehar declared the practice of Triple Talaq as unconstitutional by 3:2 majority. Justices Kurian Joseph, UU Lalit and RF Nariman delivered the majority Judgment that Triple Talaq is unconstitutional. Chief Justice Khehar and Justice Abdul Nazeer dissented.

The petitions were filed by Shayara Bano, Afreen Rahman, Ishrat Jahan, Gulshan Parveen and Farha Faiz, and the bench also considered the October 2015 reference from the bench of justices Anil R Dave and Adarsh Kumar Goel who while dealing with a Muslim divorce case ordered registration of a Public Interest Litigation for a special bench to consider gender discrimination suffered by Muslim women owing to “arbitrary divorce and second marriage of their husbands during the currency of their first marriage”.

Advocates Anand Grover, Salman Khurshid, Arif Mohammad Khan and Indira Jaising vociferously demanded that triple talaq be declared illegal and unconstitutional and were representing petitioners.

All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) was represented by lawyer Kapil Sibal

The Supreme Court has also declared that this practice is unconstitutional and not protected by Article 25 which regards the freedom of religion. December 2016, the Allahabad High Court had said that no personal law board was above the constitution.

THE MUSLIM WOMEN (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS ON MARRIAGE) BILL, 2017

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017 was introduced in the Lok Sabha, and will be taken up for consideration and passing.
This Bill, which makes instant triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat a punishable offence, follows the Supreme Court judgment on August 22, 2017 in the case of Shayara Bano vs. Union of India.

According to clause 3 of the Bill, "Any pronouncement of talaq by a person upon his wife, by words, either spoken or written or in electronic form or in any other manner whatsoever, shall be void and illegal."

Clause 4 of the Bill states, "Whoever pronounces talaq referred to in section 3 upon his wife shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and fine."

Clause 7 says, "an offence punishable under this Act shall be cognizable and non-bailable within the meaning of the Code." (The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973)

Clauses 5 and 6 of the Bill say, "a married Muslim woman upon whom talaq is pronounced, shall be entitled to receive from her husband such amount of subsistence allowance for her and dependent children," and "shall be entitled to custody of her minor children in the event of pronouncement of talaq by her husband."

KERALA METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT AUTHORITY BILL 2017

It has been passed for urban mobility regions and envisages integrating various modes of transport operating in the municipal limits of Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode when the Kerala Metropolitan Authority Act comes into effect. However, military areas, military cantonment and economic zones cannot be included in the urban mobility region without the permission of the Centre.

AADHAR ROW

The Supreme Court asked whether the state could compel citizens, including children, to part with their biometrics in public interest even as petitioners described the Aadhaar “project” as a “giant electronic leash,” which reduces individuals to mere numbers.

A five-judge Constitution Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, began hearing 27 writ petitions filed by people from all walks of life and across the country.

Referring to the nine-judge Bench judgment in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India, which upheld privacy as a fundamental right, senior advocate Shyam Divan and advocate Vipin Nair submitted before a Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra that Aadhaar enrolment and subsequent leakages of personal mass datas how that the state itself is exploiting personal rights of individuals by giving it to private corporates who use it for commercial ends

SC rejects BBTC plea over Manjolai estate: Tamil Nadu’s declaration of the land as reserve forest upheld
The Supreme Court dismissed a special leave petition filed by the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation (BBTC) challenging a Madras High Court order that rejected its claim seeking right as a farmer for 3,400 hectares of land leased to it in Manjolai estate and its surroundings in Tirunelveli district.

With this, Tamil Nadu government’s declaration of 23,000 hectares in the Kalakkadu Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve (KMTR), including nearly 3,400 hectares leased to the BBTC (including Manjolai estate) stands valid.

Third SC judge recuses from Chandy case

Supreme Court judge Kurian Joseph recused himself from hearing a matter involving former Kerala Transport Minister Thomas Chandy, who is facing allegations of land encroachment.

Earlier, Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and A.M. Sapre had recused themselves from the case.

The Bench of Justices Kurian Joseph and Amitava Roy referred the case to the Chief Justice of India for putting it up before another Bench.

NEW CONSUMER PROTECTION BILL, 2018

New Consumer Protection Bill, 2018 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha. If all goes well, the Bill could become an Act sooner than later. It will replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and it is much wider.

The famous 1992 McDonald’s Coffee Case, where the fast food chain had to cough up $640,000 as compensation to 79-year-old Stella Liebeck for “unreasonably dangerous” and “defectively manufactured” coffee, could soon repeat itself in India.

It’s ambit includes product liability, alternative dispute redressal mechanism, etc. It also provided for an imprisonment of upto 2 years and a fine of upto 10 lakhs for false and misleading advertisement

SC to make public work allocation process

Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra has examined suggestions from stakeholders to bring transparency in allocation of sensitive PILs to judges and is likely to bring in the public domain soon the system he is going to adopt for it.

Clear-cut roster system is likely to be followed in the Supreme Court for the allocation of cases.

Loya death will be examined objectively, says CJI Bench
A Bench of Chief Justice Misra and Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and D.Y. Chandrachud transferred two PIL petitions on Justice Loya's death, pending before the Bombay High Court, to itself.

It allowed both the Maharashtra government and the petitioners — journalist B.R. Lone and activist Tehseen Poonawala — to place on record additional documents.

Maharashtra produced documents containing the statements of four district judges, two of whom went on to become High Court judges. They had stated that Justice Loya died of cardiac arrest and they had taken him to hospital.

The petitioners, in turn, submitted that they had accessed certain documents under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The Bench allowed the Bombay Lawyers' Association to file an intervention application.

Motor Vehicle Act, 2017

The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha in 2017. If passed by the Rajya Sabha, it will be the first of its kind to extensively reform existing legislation on road safety, the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988.

The Amendment Bill is robust and rectifies several systemic issues by providing for a uniform driver licensing system, protection of children and vulnerable road users, rationalising penalties, and much more.

The Bill also proposes to introduce digitisation in the monitoring and enforcement of traffic laws. Electronic monitoring and enforcement can already be seen in practice in Kerala.

As a signatory to the Brasilia Declaration on Road Safety, India has committed to reducing, by 2020, the number of road crash fatalities and serious injuries by 50%.

Act on proposal to remit Rajiv case convicts' life sentence: SC

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court gave the Centre three months to decide on the Tamil Nadu government's proposal made in 2014 to REMIT
the sentences of seven life-term convicts in the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

- The apex court had on February 20, 2014 stayed the State government’s move to release three convicts — Murugan, Santhan and Perarivalan (Arivu) — whose death sentences were commuted to life term by it on February 18 in the case.

- It had later on stayed release of four other convicts — Nalini, Robert Pious, Jayakumar and Ravichandran — saying there were procedural lapses by the State government.

- On December 2, 2015, a five-judge Constitution Bench led by then Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu interpreted the law to hold that States cannot unilaterally remit the sentences of life convicts in cases investigated by a Central agency under a Central law.

Submit time-bound action plan on Bellandur lake: NGT

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) rapped the Karnataka government for not taking measures to prevent recurring fires at the severely polluted Bellandur lake, most recently on January 19, when it raged for over 24 hours.

- A Bench, headed by NGT acting chairperson U.D. Salvi, directed the government to submit a time-bound action plan by January 29.

‘Law & order State subject’

- The Centre made it clear that maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the State governments.

- The States that witnesses violence should deploy the Rapid Action Force, which is trained to handle such protests.

Supreme Court judges’ press conference

- In an unprecedented move, four senior Supreme Court judges called a press conference to express their displeasure with the Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Mishra and with the way he was assigning cases.
The four judges wrote a letter to the CJI two months ago, airing their grievances about selective assigning of important cases to judges who are junior to them. They also said they have issues with the assignment of the case to do with the mysterious death of Justice BH Loya, who was hearing the Sohrabuddin fake encounter case.

The judges were Justice Chelameswar, Justice Gogoi, Justice Lokur and Justice Kurian Joseph. They said they are speaking out because “democracy will not survive if the judiciary is not impartial”.

“The CJI is only the first among equals nothing more and nothing less”, they said.

NGT not to review order on Amarnath shrine

The National Green Tribunal has refused to review its order directing devotees to maintain silence while standing in front of the Amarnath ‘shivling’ in the cave shrine.

NGT on December 13, 2017 declared that from the end point of stairs and area of the holy cave only shall be treated as silent zone. This would check the adverse impact of noise heat vibrations in the zone thereby preventing avalanches it would also maintain the pristine nature of the delicate ecosystem. The plea was filed by the environment activist Gowri moulekhi.

A Bench headed by acting Chairperson Justice U.D. Salvi said the tribunal had heard all the parties and sufficient opportunity was given to respondents to place relevant material in support of their contention.

The order came on a plea filed by the Amarnath Shrine Board seeking a review of the NGT order on the ground that it was “bad in law” as a decision in a case could not be based on grounds outside the pleadings of the parties.
Plea to exclude SC/ST creamy layer from quota

- A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, will hear the petition to exclude the affluent members, or the creamy layer, of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from the benefits of reservation.
- This is the first time a petition has been filed, urging the Supreme Court to introduce the creamy layer concept for the SCs/STs.
- In 1992, a nine-judge Bench of the court in the Indra Sawhney case, or the Mandal case as it was popularly known, upheld the caste-based reservation for the OBCs as valid. The court also said the creamy layer of the OBCs (those earning a specified income) should not get the benefits of reservation.
- The petition, filed by advocate Shobhit Tiwari, refers to the Constitution Bench’s 2006 judgment in the M. Nagaraj case that the “means test [a scrutiny of the value of assets of an individual claiming reservation] should be taken into consideration to exclude the creamy layer from the group earmarked for reservation.”

SC/ST promotions: Apex court raps State for not complying with order

- The Supreme Court took to task the Karnataka government for not complying with a judgment to revise its seniority list after the apex court, in a judgment in February 2017, quashed a State law favouring reservation in promotion for SC/ST government employees.
- The law is Karnataka Determination of Seniority of the Government Servants Promoted on the Basis of Reservation (To the Posts in the Civil Services of the State) Act of 2002.

Allahabad High Court judge Shukla to be impeached
Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra recommended the removal of Justice Shri Narayan Shukla, the eighth senior-most judge of the Allahabad High Court, following an adverse report about him by an in-house panel.

The panel had been set up by the CJI. The committee was led by Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee.

The impeachment proceedings were to start against him for his defiance of an the orders passed by Supreme Court to stop admissions for the academic session 2017-18 in case of blacklisted private medical colleges in Lucknow.
ECONOMY

Chocolate brown Rs. 10 note coming

- A new chocolate brown-coloured Rs. 10 denomination currency will be put into circulation, the Reserve Bank of India said.
- The new note has the motif of Sun Temple, Konark, on the reverse, depicting the country’s cultural heritage.

GDP growth seen slowing to 4-year low of 6.5% in 2017-18

- The Central Statistics Office (CSO) forecast that GDP growth in the current financial year ending March 31 will slow to a four-year low of 6.5%, from the provisional 7.1% pace seen in 2016-17, dragged down by deceleration in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

WHO okays Bharat Bio typhoid shot

- Bharat Biotech has received a pre-qualification from the World Health Organisation (WHO) for Typbar Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine.
- Typbar TCV is the first typhoid vaccine clinically proven to be administered to children from 6 months of age to adults, and confers long-term protection against typhoid fever.

CRYPTO CURRENCY

- India’s first mobile application for transacting in virtual currencies was announced by Cryptocurrency dealer Pluto Exchange.
- Gurugram-based VVDN, in partnership with Ireland’s Embedded Downloads, unveiled blockchain technology-based smartphone BitVault for Rs 75,000 a unit. This is the world’s first blockchain technology-based smartphone,
• The birth of the first cryptocurrency — bitcoin — was announced to the world in 2008 by still unidentified inventor(s) who goes by the name ‘Satoshi Nakamoto’

RIL COMMISSIONS WORLD’S LARGEST GAS CRACKER COMPLEX

• Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) has commissioned the world’s largest off-gas cracker facility at its Jamnagar complex, completing its multi-billion-dollar expansion which has seen it doubling the ethylene capacity and entering the league of the top five petrochemical producers globally.

• With this, Jamnagar in Gujarat has also become home to the world’s largest operating refinery off-gas cracker.

• The oil major also runs the world’s largest single location petroleum refinery at Jamnagar with a 60-million-tonne annual capacity

HP bringing 3D printing technology to India in Q1, 2018

• Hewlett Packard Inc is bringing 3D printing technology to India about two years after it launched globally.

U.S. Puts Alibaba’s Taobao on Blacklist for Counterfeit Products—Again

• The U.S. Trade Representative put Alibaba’s Taobao on its blacklist for the second year in a row over suspected counterfeits sold on the shopping platform, a move the Chinese e-commerce giant.

• Taobao, China’s largest ecommerce marketplace and its third-most popular website, stayed off the list from 2012 to 2015, but was included in 2016 and now again in 2017.

Zoho Corporation opens office at Renigunta

• Zoho Corporation today forayed in to Andhra Pradesh by opening an office in Renigunta, 10 km from Tirupati.

• This is Zoho’s third office in India after its international headquarters in Chennai and Tenkasi in southern Tamil Nadu.

Tata Projects, Watergen of Israel tie upto extract water from atmosphere
Watergen of Israel and Tata Projects have entered into a memorandum of understanding to take up projects to work towards extracting drinking water from the atmosphere.

The MoU, coinciding with the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is aimed at deepening business ties and work towards providing safe, clean and cost-effective drinking water.

During the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad in November 2017, Watergen's President and majority shareholder, Michael Mirilashvili, presented to Prime Minister Narendra Modi a detailed plan on mitigating India's water woes in four-five years.

Watergen's technology provides energy-efficient, clean “drinking water from the air” solution with different models. While AWG (atmospheric water generators) can serve clean drinking water, with no other additional infrastructure, in villages and cities of India, the large-scale AWG unit produces up to 6,000 litres of water from the air every day.

The medium-scale AWG unit produces up to 600 litres of water daily.

India to set up $350 million fund to finance solar projects

India will set up a $350 million fund to finance solar projects, Power Minister R.K. Singh said, as the country steps up efforts to achieve its ambitious target of adding **175 gigawatts (GW)** in **renewable energy by 2022**.

The country would achieve its target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity well before 2020,” Singh said at an event organised by the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** in Abu Dhabi.

India’s Yes Bank Ltd has committed to financing solar projects worth $5 billion, while **state-run NTPC Ltd will contribute $1 million to an ISA fund**, the power ministry said in a statement.

Petroleum products not yet under GST

In the **25th GST Council** meeting on 18th January, 2018 chaired by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitdey at Delhi did not take up the proposal of bringing petroleum products, alcohol and real estate sector under the GST regime.

ONGC to acquire Centre's stake in HPCL for Rs. 36,915 cr.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) said that it would buy out the entire stake of the Central government in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL).

The Centre holds 51.11% in HPCL.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India has given exemption from the application of Section 23 of Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements

Asian meet to focus on producing greener steel

• Objective is to make steel a better-looking and a more environment-friendly product

RIL becomes India’s first firm to cross Rs. 6-lakh crore in market cap

• Reliance Industries (RIL) become the first Indian company to cross the Rs. 6-lakh crore mark in market capitalisation as its shares touched a 52-week high of Rs. 974.5 followed by Tata Consultancy Services, India’s largest software company.

• HDFC Bank is first lender to cross Rs. 5-lakh crore mark

SEBI ban Price Waterhouse

• In January 2009, Satyam Computer Services’ chairman B. Ramalinga Raju wrote a letter admitting that the company’s balance sheet was fudged and included inflated and non-existent cash and bank balances.

• Price Waterhouse (PW) was the auditor.

• On January 10 this year, nine years after the fraud came to light, SEBI issued a 108-page order, barring Price Waterhouse from auditing any Indian-listed company for two years.

Setting up firms may get easier

• On the occasion of the 69th Republic Day, the Ministry is launching the Government Process Re-engineering (GPR) initiatives for making the incorporation process speedy, smooth, simple, and reducing the number of procedures involved for starting a business,.

• The Ministry said it would unveil “RUN” or “Reserve Unique Name” web service for name reservation on January 26. The initiatives would significantly enhance the “ease of doing business — starting a business” in the country and benefit a large number of stakeholders, it said.

Ranking of States that contributed to 70% of the country’s export.

• Maharashtra was leading with 22.3% of exports and Gujarat(2nd) with 17.2%.

• Following the top two States are Karnataka with 12.7% and Tamil Nadu with 11.5%.

• Telangana has contributed 6.4% share to the country’s exports taking the total contribution of the five States to 70.1%.

World’s first diamond futures exchange began operations in India
The Indian Commodity Exchange Ltd (ICEX), backed by the Anil Ambani-owned Reliance Capital, commenced trading operations in diamond futures on August 28 last year.

ICEX offers trading in diamonds of two sizes: 50 cents and 1 carat (1 carat equals 100 cents)

Headquartered in Mumbai.
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

BRAHMOS SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRED FROM SUKHOI; CRUISE MISSILE TRIAD ACHIEVED

- The air version of BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired from Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet.
- With this test firing, BrahMos became first weapon system in the world to have the capability to be fired from land, sea and air.
- The air version of BrahMos was test fired from a twin-engine Sukhoi fighter at a target over the Bay of Bengal.
- BrahMos, said to the world’s fastest anti-ship cruise missile, was integrated on the Sukhoi-30 MKI by HAL.
- BrahMos has already been inducted into the Indian Army and Indian Navy.
- The missile, which travels almost three times faster than sound.

Agni 5 Tested

- On 18 January, 2018, the long-range Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile, Agni-5, was successfully flight tested to its full range from Dr Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha. This was the fifth test of the Missile.
- First test was conducted on April 19, 2012, the second and third tests were carried out in 2013 and 2015. The last test was done on December 26, 2016.

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5 Anti-ship missiles are guided missiles that are designed for use against ships and large boats. Most anti-ship missiles are of the sea skimming variety, and many use a combination of inertial guidance and active radar homing.
The Agni-5 is an intercontinental surface-to-surface ballistic missile (ICBM) with a range of more than 5,000 km.

Agni missiles are a product of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Project (IGMDP) launched by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) in 1982.

Although the IGMDP terminated in 2008 on completion of its objectives, further development of Agni series of missiles has continued in order to enhance range, mobility and maintainability.

Agni-5 is the fifth missile in this series after Agni-1 (700 km range), Agni-2 (2000 km range), Agni-3 (2500 km range) and Agni-4 (3500 km range).

ALL ABOUT TETANUS

Tetanus, also known as Lockjaw, is an infection characterised by muscle spasms. It is called Lockjaw because the infection often causes muscle contractions in the jaw and neck. It is caused by bacterium clostridium tetani which is found in soil, saliva and dust.

ZUMA MISSION

SpaceX is planning the first test flight of Falcon Heavy. Falcon Heavy is the most powerful operational rocket in the world.

A successful test would be an important step toward demonstrating SpaceX's ability to send spacecraft beyond Earth's orbit, perhaps even to Mars.

SpaceX also could try to prove it can carry people into space in 2018.

CHANDRAYAAN-2

The ISRO intends to send an uncrewed orbiter, lander and rover to the moon in the first half of 2018. Known as Chandrayaan-2

The mission aims to demonstrate that India can land a spacecraft on the moon.

The orbiter will also beam images of the moon and information about its surface back to Earth.

The spacecraft would be India's second mission to the moon, after Chandrayaan-1. The country currently has a spacecraft orbiting Mars known as the Mars Orbiter Mission.

SOFIA

SOFIA, the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy, is the largest airborne observatory in the world.

The observatory is based at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in Palmdale, California.

The project is implemented by NASA and German Aerospace Center (DLR).
• Many objects in space emit almost all their energy at infrared wavelengths. Often, they are invisible when observed in ordinary visible light.

• Thus SOFIA observes universe in infrared wavelengths to get the expanded views.

• It is preparing for its 2018 campaign for observing Saturn’s giant moon Titan.

**LiFi**

• **Light-fidelity (LiFi) is a technology used for free-space communication using visible and near-visible light.**

• It is similar to **Wireless Fidelity (WiFi)**, a technology for wireless local area network communication using microwaves.

• Microwaves can pass through walls while transmitting signals whereas visible and near-visible light cannot pass through walls.

• Thus it makes LiFi signal network more secure.

• Scientists have recently added a new layer of security to LiFi.

**ROBOT KENGORO WHO PERSPIRES developed by JAPAN**

![Image of a robot](image)

• Developed by scientists at the University of Tokyo, the robot called Kengoro can be used as crash test dummies, and to design muscle analytics for athletes and sports.

• Scientists have developed a new humanoid robot that can perform exercises like sit-ups and push-ups, and even sweat, just like humans.

• **The robot has an artificial perspiration system and anatomically resembles the musculoskeletal intricacy of a human boy.**

**GAIL - country’s second-largest rooftop solar power plant**

• GAIL has commissioned the **country’s second-largest rooftop solar power** plant with a capacity of 5.76 Mega Watt at Pata, Uttar Pradesh.
The country's largest rooftop solar plant is located in Amritsar and has a capacity of 12 MW.

'Tacotron 2'

In a major step towards its “AI first” dream, Google has developed a text-to-speech artificial intelligence (AI) system that will confuse you with its human-like articulation.

The tech giant’s text-to-speech system called “Tacotron 2” delivers an AI-generated computer speech that almost matches with the voice of humans, technology news website Inc.com reported.

Ice cliffs spotted on Mars

Steep cliffs, up to 100 meters tall are discovered on Mars that expose what appears to be nearly pure ice.

The discovery points to large stores of underground ice buried only a meter or two below the surface at surprisingly low martian latitudes.

France's baby panda makes its first public appearance

France's five-month-old panda made its public debut, delighting hundreds of visitors as it crawled, tumbled and cuddled with its mother.

The small male cub, survivor of two babies born on 4 August at Beauval zoo, was named Yuan Meng last month by his 'godmother', the French first lady, Brigitte Macron.

Common pesticides threaten salmon, U.S. fisheries agency concludes

Three common and widely used farm pesticides can harm endangered salmon and jeopardize their survival, according to a new report by the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries).
• The pesticides—chlorpyrifos, malathion, and diazinon—also threaten orcas, because they eat salmon, the agency said.

• The findings are included in a biological opinion that NOAA’s fisheries experts wrote for U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

**Navy eyeing more ‘submarine killers’**

• The **Indian Navy** is considering the acquisition of more **Boeing P-8I aircraft for surveillance and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)**, according to Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba.

• **P-8I** is “capable of thrusting a punitive response and maintaining a watch over India's immediate and extended areas of interest”.

• **P-8I**, often referred to as the “submarine killer”, is perhaps the most advanced system that any of the three Indian services have acquired in recent years.

• The aircraft **was deployed in 2013 by the Indian Navy around the same time the U.S. Navy did**.

• The agreement for the **P-8Is was signed on January 1, 2009**, within a couple of months of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks which exposed the vulnerability of the country’s maritime defences.

**Acadia launches Parkinson’s campaign to shine light on psychosis symptoms**
Parkinson’s disease affects the nerve cells in the brain that produce dopamine.

A new disease awareness campaign shines a light on the hallucinations and delusions that can affect half of people who have Parkinson’s disease.

Sponsored by Acadia Pharmaceuticals, a TV ad and accompanying website focus on the common but lesser-known non-motor side effects of seeing and hearing things that aren’t real.

Acadia is the only drugmaker with an approved treatment for the psychosis that can accompany Parkinson’s.

Acadia’s antipsychotic drug Nuplazid was approved last year after netting an FDA breakthrough designation to treat hallucinations and delusions in Parkinson’s patients.

Make-II’ promise for arms firms

Indian industry can suggest projects related to sub-systems for innovation and import substitution under the revised Make-II procedure in the Defence Procurement Procedure, the Defence Ministry said.

Cloud AutoML

Google unveiled ‘Cloud AutoML’, which would help businesses with limited machine learning expertise start building their own high-quality custom models using advanced techniques provided by the Internet giant.

Parker Solar Probe to be launched

NASA is turning 60 in 2018.
NASA’s Parker Solar Probe is scheduled for launch in 2018 to explore the sun’s outer atmosphere. The probe will use Venus’ gravity during seven flybys over nearly seven years to gradually bring its orbit closer to the sun.

The primary goals for the mission are to trace how energy and heat move through the solar corona and to explore what accelerates the solar wind as well as solar energetic particles.

In 2018, NASA will also add to its existing robotic fleet on Mars with the InSight lander designed to study the interior and subsurface of the red planet.

The U.S. space agency’s first asteroid sample return mission, OSIRIS-REx, is scheduled to arrive at the near-Earth asteroid Bennu in August 2018, and will return a sample for study in 2023.

AAKASH MISSILE

The Army is fully satisfied with the performance of the indigenously developed Akash short-range surface-to-air missile (SR-SAM) system.

Army is looking for further performance enhancements in future.

Akash is a medium-range mobile surface-to-air missile defence system developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

It is produced by Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) for Missile Systems and Bharat Electronics (BEL) for other radars, control centres in India.

It has the capability to “neutralise aerial targets like fighter jets, cruise missiles and air-to-surface missiles” as well as ballistic missiles.
- It is in operational service with the Indian Army and the Indian Air Force
- The Akash system is fully mobile and capable of protecting a moving convoy of vehicles

**Washington gets top green certification**
- In August, Washington was the first to receive the top “platinum” certification under a global sustainability programme called LEED for Cities, which tracks performance on energy use, waste management, water, transport and even quality of life.
- Washington was joined by Phoenix in December.
- The LEED for Cities framework, which celebrated its first birthday last month, is an expansion of the world's most widely used rating system for green buildings.
- Places earning top marks with LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) could serve as a model for officials around the world seeking to prove to investors and others that their cities are clean, green and offer a high quality of life, experts say.

**Army to get modern assault rifles, carbines**
- The Defence Ministry cleared the procurement of assault rifles and close quarter battle (CQB) carbines for the Army on a fast-track basis. Both the deals had been repeatedly cancelled in the past.
- The assault rifles will be of 7.62mm calibre, while the carbines will be of 5.56mm calibre.

**First joint estimation of tigers in Sunderbans begins. The region hosts 75% of all big cats in the world**
The first joint estimation of tigers in the Sunderbans, spread across India and Bangladesh was conducted.

Eminent tiger biologist Qamar Qureshi said the Sunderbans houses the fifth largest tiger population in the world.

**Australia to offer payment for Great Barrier Reef rescue ideas**

- **Australia is calling on the world's top scientific minds to help save the Great Barrier Reef**, offering hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund research into protecting the world's largest living structure.
- The **UNESCO World Heritage-listed reef** is reeling from significant coral bleaching due to warming sea temperatures linked to climate change.
- The Australian government announced a Aus$2 million ($1.6 million) funding pot available to people with bright ideas on how to save the reef.
- Solutions could focus on anything from reducing the exposure of corals to physical stressors, to boosting coral regeneration rates by cultivating reef-building coral larvae that attract other important marine species.
- **The 2017 bleaching marked the second-straight year that corals have been damaged by warming sea temperatures, an unprecedented occurrence that scientists said would give the invertebrate marine creatures insufficient time to fully recover.**

Agni-V extends its reach
India successfully tested Agni-V, validating the long range surface-to-surface ballistic missile's reliability.

Agni-V, with a range of over 5,000 km, is India's longest range ballistic missile and can reach most parts of China, making it the mainstay of India's triad to deliver nuclear weapons.

“This was the fifth test of the missile and the third consecutive one from a canister on a road mobile launcher. All the five missions have been successful.

The missile was tested for its full range from the Dr. Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.

The launch was supervised by project director G. Ramaguru and programme director M.R.M. Babu.

Agni-V is the most advanced missile in the Agni series with new technologies incorporated in it in terms of navigation and guidance, warhead and engine.

Navy confident of commissioning aircraft carrier Vikrant in two years
• After several delays, the Indian Navy is confident of commissioning Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-1) Vikrant, currently under construction at Kochi, by October 2020.

• The theme of this year’s Navy tableau is centred around a model of Vikrant being built at the shipyard.

• Vikrant borrows its name from India’s first aircraft carrier, the 20,000-tonne INS Vikrant purchased from the U.K. India currently operates the 44,500-tonne INS Vikramaditya procured from Russia.

• Like INS Vikramaditya, Vikrant too would employ the STOBAR (Short Take-Off But Arrested Recovery) mechanism with a ski-jump and arrestor cables to launch and recover aircraft.

• The IAC-I project was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in 2003 and the keel for the 260-metre ship was laid in 2009. The CCS had initially sanctioned Rs. 3,200 crore, which was subsequently revised to Rs. 19,341 crore.

• The Navy has already set sights on the IAC-II, which it envisages to be conventionally powered and to displace 65,000 tonnes with an advanced Catapult-based Aircraft Launch Mechanism (CATOBAR) similar to the U.S. Electro-Magnetic Aircraft Launch System (EMALS) for aircraft launch and recovery.

An electronic ‘nose’ model from IIT Bombay

• Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, research is on to develop an “electronic nose”, the “nose” can differentiate between molecules based on their vibrational energies.

• It will be based on the process of inelastic quantum tunnelling.

Rocks found in Australia
Researchers have discovered rocks in Queensland that bear similarities to those found in North America, suggesting that a chunk of Australia was actually part of America 1.7 billion years ago.

Sediments from Georgetown in Queensland and Mount Isa were analysed to arrive at the finding

**First India-designed vaccine passes WHO test**

- For the first time, a vaccine conceived and developed from scratch in India has been “pre-qualified” by the World Health Organisation.

- The Rotavac vaccine, developed by the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech Limited last year, was included in India’s national immunisation programme. To be “pre-qualified” means that the vaccine can be sold internationally to several countries in Africa and South America.

- The Rotavac vaccine protects against childhood diarrhoea caused by the rotavirus and was built on strain of the virus isolated at the the All India Institute of Medical Sciences here over 30 years ago.

**Saras the phoenix rises again**

- Nearly a decade after a tragic crash of the 14-seater Saras, which effectively stalled the indigenous civilian aircraft programme saw the first flight trial of the new version of the airplane, PT1N (Prototype 1 New).

- The aircraft programme, named after the Indian crane Saras, was first conceptualised in the 1990s as a way to establish a short-haul civil aviation market.

- NAL carried out its first flight on May 29, 2004.

- On March 6, 2009, Prototype 2 crashed at Bidadi on the outskirts of the city killing two wing commanders and one flight test engineer.

- It was only in 2015-end that the project restarted, and by Aero-India 2017 in Bengaluru, NAL announced that CSIR had given the go-ahead and flight tests would begin in 2018.
• “It is a big morale booster for NAL to see a long-pending project gather steam,” said an official, when asked about what the short-flight means to the defence public sector unit.

Plant this tree and tap solar power!

• The Solar Power Tree offers a way out of the space or land constraint faced in setting up panels for generation of clean, alternative energy.

• The Solar Power Tree is on display at AU’s Dr. Y.V.S. Murthy Auditorium, where an exhibition of technologies from various CSIR laboratories is under way as part of the CSIR’s ‘Be an Entrepreneur of Science and Technology’ programme.

Mysterious ‘hot Jupiter’ with unusual winds discovered
Astronomers have discovered a *mysterious hot spot* 930 light years from Earth on a gaseous exoplanet.

**Exoplanet CoRoT- 2b**, discovered a decade ago by a French-led *space observatory mission*, is also called as “*hot Jupiter*”.

Unlike Jupiter, the so-called hot Jupiters circle astonishingly close to their host star - so close that it typically takes fewer than three days to complete an orbit.

These planets experience strong winds blowing eastward near their equators, which can sometimes displace the hot spot toward the east.

Astronomers have discovered the most distant "*supermassive*" black hole known to science.

A quasar has been spotted 13 billion light years away from us. It’s the farthest one we’ve ever seen, and it already existed *690 million years after the birth of the universe.*

But at about 800 million times the mass of our Sun, it managed to grow to a surprisingly large size in just a short time after the origin of the Universe.

The newly discovered black hole is busily devouring material at the centre of a galaxy - marking it out as a so-called quasar.
Bone morphogenetic proteins (BMP)

- Bone morphogenetic proteins (BMP) are secreted signalling molecules which are already known to regulate the production of neurons from neural stem cells.

- Ilt Kanpur team found that inhibition of BMP signalling leads to delayed migration and this may be one of the causes for such disorders. Thus, it might be possible to prevent or treat these diseases if further research is carried out.”

- Five-pointed star with its tips truncated.

- Dillip Kumar Chand’s lab at the Department of Chemistry, Indian Institute of Technology Madras, researchers have made a molecule that looks like a five-pointed star with its tips truncated.

Satish Tailor’s thermal spray coating useful for gas turbine engine

- A new thermal spray coating technology used for gas turbine engine in spacecraft developed by a Rajasthan-based researcher has caught the attention of a NASA scientist.

- He developed the controlled segmented Yttria-Stabilised Zirconia (YSZ)-Plasma sprayed coating technology, which according to him could reduce the thermal spray coating cost by almost 50%.

Isro’s communication satellite GSAT-17 launched from French Guiana

- India’s latest communication satellite GSAT-17 was successfully launched by a heavy duty rocket of Arianespace from the spaceport of Kourou in French Guiana.

- GSAT-17 that will strengthen Isro’s current fleet of 17 telecommunications satellites was launched into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).
• Configured around I-3K extended bus, **GSAT-17 with a lift-off mass of about 3,477 kg**, carries payloads in Normal C-band, Extended C-band and S-band to provide various communication services.

• It also carries equipment for meteorological data relay and satellite based search and rescue services being provided by earlier INSAT satellites.

• This will be **third satellite launch by Isro this month**, the other two being **first developmental flight of GSLV MkIII and PSLV C-38 missions**—both from Sriharikota spaceport.

**Super Blue Moon, total eclipse visible**

• **A total eclipse of the moon, a super moon and a blue moon was seen on 31st January.**

• **The second full moon in a month is termed the blue moon. It will also be bigger and brighter as it will be closest to the earth in its orbit. This phenomenon is termed a super moon.**

• **As the moon will completely enter the earth’s umbral shadow, it may look reddish**, the Meteorological Department predicted.

• **The coincidence of the total eclipse with the blue moon and the super moon is a rare event.**
SPORTS

Smith racks up another record

- The Australia skipper, Steve Smith playing his 111th innings, joined Garry Sobers as the second fastest batsman to reach 6,000 Test runs, second only to the legendary Don Bradman.

- At close, Smith was on 44 with Khawaja reaching his highest score of the series on 91.

SC allows Bihar to play Ranji Trophy after 17 years

- The Supreme Court comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud gave a ray of hope to cricketers from Bihar, who could not play national-level tournaments for the last 17 years, by allowing the Bihar Cricket Association to participate in Ranji Trophy and other championships this year.

Second GM norm for Iniyan

- P. Iniyan of Erode got his second Grandmaster norm after finishing second in the Boblingen International GMs chess tournament held from December 26 to 30.
Winter Olympics: Indian Luger Shiva Keshavan Placed 34th After Two Rounds

- India's Shiva Keshavan finished 34th after two rounds of heats in the men's singles luge competitions in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics.

PARALYMPICS

- Russia's team will be suspended from the Paralympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang, but individual athletes will be allowed to compete under a neutral flag.
- Winter Olympics that precede the Paralympics.
- Russia was suspended by the IPC in August 2016 following revelations of widespread state-sponsored doping uncovered in a report of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

- Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki won the women's singles trophy at the 2018 Australian Open in Melbourne after beating Simona Halep from Romania in finals. Wozniacki is the first Dane to win a Grand Slam singles title, and sits behind only Jana Novotna (45), Marion Bartoli (47) and Flavia Pennetta (49) for the most Grand slam appearances before winning a major.
• Roger Federer from Switzerland beat Marin Cilic from Croatia in five riveting sets and won his sixth Australian Open and 20th Grand Slam title in Melbourne.

• Gabriela Dabrowski (Canadian) and Mate Pavić (croatian) won the mixed double title, at Australian open, 2018 defeating Timea Babos and Rohan Bopanna in the final.

National snooker championship

• Sumit Talwar and Amee Kamani emerged men’s and women’s champions in the senior National snooker championship. Soccer-Nike advertise Coutinho name on Barcelona shirt

• Sports apparel manufacturers Nike have created a flurry of speculation around the future of Liverpool playmaker Philippe Coutinho after they appeared to use his name in an advertisement on their website to promote Barcelona apparel.

ACHIEVEMENT OF MANIPUR IN SPORTS

• Weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu won a gold medal at the world championships in the U.S. Boxer Mary Kom claimed her fifth gold medal at the Asian Confederation Women Boxing and Championship in Vietnam.

• Eight members of the Indian football team for the U-17 FIFA World Cup were from Manipur. The State’s senior women’s team won the National Football Championship for a record 18th time defeating Railways in the final.
VIDARBHA LIFT MAIDEN RANJI TROPHY TITLE AFTER BEATING DELHI

- In the final match held at Holkar stadium in Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Vidarbha defeated Delhi by 9-wicket win.
- It is Vidarbha’s first Ranji Trophy title.
- Ranji trophy is the cricket championship and is played between 27 teams which include 21 states (of 29 Indian states) and Delhi (Union Territory)

VISWANATHAN ANAND WINS WORLD CHESS TITLE 2017

- Viswanathan Anand won the World Rapid Chess Championship in Riyadh
- The former World No 1, who had lost his crown to Carlsen in 2013, reclaimed the title he had won in 2003 beating Vladikir Kramnik in the final.

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

- Gary Kirsten and Ashish Nehra have joined the coaching team of Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) for the 11th edition of the IPL.
HOPMAN CUP, 2018

- The Hopman Cup XXX (also known as the 2018 Mastercard Hopman Cup for sponsorship reasons) was the 30th edition of the Hopman Cup tournament between nations in men's and women's tennis. It took place at the Perth Arena in Perth, Australia.

- Switzerland defeated Germany in the final to win its third title

- Roger Federer defeated Karen Khachanov while Belinda Bencic defeated Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova to help Switzerland beat Russia 3-0 in the Hopman Cup.

- The Hopman Cup is an annual international eight-team indoor hardcourt tennis tournament held in Perth, Western Australia in early January (sometimes commencing in late December) each year, which plays mixed-gender teams on a country-by-country basis.

- The championship is named in honour of Harry Hopman (1906–1985), an Australian tennis player and coach who guided the country to 15 Davis Cup titles between 1938 and 1969.

VIDARBHA WINS RANJHI TROPHY

- Vidarbha won the tournament, beating Delhi by 9 wickets in the final at the Holkar Stadium in Indore, to win their first 84th season of the Ranji Trophy.

- Karnataka opener Mayank Agarwal was easily the best batsman on show in the Ranji Trophy this season, amassing a mammoth total of 1,160 runs at an average of 105.45.

- Veteran Jalaj Saxena emerged as this season's best all-rounder as he finished as the highest wicket-taker in the tournament. Jalaj took 44 wickets in just 7 matches. He bagged 3 five-wicket hauls to go with his 2 ten-wicket in a match hauls in the 2017/18 edition.

Stokes charged with affray
England cricketer Ben Stokes has been charged with affray following an incident in the city of Bristol last September, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said.

Stokes, 26, and two other men are due to appear before Bristol Magistrates' Court at a date to be fixed.

**VIRAT KOHLI**

- Indian skipper and batting mainstay Virat Kohli dominated the ICC annual awards clinching both the cricketer and captain of the year honours – a much-expected windfall of accolades for his phenomenal run across formats.
- He was named recipient of the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for Cricketer of the Year and also the ODI Cricketer of the Year.
- He was picked the captain of both the ICC’s Test and ODI teams of the year.
- This is the second time in succession that an Indian has won the overall cricketer of the year award. Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin had claimed the honour last year.
- Apart from Kohli, there were four other Indians who were picked in the ICC’s Test and ODI Teams of the Year. While the Test team featured Cheteshwar Pujara and Ravichandran Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah and Rohit Sharma found a place in the ODI side.
- Among other awards, Yuzvendra Chahal’s incredible haul of 6/25 against England in Bengaluru last year, was named as Twenty20 International performance of the year. Chahal was named Player of the Match and Player of the Series for his performance – the best by an Indian bowler in T20I history, and the third-best of all time.

Umadevi wins National women’s billiards champion.
• R. Umadevi Nagaraj defeated Karnataka Statemate M. Chitra 76-51, 77-23, 31-76, 76-65 in the final to emerge as the senior National women's billiards champion.

Mumbai Marathon 2018

• Solomon Dekelsa and Amane Gobena made it a double delight for Ethiopia in the $405,000 Tata Mumbai Marathon by clinching the men's and women's races respectively.

• The top three Indian women finishers were Sudha Singh, Jyoti Gawte and Parul Chowdhary.

Supreme Court gave a go ahead to All India Carrom Federation (AICF)

• The Supreme Court has allowed the All India Carrom Federation (AICF) to conduct the 45th National junior championship in NAGPUR from January 28 to 31, as scheduled.

• The Supreme Court had, on January 4, stayed the order of the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court that had revived the functioning of the AICF, with a full-fledged judgement.

• “This is an application for one time exemption from the order dated 04.01.2018 passed in the special leave petition to the extent of allowing applicant to conduct the event titled ‘45th Junior National and Inter-State championship, to be held from 28th January to 31st January 2018 at Nagpur

Indian Premier League

• The 11th Indian Premier League will be held from April 7 to May 27.
• Mumbai will host the opening match and the final of the tournament.
• Rajasthan Royals is returning to the IPL after serving a two-year ban.
• Ben Stokes happens to be the most expensive player so far in the auction.
• He was picked by Rajasthan Royals at a whopping price of Rs 12.5 crore. Coincidentally, Ben Stokes was snapped up for a record price of Rs 14.5 crore in the last season of the IPL as well.

• Jaydev Unadkat bagged a massive 11.5 crore from Rajasthan Royals. So far, he is the most expensive Indian player in the 11th edition of the IPL. Earlier, he has represented Pune Supergiant in the IPL.

IPL franchises may trim squad size

• The IPL authorities have limited the squad size to a maximum of 25 players per side for the forthcoming edition. But more than half the team-managements are planning to trim it further.

• Various officials from multiple franchises confided to The Hindu that it is highly unlikely that most teams will look to aim at a squad size of 22 or 23 players. In fact, a couple of teams are even looking at keeping the squad strength to 20 players each.

Colin Munro has set a T20 world record after smashing the West Indies

• NEW Zealand superstar Colin Munro became the first player from any country to score three centuries in Twenty20 internationals when he smashed 104 from 53 balls as New Zealand beat the West Indies by 119 runs to sweep the three-match series.

• Munro surpassed the West Indies’ Chris Gayle and Evin Lewis, India’s Rohit Sharma and New Zealand’s Brendon McCullum, who all have two centuries in T20 internationals, when he reached his century from 47 balls as New Zealand made 243-5 batting first.

12th ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup

• The 2018 ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup was an international limited-overs cricket tournament that was held in New Zealand from 13 January to 3 February 2018.
Indian umpires Anil Chaudhary and CK Nandan will be a part of the 14-strong panel of officials for the Under-19 World Cup starting January 13 in New Zealand.

New Zealand was the first country to host the event three times, once in 2002, then in 2010 and later in 2018.

India won ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup after defeating Australia by 8 wickets.

The West Indies were the defending champions

Most runs Alick Athanaze (418)

Most wickets Anukul Roy (14) Qais Ahmad (14) Faisal Jamkhandi (14)

India are World Champions, for a fourth time. They beat Australia by eight wickets to lift the Under-19 World Cup 2000, 2008, 2012 and now 2018

Shubman Gill was named the Player of the Tournament for his tally of 372 runs.

Rahul Dravid is the team coach

This is the 12th edition of the tournament which started in 1988. The inaugural event was won by Australia. The team from Down Under were also victorious in 2002 and 2010. The previous edition in 2016 was won by West Indies, which was their first win.

Blind Cricket World Cup

The 2018 Blind Cricket World Cup was the fifth Blind Cricket World Cup tournament, and was held from 8-20 January 2018 in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

In the final, defending champions India defeated Pakistan by 2 wickets to secure their 2nd Blind Cricket World Cup title under the captaincy of Ajay Kumar Reddy.
• Sunil Ramesh rose to the occasion as he played a great knock of 93 to help India retain Blind Cricket World Cup title after beating arch-rivals Pakistan by two wickets in a thrilling final played at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in UAE

Australia’s biggest stadium to host women’s World T20 final

• Australia’s biggest stadium, Melbourne Cricket Ground will be hosting the women’s World T20 final in 2020.

• The world record for attendance at a women’s sporting event was set in 1999 when 90,185 fans watched the United States defeat China in the final of the Women’s World Cup at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California

Vijender Singh rises to sixth in WBO rankings

• Indian boxing star Vijender Singh has risen four rungs to sixth in the latest WBO rankings for the super middleweight category

• The WBO super middleweight rankings are topped by Jesse Hart, the American super middleweight champion, followed by Brit Callum Smith
**AWARDS**

The Hindu Prize

- Deepak Unnikrishnan, a teacher at New York University Abu Dhabi, won The Hindu Prize, 2017, for his novel *Temporary People*, a book that was described as bringing a “keen insight into the heartrending plight of the ‘guest workers’ in the UAE.”

75th Golden Globe Awards

- The 75th Golden Globe Awards honored film and television of 2017 and was broadcast live on January 7, 2018, from The Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California.
- Talk-show host Seth Meyers hosted the ceremony for the first time.
- Oprah Winfrey is the recipient of the Cecil B. deMille Award of the 75th Golden Globes. The news was exclusively announced by 2012 Cecil B. deMille Award recipient Morgan Freeman
- ‘Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri’ and ‘Big Little Lies’(4) won the most awards.
- Best Film( Drama) won by Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri’
- Best Film(Musical or Comedy) won by Lady Bird.
- Most nomination: The Shape of Water(7)
18 bravehearts from across country to get awards on Jan. 26

- Nazia, 18, from Uttar Pradesh, who helped police capture a gang running an illegal of gambling and betting racket, will be among the 18 children to receive the National Bravery Awards this year.

- Neetavathi Chavan, 14, from Bagalkot district in Karnataka, who had rescued a boy who was drowning, but lost her life while trying to save another, has been honoured posthumously with the Geeta Chopra award for bravery. Neetavathi was washing clothes in a pond, when she noticed her cousins, who were swimming in the pond, in difficulty.

- The awards, divided into five categories — Bharat Award, Geeta Chopra Award, Sanjay Chopra Award, Bapu Gaidhani Award, and General National Bravery Awards — would be given away by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 24

16th Pune International Film Festival

- 16th Pune International Film Festival (PIFF) was held at Citypride, Kothrud.
- It will feature a jury of global cinema experts, including Italian filmmaker Maurizio Nichetti and Polish screenwriter-director Joanna Kos-Krauze.

Dolly Parton earns two Guinness World Records
• **Singer Dolly Parton** has been recognised by the **Guinness World Records**.

• She was honoured for “Most decades with a Top 20 hit on the U.S. Hot Country Songs chart” and “Most hits on the U.S. Hot Country Songs chart by a female artist

**Chennai tops road safety index**

• The **Greater Chennai Traffic Police** was awarded the ‘**Best City — Motor Laws and Traffic Control**’

• As part of India Road Safety Mission, a comprehensive road safety index rating of 10 cities, was undertaken after considering key parameters such as traffic control, safety of people, pedestrian rights, lighting and maintenance, heavy vehicle management and cleanliness.

**Lokesh receives innovation in governance award**

• **Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and IT Minister N. Lokesh** received the **Kalam Innovation in Governance Award-2018 (KIGA)**.

• The **Kalam Centre for Livable Planet Earth and Sustainable Development**, recognising the **development of rural areas and integration of technology in rural governance**, selected **Andhra Pradesh** for the innovation award in the **Panchayat Raj & Rural Development category**.

**Shah Rukh Khan wins award for work on human rights**
Bollywood star Shah Rukh Khan, Australian actor Cate Blanchett and singer-songwriter Elton John received awards at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos even for their work raising awareness about human rights issues.

Ms. Blanchett received a Crystal Award for her work with refugees.

Mr. John received for charitable work with his AIDS foundation.

Mr. Khan's was in recognition of his work championing the rights of children and women in India.

Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar recipient

Tamil research scholar from Pondicherry University A. Jayabharathi who won the 'Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar – 2017

Vandana Gopikumar gets global award

Vandana Gopikumar, co-founder of The Banyan and The Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health, will receive the 2018 Penn Nursing Renfield Foundation Award for Global Women’s Health for her work in helping women with mental health problems in India.
• She will receive the award – which comes with a $100,000 cash prize – at the University of Pennsylvania on March 21.

• Renfield Award, which is given to an individual who demonstrates leadership in improving women's health.

**Energy conservation award for R.V.G. Menon**

• R.V.G. Menon has been selected for the Kerala State Akshaya Oorja Award, 2017, for his lifetime contribution for energy conservation.

**Sheikh Salim Gafur, driver who saved Amarnath pilgrims, gets second highest award**

• The Gujarati bus driver who saved 52 Amarnath pilgrims from terror attack has been awarded the “Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak.”

• Sheikh Salim Gafur displayed rare grit and bravery and continued to drive the bus which came under attack on July 10, 2017 in Jammu and Kashmir

**National Basava Krushi Award**
• Agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan was presented the National Basava Krushi Award 2018 for lifetime achievement and contribution to farmers.

Ashok Chakra for IAF commando who died in J&K

• India's highest peacetime gallantry award, Ashok Chakra, was conferred on Corporal Jyoti Prakash Nirala of the Indian Air Force (IAF) who died fighting militants in Kashmir valley. This is the third Ashok Chakra for the IAF and its first for ground combat.

Lt. Gen. Nimbhorkar gets Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM)

• Lieutenant General Rajendra Ramrao Nimbhorkar, Indian Army's Master General of the Ordnance, has been awarded the Param Vishisht Seva Medal for distinguished service, joining the ranks of officers decorated with the most medals for gallantry and distinguished service.
Lt Gen Nimbhorkar is also a Colonel of the Punjab Regiment, only the second Maharashtrian after Lt Gen Thorat to hold this post. He also served as General Officer Commanding, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa before taking over the command of 16 Corps in 2015.

He was selected military observer for UN Mission in Angola and for military course at National Defence University, Washington and Hawaii. He was also selected for National Defence College, Dhaka.

Lt. Gen. R.R. Nimbhorkar, presently Master General of the Ordnance (MGO), looking after Army’s procurements, has become the only serving officer to get the maximum number of gallantry and distinguished service awards.

Padma awards

President Ram Nath Kovind approved the award of 85 Padma awards. The list of those honoured includes music composer-director Ilaiyaraaja conferred with a Padma Vibhushan and sports icons M.S. Dhoni and Pankaj Advani honoured with Padma Bhushan.

The 73 Padma Shri awards include Malaysian dancer-choreographer Ramli Bin Ibrahim, doctor couple Abhay Bang and Rani Bang and Gond artist Bhajju Shyam.

Murlikant Petkar, India’s first para-Olympic gold medallist, who lost his arm in the 1965 Indo-Pak war has also been honoured with a Padma Shri.

Internationally-acclaimed Gond artist Bhajju Shyam has also been honoured with a Padma Shri. His The London Jungle Book sold 30,000 copies and has been published in five foreign languages.

P. Parameswaran, Director, Bharatiya Vichar Kendra, has been conferred the Padma Vibhushan, the country’s second highest civilian honour.
National Bravery Awards

- Four children from Nagaland, two from Mizoram and one each from Manipur and Meghalaya are among the 18 bravehearts honoured with the National Bravery Awards this year.

- Of the eight children from the Northeast, F. Lalchhandama from Mizoram and Loukrakpam Rajeshwari Chanu from Manipur have been honoured posthumously.

Presidents medal and Tamil Nadu government’s Anna Award for Gallantry

- The President’s medal for distinguished service has been awarded to Rajeev Kumar, Additional Director General of Police Welfare, Chennai, and S. Manoharan, Joint Commissioner of Police, East Zone, Greater Chennai Police.

- The Tamil Nadu government’s Anna Award for Gallantry was given to K. Shanmugam, a constable with the Railway Protection Force for his brave act of saving the life of a passenger, who was caught between a platform and a moving train at the Egmore railway station in July last year.

SHAURYA CHAKRA

- Captain Pradeep Shouri Arya, now Additional Commissioner of Income Tax (Internal Taxation), Karnataka, was selected for the Shaurya Chakra gallantry award for military operation.

- Assistant Commandant Vikash Jakhar and Sub-Inspector Riyaz Alam Ansari, Two CRPF CoBRA commandos have been decorated with the Shaurya Chakra for an anti-Naxal operation in Jharkhand’s Latehar that led to the killing of six Maoist cadres besides the recovery of a heavy assortment of arms and ammunition in 2016.

- The Shaurya Chakra is the third highest peacetime military decoration after the Ashoka Chakra and the Kirti Chakra.

- R.R. Bhatnagar is the Director-General, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).
• The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is the largest of India's Central Armed Police Forces. It functions under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of the Government of India. The CRPF's primary role lies in assisting the State/Union Territories in police operations to maintain law and order and counter insurgency.

• Shaurya Chakra is India's third-highest peacetime gallantry award.

60th GRAMMY AWARDS

• It was the first time since 2003 that the ceremony was held outside Los Angeles.

• Singer Rihanna performed at the 2018 Grammy Awards with DJ Khaled and Bryson Tiller. The trio will perform their smash hit Wild Thoughts.

• It was held at Madison Square Garden, New York City in the year 2018.

• Most awards were won by Bruno Mars (6)

• Most nominations were for Jay-Z (8)

• Album of the Year: “24K Magic” — Bruno Mars

• Record of the Year: “24K Magic” — Bruno Mars

• Song of the Year: “That’s What I Like” — Christopher Brody Brown, James Fauntleroy, Philip Lawrence, Bruno Mars, Ray Charles McCullough II, Jeremy Reeves, Ray Romulus and Jonathan Yip, songwriters (Bruno Mars)

• Best New Artist: Alessia Cara

Siddeshwar Swami declines Padma Shri

• Siddeshwar Swami of Jnana Yogashrama in Vijayapura, who was chosen for the prestigious Padma Shri award, has decided to “respectfully refuse” it.
State ranks in Atal pension scheme

- Uttar Pradesh (about 11.27 lakh subscribers) is the first State in terms of number followed by Bihar (over 8 lakh subscribers).
- Tamil Nadu is the third biggest State in terms of number of subscribers under the Centre's Atal Pension Yojana.
- The Centre launched the Atal Pension Yojana in 2015 mainly as a means to provide social security to the unorganised work force. The scheme is open to all citizens of India in the age group of 18-40 years.
- Under the scheme, a guaranteed minimum pension of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 2,000, Rs. 3,000, Rs. 4,000 and Rs. 5,000 per month will be given at the age of 60 years depending on the contribution.

Subscribers under Atal Pension Yojana

- Uttar Pradesh: 1,127,032
- Bihar: 8,78,934
- Tamil Nadu: 6,50,885
- Andhra Pradesh: 5,47,953
- Gujarat: 3,74,764
- Madhya Pradesh: 4,01,087
- Maharashtra: 5,80,395
- Karnataka: 5,18,312
- Kerala: 1,69,523

Source: Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority
**Prizes at 69th Republic Day**

- **Punjab Regiment** has bagged the award for the best marching contingent among the three services and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police among the paramilitary and other auxiliary forces in the Republic Day parade.

- **Maharashtra** got the first prize for the best tableau. Maharashtra’s tableau was titled *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj coronation*.

- Assam’s tableau depicting traditional “masks and sastras” bagged the second prize.

- The third prize went to Chhattisgarh’s display of Ramgarh’s ancient amphitheatre and artistes performing dance based on Kalidasa’s *Meghadootam*.

- Among the tableaux by Union Ministries and departments, the first prize went to Khelo India of the Youth Affairs and Sports Ministry.

- For performance by schoolchildren, the South Central Zone Cultural Centre from Nagpur got the first prize for the Baredi dance of Madhya Pradesh.

**From Devdasi to Padma Shri**

- **Seetavva Jodatti** and a few other former Devadasis started Mahila Abhivrudhi-Samrakshana Sansthe (MASS) in 1997 to help victims of the Devadasi system find a foothold in society.

- She is a **Padma Shri awardee**.
APPOINTMENTS

Britain appoints *Tracey Crouch* as first-ever Minister of Loneliness.

- The British government has appointed **Tracey Couch its first ever Minister for Loneliness**, who will help tackle the problem of isolation and loneliness suffered by an estimated 9 million people in the country.
- The move follows a cross-party initiative to tackle an issue that was one of the legacies of **Jo Cox, the Labour MP who was brutally murdered by a far-right activist in 2016**, and who set up a commission to tackle loneliness shortly before she was killed.
- Her work was carried on by Conservative MP Seema Kennedy and Labour MP Rachel Reeves, who together chaired a Commission on Loneliness that called for "national action.

**Swiss politician traces India roots**
• Niklaus-Samuel Gugger, who was abandoned at birth in a hospital in Karnataka, is the first Person of Indian Origin (PIO) to be elected to the Swiss parliament.

• Mr. Gugger’s new parents — Fritz and Elizbeth — raised him for a while in Kerala before moving to Switzerland.

Sudeep Lakhtakia appointed new NSG chief

• CRPF special DG Sudeep Lakhtakia has been appointed as the new chief of National Security Guard (NSG). Lakhtakia will take over from S P Singh, the current chief of the elite counter terror force, who retires on January 31

Salil Parekh: New CEO and MD of Infosys

• Salil s. Parekh is the current chief executive officer and managing director of Infosys. Parekh took over from interim ceo Pravin Rao on january 2, 2018.

• Gurbir S Grewal became the nation’s first Sikh state attorney general after the Senate approved his nomination with a vote of 29-0.

• Gurbir S Grewal, a prominent Indian-American lawyer has become the first Sikh attorney general of the US state of New Jersey after the state Senate approved his nomination unanimously.

INDU MALHOTRA
• **Indu Malhotra**, a senior advocate with a heart for social causes, is the first woman lawyer to be recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium for direct elevation to the court.

• If her appointment goes through, Ms. Malhotra will be the seventh woman lawyer in independent India to become a judge of the top court.

• All the six previous woman judges of the court were elevated from the High Court, the first being Justice M. Fathima Beevi in 1989.

• In 2007, she became the second woman to be designated a senior advocate by the Supreme Court, after the legendary Justice Leila Seth, who was given the honour in 1977.

• Ms. Malhotra has authored *The Law and Practice of Arbitration in India*, which was released in April 2014.

**O P Rawat assumes charge as CEC**

**Om Prakash Rawat**, assumed charge as the Chief Election Commissioner. After taking over from Achal Kumar Joti, Rawat spoke on various issues including electoral bonds and simultaneous polls.

• EC is a three member body, other members are Sunil arora and Mr Ashok Lavasa

**Vijay Gokhale replaces S Jaishankar as Foreign Secretary of India**
Vijay Gokhale becomes the Foreign Secretary with effect from January 28, 2018. He will take over S Jaishankar.

Gokhale is a 1981 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service and has served Indian embassies in Germany and Malaysia.

He will take over from Jaishankar who was appointed Foreign Secretary on January 29, 2015, for two years and given a one-year extension in January last year.

JUSTICE UD SALVI TAKES CHARGE AS ACTING CHAIRPERSON OF NGT

Justice Umesh Dattatraya Salvi took charge as the acting Chairperson of the NGT, following the retirement of Justice Swatanter Kumar, with effect from December 20, 2017 until the date on which a new Chairperson is appointed or till the date of his superannuation, whichever is earlier.” Justice Salvi will retire on February 13, 2018.

The NGT was established on October 18, 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

The tribunal’s principal bench is located in New Delhi while its zonal benches are in Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai and its circuit benches are in Shimla, Shillong, Jodhpur and Kochi.

UGC CHAIRMAN

Professor Dhirendra Pal Singh was appointed as its new chairman. Prof. Singh is currently serving as the director of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bengaluru.

He has been appointed the UGC chairman for a period of five years, according to the order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

Since April 2017, the post of UGC chief had been lying vacant after the retirement of Professor Ved Prakash.

UGC is the apex body of higher education responsible for coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of universities in the country.
CHAIRMAN OF THE KARNATAKA STATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (KSHRC)

- **Darmar Murugensan**, the former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court will be the next Chairman of the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission (KSHRC).

- The post was vacant for last 18 months, since the retirement of the former Karnataka High Court Judge SR Nayak. At present he is a member of the National Human Rights Commissions.

DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER

- **Rajinder Khanna** was appointed the Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA).

- He headed the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) from December 2014 for a fixed two-year period.

- Khanna is at present Officer on Special Duty (Neighbourhood Studies) in the National Security Council Secretariat.

ISHRAT JAHAN JOINS BJP

- **Ishrat Jahan**, one of the petitioners in the triple talaq case, has joined the BJP in West Bengal.

- Ishrat was one of the five petitioners in the triple talaq case. Her husband had divorced her over the phone from Dubai in 2014 by uttering 'talaq' thrice.
**SUMMITS**

**International Puppet Festival**
- The three-day Dhaatu International Puppet Festival will be held from January 5 to 7 in the Bangalore.

**Coconut Festival**
- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Coconut Development Board will conduct a coconut festival here on January 27 and 28 in Coimbatore.
- The aim of the event was to create awareness, educate farmers on better irrigation practices and showcase opportunities for value addition so that farmers get better realisation.

**Global Partnership Summit**
- The Global Partnership Summit (GPS) 2017 is scheduled to be held at Aerocity, New Delhi.
- The GPS will focus on clean energy, healthcare, infrastructure and logistics, energy, tourism, art and culture, agro-economy, banking and finance, education and skill development and information communication technology.
- The visionary behind the initiative is Vibhav Kant Upadhyay who has been at the forefront of many key development initiatives in the past two decades. He is also the Founder Chairman, GPS which is evolved from the successful - India-Japan Global Partnership (IJGP) Initiative
- India Center Foundation (ICF), a not for profit and non-governmental organisation, which has been working for over two decades towards nation’s socio-economic development, brings to India for the first-time ever Global Partnership Summit.

**11TH GLOBAL HEALTHCARE SUMMIT**
- 11th Global Healthcare Summit was held at Kolkatta, India
- It was organised by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin.

**REGIONAL PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIVAS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN) COUNTRIES.**
- Swaraj to inaugurate Pravasi Bhartiya Divas of ASEAN in Singapore
- Swaraj will be holding bilateral meetings with the leaders in Singapore and interact with People of Indian Origin (PIO) delegations from ASEAN countries, who are participating in the PBD.
• Theme: “Ancient route, new journey: diaspora in the dynamic ASEAN-India partnership”.

• The Ministry organizes Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) periodically outside India to connect with the Indian Diaspora in specific regions, familiarize them with the policies and programmes of the Government, enable them to contribute to India’s development and growth, and address their concerns.

• The 8th Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) Convention was organized in London during October 16 to 18, 2014 with External Affairs Minister leading the delegation. The 9th Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (RPBD) Convention was organized in Los Angeles, California (USA) during 14 - 15 November, 2015 with Hon’ble Minister of State for External Affairs, General V.K. Singh leading the delegation.

ASEAN - INDIA COMMEMORATIVE SUMMIT TO MARK THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF ASEAN - INDIA DIALOGUE RELATIONS

• ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, which will be held on 25 and 26 January, 2018.

• It marked the 25th year of ASEAN - India Relations.

• 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations under the theme of "Shared Values, Common Destiny";

• Viet Nam is currently the Country Coordinator for ASEAN - India Dialogue Relations and Thailand will assume the coordinatorship from Viet Nam in August 2018.

• The outcome of Delhi Declaration was a result of ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit.

• The declaration reflects the Leaders’ determination to enhance Strategic Partnership between ASEAN and India in political and security, economic, and socio-cultural pillar.

INDIA SCIENCE CONGRESS

• 105th Indian Science Congress was scheduled from 3-7 January, at the Osmania University, Hyderabad where the event was to be organised between the January 3 and 7 next year.

India mulls ‘mini meet’ of 40 WTO members

• India is considering holding a mini-ministerial meeting of about 40 World Trade Organization (WTO) members to discuss ways to increase global trade in March.

Maramon convention from February 11

• The Maramon Convention, one of the largest Christian convention in Asia, is held at Maramon, Pathanamthitta, Kerala, India annually during the month
of February on the vast sand-bed of the **Pampa River next to the Kozhencherry Bridge.**

- It is organised **by Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, the missionary wing of the Mar Thoma Church.**

**Assam Global Investors' Summit**

- **Assam Global Investors' Summit was held on 3–4 February 2018.**
- It is an economic summit organised by the Government of Assam.
- The main aim of the summit is to increase the trade and other relations with Southeast Asia
- **World in the first-ever global investors' summit in Assam**
OBITUARY

Leading Black Lives Matter activist Erica Garner dead

- Erica, the daughter of key Black Lives Matter figure Eric Garner, died after a week-long hospital stay following a heart attack.
- “She was a warrior to the end. She stood up for justice for her father,” the Rev. Al Sharpton said in announcing the death of Ms. Garner, 27, at a New York hospital.

Veteran Kannada actor Kashinath dead

- Actor, director and producer Kashinath, 67, who was instrumental in changing the direction of Kannada cinema in the late ’70s, died after a brief illness. In his four-decade career, Kashinath acted in over 40 films and directed 16. He changed the perspective of a protagonist and anti-hero and carved a niche for himself.

CPI(M) veteran passes away

- Khagen Das, CPI(M) veteran and chairman of the Left Front Committee of Tripura, died in Kolkata.
- Mr. Das, 81, died within minutes of his admission to a hospital for chest pain.

Veteran actor Krishna Kumari dead

- Yesteryear actor T. Krishna Kumari, 84, who acted in over 230 Telugu, Tamil and Kannada films and dominated the three industries for more than two decades, died at her Bengaluru residence.
Vila, one of world’s oldest gorillas, dies at 60 in San Diego Zoo

- The Congo-born western lowland female ape was estimated to have been born in 1957 and was hand-raised in the zoo.
- One of the world’s oldest known gorillas, Vila, died at the age of 60 at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park.

Veteran Bengali actor Supriya Devi passes away

- Veteran Bengali film actor Supriya Devi, best known for her portrayal of ‘Neeta in Ritwik Ghatak’s Meghe Dhaka Tara’, died of heart attack. She was 85. Born in 1933, Supriya Devi’s acting career spanned over five decades during which she featured in classics like Chowringhee and Bagh Bandi Khela. She is survived by a daughter.

Ikea founder Kamprad dead

- Ikea founder Ingvar Kamprad has died aged 91 leaving behind a global empire built on revolutionary flat-pack furniture.
- Ikea’s self-assembly model — which would cut transport and storage costs — was conceived in 1956 after an employee suggested table legs be removed during freight so that the package would fit into a car.
- Mr. Kamprad opened its first store in Almhult

Beetle Bailey’ cartoonist Mort Walker dies at 94
• Comic strip artist Mort Walker, a Second World War veteran who satirised the Army and tickled millions of newspaper readers with the antics of the lazy private “Beetle Bailey,” died. He was 94.

• The character that was to become Beetle Bailey made his debut as Spider in Walker’s cartoons published by the Saturday Evening Post.

Jazz musician, Nazi camp survivor, Coco Schumann dies at 93

• German Jewish guitarist Coco Schumann, who had a seven-decade-long career in swing and jazz music and survived Nazi concentration camps, died at the age of 93.

Filmmaker Dharmasena Pathiraja dead

• Renowned Sri Lankan filmmaker Dharmasena Pathiraja, fondly referred to as ‘a rebel with a cause’ and acclaimed for his compelling portrayals of urban underclasses, passed away in Kandy. He was 74.

Sherlock Holmes’ of Nepal’s Himalayas dies at 94

• American journalist Elizabeth Hawley, whose 50 years chronicling summits and tragedies in the Himalayas earned her the moniker “the Sherlock Holmes of the mountaineering world,” died aged 94.
DAYS

• The Army Day is celebrated on January 15 every year in recognition of Lieutenant General (later field marshal), K M Cariappa taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander on January 15, 1949.

• January 30th: Martyr’s Day. January 30 marks the 70th anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

• January 28th: National Immunisation Day

• The 119th birth anniversary of Field Marshall K.M. Cariappa (born on 28 January 1899) was celebrated on 28th January, 2018

• Scotch, the world’s favourite whisky, will be celebrated across the globe on February 8, with a series of events to mark International Scotch Day. In its second year, the day is a celebration of Scotland’s greatest gift to mankind.

• The 8th National Voters Day was commemorated by the Election Commission of India with the theme of “Accessible Elections” on 25th January, 2018.

• National Girl Child Day observed was celebrated to provide various opportunities to girls, protect their rights, and recognise the hidden talents in them.

• 121st birth anniversary of SC Bose was celebrated on 23rd January, 2018 (23 January 1897). He died on 18 August 1945, Taipei, Taiwan.

• Jan. 1 marks mass birthday in Afghanistan
National Investigation Agency (NIA) is a central agency established by the Indian Government to combat terror in India. It acts as the Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency. The agency is empowered to deal with terror related crimes across states without special permission from the states. The Agency came into existence with the enactment of the National Investigation Agency Act 2008 by the Parliament of India on 31 December 2008. NIA was created after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks as need for a central agency to combat terrorism was realised.

On the Trail of the Black: Tracking Corruption is written by Bibek Debroy and Kishore Arun Desai.

The book — ‘The Tall Man Biju Patnaik’, a pictorial biography by researcher Sundar Ganesan — was released by the former President Pranab Mukherjee.

The book ‘Imperfect’ is authored by Sanjay Manjrekar.

‘A republic in the making: India in 1950's is authored by Gyanesh Kudaisya.

‘Triple Talaq: Examining faith’ is authored by Salman Khurshid.

Ms. Bedekar started Vatsalya Foundation in 2000 to provide a “total health solution during menstruation.” Its efforts are now going global. Sakhi, a cellulose-based organic sanitary napkin, manufactured by women in villages in and around Vadodara and the city bastis.

Britain marks the 100th anniversary of the Representation of People Act, 1918 in the year 2018, following which women over the age of 30 were able to vote for the first time.

WikiLeaks founder Julian assange has taken exile in in London’s Ecuadorian embassy.

Nasreen Munni Kabir has published a book titled Zakir Hussain: A Life in Music.

Mr. Modi, became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the World Economic Forum's annual summit (2018) in two decades, talked about grave concerns facing the world, including terrorism and climate change. Annual Meeting is held in Davos, Switzerland.

India is likely to be among the top three economies in the world in the next 25 years, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, adding that the country had shown an ability to grow during adversity. “India has moved from the seventh largest to the fifth largest economy,” said at the ASEAN-India Business and Investment Meet.

The INSPIRE (Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research) Faculty scheme selects promising research scholars under 32 and offers them a
salary of Rs. 80,000 a month as well as an annual research grant worth Rs. 7 lakh to work at a university of their choice for five years. It was conceived in 2008 amid concerns that not enough talented students were opting for research careers in basic sciences and were being lured away by higher salaries in banking, information technology and management.

- The Mettur Dam is one of the largest dams in India and the largest in Tamilnadu located across the river Cauvery where it enters the plains.
- Commonwealth Games (CWG) will held in Gold Coast, Australia, in April.
- The book ‘The Ocean of Churn’ is authored by Sanjeev Sanyal.
- The book Decentralised Democracy in India: Gandhi’s Vision and Reality is authored by M. V. Nadkarni (Author), N. Sivanna (Author), Lavanya Suresh (Author). The book provides a vantage point of comparison, of the actual reality of decentralisation in India with Gandhi’s vision of decentralised democracy, or what he referred to as Gram Swaraj.
- Xi’an, one of the four capitals of ancient China, is known for its famous monuments. Among them are the Bell and Drum towers. The 14th century Bell Tower was the starting point of the ancient Silk Route. The Drum Tower, located in the city centre, complements the Bell Tower in giving the city its distinct identity.
- Shivnath Singh’s National marathon record of 2:12:00s at Jalandhar in 1978 has survived the test of time; and it doesn’t look like it will go down anytime soon.
- MDMK leader Vaiko has urged to install a statue of British engineer John Pennycuick, the man behind the Mullaiperiyar dam, which irrigates over five southern districts in the State, at the Theni bus stand.
- Congress MP and noted writer Shashi Tharoor has authored his recent book Why I Am A Hindu.
- IDFC Bank that it will take over non-banking finance company Capital First. This is the second acquisition by the private sector bank — in 2016 it had acquired Grama Vidiyal Micro Finance — aimed at retailising and diversifying its operations.
- When Memory Dies is a novel by Ambalavaner Sivanandan

- Securities and Exchange board of india Chairman: Ajay Tyagi
- Deputy chairman Rajya Sabha: PJ Kurien
- SBI chairman: Rajneesh Kumar who succeeded Arundati Bhatacharya
- ISRO chairman: K Sivan
- Army Chief General: Bipin Rawat
- ASEAN Secretary General: Le Luong Minh
- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India Chairman: T.S.Vijayan
- Maldives President: Abdulla Yameen
- Opposition leader of Maldives: Mohammad Nasheed (in exile)
- Japanese Ambassador to India: Kenji Hiramatsu
- Indian Ambassador to the UN: Syed Akbaruddin
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General: Petteri Talaas
- NHRC Chairperson: Justice H.L. Dattu
- U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations: Nikki Haley
- Maithripala Sirisena from New Democratic Front is the 7th and current President of Sri Lanka.
Practice Question

1. After Sikkim, which North-East state has been officially declared Open Defecation Free (ODF)?
   [C] Nagaland [D] Mizoram

   Correct Answer: B [Arunachal Pradesh]

   Explanation: Arunachal Pradesh has been officially declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) and has become the second state in the North East after Sikkim to achieve the status.

2. Which country has launched the world’s largest human genome research project?
   [A] China [B] Japan
   [C] Brazil [D] Russia

   Correct Answer: A [China]

   Explanation: China has launched the world’s largest human genome research project to document the genetic makeup of one lakh people to help generate the precision medicines for the future.

3. Which state will be the theme state for the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts fair?
   [C] Rajasthan [D] Haryana

   Correct Answer: B [Uttar Pradesh]

   Explanation: Uttar Pradesh will be the theme state for the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts fair, which is scheduled to be held from the first week of February at Faridabad in Haryana. The aim of fair is to preserve Indian folk traditions and cultural heritage. It also provides a world-class platform for craftsmen from around the world to showcase their skills.

4. Who has taken charge as the new CEO and MD of Infosys?
   [C] Salil Parekh [D] Pravin Rao

   Correct Answer: C [Salil Parekh]

   Explanation: Salil S Parekh, an aeronautical engineer from IIT Bombay, has formally taken charge as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Infosys on January 2, 2018.

5. Who has been appointed the new Foreign Secretary of India?
   [C] Madhukar Bhave [D] Husain Dalwai

   Correct Answer: B [Vijay Keshav Gokhale]

   Explanation: Vijay Keshav Gokhale, the 1981-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has been appointed the new Foreign Secretary of India. He will succeed S Jaishankar, whose term ends on January 28, 2018.

6. Who has become the India’s highest-ranked player in latest International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings?
Correct Answer: C [G Sathiyan]
Explanation: G Sathiyan has become India’s highest-ranked player in the latest International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings. Sathiyan (ranked 49th) surpassed his compatriot the legendary Sharath Kamal (51st).

7. The Union Cabinet has recently given its approval for establishment of new AIIMS in which state under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)?
Correct Answer: A [Himachal Pradesh]
Explanation: The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for establishment of new AIIMS in Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh) under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

8. Prime Minister’s official website – www.pmindia.gov.in – is available in how many languages?
Explanation: On 1st January 2018, the Assamese and Manipuri language versions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Official website (www.pmindia.gov.in) were launched. The PM INDIA website is available in 13 regional languages namely Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu in addition to English and Hindi.

9. The first draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC) has released for which state?
Correct Answer: B [Assam]
Explanation: The first draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam has listed 19 million people out of the 32.9 million applicants as legal Indian citizens in a massive exercise aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the state that borders Bangladesh.

10. Who has been appointed as the new Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA)?
Correct Answer: C [Rajinder Khanna]
Explanation: Former RAW Chief Rajinder Khanna, a 1978-batch Research and Analysis Wing Service (RAS) officer, has been appointed as the new Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) on January 2, 2018. The position has been vacant since Arvind Gupta had stepped down after completion of his contractual term in August 2017.

11. Which of the following countries has formally joined as the new non-permanent members of UNSC?
    [A] Poland  [B] Japan  [C] India
Correct Answer: A [Poland]
Explanation: On 3rd January 2018, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has welcomed six new non-permanent members — Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, and Poland.

12. Endangered ‘bird language’ has entered the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is belong to which country?
   [A] Senegal          [B] Turkey
   [C] India               [D] Uruguay
Correct Answer: B [Turkey]
Explanation: Turkey's endangered ‘bird language’ has entered the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is an unusual and very efficient whistle language used as a means of communication by villagers in remote northern Turkey.

13. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated PCA against Allahabad Bank over its high bad loans. What does “PCA” stands for?
   [A] Prompt Control Action          [B] Principal Complaints Action
   [C] Principal Component Action     [D] Prompt Corrective Action
Correct Answer: D [Prompt Corrective Action]
Explanation: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) against public sector lender Allahabad Bank, owing to its high net Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and negative Return on Assets (RoA) for two consecutive years.

14. Which state to host the 39th National Games in 2022?
   [C] Mizoram             [D] Assam
Correct Answer: A [Meghalaya]
Explanation: Meghalaya has signed the Host City Contract with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for hosting the 39th National Games in 2022 on January 3, 2018. The tripartite contract was signed between the IOA, the Meghalaya State Olympic Association, and the state government.

15. The Border Security Force (BSF) has launched which operation on Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) International Border to curb infiltration?
   [C] Operation Alert        [D] Operation Star
Correct Answer: C [Operation Alert]
Explanation: The Border Security Force (BSF) has launched Operation Alert along the over 200 km long International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) to curb the increasing movement of infiltrating terrorists from across the border.

16. Which country has become the world’s first country to enforce equal pay for women and men?
   [A] Finland          [B] France
   [C] Iceland              [D] Sweden
Correct Answer: C [Iceland]
Explanation: Iceland has become the first country in the world to enforce equal pay for women and men.
17. Which city to host World Sweet Festival (WSF-2018)?
   [A] New Delhi       [B] Lucknow
   [C] Hyderabad       [D] Chennai

Correct Answer: C [Hyderabad]
Explanation: The World Sweet Festival (WSF-2018) will be held in Hyderabad from January 13 to showcase the cosmopolitan nature of Hyderabad in a sweet way.

18. Who has become the first African-American to win Golden Globe for best actor in a drama television series at the 75th Golden Globe Awards 2018?
   [C] Sterling K Brown [D] Alexander Skarsgard

Correct Answer: C [Sterling K Brown]
Explanation: Actor Sterling K Brown has created history by becoming the first African-American to win Golden Globe for best actor in a drama television series for his role as Randall Pearson on NBC’s breakout hit “This Is Us”.

19. Which country has won the 30th edition of the Hopman Cup tournament 2018?
   [C] Spain           [D] Switzerland

Correct Answer: D [Switzerland]
Explanation: Switzerland has won the 30th edition of the Hopman Cup tournament 2018 at the Perth Arena in Perth, Australia. It was Federer’s second Hopman Cup triumph after victory in 2001 alongside Martina Hingis.

20. India’s fastest and first multi-peta-flops supercomputer “Pratyush” has established at which institute?
   [A] Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS) Dehradun
   [B] Central Institute of Technology (CIT) Kokrajhar
   [C] Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Gwalior
   [D] Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune

Correct Answer: D [Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune]
Explanation: Dr Harsh Vardhan, the Union Minister of Earth Sciences (MoES), has dedicated India’s fastest and first multi-peta-flops supercomputer “Pratyush” to the nation in Pune on January 8, 2018. The supercomputer has been established at Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology.

21. Which Indian personality will be conferred with the France’s highest order of merit ‘Legion of Honour at the 42nd International Kolkata Book Fair 2018?
   [A] Soumitra Chattopadhyay [B] Priyanka Chopra
   [C] Deepika Padukone       [D] Amitabh Bachchan

Correct Answer: A [Soumitra Chattopadhyay]
Explanation: Soumitra Chattopadhyay (82), the legendary film and theatre actor, will be conferred with the France’s highest order of merit ‘Legion of Honour at the 42nd International Kolkata Book Fair 2018.

22. Which Indian-origin personality has been appointed as the Chairman of the Geneva-based World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)?
   [A] Bhupendra Kainthola [B] Sunny Verghese
23. India’s second Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) will be set up in which state/UT?

Correct Answer: [C] Arunachal Pradesh

Explanation: India’s second Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) will be set up by the Union Government in Arunachal Pradesh as part of tapping the potential of the Northeastern region. The first FTII was set up in Pune.

24. Who has inaugurated the first-ever Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) Parliamentary Conference in Delhi?

Correct Answer: [A] Narendra Modi

Explanation: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the first-ever Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) Parliamentary Conference in the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra (PBK) in Delhi on January 9, 2018.

25. The 2018 Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated on which date in India?

Correct Answer: [C] January 9

Explanation: The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated every year on January 9 to mark the contribution of Overseas Indian community in the development of India. The day was chosen to commemorate the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to India in 1915, which led India’s freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

26. What is the India’s GDP forecast in 2018, as per World Bank’s latest report “2018 Global Economic Prospects (GEP)”?
   [A] 7.3%  [B] 7.5%  [C] 7.6%  [D] 7.0%

Correct Answer: [A] 7.3%

Explanation: The World Bank (WB) in its latest report “Global Economic Prospects (GEP-2018)” has projected India’s GDP growth rate at 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5% for the next two years.

27. Aanchal Thakur has become the first Indian to win an international medal in skiing. She hails from which state?

Correct Answer: [C] Himachal Pradesh
Aanchal Thakur, a 21-year-old from Himachal Pradesh, has created history by becoming the first Indian to register an international medal in skiing.

28. Which railway station entered Limca Book of Records 2018 for having all-women staff?
   [A] Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station
   [B] Matunga railway station
   [C] Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station

**Correct Answer:** B [Matunga railway station]

**Explanation:** The Matunga suburban station on the Central Railway (CR) of Mumbai division has figured in the Limca Book of Records 2018 for having an all-woman staff.

29. Which of the following has become the India’s first city to have a common mobility card for rides on public buses and the metro?
   [A] Kolkata
   [B] Chennai
   [C] Kochi
   [D] Delhi

**Correct Answer:** D [Delhi]

**Explanation:** Arvind Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi, has launched a common mobility card scheme to aid seamless travel between the city’s bus transport and the Metro system on January 8, 2018.

30. The world’s largest Ice festival has started in which country?
   [A] China
   [B] Japan
   [C] Italy
   [D] United States

**Correct Answer:** A [China]

**Explanation:** The 34th Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival 2018 and the 3rd China International Ice and Snow Tourism Summit has officially started on January 5 in Harbin, capital of northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province.

31. The 2018 World Hindi Day (WHD) is observed on which date?
   [A] January 11
   [B] January 9
   [C] January 10
   [D] January 12

**Correct Answer:** C [January 10]

**Explanation:** The World Hindi Day (WHD) is observed every year on January 10 to mark the first anniversary of World Hindi Conference (WHC) which was held in 1975.

32. Who will the new Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)?
   [A] Narinder Singh Kapany
   [B] Amar Gupta
   [C] Narinder Singh Kapany
   [D] K Sivan

**Correct Answer:** D [K Sivan]

**Explanation:** Dr. K Sivan will be the new Secretary of the Department of Space, and Chairman of the Space Commission and the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

33. Which CABE Sub-Committee on girl child education has recommended free education for girls up to PG level?
   [A] Himanta Sharma committee
   [B] Neera Yadav committee
   [C] Kadiam Srihari committee
   [D] Prakash Javadekar committee

**Correct Answer:** C [Kadiam Srihari committee]
Explanation: The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) sub-committee on girl child education has decided to recommend free and compulsory education for girls up to post-graduate level across the country.

34. Which committee has been constituted by the Election Commission (EC) to suggest changes to Representation of the People Act in view of social media expansion?
   [A] Umesh Sinha committee  [B] N K Singh committee  
   [C] Pukhraj Kukreja committee  [D] Nilesh Gupta committee

Correct Answer: A [Umesh Sinha committee]

Explanation: The Election Commission (EC) has constituted a 14-member committee to suggest changes to Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act in view of social media expansion. The Act prohibits poll campaign in the last 48 hours of voting. The Committee chaired by Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha will study the impact of social media during the silence period and suggest modifications to the election law and model code of conduct.

35. Which country has granted citizenship to Julian Assange, the founder of WikiLeaks?
   [A] United Kingdom  [B] Ecuador  
   [C] Sweden  [D] South Korea

Correct Answer: B [Ecuador]

Explanation: Ecuador has granted citizenship to Wikileaks founder Julian Assange in an attempt to resolve the political impasse over his continued presence in the United Kingdom (UK).

36. Who has become the first woman lawyer to be directly promoted as a judge of the Supreme Court (SC)?
   [C] Meenakshi Arora  [D] Indu Malhotra

Correct Answer: D [Indu Malhotra]

Explanation: The Supreme Court collegium, headed by CJI Dipak Misra, has created history by selecting Indu Malhotra as the first woman lawyer to be directly promoted as a judge of the Supreme Court (SC). She will be the 7th woman judge in the Supreme Court, since it was established 67 years ago, if her appointment goes through. Along with Malhotra, Uttarakhand High Court Chief Justice KM Joseph has also been promoted as a Supreme Court judge. At present, Justice R Banumathi is the lone woman judge in the apex court. In 1989, Justice M Fathima Beevi became the first woman to be appointed as a judge of the apex court. Thereafter, Justice Sujata V Manohar, Justice Ruma Pal, Justice Gyan Sudha Misra and Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai made it to the top court as judges.

37. Which telecom company of India to launch its own crypto currency?
   [C] Reliance Jio  [D] Idea Cellular

Correct Answer: C [Reliance Jio]

Explanation: The Reliance JioInfocomm Ltd is planning to launch its own crypto currency “JioCoin”.

38. ISRO has successfully launched Cartosat 2 Series satellite into space from which launch vehicle?
   [A] PSLV C-44  [B] PSLV C-42  
   [C] PSLV C-40  [D] PSLV C-46
Correct Answer: C [PSLV C-40]
Explanation: ISRO has successfully launched weather observation satellite Cartosat 2 Series and 29 other spacecraft into the space from its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C-40 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The Cartosat-2 series satellite will provide high-resolution scene specific spot imageries.

39. Which of the following has become the India’s first railway station to have sanitary napkin vending machine?
   [A] Thane railway station
   [B] Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station
   [C] Kolkata railway station
   [D] Bhopal railway station

Correct Answer: D [Bhopal railway station]
Explanation: The Bhopal railway station has become the India’s first railway station to have a sanitary napkin vending machine named as ‘Happy Nari’.

40. What is the India’s rank at the latest World Economic Forum (WEF)’s Global Manufacturing Index (GMI)?
   [A] 44th
   [B] 30th
   [C] 57th
   [D] 68th

Correct Answer: B [30th]
Explanation: The World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked India at 30th position on a Global Manufacturing Index (GMI).

41. The 3rd edition of Raisina Dialogue 2018 will be held in which city?
   [A] New Delhi
   [B] Pune
   [C] Gandhinagar
   [D] Jaipur

Correct Answer: A [New Delhi]
Explanation: The 3rd edition of the annual Raisina Dialogue 2018 will be held at the Taj Diplomatic Enclave in New Delhi from January 16-18. The theme for the 2018 Conference is “Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms”. This theme is designed to explore the shifting dynamics within the global order; where old relationships need new directions, emerging partnerships face unprecedented constraints and the notions of power and sovereignty are challenged. The 2018 Conference will be inaugurated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

42. Which Indian architect has been conferred France’s top cultural award “Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts etLettres”?
   [A] B V Doshi
   [B] Aishwarya Tipnis
   [C] Ebrahim Alkazi
   [D] Sheila Sri Prakash

Correct Answer: B [Aishwarya Tipnis]
Explanation: Aishwarya Tipnis, the Delhi-based conservation architect, has been conferred France’s top cultural award “Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts etLettres” for her outstanding commitment to preservation of French heritage in India in Kolkata on January 12, 2018. This prestigious award honours people who have distinguished themselves in the field of art.
43. Which country’s Prime Minister has inaugurated the third edition of the geo-political conference – Raisina Dialogue 2018?
   [A] Israel  [B] Canada  
   [C] Afghanistan  [D] Sweden  
   **Correct Answer: A [Israel]**  
   **Explanation:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has inaugurated the third edition of the geo-political conference – Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi on January 16, 2018.

44. India has recently signed pacts with which country on illegal migrants’ return?
   [A] United States  [B] United Kingdom  
   [C] Germany  [D] France  
   **Correct Answer: B [United Kingdom]**  
   **Explanation:** India and the United Kingdom (UK) have recently signed two agreements on return of Indians, who are living in Britain as illegal migrants and sharing criminal records and intelligence.

45. The Indo-US joint military exercise ‘Vajra Prahar 2018’ will be held in which city?
   [C] Visakhapatnam  [D] Seattle  
   **Correct Answer: D [Seattle]**  
   **Explanation:** The Indo-US joint military exercise ‘Vajra Prahar 2018’ will be held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle, in which a 45-member Special Forces team from Indian Army’s Southern Command will train alongside US soldiers in the third week of January.

46. India has contributed how much amount to UN’s Youth Mission to raise awareness and attention to youth issues globally?
   [A] $1,50,000  [B] $1,00,000  
   [C] $50,000  [D] $2,50,000  
   **Correct Answer: C [$50,000]**  
   **Explanation:** India has contributed $50,000 to the UN’s youth mission which works to raise awareness and attention to youth issues globally.

47. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra has dedicated iCREATE facility to the nation. This facility is located in which state?
   [C] Rajasthan  [D] Odisha  
   **Correct Answer: A [Gujarat]**  
   **Explanation:** Prime Minister Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu have dedicated the iCREATE facility to the nation, located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

48. Who has won the Sir Garfield Sober Trophy for Cricketer of the Year 2017?
   [C] Quinton de Kock  [D] AB de Villiers  
   **Correct Answer: B [Virat Kohli]**  
   **Explanation:** Indian captain Virat Kohli has been named the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for Cricketer of the Year 2017.
49. Which Indian cricketer has launched his autobiography "Imperfect"?
[A] Dilip Vengsarkar  [B] Sanjay Manjrekar  
[C] Rahul Dravid  [D] Sourav Ganguly

Correct Answer: B [Sanjay Manjrekar]
Explanation: Sanjay Manjrekar, the former India batsman-turned-commentator, has launched his autobiography 'Imperfect' in Mumbai, Maharashtra on January 17, 2018.

50. Which state has become the India’s first state to launch Public Cloud Policy to speed up e-governance?
[C] Assam  [D] Himachal Pradesh

Correct Answer: A [Maharashtra]
Explanation: Maharashtra has become the India's first state to launch Public Cloud Policy, which will allow all government departments to access public cloud.

51. Which of the following countries has recently joined the Australia Group export control regime?
[A] South Africa  [B] China  
[C] Russia  [D] India

Correct Answer: D [India]
Explanation: India has become the 43rd member of the Australia Group export control regime on January 19, 2018. The inclusion is expected to raise India’s stature in the field of non-proliferation and help in acquiring critical technologies.

52. Who will lead the Indian delegation at the 48th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF-2018)?
[A] Narendra Modi  [B] Suresh Prabhu  
[C] Arun Jaitley  [D] Sushma Swaraj

Correct Answer: A [Narendra Modi]
Explanation: The 48th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF-2018) will be held in Davos, Switzerland on January 22, 2018. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the largest-ever Indian delegation.

53. Which country's team has won the 5th edition of Blind Cricket World Cup 2018?
[C] Sri Lanka  [D] India

Correct Answer: D [India]
Explanation: Indian cricket team has won the 5th edition of Blind Cricket World Cup 2018 by defeating Pakistan in the final by two wickets at Sharjah in United Arab Emirates (UAE). With this, India has retained the World Cup for the Blind.

54. Which city is hosting the Ramayana Festival of ASEAN Countries?
[A] Lucknow  [B] New Delhi  
[C] Ahmedabad  [D] Hyderabad

Correct Answer: B [New Delhi]
Explanation: The Ramayana Festival of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries has started in New Delhi at the Kamani Auditorium from January 20.
55. Who has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC)?
   [C] Ashok Lavasa  [D] Sunil Arora  
   **Correct Answer: B [Om Prakash Rawat]**
   **Explanation:** Om Prakash Rawat, the senior-most Election Commissioner, has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). He will succeed A.K. Joti on January 23, 2018 and will have tenure of almost a year till his retirement in December 2018.

56. Which country was the largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India in FY17, according to recent census by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)?
   [A] Singapore  [B] Japan  
   [C] Mauritius  [D] Netherlands  
   **Correct Answer: C [Mauritius]**
   **Explanation:** Mauritius was the largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India in FY17, according to recent census by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

57. What is the India's GDP growth forecast for 2018, as per IMF's latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) update?
   [A] 7.4%  [B] 7.8%  
   [C] 6.6%  [D] 7.6%  
   **Correct Answer: A [7.4%]**
   **Explanation:** The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has recently released its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) update in Davos, Switzerland on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

58. What is the theme of the 48th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF-2018)?
   [A] Mastering the Fourth Industrial Revolution  
   [B] Responsive and Responsible Leadership  
   [C] Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World  
   [D] Together create a United World  
   **Correct Answer: C [Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World]**
   **Explanation:** The 48th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF-2018) has started in Davos, Switzerland on January 22, 2018. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leading the largest-ever Indian delegation. The theme of the 5-day summit is ‘Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World’, which aims to set an agenda to address political, economic and social challenges of recent times.

59. Which city is hosting the 2018 India-ASEAN Business & Investment Conference?
   [C] New Delhi  [D] Lucknow  
   **Correct Answer: C [New Delhi]**
   **Explanation:** To mark the silver jubilee of India-ASEAN partnership, the 2018 India-ASEAN Business & Investment Conference was organized by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). It was held in New Delhi on January 22-23 to promote mutual trade and investment for shared prosperity.
60. Which Bollywood personality has been honoured with the 24th Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum (WEF-2018)?
[C] Shah Rukh Khan  [D] Priyanka Chopra

**Correct Answer:** C [Shah Rukh Khan]

**Explanation:** Bollywood superstar Shah Rukh Khan was honoured with the 24th Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. He received the award for his leadership in championing children’s and women’s rights in India. Shahrukh received the award alongside Elton John and Hollywood actress Cate Blanchett.

61. Rachel Morrison has become the first female cinematographer to be nominated for Oscar 2018. She hails from which country?
[A] United States  [B] France  
[C] Italy  [D] Israel

**Correct Answer:** A [United States]

**Explanation:** Rachel Morrison, an American cinematographer, has been nominated for the 90th Academy Awards 2018 for her work in the film ‘Mudbound’. First Published: January 25, 2018 | Last Updated: January 25, 2018

62. What is the India’s rank in the 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI)?
[A] 168th  [B] 155th  
[C] 135th  [D] 177th

**Correct Answer:** D [177th]

**Explanation:** India has been ranked 177th out of 180 countries in the 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI). The report was released on the sidelines of the ongoing World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland.

63. Which city is hosting the 2018 India-ASEAN commemorative summit?
[C] Kochi  [D] Chandigarh

**Correct Answer:** B [New Delhi]

**Explanation:** The 2018 India-ASEAN commemorative summit has started in New Delhi on January 25 with theme “Shared Values, Common Destiny”.

64. Which Union ministry has launched Rapid Reporting System for Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)?
[A] Ministry of Women and Child Development  
[B] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
[C] Ministry of Panchayati Raj  
[D] Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

**Correct Answer:** A [Ministry of Women and Child Development]

**Explanation:** Rakesh Srivastava, Secretary of Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), has launched the Phase -1 i.e. the beneficiary module of the Rapid Reporting System for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) in New Delhi on January 24, 2018.

65. Who has been honoured with the India’s highest peacetime military decoration "Ashoka Chakra" at the 69th Republic Day?
Correct Answer: D [Jyoti Prakash Nirala]
Explanation: Corporal Jyoti Prakash Nirala, an Indian Air Force Garud commando, has been posthumously honoured with the India's highest peacetime military decoration "Ashoka Chakra" for service and exhibiting bravery in fighting the militants at the 69th Republic Day 2018.

66. Which International organisation will launch a new Global Centre for Cybersecurity to safeguard the world from hackers?
[A] World Economic Forum
[B] International Telecommunication Union
[C] UNICEF
[D] International Maritime Organization
Correct Answer: A [World Economic Forum]
Explanation: On 25 January 2018, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced to launch a new Global Centre for Cybersecurity in a bid to safeguard the world from hackers and growing data breaches — especially from nation-states.

67. Which state government has launched Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojna (MGSVY) for distressed sections?
[A] Karnataka
[B] Punjab
[C] Meghalaya
[D] Kerala
Correct Answer: B [Punjab]
Explanation: The Punjab Government has launched Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojna (MGSVY) on the occasion of 69th Republic Day 2018 for the distressed sections of the society across the state, schemes for debt stressed farmers, poor families that have a woman as sole bread earner, families of AIDS patients, out-of-school children, martyred soldiers, differently-abled, abandoned old persons, drug addicts among others.

68. What is the India's rank in the 2018 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI)?
[A] 81
[B] 98
[C] 102
[D] 88
Correct Answer: A [81]
Explanation: India has been ranked 81st out of 119 countries in the 2018 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI). The list was developed by Yale and Columbia Universities along with the World Economic Forum (WEF).

69. Which of the following has become the India's first indigenously developed vaccine to be pre-qualified by World Health Organisation (WHO)?
[A] Rabishield
[B] Rotavac
[C] Elovac-B
[D] Abhay-Tag
Correct Answer: B [Rotavac]
Explanation: India’s first indigenously developed vaccine "Rotavac" has been pre-qualified by the World Health Organisation (WHO). To be “pre-qualified” means that the vaccine can be sold internationally to several countries in Africa and South America. The vaccine was developed by the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech Limited (BBL) and was included in India’s national immunisation programme. The Rotavac vaccine protects
against childhood diarrhea caused by the rotavirus. Rotavirus is the most common cause of severe diarrhoea and kills more than 200,000 children every year.

70. Which state's tableau has won the best tableau award at the 69th Republic Day Parade 2018?

**Correct Answer: B [Maharashtra]**

**Explanation:** Maharashtra's tableau titled “Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj coronation” has won the best tableau award at the 69th Republic Day Parade 2018. Assam's tableau depicting traditional “masks and sastras” bagged the second prize. The third prize went to Chhattisgarh's display of Ramgarh's ancient amphitheatre and artistes performing dance based on Kalidas's Meghadootam.

71. The 2018 National Immunisation Day (NID) is celebrated on which date in India?

**Correct Answer: C [January 28]**

**Explanation:** President Ram Nath Kovind has launched the countrywide Pulse Polio programme for 2018 by administering polio drops to children below five years at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

72. Who has won the 2018 men's Singles title in the Australian Open 2018?

**Correct Answer: D [Roger Federer]**

**Explanation:** Roger Federer, a Swiss professional tennis player, has won the 2018 men's Singles title in the Australian Open 2018. He successfully defended his title by defeating 6th seeded Marin Cilic of Croatia.

73. What is the India's GDP growth prediction for FY19, according to 2018 Economic Survey of India?
   [A] 6.5 to 7.25%  [B] 7 to 7.5%  [C] 6.9 to 7.2%  [D] 7.5 to 8.0%

**Correct Answer: B [7 to 7.5%]**

**Explanation:** The Economic Survey 2017-18 has tabled by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in Parliament on January 29, 2018. The survey has predicted 7 to 7.5% of India's GDP growth in FY 2018-19.

74. Who has taken charge as the new Foreign Secretary of India?

**Correct Answer: D [Vijay Keshav Gokhale]**

**Explanation:** Vijay Keshav Gokhale, the 1981-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, has taken charge as the new Foreign Secretary of India on January 29, 2018.

75. India's first ever 'Khadi Haat' has launched in which city?
Correct Answer: D [New Delhi]
Explanation: To mark the 69th Republic Day 2018, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) have launched the India's first-ever 'Khadi Haat' in Connaught Place, New Delhi.

76. Who has won the 2018 women’s singles title in the Australian Open 2018?
[A] Caroline Wozniack
[B] Serena Williams
[C] Elina Svitolina
[D] Simona Halep

Correct Answer: A [Caroline Wozniack]
Explanation: Caroline Wozniack, a Danish professional tennis player, has won the 2018 women’s Singles title in the Australian Open 2018.

77. Who has been appointed the Chef-de-Mission for the 21st Commonwealth Games 2018?
[A] Virendra Tawde
[B] Krishna S Reddy
[C] Vikram Singh Sisodia
[D] Uttam Singh Chauhan

Correct Answer: C [Vikram Singh Sisodia]
Explanation: Vikram Singh Sisodia, the joint secretary of Indian Olympic Association (IOA), has been appointed the Chef-de-Mission for the 21st Commonwealth Games 2018, which is scheduled to be held in Gold Coast, Australia from April 4 to 15.

78. The first-ever India-Vietnam Bilateral Army Exercise (VINBAX-2018) has started in which state?
[A] Madhya Pradesh
[B] Karnataka
[C] Kerala
[D] Gujarat

Correct Answer: A [Madhya Pradesh]
Explanation: The first-ever India-Vietnam Bilateral Army Exercise, christened as ‘VINBAX-2018”, has started in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh on January 29, as part of joint training undertaken with friendly foreign countries by Indian Army.

79. Which union ministry has launched “Stree Swabhiman” initiative?
[A] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
[B] Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
[C] Ministry of Women and Child Development
[D] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Correct Answer: A [Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology]
Explanation: The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) has launched “Stree Swabhiman” initiative. The aim of the initiative is to create a sustainable model for providing adolescent girls and women an access to affordable sanitary products.

80. Which Indian-American personality has been elected as the Vice Chairman of the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF)?
[A] Shantanu Narayen
[B] Ajay Singh
[C] Mukesh Aghi
[D] Sayak Banerjee

Correct Answer: A [Shantanu Narayen]
Explanation:
81. India has signed how much amount of loan agreement with ADB for construction of over 6,200-kilometre rural roads in five states?
   [C] $250 million  [D] $750 million

**Correct Answer: C [$250 million]**

**Explanation:** The Government of India (GoI) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a $250 million loan agreement for the construction of over 6,200 kilometres all-weather rural roads in Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

82. What is the India’s rank in the list of wealthiest countries, according to a new report by New World Wealth?
   [A] 11th  [B] 6th  
   [C] 9th  [D] 4th

**Correct Answer: B [6th]**

**Explanation:** According to a report by New World Wealth, India has been ranked 6th in the list of wealthiest countries with total wealth of $8,230 billion US dollars.

83. After United States, which country has officially confirmed withdrawal from UNESCO?
   [A] Russia  [B] Saudi Arabia  
   [C] Israel  [D] UAE

**Correct Answer: C [Israel]**

**Explanation:** Israel has officially confirmed withdrawal from United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) over an anti-Israel bias.

84. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands administration has celebrated the 74th anniversary of First Flag Hoisting Day on which date?
   [A] December 31  [B] December 30  
   [C] December 29  [D] December 28

**Correct Answer: B [December 30]**

**Explanation:** The 74th anniversary of First Flag Hoisting Day has celebrated in Andaman and Nicobar Islands on December 30, 2017.

85. Who has been named Globe Soccer’s Best Player for the year 2017?
   [A] Radamel Falcao  [B] Lionel Messi  
   [C] Franck Ribéry  [D] Cristiano Ronaldo

**Correct Answer: D [Cristiano Ronaldo]**

**Explanation:** Real Madrid star Cristiano Ronaldo has been named Globe Soccer’s Best Player for the year 2017.

86. Which of the following has launched the India’s first bitcoin trading app?
   [C] Uranus Exchange  [D] Pluto Exchange

**Correct Answer: D [Pluto Exchange]**

**Explanation:** Pluto Exchange will launch the India’s first bitcoin trading app for transacting in virtual currencies.
87. What is the India’s ranks on a list of countries with highest Non-performing Assets (NPA) levels, according to latest report by CARE Ratings?
[A] 5th  
[B] 13th  
[C] 25th  
[D] 9th

Correct Answer: A [5th]
Explanation: India has been ranked 5th on a list of countries with highest Non-performing Assets (NPA) levels and is on top spot among the BRICS nations, according to latest report by CARE Ratings.

88. Who has won the 2017 World Rapid Chess Championship in Riyadh?
[A] Magnus Carlsen  
[B] Peter Leko  
[C] Vladimir Fedoseev  
[D] Viswanathan Anand

Correct Answer: D [Viswanathan Anand]
Explanation: Indian chess ace Viswanathan Anand has won the 2017 World Rapid Chess Championship by beating Russia’s Vladimir Fedoseev 2-0 in a two-game tie-break in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on December 28, 2017.

89. Who has been named PETA’s Person of the Year 2017?
[A] Jacqueline Fernandez  
[B] Kapil Sharma  
[C] R Madhavan  
[D] Anushka Sharma

Correct Answer: D [Anushka Sharma]
Explanation: Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma has been named PETA’s Person of the Year 2017 for her efforts to help protect dogs from fireworks.

90. As per report titled “2018 World Economic League Table”, India to become 5th largest economy in 2018. The report is published by which international organisation?
[A] International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
[B] Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)  
[C] United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)  
[D] World Bank (WB)

Correct Answer: B [Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR)]
Explanation: As per recently released report " 2018 World Economic League Table", India will overtake the United Kingdom and France in 2018 to become the world’s fifth-largest economy in terms of the United States dollar. The report was published by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), an economics consultancy based in Britain.

91. Which country to host the 2018 ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)?
[A] Singapore  
[B] India  
[C] Malaysia  
[D] Indonesia

Correct Answer: A [Singapore]
Explanation: The 2018 ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held in Singapore on 6-7 January, 2018 to celebrate the 25 years of strategic partnership between India and ASEAN. The theme of the 2018 PBD Convention is "Ancient Route, New Journey: Diaspora in the Dynamic India-ASEAN Partnership".

92. The world’s tallest and longest glass bridge has opened in which country?
[A] China  
[B] North Korea  
[C] South Korea  
[D] Japan
Correct Answer: A [China]
Explanation: The world's tallest and longest glass floor bridge has opened in Shijiazhuang, China to the public.

93. India's first runway on 'Sea Bridge' will come up in which state/UT?
   [A] Andaman and Nicobar Islands    [B] Lakshadweep
   [C] Karnataka                   [D] Andhra Pradesh

Correct Answer: B [Lakshadweep]
Explanation: India's first runway on 'Sea Bridge' will come up in Lakshadweep because the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has recently got a green nod to extend Lakshadweep's Agatti Airport.

94. Which union ministry has launched pilot project 'Blue Flag' for beach clean-up?
   [A] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
   [B] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
   [C] Ministry of Communications
   [D] Ministry of Labour and Employment

Correct Answer: B [Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change]
Explanation: The Union Environment Ministry has launched a pilot project 'Blue Flag' for beach clean-up and development. The purpose of the project is to enhance standards of cleanliness, upkeep and basic amenities at beaches.

95. Which country has launched the world's largest amphibious aircraft "AG600"?
   [A] China    [B] Norway
   [C] Japan    [D] New Zealand

Correct Answer: A [China]
Explanation: China's world's largest amphibious aircraft "AG600" has performed its maiden flight from the Jinwan Civil Aviation Airport at Zhuhai in Guangdong Province on December 24, 2017.

96. Which city has become the first Indian city to get its own logo?
   [A] Pune    [B] Patna
   [C] Kochi    [D] Bengaluru

Correct Answer: D [Bengaluru]
Explanation: The Karnataka government has launched the Bengaluru city logo on December 24, 2017 for branding the city as a tourism destination. The logo 'Be U' highlights the cosmopolitan culture of the city and is expected to build the city's image on the global stage.

97. Which city to host the annual meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018?
   [C] Geneva    [D] Davos

Correct Answer: D [Davos]
Explanation: The annual meeting of World Economic Forum (WEF) 2018 will be held in Davos, Switzerland from January 22. In the 5-day event, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be the first Indian PM in 20 years to visit the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. It was in 1997 when the then Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda had attended the event.
98. Who is the lone Indian woman cricketer to feature in both the ICC's ODI & T20I teams of the year?
   [C] Mithali Raj   [D] Jhulan Goswami

   Correct Answer: A [Ekta Bisht]
   Explanation: India's left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht is the lone cricketer to feature in both the ODI and T20 Teams of the year announced by the ICC.

99. The 2017 bilateral naval exercise "Naseem-Al-Bahr" has started between India & which country?
   [A] Palestine   [B] Oman
   [C] Egypt   [D] Qatar

   Correct Answer: B [Oman]
   Explanation: The 2017 bilateral naval exercise "Naseem-Al-Bahr" (or known as Sea Breeze) has started between Indian Navy and Oman Navy at Said Bin Sultan Naval Base, Wudam on December 17, 2017.

100. Which city has been officially selected to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games?
    [C] London   [D] Durban

    Correct Answer: B [Birmingham]
    Explanation: The Birmingham city has been officially selected to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games on December 21, 2017.