

CURRENT AFFAIRS



DECEMBER 2018

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Current Affairs – December 2018

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and a huge collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **December 2018**.

This guide will help you in preparing for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade and Officer Grade, etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade, etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll, which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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Foreign Affairs

1. India-Mozambique Joint Commission Meeting

The External Affairs Minister of India, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique, Mr. Jose Condungua Antonio Pacheco have attended the 4th session of Joint Commission meeting. The meeting was held on November 29, 2018 at Jawaharlal Nehru Bhavan, New Delhi. The theme of meeting was Economic, Cultural, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation.



In the Joint Commission meeting, both the leaders appreciated the growth of India-Mozambique partnership. The support through Lines of Credit and grant-assistance helps to enhance the capacity of Mozambican institutions in many fields including food security, small & medium enterprises, electricity, roads, drinking water availability, solar energy and information technology, etc.

Mr. Jose Condungua Antonio Pacheco has appreciated the recent progress in implementation of important Indian projects, particularly the Tica-Buzi Highway project. This project was funded through an Indian credit-line of about 150 million US Dollars. Other major LOC projects in the areas of electricity and housing also mentioned. Besides, the special contribution of Indian educational and training scholarships is also appreciated, as it helped greatly in enhancing the capacity of Mozambican youth. Likewise, both the parties agreed to further deepen and widen the realm of their development cooperation.

2. Hygiene & Inspection Requirements for Exports – India & China

India and China have explored a new aspect by signing a protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements exclusively for the exports.

The commerce ministry announced in a statement that a protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements for the exports was signed in New Delhi during the visit of Chinese Vice Minister, General Administration of Customs, Hu Wei, who is leading a six-member delegation to India.



Such agreement would enable India to export fish meal and fish oil to China. However, by the time, the neighboring country has not allowed these exports by India. China imports fish oil worth of USD 143.29 million per year and fish meal worth of USD 263.43 million per year.

3. India-Indonesia Business Forum

With the objective to facilitate the commercial and people-to-people connection between India and Indonesia, India-Indonesia Business Forum has been organized at Port Blair. Owing to its close proximity to India's Andaman & Nicobar Islands located in the Bay of Bengal and, Aceh and North Sumatra Province of Indonesia, the connectivity can be easily set up.



The Indian delegation was led by Pradeep Kumar Rawat, the Ambassador of India and assisted by the members of Andaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other officials from Andaman & Nicobar Administration. However, the primary research has been done by an academic institution of Indonesia. It has identified the potential opportunities in the economic field between Andaman-Nicobar and Aceh & North Sumatra.

The major identified areas of cooperation are:

- Eco-tourism (cruise tourism);
- Air-transport connectivity between Indonesia and Port Blair (capital of Andaman-Nicobar); and
- Sea transportation to facilitate trade between two regions.

4. India-Sudan Foreign Office Consultations

On 3rd December, 2018, the 8th Session of the Foreign Office Consultations between India and Sudan was held in New Delhi. Joint Secretary (West Asia and North Africa), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, Dr. B. Bala Bhaskar and Director General of Arab and Asian Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Sudan, Mahmoud Fadl Abdel Rasoul Mohammed have headed the meeting.



India has confirmed its commitment to work closely with Sudan in various bilateral fields. Besides, both countries also exchanged views on the issues of mutual concern at regional and multilateral levels.

Major areas of bilateral relations that were discussed include:

- Political relations
- Investments
- Defence and Security
- Human Resource Development and Capacity building
- Agriculture
- Lines of Credit, etc.

5. Conference On EU-India Partnership

On 4-5 December 2018, a two day Conference on "EU-India Partnership for Cultural Heritage Conservation" was organized at the National Museum in New Delhi.



The Conference was designed to achieve the following through collaborating with more than 30 European and Indian experts:

- The present ongoing cooperation's between India and the EU (its Member States) aimed at utilizing the potential of cultural heritage as an engine for social and economic development.
- Utilize the cutting-edge technologies with the purpose to employ in identifying, exploring, mapping and surveying the cultural heritage sites. Additionally, usage of development models and solutions for digitization and archiving of cultural material.
- Facilitate and promote research grants and scholarship scheme for Indian researchers, graduates and undergraduates in fields related to cultural heritage preservation.

6. Sweden and India Signed MoU for Renewable Resource

Sweden and India have signed two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) for the development of renewable energy sector. As per the MoUs, the advanced technology will be used to increase the power efficiency.



The first MoU has been signed between Swedish firm Spowdi and Bengaluru based company EMMVEE for setting up local manufacturing and assembly unit in Bengaluru.

The second MoU has been signed between Swedish Neutral and India's leading distribution company Tata Power DDL with the objective to set up pilot for earth fault protection in Delhi.

India and Sweden have a long history of collaboration, which is guided by MoU in the fields of environment, energy, science and technology and sustainable urban planning. However, to strengthen the collaboration, the new showroom has been set up in India – India Sweden Innovations Accelerator (ISIA).

Surprisingly, the showroom planned to present over 20 Swedish innovative technologies, which have been introduced and filtered through the dedicated ISIA program.

7. Sushma Swaraj Inaugurated Gandhi-Zayed Digital Museum in Abu Dhabi

Sushma Swaraj, the External Affairs Minister has inaugurated a digital museum in Abu Dhabi. The digital museum shows the life, works, and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi and the founder of modern UAE Shaikh Zayed.



The Gandhi-Zayed Digital Museum, which is designed to promote peace, tolerance and sustainability, is a part of the celebrations to mark 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and also marks the birth anniversary of Shaikh Zayed. Ms. Swaraj visited the UAE for two days in the first week of December. During her visit, she has co-chaired the 12th session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting.

8. Sushma Swaraj Co-chaired India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting in Abu Dhabi

The External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj visited the UAE from December 3-4 to co-chair the 12th session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting with her counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan.



The focus of the meeting was Economic and Technical Cooperation.

In the last decade, the two countries have become one of the largest trade partners of each other. The UAE is the sixth-largest source of Indian oil imports and hosts about 3.3 million-strong Indian community.

India and the UAE Tuesday signed two agreements as the outcome of the meeting. Currency swap agreement was the important one in these. Besides, Ms. Swaraj held exhaustive discussions with her counterpart Abdullah bin Zayed with the purpose to step up bilateral cooperation in areas like security, defence, counter-terrorism, trade, and energy.

9. India Signed Agreement with Iran to Pay Crude Bill in Rupee

India and Iran has signed an agreement to pay for crude oil imports from the Persian Gulf nation in rupees. The Indian refiners will make rupee payments in the UCO Bank account of the National Iranian Oil Co (NIOC).



On November 5, 2018, US has re-imposed sanctions on the export of oil from Iran; however, US has allowed a few countries to import oil from Iran, India is one of them. India

had won the exemption after it agreed to cut imports and escrow payments (payment through third party).

Through the US permission, India can export food grains, medicines and medical devices to Iran. On the other hand, India is allowed to import a maximum of 300,000 barrels of crude oil a day, from Iran.

International

1. EU's Goal to Be 'Climate Neutral' By 2050

To reduce the carbon emission, European Union has come up with new scheme of encouraging every government, business person, region, and individual (citizens) to participate in its mission.



As per the report, European Union has said that at the current rate of reducing the level of carbon emissions into the environment, by 2050, it would be able to reduce only 60 percent. Therefore, EU came up with a new scheme under which governments, businesses, individuals, and regions have been requested to assist in reducing carbon emission into the environment. By doing this European Union may become carbon neutral by 2050.

Moreover, the fact is - European Union with its 28 members together form one of the world's biggest and hence most polluting economies; therefore, now very keen to play its major part to become the first major world player to be "climate neutral".

2. Orphanage Trafficking Is Modern-Day Slavery - Australia

A report by ReThink Orphanages discovered the fact that more than 57% of Australian universities advertise orphanage placements, with 14% of Australian schools visiting, volunteering or fundraising for institutions abroad.



According to the US State Department, "*many orphanages use children to raise funds by forcing them to perform shows for or interact and play with potential donors to encourage more donations*".

In addition to this - Lumos said that even in the most well-managed orphanages, children are often unable to thrive due to the institutional environment, harming their development.

Report estimated that about 80% of children living in the world's orphanages have at least one living parent. However, in many cases, they have been lured to the orphanages to attract volunteers.

Linda Reynolds the Australian Senator said earlier this year that calling orphan tourism the "*perfect 21st-Century scam*".

After this finding, Australia's legislation is going to help to take orphanage trafficking out of the shadows and will put it in the spotlight on the global stage. Besides Australia, other

countries may also adopt similar measures and ensure their own anti-slavery legislation to protect against this heinous type of child trafficking.

3. UK Amends Weapons Bill to Incorporate Sikhs' Kirpans

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for British Sikhs led a delegation to the UK Home Office to ensure that the *Kirpan* should be exempted in the new bill (namely Offensive Weapons Bill 2018), which is going to be law soon.



The Members of the House of Commons have completed their reading of the new bill namely 'The Offensive Weapons Bill 2018' and passed to the House of Lords for the final approval. The bill exclusively involves a new offence of possessing certain types of offensive weapons in public places. It also includes a new restriction on the online sales of bladed articles and corrosive products.

4. Asia Pacific Summit-2018 Held in Kathmandu

On December 1-2, 2018, the Asia Pacific Summit-2018 has been held in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.

The theme of this two-day Summit was – "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values".



Mr. H. D. Deve Gowda, the former Prime Minister of India said that terrorism and climate change are the biggest challenges of today's world. According to him e - terrorism makes no distinction between the borders, genders or religions. Further he emphasizes that the magnitude of such threat multiplies when terrorism is state sponsored.

On the other hand, K.P. Sharma Oli, Nepal's Prime Minister said that the world continues to reel under the adverse impacts of climate change, natural and man-made disasters, and terrorism. Therefore, in order to attain the global peace and harmony, he emphasizes the active partnership between governments and private sectors and other social groups.

5. World Bank Announced to Invest USD 200 Bn to Fight Climate Change

The World Bank has announced that it is going to invest USD 200 billion in the name of climate action investment. The investment will be given for the period 2021-2025. The World Bank further confirmed that the breakdown of the USD 200 billion would include roughly USD 100 billion in direct finance from the World Bank.



As per the report, the developed countries are committed to increase combined annual public and private spending to USD 100 billion in developing countries by 2020 with the exclusive objective to fight the impact of climate change. Last year, this investment figure was USD 56.7 billion.

6. Australia Became World's Biggest LNG Exporter

Australia overtook Qatar and has become the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the first time in November, 2018. In the last three years, the number of Australian exports projects started that heightened the LNG export.



In November 2018, Australia exported 6.5 million tons of LNG; whereas Qatar exported over 6.2 million tons, and came down to second rank. However, as per the news, Qatar, of course, will respond and likely launch some new project to improve its production and export to regain its first position.

7. Global Debt Hits All-Time High

With a figure of USD 184 trillion, the global debt has reached an all-time high. The top three countries namely United States, China, and Japan alone account for more than half of total debt. IMF said that the most indebted economies in the world are also the richer ones.



International Monetary Fund (IMF) had calculated global debt USD 182 trillion earlier this year, but this figure further increased to USD 2 trillion. On an average, the world's debt now reached USD 86,000 per person, i.e. more than 2½ times the average per-capita income.

8. Luxembourg – The First Country to Make Public Transport Free of Cost

Luxembourg in its landmark announcement is set to become the first country in the world to make all its public transport free. As per the report, fares on trains, trams, and buses will be lifted from the next summer.

This plan is introduced by the re-elected coalition government led by Xavier Bettel. Mr. Bettel has sworn in for his second term as prime minister of the country. However, the report also says that Luxembourg City, the capital of Luxembourg, suffers from some of the worst traffic congestions in the world.



Though the country has a total of 600,000 inhabitants, a near about 200,000 people living in France, Belgium, and Germany cross the border every day to work in Luxembourg.

9. Dubai Crown Prince Launched World's Largest Arabic Audio Library

Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Dubai Crown Prince, has launched the largest Arabic Audio Library. This audio library is unique of its kind and largest in the world. The Dubai Audio Library targets a seven million visually challenged people in the Arab World.



It was an initiative undertaken by the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) in collaboration with the country's eminent website Bookshare.org.

The RTA plans to provide 300,000 books in Arabic language. There are more than 10,000 volunteers who will convert Arabic books into digital format.

10. Indian Currency Above 100 Banned in Nepal

The Nepal Government has in an announcement banned the use of Indian currency notes of INR 2,000, INR 500, and INR 200. The Nepal Government has instructed its citizens to restrain from keeping or carrying Indian currency higher than INR 100 denomination.



Such instruction will be applicable to Nepalese laborers working in India as well as Indian tourists visiting Nepal.

11. Wickremesinghe Sworn in as Sri Lanka's PM

Ranil Wickremesinghe has again taken an oath as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. The ongoing controversy ended with the resignation of the current Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. Mahinda Rajapaksa was appointed as the PM by the President Maithripala Sirisena just two months ago (i.e. on October 26, 2018). His appointment was a controversial move of President Sirisena, as he removed Wickremesinghe to make him PM.



But the system took a 'U' turn, when the Supreme Court unanimously declared that the dissolution of the Parliament by President Sirisena was illegal. After the Supreme Court's decision, the leader of United National Party (UNP), Wickremesinghe reinstated his post.

National

1. All 22 Languages for Government School Students

The Ministry for Human Resource Development (MHRD) has initiated 'the *Bhasha Sangam* programme, under the '*Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat*' project. Under the project, from November 20 to December 21, 2018, all government schoolchildren will be introduced to all 22 Indian languages mentioned in the Schedule VIII of the Constitution.



Every language has been given a date on which it needs to be introduced in the schools; for example, Assamese on November 20, Bengali on November 22, Bodo on November 26, Kannada on November 30, and so on.

While introducing the *Bhasha Sangam* programme in all the government schools across the country, the school authorities are instructed to familiarize students with five sentences of the language, which is scheduled for that date. The school authority will read out the sentences in the morning assembly asking the students to repeat the same.

As per the MHRD, such program is aimed to increase the linguistic tolerance, develop respect for other languages, and support of national integration.

2. South Asia Regional Youth Peace Conference Organized

Gandhi Smriti and *Darshan Samiti* (GSDS), which are functioning under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India have organized a 3-day 'South Asia Regional Youth Peace Conference.' The partners were UNESCO & MGIEP. The conference that was held at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat, Delhi, was organized to mark the beginning of celebration of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

The chief guest for the inaugural session was the great grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Shrikrishna G Kulkarni. The conference was destined on building a network for young leaders from South Asian countries specifically with the purpose –



- to work for different social issues
- to identify avenues for partnership and collaboration
- to support and show solidarity towards each other's initiatives
- to nurture relationships

- to promote global citizenship, and
- to work towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

And the major work areas are:

- Gender issue
- Interfaith issues
- Food Security in the context of Gandhian vision of village economy
- Digital Media, and
- Arts, Democracy and Dialogue.

3. FSSAI's New Campaign to Eliminate Trans Fats By 2022

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched a new mass media campaign to eliminate the industrially produced trans-fats available in the food supply. Such mission is first of its kind on a mass scale in India.

Named as the "**Heart Attack Rewind**", it is the 30 second public service announcement, whose objective is to support FSSAI's global target of eliminating trans-fat in India by the year 2022. However, the global target of eliminating trans-fat is 2023, set by World Health Organization (WHO).



As per the data, trans fat intake causes more than 500,000 deaths only from cardiovascular disease, every year globally.

Therefore, "FSSAI has set target to reduce the industrially produced trans fatty acids to less than 2% by the year 2022.

About Trans-Fats

Trans fats are usually made by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils. Such mixture makes the oil more solid and increases the shelf life of the foods.

Trans fat are largely found in Vanaspati, margarine, and bakery shortenings, and can also be found in baked and fried foods.

4. Train 18 - Most Likely Fastest Train of India

In its trail run, India's first engine-less train, train 18 crossed the mark of 180 km/hour. So, the report says that once the train 18 will be in operation, it would be the fastest running train of India.

The Train 18 crossed the 180 kmph speed limit while crossing the *Kota-Sawai Madhopur* section. However, as of now, *Gatimaan* Express, which runs at the speed of 160 km/hour, is the fastest train in India.



The major trials are now over, as of now, no major technical problem has been noticed. Officials in the Indian Railways affirmed that the train 18 holds the capability of reaching the top speed of 200 kmph provided that the tracks and signal system work in tandem.

With 16 coaches, the train will have the same carrying capacity (in terms of number of passengers) as that of the *Shatabdi* Express.

5. Gangotri, Yamunotri & Amarkantak Included Under PRASAD Scheme

The Centre has included *Gangotri* and *Yamunotri* (located in Uttrakhand), *Amarkantak* (located in Madhya Pradesh) and *Parasnath* (located in Jharkhand) under a central scheme to develop major pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country.



With such inclusion, the number of sites under PRASAD, has now become 41, located across 25 states of India.

The major areas of development, under this scheme, are road, rail, water transport and providing basic tourism facilities (such as information/interpretation centers, eco-friendly mode of transport, ATM/money exchange, lighting and illumination with renewable source of energy, drinking water, cloak room, waiting room, parking, toilets, first aid centers, craft markets/haats/souvenir shops, rain shelters, telecom facilities, internet facility, etc.).

About PRASAD

It stands for the **P**ilgrimage **R**ejuvenation **A**nd **S**piritual Heritage **A**ugmentation **D**rive. The scheme was launched in 2014-15.

6. India Gets First Witness Protection Scheme

The Supreme Court of India has approved a witness protection regime in the country. The honorable court observed that one of the main reasons for witnesses turning hostile is that they are not given security by the State.

A Bench comprising of Justice A.K. Sikri and Justice S. Abdul Nazeer said that Witness Protection Scheme, 2018 will come into effect immediately across all States of India.



Further, the Apex court said that the scheme, which aimed to enable a witness to depose fearlessly and truthfully, would be the law of the land until Parliament enacted a suitable legislation.

7. India's First Underwater Museum Soon Open Off Puducherry Coast

India will soon get its first underwater museum off the Puducherry coast. It will a great boost to tourism in the Union territory.

As per the report, INS Cuddalore, a minesweeper decommissioned in March after travelling 30,000 nautical miles in last 30 years. Now, it is planned to turned it into an underwater museum.



The Navy has agreed to gift the vessel to promote tourism in Puducherry. So, the minesweeper will be deployed in the seabed i.e. 7 km off Puducherry coast at a depth of 26 meters. This 60-metre long and 12-metre wide vessel is unquestionably going to be a popular destination for scuba diving and snorkeling.

8. India's 1st Railway University at Vadodara

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal along with the Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has inaugurated India's very first dedicated Railway University at Vadodara. Though it is India's first railway university, it is third such university in the whole world, after those in Russia and China.



The inaugural batch of the university, who have taken admission this year (2018), has been given a 50% scholarship in the annual course fee of Rs 75,000 by the government.

However, without the scholarship, the total fee is Rs 91,000 for one academic year (it also includes all other charges).

9. J-K Became First State to have Law Banning Sexual Exploitation of Women

Jammu and Kashmir has become the first state in India to have a law explicitly banning sexual exploitation of women. The sexual exploitation especially by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or by a public servant is now banned.



The State Administrative Council (SAC) headed by Governor Satya Pal Malik has approved the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and the Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

However, an eminent lawyer and human rights activist, Deepika Singh Rajawat, said that instead of having more laws on sexual exploitation, there is a need to effectively implement the existing laws.

10. Pune Court becomes First in India to Facilitate E-Payment

In an advance move, Pune district court administration has started an e-payment facility. The court located in Shivajinagar district will commence such facility to bring transparency to cash transactions.



With such facility, the first time in India that the practicing lawyers and litigants can now pay various sorts of court fee online. The facility will be available into the clerical offices in the court and civil lawyers. The litigants can pay their court fees, and various other fines, penalties, judicial deposits, rent, maintenance, etc. online. The court administration informed that the e-payment facility will be available on its official website - <https://pay.ecourts.gov.in/epay/>

11. India's Largest Cancer Institute Opened in Haryana

India's largest cancer institute, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has been inaugurated at Haryana's Jhajjar area. The 710-bed hospital opened its OPD services about five years after its foundation stone, which was laid by the then prime minister Manmohan Singh in 2014. However, the hospital is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2020.



Major purpose behind this big hospital is to strengthen the research program and also bring down the patient load at All India Institute of Medical Sciences' (AIIMS) cancer centre. This cancer institute has been modelled after United States' National Cancer Institute (NCI).

Further, it is developed as the premier institute for all activities related to cancer in the country. The institute also would have linkages with all regional cancer centres.

12. Prime Minister Modi Renamed 3 Andaman & Nicobar Islands as a Tribute to Netaji

On 30th December, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced renaming of three islands of Andaman and Nicobar archipelago to pay tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. The archipelago of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is located in the Bay of Bengal.



On this day in 1943, Netaji had suggested that Andaman and Nicobar Islands should be renamed as Shahid and Swaraj Dweep respectively. Later he unfurled the Tricolour in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The New Names are:

- The Ross Island renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep,
- The Neil Island renamed as Shaheed Dweep, and
- The Havelock Island renamed as Swaraj Dweep.

Regional

1. Saubhagya Scheme Helped 8 More States to Achieve 100% Electrification

Under the scheme Saubhagya, eight more states – Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, J&K, Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, West Bengal, & Telangana, have achieved 100% household electrification.

Now total 15 states have 100 percent household electrification, as proclaimed by Shri RK Singh, Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and Renewable Energy.

What is Saubhagya?

Saubhagya is a scheme described as '**Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana.**' The scheme was first launched in September, 2017. The major objective of the scheme was to provide access to electricity to all the remaining households across the country.



2. First Owl Festival Celebrated in Pune

The country's first owl fest has been celebrated at Pingori village located in Purandar taluka of Pune, Maharashtra. It was a two day festival held on November 29 and 30, 2018. The festival was organized by Ela Foundation.

Ela Foundation is an NGO working for nature education and conservation. Ela Foundation gives information on owl conservation in the forms of feature art such as pictures, paintings, lanterns, lamp shades, stitched articles, posters, poems, origami, and stories on owls.



There are many native stories associated with owl, which is of course disastrous for owls, whereas owls are beneficial for the environment. Owls eat rodents, bandicoots, rats, etc. and most of these species are harmful to crops, and thus are beneficial for the farmers.

3. Maharashtra Finally Approved 16% Maratha Quota

Maharashtra government has given approval to 16% reservation in government jobs and education to Marathas community in the state.

The Bill is named as the "Maharashtra State Reservation (of seats for admission in education institutions in the state and for appointments in public services and posts under the state) for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2018.



With this reservation, the caste based reservation quota has reached 68 percent from the existing 52 percent in the Maharashtra state. The state has about 32 percent population of Maratha community.

Such reservation to the Maratha community has been granted on the basis of the report submitted by the Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC). The MSBCC has declared the community as socially and educationally backward.

4. 5 Crore Fine on West Bengal for Failing To Curb Air Pollution

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has fined Rupees 5 crore on the West Bengal Government for not complying with its directive (given two years back) to improve air quality in Kolkata and Howrah.



Besides, the NGT Eastern Zone bench has instructed West Bengal Government to deposit the fine amount within two weeks of the order to the Central Pollution Control Board. However, if government fails to do so, then it will have to pay an additional amount worth of Rupees 1 crore as fine for every month's delay.

In its order, the NGT had recommended the West Bengal Government on introducing an alternative mechanism i.e. to put a lid on high number of polluting diesel vehicles running in the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah. Besides, it also asked to introduce remote sensing device (RSD) to monitor smoke emission and to increase the number of computerized air monitoring stations.

5. 'One' Card for Delhi Metro & Buses

Government of Delhi has launched a common mobility card with the tagline of 'One Delhi One Ride.' With this new card, Delhi commuters can now travel in metro and buses; without a need to buy separate card or ticket.



Interestingly, the commuters would have a 10 percent discount on the card 'One.' The Delhi commuters can buy this 'One' card from any metro station or DTC pass counters.

The amount for recharging these cards will remain the same i.e. Rs. 200 as the minimum recharge value and Rs. 50 as the security fee on the card; however, the basic design of the 'One' card has changed.

6. Odisha Government Launched 'PEETHA'

Odisha Chief Minister Mr. Naveen Patnaik has launched a new programme namely the **Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability** (in short PEETHA).



The objective of this program is to ensure transparency and awareness on various government schemes. The program is also destined to provide different social benefits at the individual level.

Under the scheme, every month, the best panchayat in each Block will be given INR 5 lakh with the objective to organize PEETHA. Upon the completion of camps, the best panchayats (based on the performance) in each district will be awarded at the district Level.

7. SMART Market for Farmers

More than 49 companies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Maharashtra government to improve the agricultural market and farmers' status in the state.

Major companies involved in this project are Amazon, ITC, Tata Group, and Patanjali. The name of project is 'State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation.'

In addition to this, World bank is also assisted to revamp the agricultural value chain and improve the price realization for the farmer.

The total project cost is INR 2,000, out of which, World Bank has contributed INR 1,500 crore and the State government has contributed INR 430 crore.

The remaining INR 70 crore has been raised by Village Social Transformation Foundation (VSTF).

Likewise, the project SMART will support the value addition in post-harvest segments. It will further facilitate enterprise promotion and business investment for the Community-based organizations.



8. Kannur International Airport Inaugurated

The Kannur International Airport (KIAL) is inaugurated on December 9, 2018. The chief guests who came for this inauguration were the Union Minister for Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.



In Kerala, Kannur International Airport became the fourth international airport after Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and Kochi. Here, Air India Express flight will give service to Abu Dhabi. Among others, two flights are operated by GoAir for Bengaluru and Thiruvananthapuram.

9. Shi Yomi Became the 23rd District of Arunachal Pradesh

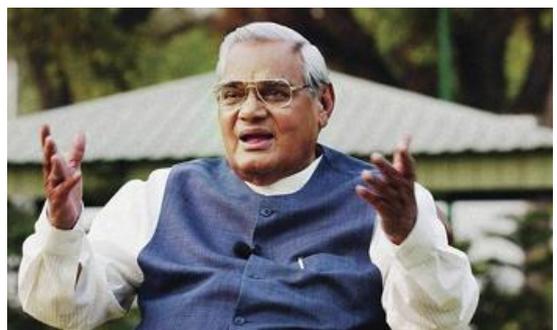
Arunachal Pradesh created its 23rd district namely 'Shi Yomi.' The formal inauguration of Shi Yomi as district has been carved out of the West Siang district. The new district consists of four circles namely Mechuka, Pidi, Tato and Monigong.



On August 9, 2018, the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly had passed a bill for the creation of three new districts namely, Pakke-Kesang, Lepa Rada, and Shi Yomi.

10. UP Government Announced to Set Up an Umbrella University

The Uttar Pradesh Government has announced to set up an umbrella university, which will control all the medical and dental colleges and nursing institutions in the state. And, this umbrella university will be named after the name of former Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



The decision has been taken in a cabinet meeting headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. As per the report, such decision of having an umbrella university will be very helpful in regulating and controlling the quality of medical education in the State.

Because of one system, there would be one syllabus and one education system, which will definitely improve the medical education system. It will also help in maintaining the transparency in overall education system in the field of medical science.

11. MNF chief Zoramthanga Sworn in as Mizoram CM

Mizo National Front (MNF) chief Zoramthanga has taken oath as the chief minister of Mizoram for the third time in 20 years.

Zoramthanga, who was a former rebel leader, but later turned politician, had served as Mizoram CM for two terms i.e. from 1998-2008. However, in 2018 election, his party (MNF) had swept the polls by winning 26 of the 40 seats.



Surprisingly, the ruling party Congress, which had grabbed 34 seats in the 2013 elections, was reduced to only five seats.

12. Kamal Nath Sworn in as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh

After the victory of Congress in Madhya Pradesh, the senior congress leader, Kamal Nath sworn in as the 18th Chief Minister of the state. Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath of office of Kamal Nath.

Kamal Nath, who has held several portfolios in the Union cabinet, was appointed the Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee president with assignment to steer the party to win the November assembly elections. Out of the 230 seats, Congress won 114 seats.



13. Bhupesh Baghel Sworn in Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh

After the landslide victory of Congress in Chhattisgarh Assembly election, Bhupesh Baghel sworn in as the 3rd Chief Minister of the state. Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath of office.

Mr. Baghel, who took the charge as Congress State president after 2013 Assembly polls, was credited for the massive victory of the party in the recent Assembly polls. In the Assembly elections, Congress won 68 seats out of a total of 90 seats.



14. Ashok Gehlot Took Oath as Chief Minister of Rajasthan

Senior congress leader Ashok Gehlot has taken oath as Rajasthan's new Chief Minister. Sachin Pilot has sworn in as the deputy chief minister of the state at Jaipur's Albert Hall. The Governor of Rajasthan, Kalyan Singh administered the oath of office to Gehlot and other ministers.

Several leaders from the Congress and its alliance partners from all over the country attended the ceremony.



Defence

1. India-US Air Forces Military Drill

To increase the operational coordination, Air forces of India and the United States have successfully completed military exercise in *Kalaikunda* and *Panagarh* air bases located in West Bengal, India. This is for the first time the military exercise was held at two air force bases.



The 'Ex Cope India-18' was the fourth edition in the series of bilateral military drills between the Indian Air Force and the United States Air Force. The objective of such joint military exercise is to provide operational exposure and undertake mutual exchange of best practices towards enhancing operational capability.

The Indian Air Force has participated with the Su-30 MKI, jaguar, Mirage 2000, AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System Aircraft), and C-130J; on the other hand, the United States Air Force participated with F15 C/D and C-130 military aircrafts.

2. Indian Navy Will Conduct 'Exercise sea vigil'

The Indian Navy will conduct a large-scale coastal defense exercise namely 'Exercise sea vigil' in January, 2019. This exercise is designed to test the robustness of the entire coastal security apparatus.



The 'Exercise sea vigil' planned to involve all stake holders across mainland and Island territories. It will also invite all operational ship, submarines, and aircraft along with Indian coast guards, Indian Army and the Indian Air Force, to participate in this exercise.

As per the report, the exercise sea vigil will help to enhance interoperability and ensure security in country's maritime neighborhood as well as in the global commons.

3. Joint Exercise - SHINYUU Maitri-18

The joint air exercise of SHINYUU Maitri-18 was held at Air Force Station, Agra. The Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) and Indian Air Force jointly organized this exercise with the theme 'Joint Mobility/Humanitarian assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft.



The JASDF C2 aircraft and the aircrew/observers were the part of this first air exercise between the two Air Forces of Japan and India. Indian Air Force is participating with AN-32 and C-17 aircraft. The objective of this exercise was to set for the IAF and JASDF crews to undertake Joint Mobility/ HADR operations.

4. India Test Fires Nuclear Capable 2nd Agni-5 Missile in Last Six Months

Agni-5, the indigenously developed surface-to-surface ballistic missile has been successfully test-fired from Dr. Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast.



The Agni missile was launched with the help of a mobile launcher from the launch pad-4 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) located at Dr Abdul Kalam Island in the Bay of Bengal.

Major Highlights of Agni-5 Missile

- It is a surface-to-surface missile;
- It is an indigenously developed missile;
- It has a strike range of 5,000 km;
- It is a three stage missile;
- It is 17-meter-tall and 2 meter wide; and
- It is capable of carrying 1.5 tons of nuclear warheads.

5. Air Force Tested Surface-To-Air Missiles

The Indian Air Force, in a first-of-its-kind exercise (code-named CROSS BOW-18), has successfully conducted a combined guided weapons firing of Surface-to-Air Missiles. The missile is tested from the Air Force Station located at Suryalanka in Andhra Pradesh.



As per the report, CROSS BOW-18 that successful tested has four different classes of missiles like Akash, Spyder, OSA-AK-M and IGLA.

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa said that it has further improved the professional skills and would definitely enhance the IAF's combat capability.

6. Navy Installs Submergence Rescue Vehicle

Indian Navy's first flyaway Deep Sea Submarine Rescue System was formally installed at the Naval Dockyard, Mumbai. It is inducted by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief of the Naval Staff.



The acquisition of this capability is a significant and pioneering jump in the Indian Navy's capability particularly in the deep submarine rescue. This Deep Sea rescue system would have a global footprint. It can be mobilized from the Naval base at Mumbai to the nearest mobilization port by air/land or sea and will provide rapid rescue to the Submarines in distress.

Moreover, the Indian Navy's Deep Sea Submarine Rescue System is considered as the most advanced system currently in operation globally. It is capable of undertaking rescue from a disabled Submarine up to 650 meters deep in the water.

7. Indo-Russia Bilateral Naval Exercise

The bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy namely INDRA NAVY has been exercised in Vishakhapatnam from December 9 to 16, 2018.



Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) Ships Varyag, Admiral Panteleyev and Boris Butoma participated in the joint exercise from Russian side. From India side, the exercise has been led by the Command of Rear Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi, Flag Officer Commanding, Eastern Fleet.

The primary objective of the joint navy exercise is to increase inter-operability amongst the two navies and develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations. INDRA NAVY joint navy exercise was initiated in 2003. The thrust of such exercises at sea was on Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW), Air Defence drills, Surface Firings, Visit Board Search, and Seizure (VBSS) operations and tactical procedures.

During exercise INDRA NAVY-18, the Indian Navy has been represented by:

- INS Ranvir - a guided missile destroyer,
- INS Satpura - an indigenous frigate,
- INS Kadmatt - an indigenous anti- submarine warfare (ASW) corvette,
- IN Ships Kuthar and Khanjar - both indigenous missile corvettes,
- INS Jyoti - a fleet tanker,

- One Sindhughosh class submarine,
- Dornier maritime patrol aircraft,
- Hawk fighter aircraft, etc.

8. Military Literature Festival Held at Chandigarh

Punjab government has organized 3-day Military Literature Festival at the Lake Club in Chandigarh. The festival was commenced on December 6 and ended on December 9, 2018.

Some of the pre festival activities such as archery competition, shotgun shooting, and Army Polo were also the point of attraction.

Besides, in this literature festival, some other activities also organized including military-themed photography competition, cyclothon, off roading show, nature trail run for women and children, and a bird watching workshop.



Environment

1. Climate Vulnerable Forum Virtual Summit

The 2018 Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) Summit is organized as a part of the *Talanoa* Dialogue. *Talanoa* Dialogue serves as an agreed mechanism for the promotion of enhanced national action (participated) by all nations party to the Paris Agreement by 2020.



Heads of State/Government and high-level representatives and other partners are invited to participate in the Summit. They are being expected to demonstrate intentions to raise ambition, including in relation to updating their national targets.

Highlights of CVF Summit

- It was in the Marshall Islands;
- The Summit was the first intergovernmental Summit to take place entirely online;
- Over 40 government leaders participated in the virtual Summit; and
- The target to limit global warming to as close to 1.5°C.

2. India - 4th Highest Emitter of CO₂ in the World

With its 7% contribution in global Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emission in 2017, India is ranked the fourth highest emitter in the world.

As per the latest report, the top four CO₂ emitters in the year 2017, were China (27%), the United States (15%), European Union (10%), and India (7%).



Likewise, these four (alone) covered 59% of total CO₂ emission in the world and rest of the world collectively contributed 41%. Further, the report said that the CO₂ emissions in India are expected to grow by a solid 6.3% in the year 2018 because of setting strong economic growth i.e. of around 8%/year. Secondly, in India, coal is still the major source of the Indian economy, which is also the largest source of CO₂ emission.

3. 12th Century Nishidhi Stone Inscription Discovered in Karnataka

12th Century Old Nishidhi stone inscription was found at Nandi *Basaveshwara* temple in Harakere village of Shivamogga, Karnataka.

R. Shejeshwara, Assistant Director, Department of Archeology, Heritage and Museums, and Jagadeesh, historian, discovered the inscription during their field work undertaken in Harakere village of Karnataka. The dimension of newly discovered inscription is - 60 cm long and 15 cm wide, which found chiseled from a schist rock slab.



4. Dracula Ants Possess Fastest Known Animal Appendage

According to a new study, the Dracula ant (named *Myrmium camillae*), can snap its mandibles at the speed of up to 90 meters per second, which is more than 200 mph. Such movement feature made ant the fastest animal movement on record.



According to the scientists, the mandibles of the Dracula ants, are very unusual; hence, the group of scientists concluded that a type of the Dracula ant, can move at 90 meters per second, or 200 miles per hour.

The tiny insects were discovered in 1994; since then, it remained as (relatively) mystery for the scientists. However, over a period of time, a group of scientists discovered many features of this insects.

5. Mount Soputan Volcano Erupted in Indonesia

A volcano located in central Indonesia has erupted. It has ejected columns of thick ash as high as about 7,500 meters (24,606 feet) into the sky.

The name of this volcano is Mount Soputan and it is located on the northern part of Sulawesi island, Indonesia.



Soputan, which measures 1,784 meters (5,853 feet) tall, is Indonesia's one of the more than 120 active volcanoes. Indonesia is having hundreds of active volcanoes because it is located in the vicinity of the "Pacific Ring of Fire."

The lives of 260 million people who are living in Indonesia are always at risk because of frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

6. Cyclone Phethai Hits the Coast of Andhra Pradesh

Heavy rain and strong winds hit the southern India on 16 and 17 of December because of the depression over the Bay of Bengal and subsequent generation of cyclone Phethai. The major affected regions are coastal parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.



Because of gush of winds and heavy rainfall, the temperature also decreased drastically. People are warned not go in the coastal part of the states.

Science & Technology

1. Chinese Firm Reveals Plans to Provide Free Worldwide WiFi

A Chinese internet technology firm recently revealed its plan to launch a constellation of 272 satellites by the year 2026 with the objective to provide **free WiFi service worldwide.**

Founded in 2013 in Shanghai, China, LinkSure Network markets itself as a global innovative mobile internet company. The specialty of this company is – it provides free internet access, content, and location-based services on its registered website.



As per the report, LinkSure Network will launch its satellite from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre located in Northwest China's Gansu province by next year. By 2020, it will be launching 10 satellites into the space and by 2026, there would be a constellation of 272 satellites in the space.

Users can use their mobile phones to search for internet services provided by the constellation and can browse the internet. With such satellites based internet facility, people can access internet facility even in regions where telecom networks do not cover.

2. India Launched Digital Sky Platform

Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu has announced launching of a new portal named as 'Digital Sky.' This portal will facilitate drone operators to register online. On this portal both pilots and owners of the drones can now register to operate drone. This facility is made available from December 1, 2018.



Under these norms, drone users will be required to follow the procedure of one-time online registration of their drones. Besides, they also need to register the pilots of drones along with their owners.

Nano drones can start flying legally; however, for drones of micro size and above categories, operators are first required to register on this new Digital Sky portal.

3. Special Women Safety Feature Pan-India App

Home Minister Rajnath Singh has announced a PAN-India single-number emergency mobile app. This app will have a special women safety feature to get immediate assistance from police and local volunteers.

While launching a new technology in Kohima (capital of Nagaland – north-east state), Mr. Singh said that 'SHOUT' feature has been made available exclusively for women in the '112 India' mobile app.



This app will be connected to the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS). With this facility, Mr. Singh said that, women in distress will be able to seek immediate assistance from the nearby registered volunteers as well as from Emergency Response Centre.

4. India's First Privately Built Satellite Launched

India's first privately built satellite namely 'Exseed Sat-1' has been launched by Elon Musk-led SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. 'Exseed Sat-1' is built by Mumbai-based startup Exseed Space with the objective to serve the amateur radio community in the country.



Elon Musk-led SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket has been launched from the Vandenberg air force base located in California, USA. The rocket was carrying total 64 satellites picked up from 17 different countries.

5. India's Heaviest Communication Satellite GSAT-11 Launched

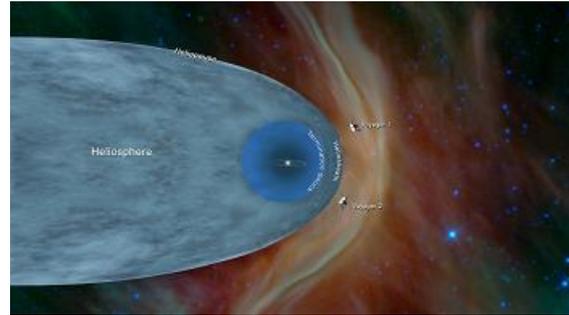
GSAT-11, Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) heaviest and most-advanced high throughput communication satellite, was launched successfully from the Spaceport located in French Guiana, South America.

Under the part of Digital India Program, GSAT-11 is launched to boost the broadband connectivity to rural and inaccessible Gram Panchayats in India. It is covered under the Bharat Net Project.

The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-246 lifted off from Kourou Launch Base in French Guiana at 02:07 am (IST). The satellite had the load of India's GSAT-11 and South Korea's GEO-KOMPSAT-2A satellites. Along with Soyuz and Vega, Ariane 5 is one of three launch vehicles operated by Arianespace.

6. NASA's Voyager 2 Probe Successfully Enters Interstellar Space

As per the report, NASA's Voyager 2 reached the edge of solar system. In the space history, it is the second human-made object that reached the edge of solar system. The Voyager 2 is (a little) more than 18 billion kilometers away from the Earth. Further, the US space agency confirmed that Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 have not yet left the solar system nor be leaving anytime in near future.



Surprisingly, from such a distance, the mission operators still can communicate with Voyager 2 as it enters this new phase of its journey. However, the information – moving at the speed of light – takes about 16.5 hours to travel from the spacecraft to Earth. On the other hand, comparatively, light traveling from the Sun takes about eight minutes to reach on the Earth.

7. World's First Floating Nuclear Plant Installed in Russia

The world's first "floating" nuclear power plant (FNPP) namely Akademik Lomonosov has been installed in remote part of Russia. As per the report, FNPP has started and brought to 10 per cent of its capacity.



Smartly designed FNPP is a mobile, low-capacity reactor unit. Its beauty is – it is operable in remote areas, which is isolated from the main power distribution system, or in places even hard to access by land.

On top of this, it is designed to maintain both uninterrupted power and plentiful desalinated water supply in remote areas.

8. India's IDRSS to Be Satellite Communication Hub In Space

According to the ISRO report, as part of its proposed manned space mission, India soon will launch the Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS). It will improve data relay and communication links with its remote sensing/earth observation satellites.



The two-satellite IDRSS will maintain unceasing communication link with India's remote sensing/earth observation satellites. It will also set up link with the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III), which is planned to carry three Indian astronauts to the space in 2022. The two IDRSS satellites will be placed in geostationary orbit, which will enable satellite to satellite communication and transfer data.

IDRSS will be like a hub, as it is capable to receive the commands from the ground stations and in turn relay the same to other satellites. Besides, IDRSS can also monitor a rocket from the same time it lifts off from the launching pad.

9. ISRO Launches Military Communication Satellite GSAT-7A

On 19th of December, ISRO has launched its military communication satellite GSAT-7A from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The satellite will improve the defence forces' communication capabilities. The satellite was carried by the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle-F11 (GSLV-F11).



The satellite is designed to add a new space-based dimension to the way Indian Air Force interlinks, which the air force frequently operates and communicates with its aircrafts when they fly. GSAT-7A is the first satellite that primarily launched for the Indian Air Force to qualitatively unify its assets and improve combined, common intelligence during the operations.

GSAT-7A is the first satellite that primarily launched for the Indian Air Force to qualitatively unify its assets and improve combined, common intelligence during the operations.

Major Highlights

- The satellite GSAT-7A is the 35th Indian communication satellite;
- Its weight is 2,250 kg;
- GSLV F11 is fourth generation launch vehicle with three stages;
- It is launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Center, Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh;
- It is place in a geostationary orbit, which is at the altitude of 36,000 km from the earth's surface; and
- It will connect fighter jets, helicopters, armed UAVs, reconnaissance aircraft, and special purpose planes.

1. SBI Raised Deposit Rates by 0.10%

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest bank, has increased the fixed deposit rates by up to 10 basis points i.e. 0.10% on selected maturities. The new rates will range from 5 to 10 bps and are applicable for the deposits less than 1 crore.

As result of SBI's such announcement, ICICI Bank has also increased rates by up to 0.25 percent and HDFC Bank has increased by up to 0.5 percent on selected maturities. Furthermore, senior citizens will be given 7.30 percent on deposits with tenure of two to less than three years. However, for rest of the maturities (plan) deposit rates are unchanged.



2. ADB Will Give USD 85 Mn Loan for Skill Development In Odisha

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has confirmed that it will give USD 85 million loan specially to improve skill development ecosystem in Odisha. Further, ADB also said that it would help to set up an advanced skill training center at Bhubaneswar, the Capital of Odisha state.

As per the estimation, the project will assist more than 1.5 lakh people in learning new skills in priority sectors.

The major sectors (in priority sectors) are constructions, manufacturing, and services. The World Skill Centre (WSC), which planned to set up in Bhubaneswar has designed to deliver eight training courses for 13,000 full-time students and will provide training to 5,000 teachers and train about 1,000 assessors.



3. RBI Released Fifth bi-monthly Statement

On 5 December, 2018, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of RBI has released the 5th Bi-monthly monetary policy in the presence of Dr. Urjit Patel, the Governor of RBI. In this report, the committee kept many policy rates unchanged; however, some changes are done in its policy.

Highlights of Report

- The Policy Repo Rate under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) kept unchanged i.e. at 6.5 per cent;
- The Reserve Repo Rate is fixed at 6.25%;
- The Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate is fixed at 6.75%;
- Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) will be reduced from existing 19.5% to 18.0% in six quarterly instalments (beginning from January 2019);
- The projections of inflation for 2018-19 and Q1:2019-20 have been substantially revised downwards from the October resolution; and
- The GDP growth projection for 2018-19 is retained at 7.4 per cent as in the Fourth Bi-monthly Resolution in October, 2018.



4. ICICI Securities Launched eATM

On 3 December, 2018 ICICI Securities has announced the launching of a revolutionary new offering namely eATM. With the help of eATM, retail investors can now get near real-time access to money in their bank account when they sell stocks on the BSE. As of now, the investors have to wait for the period about T+2 days to access that money.



The money would be credited in the respective investor's account within 30 minutes of selling; however, its limit is of INR 50,000 per client per day. Interestingly, this new facility would be available to all ICICI direct customers at no additional cost. The facility would be available to stocks sold on the BSE (as of now).

Likewise, the ICICI direct account now almost became just like an ATM, as retail investor can sell and within 30 minutes, he can walk any ATM to withdraw the cash.

5. India's E-Commerce Market – Fastest Growing Market

As per the latest report, India's e-commerce market is the fastest growing e-retail market across the world. The report released by consultancy firm Bain and Company, India's online retail market experienced a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 53%. The growth rate has been recorded between the 2013 and 2017.

In the year 2017, India's total e-commerce retail sales were marked at about USD20



billion. Further studies have specified that another USD50 billion of online e-commerce could be unlocked by adding new potential users who are currently not buy products online.

However, report further also illustrated the fact that despite the rapid growth, online retail penetration in India is as low as 5%; whereas in China, this figure is 20% and the US 12%. India has been given eighth rank (in terms of online retail penetration) among 11 countries.

6. India's Economy Grows at 7.1%

For the second quarter of 2018-2019, India's economy grew at the rate of 7.1%. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) reported that the GDP at constant price was 33.98 Lakh crore INR for Second Quarter this fiscal year. However, for the same period last year (i.e. 2017-2018), it was 31.72 Lakh Crore INR, which shows increase in growth rate.



Dr. Bibek Debroy, Chairman of the Economic Advisory Council said that the government's focus on simplifying India's business and investment eco-system has greatly improved India's economic health in the recent years.

7. \$400 Million Loan for Water Supply Project In AP

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank's (AIIB) has approved USD 400-million loan for a water sanitation project in Andhra Pradesh. The bank stated that this new project is expected to have a positive impact on women and girls, particularly in affected communities.



In fact, fetching water from the communal taps is mainly carried out by women and girls. Such work takes unnecessarily much time, which can be used in some other productive work. Besides, this project will also reduce health risks and health expenditures for women in Andhra Pradesh.

India is the second largest shareholder of this bank after China. The headquarters of AIIB is located in Beijing, China.

Reports

1. The Highest Number of Children and Adolescents Living with HIV in India

As per the report, an estimated 120,000 children and adolescents (aged between 0 and 19) were living with HIV in India in 2017, which is the highest number in the South-Asian region.



The report, which is prepared by UNICEF, further illustrated that an estimated number of children under 5 years old newly diagnosed with HIV was 43%, which is lower than the comparable estimate in 2010. Likewise, there is a decline greater than the 35% recorded globally. However, the report warned that by 2030, around 80 adolescents will be dying of AIDS every day provided if no strict preventive measure has been taken to stop the HIV transmission.

Further, the report mentioned that the number of HIV affected adolescents in Pakistan, was 5,800, followed by Nepal with 1,600 and Bangladesh with less than 1,000.

2. With \$80 Billion, India to Retain Top Position In Remittances

As per the report released by World Bank, India retains its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year. The amount that India has received this year through its diaspora, is \$80 billion. With this figure, India has retained its top spot in remittances in the world, the report is published in the World Bank's Migration and Development Brief.



However, with \$ 67 billion, China has second rank; other important countries are Mexico and Philippines (\$34 billion each) and Egypt (\$26 billion). The World Bank estimates that officially-recorded remittances to developing countries will likely increase by 10.8 per cent and can be reached \$528 billion in 2018.

As per the World Bank report - remittances have a direct impact and it greatly helps in alleviating poverty for many households. Therefore, World Bank is well positioned to work with countries to facilitate remittance flows.

3. Russia Ranked as World's No. 2 Arms Producer

In a Swedish think tank report, Russia has emerged as the world's second-largest arms producer after the United States. Russia has surpassed Britain, which had held second spot since 2002. Now, Russia became Europe's No. 1 arms maker.



The report publishing organization, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, has reported in its annual report that on the world's top 100 largest armaments groups that the combined arms sales of Russian companies was \$37.7 billion in 2017. In comparison to last year, it is 8.5 percent rise.

Though, this report includes both domestic and foreign sales around the globe, but did not include Chinese companies because of unreliable statistics.

4. Global Economic Growth in 2018 Unchanged

As per the Monthly Oil Market Report that was published by Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), global economic growth remains at 3.7 per cent for 2018 whereas for 2019, it is forecasted as 3.5 per cent.



The growth in the United States and in the Euro-zone also remained unchanged, i.e. standing at 2.9 percent and 1.9 percent for the current year 2018, and 2.6 percent and 1.7 percent for the year 2019 respectively.

However, OPEC report has slightly revised its forecast for Japan; so, as per the revised report, 1.0% decreased in 2018; however, the forecast for the year 2019 remains unchanged i.e. 1.1 percent.

5. In the List of World's Fastest-Growing Cities, India Swiped All Top 10

As per the report of Oxford Economics, the top 10 fastest-growing cities for economic growth in the world, Indian cities set to dominate over the next two decades.



Surat, which is a diamond processing and trading center in the western state of Gujarat, will be the fastest expansion through 2035 and hence ranked one. As per the report, by 2030, India will have some 25 million more financial and business services jobs. As a result of this rapid economic development, not only poverty will be reduced, but prosperity will also be high.

Following table illustrates the name of all the top ten fastest growing cities for next two decades (all will be in India):

Rank	City	Ave. Growth Rate	Country
10	Vijayawada	8.16%	India
9	Chennai	8.17%	India
8	Tiruchirappalli	8.29%	India
7	Rajkot	8.33%	India
6	Tiruppur	8.36%	India
5	Nagpur	8.41%	India
4	Hyderabad	8.47%	India
3	Bengaluru	8.50%	India
2	Agra	8.58%	India
1	Surat	9.17%	India

6. India Tops in Road Deaths

In terms of number of road fatalities across the world, India is ranked 1. As per the report published by the Global Status Report on Road Safety, India reported about 1.51 lakh road deaths in 2016. However, the toll on road deaths increased from 1.25 million to 1.35 million globally merely in the period of three years.



The World Health Organization (WHO) report says that the deaths because of road accidents is the leading cause of deaths especially for the children and young adults ranging between 5 and 29 years.

Report further said that there was no decrease in the deaths caused by road accident in any low income country between the period 2013 and 2016. However, in the middle and high income countries, road casualties reduced in the last three years.

Appointments

1. Raninder Singh - First Indian To Be Elected ISSF Vice-President

Raninder Singh has become the first Indian to be elected as the vice-president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). He will be one of the four vice-presidents of the organization.

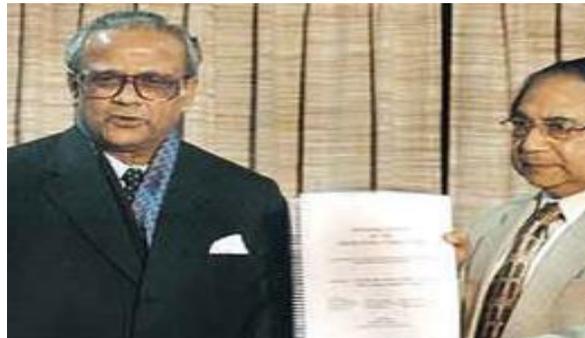
The 51-year old Mr. Singh currently heads the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI). Besides, Mr. Singh has recently been also awarded the ISSF diploma of honour gold medal at the general assembly. On this occasion, he has been accorded the diploma and medal by the outgoing as well as the longest serving president of the ISSF, Olegario Vazquez Rana. Mr. Rana served for 38 years.



2. U C Dhyani, Former HC Judge, Will Monitor Ganga Cleaning

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has appointed former Uttarakhand High Court judge, Justice U C Dhyani, as head of the three-member committee to monitor rejuvenation work of the Ganga river.

Besides, the NGT also directed the law enforcing agencies to implement the Supreme Court's order. In the order, it is directed that every cinema hall and video parlors should have at least two slides of messages on environment in each show along with the information.



3. Shamila Batoh First Female Top Prosecutor

President Cyril Ramaphosa named Shamila Batoh, a respected female lawyer to head South Africa's prosecuting authority. Ms. Batohi, the first female to occupy this role, is a former prosecutions chief in KwaZulu-Natal province. Besides, she has served as the senior adviser to the prosecutor at the International Criminal Court (ICC) since 2009.



On this occasion, Mr. Ramaphosa says – *"I am confident that the advocate possesses all the attributes of a capable National Director of Public Prosecutions... she has shown herself to be a fit and proper person."*

4. Shaktikanta Das Appointed as 25th Governor of RBI

Shaktikanta Das is appointed as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). 61-year-old Mr. Das is a former economic affairs secretary at the Finance Ministry.



He took the charge at the Reserve Bank of India for a three-year term. His appointment is made on an urgent basis, as the predecessor Governor Mr. Urjit Patel has resigned in the middle of his term by stating personal reasons.

Mr. Das is a retired 1980 batch Indian Administrative Service officer of Tamil Nadu cadre. He was earlier a member of the Fifteenth Finance Commission of India. Besides, during his career as an IAS officer, Das served in various capacities for India as well as Tamil Nadu governments, including Revenue Secretary of India, Economic Affairs Secretary of India, Fertilizers Secretary of India, etc.

5. Rajiv Mehrishi Appointed as Vice-Chair of UN Panel of Auditors

Rajiv Mehrishi, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, has been appointed as the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors.



The United Nations Panel of Auditors consists of External Auditors of the United Nations and its agencies. The UN panel unanimously elected Mr. Mehrishi, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India as the Vice Chair of the panel for the year 2019.

At present, the UN panel consists of 11 countries namely:

- India,
- Germany,
- Chile,
- Canada,
- France,
- Italy,
- Philippines,
- Ghana,
- Indonesia,
- Switzerland, and
- United Kingdom.

Currently, the UN panel is chaired by the Comptroller and Auditor General of the United Kingdom.

6. K. Chandrashekhara Rao Sworn in As Telangana CM For Second Term

K. Chandrashekhara Rao, the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) president, has sworn in as the Chief Minister of Telangana for the second term. Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan has administered the oath of office.



64-year-old TRS president, Mr. Rao first time became chief minister of Telangana state in the year 2014. However, before the completion of his five-year term, he resigned and demanded early elections. As result of this, assembly elections were held a few months earlier than scheduled and again Mr. Rao won with full majority.

7. BP Singh Appointed as FTII Chairman

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has appointed TV producer BP Singh as the President of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) and chairman of its Governing Council.



Mr. Singh's appointment is confirmed immediately after the resignation of actor Anupam Kher who was the Chairman of FTII.

Mr. Kher gave his resignation by sighting his personal 'international commitments.' Because of his maximum time in abroad, he was not able to exercise his job in India.

Mr. Singh did a cinematography specialization course from the institute in the early 1970s and later became producer-director of popular TV serial CID. CID, recently completed a record of 21 years' unbroken run on SONY TV.

8. Barupal Appointed as the Ambassador of India to the Republic of Guinea

Presently working as the Consul General of India, Zanzibar, T.C. Barupal, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Guinea. An Indian Foreign Service officer, Mr. Barupal has done his masters in History from University of Rajasthan.



Besides, he has also done professional courses from Foreign Service Institute and also completed his executive Education programs from Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

9. Harsh Vardhan Shringla Appointed as the Next Ambassador of India to the US

Currently working as the High Commissioner to the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. Harsh Vardhan Shringla has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United States of America.



Mr. Shringla, who will succeed Navtej Sarna, is a 1984-batch Indian Foreign Service diplomat. Senior diplomat Riva Ganguly Das, at present working as Director General of Indian Council for Cultural Relations, has been appointed as new High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

Awards

1. Indian Navy Pilots Vijay Varma and P Rajkumar Won 'Asian of the Year' Award

Indian Navy Pilots Commander Vijay Varma and Captain P. Rajkumar have been awarded "Asian of the Year" award, jointly. They have been given this award for their heroic rescue work and the courageous conduct in the face of natural calamity that they did during the Kerala floods.



The Singapore Press Holdings Ltd, the English-language flagship (and most read newspaper) in Singapore, announced this award.

Varma and Rajkumar had been rescued a number of people during the Kerala floods which wrecked the state in the months of July and August 2018. Both of them were addressed for rescuing people by lifting them up from rooftops and elsewhere in Kochi. Mr. Rajkumar surprisingly, lift a wheel-chair bound pregnant woman.

2. Abhinav Bindra Received ISSF's Highest Honor

Former World and Olympic champion (2008 Olympics gold-medalist) Abhinav Bindra has been given the Blue Cross and Diploma of Honour in appreciation of "exceptional services" to the sport.

The Blue Cross is the highest recognition that was conferred by the parent body of international shooting, the ISSF. 36-year old Mr. Bindra is the first Indian who has been received the Blue Cross honor.



This honor is given for outstanding contribution to the sport of shooting.

Major Achievements of Mr. Bindra

- Won Olympic Gold Medal in 2008;
- Won World Championship Gold in 2006;
- Won 7 Commonwealth Games medals; and
- Won 3 Asian Games medals;

Major Honors/Awards

- Received Arjuna award in 2000;
- Received Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award in 2001;
- Padma Bhushan in 2009; and
- Blue Cross award in 2018.

3. Kohli Honoured by Bradman Museum

The captain of Indian Cricket team, Mr. Virat Kohli, has received a special honor as a signed jersey that he donated after scoring his maiden hundred in the fourth Test at the SCG during India's tour of Australia in 2014-15 has been placed next to Sachin Tendulkar's portrait at the Bradman Museum.



The Bradman Museum exclusively designed to celebrate Sir Don Bradman's contributions to world cricket. Besides, the museum honors the greatest achievers of the cricket. Only a few special Indian cricketers such as the legendary Kapil Dev and Tendulkar have a memento celebrating their achievements placed at this iconic museum. The Museum is also known as 'The Home of Cricket Memories.'

4. Malala Yousafzai Honored by Harvard University

Harvard University has honored the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai for her work promoting girls' education. Harvard's Kennedy School awarded her 2018 Gleitsman Award.

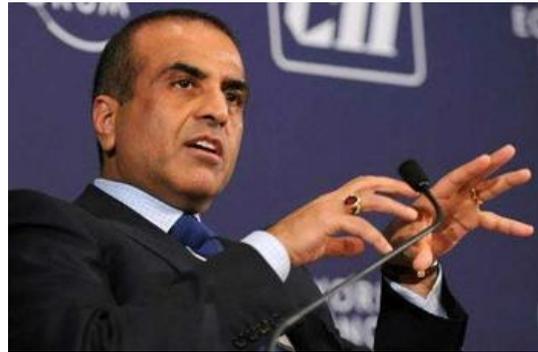


In 2014, Yousafzai became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She had been given this award for her global work supporting schooling for all children. When she was teen in her native country Pakistan, Taliban attempted to kill her; however, she somehow survived. Later, she set up the non-profit Malala Fund to support her work.

5. Sunil Mittal Honored Doctorate by ESCP biz School

The founder and chairman of Bharti Enterprises, Sunil Bharti Mittal, has been honored with honorary doctorate namely 'Doctor Honoris Causa' by ESCP Europe Business School.

He was awarded this honor for his innovative entrepreneurship and contribution towards philanthropy in the field of education.



In 200 years' history, Mr. Mittal is the first Indian who has been honored with this award in ESCP Europe. Founded in 1819, ESCP Europe is the world's first business school. It was founded by a group of economic scholars and businessmen.

6. Kanimozhi Won Best Woman Parliamentarian Award

The DMK Member of Parliament Kanimozhi has won the Best Woman Parliamentarian (Rajya Sabha) award - 2018. Murali Manohar Joshi, the head of jury, selected her for the award and the award is presented to Ms Kanimozhi by Vice-President Mr. Venkaiah Naidu. The award was set up by Lokmat newspaper in 2018.



Muthuvel Karunanidhi Kanimozhi is an Indian politician, poet and journalist. She is a Member of Parliament, representing Tamil Nadu in the Rajya Sabha. She is the daughter of the former chief minister of Tamil Nadu Karunanidhi.

7. Manipur Government Honored Mary Kom with 'Meethoileima' Title

The Manipur Government has honored MC Mary Kom with the title of "Meethoileima" for her archetypal achievement in the field of boxing. The title "Meethoileima" can be roughly translated as "great or exceptional lady."

Ms. Kom is the six times World Women Boxing Champion and Olympic medalist. Last month, Ms. Kom created history in women's boxing, as she won her sixth world championship gold at the 10th World Women's Boxing Championship that held in New Delhi.



8. 15-year-old Odisha Boy Won National Bravery Award

Situ Malik, a fifteen-year-old boy from Kendrapara district won the National Bravery Award by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He won this award for exhibiting exemplary courage in saving his uncle from a crocodile attack.



While keeping a watch on their harvested paddy crop, a crocodile attacked on Binod Malik, but Situ who was also present there saved his paternal uncle from the jaws of an estuarine crocodile.

Situ is a Class-10 student of Basudebpur Vidyapitha at Kandira village. He will receive the coveted award from the Prime Minister on January 23, 2019. The award is instituted by Indian Council for Child Welfare.

9. Jharkhand Received "Krishi Karman" Award

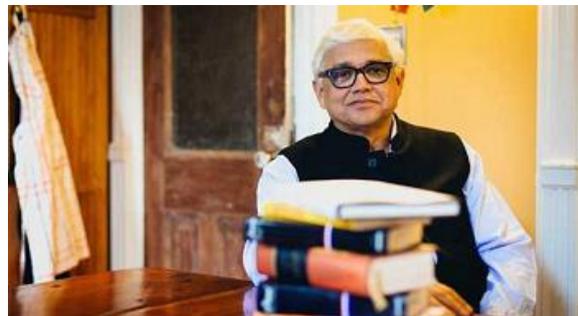
As per the report, the State Jharkhand will receive "Krishi Karman" award in the rice category. The award that carries a cash prize of Rs 2 crore and a citation will be given in February 2019.



Besides, two progressive farmers, i.e. one male and one female, would also be given 'Agriculture Minister's Krishi Karman Award. Each farmer will be given a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh and citation. Raghubar Das, the Chief Minister of State (Jharkhand) congratulated the state agriculture department and the farmers for such honors.

10. Amitav Ghosh Honored with Jnanpith Award

Well known English writer Amitav Ghosh has been honored Jnanpith Award of 2018. Jnanpith award is a literary award that is given to an author for "outstanding contribution towards literature." Born in Kolkata, West Bengal in 1956, the 62-year-old author lives in New York City, USA with his wife Deborah Baker.



Mr. Ghosh is one of the most prominent contemporary Indian writers and he is known for a series of novels.

Some of his popular novels are - Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, and the Ibis Trilogy -- Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke and Flood of Fire -- chronicling the opium trade between India and China run by the East India Company.

Persons in News

1. Salome Zurbashvili Elected as the First Woman President of Georgia

Salome Zurbashvili finally has won Georgia's presidential election and became the first woman president of this country. The French-born ex-diplomat had received 59% of the vote; whereas her rival Grigol Vashadze won only 40%.



66 years old Ms Zurbashvili was born in Paris after her parents fled Georgia in 1921 following its annexation by Soviet forces.

She began her career in the French foreign service and in 2003, she was posted as ambassador to the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. Later, she gave up her post and the then-president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, appointed her as the foreign minister.

2. López Obrador Sworn in As First Leftist President of Mexico

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been elected as the first leftist president in Mexico in over 70 years of history. Mr. Obrador promised a peaceful and orderly transition.



Mr. Obrador won a crushing victory in the July 1 elections; however, his two previous attempt was unsuccessful. Now, he became the country's first president since the Mexican Revolution to rise to prominence as a protest leader.

The country's 65-year-old new leader, Mr. Obrador has moved the presidential office fully back to the centuries-old National Palace that lines one side of the square. However, he refused to live at the luxurious, heavily guard presidential residence rather preferred to reside at his private home.

3. RBI Governor Urjit Patel Resigned

Because of some personal reason, Urjit Patel, has resigned from the post of the Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). However, his resignation came amidst the backdrop of increasing tensions between the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India.



Mr. Patel took over as the 24th Governor of the RBI on 5th September, 2016. Because of his early retirement (through resignation) made him the shortest serving Governor of RBI since 1992.

Another matter of fact is, in the recent months, there was no synchronization between Government of India and the RBI, they were at loggerheads. RBI has been more aggressive towards the default lenders. Most likely, because of these reasons, there is drop in economy growth rate.

4. Four Indians Made Space in World's 100 Most Powerful Women, 2018

The 15th list in reference to the ranking of the 'World's 100 most powerful women, 2018, is released. The four Indian women namely Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Kiran Muzumdar Shaw, Shobhana Bhartia, and Priyanka Chopra have secured their places in top 100 most powerful women.



Roshni Nadar Malhotra

37 years old, Roshni Nadar Malhotra, has placed at 51st, which is the top among all four Indian women. She is the CEO at the HCL Technologies and responsible for all strategic decisions for the 8.1 billion enterprise. Major operating areas of HCL Technologies are technology, infosystems, and healthcare.

In addition to this, Roshni Nadar Malhotra also acts as the trustee to the Shiv Nadar Foundation. The major focus of Shiv Nadar Foundation is in education, which has set up some of the top colleges and schools in India.

Kiran Muzumdar Shaw

Kiran Muzumdar has placed at 60th, which is second highest rank among four Indian women. She is India's richest self-made woman. She has set up India's largest biopharmaceutical firm in 1978.



Her style of working is different as she does not believe in following the tradition to run her business rather she has invested much money in Research and Development based biotech firm.

Besides, she also runs Mazumdar Shaw medical Center, with an objective is to provide sustainable and affordable cancer care.

Shobhana Bhartia

Shobhana Bhartia has bagged the 88th rank, which is the third highest among all four Indian women. Shobhana Bhartia is the Chairperson and Managing Director of HT Media.

After launching her business weekly MintAsia in Singapore, 2013, she bought Webitude, a social and digital media outfit.



Priyanka Chopra

The former Miss World and actress and producer, Priyanka Chopra is placed at 94th position, which is the last among all four Indian women. Priyanka Chopra is one of the most successful Bollywood actors. She, later, also made her US big screen debut in 2017.

Priyanka also has launched her own production company namely Purple Pebble Pictures with the objective to promote regional filmmakers. Recently, she married an American musician and actor Nick Jonas.



Besides, following women are the top ten in the list of 100 most powerful women - 2018:

1. **Angela Merkel** - She is a politician and chancellor of Germany.
2. **Theresa May** - She is a politician and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.
3. **Christine Lagarde** – She is a French lawyer and politician who is currently serving as the Managing Director and Chairwoman of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
4. **Mary Barra** – She is American business woman and Chairwoman and CEO of General Motors Company.
5. **Abigail Pierrepont Johnson** – She is an American businesswoman and since 2014, she is president and Chief Executive Officer of US investment firm Fidelity Investments, and chairman of its international sister company Fidelity International.
6. **Melinda Ann Gates** – She is an American philanthropist. She is a former Microsoft employee and co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Besides, she is the winner of Padma Bhushan.

7. **Susan Diane Wojcicki** – She is an American technology executive. She has been serving as the CEO of YouTube since February 2014.
8. **Ana Patricia Botin** – She is a Spanish banker. In 2014, she was appointed as the Executive Chairman of Santander Group.
9. **Marillyn Adams Hewson** – She is an American and the Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Lockheed Martin.
10. **Ginni Rometty** – She is an American business executive. She is the current chair, president, and CEO of IBM, and the first woman to head the company.

5. Mexican Beauty Vanessa Ponce de Leon Crowned Miss World 2018

The Mexican beauty Vanessa Ponce de Leon of Mexico won the Miss World 2018 title. She is crowned by outgoing queen Manushi Chhillar (the Indian beauty) in the coastal city of Sanya, China. Vanessa won the title among 117 other hopefuls from all around the world.



She is the first Mexican queen to have won the title Miss World. Nicolene Limsnukan of Thailand was named first runner-up. The 26-year-old beauty completed her degree in International Business. Currently, she is on the board of directors of a rehab centre for girls and volunteers for 'Migrantes en el Camino'.

6. Philippino Beauty Catriona Elisa Gray Crowned Miss Universe 2018

Catriona Elisa Gray of Philippines has been crowned as Miss Universe 2018 at a gala ceremony. She was crowned by 2017 Miss Universe Demi Leigh Nel-Peters, who comes from South Africa.



The beauties from South Africa namely Tamaryn Green and Venezuela namely Sthefany Guterrez have secured the first runner-up and second runner-up spots respectively.

7. Former US President Barack Obama Named as Most Admired Man

As per the report of Gallup survey, the former US President Barack Obama has been named as the most admired man in America. He is named so in the 11th surprising year in a row. However, the current President, Donald Trump has been ranked 2nd for the fourth consecutive year.



Besides, the former first lady and wife of former President Barack Obama, Michelle Obama named as most admired woman in the country. She has replaced Hillary Clinton.

Surprisingly, in the last 17 years, it was the first time Clinton did not make place at the top in the list.

Books & Authors

1. The Book: 'Blue Waters Ahoy' Released

Vice Admiral Anup Singh, who retired as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command in 2011 has authored the book 'Blue Waters Ahoy', which is released by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of the Naval Staff. The book narrates the Indian Navy's History from 2001 to 2010.



Mr. Ramnath Kovind, the President of India and the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces along with a large number of dignitaries from both India and abroad were present at the function.

2. The Book: "Architecture of Justice: A Pictorial Walk-through the Supreme Courts and High Courts of India" Released

The book authored by father-son duo Vinay Thakur and Amogh Thakur and titled as "Architecture of Justice: A pictorial walk-through of the Supreme Court and High courts of India" was released by the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi.



The book, a sequel to Mr. Vinay's earlier book namely "The Courts of India: Past to Present" (2016), is not only about the photographs, but rather is complete with interesting trivia and anecdotes about the monumental buildings.

On this event, Justice SA Bobde, the head of the SC Editorial Committee that compiled 'The Courts of India: Past to Present' says – "It is the only book, which has photographs of all the High Courts in the country and Vinay is the only man I think who has seen all the High Courts."

3. The Book: 'Modiraj Main Kisan, Double Aamad Ya Double Afat' Released

The book titled as 'Modiraj Main Kisan, Double Aamad Ya Double Afat,' which is authored by Swaraj India President Yogendra Yadav released. The book describes, how Modi government's policies have led to a drop in farmers' income and caused rural distress across the country.



The book is released by agricultural economist Ashok Gulati and the Punjab State Farmers' and Farm Workers' Commission Chairman Ajay Vir Jakhar.

4. The Books: “The Republican Ethic” & “Loktantra Ke Swar” Released by Vice-President

Mr. M. Venkaiah Naidu, the Vice President of India, has released the books namely “The Republican Ethic” in English and “*Loktantra Ke Swar*” in Hindi in a function that held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.



The book is the compilation of selected speeches of the President, Mr. Ram Nath Kovind that he gave in the first year of assuming the office. ‘The Republican Ethic’ (written in English) has a collection of 95 select speeches out of the total 243 speeches that he gave in the first year as the President of India.

In this book, the speeches are categorized into eight subgroups namely:

- 1) Addressing the Nation,
- 2) Diversity of India,
- 3) Window to the world,
- 4) Educating India,
- 5) Equipping India,
- 6) Dharma of public service,
- 7) Honoring our sentinels, and
- 8) Spirit of the Law & Acknowledging excellence.

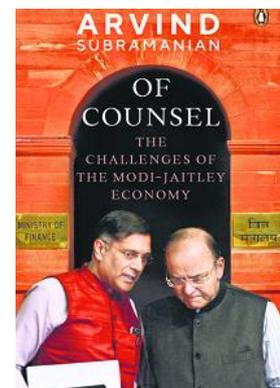
On the other hand, the second book “*Loktantra ke Swar*” – is the collection of 109 speeches in Hindi. It describes about different layers and levels of multifaceted largest democracy in the world (i.e. India).

5. The Book: ‘Of Counsel — The Challenges of the Modi-Jaitley Economy’ Released

Written by Subramanian, the book titled as ‘Of Counsel – The Challenges of the Modi-Jaitley Economy’ has been published.

The book provides the inside details of author’s rollercoaster journey as the Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India. Mr. Subramanian served as the chief economic advisor from 2014 to 2018.

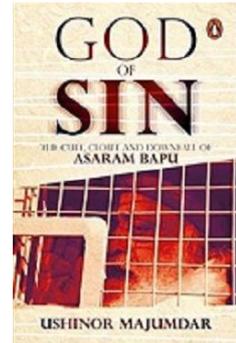
So, the book describes author’s part-memoir, part-analytical writings, truthfully illustrates the various triumphs and challenges of policymaking.



6. The Book - “God of Sin: The Cult, The Clout and Downfall of Asaram Bapu” Released

The book titled as “God of Sin: The Cult, The Clout and Downfall of Asaram Bapu,” is released on December 16, 2018 after a controversy. The book was restrained to publish but Chandigarh court refused to ban this book.

A plea was filed seeking a permanent injunction against the publication of this book. However, after court’s approval, the book was published by Penguin Random. The book narrates the story about Asaram’s journey to spiritual godhood, his fall from grace and the long and difficult road to bring him to justice.



7. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh Released His Book “Changing India”

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has released his book titled as ‘Changing India.’ The book is published in five volumes and it narrates Mr. Singh’s private and public life in chronology. The book also emphasizes the economic liberalization and Mr. Singh’s tenure in UPA Government.



The book ‘Changing India’ that is published in five volumes have different titles for each volume. The title of each volume is given as:

- First Volume - India's Export Trends and the Prospects for Self-Sustained Growth;
- Second Volume - Thoughts on Trade and Development;
- Third Volume - The International Economic Order and the Quest for Equity in Development;
- Fourth Volume - Economic Reforms: 1991 and Beyond; and
- Fifth Volume - 'The Prime Minister Speaks' – it is further published in two parts and deals with his prime ministerial years.

Deaths

1. Former President George H.W. Bush Died

Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush, has died at the age of 94. He was the 41st President of the United States. He served White House from 1989 to 1993. Mr. Bush is known for Cold War and routing out Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army.



He was the father of former President George W. Bush (Junior), who served two terms as the President of the United States i.e. from 2001 to 2008. The second son of Senior Bush John Ellis "Jeb" Bush is also an American politician. He served as the 43rd Governor of Florida state for the period 1999 to 2007.

2. Stan Lee Died Because of Cardiac Arrest

Comic-book writer and Marvel comics creator Stan Lee has died because of cardiac arrest brought on by respiratory and congestive heart failure. He was 95 years old.



He is largely known for co-creating superhero characters namely Spider-Man, Iron Man and The Hulk.

3. Singer Mohammed Aziz Passes Away

Veteran singer Mohammed Aziz has died because of cardiac arrest. He was 64 years old.



Mohammed Aziz has sung more than 20,000 songs in different languages including Bollywood song (i.e. in Hindi), Bengali, and Odia song. Besides, he has also recorded several devotional Bhajans and Sufi songs.

He made his film debut with a Bengali film namely *Jyoti*. Later he got a break in Bollywood when music director Anu Malik asked him to sing the song *Mard Taangewala* for Amitabh Bachchan's for the movie *Mard*.

4. The Agriculturalist Jayaraman Passes Away

The eminent agriculturalist Jayaraman has died in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was the pioneer of the protection and propagation of indigenous paddy varieties in Tamil Nadu.



Jayaraman has been credited for his work of documenting and protecting more than 170 paddy varieties. His industrious work in the field of protecting the gene prototypes of indigenous paddy varieties facilitated him a state award in 2011 and the National Award in the year 2015.

5. Senior Congress MP Maulana Asrar-ul-Haque Qasmi Passes Away

Maulana Asrar-ul-Haque Qasmi, the noted Islamic scholar and Congress Member of Parliament (Lok Sabha), has passed away because of heart attack. He was 76-year old.



Mr. Qasmi was the MP from Bihar's Kishanganj constituency. First time, he was elected in 2009 general elections and second time, he again won in 2014 general elections. Mr. Qasmi was a true leader and social worker who had immense popularity in his constituency.

6. Senior Kerala Congress Leader CN Balakrishnan Passes Away

Senior Kerala Congress leader and former Kerala Minister C.N. Balakrishnan has died in Kochi, Kerala because of pneumonia. He was 87-year old. It was in 2011, when Balakrishnan first contested the polls and became the Minister of Co-operation, Khadi and village industries in the Oommen Chandy's cabinet.

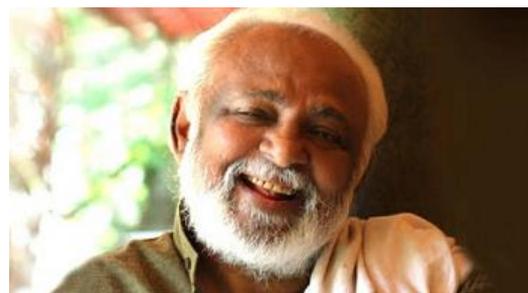


He has contested in the polls from the Wadakkanchery constituency. CN Balakrishnan was also the front ranking volunteer and leader of the library movement in Kerala state.

7. Thoppil Ajayan, National Award Winning Director Passes Away

Thoppil Ajayan, the National award winning Malayalam film director, has died because of the severe illness. He was 66 years old.

He won the laurels for his only feature film "Perumthachan" (The Master Carpenter). The movie also received Ajayan the Indira Gandhi Award for Best Debut Film of a Director and Kerala State Film Award for Best Debut



Director in the year 1990. Besides, the movie was also nominated for the Golden Leopard award at the Locarno International Film Festival in 1992.

8. Distinguished Classical Singer Pandit Arun Bhaduri Passes Away

Legendary classical singer Pandit Arun Bhaduri has passed away at a city hospital because of prolonged illness. He was 75 years old and suffering from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other respiratory ailments.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed her grief over the demise of Pandit Bhaduri. He was a master of Bengali songs and Bhajans. He was guru at the State Sangeet Academy. In 2014, he had received 'Banga Bibhusan Award.'



9. Yoga Exponent Geeta Iyengar Passes Away

Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar, a noted exponent of the yogic science in her own right, has passed away at her residence. She was 74 years old. Geeta Iyengar was the eldest daughter of legendary Yoga guru, B.K.S. Iyengar.

Ms. Iyengar began imbibing the precepts of yoga from her father at a tender age. She was running the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI) along with her brother Prashant. Her famous book 'Yoga: A gem for women' became the primer for women across the world. This book was translated into half-a-dozen European languages.



Places in News

1. Gitega – The New Capital of Burundi

In an announcement, Burundi declared that its small central city namely Gitega as the country's new political capital. The government also announced that the current capital namely Bujumbura, located on the north-eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, would in future function solely as the country's economic centre.

Bujumbura, at present, is considered as an opposition stronghold where the president spends a lesser time.



2. London – The Best City in the World

The capital of United Kingdom has been named as the best city in the world. London ranked first by considering the index that measures visitor and resident experiences in the subcategories of Shopping, Culinary, Nightlife and Culture, where the city placed no lower than third, globally.

London's magnetism (first rank) is positively centered around visitors streaming into the city in record volumes i.e. 19.8 million in the year 2017. This figure was almost a million more than the record set the previous year.



The tourist boom drove strong sales for British luxury brands such as Burberry, which helped propel Bond Street in London into the top three of the world's most expensive store locations, overtaking Paris' Champs-Élysées. Tourists, predominantly from other European countries, from the United States and from China, visit city to buy luxury designer brands for prices much lower than they can get at their home shops.

1. Minjee Lee Won Greg Norman Medal

Minjee Lee, ranked as 6 in the world, has won the most prestigious individual honor in Australian golf, the Greg Norman Medal. Lee has become the only third person to win this award since its inception (i.e. in 2015). Other two are Jason Day and Marc Leishman.

Lee beat both to win this year's honor following a season in which she showed her talents around the globe. Lee has been awarded this prestigious medal during a gala ceremony at Royal Pines on Queensland's Gold Coast. It was the venue for this year's Australian PGA.

On this occasion Lee says – *"I'm humbled to have won such a prestigious award alongside two amazing golfers already in Marc and Jason."*



2. Messi Surpassed Cristiano Ronaldo

Lionel Messi, the Barcelona striker, has overtaken Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal and recovered the record of being the top goal scorer in the Champion League for one club.

In an another champions league match, Paris Saint Germain (PSG), Neymar beaten former Real Madrid midfielder Kaka and became Brazil's highest goal scorer in the European League.



3. Ridhima Won Hero Women's Pro Golf Title

Ridhima Dilawari won her maiden professional title by her five-shot win in the 17th Leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour held at the Noida Golf Course, Uttar Pradesh. It was her third start on the domestic Tour. Besides, Ridhima has also played at the Hero Women's Indian Open on the Ladies European Tour.

Ridhima, 20-year-old girl took a year off after completing her second year at Columbia University, New York, US to represent India at the Asian Games, and then she turned pro.



4. Bhavani Devi Won Gold in Senior Commonwealth Championship

India athlete Bhavani Devi has won a gold medal in the Sabre event at the Senior Commonwealth Fencing Championship 2018. The Championship was held in Canberra, Australia. With this title, Bhavani has become the first Indian who won gold at the Commonwealth Championship.



The Chennai-born Bhavani Devi defeated England's Emily Ruaux by 15-12 in the final. In the semi-final, she had defeated Catriona Thomson (Scotland). Besides, last year, she had won gold at the World Cup Satellite Tournament held in Reykjavik, Iceland.

5. Ullas Narayan Won First International Medal in Ultra Running

Ullas Narayan has won the third position at the 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championships. The Championship was held at Taipei, Taiwan.



Ullas Narayan has completed 250 Km closely behind Japan's Yoshihiko Ishikawa (253 Km) and Nobuyuki Takahashi (252 Km). The Indian Men namely Ullas (completed 250 Km), Sunil Sharma (completed 202 Km) and LL Meena (completed 192 Km) won the team third position with their combined distance of 644 Km.

6. Ethiopian Atlawim Debebe Won Pune International Marathon

Atlawim Debebe of Ethiopia has won the Full Marathon with the timing of 2 hours 17 minutes 17 seconds. The second rank was secured by Teshome Getachew and the third rank was secured by Bekele Asefa. All these three are from Ethiopia.



In women's Full Marathon, the Kenyan girl Pascalia Chepkogei stood first with the timing of 2 hour 50 minutes 27 seconds. However, the second and third positions are secured by Belew Mekonnen and Fekede Tilahun respectively. Both are from Ethiopia.

Likewise, the 33rd year of Pune International Marathon was celebrated as the Ethiopian show.

7. Delhi Daredevils Renamed as Delhi Capitals

Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Delhi Daredevils has been renamed as Delhi Capitals. The announcement was made in a function held in the capital by owners GMR Group and JSW Sports.

Co-owners Parth Jindal who represents JSW Sport, and Kiran Kumar Grandhi of GMR, announced the new name of the team. However, the team has retained the old red and blue color in the new team logo.



8. Gautam Gambhir Announced His Retirement

Gautam Gambhir, the Indian cricketer, has announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. Gambhir who had played a key role and made India win the World T20 in 2007 and the 2011 World Cup tweeted his retirement.

Since making his international debut in 2003 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, Gambhir has played 147 ODIs, 58 Tests, and 37 T20s for India. His career's best ranking was – he ranked No.1 in Tests in 2009, two years later he was ranked No.1 T20I batsman, and in ODIs, Gambhir attained his career-best 8th rank.



9. Budapest to Host 2023 World Championships

As per the latest report, Budapest (capital of Hungary) will host the 2023 athletics world championships. Such announcement is made by the governing body IAAF.

Sebastian Coe, the president of International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) said that Hungary boasted both athletic tradition and experience in organizing world-class sports events. Likewise, Budapest became the first city named under a new bidding process.



10. Yasir Shah - The Fastest Bowler to Complete 200 Test Wickets

The Pakistani leg-spinner, Yasir Shah, has become the fastest bowler who took 200 wickets. He has taken his 200th wicket in his third test against New Zealand.

The leg-spinner, Shah has reached this milestone in his (total) 33rd Test; it is three match less than Australia leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett, who previously held the record. Likewise, 32 years old Shah beat the 82-year-old record.



Highlights of Fastest (to) 200 Test wickets:

Name of the Bowler	No. of Tests Played
Yasir Shah (Pakistan)	33*
Clarrie Grimmett (Australia)	36
Ravichandran Ashwin (India)	37
Dennis Lillee (Australia)	38
Waqar Younis (Pakistan)	38

11. Anushka, Chaitanya Won Youngest Golf Championship At US Kids Golf

Anushka Gupta and Chaitanya Gupta won championship in under-7 girls and boys competition respectively at the US Kids Golf India Tour. The championship held at Gurugram, Haryana.

As many as 71 participants across 13 categories participated at the Jack Nicklaus designed Classic Golf & Country Club. Winners in other categories were:



- Lavanya Gupta in Girls 10-11 years,
- Ragini Navet in Girls 12-14 years,
- Khushi Dawar in Girls 15-18 years,
- Sohang Har Kantor in Boys 8 years,
- Bhavesh Nirwan in Boys 9 years,
- Udai Aditya Middha in Boys 10 years,
- Kushagra Tokas in Boys 11 years,

- Vickram Baruah in Boys 12 years, and
- Aaryomaan Bose in Boys 15-18 years.

The US Kids Golf India Tour 2018-19 edition also carries ranking points. Therefore, with a participation in a minimum of four events out of the eight, the junior golfers will be able to gain qualification to participate in the US Kids World Championship, US Kids European Championships, and US Kids Teen World Championship.

12. Virat Kohli Sets Test Records

With the victory over Australia in the opening Test match at the Adelaide Oval (Australia), the Indian Cricket team captain Virat Kohli became the first Asian captain who won Tests in Australia, England, and South Africa.



Former Indian Cricket team captain Rahul Dravid and MS Dhoni have won the Test matches (as captains) in South Africa and England respectively, but they did not win in Australia. Besides, Kohli also became the first Indian captain who won the opening Test of a series against Australia at Australian home ground.

The last Test that India won in Australia was at that held in Perth in 2008. Before that in 2003, India won a Test match in Adelaide under Sourav Ganguly's captaincy.

13. Virat Kohli Unstoppable – Setting Record in Series

In his 127 Test innings, the Indian Cricket captain, Virat Kohli completed his 25 centuries which is the second fastest Test century in the world after Sir Don Bradman. Sir, Don Bradman had completed his 25 Test centuries merely in 68 innings.



Sachin Tendulkar had completed his 25 Test centuries in 130 innings and Sunil Gavaskar had taken 138 innings. Now Kohli is the 21st batsman in the world who have made 25 or more centuries in Test cricket, and in India, he is the fourth.

14. PV Sindhu Won BWF World Tour Finals 2018

PV Sindhu has won the gold medal at BWF World Tour Finals 2018. In the women's single final match, she defeated Nozomi Okuhara of Japan by 21-19, 21-17. She had lost a World Championship final to Okuhara last year. But this year, she completed her dream at Guangzhou in China.



After the victory, Sindhu says –

"I feel really happy and I think I have no words because this is my first win in this year and every time I have been coming to the final and losing. This will be the most memorable this year because I think it was a good game and I'm really very proud. I think the year has ended on a beautiful note."

15. India Won 2 Tests in a Series on Australian Ground

India has defeated Australia by 137 runs in the third Test at Melbourne and took 2-1 lead in the four Test-match series. After 1977-78, it is first time that India have won two matches in a Test series on Australian home ground.



The highlights of match are –

First Inning – India made 443/7 and declared

First Inning – Australia all out on 151

Second Inning – India made 106/8 declared

Second Inning – Australia all out on 261.

Result – India won by 137 runs; and, lead the series by 2-1.

Important Days

1. 1 December 2018 – World AIDS Day

On 1 December, 2018, the World AIDS day was observed globally to express support for the people living with HIV, and also to commemorate those people who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Theme of this year was "Know Your Status."



This year was marked as the 30th anniversary of World AIDS Day, as the first World AIDS Day was initiated by World Health Organization (WHO) in 1988 with the objective of global health campaign.

Likewise, WHO aimed World AIDS Day 2018 to achieve the following objectives:

- Urge people to know their HIV infection status through testing, and to access HIV prevention, treatment and care services and
- Urge policy-makers to promote a "health for all" agenda for HIV and related health services, such as tuberculosis (TB), hepatitis and non-communicable diseases.

2. 1 December 2018 - BSF Celebrating 54th Raising Day

On 1 December 2018, the Border Security Force (BSF), the guards of Indian borders with Pakistani and Bangladeshi counterpart celebrated its 54th Raising Day.



Vice President as well as Home Minister have greeted all personnel of Border Security Force and their families on the occasion of raising day. In his tweet, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu, the Vice President said -

"I join the nation in thanking India's first line of defence for their service to the nation and I salute their courage, bravery, hard work and dedication."

3. 2 December 2018 - World Computer Literacy Day

On 2 December 2018, World Computer Literacy Day was observed with the objective to "create awareness and drive digital literacy in underserved communities worldwide". World Computer Literacy Day was first launched by Indian computer company NIIT. It was launched in the response of a research, which illustrated that the majority of computer users were men around the world. So, its emphasis is

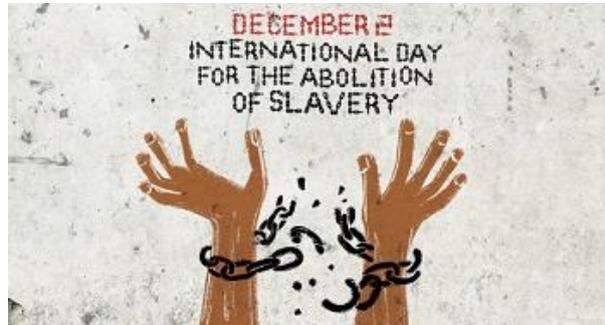


World Computer Literacy Day

to encourage the development of technological skills, specifically among women and children in India.

4. 2 December 2018 - International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

On 2 December 2018, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery observed globally. It is organized by the United Nations General Assembly. First time it was celebrated in 1986.



Its focus is to end all sorts of slavery including forced marriage, sexual exploitation, trafficking of persons, and recruitment of child labor.

As per the UN report following are the noticeable facts regarding the slavery:

- An estimated 40.3 million people are in modern slavery, including 24.9 in forced labor and 15.4 million in forced marriage.
- There are 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every 1,000 people in the world.
- 1 in 4 victims of modern slavery are children.
- Out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labor, 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture; 4.8 million people in forced sexual exploitation, and 4 million people in forced labor imposed by state authorities.
- Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labor, accounting for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors.

Source: United Nations Official Website

5. 3 December 2018 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities

On 3 December 2018, International Day of Persons with Disabilities was observed by the United Nations. Theme of 2018 was "empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." It is being observed since 1992, by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3.



The objective of celebrating such Day is to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, it also designed to increase awareness of gains to be derived through the integration of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

6. 4 December 2018 - The Navy Day in India

On 4 December 2018, Navy Day was celebrated in India in the memory of the launch of Operation Trident. The Operation Trident was launched during the Indo-Pak war in 1971. It was marked in reverence to those personnel who were martyred in the war.

In addition to this, on the eve of the Navy Day, the Navy also organized a Beating Retreat and Tattoo Ceremony at the Gateway of India, Mumbai.



7. 5 December 2018 – World Soil Day

On 5 December 2018, World Soil Day was observed with the objective to stop soil pollution. World Soil Day is celebrated on the 5th of December every year at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy - the regional offices and through national and local events.



Soil pollution is largely invisible and seems far away but everyone, everywhere is affected. As per the data, one third of our global soils are already degraded and we risk losing more due to various hidden dangers. With a growing population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, soil pollution is a worldwide problem. In fact, the soil pollution not only degrades the soil quality, but also poisons the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe.

8. 5 December 2018 - International Volunteer Day (IVD)

On 5 December 2018, International Volunteer Day was observed by the United Nations General Assembly. This year, IVD has been celebrated with focus on how volunteers can build resilient communities. It has been being celebrated as an international observance by the UN General Assembly since 1985.



It is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organizations to celebrate their efforts, with the objective to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities and various other stakeholders including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, government authorities, and the private sector.

9. 7 December 2018 - International Civil Aviation Day

On 7 December of every year, International Civil Aviation Day (ICAD) is celebrated globally by United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations General Assembly began celebrating International Civil Aviation Day globally since 7 December 1996.



For the period 2015-2018 inclusive the Council has selected the theme as:

"Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind."

Major Highlights

- The purpose of the ICAD is to recognize the importance of aviation in reference to international air travel and also to ensure the social and economic development of the world.
- It is also designed to generate and reinforce awareness worldwide and recognize the unique role of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
- To ensure harmonious global rapid transit network at the service of all mankind.

10. 10 December 2018 - Human Rights Day

On 10 December of year, Human Rights Day is celebrated globally by the United Nations. 10th of December is the day that United Nations General Assembly adopted in the year 1948 as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 10th December, 2018 was marked as the 70th anniversary of Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



This date was chosen to honor the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation, on 10 December 1948, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

(UDHR). It was the time when first global proclamation of human rights is accepted unanimously. It was one of the first major achievements of the newly constituted United Nations.

Major Highlights

- 10 December, 2018 was the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- The Human Rights document is one of the most celebrated documents that proclaims the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to by the virtue of a human being;
- The document does not discriminate anyone by any means such as race, color, religion, sex, language, political or based on any other personal opinion, nationals, or even social origin; and

- It is the most translated document in the world, available in more than 500 languages.

StandUp4HumanRights

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights empowers us all.
- Human rights are relevant to all of us, every day.
- Our shared humanity is rooted in these universal values.
- Equality, justice and freedom prevent violence and sustain peace.
- Whenever and wherever humanity's values are abandoned, we all are at greater risk.
- We need to stand up for our rights and those of others.

Source: it is taken from the Official website of the United Nations.

11. 12 December 2018 - Universal Health Coverage Day

On 12 December of every year, the Universal Health Coverage Day is celebrated globally. The day is promoted by the World Health Organization. The aim of Universal Health Coverage Day is - everyone, everywhere should have access to quality, affordable health care - as an essential priority for international development.



On 12 December 2017, the United Nations has proclaimed "12 December" as the International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day) by its resolution 72/138. The theme for the 2018 UHC Day is: "*Unite for Universal Health Coverage: Now is the Time for Collective Action.*"

12. 14 December 2018 - National Energy Conservation Day

On 14 December every year, National Energy Conservation Day is celebrated nationwide by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Government of India. The objective of such celebration is to drive mass awareness about the importance of energy efficiency and conservation.



In addition to this, BEE recognizes and encourages endeavors of those industries, which are sincerely making efforts to reduce the level of energy consumption. BEE honors them National Energy Conservation Awards. BEE also gives prizes to the national winners of the annual National Painting Competition on Energy Conservation.

13. 18 December 2018 - International Migrants Day

On 18 December of every year, International Migrants Day is celebrated by United Nations General Assembly. The theme of 2018 was 'Migration with Dignity.' On 18 December 1990, the General Assembly had first adopted a resolution on the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Later, in 2000, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to celebrate International Migrants Day on 18 December.



This day is celebrated in many countries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations across the world. It is celebrated through the dissemination of information on human rights and fundamental political freedoms of migrants. On this occasion people also share their experiences and the design actions to ensure the protection of migrants.

14. 18 December 2018 - Minorities Rights Day in India

On 18 December of every year, Minorities Rights Day is celebrated nationwide. by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Government of India. On this occasion, various seminars are organized to discuss the current status of the minorities. Besides, they also discuss how to uplift the group of minorities who are marginalized.



The day is celebrated with the objective to promote the actual and legal rights of Minority communities. The truth in India is - employment opportunities, educational upliftment and financial inclusion are the major areas wherein minorities are marginalized. On the other hand, for overall development of the country, it is mandatory to provide them proper opportunity with appropriate guidance and support.

15. 20 December 2018 - International Human Solidarity Day

On 20 December of every year, International **Human Solidarity Day** is celebrated by United Nations General Assembly. The objective of this celebration is to remind people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty.



By a resolution, the General Assembly, on 20 December 2002, established the World Solidarity Fund. In 2003, it was set up as a trust fund of the United Nations Development Programme. The major objectives

are to eradicate poverty and promote human and social development in developing countries, specifically among the poorest segments of their populations.

Speciality of International Human Solidarity Day is:

- a day to celebrate our unity in diversity;
- a day to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements;
- a day to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity;
- a day to encourage debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals including poverty eradication; and
- a day of action to encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication.

Source: taken from official website of United Nations.

Miscellaneous

1. The Projects/Plans/Policies/MoUs Approved by Cabinet Ministry in December 2018

Following are the important projects/plans/policies/MoUs those were approved by Government of India in the month of December:

- The central Cabinet approved Submission of India's Second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Submission of India's Second BUR is designed to fulfil the obligation of India to furnish information regarding implementation of the Convention, being a Party.
- The central Cabinet approved setting up of the National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) Bill, 2018.
- The central Cabinet approved setting up of the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2018.
- The central Cabinet has approved implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam Project, Punjab on river Ravi. For this, Centre will give assistance of Rs. 485.38 cr (for irrigation component) would be provided over five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23.
- The central Cabinet has approved the launching of National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS). It will be implemented by the Department of Science & Technology at a total outlay of Rs. 3660 crores for a period of five years.
- To strengthen the bilateral ties between Cuba and South Korea, the central Cabinet acquainted two Bilateral MoUs between India and Cuba, and India and Korea in the area of Biotechnology respectively.
- The central Cabinet has approved the proposal for Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012. The significant aspect of the amendment is to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children.
- The central Cabinet imparted of Framework Agreement between India and Sao Tome & Principe for Cooperation in the Exploration and Uses of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes.
- The central Cabinet has approved the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2018. It was last reviewed and issued in 2011.
- The central Cabinet has approved the *Gaganyaan* Programme with demonstration of Indian Human Spaceflight capability to low earth orbit. It is approved for a mission; duration is ranging from one orbital period to a maximum of seven days.
- The central Cabinet has acquainted of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU has been signed between the Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI), India and Commissariat a l energie atomique et aux energies alternatives

(CEA) - a French state-owned research entity and BlueStorage SAS - a French Company.

- The central Cabinet has signed of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Afghanistan on cooperation in the field of Human Resource Development.
- The central Cabinet has approved establishment of two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). The first one will set up at Madurai, Tamil Nadu at a cost of Rs 1,264 crore and the second will be set up at Bibinagar, Telangana at a cost of Rs 1,028 crore. These two AIIMS will be set up under the Pradhan MantriSwasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) scheme.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Joint Issue of Postage Stamps by India and South Africa on the theme "125th Year of Mahatma Gandhi's Pietermaritzburg Station Incident & Birth Centenary of Nelson Mandela".
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Australia for Cooperation in the Disability Sector.
- The central Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan for Environmental Cooperation.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United States of America (USA) in reference to Scientific and Technical Cooperation in the field of Earth Sciences.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and France in the field of energy efficiency / energy conservation.
- The central Cabinet has approved the Amendment of the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951.
- The central Cabinet has approved the Agriculture Export Policy, 2018 with the objective to double farmers' income by 2022.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Tajikistan for Cooperation on Peaceful uses of Space Technology i.e. for nation's Development.
- The central Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan for cooperation in the Postal field. The MoC is designed to improve postal services and cooperation in the postal field between these two countries.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Russia on Joint Activities under Human Spaceflight Programme.
- The central Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Zimbabwe for cooperation in the field of geology, mining and mineral resources.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Agreement between India and Uzbekistan on Cooperation in the exploration and uses of Outer Space for peaceful purposes.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Morocco for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

- The central Cabinet has been apprised of Agreement between India and Algeria on Cooperation in the field of Space Sciences, Technologies and Applications.
- The central Cabinet has been apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Armenia on joint issue of postage stamp.
- The central Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval on the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Japan in the field of Healthcare and Wellness.