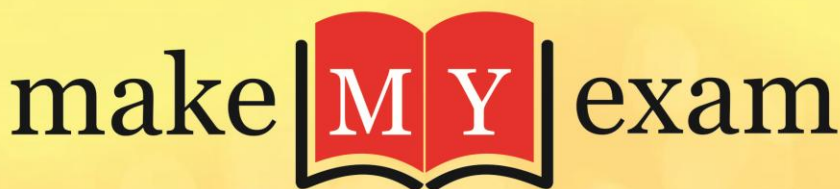


Monthly GK Capsule

January, 2019



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National News

1. PM Modi releases commemorative stamp on Maharaja Suheldev

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the commemorative stamp on Maharaja Suheldev and described him as a brave warrior.
- ✦ “Maharaja Suheldev is among those bravehearts who had struggled for the honour of `Maa Bharti'. The PM's rally in Ghazipur is also being seen as an effort by the Bharatiya Janata Party to woo the Rajbhar community, which reveres Maharaja Suheldev.
- ✦ Maharaja Suheldev is a semi-legendary king whose references are found somewhere between the boundary of fiction and history.

2. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates the 12th Global Healthcare Summit in Mumbai

- ✦ The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 12th Global Healthcare Summit organized by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin in Mumbai.
- ✦ He said India and the US shared complementarities in the pharmaceutical field – in clinical research, drug discovery and manufacture.
- ✦ The President said that the goal of ‘Health for All’ must be integral to our programmes and policies. The President also addressed The Yoga Institute, Mumbai, which had marked 100 years of its establishment.

3. 11th Bengaluru International Film Festival to kick start in February

- ✦ With a special theme of 'Nature's Fury,' The Bengaluru International Film Festival (BIFFES) is all set for its 11th edition, which will be held from February 07, 2019 to February 14, 2019, in Bengaluru.
- ✦ Being organised by the Karnataka Chalanachitra Academy and Department of Information and Public Relations of Government of Karnataka, the opening event of the festival will be held in the presence of National and International delegates, filmmakers and celebrities in Bengaluru at Banquet Hall, Vidhanasoudha.
- ✦ While the closing event for the conferring of awards will be held on February 14, 2019. To give it a definite date, the festival is always held on first Thursday of February every year.

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

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

- ✦ Underlying the importance of the project, Patnaik said that digitization of service delivery mechanism will definitely make the whole system faster, smoother and easier, the release stated.

5. PM Modi renames 3 Andaman & Nicobar islands as tribute to Netaji

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced renaming of three islands of Andaman and Nicobar archipelago as a tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- ✦ The Ross Island was renamed as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, the Neil Island as Shaheed Dweep and the Havelock Island as Swaraj Dweep, Modi said during a speech amidst thunderous applause from the audience here. The three islands are major tourist spots.
- ✦ Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister inaugurated a slew of development projects and laid foundation stones of several others related to energy, connectivity, education, tourism and health sectors.

6. New facility for receiving complaints by NHRC through mobile telephone

- ✦ With a view to facilitating contact by the public with the National Human Rights Commission in case of emergencies after office hours and on holidays, the Commission has designated a special telephone number for receiving complaints.
- ✦ A senior officer of the Commission will be in-charge of this facility and will attend to the complaints. The Commission hopes that this arrangement will prove useful to the public.
- ✦ On working days, during the office hours, the public are free to contact the Commission on its regular phone numbers. The officer receiving the call on mobile phone will render assistance and offer advice to the complainant.

7. PM Modi's visit to Uttar Pradesh: One District, One Product Regional Summit held; 6th International Rice Research Institute inaugurated

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 29, 2018 visited Varanasi and Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh on December 29, 2018.
- ✦ The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of medical College in Ghazipur during the visit in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. He took stock of the preparations for the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
- ✦ The Prime Minister dedicated the 6th International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), South Asia Regional Center (ISARC) to the nation. The Institute is built at the campus of National Seed Research and Training Center (NSRTC) in Varanasi.

8. Government sets up export promotion cell for MSMEs

- ✦ The MSME ministry has established an export promotion cell to create a sustainable ecosystem for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- ✦ The benefits likely to accrue from the setting up of the cell include integration MSMEs into global value chain, evaluation of readiness of MSMEs to export their products and services.

- ✦ The ministry has also proposed to formulate a governing council that will be chaired by secretary of the MSME ministry and co-chaired by the development commissioner, MSME.

9. Government to achieve 100% household electrification ahead of Republic Day

- ✦ The government is likely to achieve its 100 per cent household electrification target in the country ahead of Republic Day as it has already energised 2.39 crore out of the targeted 2.49 crore households under Rs 16,320 crore Saubhagya scheme.
- ✦ A power ministry statement said India has achieved yet another milestone in the power sector with the completion of electrification in hundred per cent households in 25 states at the year-end.
- ✦ The centre had launched the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, Saubhagya scheme to provide electricity to all households by December 2018.

10. Govt Releases 6 Crore LPG Connections Under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)

- ✦ The government gave out the 6-crore free cooking gas (LPG) connection as the scheme to make available cleaner fuel in every household kitchens runs ahead of schedule.
- ✦ Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu handed over papers for an LPG connection under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) — which was launched on May 1, 2016, with a target to give 5 crore connections by March 2019.
- ✦ The scheme together with a government push to replace polluting firewood in kitchens has led to LPG coverage rising to almost 90 per cent of the population from 55 per cent in May 2014.

11. Cabinet apprised of MoU between India and Morocco on Cooperation in the area of Cyber Security

- ✦ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Morocco on cooperation in the area of Cyber Security.
- ✦ The MoU intends to promote closer cooperation for exchange of knowledge and experience in detection, resolution and prevention of security-related incidents between India and Morocco.
- ✦ Implementation of the MoU will result in significant mutual benefits in the Cyber Security sector, through institutional and capacity building with Morocco in the field of Cyber Security.

12. Krishak Bandhu : New schemes to provide Rs 2 lakh compensation for farmers' deaths

- ✦ West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced schemes for farmers, months ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
- ✦ The chief minister said the 'Krishak Bandhu' schemes are expected to benefit over 72 lakh farmers in the state.

- ✦ In case a farmer between the age of 18 to 60 dies, compensation of up to Rs 2 lakh will be provided to their family. The money will be available through the agriculture department.

13. Bharti AXA Life uses WhatsApp to deliver policy, renewal premium

- ✦ Private sector insurer Bharti AXA Life Insurance said it has started delivering policies and renewal premium receipt to customers via instant messaging platform WhatsApp.
- ✦ It is a part of its alternative service option to the policy holders, Bharti AXA Life Insurance said.
- ✦ Bharti AXA Life Insurance, a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and French Insurance major AXA, is one of the first few life insurers to provide its customers with the option of policy contract, renewal premium receipts and claim intimation through WhatsApp.

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

- ✦ Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair has been declared as an authorized Immigration Check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers.
- ✦ Information, Public Relations and Tourism Division of Andaman and Nicobar Administration said this in a press release.
- ✦ This decision of the Union Government will open up the Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities. For this purpose, the Superintendent of Police (CID), Andaman and Nicobar Police has been appointed as the 'Civil Authority' for the purpose of the immigration check post.

15. Andhra tops ACI's Ease of Doing Business index

- ✦ Andhra Pradesh emerged on top of Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI), Singapore's 2018 Ease of Doing Business (EDB) Index ABC rankings for economies of 21 states of India, while Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place, respectively.
- ✦ EDB index is based upon three parameters called ABC - Attractiveness to Investors, Business Friendliness and Competitiveness Policies.
- ✦ Andhra Pradesh jumped from the 7th rank in 2016 to the 3rd rank in 2018 in Attractiveness to Investors.

16. Centre brings booklet on cyber safety for school children

- ✦ Home Ministry has brought out a booklet on cyber safety for school children to inform them about different aspects of cyber safety.
- ✦ The booklet, titled 'A Handbook for Students on cyber Safety', also deals with the problems of cyber bullying, cyber grooming and email fraud.
- ✦ It advises teenagers against accepting friend requests from unknown people on social media.

- ✦ The booklet explains various kinds of cyber crimes like identity theft, job fraud, email spoofing and how children can overcome them.

17. Rajya Sabha amends Right to Education Act, scraps no-detention policy

- ✦ The Rajya Sabha passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2019, that does away with the no-detention policy mentioned in the law.
- ✦ The House also passed the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill. The Lok Sabha had passed the two bills in July during the Budget Session.
- ✦ The motion to pass the bill was accepted by voice vote. Union minister for Human Resources Development Prakash Javadekar's motion to amend the name of the bill to reflect that it was passed in 2019 was also accepted by voice vote.

18. PM Modi inaugurates, lays foundation stone of projects worth over Rs 1500 crore

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated eight projects and laid foundation stones for four projects worth over Rs. 1500 crore in Manipur.
- ✦ The inauguration and foundation stone-laying event was carried out during a public rally held in Imphal's Hapta Kangjeibung, attended by thousands.
- ✦ The eight projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister were—Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Moreh, Dolaithabi Barrage Project in Thoubal, FCI Food Storage Godown at Sawombung Imphal East, Buffer Water Reservoirs at Shirui Village in Ukhrul district.

19. Govt launches Green-Ag, GEF-assisted project, in partnership with FAO

- ✦ The Government of India launched a Global Environment Facility- (GEF) assisted project, namely Green-Ag: Transforming Indian agriculture for global environment benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in high-conservation-value landscapes of five states.
- ✦ The project seeks to mainstream biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.
- ✦ The overall objective of the project is to catalyse the transformative change of India's agricultural sector to support achievement of national and global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes.

20. Indian Panorama Film Festival inaugurated in New Delhi

- ✦ Indian Panorama Film Festival, being organized by Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of I&B, was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of I&B, Shri Amit Khare in the presence of Shri Shaji N Karun, the director of the opening feature film 'Olu', at Siri Fort Auditorium II.

- ✦ Shri Shaji N Karun, Director of the opening Feature Film 'Olu' emphasized on the importance of organizing Indian Panorama Film Festival and said that he honed the craft of filmmaking by watching movies at such Festivals.
- ✦ The ten day Festival will last till 13th January, 2019, during which 26 Feature Films and 21 Non-Feature Films will be screened. The entry for the Festival has been kept free of charge. Seating will take place on first-come-first-served basis.

21. PM inaugurates, launches development works in Baripada, Odisha

- ✦ The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Baripada, in Odisha. He unveiled a digital plaque to mark the commencement of work for conservation and development of Rasika Ray Temple, and Excavated Structure at Ancient Fort Haripurgarh.
- ✦ He dedicated to the nation, the Balasore-Haldia-Durgapur section of the Paradip-Haldia-Durgapur LPG pipeline of IOCL. He also inaugurated the Multi Modal Logistic Park at Balasore, and six Passport Sewa Kendras.
- ✦ The Prime Minister said that in the last four and a half years, the Union Government has attempted to reduce the difficulty faced by people in obtaining passports. He said that the six Passport Sewa Kendras being inaugurated today, are a step in this direction.

22. PM lays foundation stone for revival of 6 irrigation projects in Jharkhand

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of revival of six irrigation projects, including North Koel (Mandal Dam) project amounting to 2,500 crore rupees and Kanhar Stone Pipeline irrigation system.
- ✦ The Mandal Dam project will help around one lakh 11 thousand hectares of agricultural land in Jharkhand and Bihar to get irrigation facilities and 24 MW of electricity will also be produced.
- ✦ Jharkhand has recorded 18 percent growth in the growth rate of agriculture in last four year and present Raghubar Das government is taking many steps, like subsidised agriculture equipments and seeds.

23. 9-day long International Kite Festival kicks off in Ahmedabad

- ✦ In Gujarat, the nine-day long international kite festival kicked off at Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad this morning.
- ✦ Our correspondent reports that more than 150 kite fliers from 45 countries are participating in this edition of the festival.
- ✦ About 500 kite fliers 13 different states of the country and 19 cities of Gujarat are also taking part. The festival is also planned at Vadodara, Kevadiya, Dwaraka, Surat, Rajkot, Jetpur, Songadh, Saputara and Dhordo in the coming days.

24. AAI signs MoU with SAMEER for boosting communication

- ✦ Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) for joint research programs in the field of Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).

- ✦ AAI and SAMEER, an autonomous research and development (R and D) institute under MeitY have entered into an overarching MOU that will provide a platform for Collaborative Research for both the Organizations to work together.
- ✦ Both the organisations will strive to arrive at a beneficial solution for CNS Systems related R and D activities in the country.

25. Odisha 'Partner State' in Indus Food Meet 2019

- ✦ Odisha has become the 'Partner State' in the Indus Food Meet 2019. The two-day mega food international event, which going to be held from January 14 at India Exposition Mart of Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh, is being organised by Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and union commerce ministry.
- ✦ Odisha minister for MSME Prafulla Samal and MSME additional chief secretary LN Gupata Thursday reviewed the preparation for the state's participation in the Meet.
- ✦ The 2nd edition of Indus Food Meet is hosting over 600 most prominent global buyers from food and beverage industry from over 60 countries.

26. Kumbh Mela: Railways launch mobile app to help devotees, tourists navigate through Allahabad

- ✦ The North Central Railway (NCR) has launched a mobile application that will help those arriving in Allahabad for the Kumbh Mela starting from January 15 to navigate through the city and the mela grounds
- ✦ The 'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App' will also provide information regarding all the 'Mela special' trains that will be run during the period.
- ✦ Additionally, the app will provide a link to the user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets.

27. First Global Aviation Summit to open in Mumbai on Jan 15

- ✦ Against the backdrop of the International Civil Aviation Organisation's (ICAO) prediction of a "100 percent increase in global air travel by 2030", the first-ever two-day Global Aviation Summit-2019 with the theme of 'Flying For All' will open here on January 15.
- ✦ Organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation along with FICCI, the first GAS-2019 will discuss how to ride this strong tailwind of growth and pave the way forward for the aviation sector.
- ✦ The GAS is supported by ICAO, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the US, IATA, Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation, Airports Council International and Association of Asia-Pacific Airlines and will include conferences, exhibitions and G2G, G2B and B2B exchanges.

28. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan attends Global Skill Summit at Ranchi

- ✦ Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship attended the Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

- ✦ Governor of Jharkhand Smt. Droupadi Murmu was the chief guest in this one day Global Skill Summit, 2019 which was also attended by Chief Minister of Jharkhand Shri Raghubar Das.
- ✦ On this occasion Shri Dharmendra Pradhan said that India, with its pool of talented youth, has the potential to cater to the ever-growing demand for skilled manpower in the world.

29. Chhattisgarh withdraws general consent accorded to the CBI to probe cases in the state

- ✦ Two months after the Chandrababu Naidu-led government in Andhra Pradesh withdrew general consent accorded to the CBI to probe cases in the state, the Congress government in Chhattisgarh took a similar decision on Thursday.
- ✦ The state government has conveyed the decision to the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of Personnel and Training.
- ✦ Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 makes the consent of the states mandatory for the CBI to exercise its power and jurisdiction in the state.

30. India will overtake the US economy by 2030 ; Standard Chartered

- ✦ India is likely to become the world's second-largest economy by 2030, next only to China and overtaking the US, according to Standard Chartered's long-term forecast released on Jan. 08.
- ✦ The UK-based multinational bank also predicts that based on nominal GDP using purchasing power parity exchange rates, China will overtake the US by 2020.
- ✦ Current emerging markets will likely make up the majority of the 10 biggest economies by 2030.

31. Lok Sabha passes DNA (Use and Application) Technology Regulation Bill

- ✦ The Lok Sabha passed the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2019 by voice vote after a brief discussion.
- ✦ It seeks to provide regulation for the use and application of DNA technology for the purpose of establishing the identity of certain category of persons including the victims, offenders, suspects, under trials, missing persons and others.
- ✦ The bill also seeks to establish a National DNA Data Bank and Regional DNA Data Banks. Speaking on the bill, Science and Technology Minister Dr Harshvardhan said the issues of privacy, confidentiality and data protection have been minutely addressed in this legislation.

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

- ✦ India's longest 300-metre single lane steel cable suspension bridge was inaugurated by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu .He also laid the foundation stone for a district secretariat building.
- ✦ The bridge across the Siang river at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named Byorong Bridge.

- ✦ The road to Tuting, near the China border in Upper Siang district, was 192 km before the bridge was built. The bridge is expected to benefit 20,000 people on either banks of the river, besides bolstering the defence preparedness.

33. NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission releases the Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook on eve of National Youth Day

- ✦ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) released the "Atal Tinkering Lab Handbook – Naye Dishayen, Naye Nirman, Naya Bharat" on the eve of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, also celebrated as the National Youth Day.
- ✦ They also announced the 10 Month Student Entrepreneurship Programme, which is a fully-funded initiative to help the Top Six innovations of the Atal Tinkering Marathon 2017 to transform their innovative prototypes into functioning, scaled and Go-to-Market products.
- ✦ These innovations include prototypes across six crucial themes having broader social impact, namely, Clean Energy, Waste Management, Agritech, Healthcare, Smart Mobility and Water Resources.

34. Govt launches National Clean Air Programme to tackle air pollution

- ✦ Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan just launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) that aims to reduce toxic particulate matter by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year.
- ✦ In addition to the release by his office, he also shared a twitter clip talking about NCAP and the research that went behind the plan.
- ✦ It will be launched in the 43 smart cities falling in the list of the 102 non-attainment cities, under the Smart Cities program.

35. 6 states sign agreement for Renukaji dam multipurpose project

- ✦ Six states--Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh--on Friday signed an agreement for construction of Renukaji Dam Multi-Purpose Project in the presence of Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari.
- ✦ Three projects are proposed to be constructed on the Yamuna and two of its tributaries, Tons and Giri, in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of the Upper Yamuna Basin.
- ✦ These include Lakhwar project on the Yamuna in Uttarakhand, Kisau on the Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal, and Renukaji on the Giri in Himachal.

36. Sikkim says it will become first state to roll out Universal Basic Income

- ✦ Sikkim will be the first state to roll out Universal Basic Income (UBI) and has started the process to introduce the unconditional direct cash transfer scheme.
- ✦ Sikkim's ruling party, the Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF), has decided to include UBI in its manifesto ahead of the Assembly election in 2019 and aims to implement the scheme by 2022.

- ✦ The 2017 Economic Survey had flagged the UBI scheme as “a conceptually appealing idea” and a possible alternative to social welfare programmes targeted at reducing poverty.

37. Naveen Patnaik launches scheme to distribute free LED bulbs in Odisha

- ✦ Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the ‘Ama Ghare LED’ scheme, under which about 95 lakh families in the state will each get four LED bulbs free of cost.
- ✦ Patnaik said the LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSC).
- ✦ The beneficiaries will have to produce their bio-metric authentication in order to avail the benefits of the scheme.

38. Sikkim CM launches 'One Family, One Job' scheme

- ✦ Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Chamling launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme that envisions employment to a member of every family which does not have a government job in the state.
- ✦ He also declared that all loan debts in the farming and agriculture sector would be revoked.
- ✦ Chamling's Sikkim Democratic Front government earlier announced that 20,000 youths would immediately be given temporary jobs under the scheme.

39. PM Narendra Modi unveils slew of projects worth over Rs 1,550 cr in Odisha

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a slew of projects worth over Rs 1,550 crore for Odisha.
- ✦ He dedicated to the nation electrification of Jharsuguda- Vizianagaram and Sambalpur-Angul lines spanning 813 km completed at a cost of Rs 1,085 crore.
- ✦ A Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) at Jharsuguda, built at a cost of Rs 100 crore, was dedicated to the nation by the prime minister.

40. Pongal: legends behind the Harvest festival celebrated largely in Tamil Nadu

- ✦ Pongal is a three-day Hindu festival majorly celebrated in south India. It is celebrated in the winters when the sun reaches its southernmost point according to the Hindu calculations.
- ✦ The most popular legend associated with Pongal is that on the first day, which known as the Bhogi, Lord Krishna lifted Goverdhan Mountain in his little finger, to protect cattle and people from Indira, the rain god.
- ✦ Pongal marks the beginning of the sun's northward journey towards the equinox, known as Uttarayan.

41. SC dismisses pleas of 5 states seeking modification of its order on DGPs

- ✦ The Supreme Court dismissed the pleas of five states seeking modification of its order issued last year on the selection and appointment of director generals of police (DGPs).
- ✦ The apex court was hearing applications of various state governments, including Punjab, Kerala, West Bengal, Haryana and Bihar, seeking implementation of their local laws regarding the selection and appointment of DGPs.
- ✦ The states and Union Territories are required to send names of senior police officers to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for being considered as probable candidates for the post of DGPs or police commissioners (as per applicability).

42. President Ram Nath Kovind Inaugurates three day Gandhian Resurgence Summit at Parmarth Niketan camp at Prayagraj Kumbh

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind Inaugurated the three day Gandhian Resurgence Summit at Parmarth Niketan camp at the ongoing Prayagraj Kumbh today. About 300 Gandhians from different parts of the country and organisations are participating in the Summit.
- ✦ The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Shri Yogi Adityanath said that about 2 crore 25 lakhs devotees have taken holy dip during the two days Makar Sankranti bathing festival.
- ✦ Prayagraj Kumbh 2019 will be remembered for opening of doors to Akshaya Vat (sacred tree) and Saraswati Koop (sacred well) for common men after 450 years. It was a long pending demand of the devotees.

43. Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates UNNATI-- Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly & Training programme of ISRO in Bengaluru

- ✦ Space Technology has been provided with more budgetary allocations during the last five years and now it is utilised in Infrastructure Developments like roads.
- ✦ The Minister said that application of Science & Technology has become more in our day activities. Space Technology in India has entered every household.
- ✦ The Minister appreciated the efforts of ISRO in launching various satellites and its space programmes, particularly Chandrayan Mission.

44. First human rights TV channel to 'lend voice to the voiceless'

- ✦ The world's first television channel dedicated to human rights was launched in London with a promise to deliver hidden stories ignored by mainstream media into people's living rooms.
- ✦ The International Observatory of Human Rights (IOHR) said its web-based channel would bring human rights issues to audiences in over 20 countries across Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.
- ✦ Initially the programmes would be in broadcasted in English but other languages including Farsi, Turkish, Arabic and Russian would be inducted in the future.

45. Reliance Retail, Jio to launch new e-commerce platform

- ✦ Reliance Retail, Jio to launch new e-commerce platform
- ✦ Reliance Industries Ltd Chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani said group companies Reliance Retail and Reliance Jio Infocomm would jointly launch a new e-commerce platform in the country.
- ✦ The new e-commerce project would empower 1.2 million shopkeepers in Gujarat, Ambani said, adding the company was committed to making the western Indian state a fully digital one.
- ✦ The company's consolidated net profit of Rs 10,251 crore for October-December was 7.7% higher than the September quarter.

46. 2nd World Orange Festival begins in Nagpur

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

47. India's largest startup ecosystem inaugurated in Kerala

- ✦ India got its largest startup ecosystem when Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated here a 1.8-lakh-square-foot facility housing incubation set-ups across a string of segments in modern technology.
- ✦ Overall the Kerala Government is working for the state to have a total area of 2.3 crore sq ft of IT space (up from 1.3 crore sq ft last year).
- ✦ The opening of the new complex at the Technology Innovation Zone (TIZ) is a major step towards achieving the objective .

48. Puducherry govt to ban single-use plastic products from March 1

- ✦ Chief Minister V Narayanasamy said that the cabinet has decided to ban production, sale and use of single-use plastic products in the Union Territory from March 1.
- ✦ He said a massive drive would also be launched to create awareness among the merchants and the public on the necessity of the ban.
- ✦ The neighbouring Tamil Nadu government had in June 2018 announced that it would ban the use of plastic items including non-biodegradable carry bags from January 1, 2019, to "gift a plastic-free state to future generations".

49. Govt. to launch an end-to-end prediction system for predicting thunderstorms/lightning by April 2019

- ✦ Last year during the pre monsoon season a series of thunderstorm/dust storm affected the northern states and claimed about 200 lives. In view of this the India Meteorological Department will be implementing an end-to-end prediction system for predicting thunderstorms/lightning by April 2019.

- ✦ All these observatories are expected to be established by end of 2020. On the specific request from Kerala Government, IMD will be installing 100 new Automated Weather Stations including rain-gauges to monitor weather activities in the state.
- ✦ These new tools will help IMD to disseminate forecasts and warnings on time and more effectively to the users and the new website and mobile Apps will be ready for launch by June 2019.

50. PM Modi inaugurates National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a pan-country single window system for film permissions and also that his government began the process of amending the cinematography act, 1952 to make piracy a stricter offence.
- ✦ Modi was in Mumbai to inaugurate the first-ever National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) at Peddar road and will also support if anyone from the film industry wants to develop a communication and entertainment university in the country.
- ✦ The state-of-the-art museum has been built at a cost of Rs 140.61 crore and is housed in two buildings – the New Museum Building and the 19th century historic palace Gulshan Mahal – in the Films Division campus in Mumbai.

51. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced extension of free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana

- ✦ Odisha Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik announced the extension of free health services under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) to all medical colleges and hospitals of Odisha from 1st February 2019.
- ✦ Under the scheme, all the patients irrespective of APL or BPL category will be eligible to avail the free health services at government medical colleges and hospitals.
- ✦ An Additional provision of over Rs 100 crore was made for this scheme by the state government from its budget.

52. Methanol-blending in petrol reduces carbon dioxide emission

- ✦ Methanol (M-15) blended with petrol and used in the existing BS-IV standard cars reduces carbon dioxide emission, a study conducted by Pune-based Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) has shown.
- ✦ Pune-based Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) conducted a study using 15% M-15 methanol blend in vehicles and tested them for 3,000km to evaluate emissions in real-world conditions as well as check the performance of the vehicles.
- ✦ NITI Aayog has drawn up a comprehensive plan to replace 20 per cent of crude imports from methanol alone.

53. PM Modi hoists tricolour at Red Fort to honour Subhas Chandra Boss

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi joined a flag-hoisting ceremony at the Red Fort to mark the 75th anniversary of the 'Azad Hind government' headed by Subhas Chandra Bose.
- ✦ Survivors of the Azad Hind Fauj or Indian National Army (INA) Netaji's grand-nephew and BJP Bengal vice-president Chandra Kumar Bose had planned to unfurl the tricolour at Red Fort and had written to the PM to join them in the celebrations.
- ✦ Subhas Chandra Bose popularly known as Netaji was born on 23rd January 1897 and died on 18th August 1945.

54. Nitin Gadkari Lays Foundation Stones for Namami Gange Projects in Agra and Mathura

- ✦ Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stones of six Namami Gange projects in Agra and Mathura.
- ✦ The government is steadfastly working on cleaning the river Ganga and its 40 tributaries and major drains. The four projects in Mathura have a sanctioned cost of Rs 511.74 crore.
- ✦ These include two sewerage projects - an integrated sewerage infrastructure for the city on Hybrid Annuity Mode with 'One-City-One-Operator' approach and reuse of treated sewage water in Mathura refinery at a sanctioned cost of Rs 460.45 Crore.

55. PM Narendra Modi launches Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22, 2019 launched the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana under which a group of Indian diaspora will be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice a year.
- ✦ The first batch of 40 Indian-origin people are at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas and they would be beginning their tour from there.
- ✦ He also released two books 'Kashi: The Universe of Crafts and Textiles' and 'Indian Textiles: History, Splendour, Grandeur'.

56. Nitin Gadkari inaugurates bridge over Ravi river in J&K

- ✦ Union minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated a bridge over the Ravi river in Jammu & Kashmir which will reduce the distance between Kathua in Jammu and Pathankot in Punjab to 8.6 km from 45 km.
- ✦ The bridge over the Ravi river at Keerian - Gandial will benefit over 2.2 lakh people living on the two sides.
- ✦ It has been constructed at a cost of Rs 158.84 crore to improve inter-state connectivity, the Road Transport and Highways.
- ✦

International News & Foreign Affairs

1. United Nations adopts two Russia sponsored resolutions backed by India on International Information Security

- ✦ The United Nations has adopted two Russian sponsored resolutions backed by India on international information security (IIS) system in what can be described as important steps towards a multipolar world order.
- ✦ India and Russia joined their efforts for achieving democratic, inclusive and transparent United Nations negotiation process on security in the use of information and communications technologies.
- ✦ These documents became the world's first code of conduct in the digital sphere, designed to create the foundation for peaceful interaction and to prevent war, confrontation and any other aggressive action.

2. Pakistan Cabinet approves issuance of 'Panda bonds' in Chinese currency

- ✦ Pakistan's cabinet has approved the issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated bonds to raise loans from China's capital markets, as the country moved a step forward to give the Chinese currency a status at par with the US dollar.
- ✦ The 'Panda Bonds' was approved in a Cabinet meeting, led by Prime Minister Imran Khan.
- ✦ The approval for issuing bonds in the Chinese capital markets came on the heel of the Finance Ministry's decision to delay issuance of dollar-denominated Eurobonds, worth \$3 billion.

3. Trump Signs Asia Reassurance Initiative Act In to Law

- ✦ U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which passed the U.S. Senate earlier that month.
- ✦ The act "establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ✦ The ARIA Act was introduced into the Senate in April by Senator Cory Gardner, and was co-sponsored by Senators Edward Markey, Marco Rubio, and Ben Cardin.

4. Justice Asif Saeed Khosa appointed new Chief Justice of Pakistan

- ✦ Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa has been appointed new Chief Justice of Pakistan with effect from January 18.
- ✦ The Ministry of Law has appointed Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, the senior most judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, after President Dr Arif Alvi approved summary to appoint him as Chief Justice.
- ✦ Justice Khosa was born on 21 December 1954. He has served as Justice of the Supreme Court since 18 February 2010 and also served as judge of the Lahore High Court prior to that.

5. Chinese rover powers up devices in pioneering moon mission

- ✦ Chinese spacecraft and rover power up their observation equipment after making a first-ever landing on the far side of the moon, the Chinese National Space Administration said.
- ✦ The Jade Rabbit 2 rover has succeeded in establishing a digital transmission link with a relay satellite that sends data back to the Beijing control center, the space agency said in a posting late Friday on its website.
- ✦ Chang'e 4, named after a Chinese moon goddess, is the first craft to make a soft landing on the moon's far side, which faces away from Earth.

6. China to 'sinicize' Islam, passes law to make religion compatible with socialism

- ✦ Months after UN flagged China's 're-schooling' campaign against Muslims in the Xinjiang region, Beijing has passed a law to make Islam 'compatible' with socialism within next five years.
- ✦ The law to implement measures to 'Sinicize' Islam was passed after Chinese government officials met representatives from eight Islamic groups, as per a Global Times report.
- ✦ The government officials after the meeting agreed to "guide Islam to be compatible with socialism and implement measures to Sinicize the religion"

7. Former Indian envoy to Myanmar, Vikram Misri, took charge as India's new envoy to China

- ✦ India's new ambassador to China Vikram Misri took charge of the post on Monday and met top Chinese officials during which they discussed Sino-India ties.
- ✦ A 1989-batch India Foreign Service (IFS) officer, Misri 54, replaced Gautam Bambawale who retired in November last year.
- ✦ He has served in various capacities at the headquarters of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) as well as in the Prime Minister's Office.

8. India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List Of Most Powerful Passports

- ✦ According to the Henley Passport Index, which periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year.
- ✦ Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries.
- ✦ South Korea edged up the ranking from October's index to join Singapore, offering access to 189 jurisdictions.

9. India, Japan bilateral currency swap gets Cabinet nod

- ✦ The Union Cabinet on gave its nod to the \$75-billion bilateral currency swap arrangement between India and Japan.

- ✦ The arrangement is expected to bring stability to foreign exchange and capital markets in India.
- ✦ The Cabinet also approved setting up of 3 new AIIMS at Vijayanagar in Samba in Jammu and Awantipur in Pulwara in Kashmir and Rajkot in Gujarat.

10. WEF recognises Tata Steel's Netherlands plant as 'Factory of the future'

- ✦ The World Economic Forum announced that Tata Steel's plant at IJmuiden in the Netherlands has been inducted into its prestigious community, a distinction awarded to manufacturing facilities which are seen as leaders in technologies of the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution'.
- ✦ This makes Tata Steel part of a network of just 16 key factories to create the world's leading learning platforms for production.
- ✦ To aid the learning and adoption of technologies by other companies, the 'Lighthouse' companies are committed to open their doors and share their knowledge with other manufacturing businesses.

11. India, US hold 2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting in New Delhi

- ✦ A 2+2 Inter-Sessional meeting between the United States and India took place, focusing on the progress of defence and foreign policy issues between the two countries.
- ✦ The Indian delegation was led jointly by Joint Secretary (AMS) from the Ministry of External Affairs Gourangalal Das, and Joint Secretary (PIC) from the Ministry of Defence, Shambhu S Kumaran.
- ✦ During meeting, both India and the US also exchanged views on regional developments as partners and stakeholders for a free, open, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

12. India to buy \$5 billion oil, gas from US & spend \$18 billion in defence

- ✦ India has committed to purchase USD 5 billion worth of oil and gas from the US per annum and USD 18 billion worth of defence equipment that are under implementation.
- ✦ At a reception hosted in his honour by the US-India Business Council (USIBC), Shringla said India has been sourcing and buying much more from the US than ever in the past.
- ✦ In the defense sector, India is looking at USD 18 billion worth of orders that are under implementation.

13. Mukesh Ambani, Jack Ma, Jeff Bezos in top '100 Global Thinkers' list of 2019

- ✦ Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani has made it to the prestigious Foreign Policy magazine's 2019 list of '100 Global Thinkers'.
- ✦ The other names on the list, which will be fully released next week, include Alibaba's Jack Ma, Christine Lagarde, managing director of the International

Monetary Fund, Amazon's founder and CEO Jeff Bezos, and Bill and Melinda Gates.

- ✦ The other Indian-origin names on the latest list of thinkers include Fareed Zakaria, one of the most influential foreign-policy analysts and TV hosts for almost two decades, and author Amitav Ghosh.

14. India okays Aadhaar as a valid travel document for Nepal and Bhutan

- ✦ India's Ministry of Home Affairs has approved the use of Aadhaar — the 12-digit unique identification number — as an identity proof for Indian citizens under 15 and above the age of 65 while travelling to Nepal and Bhutan
- ✦ Indian proof including Aadhaar travellers will not be required to have a visa if they have a passport and valid photo identity
- ✦ For families visiting the two countries, only one adult member needs to carry the relevant travel documents, but, are required to have identity proofs.

Banking

1. Government to infuse Rs 10,086 crore capital in Bank of India

- ✦ The Central government will infuse around Rs 10,086 crore in Bank of India (BoI). The government has intimated BoI about the capital infusion.
- ✦ The government had earlier announced an infusion of Rs 65,000 crore in PSBs in FY19, of which Rs 23,000 crore has already been disbursed, while Rs 42,000 crore is remaining.
- ✦ There are 11 PSBs under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework that restricts them from lending to high credit risk categories, in turn preventing the growth of their loan books.

2. ESAF small finance bank gets RBI nod to operate as scheduled bank

- ✦ ESAF small finance bank which received the first banking license in Kerala since independence has got RBI approval to operate as scheduled bank.
- ✦ This makes Thrissur-based ESAF small finance bank (SFB) the fifth scheduled bank from Kerala. ESAF micro finance institution, started in 1992, was one among the ten applicants to receive approval from RBI to start banking operations in 2016.
- ✦ The bank has established a network of 432 banking outlets spread across 13 States and has a customer base of 2.6 million.

3. Banks recover Rs 40,000-crore from defaulters : RBI

- ✦ Banks have seen a significant improvement in recovery of stressed assets helped by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and amendments in the

Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests (SARFAESI) Act, during FY18, the RBI data showed.

- ✦ In the fiscal year 2018, banks recovered Rs 40,400 crore worth of bad loans as against Rs 38,500 crore in FY17.
- ✦ Besides recovery through various resolution mechanisms, banks are also cleaning up their balance sheets through sale of doubtful/ loss assets to assets reconstruction companies (ARCs) and other banks/NBFCs/financial institutions by taking haircuts, the report said.

4. Centre infuses Rs 3,076 crore capital into UCO Bank

- ✦ State-run lender UCO Bank on Monday said the central government has infused Rs 3,076 crore of capital into it by way of preferential allotment.
- ✦ By the end of second quarter of 2018-19 (FY19), its capital adequate ratio (Basel III) stood at 7.57 per cent as against 9.32 per cent year-ago.
- ✦ Gross NPA of the Bank as a percentage of total loans decreased during September quarter by 0.34 basis points to 25.37 per cent from 25.71 per cent during the June quarter.

5. Cabinet Clears Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank, Bank of Baroda Merger

- ✦ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the merger of state-run Vijaya Bank, Bank of Baroda and Dena Bank.
- ✦ This marks the first-ever three-way merger in the country's banking sector. The merged entity will become the third largest bank in the country, after government-owned State Bank of India and private sector lender ICICI Bank.
- ✦ The merger will come into force on April 1, 2019.

6. RBI Lifts Six Month Ban, Permits Paytm Payments Bank To Onboard New Customers

- ✦ The year 2019 seems to have brought good luck to Paytm. After almost six months of the ban, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed Paytm Payments Bank to restart opening new accounts for its consumers.
- ✦ Launched in May 2017, Paytm Payments Bank is a mobile-first bank with zero charges on all online transactions (such as IMPS, NEFT, RTGS) and no minimum balance requirement.
- ✦ Paytm Payments Bank stopped enrolling new customers on June 20, 2018, following an audit by the RBI, which made certain observations about the process the company follows in acquiring new customers and its adherence to know-your-customer (KYC) norms.

7. Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance sign a bancassurance pact

- ✦ Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance announced that they have signed a bancassurance pact to offer a comprehensive financial planning solution to its customers.

- ✦ The agreement was signed in the presence of Syndicate Bank Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Mrutyunjay Mahapatra and MD and CEO of SBI Life, Sanjeev Nautiyal.
- ✦ The two banks said they were hopeful of ensuring greater reach and penetration in the market with 3,000 branches of Syndicate Bank spread across the country offering SBI Life's diverse range of protection, wealth creation and savings insurance products to its customers.

8. Govt amalgamates three RRBs into a single bank

- ✦ The government has amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks -- Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank -- into a single RRB with effect from January 1.
- ✦ In a filing to the BSE, Punjab and Sind Bank said the central government, after consulting the sponsor banks of the three RRBs, felt that in the interest of the banks and the areas served by them, they should be amalgamated into a single RRB.
- ✦ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) Chairman: Harsh Kumar Bhanwala, Headquarters: Mumbai

9. RBI limits customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India has decided to limit the liability of customers in case of unauthorised electronic payment transactions in Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs) issued by non-banks.
- ✦ Under new norms on customer liability, the regulator said frauds due to third-party breach where neither the customer nor the PPI issuer is at fault, there cannot be any liability for the customer, in case the incident is reported within three days.
- ✦ If the fraud is reported between three and seven days, customer liability will amount to the transaction value or 10,000, whichever is lower.

10. RBI appoints Nandan Nilekani as chairman of panel on digital payments

- ✦ Panel to suggest measures to strengthen safety of digital payments ecosystem.
- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Nandan Nilekani, co-founder of Infosys, as the chairman of a five-member high-level committee that will work towards deepening digital payments in India.
- ✦ Besides, it will suggest measures to strengthen the safety and security of digital payments and provide a road map on how to increase customer confidence while accessing financial services through digital modes.

11. Nepal's central bank asked RBI to declare new Indian currency notes legal in a written plea

- ✦ Nepal has asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country.

- ✦ The Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), the country's central monetary authority, has written a letter on Friday to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), asking it to make Indian bank bills Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 legal tender in Nepal.
- ✦ The RBI has only allowed the circulation of Indian currency notes of Rs 100 and less in Nepal and provides exchange facilities for bills of these denomination.

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

- ✦ Sri Lanka's Central Bank said that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has agreed to provide USD 400 million under a swap arrangement to boost the island nation's reserves.
- ✦ The RBI has agreed to provide the funds under its SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Swap Facility.
- ✦ Central Bank Governor Indrajith Coomaraswamy last week said that the nearly two-month long political crisis had an adverse impact on the country's economy.

13. Yes Bank appoints Brahm Dutt as non-executive part-time chairman

- ✦ Yes Bank, India's fourth-largest private sector bank, on Saturday announced the appointment of Brahm Dutt as non-executive part-time chairman.
- ✦ Brahm Dutt has been on Yes Bank's board since July 2013 as an independent director, and contributed to almost all the sub-committees of the board over the past five and a half years, it added.
- ✦ He is currently also the chairman of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee.

14. Reserve Bank slaps Rs 3 crore penalty on Citibank

- ✦ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Citibank India for not complying with directions regarding the 'fit-and-proper criteria' for directors of the bank.
- ✦ The RBI in a statement, however, added that the action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.
- ✦ The US-based Citibank has been operating in India for over 115 years. The bank has 35 branches in India and a network of 541 ATMs, according to the latest RBI data.

15. IDFC Bank re-named IDFC First Bank

- ✦ Private sector lender IDFC Bank said its name has been changed to IDFC First Bank Ltd with effect
- ✦ IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company Capital First had announced completion of their merger on December 18, creating a combined loan asset book of Rs 1.03 lakh crore for the merged entity.

- ✦ Following the merger, the board of IDFC Bank had approved the appointment of V Vaidyanathan, founder and chairman of Capital First Ltd, as managing director and chief executive officer of the merged entity.

16. Fin Min wants PSU banks to bring down govt equity to 52%

- ✦ In a bid to align with the best corporate practices, the Finance Ministry has asked the public sector banks to gradually bring down the government's equity to 52 per cent.
- ✦ The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has already initiated step for Rs 20,000 crore share sale through qualified institutional placement.
- ✦ A notification under the Securities Contracts Regulations (Amendment) Rules makes it mandatory for all listed entities to have a minimum public float of 25%.

17. Stage set for RBI rate cut as retail inflation falls to 2.19%

- ✦ India's retail inflation and wholesale inflation fell to multi-month lows in December amid signs of weakening economic recovery, creating wiggle room for the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) monetary policy committee to cut interest rates at its meeting on 7 February.
- ✦ Data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) showed consumer price index (CPI) based inflation at an 18-month low of 2.19% in December against 2.33% a month ago, as food prices continued to slide.
- ✦ Wholesale inflation (measured by WPI) softened to an eight-month low of 3.8% in December from 4.64% in November, 2018.

18. RBI sets new external commercial borrowings framework, lifts sectoral curbs

- ✦ The Reserve Bank came out with a new policy for overseas borrowings, allowing all eligible entities to raise foreign funding under the automatic route and removing sectoral curbs.
- ✦ All eligible borrowers can now raise External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) up to \$750 million or equivalent per financial year under the automatic route replacing the existing sector wise limits.
- ✦ The "liberalisation/rationalisation" in the new framework ECB and rupee-denominated bonds has been done to further improve the ease of doing business.

19. The Union Cabinet approved fund infusion in Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).

- ✦ The government had provided for Rs 500 crore towards capital infusion in the Exim Bank in the budget for this fiscal.
- ✦ Established by the Government of India, Exim Bank commenced operations as a purveyor of export credit, mirroring global export credit agencies.
- ✦ This includes import of technology and export product development, export production, export marketing, pre-shipment and post-shipment and overseas investment.

20. IDFC First Bank gets RBI approval for appointment of MD & CEO

- ✦ IDFC First Bank announced that the Reserve Bank of India vide its letter dated 17 January 2019, has given its approval for the appointment of V. Vaidyanathan as the Managing Director & CEO of the Bank for a period of 3 (three) years.
- ✦ His tenure is effective from December 19, 2018.
- ✦ Last month, IDFC Bank and non-banking financial company Capital First completed their merger, creating a combined loan asset book of Rs 1.03 lakh crore for the merged entity IDFC First Bank.

New Appointments & Person in News

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

- ✦ Shri Rahul Chhabra , presently High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Kenya, has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to the Federal Republic of Somalia, with residence in Nairobi.
- ✦ India is represented in Somalia through its embassy in Nairobi, Kenya and Somalia maintains an embassy in New Delhi.
- ✦ He is expected to take up the assignment shortly.

2. Sudhir Bhargava Appointed New Chief Information Commissioner

- ✦ The government has appointed Sudhir Bhargava as new Chief Information Commissioner along with four new Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission (CIC) which had been functioning with just three of them as against a sanctioned strength of 11, including the Chief Information Commissioner.
- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the appointment of former IFS officer Yashwardhan Kumar Sinha, former IRS officer Vanaja N Sarna, former IAS Neeraj Kumar Gupta and former Law Secretary Suresh Chandra as Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission.
- ✦ The Supreme Court had asked the centre and states to maintain transparency in appointments of Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners and upload the details of search committees and applicants on website.

3. TB Radhakrishnan takes oath as first Chief Justice of Telangana High Court

- ✦ Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnansworn in as the first Chief Justice of Telangana High Court, which came into existence on New Year's day more than four and a half years after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh in 2014.

- ✦ Justice Radhakrishnan was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh ESL Narasimhan at a simple ceremony in Raj Bhavan at 8.30am.
- ✦ Last week, the central government issued a notification for the bifurcation of the high court between the two states with effect from January 1.

4. Sheikh Hasina wins third term as PM in Bangladesh

- ✦ Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to return to power for an unprecedented third consecutive time after the ruling alliance emerged victorious in the parliamentary elections.
- ✦ Hasina's Awami League won 287 of the 298 seats, while the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) managed just seven seats.
- ✦ Bangladesh - Capital: Dhaka, Currency: Taka

5. Axis Bank MD & CEO Shikha Sharma retires; Amitabh Chaudhry takes charge

- ✦ Axis Bank on Monday said its Managing Director and CEO Shikha Sharma has retired, effective December 31, 2018. Amitabh Chaudhry will be the new managing director and CEO of the bank with effect from January 1, 2019.
- ✦ Chaudhry, 54, started his career in corporate banking with the Bank of America in 1987, where he worked in diverse roles.
- ✦ However, in April this year, Sharma wanted her new term to be reduced to seven months from a three-year tenure without citing any reasons, which was accepted by the board.

6. Ashwani Lohani retires, V K Yadav new railway board chairman

- ✦ Railway Board Chairman Ashwani Lohani retired on Monday, despite strong indications that the Narendra Modi government could grant him an extension.
- ✦ Yadav belongs to the 1980 batch of the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers. Till Monday, he was general manager of South Central Railway.
- ✦ Yadav is credited with bringing in innovative practices to enhance productivity and ensure workforce welfare.

7. Justice AK Sikri nominated as Executive Chairman of NALSA

- ✦ Justice AK Sikri was nominated as the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). President Ram Nath Kovind nominated Justice Sikri as Executive Chairman of NALSA with effect from December 31, 2018.
- ✦ The NALSA was constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to provide free legal services to the weaker sections of the society and to organise Lok Adalats for settlement of disputes.
- ✦ The functions of the NALSA also includes spreading legal literacy and awareness, undertaking social justice litigations.

8. Jair Bolsonaro Sworn In as Brazil's President

- ✦ Brazil's far-right president-elect and controversial Social Liberal Party candidate Jair Bolsonaro has been sworn in as the 42nd President of the country.
- ✦ Last year, by the end of October, Bolsonaro, a former army captain, was elected as the President after defeating ex-Sao Paulo mayor and Workers Party (PT) candidate Fernando Haddad.
- ✦ During his election campaign, Bolsonaro had promised to crack down on recession, a heightening sense of insecurity, and corruption scandals, which are among major factors rampant across the South American country.

9. KV Subramanian resigns from Bandhan Bank after appointment as CEA

- ✦ Bandhan Bank announced that Krishnamurthy V Subramanian has resigned as independent director from its board following his appointment as the chief economic advisor (CEA) to the government.
- ✦ On December 7, the government had appointed ISB Hyderabad professor Subramanian as the CEA for a period of three years.
- ✦ He replaced Arvind Subramanian, who resigned from the post in June 2018.

10. Vijay Mallya becomes first person to be declared a 'fugitive economic offender' under new law

- ✦ A special court in Mumbai declared absconding liquor baron Vijay Mallya a fugitive economic offender (FEO) on a plea of the Enforcement Directorate.
- ✦ Mallya has become the first businessman to be declared EFO under the provisions of the new Fugitive Economic Offenders Act which came into existence in August last year.
- ✦ A fugitive economic offender is offences involving amount of at least Rs 100 crore or more and has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution. any individual against whom warrants for arrest is issued for his involvement in select economic

11. Gita Gopinath joins IMF as its first female Chief Economist

- ✦ Prominent Indian-American economist Gita Gopinath has joined as the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, becoming the first woman to occupy the top post at the global lender.
- ✦ Gopinath, 47, joined last week at a time, when she believes the world is experiencing a retreat from globalisation, posing challenges to multilateral institutions.
- ✦ The John Zwaanstra professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University, Gopinath, a US citizen, succeeds Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld as Economic Counsellor and Director of the IMF's Research Department. Obstfeld retired December 31.

12. President appoints senior advocates Sanjay Jain, K M Nataraj as Additional Solicitor Generals

- ✦ President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed senior advocates Sanjay Jain and K M Nataraj as Additional Solicitor Generals of India for the Supreme Court.

- ✦ Additional Solicitor General, appointed under Law Officers Act 1987, is the third largest law officer of the Central Government. It is a duty of the Additional Solicitor General to assist the Solicitor General.
- ✦ Jain was appointed as ASG for the Delhi High Court in 2014 and had resigned from the post last year.

13. India coach Stephen Constantine resigns after Asian Cup exit

- ✦ India went down fighting against Bahrain in their last Group A match.
- ✦ The 56-year-old Constantine, who had earlier coached India from 2002 to 2005, was handed over reins of the team again in 2015.
- ✦ Englishman Stephen Constantine has resigned as India's head coach after they were knocked out of the AFC Asian Cup following a 1-0 defeat by Bahrain in Sharjah.

14. Kerala HC disqualifies LDF-backed Independent MLA Karat Razack for defaming rival leader

- ✦ The Kerala High Court disqualified Left-backed Independent MLA Karat Abdul Razack from the Koduvally Assembly constituency for his defamatory campaign against the IUML's M.A. Razack Master during the May 2016 Assembly polls.
- ✦ The HC found that he had indulged in a corrupt practice hence his election was declared void, as it was in violation of the Representation of People's Act.
- ✦ The disqualification was as per the provisions of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1951. The Representation of the Peoples act defines the corrupt practices for the disqualification of the elected representative.

15. Justice Asif Saeed Khosa takes oath as 26th Chief Justice of Pakistan

- ✦ Chief justice Khosa will serve as top judge for approximately 337 days and is scheduled to retire on Dec 21, 2019.
- ✦ The ceremony started with recitation from the Holy Quran after which notification of his appointment was read out.
- ✦ Prime Minister Imran Khan and other attendees congratulated Justice Khosa for assuming the office of Chief Justice of Pakistan.

16. Former chief statistician TCA Anant assumes charge as UPSC member

- ✦ Former chief statistician TCA Anant assumed charge as a member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts the prestigious civil services examination to select the country's bureaucrats.
- ✦ Anant was appointed Chief Statistician of India-cum-Secretary, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, in June 2010 for five years.
- ✦ The commission has a strength of 10 members. After Anant's appointment, the commission still has one more vacancy of member.

17. TCS hires former Citigroup executive Daniel Houghes Callahan as independent director

- ✦ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) hired former Citi executive Daniel Houghes Callahan, 62, as an additional and independent director for 5 years
- ✦ As chief administrative officer and head of Citigroup's technology, Callahan was member of Citi's operating committee until November 2018.
- ✦ Prior to joining Citi in 2007, Callahan held senior positions in AIBM Japan, Morgan Stanley, and Credit Suisse.

18. Aparna Kumar Becomes First Female IPS Officer To Reach South Pole

- ✦ Aparna Kumar has become the first woman IPS DIG and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) officer to successfully complete the South Pole expedition.
- ✦ Ms Kumar has successfully reached the South Pole after covering 111 kilometres of walking on the snow. She also carried equipment weighing 35 Kilograms along with her.
- ✦ She has already scaled the top six mountain peaks of the six continents of the globe.

Science Tech & Defence

1. ISRO launches Samwad with students to engage them on space science activities

- ✦ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched Samwad with Students as part of its outreach programme. The Indian Space agency will engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme.
- ✦ During the inauguration in Bengaluru , 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools interacted with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan about the Indian Space Programme and their benefits to the common man.
- ✦ The Chairman asked students to study science and mathematics with absolute seriousness which would enable them to take up challenging careers.

2. Centre to introduce Commercial Space Activities Bill in Budget session

- ✦ The Centre is likely to introduce a Bill to commercialise space activities in the budget session next year.
- ✦ It will help the Centre establish a regulatory mechanism through an appropriate body to authorise and license space activities.
- ✦ The bill provides for a non-transferable licence to be provided by the Central Government to any person carrying out commercial space activity.
- ✦ The bill empowers the Central Government to formulate the appropriate mechanism for licencing, eligibility criteria, and fees for the licence.

3. Nasa's New Horizons: 'Snowman' shape of distant Ultima Thule revealed

- ✦ A new picture returned from Nasa's New Horizons spacecraft shows it to be two objects joined together - to give a look like a "snowman".

- ✦ The US probe's images acquired as it approached Ultima hinted at the possibility of a double body, but the first detailed picture from Tuesday's close flyby confirms it.
- ✦ The event set a record for the most distant ever exploration of a Solar System object. The previous mark was also set by New Horizons when it flew past the dwarf planet Pluto in 2015.

4. MoU between Indian Army and PNB

- ✦ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Army and PNB on the Defence Salary Package.
- ✦ The signing ceremony was chaired by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar and was attended by top dignitaries of PNB headed by Mr Naveen Kumar.
- ✦ A number of additional facilities have been incorporated in the MoU after concerted efforts. The Army hopes this MoU will benefit a large number of serving and retired Army personnel who have accounts with PNB and also provide them an opportunity to access modern banking facilities.

5. SpaceX launches 10 Iridium Communications Satellites

- ✦ A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket carrying 10 Iridium Communications satellites has blasted off from California.
- ✦ SpaceX will try to land the Falcon's first stage on an autonomous vessel floating in the ocean.
- ✦ The payload is the eighth and final set of satellites to be launched as Iridium replaces its entire globe-circling fleet with next-generation orbiters. Deployment of the satellites is scheduled to be completed a little over an hour after liftoff.

6. SpaceX Dragon Returns to Earth After 2nd Space Station Delivery

- ✦ SpaceX's fourth Dragon capsule to make two trips to the International Space Station successfully returned to Earth overnight, with splashdown confirmed in the Pacific Ocean.
- ✦ The SpaceX-CRS-16 Dragon successfully delivered more than 2,500 kilograms (5,600 pounds) of cargo to the space station and orbited Earth for five weeks.
- ✦ The International Space Station is a habitable artificial satellite, in low Earth orbit.

7. Japan launches Epsilon-4 rocket with 7 satellites

- ✦ Japan successfully launched the Epsilon-4 rocket carrying seven satellites from the Uchinoura Space Center in Kagoshima.
- ✦ The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency or JAXA shouldered the cost of the launch, which adds up to roughly USD 50 million, to encourage space exploration by the private sector, reports NHK World.
- ✦ In fact, the largest satellite has been successfully placed in orbit shortly after take-off at an altitude of 514 kilometres.

8. ISRO to launch two unmanned space missions in 2020 and 2021

- ✦ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that it will send two unmanned mission to space in December next year and in July 2021.
- ✦ Country's first manned space flight - Gaganyaan - will send three humans into space for seven days by December 2021. Dr Sivan said ISRO's unmanned test missions for Gaganyaan in 2021 will carry humanoids not animals.
- ✦ Dr Sivan said 32 planned missions including Chandrayaan-2 are in the pipeline. He said Chandrayaan-2 is a complex and challenging mission and it will land near south pole.

9. BHEL, Libcoin to build India's first lithium-ion battery plant: Govt

- ✦ State-run BHEL and Libcoin are in talks to form a consortium to initially build a 1GWh lithium-ion battery plant in India.
- ✦ The plant's capacity will be scaled up to 30GWh in due course.
- ✦ BHEL will be sending a team of senior officers for study of the facilities, R&D infrastructure and other techno-commercial issues soon.

10. Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurates Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor

- ✦ Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor, taking a step forward to boost indigenous production of defence equipment.
- ✦ Total investments worth over Rs 3,038 crore in this defence corridor were announced during the inauguration.
- ✦ The Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor — also called the Tamil Nadu Defence Production Quad as the nodal cities form a quadrilateral with one of them at the centre — includes Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli as nodes.

11. Microsoft launches e-comm platform for handloom weavers

- ✦ Microsoft India has launched a new e-commerce platform re-weave.in for handloom weavers under its Project ReWeave, part of its philanthropic initiatives.
- ✦ This e-commerce platform will help connect artisans to buyers directly, enabling them to expand to newer customers and markets.
- ✦ The new e-commerce website hosts signature collections created by weaver communities and showcases traditional designs and products created from natural dyes.

Important Days

1. World Hindi Day observed on 10 January

- ✦ World Hindi Day is celebrated on January 10 every year, marking the anniversary of first World Hindi Conference which was held in 1975. The first

World Hindi Conference was inaugurated by the then prime minister Indira Gandhi.

- ✦ Since 1975, the World Hindi Conference has been organised in different countries like India, Mauritius, United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, United States.
- ✦ World Hindi Day was first observed on January 10, 2006. Since then, it is celebrated on January 10 every year.

2. National Youth Day observed on 12 January

- ✦ National Youth Day is celebrated in all over the world on 12 January on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.
- ✦ In 1984 the Government of India declared the day as the National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.
- ✦ The National Youth Day is observed all over India at schools and colleges, with processions, speeches, recitations, music, youth conventions, seminars, Yogasanas, presentations, competitions in essay-writing, recitations and sports on 12 January every year.

3. National Religious Freedom day Observed on 16 January

- ✦ National Religious Freedom Day commemorates the Virginia General Assembly's adoption of Thomas Jefferson's landmark Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom on January 16, 1786.
- ✦ In an age of hyper-partisanship, Religious Freedom Day offers all Americans — religious and nonreligious — an opportunity to celebrate and renew our commitment to
- ✦ safeguarding principles we have historically agreed on: religious liberty and conscience protection.
- ✦ The day marks the anniversary of the passage of the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom, which cut formal ties between the Church of England and the state of Virginia.

4. Army day observed on 15 January

- ✦ Army Day is celebrated on 15 January every year in India, in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa's (then a Lieutenant General) taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher
- ✦ It is in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15 January 1949.
- ✦ Army Day is used to develop the art of encouragement in the people to fight for the country in the critical times.

Awards

1. Swachh Surveksahan award for Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

- ✦ The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation was awarded Best Capital City in the Solid Waste Management in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings.
- ✦ According to a press release, the Swachh Survekshan survey ranks cities on various sanitation parameters.
- ✦ The GHMC was also at the 27th place among 4,041 cities.

2. Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards

- ✦ The Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Awards, the most prestigious annual event in the Indian media calendar, is a recognition of the highest standards of journalism.
- ✦ Home Minister Rajnath Singh Friday presented awards to 29 winners in 18 categories — across print, broadcast and purely-digital — for outstanding work done in 2017.
- ✦ The awards aim to celebrate excellence in journalism, recognise courage and commitment and showcase the outstanding contributions of journalists from across the country.

3. 6 professors take home Infosys Science Foundation awards

- ✦ The global software major's Infosys Science Foundation awarded its Infosys Prize 2018 to six winners, including two Indian Institute of Science (IISc) professors.
- ✦ The winners included IISc professor at its centre for Nano Science and Engineering Navakanta Bhat in Engineering and Computer Science, professor at IISc's Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences SK Satheesh in Physical Sciences.
- ✦ The annual prize aims to celebrate the success of the recipients in science and research by recognising their achievements in the six categories of Engineering and Computer Sciences, Humanities, Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Physical Sciences and Social Sciences.

4. Namita Gokhale wins Sushila Devi Literature Award

- ✦ Writer Namita Gokhale has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".
- ✦ She was awarded in the 'Best Book of Fiction Written by a Woman Author' category at the inaugural edition of Bhopal Literature and Art Festival.
- ✦ The literature festival was inaugurated by the Union Tourism Minister, KJ Alphons, on January 12, at Bharat Bhawan the multi-cultural hub in Bhopal.

5. Detained Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng wins Franco-German human rights award

- ✦ The French and German ambassadors to Beijing have granted a human rights award to a detained Chinese lawyer, with his wife picking up the prize on his behalf.

- ✦ Mr Yu Wensheng - best known for suing the Beijing government over the city's once chronic pollution - was detained in January last year and charged with "inciting subversion of state power".
- ✦ Beijing has stepped up its crackdown on civil society since President Xi Jinping took power in 2012, tightening restrictions on freedom of speech and detaining hundreds of activists and lawyers.

6. WHO Goodwill ambassador Yohei Sasakawa to get Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018

- ✦ Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018 will be conferred on Yohei Sasakawa who is Goodwill Ambassador of the World Health Organization for Leprosy Elimination.
- ✦ The award will be given to Mr Sasakawa in recognition of his work towards the eradication of the disease in India and across the world.
- ✦ Ekal Abhiyan Trust has been chosen for the award for the year 2017 while Akshaya Patra Foundation and Sulabh International will share the award for 2016. Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari bagged the award for 2015.
- ✦ As chairman of The Nippon Foundation, Japan's largest charitable foundation, he is seen as a pioneer in guiding public-interest activities by the private sector in modern Japan.

7. Vinesh Phogat first Indian to be nominated for Laureus World Sports Awards

- ✦ Asian Games gold medallist Vinesh Phogat has become the first Indian athlete to earn a nomination in one of the seven main categories of the Laureus Sports Awards
- ✦ She was nominated due to her comeback after battling a long injury lay-off to win a gold medal at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games and Jakarta Asian Games.
- ✦ She had become the first Indian woman wrestler to win the yellow metal in wrestling at the continental meet.

8. PM Modi Wins First Ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award For "outstanding Leadership And Selfless Service".

- ✦ Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award, which focuses on the triple-bottom-line of 'people, profit and planet'. It is an award which is offered annually to the leader of the nation.
- ✦ Modi was selected for his "outstanding leadership and his selfless service towards India, combined with his tireless energy has resulted in extraordinary economic, social and technological advances in the country".
- ✦ The Philip Kotler Presidential Award is constituted to honour mastery in the field of marketing and management.

9. President to confer Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 at Rashtrapati Bhawan

- ✦ The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind will confer the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019 at Rashtrapati Bhawan.

- ✦ The awards will be given to 26 shortlisted awardees including one joint award for National Child Award (now renamed as Bal Shakti Puraskar) under the category of innovation, scholastic, sports, arts & culture, social service and bravery.
- ✦ A total of 783 applications were received for the Baal Shakti Puruskar this year. 2 individuals and 3 institutions will also be awarded under National Child Welfare Awards category (now renamed as BalKalyanPuraskar).

Obituaries

1. Veteran actor-writer Kader Khan passes away at age of 81

- ✦ Veteran actor-writer Kader Khan passed away due to prolonged illness at the age of 81 on December 31.
- ✦ As a screenwriter, Khan frequently collaborated with Manmohan Desai and Prakash Mehra. His films with Desai include "Dharam Veer", "Ganga Jamuna Saraswati", "Coolie", "Desh Premee", "Suhaag.
- ✦ Born in Kabul, Khan made his acting debut in 1973 with Rajesh Khanna's "Daag" and has featured in over 300 films.

2. Veteran Kannada actor C H Loknath passes away

- ✦ Veteran Kannada actor C H Loknath passed away at a private hospital in Bengaluru . He was 91.
- ✦ Loknath ,popularly known as 'Uncle' in the industry has acted in about 650 movies and performed in over 1,000 plays in his career spanned almost six decades.
- ✦ He acted in several notable movies like 'Samskara' 'Naagara Haavu, 'Bangarada Manushya', 'Pushpaka Vimana' and 'Bhootayyana Maga Ayyu, which was based on Gorur Ramaswamy Iyengar's short stories 'Vayyari.'

3. Sachin Tendulkar's coach Ramakant Achrekar passes away

- ✦ Dronacharya awardee cricket coach Ramakant Achrekar, who is credited with shaping the early career of Sachin Tendulkar, died.
- ✦ Best known for being the childhood coach of Tendulkar, who has always acknowledged him as his mentor, Achrekar was also a Padmashri awardee.
- ✦ Besides Tendulkar, he also coached some prominent players in Vinod Kambli, Pravin Amre, Sameer Dlghe and Balwinder Singh Sandhu.

4. Former Maharashtra Minister Shivajirao Deshmukh dies

- ✦ Veteran Congress leader and Maharashtra's former legislative council chairman Shivajirao Deshmukh passed away in Mumbai after a prolonged illness. He was 84.
- ✦ Deshmukh was first nominated to the state's legislative council in 1996.
- ✦ Before that, he was elected to the legislative assembly on four occasions. He was elected unopposed as the chairman of the legislative council three times.

5. Mary Oliver, Pulitzer prize-winning poet, dies aged 83

- ✦ Mary Oliver, the Pulitzer prize-winning poet whose rapturous odes to nature and animal life brought her critical acclaim and popular affection, has died.
- ✦ Author of more than 15 poetry and essay collections, Oliver wrote brief, direct pieces that sang of her worship of the outdoors and disdain for greed,
- ✦ One of her favorite adjectives was “perfect”, and rarely did she apply it to people. Her muses were owls and butterflies, frogs and geese, the changes of the seasons, the sun and the stars.

6. CIA officer who inspired Oscar-winning film Argo dies, aged 78

- ✦ A former CIA technical operations officer who helped rescue six US diplomats from Iran in 1980 and was portrayed by Ben Affleck in the film Argo has died at the age of 78.
- ✦ He had suffered from Parkinson’s disease, according to the statement.
- ✦ Specialising in covert operations, Mendez helped devise the plan under which six diplomats who were in hiding were disguised as a Canadian film crew so they could board a flight and escape the country amid the Iran hostage crisis.

Books and Authors

1. Vice President Releases the book titled ‘Universal Brotherhood Through Yoga’

- ✦ Addressing the gathering after releasing the book ‘Universal Brotherhood through Yoga’ the Vice President said that Yoga has the power to bring in the essential transformation required to change the way people live, think and interact with fellow human beings.
- ✦ The Vice President said that an understanding of the underlying theory and Philosophy of Yoga was essential for any practitioner to appreciate Yoga in its true sense.
- ✦ The group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices ingrained in Yoga allows people to practice self control, exercising dominion over senses and of helps in maintaining balance, he added.

Sports

1. India's Smriti Mandhana named ICC women's cricketer of the year

- ✦ India's Smriti Mandhana was crowned women's cricketer of the year by the sport's world governing body, capping off a prolific run-scoring season for the opener.
- ✦ The left-handed batswoman was also named ODI cricketer of the year for accumulating 669 runs off 12 one-day internationals. She scored 622 runs in 25 T20 matches this year.

- ✦ Mandhana, 22, is only the second Indian woman to win an International Cricket Council award after fast bowler Jhulan Goswami who was named the women's player of the year in 2007.

2. Virat Kohli beats Sachin Tendulkar to become the fastest to reach 19000 international runs

- ✦ Virat Kohli beats Sachin Tendulkar to become the fastest to reach 19000 international runs
- ✦ Virat Kohli has beaten his idol Sachin Tendulkar as the quickest batsman to 19,000 international runs. The Indian skipper reached the milestone in 399 innings while Sachin did it in 432.
- ✦ The comparisons between Tendulkar and Kohli have been in discussions among cricket fans and pundits for the past couple of years at least.
- ✦ The 30-year-old Delhi lad ended 2018 with a total of 2735 international runs, which comprised 11 hundreds, to cap-off another stellar calendar year.

3. Arunima Sinha, First Female Amputee To Scale Mt Everest Now Climbs Mt Vinson In Antarctica

- ✦ Setting a first-of-its-kind record, Indian mountaineer Arunima Sinha became the first female amputee to climb Mount Vinson, the highest peak of Antarctica.
- ✦ She was also the world's first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest in 2013.
- ✦ She was congratulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who called her "the pride of India" for distinguishing herself through her "hardwork and perseverance"

4. Virat Kohli Leads India to First-Ever Test Series Win In Australia

- ✦ A dominant India won their first-ever Test series in Australia by a margin of 2-1 after play in the fourth and final Test in Sydney was abandoned due to rain.
- ✦ Australia were still trailing by 316 runs when the match was called off as a draw, ending India's 71-year wait after wins in Adelaide and Melbourne. It is the first time India managed the feat since they began touring Australia in 1947-48.
- ✦ Consequently, Virat Kohli became the first Indian as well as the first Asian captain to win a Test series in Australia.

5. Mohamed Salah once again named African Footballer of the Year

- ✦ Mohamed Salah has been named African Footballer of the Year for a second successive year.
- ✦ The Egypt forward edged the same two players last year in a vote decided by the technical directors and head coaches of 56 Caf member associations.
- ✦ Among other awardees, Houston Dash and South Africa forward Thembi Kgatlana was named Women's Player of the Year.

6. 8-year-old Kartik Singh becomes youngest to win Junior World title in golf

- ✦ Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.
- ✦ Kartik is well known all across DLF Golf and country club for his dedication and hard work.
- ✦ He started playing Golf three years ago, when he accompanied his father to a match and was spotted by the coaches there. He has the best hand-eye coordination.

7. Chennai's Gukesh crowned world's second youngest grand master

- ✦ Tamil Nadu lad D Gukesh became the second youngest Grand Master in the world and the youngest Indian to achieve the feat at 12 years, seven months and 17 days, erasing the mark set by his state-mate R Praggnanandhaa in June last year.
- ✦ He achieved his third and final GM norm at the ongoing 17th Delhi International Open Chess tournament in Delhi after beating compatriot D K Sharma in the ninth round. Gukesh becomes India's 59th Grand Master.
- ✦ Ukraine's Sergey Karjakin remains the youngest-ever GM, having achieved the feat at the age of 12 years and seven months in 2002.

8. Indian boxing's first CWG gold-medallist Mohammed Ali Qamar named women's chief coach

- ✦ Mohammed Ali Qamar, the man who won India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal in boxing, has taken over as chief coach for the country's women pugilists, becoming the youngest ever to get the top job.
- ✦ Ali Qamar, who turns 38 in a couple of months' time, was appointed to the position, replacing veteran Shiv Singh. Ali Qamar has been an assistant coach in the national camp for more than a year.
- ✦ Arjuna Awardee has helmed the Railways Sports Promotion Board's women's team for more than three years

9. Virat Kohli-led India become first team to win bilateral series across formats versus Australia Down Under

- ✦ Yuzvendra Chahal returned to ODIs with a bang as he bagged a career-best 6 for 42 to help India fold Australia for a score of just 230 runs in the series decider at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).
- ✦ It was India's first win in the format since 1947 that includes a total of 12 tours to the nation.
- ✦ The win also made India the first nation since South Africa in 2008/09 to win both the Test and ODI series on a tour of Australia.

10. Bengaluru Raptors win Premier Badminton League

- ✦ Bengaluru Raptors edged the Mumbai Rockets 4-3 to win their maiden Premier Badminton League title.

- ✦ World No. 18 Anders Antonsen lost narrowly to the Bengaluru skipper Srikanth when the two faced off in that battle at the beginning of this week.
- ✦ Bengaluru Raptors have become the fifth team after Chennai Smashers, Delhi Dashers, Hyderabad Hotshots and Hyderabad Hunters to win the title.

11. Khelo India Youth Games: Maharashtra finish top with 228 medals

- ✦ The Khelo India Youth Games concluded in Pune with the hosts Maharashtra walking away with the overall trophy.
- ✦ They amassed 228 medals, comprising 85 gold, 62 silver and 81 bronze. Haryana, were second with 62 gold, 56 silver and 60 bronze for a total of 178 medals, while Delhi were third with 48 gold, 37 silver and 51 bronze for a total of 136 medals.
- ✦ The glittering Trophy was presented to the Maharashtra sportspersons and officials by Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar, and Maharashtra's Minister of Sports and Youth Welfare, Vinod Tawde, at a closing ceremony held at the Shree Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex.

12. Mohammed Shami becomes fastest Indian to reach 100 ODI wickets

- ✦ Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian to claim 100 wickets in One-day Internationals, reaching the mark in the opening match against New Zealand here.
- ✦ Shami's wicket number 100 was New Zealand opener Martin Guptill, who played onto his stumps a delivery that moved in after pitching on a good length.
- ✦ Shami is part of arguably India's best ever fast bowling attack in Test matches. In 2018, Shami picked up 47 wickets in 12 games with two five-wicket hauls. He is also an integral part of the one-day squad.



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