

CURRENT AFFAIRS CAPSULE (JANUARY 2019)

INTERNATIONAL

US, Israel quit UNESCO citing bias

The United States and Israel officially quit the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with the close of 2018.

Qatar will cease to be a member of OPEC

Qatar will cease to be a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. The country had sent an official notification to the OPEC expressing its wish to pull out and to focus on its liquefied natural gas production in December.

Ireland to seek EU aid over Brexit

Ireland government stated that it will seek hundreds of millions of euros in aid from the EU if Britain crashes out of the EU without a deal.

Pakistan abolishes visa on arrival for Afghans

Pakistan abolished the long-standing facility of visa on arrival for Afghan nationals.

France to ban participation in unauthorised protests: PM

French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe has announced plans to punish people who hold unsanctioned protests after seven weeks of anti-government unrest.

India takes over operations of Chabahar port in Iran

India has taken over operations of the strategic Chabahar port in the Sistan-Balochistan province of Iran's southern coast. This is the first time India will be operating a port outside its territory.

India, Norway to collaborate on SDGs, ocean economy

India and Norway agreed to closely collaborate on ocean economy and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, while also vowing to step up cooperation in combating terrorism. The two countries signed an MoU for holding an India-Norway Ocean Dialogue and decided to establish a joint task force on blue economy.

Iran proposes a new regional forum for West Asia

In a diplomatic initiative to address the lingering conflicts and mistrust in the Gulf region, Iran has proposed a new platform called Persian Gulf Regional Dialogue Forum for regional peace building.

British Parliament rejects Brexit deal

British Prime Minister Theresa May suffered a crushing defeat in Parliament over Brexit deal.

Antarctica ice melting 6 times faster than 40 years ago

According to a new study, the ice in Antarctica is melting six times faster than it did 40 years ago. This acceleration of the ice loss is a clear indication of human-caused climate change.

UK PM Theresa May wins no-confidence vote

British Prime Minister Theresa May has won a confidence vote, a day after her government suffered a parliamentary defeat over her Brexit deal with the European Union (EU). Ms. May won by 325 votes to 306 - a majority of 19, averting a general election.

India signed long term contract with Uzbekistan for supply of Uranium

India has signed a long-term contract with Uzbekistan for supply of uranium ore concentrates to widen its source base for the nuclear fuel.

India and Mongolia Sign a Powerful MoU at ICMEI

The Embassy of Mongolia and International Chamber of Media and Entertainment Industry (ICMEI), India have further strengthened the relationship between India and Mongolia by signing a MoU in the field of art and culture.

Palestine took over the Chair of the Group of 77 (G-77) for 2019 from Egypt

Palestine took over the chairmanship of the Group of 77 from Arab Republic of Egypt.

India to host 14th session of the Conference of Parties to UNCCD

India will host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to address the issue of land degradation and desertification which will have participation from over 100 countries.

World Economic Forum begins in Davos

The annual meet of the World Economic Forum (WEF) begun in Davos, Switzerland. World leaders from across the globe will assemble to the ski resort town on the Swiss Alps for five days to discuss issues related to global economy.

India signs 11 MoUs with Afghan government worth \$9.5 million

India has signed 11 MoUs valuing \$9.5 million with Afghanistan. The MoUs signed were for infrastructure, public services such as health clinics and governance related projects.

Venezuela announces breaking off diplomatic ties with US

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has announced that he is breaking off diplomatic ties with the United States after his American counterpart Donald Trump recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido as the South American country's interim President.

Thailand to hold first general election on March 24

Thailand will hold a general election on March 24. It will be the first polls since a military coup in May 2014.

India, Maldives agree to continue close cooperation on maritime security, counter-terrorism & medical cooperation

India and Maldives have agreed to continue their traditionally close cooperation on issues of maritime security, counter-terrorism and medical cooperation.

EU nations put Venezuela's Maduro on notice

European Union diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini has said that EU will take further actions if new elections are not called in Venezuela in the coming days.

Turkey aims to form safe zones in Syria for refugees to return

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said that his country is aiming to form safe zones in northern Syria so that Syrian refugees hosted by Turkey could return to their home country.

US, Taliban agree to preliminary peace framework

U.S. and Taliban officials have agreed to an initial framework for a peace deal that could lead to the withdrawal of American forces in Afghanistan.

Syria signs long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran

Syria has signed a long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran. This new agreement covers the industrial, agricultural, service, infrastructure and energy sectors among others.

Macedonia renamed as 'The Republic of Northern Macedonia'

The Parliament of Macedonia has passed the resolution to amend the constitution of the country to rename it as the Republic of Northern Macedonia.

NATIONAL

Lok Sabha passes Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill

The Lok Sabha passed the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Bill. It amends the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and replaces the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018.

The Bill is aimed at revamping medical education regulatory system in the country

ASI declared 6 monuments of national importance in 2018

The 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra, and two Mughal-era monuments in Agra – Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana are among the six monuments declared protected and of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 2018.

The ancient Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district; the Group of Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's Bolangir; and the Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district, Uttarakhand, are the three other monuments that have been listed.

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

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has launched Samwad with Students as part of its outreach programme.

Cabinet approves restructuring of National Health Agency as the National Health Authority

The Union Cabinet has approved the restructuring of National Health Agency as the National Health Authority for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri - Jan Arogya Yojana.

Consensual physical relationship between live-in partners not rape, says SC

The Supreme Court of India has held that consensual relations between live-in partners does not amount to rape in case the man fails to marry the woman due to circumstances beyond his control.

Cabinet approves amendment to Trade Unions Act, 1926

The Cabinet has approved amendment to the Trade Unions Act, 1926 to make provisions regarding recognition of trade unions. The approval will facilitate recognition of Trade Unions at Central and State level.

RTE amendment Bill passed in Parliament

Parliament has passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, with the Rajya Sabha approving it. The bill was passed to abolish the no-detention policy in schools.

Parliament passes NCTE amendment Bill

Parliament has passed the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, with the Rajya Sabha approving it. The bill seeks to grant retrospective recognition to Central and State institutions which had conducted teacher education courses without approval by the Council.

Govt to honour outstanding young entrepreneurs with National Entrepreneurship Awards

The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will host third edition of the National Entrepreneurship Awards in New Delhi.

Oil PSUs sign pact with IIT-Bombay to set up centre of excellence

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up Centre of Excellence in Oil, Gas and Energy was signed between Director, IIT Bombay and CMDs of PSU Oil Companies and EIL.

NGT imposes Rs 100 Cr fine on Meghalaya govt

The National Green Tribunal has imposed a fine of 100 crore rupees on Meghalaya government for its failure to curb illegal coal mining in the state.

LS passes Bill to amend Aadhaar Act

The Lok Sabha passed a Bill to amend the Aadhaar Act and two related laws which will allow individuals to offer voluntarily biometric ID as a means of identity verification for obtaining services such as opening a bank account and getting a mobile phone connection.

New Delhi World Book Fair's 27th edition kick-starts

The 27th edition of the New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF) began at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The Book Fair's theme is "Books for Readers with Special Needs".

Fourth edition of Swachh Survekshan launched

The fourth edition of the annual cleanliness survey was launched in New Delhi. The Swachh Survekshan 2019 will be conducted across 4,237 towns and cities.

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 at Siri Fort Auditorium II, New Delhi.

Govt allocates Rs 10,900 cr for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next 4-years: ISRO Chairman

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Dr K Sivan has said that the Union Government has allocated 10,900 crore rupees for the development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in the next four years.

Govt will soon make linking Aadhaar mandatory with driving licences

Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has said, the union government will soon make it mandatory for linking Aadhaar with driving licences.

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.

Hydro projects of 5,950 MW stalled

According to the Central Electricity Authority estimates, as many as 16 hydro power projects of 5,950 MW capacity are stalled due to financial constraints and other reasons.

4th Edition of Raisina Dialogue to begin in New Delhi

The fourth edition of the Raisina Dialogue will begin in New Delhi.

The theme of the Dialogue this year is "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes".

HRD introduces 70-point grading index to assess quality of school education in states

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has introduced a 70-point grading index to assess the quality of school education offered by states.

Lok Sabha passes Constitution 124th Amendment Bill, 2019 to provide 10% quota in jobs, education for economically weaker sections in General category

The Lok Sabha has passed the Constitution 124th (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to provide ten per cent

reservation to economically backward sections (EWS) in the General category.

The bill facilitates reservation for EWS in direct recruitments and admission in higher educational institutions.

Lok Sabha passes DNA technology Bill

The Lok Sabha has passed the DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill that allows the use of the technology to establish the identity of persons in matters of crime, parentage dispute, emigration or immigration and transplantation of human organs.

Polavaram enters Guinness Book of Records

The Polavaram project in Andhra Pradesh has entered the Guinness Book of World by pouring 32,100 cubic metres of concrete in 24 hours.

Private FM channels allowed to carry All India Radio news

Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore has launched 'Sharing of All India Radio News with Private FM broadcasters' in New Delhi. Private FM channels can now carry All India Radio News free of cost on trial basis up to 31st May this year.

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. The bridge across the Siang river at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named Byorong Bridge.

Cabinet approves re-promulgation of triple talaq ordinance

The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to re-promulgate the ordinance making instant triple talaq a criminal offence.

Cabinet approves establishment of three new AIIMS

The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of three more All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS to boost healthcare infrastructure in the country. Two of them will be set up in Jammu and Kashmir's Samba and Pulwama district. The third AIIMS will be set up at Rajkot in Gujarat.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency and CPWD sign MoU on promoting energy efficiency in buildings

The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU), kick starting cooperation in building energy efficiency.

Six States sign agreement for Renukaji Multipurpose Dam Project

An agreement for Renukaji Dam Multipurpose Project will be signed among the states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. The project is aimed at meeting the drinking water needs of these states.

ISRO announces Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru

In a step closer to making India's maiden human mission to Space a reality, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced the setting up of Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru with Unnikrishnan Nair as its head.

West Bengal exits Ayushman Bharat scheme

The government of West Bengal has decided to exit from the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana.

National clean air programme launched

The Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan has launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). The programme aims to tackle the challenge of increasing pollution in the cities and towns.

NIC Command and Control Centre Inaugurated

The Minister for Electronics and IT (MeitY) Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated the National Informatics Centre (NIC)'s Command and Control Centre (CCC) and its Centre for Excellence in Artificial Intelligence.

10% reservation for economically weak in general category comes into force

The Act providing 10 per cent reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) among upper caste came into effect.

'Women of India Organic Festival' organized by WCD Ministry begin at Leisure Valley, Chandigarh

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is organizing the three-day 6th 'Women of India Organic Festival' at Leisure Valley, Chandigarh, to celebrate and promote women farmers and entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India.

National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 launched

Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col Rajyavardhan Rathore launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 at a function in New Delhi.

IMBEX 2018-19

India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19, has begun at Chandimandir Military Station which houses the headquarters of the Western Command.

Sikkim CM launched 'One Family, One Job' scheme

Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling launched the 'One Family One Job' scheme, under which for every family one government job has been allotted, in Gangtok. New recruits were taken for Group C and Group D posts in 12 departments.

Madras HC forms committee to weed out invasive plant species

The Madras High Court has set up an expert committee to find a solution to root out invasive species of plants from the Western Ghats.

Gujarat becomes the first state to implement 10% quota for General Category

Gujarat has become the first state to implement the 10% reservation for economically weaker sections of the general category.

Government drafts five-year action plan to address drug abuse in the country

The government has drafted a five-year action plan to address the problem of drug and substance abuse in the country.

The National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction, 2018 to 2023, aims to employ a multi-pronged strategy to address the issue.

Government to launch system for predicting thunderstorms

In view of life-threatening thunderstorms and lightning during the pre-monsoon season, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has decided to implement an end-to-end prediction system for predicting thunderstorms or lightning by April 2019.

Government launches global technology challenge to build houses in shorter time

Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched the Global

Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC) among stakeholders, a move aimed at introducing best technologies that seek to construct houses in a shorter period of time with lower cost.

All time high Rs. 61,084 Crores for MGNREGA

The Centre has allocated an additional 6 thousand 84 crore rupees to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, MGNREGA. With this the total allocation for the scheme has reached an all time high of 61 thousand 84 Crore rupees.

Government unveils national air cargo policy

The Union government has unveiled its much-awaited national air cargo policy, which seeks to make India among the top five air freight markets by 2025, besides creating air transport shipment hubs at all major airports over the next six years.

Teachers, academic staff of tech institutes to get 7th Central pay commission benefits

The Union government has approved a proposal to extend the 7th Central Pay Commission benefits to teachers and other academic staff of the state government and government-aided degree level technical institutes.

DD Science and India Science, two science communication initiatives launched

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with Doordarshan (DD), Prasar Bharati has launched two science communication initiatives, DD Science and India Science.

Around two crore devotees take holy dip on Makar Sankranti at Kumbh in Prayagraj

Around two crore devotees took holy dip on the occasion of Makar Sankranti at Kumbh Prayagraj.

This Kumbh bathing Mela will continue for 49 days and conclude on 4th March on Mahashivratri

Bengaluru pipped Hyderabad to top list of worlds most dynamic cities

According to the 6th City Momentum Index, released by property consultant JLL, Bengaluru has emerged as the world's most dynamic city with a robust technology and innovation ecosystem in place.

States cannot pick police chiefs on their own: SC

The Supreme Court of India rejected the pleas made by five States to implement their own local laws for selection and appointment of their State police chiefs. The court said its directions were issued in larger public interest and to protect the police officials from political interference.

ISRO to share its expertise in space sector, train 45 countries in nano-satellite making

India will train participants from 45 countries in nano-satellite making through a new capacity building programme. The programme named Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly and Training by ISRO (UNNATI)

SC relaxes rules to open dance bars in Mumbai

The Supreme Court of India has set aside certain provisions of a law imposing restrictions on the licensing and functioning of dance bars in Maharashtra.

BES EXPO 2019 begins, 25 countries displaying their products at Expo

Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare and TRAI Chairman RS Sharma inaugurated the 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 in New Delhi.

Govt. to move strategic ITBP unit to Leh

Amid growing concerns over the Chinese military build-up

along the eastern side of the country, the union government has ordered moving a strategic Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) command from its current base in Chandigarh to the border of Leh in Jammu and Kashmir.

Government sanctions three new Naval Air Squadrons to be set up in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu

Government has sanctioned three new Naval Air Squadrons to be set up in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

India's 2nd Defence Innovation Hub to come Up in Nashik

Nashik in Maharashtra will be the site of the country's second defence innovation hub after Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu.

BHEL and LIBCOIN to Build India's First Lithium Ion Giga Factory

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Libcoin are in dialogue to form a world class consortium to initially build 1GWh lithium ion battery plant in India.

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.

PM Narendra Modi launches National Museum of Indian cinema in Mumbai

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the National Museum of Indian Cinema (NMIC) in Mumbai.

IIT-H announces launch of full-fledged B.Tech in Artificial Intelligence

Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H) has announced the launch of a full-fledged bachelor's programme in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology from the new academic session, a first for the country and only the third globally.

15th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas begins at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh

The 15th edition of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas has begun at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Around 6,000 NRIs are expected to take part in the three-day event. The theme this year is, 'Role of Indian Diaspora in building New India'.

Universities told to allot quota from this year

The Union government has directed all educational institutions and universities to implement the 10% quota for the poor in the general category from the coming academic year.

Aadhaar is now passport to Nepal and Bhutan

According to a Home Ministry communique, Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 travelling to Nepal and Bhutan.

India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference begins in Mumbai

India Steel 2019 Exhibition and Conference has begun in Mumbai.

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.

Centre constitutes NITI Aayog-led Committee to monitor pricing of drugs

The Union government has constituted a high power committee to monitor pricing of medicines and healthcare products. The committee will be headed by a Niti Aayog member (Health).

The committee will be a recommending body to the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) regarding prices of drugs and health products.

Nation pays homage to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 122nd birth anniversary

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has paid rich tributes to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on the 122nd birth anniversary of the founder of Indian National Army (INA).

Election Commission to host International Conference on Making Elections Inclusive and Accessible

The Election Commission will host an International Conference on making elections inclusive and accessible in New Delhi. This conference is being organized in consonance with the 9th National Voters' Day to be held on January 25.

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

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the recruitment of domestic workers.

Railways to recruit 2.30 lakh employees in 2 years

The Railways will initiate fresh recruitment of two lakh 30 thousand more employees in the next two years. The vacancies are proposed to be filled in two phases.

Cabinet decides to strengthen NE autonomous councils

The Union Cabinet has approved the landmark amendment to Article 280 of the Constitution to increase powers of Autonomous Councils in Sixth Schedule areas of North East. The proposed amendment will give more powers to Autonomous District Councils of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura.

India conducts 'largest coastal security drill'

India conducted its largest coastal defence drill, Exercise Sea Vigil, to test its preparedness along the entire 7,516.6 km-long-coastline and exclusive economic zone of the country.

DRDO launches long range surface to air missile off Odisha coast

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test fired Long Range Surface to Air Missile (LR-SAM) from naval warship INS Chennai.

PM Modi launched Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana under which a group of Indian diasporas will be taken on a government-sponsored tour of religious places in India twice a year.

ISRO tastes first success of 2019

ISRO's PSLV C-44 lifted off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre to successfully place into orbit a military satellite, Microsat-R.

NGT seeks report on solid waste management

Concerned over the lack of action pertaining to the compliance of solid waste management across the country, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has summoned the Chief Secretaries of all States and Union Territories from March 1 onwards.

Centre issues advisory to release undertrial prisoners who have served half of their maximum punishment

Home Minister Rajnath Singh has said that the Centre has issued an advisory to release undertrial prisoners who have served half of their maximum punishment provided under the law.

Drinking alcohol, cooking on Goa beaches can now attract fine

Drinking (alcohol) or cooking in public on the beaches in Goa will soon attract a fine of ₹2,000 or imprisonment up to three months.

Centre to renovate, develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across country

The Centre has decided to renovate and develop around 400 abandoned airstrips across the country to strengthen air-connectivity.

Jharkhand is the first state in the country where an MOU was signed to develop one such abandoned air strip at Dhalbhumgarh.

Disability, war injury pension for armed forces personnel shall be minimum Rs 18,000 per month: Def Min

Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that the disability or war injury pension, special family pension and liberalised family pension shall be minimum Rs. 18, 000 per month for Defence Forces pensioners, with effect from 1st of January 2016.

Centre to take up highway projects worth Rs 50000 Cr to decongest Delhi

Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari has said that works worth 50 thousand crore rupees have been sanctioned for road projects around Delhi.

Centre aims to make Tamil Nadu a Defence, Aerospace hub: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that Centre aims at making Tamil Nadu a hub for aerospace and defence industries.

India's fastest indigenous train renamed as Vande Bharat Express

India's fastest indigenous train which will run from Delhi to Varanasi has been named as "Vande Bharat Express". Earlier it was named Train 18 and now it has been given a new name after taking suggestions from the general public.

'Samantha Express' covering places linked to Ambedkar & Buddha to run from Nagpur on April 14

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is running a special Bharat Darshan Tourist Train named "Samantha Express" in memory of the revered leader, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar covering the prominent places associated with his life and that of Lord Buddha.

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

Information and Broadcasting Ministry has decided to revise the advertisement rates offered by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) to private TV channels. The revision would lead to an increase in rates of around 11 per cent over the rates of 2017 in respect of most of the private TV channels.

ICAR's 'Kisan Gandhi' tableau wins first prize at R-Day parade

The ICAR tableau in the Republic Day Parade has won the first prize for its Kisan Gandhi theme.

Tripura bagged the first prize for the state tableau while tableau from Jammu and Kashmir was adjudged the second and Punjab won the third prize.

Nation pays homage to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary

India pays homage to Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on his 71st death anniversary on January 30. He was assassinated on this day in 1948 and this day is also observed as Martyrs' Day.

Centre's nod to Rs. 7,214 cr. disaster relief

The Union Home Ministry headed by Rajnath Singh has approved the release of Rs. 7,214 crore from the National Disaster Relief Fund to six States and a Union Territory for damage caused by natural calamities during the kharif season 2018-19.

Rajasthan Zika strain is endemic to Asia, says new study

According to a new study, the Zika virus that infected 159 people in an outbreak in Rajasthan last year, could have been circulating in India for several years and is endemic to Asia.

NGMA to organize 1st edition of Night at the Museum

National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) New Delhi will organize the first edition of Night at the Museum.

Centre enhances fellowship of PhD students

The Centre has enhanced the fellowship of PhD students and other research personnel enrolled in any area of science and technology, including Physical and Chemical Sciences, Engineering, Mathematical Sciences, Agricultural Sciences, Life Sciences, Pharmacy etc with effect from 1st January this year.

Land acquisition: Centre seeks Constitution Bench

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has agreed to look into an oral request from the Centre to set up a Constitution Bench for expeditious disposal of issues relating to amendments in the Land Acquisition Act.

SC begins automatic listing of fresh cases

The Supreme Court of India has launched its new system of automatic listing of fresh cases within three to seven days in a bid to do away with the system of mentioning of matters for urgent listing every day.

Gorkha Brigade Contingent chosen as Best Marching Contingent in RD Parade 2019

The Gorkha Brigade Contingent has been chosen as the Best Marching Contingent among the three services in this year's Republic Day Parade. CRPF Marching contingent has been adjudged Best Marching Contingent among paramilitary forces and other auxiliary marching contingents.

BANKING

Govt infuses about Rs 11,000 capital in four public sector banks to enhance lending capacity

The union government has infused 10,882 crore rupees in four public sector banks.

UCO Bank has received 3,074 crore rupees in the equity by way of preferential allotment. Besides, Bank of Maharashtra got 4,498 crore rupees, Syndicate Bank 1,632 crore rupees and Central Bank of India 1,678 crore rupees.

Credit flow to agriculture increased by 57 per cent: Govt

The Union Agriculture Ministry has stated that the agricultural credit flow was increased by 57 per cent to Rs 11 lakh crore in the last 4 years.

RBI reserves ratio among the highest

Analysis of the balance sheets of the central banks of 10 comparable economies shows that the RBI's reserves as a percentage of its balance sheet is among the highest, a report by consultancy firm Quantum Advisors found.

The RBI's reserves was about Rs. 10.5 lakh crore – form 26.2% its balance sheet.

Loan subsidy for middle-income group extended till March 2020

Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri said that the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, PMAY

loan subsidy for middle-income group has been extended till 31st March 2020. About one lakh beneficiaries have taken benefit of the scheme so far.

Allahabad Bank, SBI Life join hand for bancassurance partnership

State-owned Allahabad Bank has tied up with SBI Life Insurance to sell the policies of the insurer from over 3,200 branches.

Fund raising via NCD surges 3-fold to Rs 29,300-cr in 2018

According to SEBI data, Indian companies raised over Rs. 29,300 crore by issuing non-convertible debentures (NCDs) to retail investors in 2018 to meet their business requirements.

SEBI rules for physical settlement of derivatives

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has directed exchanges to move stock derivatives in a phased manner to physical settlement mechanism based on their respective daily market capitalization averaged for December 2018.

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).

Amitabh Chaudhry takes charge as Axis Bank MD & CEO

Axis Bank announced its Managing Director and CEO Shikha Sharma has retired from the post and Amitabh Chaudhry will be the new managing director and CEO of the bank with effect from January 1, 2019.

France introduced GAFA tax on Global Internet, Technology Firm

France introduced its own tax "GAFA tax" on large internet and technology companies from January 1.

RBI lifts six months ban from Paytm Payments bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed Paytm Payments Bank to restart opening new accounts for its consumers after almost six months of the ban.

RBI provides for One-Time restructuring of loans to MSMEs

Reserve Bank allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt up to Rs 25 crore for the companies which have defaulted on payment, but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets.

U.K. Sinha to head RBI panel on MSME revival

The RBI has appointed an eight-member expert committee headed by former SEBI chairman U.K. Sinha to comprehensively review and propose long-term solutions for revival of the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector.

Hemant Bhargava appointed LIC's Acting Chairman

The union government has appointed Hemant Bhargava, Managing Director, Life Insurance Corporation of India, as the Acting Chairman.

HDFC MF surpasses ICICI Prudential MF to become largest AMC in India

As per the latest data available with Association of Mutual funds in India (Amfi), HDFC Mutual Fund has pipped ICICI Prudential MF to become the country's largest asset management company after a gap of over two years.

Printing of Rs. 2,000 notes reduced to minimum

According to RBI data, the printing of Rs. 2,000 banknotes, introduced post-demonetisation in November 2016, has been reduced to minimum.

NHAI to raise Rs 10,000 cr through Bharatmala bonds
The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans to raise Rs. 10,000 crore through Bharatmala Taxable Bonds in the current fiscal.

Andhra tops ACI's Ease of Doing Business index
In the latest ranking of Asia Competitiveness Institute's (ACI) EDB index for economies of 21 states of India, Andhra Pradesh bagged the top rank in 2018, while Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place, respectively.

Cabinet approves merger of Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda

The Union Cabinet has approved the merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda.

SEBI allows custodial services in commodity market
Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed custodial services in the commodity derivatives market. This move is aimed at enabling the participation of institutional investors such as mutual funds and portfolio managers in the commodity derivatives market.

ICICI Bank, Small Business FinCredit partner to offer loans to MSMEs

ICICI Bank has joined hands with Small Business FinCredit (SBFC) to jointly offer loans worth Rs 1 crore to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

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.

FSSAI asks food businesses to comply with new packaging norms by July 1

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India FSSAI has said food businesses need to comply with new packaging regulations that bar use of recycled plastics and newspapers to wrap food articles by July 1.

SEBI tweaks norms for commodity exchanges

Capital market regulator SEBI has tweaked the disclosure norms for commodity derivatives exchanges by ordering them to disclose the quantum of trading done by farmers and other commodity market participants like millers and wholesalers on the exchange platform.

LS passes New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill

The Lok Sabha passed a bill to set up a new international arbitration centre in Delhi with an aim to make India its hub.

Government 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.

Govt. banks rationalising foreign units

Public sector banks are in the process of closing or rationalising about 69 overseas operations in the next few months as part of their capital conservation exercise. Planned rationalisation of operations and examination of a total of 216 overseas operations of the public sector banks (PSBs) was undertaken last year.

Nepal writes to RBI to declare banned new Indian currency notes legal

Nepal has asked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations

higher than Rs. 100 legal tender in the country. The Nepal Rastra Bank, the country's central monetary authority, wrote a letter to the RBI, asking it to make Rs. 200, Rs. 500 and Rs. 2,000 legal tender in Nepal.

Govt. says GDP to grow at 7.2% for FY19

The government said that India's GDP is expected to rise to 7.2 per cent during 2018-19 compared to 6.7 per cent in the previous fiscal, because of improvement in the performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors.

S&P takes IDBI Bank ratings off CreditWatch

Global ratings agency S&P on Monday affirmed 'BB' long-term and 'B' short-term foreign currency issuer credit ratings on IDBI Bank, while removing them from CreditWatch, after the capital infusion from LIC.

HDFC arm Gruh Finance to merge with Bandhan Bank

Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm of mortgage lender HDFC, will be merged with Bandhan Bank, the newest commercial bank. The move would help the latter to cut promoter stake from 82.3% to 61%.

RBI forms committee to boost digital payments

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted a High-Level Committee on Deepening of Digital Payments to encourage digitization of payments and enhance financial inclusion.

The five-member committee headed by UIDAI's former Chairman Nandan Nilekani.

IBM receives 9,100 patents in 2018; India second highest contributor

IBM inventors from India earned over 800 patents -- the second highest contributor to the company's global record of 9,100 patents in the US in 2018 with nearly half in the fields of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud computing, cyber security, Blockchain and Quantum Computing.

India to become world's third largest consumer market by 2030: WEF

According to a report by the World Economic Forum, India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030.

Indian Economy Expected To Grow At 7.3% In 2018-19: World Bank

The World Bank has forecasted India's GDP (gross domestic product) is expected to grow at 7.3 per cent in the fiscal year 2018-19, and 7.5 per cent in the following two years, attributing it to an upswing in consumption and investment.

RBI issues guidelines for tokenisation of card transactions

The central bank RBI has permitted card networks to offer card tokenisation services to all third-party mobile app providers in a bid to make digital transactions more secure and less prone to hacking-related frauds.

RBI makes changes in gold scheme

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made some changes in the Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS) by including charitable institutions and the Central government, among others.

Apart from individual and joint depositors, the scheme could now be availed by charitable institutions, the Central government, the State government or any other entity owned by the Central government or the State government.

IRCTC offers free travel insurance for air travellers

Air passengers can now avail free-of-cost travel insurance of Rs 50 lakh if they book their tickets through the IRCTC, the catering and tourism arm of the railways.

GST exemption limit doubled to give relief to small businesses

The GST Council has approved doubling of the exemption threshold under Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime to Rs 40 lakh along with raising the turnover limit under composition scheme to Rs 1.5 crore from current Rs 1 crore with effect from April 1.

India allows Iran's Bank Pasargad to open branch in Mumbai

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has announced that India has allowed an Iranian bank, Pasargad Bank, to open a branch in Mumbai.

Ashok Chawla resigned as NSE chairman

Ashok Chawla resigned as chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India Ltd (NSE) with immediate effect "in light of recent legal developments".

India's largest startup ecosystem inaugurated in Kerala

India got its largest startup ecosystem when Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated 1.8-lakh-square-foot facility housing incubation set-ups across a string of segments in modern technology.

Ananth Narayanan steps down as Myntra-Jabong CEO

Ananth Narayanan has stepped down as CEO of Myntra and Jabong to pursue external opportunities. Amar Nagaram has been named as Head, Myntra and Jabong, reporting to Kalyan Krishnamurthy, CEO of Flipkart Group.

Sushil Modi to head committee on GST revenue shortfall faced by states

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi will head the 7-member committee to look into revenue shortfall being faced by the states after the GST roll-out and suggest steps for augmenting collections.

Finance Ministry 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.

RBI announces OMO purchase of government securities on Jan 17

Reserve Bank will inject 10,000 crore rupees into the system through the purchase of government securities on January 17 to increase liquidity. The central bank said in a statement that the purchase will be made through open market operations (OMOs).

Govt forms GoM for GST issues in real estate

The Union Government has constituted a seven-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to boost the real estate sector under the GST regime. Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat Nitin Patel will be the convener of the GoM.

Retail inflation eases to 18-month low in Dec.

According to a report by the government, inflation in December eased at both the retail and wholesale levels.

Growth in the CPI stood at 2.19% in December, down from the 2.33% registered in November.

Inflation as measured by the wholesale price index dropped to an eight-month low of 3.8%, also driven primarily by falling fuel prices.

RBI eases norms for external commercial borrowing

In a bid to improve ease of doing business, the Reserve Bank of India has decided to liberalize external commercial borrowing (ECB) norms.

All eligible borrowers can now raise ECBs under the automatic route replacing the existing sector-wise limits.

The RBI has decided to keep the minimum average maturity period at 3 years for all ECBs, irrespective of the amount of borrowing.

The RBI had capped funds raised via ECBs at 6.5% of GDP, at current market prices.

Govt. to infuse Rs. 6,000 crore in Exim Bank

The union Cabinet has approved an infusion of Rs. 6,000 crore of capital in the Exim Bank of India. The financing will be done through the issuance of recapitalization bonds worth Rs. 6,000 crore by the Centre.

Cabinet gives nod to integrated e-filing project for faster ITR processing

The Union Cabinet has approved expenditure sanction of over 4200 crore rupees for Integrated E-filing and Centralized Processing Centre 2.0 Project. This will help in improving tax payers' awareness and education through continuous engagement.

Saksham 2019 Launched by Petroleum Ministry in New Delhi

Saksham', an annual high intensity one-month long people-centric mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) was launched by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

China revises 2017 economic growth down to 6.8% from 6.9%

China revised its 2017 economic growth down to 6.8 per cent from 6.9 per cent, as it braces for a possibly worse performance in 2018.

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

According to a report by global consultancy firm PwC, India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, to become world's fifth largest economy.

India's economy is poised to pick up this year: IMF

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its World Economic Outlook, has said that India's economy is poised to pick up this year. IMF projected that India will grow at 7.5 per cent this year and 7.7 per cent in 2020.

Nepal's central bank bans use of Indian currency notes

Nepal's central bank has banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations. Under the new regulation issued, Nepali citizens cannot carry these denominations to countries other than India.

BHEL and Libcoin in final talks over Indian lithium-ion battery gigafactory

Indian state majority-owned firm Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and Libcoin are in final stage talks over setting up India's first lithium-ion Gigafactory.

Centre's debt-to-GDP falls, States' rises

The Centre's total debt as a percentage of GDP reduced to 46.5% in 2017-18 from 47.5% as of March 31, 2014. The total debt of the States, however, has been rising over this period, to 24% in 2017-18, and is estimated to be 24.3% in 2018-19.

Anushree Jindal unveils micro finance venture

Anushree Jindal, daughter-in-law of industrialist Sajjan Jindal has launched a micro finance venture named Svamaan Financial Services, initially in two States, Karnataka and Maharashtra, with the aim of expanding into banking services in future.

Moody's upgrades IDBI Bank's rating

Moody's Investors Service has upgraded the IDBI's long term foreign currency senior unsecured rating and its Dubai International Financial Centre (DIFC) Branch to Ba2 from B1, up by two notches.

Ravneet Gill To Replace Rana Kapoor as Yes Bank MD and CEO

Yes Bank has appointed veteran banker Ravneet Singh Gill as its new MD & CEO

SC upholds constitutional validity of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code

The Supreme Court of India has upheld the constitutional validity of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The law bans promoters of bankrupt firms from bidding for insolvent companies.

Jio Phone grabs top spot in handset market

Reliance's Jio Phone has emerged as the leader in the domestic handset market, cornering 21 per cent of it in 2018.

SBI Card and Etihad Guest Tie-up to Launch Premium Card For International Travel

SBI Card and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways, have joined hands to launch a travel-specific Visa credit card for members and Indian travelers.

Tata among 100 most valuable global brands

According to the 2019 Brand Finance Global 500 report, Indian conglomerate Tata Group has entered the list of top 100 most valuable brands. Tata brand is the only Indian brand in the top 100. Tata climbed from 104th position to 86 this year.

India, China sign protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China

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

This will pave the way for revival of Indian tobacco exports to China and prove economically beneficial to Indian farmers.

Mukund Rajan to head new \$1 bn ESG fund

Three former Tata Group executives in partnership with Quantum Advisors will launch a \$1 billion Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Fund which will invest in Indian companies that value the environment, society and corporate governance to the core.

Mukund Govind Rajan, formerly brand custodian and chief ethics officer, the Tata Group, would be the chairman of the JV.

RBI to inject Rs 37,500 crore through OMO in February

The Reserve Bank of India said that it will inject Rs 37,500 crore into the system through purchase of government securities in February to increase liquidity.

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

According to data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Foreign direct investment (FDI) during the previous fiscal grew 18 per cent to Rs 28.25 lakh crore. FDI increased by Rs 4,33,300 crore, including revaluation of past investments.

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

The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called "Aber", which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies.

DIPP rechristened to include internal trade

The Union government has notified changing the name of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) to

the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, and has enhanced its role.

E-way bill data to flow into sales returns

Businesses supplying goods worth more than Rs. 50,000 will have option to include details of e-way bills generated while filing the final monthly sales return under GSTR-1, a move aimed at curbing tax evasion.

AWARDS

Ramnath Goenka award for S. Vijay Kumar

S. Vijay Kumar, Senior Deputy Editor with *The Hindu* in Chennai has been presented the Ramnath Goenka Excellence in Journalism Award for Investigative Reporting (Print category). Awards were presented to 29 journalists across India in various categories.

Andhra Pradesh govt bags CBIP award for Polavaram project

The Andhra Pradesh government bagged the Central Board of Irrigation and Power (CBIP) award for speedy execution of Polavaram multipurpose project on the Godavari river.

Adi Godrej conferred ICSI lifetime award

Industrialist and Godrej Group Chairman Adi Godrej was conferred the ICSIs Lifetime Achievement Award for 'Translating Excellence in Corporate Governance into Reality'.

Namita Gokhale wins Sushila Devi literature award

Writer Namita Gokhale has won the Sushila Devi Literature Award for her novel "Things to Leave Behind".

PM Narendra Modi receives Philip Kotler award

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, received the first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential award in New Delhi. The Award focuses on the triple-bottom-line of People, Profit and Planet.

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

A detained Chinese rights lawyer Yu Wensheng has won the European human rights award for his exceptional contribution to the protection and promotion of human rights.

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.

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.

Dr. Rattan Lal honored with 2019 Japan prize

The Japan Prize Foundation announced India born professor Dr. Rattan Lal, is the recipient of the 2019 Japan Prize for his contributions in the field of "Biological Production, Ecology".

Bharat Ratna CNR Rao chosen for Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials

Eminent scientist and recipient of Bharat Ratna C N R Rao has been chosen for the first Sheikh Saud International Prize for Materials Research by the Centre for Advanced Materials of the United Arab Emirates.

Kohli sweeps ICC awards

Virat Kohli became the first player to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer-of-the-Year, his second consecutive, the ICC Test and the ODI Player-of-the-Year awards following an extraordinary 2018. He was also named captain of the Test and ODI teams.

Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant, was named the Emerging Player of the Year, while Scotland batsman Callum MacLeod took home the associate cricketer of the year trophy.

Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashaschandra conferred with Saraswati Samman for 2017

The 27th Saraswati Samman was conferred upon eminent Gujarati poet Sitanshu Yashaschandra.

Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh Bhupen Hazarika awarded Bharat Ratna

Pranab Mukherjee, India's 13th President has been awarded the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour. Along with Mr Mukherjee, social activist Nanji Deshmukh and music maestro from Assam, Bhupen Hazarika, have been awarded posthumously.

Tamil translation wins Romain Rolland Prize

Munpin theriyathavanin vaazhkai, the Tamil translation of the French novel La vie d'un homme inconnu (The Life of an Unknown Man) by Andreï Makine, has won the prestigious Romain Rolland Prize by the French Embassy at Jaipur Literary Festival.

It was translated by S.R. Kichenamorti, former professor and head of the French Department, Pondicherry University.

India bags Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at New York Times Travel Show 2019

India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019, the largest travel show in North America.

Hindi writer Chitra Mudgal among 24 honoured with Sahitya Akademi Award

Renowned Hindi writer Chitra Mudgal, Dogri writer Inderjeet Kesar, Kannada writer KG Nagarajappa and Kashmiri story writer Mushtaq Ahmad Mushtaq were among 24 writers, who were honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Award 2018. The awards were given for 24 different languages.

Tamil Nadu bags FSSAI award for Swasth Bharat Yatra

Tamil Nadu was declared the 'Best State Overall' for exemplary participation in the Swasth Bharat Yatra, a 100-day consumer outreach programme of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which was launched to amplify its Eat Right India initiative.

Piyush Goyal to receive Carnot prize for power reforms, rural electrification

Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal will receive the Carnot prize from University of Pennsylvania for his contribution towards sustainable energy solutions.

PERSONS IN NEWS

V K Yadav appointed new railway board chairman

V.K. Yadav, General Manager, South Central Railway, has been appointed the new Railway Board Chairman. Mr. Yadav takes over from Ashwani Lohani, who retired.

Sudhir Bhargava sworn in as Chief Information Commissioner

Sudhir Bhargava was sworn in as Chief Information Commissioner in the Central Information Commission.

Justice T B N Radhakrishnan sworn in as Chief Justice of Telangana HC

The Telangana High Court has come into being with justices taking oath. Justice T B N Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the Chief Justice of the Telangana High Court.

Justice Chagari Praveen Kumar sworn in as first Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court

Justice Chagari Praveen Kumar was sworn in as the first Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court in Vijayawada by Governor ESL Narasimhan.

Far right Jair Bolsonaro sworn in as Brazil's president

Far right Leader Jair Bolsonaro has been sworn in as president of Brazil.

Indian-American takes oath as Fort Bend County Judge in Texas

Indian-American KP George has been sworn in as the Fort Bend County Judge, becoming the first person from the community to hold the office of one of America's most diverse counties.

Justice AK Sikri nominated as Executive Chairman of NALSA

Justice AK Sikri has been nominated as the Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) with effect from December 31, 2018.

Tendulkar's coach Achrekar dies at 86

Ramakant Achrekar, the coach who channeled Sachin Tendulkar's cricketing pursuits by turning him from an aspiring fast bowler to a world-beating batsman, has died in Mumbai at the age of 86.

Bengali writer Dibyendu Palit passes away

Renowned Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee Dibyendu Palit died due to age-related ailments.

India's Arunima Sinha becomes first female amputee to climb the highest peak of Antarctica – Mt Vinson

Indian mountaineer Arunima Sinha has become the first female amputee to climb Mount Vinson, the highest peak of Antarctica.

Business tycoon Vijay Mallya declared fugitive economic offender by court

Vijay Mallya became the first Indian businessman to be declared a fugitive economic offender by a special court in Mumbai in a ruling that will likely empower government agencies to confiscate his properties in India and overseas.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim to step down on Feb 1

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim announced that he will step down from his position on February 1 - much before the end of his term in 2022.

Kristalina Georgieva, World Bank CEO, will assume the role of interim President effective 1st of next month.

Gabon coup attempt: Government says situation under control

The political situation in Gabon is "under control" following an attempted military coup. Soldiers in Gabon have reportedly attempted a coup and have ousted President Ali Bongo.

Sheikh Hasina takes oath for third consecutive term

Sheikh Hasina has been sworn in as Bangladesh's Prime Minister for a record fourth term after her Awami League registered a landslide victory in the recent election.

Pranav R Mehta Becomes the First Indian to Head Global Solar Council

Chairman of National Solar Energy Federation, Pranav R Mehta, has taken over as the president of Global Solar Council (GSC). India is placed amongst the Top 5 solar players in the world and is third largest solar market.

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 and met top Chinese officials during which they discussed Sino-India ties.

Historian Sabyasachi Bhattacharya passes away

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, one of Bengal's erudite academics, passed away after prolonged illness.

N. Ram is chief of media body

N. Ram, chairman, THG Publishing Private Limited, has been appointed president of the Alliance for Media Freedom (AFMF), a cross-media advocacy and action group of media organisations, promoters and journalists.

Shivraj, Vasundhara, Raman appointed BJP vice presidents

BJP President Amit Shah has appointed former Chief Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Raman Singh and Vasundhara Raje as the National Vice Presidents of the party.

Maduro sworn in as Venezuela President for 2nd term

Nicolás Maduro was sworn in for a second term as Venezuela's President amid the economic and humanitarian crisis faced by the Latin American country.

Su Tseng-chang appointed as Taiwan PM

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen has appointed Su Tseng-chang as Prime Minister, during a Cabinet reshuffle.

Malala pens new book on Refugee Girls Titled, "We Are Displaced"

Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai pens a new book, titled 'We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World,' charting her experiences traveling the world and visiting refugee camps.

Jaideep Govind appointed Secretary General, NHRC

Jaideep Govind has been appointed the Secretary General of National Human Rights Commission.

Greek PM Tsipras survives confidence vote after Macedonia row

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has survived a confidence vote after a row over a landmark name deal with Macedonia sunk his four-year coalition.

India's Satyarup becomes world's youngest mountaineer to climb 7 peaks, 7 volcano summits

Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta has conquered Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley. With this feat, he became the first Indian and youngest man to climb the seven highest peaks and volcanic summits across all continents.

Mukesh Ambani in top Global Thinkers list of Foreign Policy

Mukesh Ambani has featured in the top Global Thinkers 2019 ranking of the prestigious Foreign Policy publication alongside the likes of Alibaba founder Jack Ma, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos and IMF head Christine Lagarde.

President Kovind approves elevation of Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari to SC

President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the elevation of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari to the Supreme Court of India.

Indian-American named to key panel

Democratic lawmaker Raja Krishnamoorthi has been appointed as a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI), becoming the first

South Asian to serve in the powerful body tasked to strengthen U.S.'s national security.

Senior Advocate Sanjay Jain appointed ASG in Supreme Court

Senior Advocate Sanjay Jain has been appointed Additional Solicitor General of India (ASG) for the Supreme Court.

PM Stefan Lofven elected for a second term in Sweden

In Sweden, Prime Minister Stefan Lofven has been elected for a second term, ending a four-month political vacuum.

Congo court declares Felix Tshisekedi is elected President

Congo's Constitutional Court has declared the election of Felix Tshisekedi as the President and has rejected the challenges to the vote by runner-up Martin Fayulu.

Andry Rajoelina sworn in as President of Madagascar

Andry Rajoelina was sworn in as President of Madagascar at capital city of Antananarivo.

Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Mary Oliver passes away

Mary Oliver, the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet passed away. Oliver is the author of more than 15 poetry and essay collections

Prabhat Singh appointed DG in NHRC

The Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India has appointed Senior IPS Officer Prabhat Singh as Director General (Investigation) in the National Human Rights Commission.

Railways Minister Piyush Goyal given additional charge of Finance Ministry

The Union government has announced it has given Railways and Coal Minister Piyush Goyal the additional charge of the Ministry of Finance while Arun Jaitley recovers his health.

IndiGo appoints Ronojoy Dutta as new CEO

IndiGo owner Inter Globe Aviation has appointed Ronojoy Dutta as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the company with immediate effect.

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Columnist Russell Baker passes away

Russell Baker, the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer who penned thousands of columns for The New York Times, and hosted the PBS television program "Masterpiece Theatre," passed away.

South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa to be Chief Guest at R-Day Parade

South Africa President Cyril Ramaphosa will be the Chief Guest at the Republic Day Parade. He is the second President of South Africa after Nelson Mandela to be the Chief Guest at the parade.

Jnanpith winning Hindi writer Krishna Sobti passes away

Eminent Hindi author and essayist Krishna Sobti passed away. Sobti was known for writing about issues of female identity and sexuality.

Oscar-Winning French Composer Michel Legrand Passes Away

Oscar-winning French composer Michel Legrand has passed away aged 86.

Indian-origin US Senator Kamala Harris launches 2020 presidential bid

Indian-origin US Senator Kamala Harris has launched her 2020 presidential bid.

WHO Reappoints Poonam Khetrpal Singh As South-East Asia Region Director

The World Health Organization appointed Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh as its South-East Asia regional director for a second five-year term.

Suman Kumari is Pakistan's first Hindu woman judge

Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman to be appointed as a civil judge in Pakistan. Ms. Kumari, who hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot in Sindh province, will serve in her native district.

Former Union Minister Fernandes passes away

George Fernandes, who was the defence minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, died following a prolonged illness.

Dilip Sadarangani is chairman of Federal Bank

Dilip Sadarangani has been appointed as Part Time Chairman of Federal Bank.

Sunjay Sudhir appointed as India's envoy to the Maldives

The Ministry of External Affairs has announced that senior diplomat Sunjay Sudhir has been appointed as India's Ambassador to the Maldives.

ICICI Bank sacks Chanda Kochhar

The Srikrishna committee that was tasked to probe the quid-pro-quo transactions in ICICI Bank submitted its report, saying that Chanda Kochhar violated the banks code of conduct.

Punit Goenka named new BARC India chairman

Punit Goenka, managing director and CEO, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd has been elected the new chairman of TV viewership measurement company, Broadcast Audience Research Council India (BARC).

SPORTS

Jasprit Bumrah becomes highest International Wicket-Taker in 2018

Jasprit Bumrah became the highest international wicket-taker across formats in 2018. He took a total of 78 wickets in the calendar year.

Virat Kohli breaks yet another Sachin Tendulkar record in Sydney

Indian captain Virat Kohli broke yet another Sachin Tendulkar record as he became the fastest batsman to reach 19,000 international runs. He got to this feat in the in his 399th innings during the fourth and final Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Pujara faces 1258 balls in Australia series, breaks Dravid's record

Cheteshwar Pujara has faced 1258 balls in the ongoing test series so far against Australia to become the batsman who had faced highest deliveries in a test series in Australia beating India's Former Captain, Rahul Dravid's record of 1203 balls.

Record third Hopman title for Federer

Roger Federer became the most successful player in Hopman Cup history after leading Switzerland to a 2-1 win in an enthralling final of the mixed teams tournament.

India create history, win first ever Test series in Australia

India created history by winning their first ever Cricket Test series on Australian soil after beating the home team 2-1 as the fourth and final Test ended in a tame draw due to inclement weather.

Egypt to host 2019 Africa Cup of Nations

Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations between 15th June and 13th July.

Hockey India removed Harendra Singh as coach of India Men's Team

Indian men's hockey coach Harendra Singh was sacked from the position and offered the task of helming the junior squad by the national federation.

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.

USA Cricket announced as ICC's 105th member

The United States of America Cricket was welcomed as the 105th member of the International Cricket Council.

Players selected from Khelo India to be given Rs 5 Lakh scholarship

The Khelo India Youth Games 2019 kicked off in Pune with cultural programmes. 1,000 players will be selected out of competitions in the current edition of Khelo India and they will be given Rs 5 lakh each per annum for the next 8 years for development of their sporting talent.

IWF president named as Chef de Mission for Tokyo Olympics

President of the Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWF), Birendra Prasad Baishya, has been named Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Mary Kom attains number one position in AIBA rankings

M C Mary Kom has attained number one position in the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) latest world rankings. She became the most successful boxer in world championships' history when she claimed the 48kg category top honours in Delhi in November last year.

Bihar spinner Ashutosh Aman breaks Bishan Bedi's 44-year old record

Bihar left-arm spinner Ashutosh Aman etched his name in record books, surpassing the great Bishan Singh Bedi as the highest wicket-taker in a Ranji Trophy season after claiming his 65th scalp.

Virat Kohli, Ravi Shastri receive honorary membership of Sydney Cricket Ground

India skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri received the honorary membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) for their contribution to the sport of cricket.

Albie Morkel retires from all forms of cricket

Albie Morkel, the South African all-rounder, announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.

Bengaluru Raptors won 1st ever PBL title

Bengaluru Raptors have won their first ever Premier Badminton League, PBL title.

Kartik Singh becomes youngest Indian to win junior world title

Gurgaon's 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under-8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organized by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.

Shakil Ahmed sets world record in indoor rowing

Asian Cup gold medalist Shakil Ahmed has added one more feather to his cap when he set up a world record in indoor rowing by completing one lakh metres in above-40 years category in Kolkata.

Manu Sawhney named new ICC CEO

Manu Sawhney has been named as the new chief executive officer of the International Cricket Council (ICC).

CWG gold medalist Mohammed Ali Qamar becomes youngest India women's boxing coach

Mohammed Ali Qamar, India's first Commonwealth Games gold medal winner in boxing, has taken over as chief coach for the country's women pugilists.

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

Tamil Nadu lad D Gukesh has become 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.

Ivo Karlovic becomes oldest man in over 40 years to win a match at Australian Open

Ivo Karlovic became the oldest man to win a match at the Australian Open in over 40 years as he defeated Poland's Hubert Hurkacz, a man 18 years his junior, to reach the second round.

Vinesh nominated for a Laureus

Ace wrestler Vinesh Phogat has become the first Indian to receive a nomination in one of the seven main categories at the prestigious Laureus World Sports Awards to be held here on February 18.

India won Bilateral Series in All Formats in Australia

India defeated Australia in the third ODI to clinch the three-match series 2-1. With this, India became the first visiting side to win a bilateral series (two or more matches) in all three formats in Australia.

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. Maharashtra won 228 medals.

Mumbai Marathon: Cosmas Lagat, Worknesh Alemu clinch men's, women's titles

Cosmas Lagat of Kenya and Worknesh Alemu of Ethiopia won the men's and women's crowns in the Tata Mumbai Marathon in Mumbai.

Mohammed Shami is the fastest Indian bowler to reach 100 ODI wickets

Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian to claim 100 wickets in One-day Internationals in his 56th match against New Zealand.

Botha announces immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket

Former South Africa all-rounder Johan Botha has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket.

CoA of BCCI lifts suspensions on Hardik Pandya, KL Rahul

Committee of Administrators of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has lifted the suspension on Hardik Pandya and KL Rahul.

Naomi Osaka wins Australian Open Grand Slam Singles title

In Tennis, Japan's Naomi Osaka won her maiden Australian Open Grand Slam Singles title at Melbourne.

Indonesia Masters: Saina wins after injured Marin limps out of final

Saina Nehwal won her first Indonesia Masters title after

three-time world champion Carolina Marin limped out of the final due to a leg injury.

Novak Djokovic beats Rafael Nadal to win his seventh Australian Open title

Novak Djokovic has defeated Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open Men's Singles title at Melbourne.

India's Kartik Sharma wins New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship

India's Kartik Sharma has won the New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship in Australia.

Malaysia stripped of world para swim event over Israel stance

Malaysia has been stripped of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships for threatening to refuse to allow Israeli athletes to take part.

New Zealand Cricketer Ewen Chatfield Retires At 68

New Zealand fast bowler Ewen Chatfield, who is also known as 'The Naenae Express', has decided to hang up his boots at the ripe age of 68.

Denmark's Antonsen wins men's single title at badminton Indonesia Masters

Danish player Anders Antonsen won his first ever Indonesia Masters after defeating world number one Kento Momota of Japan to claim the 2019 title.

ATP Rankings: Novak Djokovic leads the table

Novak Djokovic strengthened his grip at the top of the men's ATP Tennis ranking following his victory over Nadal in the Australian Open final.

Hockey veteran Bhola passes away

Hockey Olympian and former India selector Group Captain Raghbir Singh Bhola passed away. Bhola was a member of the Indian team at two Olympics in 1956 and 1960 — winning gold and silver respectively.

MISCELLANEOUS

Devastating storm Usman leaves 68 dead in the Philippines

At least 68 people have died in a tropical storm Usman in the Philippines. The storm has resulted in heavy rain and triggered deadly landslides hit the Bicol region in Manila.

Pakistan, India exchange list of nuclear installations

India and Pakistan exchanged the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations between them.

China building advanced warships for Pakistan

China is building the first of four most advanced naval warships for Pakistan as part of a major bilateral arms deal to ensure among other things balance of power in the strategic Indian Ocean.

World Braille Day celebrated on January 4

The world Braille Day is being celebrated on January 4 every year. The day is marked remembering the birth anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille - for the people with visual disabilities.

China develops its own 'Mother of All Bombs

China has developed a massive bomb, said to be the country's answer to the US-built 'Mother of All Bombs', the most powerful non-nuclear weapon.

Chinese lunar rover named as 'Yutu 2'

China has named the lunar rover, successfully deployed to carry out a string of experiments on the unexplored far side of the moon, as 'Yutu 2'. The rover's touchdown is part of China Chang'e-4 lunar probe.

Saudi women to be texted on divorce

In a new regulation that took effect, Saudi Arabia courts will notify women by text message when they get divorced.

Egypt opens West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital

Egypt has opened West Asia's largest cathedral in its New Administrative Capital, 45 kilometres east of Cairo.

India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List Of Most Powerful Passports: Report

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.

World Hindi Day celebrated on 10th of January

World Hindi Day is celebrated on 10th of January every year to promote the greatness of Hindi.

January 12: National Youth Day

National Youth Day is celebrated in India on 12 January on the birthday of Swami Vivekananda.

EIU Democracy index 2018: Norway tops, India ranks 41st

Norway topped and India has ranked at 41st place on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Global Democracy Index. Iceland and Sweden are followed by Norway.

US partial govt shutdown becomes longest on record

The partial shutdown of the US government has become the longest on record, with still no end in sight to the political standoff.

It reaches its 22nd day, overtaking the previous record - the 21-day shutdown in 1995-96 under then-President Bill Clinton.

National Army Day – January 15

71st Army Day is being celebrated on January 15 2018. It is celebrated every year to commemorate the day when General (later Field Marshal) KM Cariappa took over the command of Army from General Sir FRR Bucher.

India moves up in global universities ranking with 49 institutions in list, 25 in top 200

According to the London-based Times Higher Education (THE), India has improved its showing in the prestigious university rankings of Times Higher Education Emerging Economies with 49 institutions making it to the list, including 25 in the top 200.

Japan Launches Satellite for World's 1st Artificial Meteor Shower

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

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

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has announced that the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro will be the World Capital of Architecture for 2020.

China population growth continued to slow in 2018

China's population rose by 15.23 million people in 2018, marking a continued decrease in the growth rate of the world's most populous nation.

India among the most trusted nations globally: Report

According to the 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report, India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media. India was at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.

Indians biggest supporters of international aid: WEF global survey

According to a survey released by the World Economic Forum, Indians have emerged as the biggest supporters of international aid, with a global public opinion survey putting India on the top when it comes to people expecting their nation to help other countries.

India moves up one position to rank 80th on the global talent competitive index

According to a report released by INSEAD business school in partnership with Tata Communications and Adecco Group, India has moved up one position to rank 80th on the global talent competitive index.

Switzerland continues to top the list.

India ranks at 54th position among most innovative countries

According to Bloomberg 2019 Innovative Index, India has been placed at 54th position among the world's most innovative countries. It is for the first time that India has made it to the rankings.

South Korea has retained the top spot with a score of 87.38.

India 4th most attractive investment market for global CEOs: PwC survey

India has emerged as 'the rising star' by surpassing the UK to become fourth most attractive destination, for Global CEO's.

JNPT becomes India's only port to be ranked among world's top 30

As per the latest Lloyds Report, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has become India's only port to get listed among the top 30 global container ports. JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking.

India spurs global growth in public funding for neglected disease R&D

According to the 11th annual G-FINDER report, Indian public funding for research and development (R&D) in neglected diseases increased significantly in 2017, growing by ₹135 crore or 38%, contributing to the strongest global growth since 2009.

Nari Shakti is Oxford dictionary's Hindi word of the year 2018

The Oxford Dictionaries announced 'Nari Shakti' as the Hindi Word of the Year.

India signs agreement with OECD for participation in PISA 2021

The Human Resources Development Ministry has signed an agreement with Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for India's Participation in Programme for International Student Assessment- PISA 2021.

Dubai airport retains top position as world's busiest

Dubai International Airport has retained its position as the world's busiest airport for international passengers for the fifth consecutive year.

India improves its global corruption ranking in 2018

According to the rankings released by an anti-corruption watchdog, India has improved its ranking on a global corruption index in 2018 by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41.

Denmark is the least corrupt country.

India Replaces Japan To Become Second-Largest Crude Steel Producer

According to World Steel Association's report, India has replaced Japan as world's second largest steel producing country.

China is the largest producer of crude steel accounting for more than 51 % of production.

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

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has opened a new centre in partnership with the UN to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa.

The new centre is located near the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in central Rome.

Armed forces celebrate Veterans Day on January 14

The Armed Forces celebrates the Veterans Day on January 14th. The objective is to honor the veterans of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura celebrating their statehood day on January 21

Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura are celebrating their statehood day on January 21st.

National Girl Child Day being observed on January 24

National Girl Child Day is being observed on January 24 every year. The theme for this year is 'Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow'.

25th January: National Voters Day

25 January is celebrated every year as National Voters Day to spread awareness about the necessity of voting and to encourage young generation towards the voting rights. National Voters Day Theme 2019 is "No Voter to be left behind".

Nation celebrates its 70th Republic Day

The nation celebrated its 70th Republic Day with a grand military parade and exhibition of its history, cultural diversity and strategic weaponry at Rajpath in New Delhi.