

G.K. CAPSULE

IBPS CLERK MAINS 2018-19

PART-II



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» Current Affairs

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NATIONAL NEWS

- **Train 18 is India's fastest: Country's first engine-less train crosses 180 kmph speed limit during trial run**
 - India's first locomotive-less train or Train 18 breached the 180 kmph speed limit during a test run.
 - Train 18 breached the 180 kmph speed limit in the Kota-Sawai Madhopur section. In the process, the Rs 100 crore indigenously designed train has become the country's fastest train.
 - It is about 15-20 per cent energy efficient and leaves less carbon footprint.
 - The train sports an advanced regenerative braking system which saves power.
- **The first ever Swadesh Darshan Project in the state of Nagaland to be inaugurated**
 - Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha Project” will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Shri Neiphiu Rio, in the presence of Union Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism.
 - This is the first project to be implemented in the state under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
 - Swadesh Darshan scheme is one among the flagship schemes of the Ministry of Tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country in a planned and prioritised manner.
- **MHA Introduce ‘A Handbook for Students on Cyber Safety’ to Aware Students & Adolescents About Online Crimes & Threats**
 - In a bid to increase the awareness of cyber crimes and threats, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has come out with a booklet on cyber safety for school students and teenagers.
 - This cybersecurity steps can be accessed online [cybercrime .gov. in](http://cybercrime.gov.in).
 - As per the directions of Supreme court of India, MHA last year set up a Cyber and Information Security Division (C&IS) to check the rapid growth of cyber-crimes and cyber threats.
- **Delhi government launches common mobility card for buses, metro trains**
 - The Delhi government launched a common mobility card which can be used by people for travelling in metro trains, DTC and cluster buses.
 - The minister along with Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) Managing Director Mangu Singh launched the 'rebranded' common mobility card named 'ONE'.
- **Cabinet approves Amendment of the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951**
 - The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the Amendment of the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951.
 - The decisions aims to suitably amend the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 so as to secure representation as Trustees
 - The proposed Amendment will empower the Government to terminate and replace a Trustee to participate in functioning of the Trust or for any other reason.

➤ **NITI Aayog Launches Global Hackathon On Artificial Intelligence**

- NITI Aayog organises hackathons to source sustainable, innovative and technologically-enabled solutions to address various challenges in the development space.
- NITI Aayog organized its first hackathon, 'MoveHack' in August, on the sidelines of the Global Mobility Summit 2018, with the aim of garnering cutting-edge mobility applications.
- The 'AI 4 All Global Hackathon' was announced at the AI conference organized by NITI Aayog, in partnership with the ORF, held in Mumbai in November 2018.

➤ **Delhi HC bans online sale of medicines**

- The Delhi High Court has ordered a ban on the sale of medicines online by e-pharmacists across India and has directed the Delhi government and the Centre to put the order into effect immediately
- The order was passed by Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice VK Rao, acting on a PIL filed by Zaheer Ahmed, a New Delhi-based dermatologist.
- The Union Health Ministry in September had put out draft rules on sale of drugs online, aiming to regulate the sale across India and make medicines available from select authentic online portals.

➤ **Jammu And Kashmir Becomes First State To Bring Law Against "Sextortion"**

- Jammu and Kashmir has become the first state in the country to have a law banning sexual exploitation of women by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant.
- The State Administrative Council (SAC) under the chairmanship of Governor Satya Pal Malik approved the 'Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018' and the 'Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018'
- The Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018 seeks to amend the Ranbir Penal Code, whereby specific offence under section 354 E is being inserted to provide for the offence of 'Sextortion'.

➤ **President's Rule imposed in Jammu and Kashmir after 22 years**

- The central government imposed President's rule in Jammu and Kashmir starting from December 20, 2018, as the Governor's rule expires in the state six months after it was imposed.
- President's rule was first imposed in the state in 1986, whereas the previous instance of President rule was 22 years ago.
- According to Indian Constitution, President's Rule is the imposition of Article 356 of the India Constitution on a state which gets incapable of running the constitutional machinery.

➤ **Railways launches new EMU train with 130 kmph speed**

- The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) rolled out the mini version of Train 18 as it launched the new generation Mainline Electrical Multiple Unit (MEMU) with underslung equipment and some features from the Train 18.
- Train 18, a creation of the ICF is India's first modern semi-high speed train set which is currently under speed trials.
- Train 18 had many first time features including underslung propulsion that enabled the clearing of entire on-board space for passengers thus increasing the number of passengers.

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- **GST Council cuts rates on 17 items, 6 services; rationalises 28% slab**
 - The Goods and Services Tax Council cut rates on 17 items and six types of services during its 31st meeting, leaving only one common use item — cement — in the 28% bracket.
 - Seven items that saw tax rates being slashed from the 28% bracket are certain vehicle parts used in agriculture, monitors and TVs up to 32 inches, retreaded tyres, power banks, digital cameras, videogame consoles (all from 28% to 18%), and parts and accessories for the carriages for disabled persons.
 - Four items, mainly to do with cork, saw their tax rates cut from 18% to 12% and 5%. Another four items saw rates cut from 12%, and two from 5%.
- **PM Narendra Modi releases Rs 100 coin in memory of Atal Bihari Vajpayee**
 - Narendra Modi released a commemorative coin worth Rs 100 in honour of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who died in August this year.
 - The commemorative coin features the Emblem of India on the front face. The words Satyamev Jayate are inscribed below the Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar in Devanagari script. Also inscribed on the coin are the words 'Bharat' in Devanagari and 'India' in Roman script.
 - The reverse side of the coin features a portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his name inscribed in both Devanagari and Roman.
- **PM Opens India's Longest Railroad Bridge In Assam's Bogibeel**
 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened the Bogibeel railroad bridge in Assam, billed as India's longest railroad bridge. Its foundation was laid in 1997.
 - The five-kilometre structure spans the waters of the mighty Brahmaputra River. Bogibeel bridge will connect Assam's Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts, bordering Arunachal Pradesh.
 - It will cut the travel time between the two points by four hours and help avoid a 170-km detour.
 - With its proximity to the China border, the bridge also has tremendous significance for India's defence and has been built strong enough to support the movement of tanks and even fighter jet landings.
- **Govt extends ban on import of milk products from China for 4 months**
 - The government has further extended the ban on import of milk and its products, including chocolates, from China for four months till April 23 next year.
 - The ban was first imposed in September 2008 and later extended from time to time.
 - The ban was imposed on apprehensions of presence of melamine in some milk consignments from China. Melamine is a toxic chemical used for making plastics and fertilisers.
- **Lok Sabha clears Triple Talaq Bill as opposition walks out**
 - The Parliament passed the historic triple talaq bill that penalises the archaic practice of instant triple talaq after a charged up five-hour debate in the Lok Sabha.
 - On a day when leaders across the benches accused each other of playing to their vote bank, the government asserted that the bill was urgently needed as triple talaq was a rampant menace despite the ordinance.
 - Finally, the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2018 will supersede the previous bill passed on December 28, 2017 and will go to the Rajya Sabha for approval.
- **Railways develops robot powered by artificial intelligence to check for faults in trains**
 - The Indian Railway's Central Zone has developed a robot powered by artificial intelligence to take pictures and record videos of the under-gears of trains and send them to engineers for repairs and maintenance.
 - The mechanical branch of Central Railway's Nagpur division has developed the robot, which has been named USTAAD, an acronym for Undergear Surveillance Through Artificial Intelligence Assisted Droid.
 - It will use a high-definition camera to scrutinise parts of train coaches in real time and transmit them over a WiFi connection.

➤ **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.

➤ **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.

➤ **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.

➤ **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.

➤ **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.

STATE NEWS**➤ Manipur Assembly Passes Anti-Mob Violence Bill**

- The Manipur assembly has passed a bill which recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence, if it results in the death of a person.
- Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, who also holds charge of the home department, moved the ‘The Manipur Protection from Mob Violence Bill, 2018’ in the state Assembly.
- The bill was passed by the assembly unanimously. The Assembly also passed the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2018 unanimously.

➤ Tamil Nadu: India’s first music museum to be set up in Thiruvaiyaru

- The country’s first music museum will be set up with assistance from the Central government in Thiruvaiyaru, Tamilnadu, the birth place of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinities of Carnatic music.
- This was announced by the State Minister for Culture and Tamil Development Shri K Pandiarajan in Madurai.
- The Tyagaraja Aaradhana Music Festival which is held annually in January in Thiruvaiyaru attracts musical talents from all over the world.

➤ National Children’s Science Congress Begins In Bhubaneswar

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated 26th edition of National Children’s Science Congress in Bhubaneswar in which as many as 800 students from ten Asian and seven Gulf countries are participating.
- It is for the second time that the National Children’s Science Congress is being organized in Odisha. Earlier, the mega event was held in 2015.
- Odisha government is focusing on developing scientific temper among students by organizing events and setting up science parks and planetariums at district levels.

➤ AIIB Clears \$400 million loan for water supply project in Andhra Pradesh

- The board of Beijing-headquartered Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank’s (AIIB) has approved a \$400-million loan for a water sanitation project in Andhra Pradesh, taking the overall exposure of the bank to India to \$2 billion spread over nine projects. India is the second largest shareholder of the bank after China.
- The new project is expected to have a positive impact on women and girls in affected communities, the bank said in a statement.
- The project will also reduce health risks and health expenditures for women in Andhra Pradesh.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS**➤ Trump signs trade pact with Canada and Mexico to replace Nafta**

- Donald Trump and the leaders of Canada and Mexico signed a revised North American trade pact, a deal that fulfills a key political pledge by the US president but faces an uncertain future in the US Congress.
- The US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is meant to replace the 24-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta), which Trump has long denigrated as a “disaster”.
- The deal requires ratification by all three countries legislatures before taking effect.

- **President Kovind to embark on 4-day visit to Myanmar**
 - President Ram Nath Kovind will be on a four-day visit to Myanmar.
 - The visit is expected to maintain the momentum generated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Myanmar in September last year and the visit of Myanmar State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to New Delhi in January this year.
 - Through this visit, the President will reaffirm India's commitment to developing an important partnership with Myanmar.
 - He will also visit various development projects funded by India. Myanmar is a country where India's "Act East" and "Neighbourhood First" policies intersect.
- **India signs bilateral annual Haj agreement with Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage next year**
 - India signed the Bilateral Annual Haj 2019 Agreement with Saudi Arabia for the pilgrimage next year at Jeddah.
 - At the event, Naqvi said the Saudi government has always played an active and effective role to ensure safety and better facilities to Indian Haj pilgrims, which strengthened bilateral relations.
 - India-Saudi Arabia relations have achieved newer heights under the leadership and guidance of Saudi Arabia's King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
 - The Haj Committee of India has received more than 2.47 lakh applications for Haj next year of which around 1.36 lakh were online, Naqvi said, adding of the total number of applicants, 47 per cent are women.
- **Nepal government bans use of Indian currency notes above Rs 100**
 - The Nepal government has banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations in the country, The government said Rs 100 notes can be used in the country.
 - This move will affect Nepali workers in India and Indian tourists. The Nepal government is also making preparations to celebrate 2020 as the "Visit Nepal Year"
 - The announcement was made by Nepal's Minister for Information and Communications Gokul Prasad Baskota.
- **Kannur International Airport Now Open, First Flight Goes To Abu Dhabi**
 - Union Minister Suresh Prabhu and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Kannur international airport, taking the total number of international airports in Kerala to four.
 - The first flight from the airport, an Air India Express flight with 180 passengers to Abu Dhabi, was flagged off by the chief guests.
 - The three other international airports in Kerala are in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode.
- **West Jerusalem as Capital of Israel recognized by Astralia**
 - Israel signalled displeasure on Sunday with Australia's recognition of West Jerusalem as its capital, with a confidant of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying it was a mistake to gainsay Israeli control over the whole city.
 - Israel captured Arab East Jerusalem in a 1967 war and annexed it as its capital in a move not recognized internationally. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as capital of the state they hope to found in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip.
 - Both Israel and the Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital.
- **India ranks 108th in WEF gender gap index 2018**
 - India has been ranked 108th in World Economic Forum (WEF) gender gap index, same as 2017, while recording improvement in wage equality for similar work and fully closing its tertiary education gender gap for the first time.
 - As per the WEF's Global Gender Gap Report 2018sub index.,while India has many challenges as it ranks 142nd out of 149 countries in the economic opportunity and participation
 - The global list was topped by Iceland having closed more than 85.8 per cent of its overall gender gap. Iceland holds the top spot in the index for the 10th consecutive year.

- **India, South Korea agree to increase bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030**
 - India and South Korea explored new avenues of Korean investment in India's infrastructure modernisation, and agreed to intensify their efforts to increase bilateral trade to USD 50 billion by 2030.
 - They also shared concerns that terrorism in all its forms is a "global scourge" and resolved to combat it through coordinated regional and global efforts.
 - The Indian side also extended an invitation to South Korea to join the International Solar Alliance as South Korea as an indispensable partner in India's 'Act East' policy.
- **UN General Assembly adopts global framework on International migration**
 - The UN General Assembly has adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the first-ever negotiated global framework on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions.
 - It is meant to address issues that concern the world's 258 million people on the move and countries of origin, transit and destination.
 - The compact was adopted by the General Assembly with 152 votes in favour in Marrakesh, Morocco, on December 10.
- **Burundi names Gitega as new capital**
 - Burundi declared the small central city of Gitega the country's new political capital in line with a presidential promise made a decade ago.
 - A government spokesman named Gitega while also stating that the previous capital Bujumbura, on the north-eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, would in future function solely as the country's economic centre.
 - Capital-Gitega, Currency-Euro
- **1st meeting of Follow-up Committee for implementation of Trilateral Chabahar Agreement held**
 - The first meeting of the Follow-up Committee for implementation of the Trilateral Chabahar Agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran was held in the port city of Chabahar in Iran.
 - India Ports Global Limited company opened its office and took over operations at Chabahar on this occasion.
 - They agreed on the routes for the trade and transit corridors between the three countries. It was agreed to finalise at the earliest the Protocol to harmonize transit, roads, customs, and consular matters.
- **Thailand becomes 1st country in Southeast Asia to legalize medical marijuana**
 - Thailand's legislature agreed to amend the country's drug law to allow the licensed medical use of marijuana, as well as kratom, a locally grown plant traditionally used as a stimulant and painkiller.
 - Thailand is the first country in Southeast Asia to take such action, which is also under consideration in neighboring Malaysia.
 - New Zealand's government earlier this month enacted a law liberalizing the medical use of marijuana, which had previously been tightly restricted.

ALL INDIA TOPPERS FROM IBT

SUBHOJIT CHAKRABORTY SBI-PO - 2016 Roll No: 38407295966  	VIPAN PRITMANI RBI ASSISTANT - 2016 Roll No: 2630701471  	LOVE GUPTA SSC CGL - INSPECTOR Roll No: 2201295176  	AASTHA SIHAG SSC CGL - INSPECTOR Roll No. 2201399971  	VIKAS MEENA DMRC Roll No. 1130709957  
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- **India takes over operations of Iran's strategic Chabahar Port, can bypass Pak on way to Afghanistan**
 - India formally took over operations at Chabahar port in Iran, giving a major boost to the country's efforts to support war-torn Afghanistan, people familiar with developments said.
 - Iran formally handed over the port to India during a first meeting of the follow-up committee for the implementation of the Chabahar Agreement between Iran, Afghanistan, and India in the port city Tehran.
 - The meeting discussed matters such customs tariffs, promoting customs transactions and rail transit, and the transportation process.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Sri Lanka's disputed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa resigns, Ranil Wickremesinghe new PM of Srilanka**
 - Sri Lanka's disputed Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has stepped down from his post, signalling an end to a weeks-long political crisis that has kept the Indian Ocean nation without a functional government.
 - Rajapaksa signed a letter of resignation in front of supporters and journalists at his private residence in the country's capital, Colombo
 - Ranil Wickremesinghe, Father of Modern Democracy MP became the current Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, and has served as Leader of the United National Party since 1994. He was first elected Member of Parliament for Colombo District in 1977.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

➤ Delhi Government launches Free Pilgrimage Scheme for senior citizens

- Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwalla launched the 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana' which offers free travel packages for senior citizens from Delhi to five religious circuits. 1,100 senior citizens from every constituency of Delhi will be able to avail this facility at one go.
- Under this free pilgrimage scheme, a Delhi resident above 60 years will be eligible to take free pilgrimage along with his or her spouse.
- The scheme was approved by the Delhi Government on July 9, 2018. Earlier, the Delhi Cabinet had on January 8, 2018 approved the Revenue Department's proposal to begin with the Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana.

STATE GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

➤ Assam govt announces 3 schemes for farmer's welfare

- Assam government has announced three schemes for the welfare of farmers. The schemes are the Assam Farmers' Credit Subsidy Scheme (AFCSS), Assam Farmers' Interest Relief Scheme (AFIRS) and Assam Farmers' Incentive Scheme (AFIS).
- The state Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said all three schemes will cover five lakh farmers in the first phase.
- He said the state has 27 lakh agricultural households and the AFCSS scheme would benefit 2.62 lakh families of farmers.
- Under AFCSS, whatever amount of loan the farmers took from banks and whatever amount they repaid, 25 per cent of the money will be reimbursed by the state government.

➤ Jharkhand Announces Rs 2,250-Crore Scheme to Help Farmers

- Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das announced a Rs 2,250-crore scheme to help 22.76 lakh medium and marginal farmers of the state double their income by 2022.
- The state government will give Rs 5,000 per acre to 22.76 lakh medium and marginal farmers from the next financial year.
- Under the new Mukhya Mantri Krishi Yojana, Rs 2,250 crore will be spent. The scheme will start from the 2019-20 financial year.

➤ Andhra, Himachal and Madhya Pradesh best performing states under maternity benefit programme

- Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were the top three performing states under the maternity benefit programme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.
- Minister of State for the Women and Child Development Ministry Virendra Kumar said the PMMVY is a centrally-sponsored scheme under which the cost sharing ratio between the Centre, states and the Union Territories with the legislation is 60:40.
- According to the finding, 51.70 lakh beneficiaries are covered annually under the PMMVY.

➤ Atal Ayushman Yojana launched in Uttarakhand

- Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana has been launched in the hill state. Under the scheme, each household in the state will be able to avail medical treatment of up to 5 lakh rupees annually.
- The scheme will benefit 23 lakh households and cover 1,350 critical diseases. Launching the Yojana in Dehradun, Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat distributed scheme-related golden cards to beneficiaries.
- He also signed Memoranda of Understanding with private hospitals and announced that soon free of cost OPD facilities will be available for children and elderly people in the state.

BANKING NEWS**➤ India's economy grows at 7.1 per cent for 2nd part of 2018-19**

- India's economy grew at 7.1 per cent for the second quarter of 2018-19 according to data released by Central Statistics Office(CSO).
- The CSO estimates state that GDP at constant prices was 33.98 lakh crore rupees for second quarter this fiscal, which is a marked increase from 31.72 lakh crore rupees for the same period in 2017-18.
- He further stated that the government's focus on simplifying India's business and investment eco-system has greatly improved India's economic health in the recent past.

➤ Government of India and Asian Development Bank Sign \$85 Million Loan to Support Odisha Skill Development Project

- The Asian Development Bank(ADB) and the Government of India signed a 85 million dollar loan to improve the skill development eco-system in Odisha
- The signatories to the Odisha skill development project were Sameer Kumar, Department of Economic affairs, Ministry of Finance.
- The Project will improve the quality and industry- relevance of the state's TVET programs by making them relevant to industry and demand driven and will impart advanced occupation.

➤ World Bank unveils USD 200 bn in climate action investment for 2021-25

- The World Bank has unveiled 200 billion US Dollars in climate action investment for 2021 to 2025, adding that this amounts to a doubling of its current five-year funding.
- The World Bank said, the move represents a significantly ramped up ambition to tackle climate change and sends an important signal to the wider global community to do the same.
- In the 2018 fiscal year, running from July 2017 to June 2018, the World Bank had committed USD 20.5 billion to climate action, compared with an annual average of USD 13.5 billion for the 2014-2018 period.

➤ Fitch slashes India growth forecast to 7.2% on reduced credit availability

- Fitch Ratings slashed India's GDP growth forecast to 7.2 per cent for current fiscal, from 7.8 per cent projected in September, citing higher financing cost and reduced credit availability.
- In its Global Economic Outlook, Fitch estimated India's GDP growth to be 7 per cent and 7.1 per cent in financial years 2019-20 and 2020-21 respectively.
- The 7.2 per cent GDP growth for current fiscal is substantially lower than 7.8 per cent and 7.4 per cent projections made by Fitch in September and June respectively.

➤ India to retain top position in remittances with \$80 billion:World Bank

- India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with its diaspora sending a whopping USD 80 billion back home.
- India is followed by China (USD 67 billion), Mexico and the Philippines (USD 34 billion each) and Egypt (USD 26 billion).
- The Bank estimates that officially-recorded remittances to developing countries will increase by 10.8 per cent to reach USD 528 billion in 2018. This new record level follows a robust growth of 7.8 per cent in 2017.

➤ **Jana Small Finance Bank Launches Jana Bankable Debit Card**

- Jana Small Finance Bank launched the offer-loaded, Jana Bankable Debit Card. Jana Small Finance Bank is the official sponsor of BCCI for all the cricket matches that are played in India.
- This card is designed for cricket fans who like deals and offers on online shopping, gym membership, health & wellness products, food delivery, music and travel on top brands like Snap Fitness, Snapdeal, Gaana.com, IXIGO, Myntra, Crocs, Puma and GrowFit.
- With plethora of benefits and Indian cricketers' images on the card, this Debit Card is the first-of-its-kind debit card from Jana Small Finance Bank.

➤ **Bandhan Bank surges 6% as RBI allows it to open 40 new branches**

- Bandhan Bank shares surged over 6 tradeas the Reserve Bank of India allowed Bandhan Bank to open as many as 40 new branches, the first time since it put a restriction on the bank's branch opening spree three months back.per cent in early
- RBI had come down heavily on Bandhan Bank in the last week of September for its failure to bring down promoters' stake to 40 per cent as per the licensing agreement.
- Bandhan Financial Holdings (BFHL) is owned by Bandhan Financial Services (BFSL). The promoter holding in the bank currently stands at 82.28 per cent.

➤ **Sebi eases norms around cyber security ops for small market intermediaries**

- Market regulator SEBI relaxed guidelines pertaining to setting up cyber security operations centre for small market intermediaries as they lack knowledge in cyber security.
- The decision has been taken after discussions with market participants, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).
- Under new framework, Small intermediaries can utilize services of market Security Operations Center (SCO) which will be set up by the Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIS).

➤ **Capital First, IDFC Bank rally 5% on merger to create IDFC First Bank**

- Capital First and IDFC Bank shares rallied 5 percent intraday after the both companies announced completion of their merger on Tuesday. Both shares had also gained 5 percent each in previous session.
- The board of IDFC Bank approved the appointment of V Vaidyanathan, founder and chairman of Capital First Ltd, as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the merged entity.
- According to the merger agreement, shareholders will receive 139 shares of IDFC Bank for each 10 shares held of Warburg Pincus-backed Capital First.

➤ **Karnataka Bank partners with Paisabazaar.com for home loans**

- Paisabazaar.com, India's largest online marketplace for financial products, and Karnataka Bankannounced a strategic partnership to offer the bank's home loan product to customers on the Paisabazaar platform.
- Through this partnership, consumers will now be able to choose and apply for a home loan from Karnataka Bank, directly through the Paisabazaar platform.
- Paisabazaar.com works with 30 partners for its home loan product, which includes India's biggest private and public banks and HFCs

➤ **RBI to soon release new Rs 20 currency note**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will soon introduce a new Rs 20 currency note with additional features, according to a document of the central bank.
- The central bank has already issued new look currency notes in the denominations of Rs 10, Rs 50, Rs 100, and Rs 500, besides introducing Rs 200 and Rs 2,000 bank notes.
- According to the RBI data bank, there were 4.92 billion pieces of Rs 20 note in circulation as on March 31, 2016. The number more than doubled to about 10 billion pieces by March 2018.

➤ **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.

➤ **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.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND HEALTH

➤ **After a two-year journey, a NASA spacecraft arrives at its target asteroid**

- One of NASA's deep-space probes, OSIRIS-REx, arrived at the space rock it's been traveling toward for the last two years, an asteroid named Bennu.
- OSIRIS-REx came within about 12 miles (20 kilometers) of the asteroid, which is closer than ever before.
- Bennu is near-Earth carbonaceous asteroid about the size of a small mountain in the Apollo group. It was discovered in September 1999 by the LINEAR Projects.

➤ **India's Most Powerful Satellite, 'The Big Bird', Launched Successfully**

- Indian Space Research Organisation or ISRO's GSAT-11 satellite also called the "Big Bird " was successfully launched into space from the French space port of Kourou in South America.
- The satellite, launched at 2.07 am (IST), will help provide satellite-based internet to remote places where cable-based internet cannot reach.
- The "Big Bird" has cost about Rs. 600 crore. The ariane-5 heavyweight rocket was hired from Arianespace by ISRO. The satellite is expected to have a life span of 15 years.

➤ **SpaceX launched 64 satellites in record-breaking mission**

- SpaceX delivered 64 satellites into orbit in one fell swoop for a record-setting mission.
- It marked one of the largest satellite ride-sharing missions ever launched and the most crowded single mission in US history, according to Spaceflight, SpaceX's customer for the launch.
- The latest version of SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket, called Block 5, is designed to fly as many as 100 times before retirement, and up to 10 times without significant refurbishment between flights.
- SSO-A was the first mission Spaceflight has filled a rocket entirely with its small satellite customers. They came from 34 companies and organizations across 17 countries.

➤ **Chang'e 4: China's Mission to the Moon's Far Side**

- China launched its Chang'e 4 mission to the far side of the moon on Dec. 8, 2018 Beijing
- China is the first country ever to send a rover to soft-land on the lunar farside. The successful launch marked the start of a long journey to the far side of the moon for the Chang'e-4 mission, which is expected to land around the New Year to carry out experiments and explore the untrodden terrain.
- The Chang'e-4 lunar probe mission -- named after the moon goddess in Chinese mythology -- launched on a Long March 3B rocket from the southwestern Xichang launch centre in the pre-dawn hours.

➤ **India Successfully Test Fires Nuclear-Capable Agni-5 Missile**

- India successfully test-fired nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-5, which has a strike range of 5,000 km, from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast.
- This is the seventh trial of the indigenously-developed surface-to-surface missile.
- Agni-V is a three stage missile, 17 metres tall, two metres wide and capable of carrying 1.5 tonne of nuclear warheads.
- The first two flights of Agni-5 in 2012 and 2013 were in open configuration.

➤ **Sino-Indian militaries begin 'Hand-in-Hand' drills in China**

- India and China began the 7th round of their 'Hand-in-Hand' military drills in the Chinese city of Chengdu as part of the focussed efforts by the two militaries to improve ties after last year's standoff at Doklam.
- The aim of the Hand-in-Hand exercises is to build closer relations between the militaries of India and China. The exercises involve tactical level operations in an International Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorist environment as per UN mandate.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter insurgency/ counter terrorism environment under UN mandate.

➤ **Signs of water found on asteroid Bennu: Fascinating discovery by NASA spacecraft**

- ASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft discovered evidence of water on a relatively nearby skyscraper-sized asteroid, Bennu, a rocky acorn-shaped object that may hold clues to the origins of life on Earth
- OSIRIS-REx, which flew last week within a scant 12 miles (19 km) of the asteroid Bennu, some 1.4 million miles (2.25 million km) from Earth, found traces of hydrogen and oxygen molecules - part of the recipe for water and thus the potential for life - embedded in the asteroid's rocky surface.
- Bennu is near-Earth carbonaceous asteroid about the size of a small mountain in the Apollo group. It was discovered in September 1999 by the LINEAR Project.

➤ **ISRO launches military communication satellite GSAT-7A from Sriharikota**

- ISRO launched its military communication satellite GSAT-7A from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- The satellite GSAT-7A is the 35th Indian communication satellite weighing 2,250 kg. The satellite is expected to add a new space-based dimension to the way Indian Air Force interlinks, operates and communicates with its aircraft as they fly and with command centres on ground.
- GSAT-7A is designed to expand the communication capabilities of the Indian Air Force (IAF). It will do this by connecting many of the ground radar stations, airbases and aircrafts operated by the IAF.

➤ **Cyclone Gaja washes away coastal salt pans**

- The famed salt pans of Vedaranyam, directly in the path of the battering storm, have been washed away.
- Salt manufacturers claim that close to two lakh tonnes of salt was damaged, though officials were not sure about the extent of damage.
- Salt production generally lasts from January to October and manufacturers claimed a majority of the stock had been destroyed.

➤ **ISRO Completes Fourth Orbit-Raising Manoeuvre Of GSAT 7a Towards Its Final**

- The ISRO Has Completed The Fourth Manoeuvre To Position The GSAT-7a Military Communication Satellite Closer To Its Final Position On Monday.
- The Satellite Is Now Very Close To Its Final Position In The Geostationary Orbit, Which Is Located At An Altitude Of Around 35,786 Km From Earth. The Satellite Is Currently Between 35,800 And 36,092 Kilometres Away, And Will Be Moved In A Final Orbital Manoeuvre To Its Final Position.
- GSAT-7A, A Satellite Built By Isro For The Indian Air Force, Was Launched On A Gslv-Mk2.1 Rocket (Gsat-F11) On 19 December From The Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

➤ **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.

DEFENCE➤ **Putin heralds successful tests of Russia's new Avangard hypersonic nuclear weapons**

- Russian president Vladimir Putin has announced the successful final testing of a new hypersonic nuclear-capable weapon.
- Speaking at an end-of-year meeting with the government, Mr Putin said the weapon, named "Avangard", had been launched from Orenburg region in European Russia, hitting its target in eastern Kamchatka nearly 4,000 miles away.
- The Avangard glide vehicle is one of six weapons announced in the president's State of the Nation speech on the eve of his March re-election.

➤ **Indian Navy to conduct 'Exercise sea vigil' next month to test robustness of coastal security apparatus**

- The Indian Navy will conduct a large-scale coastal defence exercise next month to test the robustness of the entire coastal security apparatus.
- The 'Exercise sea vigil' will involve all stake holders across mainland and Island territories, and will see the participation of all operational ships, submarines and aircraft as well as units of Indian coast guards
- Theatre level operational readiness exercise 'Tropex' will begin from January and culminate in March, next year.
- Maiden Bilateral Exercises with UAE and Indonesia and Maiden CORPAT with Bangladesh were also commenced this year.

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IMPORTANT INDEX

- **India tops in road deaths; Globally fatalities increase by 1 lakh in 3 years: WHO report**
 - According to the Global Status Report on Road Safety, India reported a maximum of about 1.51 lakh road deaths in 2016 and globally the toll of road deaths increased from 1.25 million to 1.35 in a span of three years.
 - The spike in road deaths globally has come as a shocker considering that the countries had pledged to halve their road deaths by 2020 when the United Nations had declared the 2010-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety.
 - The United Nations had declared the 2010-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety.
- **Gujarat emerges as best performing state in start-up ranking 2018**
 - Gujarat has emerged as the best performing state in the Startup Ranking 2018. The National Report on States' Startup Ranking was unveiled by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi.
 - Gujarat, with 100 percentile, has performed better than all other states in all the seven areas including start up policy, incubation support, seeding innovation and scaling innovation.
 - Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan, with a score of more than 85 percentile, have been adjudged the top performers.
- **Salman Khan tops Forbes' richest Indian celebrity list for third time, Shah Rukh drops out of top 10**
 - Bollywood superstar Salman Khan is the richest Indian celebrity, according to the 2018 Forbes India Celebrity 100 list, which he has topped for the third consecutive year. Shah Rukh Khan has fallen out of the top 10 list.
 - The 2018 Forbes India Celebrity 100 List rankings are based on estimates of entertainment-related earnings of celebrities. The period under consideration is October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.
 - The actor's earnings are pegged at Rs 253.25 crore. Salman, 52, cemented his place in the top spot thanks to the commercial success of his movies.
- **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.

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MOUS AND AGREEMENTS

➤ 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.

IMPORTANT DAYS

➤ International Day for the Abolition of Slavery ; 2 December

- The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is a yearly event on December 2, organized by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The Day was first celebrated in 1986.
- The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others was approved by the United Nations General Assembly on December 2, 1949.

➤ Indian Navy Day : 4 December

- Navy day is observed on 4th of December every year to celebrate the achievements, and role of the naval force in protecting and guarding the country.
- Navy Day is celebrated in memory of the strength and bravery of the Indian Navy who won the Indo-Pak war in 1971.
- It is celebrated using a particular theme each year, like “Safe Seas and Secure Coasts for a strong Nation” because theme based celebration makes this event more powerful and effective occasion.

➤ World Soil Day : 5 December

- World Soil Day is celebrated annually on the 5th of December at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) headquarters in Rome, the regional offices and through national and local events.
- The Solution to Soil Pollution campaign for World Soil Day 2018 aims to raise awareness and call people to #StopSoilPollution.
- With a growing population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, soil pollution is a worldwide problem which degrades our soils, poisons the food we eat.

➤ Armed Forces Flag Day ; 7 december

- The Armed Forces Flag Day or the Flag Day of India is a day dedicated to India towards collection of funds from people of India for the welfare of the Indian Armed Forces personnel. It has been observed annually in India on December 7 since 1949.
- Over the years, it has become a tradition to commemorate this day as an honour to the soldiers, sailors and airmen of India.
- Immediately after India achieved independence, a need arose for the government to manage the welfare of its defence personnel. On August 28, 1949, a committee set up under the defence minister decided to observe a Flag Day annually on December 7.

➤ **International Day of Human Rights December 10**

- Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December – the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948.
- This year, Human Rights Day marks the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a milestone document that proclaimed the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being.
- The theme of the 2018 Human Rights Day is: #StandUp4HumanRights.

➤ **Nation celebrates Vijay Diwas on 16 December to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 war**

- The nation celebrated Vijay Diwas to commemorate India's victory over Pakistan in 1971 war. Rich tributes are being paid to the Martyrs who laid down their lives during the war.
- On this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces, General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, along with 93 thousand troops, had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of Indian Army.
- This year's celebration marks the 47th anniversary of India's victory over its neighbour.

➤ **Good Governance Day observed on 25 december**

- Good Governance Day is observed in India annually on the twenty-fifth day of December, the birth anniversary of former-Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to honor Prime Minister Vajpayee by fostering awareness among the Indian people of accountability in government.
- Atal Bihari Vajpayee was an Indian politician who served three terms as the Prime Minister of India: first for a term of 13 days in 1996, then for a period of 13 months from 1998 to 1999, and finally, for a full term from 1999 to 2004.

➤ **National Consumer Day observed on Dec 24**

- National Consumer Day observed on Dec 24. The objective is to highlight the importance of the consumer movement and the need to make every consumer more aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- The theme this year is "Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints"

SPORTS

➤ **Abhinav Bindra conferred with shooting's highest honour by ISSF**

- Abhinav Bindra, the 2008 Olympic gold medallist was conferred with shooting's highest award by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) at the General Assembly in Munich .
- The Arjuna awardee on receiving the prestigious Blue Cross took to Twitter to express that he feels "extremely humbled."
- The 36-year-old Bindra had created history during the Beijing Olympics when he became the first Indian individual to clinch a gold medal.

➤ **Gautam Gambhir Announces Retirement From All Forms Of Cricket**

- Indian cricketer Gautam Gambhir announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. He is a left-handed opening batsman who played domestic cricket for Delhi, and captained Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League (IPL).
- The 37-year-old, who represented India in 58 Tests, 147 ODIs and 37 T20Is, made the announcement on social media.
- The aggressive opener was India's top-scorer in the finals of the 2007 World T20 in South Africa and the 2011 ODI World Cup, both of which the country won.
- He made his One Day International (ODI) debut against Bangladesh in 2003, and played his first Test the following year against Australia.

➤ **Belgium beat Netherlands in shootout to win Men's Hockey World Cup 2018**

- Belgium defeated former champions the Netherlands in sudden death in a thrilling summit clash to win their maiden men's hockey World Cup title at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar.
- Olympic silver medallist Belgium created history by eking out a 3-2 win in the penalty shoot-out after the final match of the game's showpiece event ended in a goalless draw.
- 16 Teams Participated in the 2018 Men's Hockey World Cup Championship and they Played 32 Matches in this Championship.

➤ **PV Sindhu beats Nozomi Okuhara to win maiden BWF World Tour Finals title**

- PV Sindhu scripted history by becoming the first Indian to win a World series final title.
- The Indian shuttler was at her best in a real humdinger of a contest against Japanese Nozomi Okuhara as she walked away with the match 21-19, 21-17. Sindhu, who had finished second in the Olympics, Commonwealth Games, Asian games and World Championships.
- The BWF World Tour Finals is an annual badminton competition that takes place at the end of every year. The badminton players having most points from all the events of the BWF World Tour in that calendar year compete with each other in this tournament.

➤ **BCCI Appoints WV Raman As Head Coach Of India Women's Cricket Team**

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) appointed WV Raman as the head coach of India women's cricket team.
- According to a media release by the BCCI, his selection was based on recommendations of the ad-hoc committee comprising Kapil Dev, Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy.
- The ad-hoc committee decided on the following three names in the order of preference -- Gary Kirsten, WV Raman and Venkatesh Prasad," the BCCI said in a statement.
- The 53-year-old played 11 Test matches and 27 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) for the national team. In the first-class cricket he had featured in 132 matches, notching up over 7,900 runs for Tamil Nadu.

AWARDS AND PRIZES

➤ **Tamil writer S Ramakrishnan gets Sahitya Akademi award**

- Tamil writer S Ramakrishnan (52) has been honoured with Sahitya Akademi award for his novel Sancharam which deals with the lives of nadhaswaram artistes.
- Ramakrishnan is a full-time writer who has been active over the last 27 years in diverse areas of Tamil literature like short stories, novels, plays, children's literature and translations.
- Among the many important awards won by him are Tagore Literary Award for his novel Yamam. Sangeetha Nataka Academy Award for best young playwright.

➤ **Sahitya Akademi announces winners in 24 languages**

- The Sahitya Akademi award is among the most prestigious literary honours bestowed on writers for their works across genres and languages.
- Winners include Anees Saleem in English, Rama Kant Shukla in Sanskrit, Rajesh Kumar Vyas in Rajasthani, Rahman Abbas in Urdu, Lok Nath Upadhyay in Nepali, Chitra Mughal in Hindi and S. Ramakrishnan in Tamil.
- The awards, in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper-plaque, a shawl and a cheque of Rs 1 lakh, will be presented to the authors at a special function in January next year at Kamani Auditorium.

➤ **Manushi Chhillar Crowns Miss World 2018 A Year After She Won The Title**

- A Mexican model and volunteer Vanessa Ponce was crowned Miss World at a glitzy event on the tropical Chinese island of Hainan
- Miss Mexico Vanessa Ponce de Leon, 26, has a degree in international business, volunteers for "Migrantes en el Camino" and is on the board of directors of a rehab centre for girls.
- Miss Belarus Maria Vasilevich, Miss Jamaica Kadijah Robinson and Miss Uganda Quiin Abenakyo were also among the final five.
- It is the eighth time the Miss World final has been held in Sanya, which first hosted the pageant in 2003.

➤ **Indian Railway employee conferred with prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel "Marom" in Santhali language**

- Shri Shyam Sundar Besra, Chief Inspector of Ticket working in Asansol Division of Eastern Railway has been conferred the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award.
- He has been awarded for his novel "Marom" in Santhali language which is primarily based upon natural, social, economic and political conditions of Santhal Pargana.
- The novel highlights the situation emerged after the two main industrial development of the Santhal area after Independence i.e Masanjore Dam at Dumka and Railway locomotive workshop at Chittaranjan.

➤ **Amitav Ghosh honoured with Jnanpith Award 2018**

- Noted English writer Amitav Ghosh has been honoured with this year's Jnanpith Award, a literary award given to an author for "outstanding contribution towards literature.
- The decision was taken in a meeting of Jnanpith Selection Board chaired by eminent novelist, scholar and Jnanpith laureate Pratibha Ray.
- Ghosh, one of the most prominent contemporary Indian writers, is known for a series of novels such as Shadow Lines, The Glass Palace, The Hungry Tide, and the Ibis Trilogy -- Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke and Flood of Fire -- chronicling the opium trade between India and China run by the East India Company.

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➤ **Philippines' Catriona Elisa Gray crowned Miss Universe 2018**

- Catriona Elisa Gray from Philippines was crowned Miss Universe 2018 at a gala ceremony, where representatives from South Africa and Venezuela secured the first runner-up and second runner-up spots. India's Nehal Chudasama failed to make it to the Top 20.
- In the final question round, Gray was asked about the most important lesson she has learnt in life and how would she apply it in her time as Miss Universe.
- The winner, who pipped 93 other contestants to win the title, has a love for the arts and holds a Master Certificate in Music Theory. She is an adventure junkie and is passionate about her love for Filipino dishes including adobo, balut and the sweetest mangoes in the world.

➤ **Indian Film 'Period. End of Sentence' Made it to Oscars Shortlist**

- 'Period. End of Sentence,' the short documentary film on the stigma surrounding women during menstruation in rural India has made it to the 91st Oscar's shortlist in the Documentary Short Subject category.
- The film was co-produced by Monga's Sikhya Entertainment which is also known for backing movies like Masaan and The Lunchbox.
- The 26 minuter follows the exploits of two girls from Hapur village in Uttar Pradesh as they struggle to fight the stigma against menstruation.

➤ **Mamata Banerjee is the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year**

- West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has been conferred the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award for her contribution in the overall development of the state and emerging as the best chief minister in the country.
- The state has this year bagged 31 Skoch Awards for its performance across different fields besides implementing unique projects.
- Banerjee has been conferred with the prestigious award on the basis of the state's performance in the field of governance, culture, finance, urban and rural development, the organisation had tweeted recently.

➤ **Madhya Pradesh's Divya Patidar Joshi crowned Mrs. India 2018 title**

- Divya Patidar Joshi was crowned Mrs.India My Identity Pageant 2018.She won all the rounds of Beauty with Brain contest along with Best Cat Walk title.
- Hailing from Madhya Pradesh's Ratlam, Divya won the crown of Mrs India this year from among 24 promising contestants.
- With this win, in the year 2019, she would be representing India for Mrs. Universe title.

➤ **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.

APPOINTMENTS & PERSON IN NEWS

- **Bank of Maharashtra appoints AS Rajeev as MD, CEO**
 - A S Rajeev has joined Bank of Maharashtra as Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer on 2nd December 2018. Prior to this, he was Executive Director of Indian Bank from 22 January 2016.
 - Rajeev is having about three decades of professional experience in three Banks - Syndicate Bank, Vijaya Bank and Indian Bank.
 - State-owned Bank of Maharashtra announced that A S Rajeev has joined the lender as its Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer.
- **Former international Athlete and businessman Jon Ridgeon announced as new IAAF Chief Executive office**
 - The IAAF announced the appointment of Jon Ridgeon as its new CEO following approval by the IAAF Council on the first day of its 215th Council Meeting in Monaco.
 - Ridgeon, 51, has spent his life in sport, starting out as an athlete competing in both the 110m hurdles and 400m hurdles between 1984 and 1996. He is former British record holder and silver medallist in the 110m hurdles in the 1987 World Championships in Rome.
 - International Association of Athletics Federation Headquarters in Monaco.
- **Axis Capital CEO Dharmesh Mehta resigns**
 - Dharmesh Mehta has resigned as the managing director and chief executive officer of Axis Capital, the investment banking firm's parent entity Axis Bank Ltd.
 - The private-sector lender has elevated Salil Pitale and Chirag Negandhi as joint MDs and co-CEOs with immediate effect to replace Mehta. It has sought regulatory approvals for the appointments.
 - The private-sector lender has elevated Salil Pitale and Chirag Negandhi as joint MDs and co-CEOs with immediate effect to replace Mehta. It has sought regulatory approvals for the appointments.
- **SoftBank hires Facebook's Kirthiga Reddy to manage \$100 billion vision fund**
 - SoftBank hired Facebook Inc. executive Kirthiga Reddy as a partner at its \$100 billion Vision Fund, the first woman to join a group of just a dozen that oversees the world's biggest pool of technology investments.
 - Kirthiga Reddy had worked at Facebook in India and the US for eight years and serves as chair of the Stanford Business School Management Board.
 - She the first women coming on board in a company where the rest are all men.
- **Malala Yousafzai to be honoured by Harvard University for promoting girls education**
 - Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai is being honored by Harvard University for her work promoting girls' education.
 - Yousafzai became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 when she was recognized for her global work supporting schooling for all children.
 - The 21-year-old Malala, received the 2018 Gleitsman Award from Harvard's Kennedy School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The award provides \$125,000 for activism that has improved quality of life around the world.

➤ **Urjit Patel resigns as RBI Governor**

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Urjit Patel on Monday, 10 December, stepped down from his position with immediate effect, citing “personal reasons” His resignation comes against the backdrop of increasing tensions between the Finance ministry and the Reserve Bank of India.
- Urjit Patel, 55, who took over as the 24th Governor of the central bank on September 5, 2016, had the shortest tenure since the year 1992.
- The next RBI board meeting was scheduled for December 14. Patel has resigned just days before that. In a tweet, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley acknowledged Urjit Patel's contribution.

➤ **Shaktikanta Das appointed as the new RBI Governor**

- Former economic affairs secretary Shaktikanta Das was named the 25th governor of the Reserve Bank of India to succeed Urjit Patel. The appointment will be for three years. He is likely to join at the earliest
- The appointment means that the central bank will once again be headed by a former Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer. Patel, who had said he was resigning for personal reasons, and his predecessor Raghuram Rajan are economists.
- Das, 63, a veteran Tamil Nadu cadre officer, will first have to work on normalising the relationship between the central bank and the government that had turned frosty in the past few months as the two differed on many issues.
- Shaktikanta Das is a 1980 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu Cadre and a very prominent bureaucrat who served under both NDA and UPA governments.

➤ **Kamal Nath Will Take Oath as Madhya Pradesh CM on December 14**

- The Congress legislature party has decided that a decision on the Chief Minister of the state will be taken by party president Rahul Gandhi.
- In MP, Congress defeated BJP in the final tally announced on Wednesday, finishing below the majority mark of 116 by two MLAs but stitching alliances with BSP (3) and SP (1) and enlisting the support of four independents.
- The MP Congress chief, has been almost finalised as the leader of the legislature party ahead of Jyotiraditya Scindia. A final announcement is likely to be made by Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday.

➤ **Manipur government confers boxer MC Mary Kom with ‘Meethoileima’ title**

- Manipur government conferred MC Mary Kom, six times World Women Boxing Champion and Olympic bronze medalist, with the title “Meethoileima” for her outstanding achievement in the field of boxing.
- The title “Meethoileima” (loosely translated as great or exceptional lady) was conferred by Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh in a felicitation ceremony held at Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal. The function was attended by cabinet Ministers, MLAs and sportspersons.
- She was honoured by Chief minister N. Biren Singh who also handed over a cheque of Ten lakh rupees.

➤ **CAG Rajiv Mehrishi appointed as Vice-Chair of UN Panel of Auditors**

- The United Nations Panel of Auditors consists of External Auditors of the United Nations and its agencies. Comptroller and Auditor General Rajiv Mehrishi has become the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors
- Presently, the panel consists of 11 countries -- India, Germany, Chile, Canada, France, Italy, Philippines, Ghana, Indonesia, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Currently, the panel is chaired by the Comptroller and Auditor General of the UK.
- The panel also unanimously elected the Comptroller and Auditor General of India as the Vice Chair of the panel for the year 2019

- **Yes Bank set to name Brahm Dutt as interim chairman, share prices recover**
 - Yes Bank Ltd is likely to name independent director Brahm Dutt as the bank's non-executive interim chairman after former finance secretary Ashok Chawla resigned from the position last month.
 - Brahm Dutt is a former bureaucrat and is one of the oldest members of Yes Bank's board.
 - Yes Bank's board has witnessed a series of resignations over the past couple of months. Apart from Ashok Chawla, who resigned as chairman on 14 November, independent directors Vasant Gujarathi and R. Chandrasekhar also put in their papers last month.
- **Bhupesh Baghel takes oath as the chief minister of Chhattisgarh**
 - Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel took oath as the chief minister of Chhattisgarh. Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath of office to Bhupesh Baghel at Balbir Singh Juneja Indoor Stadium in Raipur.
 - The Congress registered a resounding victory in Chhattisgarh, winning 68 seats as opposed to the BJP's 15.
 - Bhupesh Baghel is credited for rebuilding the party and infuse confidence and enthusiasm among workers. Bhupesh Baghel will be the third chief minister of the state.
- **Harsh Vardhan Shringla appointed new Indian Ambassador to US**
 - Harsh Vardhan Shringla appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the United States.
 - Shringla, a 1984-batch Indian Foreign Service diplomat will succeed Navtej Sarna. He is expected to take up the assignment shortly.
 - Senior diplomat Riva Ganguly Das, presently Director General of Indian Council for Cultural Relations, has been appointed as new High Commissioner to Bangladesh.
- **CA Kuttappa takes over as India's new chief boxing coach**
 - CA Kuttappa, a Dhronacharya awardee, took over as India's new chief boxing coach during the beginning of the ongoing national camp, on December 10, 2018. He succeeds veteran boxing coach SR Singh, who has now retired.
 - The 39-year-old, who was an assistant coach earlier, is credited with shaping some of the country's most successful boxers such as Vijender Singh, M Suranjoy Singh and Shiva Thapa.
 - Kuttappa is just one of the two coaches from the reigning national champions, the Services Sports Control Board (SSCB), in the camp.
- **Praveen Kumar appointed acting chief justice of Andhra Pradesh high court**
 - President Ram Nath Kovind appointed Justice C Praveen Kumar, the senior most Judge among the Judges allotted to Andhra Pradesh, as acting Chief Justice of AP High court with effect from Jan 1, 2019.
 - He is fortunate to preside over the affairs of judiciary in his native state that too as the first head of the AP high court which will emerge as a new entity from 1 Jan
 - Praveen Kumar learnt many intricacies of criminal law and constitution during this period and later he became a judge of then AP high court on June 29, 2012.
- **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.
 - 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.

➤ **TB Radhakrishnan takes oath as first Chief Justice of Telangana High Court**

- Justice Thottathil Bhaskaran Nair Radhakrishnan sworn 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 E.S.L. 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.

➤ **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

➤ **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.

➤ **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.

➤ **Ashok Gehlot named chief minister of Rajasthan; Sachin Pilot to be deputy chief minister**

- Congress chosen Ashok Gehlot to be the chief minister of Rajasthan, while Sachin Pilot was chosen to be the deputy chief minister.
- Ashok Gehlot is the 15th chief minister of Rajasthan serving his third term since 1998. He is Congress party's national general secretary and in-charge of organizations and training.
- He is incubating this position from December 1998 to 2003 and from 2008 to 2013 and again from 17 December 2018.

➤ **TRS leader K. Chandrashekhara Rao sworn in as Telangana CM for second straight term**

- Telangana Rashtra Samiti president K. Chandrashekhara Rao was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Telangana for the second term by Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan.
- Mr. Mohammed Mahmood Ali, who was Deputy Chief Minister holding the subject of revenue in the previous term, was the only Minister to be administered the oath of office along with Mr. Rao.
- In the recently concluded assembly election the TRS won 88 seats in the 119-member assembly, defeating the Congress-led 'Praja Kutami', which ended up with a tally of 21 while the BJP won just one seat in the state.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS**➤ The Republican Ethic” and “Loktantra ke Swar” books released by Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu**

- To promote and disseminate selected speeches of the President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Shri Venkaiah Naidu releases two books 'The Republican Ethic' and 'Loktantra ke swar'.
- The book is a collection of 95 of his selected speeches out of a total of 243 speeches made by the President in the first year of his office.
- The book has been conceived to help the readers navigate through the vision and thought that the President delves upon, especially with relation to the vision of nation and individual citizen's duty towards the nation.

➤ Punjab CM releases book on Kapurthala Maharaja

- Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh released the book 'Prince, Patron and Patriarch Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala', co-authored by the Maharaja's grandson, Brigadier (Retd) Jagjit Singh, and Cynthia Frederick.
- Besides the authors, Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore was also present on the occasion, which saw the Chief Minister hail the Maharaja as one of the scripters of modernization of Kapurthala.
- Describing the book as a candid tribute by a grandson to the erstwhile exceptional royal king of Kapurthala, the CM regaled the audience with anecdotes showcasing the far-sightedness of the Maharaja, whom he recalled meeting once as a 6-year-old, and the valour of his grandson, Brigadier Jagjit Singh.

OBITUARIES**➤ Former US President George HW Bush passes away at 94**

- Former U.S. President George H.W. Bush, who presided over the end of the Cold War and routed Saddam Hussein's Iraqi army, died at the age of 94.
- He was the 41st president of the United States.
- He defeated former Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, the Democratic nominee, in the 1988 presidential campaign, and lost his 1992 re-election bid to Democrat Bill Clinton.

➤ Padma Shri historian and former Jamia VC, Mushirul Hasan passed away at 71

- Professor Mushirul Hasan, a renowned historian and former vice-chancellor Jamia Millia of Islamia, passed away at the age of 71
- Hasan was also formerly the director general of the National Archives of India.
- Hasan won a number of awards for his work, including the Padma Shri in 2007 and the Ordre des Palmes Académiques.

➤ 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."

➤ **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.



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