

# CURRENT AFFAIRS DECEMBER 2018 PDF

## AWARDS & HONOURS

Name of the award	Award Winner	Additional Information
Ballon d'Or Award	Luka Modrić	Midfielder Luka Modrić, who led Croatia to their first-ever FIFA World Cup final, won this year's Ballon d'Or.
Women's Ballon d'Or winner	Ada Hegerberg	
Best Young Player award at Ballon d'Or event	Kylian Mbappe	
PETA Hero to Animals Award	Delhi Minister Imran Hussain	Delhi Minister of Food Supplies, Environment and Forest and Elections Imran Hussain was awarded by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)
Sahitya Akademi Award	Railway employee, Shyam Sundar Besra,	
Slain Journalist Khashoggi	Time Magazines Person of the Year	
54th Jnanpith Award	Amitav Ghosh	Ghosh is the first Indian writer in English to win the award.
Ashok Amritraj	French Knight of the National Order of Merit	
'Suvarna Chakoram'	Iranian Film Dark Room	Iranian director Ruhollah Hejazi's "The Dark Room" was selected as best film at the 23rd International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK) in Thiruvananthapuram, India.
Krishi Karman award	Jharkhand	The Union Ministry of Agriculture had selected Jharkhand for "Krishi Karman" award in the rice category.
Miss India Worldwide 2018	Indian American Shree Saini	Indian-American Shree Saini crowned Miss India Worldwide 2018 at the 27th annual global pageant held in the Fords City of New Jersey.

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		It is Organised by the New York-based India Festival Committee (IFC).
Miss Universe 2018	Philippines' Catriona Gray	
India's Person of the Year by PETA	Sonam Kapoor	
UN Human Rights Prize	Pakistani activist Asma Jahangir	
GQ's Most Stylish Man of 2018	Nick Jonas	
South Indian Education Society award	Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh	
The Skoch Chief Minister of the Year 2018 Award	West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee	
Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award	Union Minister Suresh Prabhu	
Mrs. India 2018	Madhya Pradesh Divya Patidar Joshi	India My Identity Beauty Pageant 2018 finale held in New Delhi. She defeated 24 promising contestants and won all the rounds of Beauty with Brain contest along with Best Cat Walk title.
Balkan athlete of the year award	Croatia captain Luka Modric	
Rachael Heyhoe-Flint Award	India Women opener Smriti Mandhana	Awarded for being the ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year.
National Systems Gold Medal	ISRO chairman K.Sivan	Awarded by the Systems Society of India (SSI) during the 42nd National Systems Conference held in Thiruvananthapuram.
Best short documentary award	Finding Beauty in Garbage	Awarded at Asia South East Short Film Festival recently held at Phnom Penh in Cambodia.

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## APPOINTMENTS

Name of the Person	Name of the Position	Additional Information
AS Rajeev	Bank of Maharashtra , MD and CEO	State-owned Bank of Maharashtra announced the appointment of AS Rajeev as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.
David Tait	World Gold Council, CEO	
AN Jha	Finance Secretary	
TS Vijayan	Yes Bank , independent director	
Raninder Singh	ISSF Vice President	
Pawan Singh	ISSF judges committee	
Mexico's Vanessa Ponce	Miss World 2018	Mexico's Vanessa Ponce de Leon was crowned Miss World 2018 by the outgoing pageant winner, India's Manushi Chhillar, in China's Sanya on Saturday.
India's Prathamesh Maulingkar	Mr Supranational 2018	
Shaktikanta Das	RBI Governor for three years	
Arundhati Bhattacharya	SWIFT India Chairperson	
K Chandrashekar Rao	Telangana CM	
MNF's Zoramthanga	Mizoram CM	
Venu Srinivasan	TVS Motor Chairman	
CAG Rajiv Mehrishi	Vice-Chair of UN Panel of Auditors	
K Chandrashekar Rao	Chief Minister of Telangana	
'CID' creator BP Singh	FTII President	

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Kamal Nath	Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister	
Ashley Giles	England's director of cricket	Former England cricket team spinner Ashley Giles will succeed former captain Andrew Strauss as the managing director of England's men's cricket
Uday Shankar	Chairman of Star and Disney India	
Kamal Nath	Madhya Pradesh CM	
Justice Tarun Agarwala	Securities Appellate Tribunal presiding officer	
Bhupesh Baghel	Chhattisgarh Chief Minister	
Madhavi Divan	Additional Solicitor General in Supreme Court	
Uday Shankar	Vice President of FICCI	
Harsh Vardhan Shringla	Indian Ambassador to US	
Pranab K Das	New Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Chairman	
BVP Rao	president of Archery Association of India	
PV Bharathi	MD and CEO of Corporation Bank	

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## BANKING & FINANCE

### **State Bank of Mauritius gets RBI approval for subsidiary**

Mauritius based SBM group granted a license by Reserve Bank of India to operate SBM Bank (India) Limited through Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS) mode under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 with effect from December 1, 2018.

Now at present SBM operate its branches in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Ramachandrapuram since 1994. It plans to open six new branches in Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Pune, Ahmedabad, and Jaipur by next year.

### **Ex Cope India 18, the bilateral military exercise between IAF and the U.S., began**

The Air Forces of India (IAF) and the U.S. began the 'Ex Cope India-18', a 12-day military exercise, in the Kalaikunda and Panagarh air bases in West Bengal. The aim is to enhance operational coordination and to provide operational exposure and undertake the mutual exchange of best practices towards enhancing operational capability.

### **Andrs Manuel Lpez Obrador became first leftist president of Mexico**

He became as President and signed an agreement with three Central American counterparts to create a plan to stem the flow of migrants seeking asylum in the USA.

About Mexico:-

- ◆ Capital – Mexico City
- ◆ National language – Spanish
- ◆ Currency – Peso (MXN)

### **Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Hornbill Festival of Nagaland**

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 10-day-long Hornbill Festival of Nagaland at Naga Heritage Village Kisama on 1st December 2018. More than 60,000 people have visited the Hornbill Festival.

### **State Bank of India ropes in Swapna Barman as brand ambassador for YONO**

State Bank of India roped in Asian Games gold medalist Swapna Barman as brand ambassador for its digital app YONO (You only need one). YONO is an integrated digital banking platform

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offered by State Bank of India (SBI) to enable users to access a variety of financial and other services such as taxi bookings, online shopping, or medical bill payments.

### **RBI Governor Urjit Patel quits citing personal reasons**

RBI Governor Urjit Patel resigned from his post citing personal reasons, effective immediately. “It has been my privilege and honour to serve in the Reserve Bank of India in various capacities over the years. The support and hard work of RBI staff, officers and management have been the proximate driver of Bank’s accomplishments in recent years,” he said.

### **RBI fines Indian Bank ₹1 crore for cyber security violation**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said it imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore on state-owned Indian Bank for violating cyber security norms. The bank was penalised for failing to adhere to the guidelines and directions issued by RBI. Indian Bank said the penalty will not have any material impact on it.

### **India and ADB sign \$31 million loan agreement for Tamil Nadu**

The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed in New Delhi a Loan Agreement for \$31 million to build-up the State Tourism Industry and boost visitor arrivals in Tamil Nadu.

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

Jana Small Finance Bank in association with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) launched Jana Bankable Debit Card.

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.

### **IRDAI allows single personal accident cover for multiple vehicles**

Customers will not have to purchase separate Compulsory Personal Accident (CPA) cover for each new vehicle they buy from January 1, IRDAI has said. Instead of a ‘bundled’ personal accident cover, vehicle owners can buy CPA cover separately. In September, the insurance regulator raised the minimum insurance cover for owner-driver to Rs 15 lakh for an annual premium of Rs 750.

### **OBOPAY Card: new generation pre-payment instrument for enterprise customers launched by OBOPAY, Federal Bank and MasterCard**

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OBOPAY, the global financial technology company, announced the launch of a new generation pre-payment instrument called- OBOPAY Card-in partnership with Federal Bank and Mastercard.

It is built as a one-stop solution that facilitates easy disbursements and payments by enterprises. The multi-wallet facility that allows dedicated payments and allocation of money for various purposes. The 'Split transaction' feature which provides payment flexibility to users and multiple payment scenarios among many others.

### **Capital First merges with IDFC Bank to create IDFC First Bank**

IDFC Bank and Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) Capital First have announced completion of their merger to create IDFC First Bank. Capital First Founder and Chairman V Vaidyanathan has been appointed Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the merged entity. IDFC Bank Founder, MD and CEO Rajiv Lall will serve as Part-Time Chairman of IDFC First Bank.

### **RBI shortlists TCS, Wipro to set up Public Credit Registry**

Reserve Bank of India has shortlisted six IT majors including TCS, Wipro and IBM India to set up Public Credit Registry (PCR) for capturing details of borrowers and wilful defaulters. The other shortlisted companies are Capgemini Technology Services India, Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India, and Mindtree. RBI aims to address information asymmetry and improve access to credit through PCR.

### **Ex-Governor Bimal Jalan to lead RBI's panel on excess reserves**

The RBI has appointed former Governor Bimal Jalan as the Chairman of the Economic Capital Framework committee formed to address the issue of RBI reserves. The committee will submit its report within a period of 90 days from the date of its first meeting. The six-member panel also includes RBI Deputy Governor NS Vishwanathan and Economic Affairs Secretary SC Garg.

### **HDFC Group overtakes Tata Group as India's largest business house**

HDFC Group has overtaken Tata Group to become India's largest business house in terms of market value. The combined market capitalisation of five listed companies from HDFC Group stood at ₹10.4 lakh crore as of December 26, according to Bloomberg data. This was higher than the ₹10.38 lakh crore market value of 25 listed companies of the Tata Group.

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## INDIAN AFFAIRS

### **PM Modi announces renaming of 3 Andaman & Nicobar islands**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Port Blair announced the renaming of three islands in Andaman & Nicobar. The three islands — Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island — will now be called Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep, respectively. He also hoisted a 150-foot-high national flag at Port Blair.

### **India to host G20 summit in 2022, 75th year of Independence**

India will host the G20 summit in 2022, when the country celebrates its 75th year of Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Saturday. “Come to India, the world’s fastest growing large economy! Know India’s rich history and diversity, and experience the warm Indian hospitality,” PM Modi tweeted. Italy was to earlier host the international forum in 2022.

### **Delhi Police becomes first police force in India to digitise all malkhanas**

With the launch of ‘E-Malkhana’ in the remaining 10 districts at Chinamaya Mission, the Delhi Police has become first in country to have digitalised malkhana in Police Stations of its all districts. Malkhanas are rooms for keeping seized arms and ammunition. According to the release, around 3,11,600 case properties have been encrypted in digital form across all the police stations in the state.

### **Govt clears military equipment procurement worth Rs 3,000 cr**

The Ministry of Defence cleared the proposal for procurement of military equipment worth ₹3,000 crore. The approved deal includes procurement of indigenous BrahMos missiles for two Indian Navy ships that are to be built in Russia. The Defence Acquisition Council also approved the procurement of Armoured Recovery Vehicles (ARVs) for the Indian Army’s main battle tank, Arjun.

### **Apple approves TRAI’s DND app, avoids iPhone ban in India**

Apple has agreed to add the Do Not Disturb (DND) app by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on its App Store. The iPhone maker was in a conflict with the regulatory body for around two years, citing user privacy concerns. TRAI in July had imposed a deadline of January 2019 to avoid a ban on iPhones in India.

### **Four Indian-origin women in Forbes US top 50 females in tech**

Four Indian-origin women have been named in Forbes ‘America’s Top 50 Women In Tech’ list, released on Thursday. The list featured Former Cisco Chief Technology Officer (CTO) Padmasree Warrior and Founder, CEO of identity-management company Drawbridge Kamakshi



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Sivaramakrishnan. Co-founder, CTO of streaming platform Confluent Neha Narkhede and Senior Director at Uber Komal Mangtani were also named.

### **Union Government launches Bhasha Sangam to introduce school students to 22 Indian languages**

The Government launched 'Bhasha Sangam', a unique initiative to introduce school students to 22 Indian languages. Bhasha Sangam launched under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat. It is a programme for schools and educational institutions to offer multilingual exposure to students in Indian languages. The main aim is to improve linguistic tolerance and respect and promote national integration.

### **India's 1st engineless train crosses 180 kmph during trials**

'Train 18', India's first engineless train on Sunday breached the 180 kmph speed limit during a test run, a top official said. "Train 18 breached the 180 kmph speed limit in the Kota-Sawai Madhopur section," the official said. The major trials are over and Train 18 is expected to commence its commercial run from January 2019, he added.

### **India to host G20 summit in 2022, 75th year of Independence**

India will host the G20 summit in 2022, when the country celebrates its 75th year of Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced. "Come to India, the world's fastest growing large economy! Know India's rich history and diversity, and experience the warm Indian hospitality," PM Modi tweeted. Italy was to earlier host the international forum in 2022.

### **South African Prez to be India's Chief Guest for Republic Day 2019**

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa accepted PM Narendra Modi's invitation to be the Chief Guest for India's Republic Day celebrations in 2019. President Ramaphosa accepted India's invitation on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Argentina's capital Buenos Aires. This comes weeks after US President Donald Trump declined the invitation due to "scheduling constraints".

### **India to chair Kimberley Process from January 2019**

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) Plenary 2018, was held in Brussels, Belgium, in November 2018. EU handed over the Chairmanship of KPCS to India from 1st January 2019. This year was the fifteenth anniversary of KPCS.

### **Government may ban antibiotic used to fatten chicken**

The government has reportedly proposed a ban on colistin, an antibiotic widely used in the poultry industry to make chickens gain weight faster. The usage of colistin and other such drugs

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in livestock has been linked to antibiotic resistance in humans. Colistin is called the “last hope” antibiotic as it’s used to treat patients with infections resistant to most drugs.

### **Phone calls, internet surfing may be allowed in flights from January 2019**

On May 1, the Telecom Commission – the highest policy-making body of the Department of Telecom – had cleared a proposal for allowing wider in-flight connectivity that is now available in most of the developed markets.

A separate category of licensees – in-flight service providers – will be created for offering such services, and licence fee for such niche providers will be pegged at Rs 1.

### **SC introduced Witness Protection Scheme, 2018 in India**

The Supreme Court (SC) introduced a witness protection regime in the country noting that one of the main reasons for witnesses turning hostile is that they are not given security by the State. It also announced that the Witness Protection Scheme, 2018 will come into effect immediately across all States. This scheme is aimed at enabling a witness to depose fearlessly and truthfully, would be the law of the land till Parliament enacted suitable legislation.

### **Indian Navy to conduct Exercise sea vigil as a part of 2-month long Exercise TROPEX**

Indian Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba announced conduction of a 2-month long Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (Tropex) in January 2019. It would end in March 2019. The main objective is to check on the coastal defence system.

### **Gaganyaan: Centre Approves Rs 10,000 Crore For Human Space Mission**

The Union Cabinet approved the Gaganyaan project under which a three-member crew will be sent to space for at least seven days, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad stated. The project will cost INR 10,000 crore. The Gaganyaan project was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech.

### **Ministry signs MoU to develop mobile audio guide App for 5 iconic sites**

K J Alphons, Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, handed over a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under the ‘Adopt a Heritage’ scheme to Resbird Technologies for development of a mobile Audio Guide App for five iconic sites. The five iconic sites for which the mobile Audio Guide App is to be developed are Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Kaziranga (Assam), Colva Beach (Goa), Kumarakom (Kerala) and Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

### **India submits official interest to host 2032 Olympics**

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has submitted a formal expression of interest to bid for 2032 Olympics. Mumbai and Delhi are the top two options under consideration by Indian Olympic Association (IOA), which has approached the International Olympic Committee.

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India is holding on to its dream of hosting the Olympic games for the first time. The bidding process is expected to start in 2022 and a host city will be decided by 2025.

### **First India Japan Air Exercise SHINYUU Maitri 2018 began**

A bilateral air exercise 'SHINYUU Maitri-18', between the Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) and Indian Air Force (IAF) began on December 3, 2018 at Air Force Station Agra. The exercise will end on December 7, 2018. The theme of the exercise is joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft. IAF is participating with An-32 and C-17 aircraft with aircrew & observers.

### **Salman highest-earning celeb in India, SRK out of top 10: Forbes**

Salman Khan has been named the highest-earning celebrity in India for the third time in a row by Forbes, with earnings of ₹253.25 crore. Meanwhile, Shah Rukh Khan, who came second in 2017's list, fell out of the top ten. Shah Rukh, who had ₹170.50 crore earnings in 2017, featured on the 13th spot this year with ₹56 crore earnings.

### **PM to inaugurate India's longest railroad bridge on Dec 25**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Bogibeel Bridge, India's longest railroad bridge, falling in the eastern part of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh on December 25, an official said. Connecting the north and south banks of the Brahmaputra river, the bridge is nearly five kilometres long. This project was first cleared by former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda in 1997.

### **IndiGo becomes first Indian airline to have 200 aircraft**

IndiGo became India's first airline to have 200 aircraft in its fleet. With nearly 43% share in the domestic air travel market, the Gurugram-based low-cost carrier is the country's largest airline. The airline, founded by billionaires Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal, started operations in August 2006 with a Delhi-Imphal flight.

### **Deepika beats Priyanka, named Sexiest Asian Woman by UK magazine**

Actress Deepika Padukone beat Priyanka Chopra to be named the Sexiest Asian Woman in 2018 by UK newspaper 'Eastern Eye'. While Priyanka came second on the list titled '50 Sexiest Asian Women', television actress Nia Sharma secured the third spot. Other actresses who have featured on the list include Mahira Khan, Alia Bhatt and Sonam Kapoor.

### **India fourth highest emitter of carbon dioxide: Study**

Accounting for 7% of global emissions in 2017, India is the fourth highest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world, a study by Global Carbon Project said. In 2017, the top four emitters were

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China (27%), the US (15%), the European Union (10%) and India (7%), the study said. India showed 4% growth in global emission from 2016 to 2017.

### **Top 10 fastest-growing cities from 2019 to 2035 are Indian: Study**

All the top 10 fastest growing cities in the world from 2019 to 2035 are in India, according to a study by Oxford Economics. Diamond hub Surat topped the list with a projected annual average growth rate of 9.17% through 2035. Further, 17 of the 20 fastest-growing cities will be Indian, with Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai among the strongest performers.

### **Govt's LPG scheme reduced household air pollution: ICMR**

A report released by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) stated that household air pollution in India has reduced because of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). The PMUY scheme aims to provide every household Liquid Petroleum Gas, replacing polluting cooking fuel. The report attributed residential burning of solid fuels for cooking as the main reason for household air pollution.

### **Salman, Anurag Kashyap win at Asian Academy Creative Awards**

Salman Khan won the Best Entertainment Host for 'Bigg Boss', and Anurag Kashyap won the Best Direction [Fiction] for season one of 'Sacred Games' at the inaugural Asian Academy Creative Awards in Singapore. Other winners from India included Discovery Communications India, which got Best Comedy Programme for 'Queens Of Comedy' and Cartoon Network India's 'Lampu' won Best 2D Animated Programme.

### **India to retain top spot in remittances with \$80bn: World Bank**

The World Bank has said India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances this year with \$80 billion. India is followed by China, Mexico, the Philippines and Egypt, according to World Bank's Migration and Development Brief. A foreign remittance is money transferred from a foreign worker to their family or other individuals in their home countries.

### **Vijay Mallya to be extradited to India, says UK court**

A UK court ruled that 62-year-old fugitive liquor baron Vijay Mallya will be extradited to India in Rs 9,000 crore loan default case. Mallya, who left India in March 2016, challenged his extradition on grounds of "human rights conditions" in Indian jails in the past. "I've offered to repay 100% of the principal amount...Please take it," Mallya tweeted earlier.

### **Centre rejects separate religion tag for Lingayats**

The Centre has rejected Karnataka government's request to recognise Lingayat as a separate religion. In a letter to Karnataka High Court, the Centre said that the Lingayat community "has

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always been classified under Hindus ever since 1871 census". The letter further said that scheduled caste communities of Lingayat sect would lose all benefits if it becomes a separate religion.

### **Anushka, Kartik named India's Hottest Vegetarians by PETA**

Actors Anushka Sharma and Kartik Aaryan have been named India's Hottest Vegetarians of 2018 by the animal rights organisation PETA. "Their compassion means they're as beautiful on the inside as they are on the outside," said Sachin Bangera, PETA India's Associate Director of Celebrity and Public Relations. Rajkumar Rao, Alia Bhatt were named India's Hottest Vegetarians by PETA last year.

### **Ayushmann starrer 'AndhaDhun' named top Indian movie by IMDb**

Ayushmann Khurrana and Tabu starrer 'AndhaDhun' has been named the top Indian movie of 2018 by the global film and TV website IMDb. The website on Wednesday released the names of India's top ten movies, based on IMDb customer ratings. Akshay Kumar's 'PadMan' was sixth on the list, while Alia Bhatt starrer 'Raazi' landed in the ninth position.

### **Manika Batra becomes first Indian to win 'Breakthrough Table Tennis Star' award**

Indian table tennis player Manika Batra became the first Indian to win the ITTF's 'Breakthrough Table Tennis Star' award. "I'm really honoured and happy to have received the award. I feel, 2018 has been the best year of my career so far," said the 23-year-old, who had won four medals at the Commonwealth Games earlier this year.

### **Climate Change Performance Index: Sweden tops in the Ranking, India at 11th position**

The Climate Change Performance Index was released on the sidelines of COP24 Un Summit in Katowice, Poland. U.S. dropped from 56th to 59th place due to high emissions and poor ratings for the federal government's policies. The bottom 5 consisted of: Saudi Arabia (60), US (59), Iran (58), Korea (57), Chinese Taipei (56).

### **Dam Safety Bill 2018 introduced in Lok Sabha by MoSPA&WR**

Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources Arjun Ram Meghwal introduced the Dam Safety Bill 2018 in Lok Sabha. The surveillance, inspection, operation, and maintenance of specified dams for prevention of dam failure related disasters.

Constitution of a 'National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)', chaired by Chairman of CWC, to evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations. Establishment of 'National Dam Safety Authority'(NDSA) as a regulatory body to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country, Constitution of 'State Committee on Dam Safety' by the State Governments for proper surveillance.

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### **NITI Aayog to organise 3rd edition of Women Transforming India Awards**

Government think-tank NITI Aayog will organise the 3rd edition of the Women Transforming India Awards 2018 and launch the upgraded portal of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform. The awards were instituted to recognise and celebrate stories of exemplary women from across India. “This year’s theme is ‘Women and Entrepreneurship’ and 15 winners have been chosen through an extensive six-month long process to identify fascinating and inspiring stories of women entrepreneurs,” the release added.

### **Eight parliamentarians were honoured by Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu**

NCP chief and Rajya Sabha MP Sharad Pawar and veteran BJP leader Murli Manohar Joshi were presented the Lifetime Achievement award. Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad and BJP MP Nishikant Dubey were selected for the Best Parliamentarians award. Four women MPs from both Houses were also be awarded for their contribution.

### **Tata Steel bags Prime Ministers Trophy for the Best Performing Integrated Steel Plant for the year 2016-17**

Tata Steel Limited had been declared as the winner of the Prime Minister’s Trophy for the ‘Best Performing Integrated Steel Plant’ in the country for the performance year 2016-17 making it the fourth consecutive year for Tata Steel being honored with this coveted award.

Along with the trophy a cash award of Rs. 2 crores was also given to the company. Having won the PM’s Trophy 11 times and receiving the Certificate for Excellence twice, Tata Steel has been recognized as the best-integrated steel plant 13 times, since the inception of this award in 1992-93.

### **India’s first private UAV factory inaugurated in Hyderabad**

India’s first private sector unit for manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) was inaugurated by Telangana’s Home Minister Mohammad Mahmood Ali at Adani Aerospace Park in Hyderabad, Telangana. The 50,000 square feet facility has been built by the Adani Group and Israel-based Elbit Systems.

### **PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate new campus of IIT Bhubaneswar on December 24**

Besides dedicating the new IIT Bhubaneswar campus, Modi will lay the foundation stone for IISER, Berhampur.

On the occasion of bicentenary celebration of the historic Paika Rebellion, PM Modi will also release commemorative coin, postage stamp and inaugurate the Chair at Utkal University in memory of country’s first independence movement.

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### **Aadhaar not compulsory for banking, SIM cards as Centre changes law**

Aadhaar details for bank accounts or mobile phone connections will no longer be mandatory as Union Cabinet approved an amendment to the existing law, making Aadhaar details optional for these services. The cabinet also cleared stringent penalties for hackers, and those responsible for data breaches. The Supreme Court on September 26 had upheld the constitutional validity of Aadhaar.

### **Cabinet approved the expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana**

The Union Cabinet approved the expansion of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana. The scheme aims at providing deposit-free LPG connections to eight crore households. So far, the scheme targeted the poor and underprivileged so listed in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census, 2011.

### **Fresh bill introduced in Lok Sabha to make triple talaq penal offence**

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018, commonly known as the Triple Talaq Bill, was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 17. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad introduced the Bill, despite opposition from Congress member Shashi Tharoor.

### **Cabinet approved the draft National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill**

The Union Cabinet approved the draft National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2018. The Bill seeks to replace the existing regulator Central Council of Homoeopathy with a new body to ensure transparency and accountability. The Bill aims to bring reforms in the medical education of Homoeopathy.

The Bill also aims at bringing reforms in the medical education of homoeopathy in line with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for allopathy system of medicine. The draft Bill provides for the constitution of a National Commission with three autonomous boards entrusted with the conduct of education of Homoeopathy by Homoeopathy Education Board.

### **Cabinet approves AIIMS at Tamil Nadu, Telangana**

The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Tamil Nadu and Telangana. Tamil Nadu's AIIMS will be set at Madurai and Telangana's will be set at Bibinagar at the cost of ₹1,264 crore and ₹1,028 crore respectively. Each will add 100 Undergraduate (MBBS) seats and 60 B.Sc (Nursing) seats.

### **Deepika Padukone named top Indian star of 2018 by IMDb**

Actress Deepika Padukone has been named the top Indian star of 2018, by the global film and TV website IMDb. The '2018 Top 10 Stars of Indian Cinema' list, based on IMDb's 'StarMeter' stats and page views, was released on Tuesday. Shah Rukh Khan was second on the list, followed by Aamir Khan and Aishwarya Rai Bachchan.

## **Trump issues order to create US Space Command**

US President Donald Trump issued an order to establish a Space Command to oversee the US military's operations in space. "It will develop the space doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures that will enable our warfighters to defend our nation in this new era," US Vice President Mike Pence said. The Space Command will be the 11th combatant command.

## **Bill banning commercial surrogacy passed in Lok Sabha**

The Lok Sabha passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016, which bans commercial surrogacy. The bill allows 'altruistic' surrogacy, which involves an arrangement where the couple does not pay the surrogate mother any compensation other than the medical and insurance expenses related to the pregnancy. Moreover, the surrogate mother must be a 'close relative' of the intending couple.

## **ISRO launches GSAT-7A satellite to help Indian Air Force**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched its 35th communications satellite GSAT-7A from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The 2,250-kg satellite would boost Indian Air Force's defence capabilities and interlink its ground radar stations and airbases, thus reducing the reliance on ground-based stations for drones.

## **Over 8 lakh people died of cancer in 2018: Health Ministry**

Over 8 lakh people have died of cancer so far in 2018, MoS for Health, Anupriya Patel said on Friday. An estimated 15,86,571 cases of cancer have been reported so far this year, she added. According to a report issued by Indian Council of Medical Research in 2016, the estimated number of cancer cases in India was increasing, Patel stated.

## **Madras HC orders Sterlite plant to stay shut despite NGT clearance**

Madras High Court ordered Vedanta's Sterlite copper plant to remain shut till further orders despite Sterlite getting a green signal from the National Green Tribunal. On December 15, NGT had directed Tamil Nadu to resume power supply to the plant. Sterlite was closed by the state in May after locals protested against its planned expansion citing pollution concerns.

## **Google, FB, Yahoo block keywords related to child porn in India**

Internet majors like Google, Facebook, Microsoft and Yahoo have started blocking keywords related to child porn and sexual violence in India. India's Supreme Court had earlier said these firms were not doing enough to suppress such content. The step was suggested by a committee formed by the Supreme Court following a petition filed by non-profit organisation Prajwala in 2015.



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## **PM Modi releases book on renowned cartoonist R.K. Laxman**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a book “Timeless Laxman”, based on the life and times of legendary cartoonist, the late R.K. Laxman. The book has been penned by cartoonist’s daughter-in-law Usha Srinivas Laxman. He passed away in January 2015 in Pune aged 93.

## **India to host the first ever India China Film Festival strengthening the cultural understanding amidst**

A three day India China Film Festival is set to begin in New Delhi from 22nd of December this year culminating on 24th of December. In order to strengthen and deepen cultural understanding between the two countries, the film festival is being organized during the first India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges. Jackie Chan’s 2012 action movie “CZ12” will open the India-China Film Festival.

The three-day Festival will be organized at Siri Fort Auditorium II, New Delhi by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Indian Government.

## **Union Government Launches Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the “Asiatic Lion Conservation Project” to protect and conserve the population of Asiatic Lion and its associated ecosystem. The Asiatic Lion Conservation Project is aimed at the conservation and recovery of Asiatic Lion with the help of up to date techniques, instruments, regular scientific research studies, disease management, modern surveillance and patrolling techniques.

## **India retained highest Aviation Safety Ranking: US Watchdog FAA**

US regulator Federation of Aviation Administration (FAA) retained the highest aviation safety ranking for India. According to FAA, India’s International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) rating remains ‘Category 1’. This ranking was based on an audit of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in July 2018.

## **Book ‘Changing India’ by Manmohan Singh released**

Titled ‘Changing India’, the five-volume book, published by Oxford University Press, the book is being described as a definitive expression of the former prime minister Manmohan Singh’s perspectives on a wide range of economic, social and political issues as they evolved under his long and eventful career.

The economist-turned-politician enjoyed a ten-year-long stint as prime minister, heading the UPA government at the Centre from 2004 to 2014.

## **PM Modi inaugurates India's longest road-cum-rail bridge Bogibeel**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Bogibeel Bridge, which is India's longest road-cum-rail bridge, in Assam's Dibrugarh. The 4.94-km-long bridge will connect the north and south banks of the Brahmaputra and reduce travel time from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh to four hours. It has a serviceable period of around 120 years.

## **Centre to rename 3 islands of Andaman and Nicobar: Report**

The Centre has reportedly decided to rename Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island in Andaman and Nicobar as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep respectively. PM Narendra Modi is likely to announce it during his upcoming visit to Port Blair. The occasion is to mark the 75th anniversary of Netaji's visit to the islands.

## **PM Modi unveils projects worth over ₹14,000 crore in Odisha**

PM Narendra Modi has inaugurated or laid foundation for projects worth over ₹14,000 crore in Odisha, including a IIT Bhubaneswar campus that cost ₹1,260 crore. He laid foundation for Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research campus which is estimated to cost ₹1,583 crore. He also laid foundation for a Paradip-Hyderabad gas pipeline, that is expected to cost ₹3,800 crore.

## **PM Modi announces new award for national integration**

PM Narendra Modi announced the institution of 'Sardar Patel Award for National Integration', which would be given for "outstanding efforts to further national integration". PM Modi said that the award will be a "fitting tribute" to Patel who devoted his life towards "unifying India". He added that the award will inspire people to work towards national integration.

## **Indian Railways bags 17 awards for energy conservation**

Indian Railways bagged 17 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) 2018' held in New Delhi. Out of the five categories, Indian Railways participated in three categories- railway stations, hospitals and institutions. The awards are given by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the Ministry of Power to various institutions for adopting energy efficiency measures.

## **Govt bank customers paid ₹10,000 crore in fine in 3.5 years**

State-run banks have collected over ₹10,000 crore from customers for not maintaining minimum account balance and exceeding daily ATM transaction limits in last 3.5 years. RBI has permitted banks to fix charges on various services, as per their board-approved policy. There is, however,

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no minimum balance requirement for accounts opened under Jan Dhan Yojana and Basic Savings Bank Deposit Accounts.

### **Indians stood at 12th rank in the misperception index**

Indians placed at 12th rank in the “misperception index” according to the MORI Perils of Perception Survey 2018, done by Ipsos India, an independent market research company. It behind several countries like Italy, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, Chile, and Argentina, among others.

Thailand, Mexico, Turkey, Malaysia, and Brazil were ranked first in five and performed poorer than India. “misperception index” is based on questions which asked to people and it revealed the wide chasm between what people perceived and what was real.

### **NGT bans mining within 10 km of Sariska Tiger Reserve**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has banned all mining activities within 10 km of the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan. The order was issued following a plea challenging the environmental clearance granted to 24 mines within the 10 km radius. The Supreme Court in 2006 had prohibited mining within 1 km of national parks and sanctuaries.

### **Indian Railways launches new EMU train with 130 kmph speed**

Railway passengers will soon get another high-tech train from the stable of the Integral Coach Factory (ICF). The new train –Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) –commonly known as an electric train, running at a speed of 130 Kmph is ready for its trial launch. The EMU train with higher passenger capacity already set off for Delhi (December 19), Sudhanshu Mani, General Manager.

### **Fifteenth Global SME Business Summit in New Delhi**

The 15th edition of a two day Global SME Business Summit was organized by the Ministry of MSME and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with Government e-marketplace in New Delhi. The theme of the event was ‘Building Partnerships through Global Value Chains.’

The agenda of the summit was to bring together renowned speakers with unbounded experience and expertise, a global audience, and various national and international SME stakeholders to integrate Indian MSMEs into the Global Value Chains (GVCs).

### **Govt can check online food, grocery delivery items any time: FSSAI**

The FSSAI has revised its regulatory guidelines for online food and grocery delivery platforms. Under the new rules, the government can now sample the products at any point in the supply

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chain for quality checks. Further, the online platforms can only sell products with a shelf life of 30% or 45 days before expiry, at the time of delivery.

### **Cabinet approves plan to list six state-owned companies**

The Union Cabinet headed by PM Narendra Modi has approved a plan to list six government-owned companies and dilute stake in Kudremukh Iron Ore Company. The six firms to be listed include RailTel Corporation, National Seed Corporation India and Tehri Hydro Development Corporation. The government, however, did not elaborate on the timing of the proposed share sales.

### **Cabinet approves death penalty for ‘sexual crimes’ against minors**

The Union Cabinet has approved amendments to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, including the provision for death penalty for “committing aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime” on children. “The amendment is expected to discourage the trend of child sexual abuse...due to strong penal provisions incorporated in the Act,” the government said.

### **Mission Indradhanush: Indias immunisation growth rate since launch rises to four per cent**

In December 2014, Mission Indradhanush was launched for a targeted approach to immunisation in India, in a bid to change the tardy annual growth rate of 1 per cent. Between 2014 and 2018, India’s annual immunisation growth rate has risen to 4 per cent, with an unprecedented 16 per cent rise in the number of fully immunised children.

The word Indradhanush was chosen to represent the seven vaccines that were subsequently included in the Universal Immunization Program against these seven diseases – tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, hepatitis B, diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus and measles.

### **Govt extended ban on import of milk products from China for 4 months will April 23, 2019: DGFT**

The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) announced the extension of the ban on import of milk and its products, including chocolates, from China for four months till April 23, 2019. The ban was first imposed in September 2008 and later extended due to the suspicion of the presence of melamine in some milk consignments from China.

### **Modi Government banned Khalistan Liberation Force under UAPA**

The government has banned Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) for its involvement in killing of innocent people and police officers, several bombings on civilian targets in India, collection of funds for terror activities through extortion, kidnappings, bank robberies and assassination attempts of important government functionaries.

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The outfit has been banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). The KLF came into existence in 1986 with the objective of establishing an independent Khalistan by secession of Punjab from India “through violent means”.

### **GHMC is awarded the Best Capital City in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings**

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has been awarded Best Capital City in the Solid Waste Management in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings. Swachh Survekshan was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban). The Swachh Survekshan survey ranks cities on various sanitation parameters. The GHMC was also at the 27th place among 4,041 cities.

### **Railways develops AI robot ‘USTAAD’ to check for faults**

Railways has developed an artificial intelligence-powered robot to check for faults in trains called USTAAD, which stands for ‘Undergear Surveillance Through Artificial Intelligence Assisted Droid’. The robot examines parts of coaches in real time with an HD camera and transmits them over Wi-Fi. “The camera...can be rotated in any direction as per command given by the engineers,” Railways said.

### **Lok Sabha passes bill to make instant Triple Talaq criminal offence**

The Lok Sabha has passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018, following a debate. The bill proposes to make the method of Muslim men instantly divorcing their wives by uttering “Talaq” thrice as “unconstitutional” and “arbitrary” and suggests a three-year jail term to husbands who follow the method. It will now be presented in Rajya Sabha.

### **IndiGo worst performing airline for consumers: Parliamentary panel**

A Parliamentary Standing Committee led by Derek O’Brien has said that India’s largest airline IndiGo is the “worst-performing” carrier for consumers. “IndiGo has not responded despite many complaints. The airline is very rigid. Indigo even charges for 1-2 kg overweight of baggage,” O’Brien said. The same committee had criticised IndiGo in January for “discourteous and rude behaviour” of its staff.

## **STATE RELATED CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### **First Global Aviation Summit to be held in Mumbai**

Supported by ICAO, IATA, ACI and CANSO, the 1st Global Aviation Summit will be held on January 15 and 16, 2019 at The Grand Hyatt in Mumbai.

It aims to focus on the celebration of ‘Flying for All’ and to provide a platform to the aviation fraternity to highlight the challenges of the sector in the newly-developing growth spots.

## **Indian Owl Festival, Indias first owl fest, held in Pune**

The Indian Owl Festival, India's first owl fest, was held at Pingori village in Purandar taluka of Pune, Maharashtra. The festival was organized by Ela Foundation. It created awareness on owl conservation and feature art forms like pictures, paintings, lanterns, lamp shades, posters, origami, stitched articles, poems and stories on owls.

## **Telangana State signed pact with British Council**

The Telangana government and British Council have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation and support the knowledge ambitions and economic growth of Telangana.

## **Nagaland signs MoU with Estonian academy on e-governance**

Nagaland government signed a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with e-Governance Academy of Estonia to provide advisory and technical knowledge for setting up of e-Governance Academy of Nagaland (e-GAN). The MoU is aimed at strengthening bilateral technical cooperation in the fields of information technology and e-governance.

## **Nagaland becomes second state to adopt pan-India women helpline**

Nagaland became the first state in the Northeast and second in the country, after Himachal Pradesh, to launch a pan-India single emergency number '112' under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS). The launch coincided with the state's formation day and the inaugural day of the 2018 edition of the Hornbill Festival.

## **World Bank to raise \$200 billion to fight climate change**

The World Bank Group said it will double its 5-year investments to \$200 billion to fight climate change between 2021-2025. The fund will aid high-quality forecasts, early warning systems and climate information services. World Bank will contribute \$100 billion and the rest will be raised by International Finance Corporation, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and private capital.

## **International airport to come up in Punjab's Ludhiana**

The Punjab Cabinet cleared a proposal to set up an international civil terminal at Air Force Station, Halwara in Ludhiana district. The Punjab government will provide over 135 acres of land, free of charge, for the terminal. Further, the terminal will be jointly developed by the state government and Airports Authority of India.

### **Delhi Daredevils renamed as Delhi Capitals ahead of 2019 IPL season**

Indian Premier League franchise Delhi Daredevils has been renamed as Delhi Capitals ahead of the 2019 Indian Premier League season. “We wanted this name to mean something to each and everyone from Delhi,” Parth Jindal, the co-owner of the franchise said. Parth’s JSW Sports had bought a 50% ownership stake in the team earlier this year.

### **Gujarat doctor performs heart surgery from 32 km away using robots**

Gujarat-based cardiologist Tejas Patel conducted a heart surgery on a middle-aged woman from 32 km away in the world’s first in-human telerobotic coronary intervention. Sitting at Akshardham temple, Patel operated the patient located in Ahmedabad’s Apex Heart Institute in a 15-minute procedure. He used high-speed internet and robots to clean the patient’s arteries and insert a stent.

### **India’s first underwater museum to open off Puducherry coast**

INS Cuddalore, a Pondicherry-class vessel that was decommissioned in March, will be turned into India’s first underwater museum off the Puducherry coast, as per reports. The vessel will be deployed on the seabed at a depth of 26 metres, seven kilometres off the coast. The 60-metre-long vessel will be a destination for scuba diving and snorkelling, reports said.

### **Kerala gets its 4th international airport in Kannur**

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Minister for Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the Kannur International Airport, the state’s fourth international airport. Spread across 2,000 acres and costing over ₹1,800 crore, the airport can handle around 2,000 passengers at a time and will serve more than 15 lakh international passengers annually.

### **Allahabad University likely to be renamed as Prayagraj University**

The Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University has reportedly submitted a proposal to rename the university as Prayagraj State University. The proposal is currently pending for approval with the Uttar Pradesh government, following which it will be sent to the office of Governor for clearance. In October, the Uttar Pradesh government had officially renamed Allahabad as Prayagraj.

### **MNF wins majority in Mizoram, Cong loses last foothold in Northeast**

Mizo National Front (MNF) has secured the required majority of 21 seats in the 40-member Mizoram Assembly, thus it is set to come in power after 10 years. With this, Congress has lost its last foothold in the Northeastern states. So far, Congress has secured five seats and BJP has won one seat in the state Assembly.

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## **NGT orders reopening of Sterlite copper plant in Tamil Nadu**

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) set aside Tamil Nadu government's order to close Vedanta's Sterlite copper plant in Tuticorin permanently. Calling the closure "unjustifiable", the court asked Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to provide required clearances for opening the plant in three weeks. It also directed the company to spend Rs 100 crore over three years for welfare activities.

## **MNF leader Zoramthanga sworn in as Chief Minister of Mizoram**

Mizo National Front chief Zoramthanga was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Mizoram. Zoramthanga, who has been the Chief Minister of Mizoram twice, was a close aide of MNF founder Laldenga. Zoramthanga has said that his first priorities will be to impose "a prohibition on liquor, repair roads and implement Social Economic Development Programme".

## **Ashok Gehlot named Rajasthan's CM, Sachin Pilot to be Deputy CM**

Senior Congress leader Ashok Gehlot will be sworn in as the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Congress announced. The 67-year-old, who has served as the state's Chief Minister twice, won from Sardarpura seat by defeating BJP candidate Shambhu Singh by a margin of over 40,000 votes. State Congress President Sachin Pilot has been selected as the state's Deputy Chief Minister.

## **Himachal passes resolution to declare cow 'Rashtra Mata'**

The Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed a resolution to declare cow as 'Rashtra Mata (mother of the nation)'. "Cow isn't bound to any caste, creed or religion...People abandon cows when they stop giving milk, so there is a need for such a move," Congress MLA Anirudh Singh said. The Assembly is set to forward the resolution to the Centre.

## **Operation Oliva: Coast Guard launches operation to safeguard turtles**

The Coast Guard launched an exercise along the serene sea waters of Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Odisha to protect the endangered Olive Ridley sea turtles. The Coast Guard 'Operation Oliva' exercise as part of its annual mission to ensure the safe mid-sea sojourn of breeding Olive Ridley sea turtles.

## **Jammu and Kashmir becomes first state to bring law against Sextortion**

Jammu and Kashmir become the first state in the country to enact a law banning sexual exploitation of women "by those in positions of authority, having a fiduciary relationship or a public servant", Under Section 354E of the Ranbir Penal Code (RPC).



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Any person committing the offence of sextortion shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term not be less than three years, but may extend to five years and with fine.

### **Tamil Nadu CM launched ISRO designed NaVIC to fishermen**

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami launched the distribution of satellite phones to fishermen involved in deep sea fishing. It will assist the fishermen in their navigation while in the high seas. The satellite phones, NaVIC (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System) receivers, has been designed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as a bid to the fishermen. So far, ISRO has delivered 200 NaVICs to the State government.

### **Gujarat tops government's first-ever state startup rankings**

Gujarat topped the first-ever state-wise rankings for providing a strong ecosystem to startups released by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). The rankings mentioned Karnataka, Rajasthan, Odisha and Kerala as the 'top performers' after Gujarat. "A total of 27 states and three union territories participated in the exercise," an official statement said.

### **20-year-old Pune woman becomes the fastest Asian to cycle the globe**

Vedangi Kulkarni, a 20-year-old cyclist from Maharashtra's Pune, has become the fastest Asian to cycle the globe. Vedangi achieved the feat by completing the 29,000-km distance required to qualify as bicycling across the globe in 159 days. She reached Kolkata on Sunday after pedalling up to 300 km a day in 14 countries across the 159 days.

### **Manipur Assembly passes anti-mob violence bill**

Manipur Assembly passed the 'Manipur Protection from Mob Violence Bill' to reduce the number of mob lynchings in the state. CM N Biren Singh, who holds charge of the Home Department moved the bill in the state Assembly. The bill recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence if it results in the death of a victim.

### **Andhra, Himachal and Madhya Pradesh best performing states under maternity benefit programme PMMVY: MoSWCD**

Minister of State for the Women and Child Development Ministry Virendra Kumar released the performance of states and UTs under the maternity benefit programme named Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh topped the charts as the best performing states. According to the finding, 51.70 lakh beneficiaries are covered annually under the PMMVY.

## **Manipur Assembly passed anti-mob violence bill**

Manipur Assembly led by CM N Biren Singh passed the 'Manipur Protection from Mob Violence Bill' to reduce the number of mob lynchings in the state. The bill recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence if it results in the death of a victim. The assembly also passed the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2018 unanimously.

## **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, Tamil Nadu, the birth place of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinities of Carnatic music. The other two of the Trinity are Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri. The Tyagaraja Aaradhana Music Festival which is held annually in January in Thiruvaiyaru attracts musical talents from all over the world.

## **Dwijing Festival Begins in Assam**

In Assam, the third Dwijing Festival begun on the bank of Aye river at Chirang district. Around 15 lakh tourists will participate in the festival. Assam PHE minister Rihon Daimary inaugurated the festival in presence of several dignitaries.

Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal will attend the event. Adventure sports, food mart, cultural events, traditional games are being organized in the 12-day long event.

## **Madhya Pradesh Declares Kuno as National Park**

Madhya Pradesh State government has declared Kuno wildlife sanctuary as a national park in compliance with the last condition imposed by a Supreme Court-appointed committee for the much awaited 'translocation of Asiatic lions from Gir in Gujarat.' The move is expected to pave way for translocation of lions from Gir in Gujarat to Kuno.

## **Bahuda Rookery is developed as another Olive Ridley Nesting Site in Odisha**

Odisha forest department has started preparing the beach at the Bahuda river mouth in Ganjam district to lure the endangered turtles to come over for mass nesting next year. The Bahuda rookery is located around 20 km to the south of Rushikulya rookery coast, a major mass nesting site of olive ridleys on the Indian coastline.

## **Telangana, Andhra to have separate High Courts from Jan 1**

Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will have separate High Courts from January 1, 2019. President Ram Nath Kovind issued orders stating that Andhra Pradesh will have a separate HC which will

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function from Amravati, the capital of the state. Since the bifurcation of the state on June 2, 2014, Andhra and Telangana have had a common HC at Hyderabad.

### **Nagaland declared ‘disturbed’ for 6 more months under AFSPA**

The Home Ministry has declared Nagaland “disturbed area” for six more months till June-end under Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA). The state is in such a dangerous condition that the use of armed force in aid of civilian power is necessary, the notification said. AFSPA empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior notice.

## **FOREIGN RELATIONS**

### **India, Russia, China hold trilateral summit**

PM Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin met for the second Russia-India-China ‘RIC’ Trilateral Summit at the leaders’ level after 12 years. The meeting took place on sidelines of the G20 Summit. “President Putin, President Jinping and I discussed a wide range of subjects that would cement the friendship between our nations,” PM Modi tweeted.

### **Bahrain and Maharashtra Government Signs MoU on Fintech**

The Economic Development Board (EDB), the investment promotion arm of the Kingdom of Bahrain signed an MoU with the Maharashtra Government to provide a framework for Co-operation between the two authorities to promote FinTech in their respective markets.

### **India and UAE sign ₹3,500 crore currency swap agreement**

India and UAE signed a ₹3,500-crore currency swap agreement during External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj’s Abu Dhabi visit. The agreement is expected to reduce the dependency on hard currencies like US dollar and reduce transmission costs arising from exchange rate risks, the Indian embassy said. The two nations also signed an agreement to undertake development projects in Africa.

### **Myanmar to grant visa-on-arrival to Indians**

Myanmar will provide visa-on-arrival to Indian tourists entering the country through the international airports of Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay to further people-to-people interactions, President Ram Nath Kovind said. This comes as President Kovind is on an official visit to Myanmar. President Kovind called Myanmar a key partner of India’s ‘Act East’ and ‘Neighbourhood First’ policies.

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## **India signs bilateral annual Haj agreement with Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage next year**

Haj agreement 2019 was signed between India and Saudi Arabia by Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, and Haj and Umrah Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

This year more than 2,100 women have already applied to go to Haj without 'Mehram' (male companion) after the Modi Government had lifted the ban on women going to Haj without Mehram last year and they had also been exempted from the lottery system.

## **India, France agree to fight terrorism jointly**

India and France have agreed to fight terrorism together, India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Jean-Yves Le Drian said in a joint statement. India and France also agreed to enhance their strategic partnership through cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, civil nuclear, defence and security, space, trade and economic sectors.

## **India fifth-most deadliest place to be a journalist, Afghanistan worst: Reporters without Borders (RSF)**

The annual worldwide round-up of deadly violence and abusive treatment of journalists was released by Reporters without Borders (RSF). According to the report, Journalists have never before been subjected to as much violence and abusive treatment as in 2018.

The figure increased by eight percent to 80, and by 15 percent, in the category of number of professional journalists killed, from 55 in 2017 to 63 in 2018. The numbers had been declining for the previous 3 years.

## **India overtakes Germany as world's seventh biggest stock market**

India's stock market has overtaken Germany's to become the seventh-largest in the world with a market capitalisation of \$2.08 trillion. This is the first time in seven years that India moved past the equity market of Europe's largest economy, according to Bloomberg. At \$27.07 trillion, US is world's biggest stock market, followed by China (\$5.46 trillion) and Japan (\$5.41 trillion).

## **India, China hold first People-to-People Exchanges meeting**

External Affairs Minister Sushma and her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi will co-chair the first-ever meeting of India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges in New Delhi.

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India and China decided to set up people to people mechanism during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in China.

### **India pips China in FDI inflows for the first time in 20 years**

According to data from Dealogic, a global Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) and capital markets data provider, India has been getting more foreign investment than its neighbor China for the first time in two decades.

In 2018, India whose financial market is supported by stable fundamentals, a bankruptcy code and fresh opportunities in sunrise sectors, saw more than \$38 billion of inbound deals compared with China's \$32 billion. China, which has historically been the favorite for emerging market bets, is facing slowdown nowadays because of its trade standoff with the United States.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

### **'Nomophobia' declared People's Word of 2018 by Cambridge Dictionary**

The Cambridge Dictionary has declared 'nomophobia' as the People's Word of 2018 after running a public poll to choose between four shortlisted words by the dictionary's editors. 'Nomophobia' refers to the fear or worry at the idea of being without your mobile phone or unable to use it. The other shortlisted words were 'gender gap', 'ecocide' and 'no-platforming'.

### **UK amends new weapons bill to allow Sikhs to carry kirpan**

The UK government has confirmed an amendment to a new weapons bill going through the Parliament to ensure that it does not impact the right of the British Sikh community to possess and supply kirpans, or religious swords. The Offensive Weapons Bill 2018 has now been sent to the House of Lords for approval.

### **Microsoft dethrones Apple as world's most valuable company**

Microsoft dethroned Apple as the world's most valuable company after its market value was above Apple's at the close of trading at \$851.2 billion, compared to Apple's \$847.4 billion. Microsoft's valuation surpassed multiple times this week during intraday trade but Apple beat Microsoft at market close. Apple's stock plummeted in November after lower than expected fourth-quarter earnings.

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## **EU sets goal to be climate neutral by 2050**

The European Union sets a goal to become the first major economy to be ‘Climate Neutral’ by 2050 after that the emissions of greenhouse gases need to be offset by planting trees or burying the gases underground. As per the European Union, this target can be achieved by using Solar and Wind Energy for electricity generation.

## **Chidaoba wrestling, Jamaican reggae, Irish hurling got UNESCO heritage tag**

The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, meeting in Mauritius until 1 December, inscribed six elements on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The newly inscribed elements are:

- ◆ Chidaoba, wrestling in Georgia,
- ◆ Ireland – Hurling—Hurling is a field game played by two teams using a wooden stick (hurley) to strike a small ball (sliotar) between the opposing team’s goalposts,
- ◆ Reggae music of Jamaica,
- ◆ Japan – Raiho-shin, ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes,
- ◆ As-Samer in Jordan,
- ◆ Traditional spring festive rites of the Kazakh horse breeders.

## **First global conference on Blue Economy held in Nairobi**

Kenya, Japan and Canada co-hosted the first global conference on the sustainable blue economy in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November 2018, in an event which brought together over 4,000 participants from around the world. It builds on the momentum of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris and the UN Ocean Conference 2017 “Call to Action”.

## **WhatsApp launches first-ever TV campaign to fight fake news**

WhatsApp launched its first-ever television campaign in India called ‘Share Joy, Not Rumours’ to address fake news ahead of 2019 general elections. It comprises three 60-second films that convey scenarios about dangerous rumours that spread via spam among user groups. “The

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campaign is timed to start just prior to the elections in Rajasthan and Telangana,” WhatsApp said.

### **World Bank to raise \$200 billion to fight climate change**

The World Bank Group said it will double its 5-year investments to \$200 billion to fight climate change between 2021-2025. The fund will aid high-quality forecasts, early warning systems and climate information services. World Bank will contribute \$100 billion and the rest will be raised by International Finance Corporation, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency and private capital.

### **Qatar to withdraw from OPEC after nearly 60 years**

Qatar will withdraw from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in January after nearly 60 years, country’s energy minister Saad al-Kaabi said. The decision to withdraw from OPEC came after Qatar reviewed ways to enhance its role internationally and plan its long-term strategy. Qatar is one of OPEC’s smallest producers but the world’s largest liquefied natural gas exporter.

### **International conference on bears starts in Agra**

More than 80 delegates from 11 countries are participating in an international conference on bears being organised in the Taj city for the first time. Hosted by Wildlife SOS, a conservation non-profit, the conference from December 3-6 is focused on bear care, wildlife conservation and human wildlife conflict mitigation and is in collaboration with Bear Care Group from the US and Canada. The conference aims to share knowledge on principles of welfare of bears and other wild animals in zoos, sanctuaries and rescue centres.

### **Amazon briefly becomes world’s most valuable company at \$870 bn**

World’s richest person Jeff Bezos’ Amazon briefly became the world’s most valuable company, days after Microsoft dethroned Apple. The online retailer’s shares surged 5.2% at its highs, pushing the company’s market capitalisation to around \$870 billion. At Monday’s close, Apple was back on top with a market value of \$877 billion followed by Amazon at \$866.6 billion.

### **WHO reported air pollution kills 7 million every year**

The 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) is being held in Katowice, Poland from 3rd to 14th December 2018.

In that conference, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said that the exposure to air pollution causes 7 million deaths worldwide every year and costs an estimated \$5.11 trillion in welfare losses globally. It said that the same human activities that are destabilizing the Earth’s climate also contribute directly to poor health.

## **Panama 1st Latin American nation to join Belt and Road Initiative**

Panama has become the first Latin American country to join China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Panamanian counterpart, Juan Carlos Varela signed more than a dozen deals earlier this week during the former's visit to Panama. China established diplomatic relations with Panama last year.

## **Luxembourg to become first country to make public transport free**

Luxembourg is set to become the first country in the world to make all public transport free, implementing the move in 2020. The move is aimed at addressing environmental issues and the problem of traffic congestion. Earlier this year, Luxembourg introduced free transport for all people under the age of 20.

## **Trump nominates William Barr as US Attorney General**

US President Donald Trump nominated William Barr to be the new Attorney General. Barr was previously the US Attorney General from 1991 to 1993 under late President George HW Bush and will replace the current acting Attorney General, Matt Whitaker. Barr's appointment is pending confirmation by the Senate.

## **China launches mission to land on face of Moon not seen from Earth**

China launched the first-ever spacecraft that will attempt landing on far side of the Moon, which always shows the same face to Earth as it's close enough to be locked by the planet's gravitational field. Earth-based mission controllers will not be able to communicate directly with the Chang'e 4 spacecraft and will use another Chinese satellite orbiting Moon.

## **France declares emergency amid 'yellow vest' protests**

French President Emmanuel Macron declared a state of "social and economic" emergency amid the ongoing 'yellow vest' protests in the country. Macron announced a monthly increase in the minimum wage by €100. He also announced to cancel taxes on overtime labour and introduce special tax exemptions for pensioners earning less than €2,000 per month.

## **Russia sends nuclear-capable bombers to Venezuela**

Russia has sent two Tu-160, strategic bombers capable of carrying nuclear weapons, to Venezuela in an apparent show of support to President Nicolás Maduro's regime. The bombers' deployment follows Maduro's visit to Russia last week. As per reports, the US previously considered taking military action against Venezuela, accusing Maduro of leading an "authoritarian dictatorship".



## **164 nations adopt first-ever global migration agreement**

As many as 164 countries adopted the first-ever global migration pact in Morocco. The UN's Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration aims to enhance international cooperation on migration issues. The US, Australia, Austria, Chile, Hungary and Poland are among the nations that have pulled out from the non-binding pact.

## **The Guardians' are TIME magazine's Person of the Year 2018**

TIME magazine has named 'The Guardians', a group of journalists, as its 'Person of the Year 2018'. The group includes Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, marking the first year TIME has chosen a deceased person as 'Person of the Year'. The others are Filipina journalist Maria Ressa, Reuters' jailed journalists Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo, and US newspaper Capital Gazette.

## **Japan picks 'disaster' as symbol for 2018**

Japan has picked the kanji character for "disaster" as its "defining symbol" for the year 2018, following a series of natural disasters that struck the country this year. The symbol, which is chosen by popular vote, best embodies the events that take place in a particular year. The second most popular kanji character was "peace".

## **Sri Lanka's former PM Ranil Wickremesinghe won the vote of confidence in the House**

Sri Lanka's former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe won the vote of confidence from a majority of Sri Lankan parliamentarians, including 14 from the opposition Tamil National Alliance (TNA), as their preferred candidate to serve in the post. He received 117 votes in favour in the 225-member legislative body.

## **US Senate votes to end military support for Saudis in Yemen war**

The US Senate has voted 56-41 to end US military support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen's civil war. It is the first time either chamber of Congress has backed a resolution to withdraw US forces from a military engagement under the War Powers Act. The Senate also blamed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder.

## **UN honoured Indian startup 'HelpUsGreen'**

Uttar Pradesh based startup HelpUsGreen has been honored by UN for its works to clean River Ganga by recycling tonnes of floral waste. UN presented the award to the 14 other countries along with India at the Nations Climate Action award ceremony during the UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice. According to UN the startup flower cycled 11060 metric tonnes of temple waste by the women working with the startup.

## **EU parliament approves ‘world’s largest’ free trade deal with Japan**

EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement will remove duties on almost all agricultural and industrial products as well as open up the service sector and procurement. It also moves to eliminate non-tariff barriers to trade.

The deal will create an open trading zone covering 635 million people and almost one-third of the world’s total GDP. Japan’s Parliament has already approved the agreement. EU businesses export €58 billion (\$66 billion) in goods and €28 billion in services to Japan every year.

## **Global debt reached all-time high of USD 184 trillion, says IMF**

Debt worldwide reached a record-high of \$184 trillion in nominal terms, a nearly 222 per cent of the GDP in 2017, according to a report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). On average, the world’s debt now exceeds \$ 86,000 per person more than 2 times the average income per-capita. The world’s top three borrowers – the US, China and Japan accounted for more than half the debt.

## **Nepal government banned all Indian currency notes above Rs 100**

The Nepal government has banned the validity of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations in the country.

India is currently Nepal’s largest trade partner, and their decision to ban all Indian currencies above Rs 100 denomination would also affect Nepalese people and business for their transactions.

The Indian government had introduced new currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 after the demonetisation of old notes in 2016. However, the citizens of Nepal have been using the new Indian currency in their country for nearly two years now.

## **United Arab Emirates President declares 2019 as Year of Tolerance**

United Arab Emirates (UAE) President H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan has declared 2019 to be the “Year of Tolerance.” to highlight UAE as the Global Capital of Tolerance, instilling the values of co-existence and peace in local, regional and international communities

The Year of Tolerance will focus on “Five Pillars”.

- First one aims to deepen the values of tolerance and co-existence among cultures and peoples by concentrating on teaching the youth on the values of tolerance.
- The second pillar will focus on solidifying the UAE as the global capital for tolerance, via a series of projects with dialogue between various cultures and civilizations

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- The third will enact multiple cultural programmes and contributions to build tolerant communities.
- The fourth pillar will see legislative and policy-oriented objectives that contribute mandating cultural and religious tolerance.
- The fifth pillar will promote tolerance and co-existence through media initiatives.

### **Netherlands builds artificial islands to bring back wildlife**

Dutch engineers have created an artificial archipelago of five islands in “one of the largest rewilding operations in Europe”. Recently open to the public, the 700-hectare property features three wooden bird observatories, a house for the island’s guardian, 12 km of footbridges and unpaved roads. The project, initiated by Natuurmonumenten, a Dutch NGO, cost around €60 million (over ₹481 crore).

### **Denmark passes law making handshake must for citizenship**

Danish lawmakers have approved a government-backed proposal to make citizenship applicants shake hands with the official conducting the naturalisation ceremony. The lawmakers argued the gesture, criticised for discriminating against Muslims, represents a mark of respect for the government. The law would come into effect on January 1, however, some mayors said they will ignore the new guidelines.

### **Nevada becomes 1st US state with female-majority legislature**

Nevada has become the first state in the US with a majority female legislature. This came after Clark County Commissioners appointed Rochelle Thuy Nguyen and Beatrice Angela Duran to Las Vegas-area legislative seats. Women will hold 32 of the 63 seats in the state’s legislature, with over 22 women in the state Assembly and nine women in the state Senate.

### **Global Gender Gap Report 2018: Iceland tops; India ranks 108<sup>th</sup>**

This year, the Gender Gap Index as released by World Economic Forum (WEF), was topped by Iceland with a score of 0.858, holding the top spot in the index for the 10th consecutive year. Norway ranked at 2nd, Sweden at 3rd, and Finland at 4th.

India was ranked 108th in the Global Gender Gap Index 2018, same as it was ranked in 2017. Among other South Asian countries, India fetched fourth place with top 3 being Bangladesh (48th), Sri Lanka (100th) and Nepal (105th).

### **Merriam-Webster selects ‘Justice’ as its 2018 Word of the Year**

Merriam Webster chooses its word of the year based on an increase in traffic and overall volume of traffic. They report “justice” saw a 74 percent increase year over year, taking it higher than

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other words that might have been “trendy” or “buzzed about.” The word follows “toxic,” picked by Oxford Dictionaries, and “misinformation,” plucked by Dictionary.com.

### **Trump names Patrick Shanahan as acting Defence Secretary**

US President Donald Trump has announced that Deputy Defence Secretary Patrick Shanahan would take over as the acting Defence Secretary from January 1, replacing Jim Mattis two months earlier than had been expected. Mattis had said he was quitting, effective February 28, after falling out with Trump over his foreign policy, including the decision to withdraw all troops from Syria.

### **Burundi names Gitega as new capital**

Burundi confirmed the small central city of Gitega the country’s new political capital.

#### **About Burundi**

- Capital: Gitega
- Currency: Euro
- President: Frank-Walter Steinmeier
- Language: Kirundi, French, and English

### **Barack Obama named most admired man for 11th year in a row**

Former US President Barack Obama has been named the most admired man by Americans for the 11th year in a row, according to an annual poll conducted by Gallup. US President Donald Trump finished second for the fourth consecutive year. Meanwhile, Former US First Lady Michelle Obama ended Hillary Clinton’s 17-year run as most admired woman.

### **Belgium ends the year as No. 1 in FIFA global rankings**

Belgium will end the year as No. 1 ahead of world champions France in the global rankings released by FIFA recently. Belgium have 1,727 points by FIFA’s calculations to 1,726 for France. Brazil are third on 1,676.

### **China launched first satellite for space-based broadband to rival Google**

The satellite was launched from a Long March 11 carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in north-western China. The satellite is the first in the Hongyun project planned by China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp (CASIC).

The Hongyun project, started in September 2016, aims to build a space-based communications network to provide broadband internet connectivity to users around the world, especially those in the underserved regions.

### **Japan announces IWC withdrawal, will resume commercial whaling**

Japan is withdrawing from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and will resume commercial whaling in July 2019, in a move expected to spark international criticism.

The IWC, established in 1946 to conserve and manage the world's whale and cetacean population, introduced a moratorium on commercial whaling in 1986.

### **Thailand 1st Southeast Asian nation to legalise medical marijuana**

Thailand has become the first Southeast Asian nation to legalise the use of marijuana for medical use and research. The junta-appointed parliament voted 166-0 to amend the Narcotic Act of 1979 to legalise the medicinal use of marijuana. Marijuana was used in Thailand to relieve pain and fatigue until its use was criminalised in the country in the 1930s.

### **Sheikh Hasina secures third straight term as Bangladesh PM**

Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina has secured her third consecutive term, with her alliance winning 287 of the 298 seats for which results have been declared for the 300-strong parliament, the country's Election Commission said. The main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which boycotted the 2014 poll, has won just six seats in the general election.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **Microsoft, Taiwan AI Labs launch genetic analysis platform**

Microsoft Taiwan and Taiwan AI Labs have jointly launched an AI-based genetic analysis platform named TaiGenomics. The platform uses artificial intelligence to analyse large amounts of medical and genetic data taken from patients and hospitals. According to Microsoft, the platform could reduce human errors and help medical experts to diagnose or predict diseases more efficiently.

### **Soyuz successfully launches 3 astronauts to ISS after failed launch**

The Soyuz MS-11 was successfully launched from Kazakhstan to the International Space Station with a three-astronaut crew, after a failed launch in October. Soyuz entered target orbit within nine minutes of launch. Following a six-hour journey, the crew from US, Canada and Russia will dock the Soyuz to the station and spend the next six-and-a-half months on ISS.

## **UAE passport tops the Global Passport Power Rank 2018**

As per the ratings released by Passport Index, the United Arab Emirates has topped the Global Passport Power Rank 2018, emerging as the country with the most powerful passport in world. UAE passport holders can now fly to 113 countries without a visa, and 54 others with a visa-on-arrival. UAE moved from third to first place overtaking Germany and Singapore.

## **NASA to launch VISIONS 2 to image Earth's leaky atmosphere**

NASA is set to launch VISIONS-2 rocket to get a closer look at the how the earth's atmosphere is leaking into space. The VISIONS-2 mission, Visualizing Ion Outflow via Neutral Atom Sensing-2, is scheduled to be launched on December 4. Understanding atmospheric escape on earth has applications all over the Universe, from predicting which planets might be habitable, to piecing together how Mars became a desolate landscape.

## **Musk's SpaceX launches 64 satellites at once, sets US record**

Elon Musk-led startup SpaceX on Monday successfully launched 64 satellites aboard its Falcon 9 rocket into Earth's orbit, setting a new US record. The rocket carried India's first fully private satellite 'ExseedSat-1', built by Mumbai-based startup Exseed Space for less than ₹2 crore. ISRO holds the record for most satellites launched in one go, at 104 satellites in February 2017.

## **ISRO's heaviest satellite launched, will increase internet speed**

France-headquartered Arianespace successfully launched GSAT-11, the heaviest satellite built by ISRO from its port at French Guiana. Weighing 5,854 kg, GSAT-11 will boost broadband speeds (at least 16 Gbps) and provide the capacity to meet growing demands for internet connectivity, said ISRO. The satellite, with a mission life of 15 years, will be placed in a Geostationary Orbit.

## **India successfully test-fires nuclear-capable Agni-5**

Indigenously developed surface-to-surface nuclear-capable ballistic missile Agni-5, which has a strike range of 5,000 km, has been successfully test-fired from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast. According to reports, this is the seventh trial of the missile. Agni-5, unlike others in the series, is the most advanced in terms of navigation and guidance, warhead and engine, officials said.

## **Indian Navy launched DSRV system at Mumbai**

The Indian Navy launched its first non-tethered Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. The DSRV is used to rescue crew members from submarines stranded underwater in the high seas. The cost of one system is Rs.1,000 crore.

## **India sets world record in nuclear plant operation**

The indigenously developed Kaiga Atomic Power Station has set a new world record, with one of its units operating uninterrupted for more than 940 days. This is a record for all kinds of nuclear power-generating units, including advanced gas-based reactors in the world.

## **ISRO to launch GSAT-7A Communication Satellite on December 19**

India will launch its latest communication satellite, GSAT-7A from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota onboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F11 on December 19. The 2,250 kg GSAT-7A is the 35th Indian Communication satellite built by ISRO. GSAT-7A can be used by the Indian Air Force and the Indian Army.

## **Hubble telescope finds planet evaporating at record speed**

Astronomers using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope have discovered a Neptune-sized exoplanet evaporating 100 times faster than planets of similar size. GJ 3470b circles a red dwarf star, whose intense radiation heats hydrogen in the planet's upper atmosphere, causing it to escape into space. "In only a few billion years, half of the planet may be gone," a scientist said.

## **5G services likely to be rolled out by 2020: DoT**

The Department of Telecommunications said it expects to complete processes for 5G spectrum auction by August 2019 and the services will be rolled out by 2020. TRAI has given a preliminary set of recommendations, which the working committee at the DoT is looking at, it added. Field trials for 5G services are currently going on, DoT further said.

## **NASA lander places 1st instrument to study quakes on Mars**

NASA announced that its \$993-million InSight lander has placed its first instrument, a seismometer, on Mars to study quakes on the planet. The commands to deploy the instrument were sent on Tuesday, NASA said. "InSight's timetable of activities on Mars has gone better than we hoped," Project Manager Tom Hoffman said.

## **Nuclear-capable Agni-IV missile successfully test-fired**

India successfully test-fired nuclear strategic ballistic missile Agni-IV from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast as a part of user trial by the Army. The missile has a 4,000-km strike range and is equipped with advanced avionics, 5th generation on board computer and distributed architecture. This is the seventh trial of Agni-IV missile.

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## **NASA's 1st woman executive, 'mother of Hubble' passes away at 93**

The first-ever woman to hold an executive position at NASA, Nancy Grace Roman, passed away at the age of 93 on December 25. Roman was the first Chief of Astronomy in the Office of Space Science at NASA Headquarters and is referred to as the 'mother of Hubble' telescope. She had joined NASA in 1959 and had retired in 1979.

## **InSight lander places its first instrument (SEIS) on Mars**

The US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced that its InSight lander has deployed its first instrument Seismometer (SEIS) onto the surface of Mars, completing a major mission milestone that will allow scientists to peer into the Martian interior by studying ground motion also known as marsquakes.

The InSight will deploy two more instruments namely Rotation and Interior Structure Experiment (RISE) and Heat Probe (HP3) to study Mars' deep interiors.

## **Air Marshal Rajeev Sachdeva takes over as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defense Staff Operations**

Defense Ministry appointed Air Marshal Rajeev Sachdeva who had served in three out of four wings of Integrated Defense Staff (IDS) headquarters as the Deputy Chief of Integrated Defense Staff (Operations). Air Marshal Sachdeva was commissioned as an Indian Air Force pilot in December 1981 and has logged over 7200 hours of transport and instructional flying experience. Apart from being a Category 'A' flying instructor, he has also held some of the prestigious appointments in Air Force, Joint Services and National Technical Research Organization (NTRO).

## **Russia successfully tests new hypersonic nuclear missile**

Russia successfully tested the new hypersonic missile system Avangard, which is capable of carrying nuclear and conventional warheads. Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the successful launch and said that the new missile system will be deployed in 2019. Putin had earlier said the missile could hit almost any point in the world and evade a US-built missile shield.

## **SPORTS**

### **Carlsen retains World Chess Championship title**

World number one Norwegian Magnus Carlsen has retained his World Chess Championship title, beating US opponent Fabiano Caruana in a tie-breaker event. Carlsen beat Caruana in three time-limited games, ending the American's hopes of becoming the first US champion since Bobby Fischer won in 1972.



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## **India is the fastest growing e-commerce market: Report by Bain & Company**

According to the report, India's online retail market had a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 53% from 2013 to 2017. This rapid growth is due to heavily discount-driven e-commerce marketplaces, improvement in delivery infrastructure and increased smartphone penetration and data usage. India's total e-commerce retail sales in 2017 were nearly \$20 billion.

As per the studies, another \$50 billion of online e-commerce could be introduced by adding new users and bringing back the currently inactive old users. India was in 8th rank in terms of online retail penetration among 11 countries.

## **PUBG wins 'Best Game of 2018' among 3 Google Play awards**

Online multiplayer battlefield game PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) has won three awards in Google's 'Best of 2018' awards for Android apps on Play Store. The game was awarded 'Best Game of 2018' and 'User's Choice Game of 2018' alongside a spot as the 'Most Competitive' app. Made by Tencent Games, PUBG was released for both Android and iOS in March 2018.

## **Gautam Gambhir announces retirement from all forms of cricket**

Gautam Gambhir announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Tuesday. The 37-year-old, who was India's highest run-scorer in both the 2007 WT20 and 2011 World Cup finals, played 58 Tests, 147 ODIs and 37 T20Is. "I think someone up there was writing my script, but looks like now he has run out of his ink," he said.

## **Jon Ridgeon appointed as CEO of International Association of Athletics Federations**

Ridgeon will take up the new role in March 2019. He will replace Frenchman Olivier Gers, who resigned from the post in March citing differences with the global governing body's commercial strategy. He is former British record holder and silver medallist in the 110m hurdles in the 1987 World Championships in Rome. He also represented Great Britain in two Olympic Games – Seoul in 1988 and Atlanta in 1996.

## **Kohli India's top-paid sportsperson of 2018 at 228 crore: Forbes**

Team India captain Virat Kohli has featured as the highest-earning sportsperson in the 2018 Forbes India Celebrity 100 list with ₹228.09-crore earnings. Kohli was also the top-paid sportsperson in 2016 and 2017 with ₹134.44 crore and ₹100.72 crore earnings respectively. Former captain MS Dhoni follows Kohli as the second highest-paid sportsperson in the 2018 list with ₹101.77-crore earnings.

## **Mary Kom honoured with Meethoileima title**

Mary Kom was honored by Chief minister N.Biren Singh who also handed over a cheque of Ten lakh rupees. The Chief Minister declared that the Imphal West DC Road towards Game Village will be named as MC Mary Kom Road.

## **SAIL Hockey Academy Wins Aga Khan Gold Cup Tournament**

Steel Authority of India's Hockey Academy beat Army XI Danapur to clinch the 115th All India Aga Khan Gold Cup hockey tournament held at Major Dhyan Chand hockey stadium in New Delhi. Jay Prakash Patel scored the match-winning goal for the SAIL Hockey Academy (SHA) in the final match.

## **International Cricket Council ropes in Royal Stag as official sponsor for next five years**

International Cricket Council (ICC) signed a contract with Pernod Ricard India Pvt Ltd, the makers of whiskey brand Royal Stag for a five-year global partnership as an official sponsor. The size of Royal Stag's sponsorship deal is estimated to be \$5-6 million per year. The partnership which will last until 2023 would allow Royal Stag a comprehensive presence across broadcast, digital and on-ground activations of all ICC global tournaments, including the 2019 World Cup, T20 World Cup, World Test Championship and U19 World Cup and Women's World Cup.

## **Djokovic and Halep wins 2018 ITF world champions**

Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep have been named as the 2018 International Tennis Federation (ITF) world champions by the governing body of global tennis. World number one Djokovic receives the honour from the ITF for the sixth time, while it is the first year that Romania's top-ranked Halep has been recognized.

## **PV Sindhu clinches her maiden World Tour Finals title**

PV Sindhu won her maiden BWF World tour finals title in Guangzhou, China. In the summit clash Sindhu defeated Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-19, 21-17 in 1 hour and 2 minutes. It is indeed a great victory for PV Sindhu after all the silvers in the recent past. Jinx has finally been broken after being the second best in Olympics, World Championships, CWG and Asian Games.

## **Belgium beat Netherlands to win FIH Hockey World Cup**

Belgium, Olympic silver medallists, defeated Netherlands 3-2 via a penalty shoot-out to win the FIH Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. In the last edition of the World Cup at The Hague in Netherlands, Belgium had finished fifth.

## **Virat Kohli smashes his 63rd international hundred, 11th of 2018**

India captain Virat Kohli smashed his 25th Test hundred during the first innings of the second Test against Australia at Perth on Sunday. Kohli has now smashed 63 international hundreds and is only behind Ricky Ponting (71) and Sachin Tendulkar (100). Kohli also became the first ever batsman to record 11 international hundreds each in two calendar years.

## **Wickremesinghe reinstated as Sri Lanka PM 51 days after being sacked**

Ranil Wickremesinghe was reinstated as Sri Lanka's Prime Minister on Sunday, 51 days after he was sacked by President Maithripala Sirisena. This comes a day after Mahinda Rajapaksa, who was appointed as the PM by Sirisena following Wickremesinghe's ouster, resigned from the post. Wickremesinghe was sacked by Sirisena following differences over policy making and other issues.

## **WV Raman named India Women coach despite Kirsten being 1st choice**

Ex-Indian men's cricket team opener WV Raman has been appointed as the coach of the Indian women's cricket team despite India's 2011 men's World Cup-winning coach Gary Kirsten being the first choice. Kirsten was unable to take up the assignment due to his ongoing contract with Royal Challengers Bangalore. A three-member panel including Kapil Dev picked the new coach.

## **Kabaddi World Cup Winning Captain Anup Kumar announced retirement**

In his 15-year iconic career, Anup Kumar was part of the national team that won gold medals in 2010 and 2014. He won the Arjuna Award in 2012. He began his international career in 2006 at the South Asian Games in Sri Lanka and was the captain of the national team in 2014.

## **F1 drivers choose Lewis Hamilton as 2018's top driver**

Formula One drivers have chosen Mercedes' British driver Lewis Hamilton as the best driver of the 2018 season. The Mercedes driver registered 11 victories alongside 11 pole positions and 17 podium finishes from 21 races. Red Bull's Dutch driver Max Verstappen was second in the list while departing Spanish driver Fernando Alonso was placed third.

## **Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting inducted into ICC Hall of Fame**

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting became the 25th Australian cricketer to be officially inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

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A three-time World Cup winner (including two World Cups as captain in 2003 and 2007), Ponting did a lap of honor as part of his induction during the tea break on Day-1 of the Boxing Day Test between India and Australia at MCG.

### **Dale Steyn becomes South Africa's highest wicket-taker in Test cricket**

Fast bowler Dale Steyn has become the highest wicket-taker for South Africa in Test cricket, achieving the feat by dismissing Pakistan opener Fakhar Zaman in the first Test at Centurion on Wednesday. Playing in his 89th Test, the 35-year-old overtook former South Africa captain Shaun Pollock, who had taken 421 wickets in 108 Tests.

### **Kohli hits most international runs in a year for 3rd straight time**

India captain Virat Kohli scored 2,735 runs across formats in international cricket this year, ending the year as the highest run-scorer. This is the third straight time that Kohli has ended a calendar year as the highest run-scorer in international cricket. In 2017, Kohli had aggregated 2,818 runs, while in 2016, the 30-year-old topped with 2,595 runs.

### **Harmanpreet named captain of ICC women's T20I team of the year**

India's T20I captain Harmanpreet Kaur was named the captain of the ICC women's T20I team of the year. Meanwhile, New Zealand's Suzie Bates was named the captain of the ICC women's ODI team of the year. Smriti Mandhana and Poonam Yadav were the only Indian players to be included in both the ICC ODI and T20I squads.

### **Bumrah becomes top wicket-taker in international cricket in 2018**

Indian fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah has become the highest wicket-taker in international cricket in 2018 after picking up 9 wickets in the Melbourne Test against Australia. The 25-year-old has taken 78 wickets this year, overtaking South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada, who has taken 77 wickets. Bumrah took 48 wickets in Tests, 22 in ODIs and 8 in T20Is in 2018.

## **OBITUARY**

<b>Name of the Person Died</b>	<b>Associated Field</b>
HW Bush	The 41st President of the US
CN Balakrishnan	Former Kerala Minister
Nana Chudasama dies	Former Mumbai Mayor and Padma Shri awardee
Arun Bhaduri	Famous classical singer
Jai Narain Prasad Nishad	Ex-Union Minister

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Nirupam Sen	Veteran CPI(M) leader
Dipali Borthakur	Nightingale of Assam singer
Sulagitti Narasamma	Padma Shri awardee, who helped deliver over 15,000 babies free of charge in rural Karnataka has passed away aged 98 in Bengaluru
Lawrence Roberts	Early internet pioneer
Mrinal Sen	Bengali filmmaker

### Important Days

Date	Day	Theme
1 December	World AIDS Day	Know Your Status
2 December	International Day for the Abolition of Slavery	
3 December	International Day of Persons with Disabilities	
4 December	Indian Navy Day	
5 December	World Soil Day	Be the Solution to Soil Pollution
7 December	Armed Forces Flag Day	
10 December	Human Rights Day	
11 December	International Mountain Day	
14 December	National Energy Conservation Day	
15 December	International Tea Day	
16 December	Vijay Diwas	
20 December	International Human Solidarity Day	