



CURRENT AFFAIRS (JANUARY - 2019) :

National

- ⇒ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval for opening up the International Solar Alliance (ISA) membership to all countries that are the members of the United Nations. The ISA is headquartered at Gurugram, India. The main objective of ISA is to include global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity and mobilisation of investment of over \$ 1000 billion into solar energy by 2030.
- ⇒ India's first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant has successfully completed its first deterrence patrol. The development signifies that underwater warship has completed its maiden long-range mission with live nuclear-tipped missiles. INS Arihant is India's first indigenously-designed, developed and manufactured nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine. Three more such submarines are under various stages of construction.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first Inland Multi-Modal Terminal Port on the river Ganga at Ramnagar in Varanasi and received the first container cargo from Kolkata, belonging to PepsiCo. It is the first of the four Multi-Modal Terminals being constructed on National Waterways-1 (NW1) on the River Ganga as part of the World Bank-aided Jal Marg Vikas project of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). The other three terminals are under construction at Sahibganj, Haldia and Gazipur. It will enable commercial navigation of vessels with the capacity of 1500-2,000 DWT on the river Ganga.
- ⇒ Indian Army has picked Russia's 'Igla-S' missile system as choice for its multibillion dollar contract for man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). Igla-S emerged as the lowest bidder for Indian Army's Very Short Range Air Defence (VSHORAD) deal. There is, however, a shadow of US financial sanctions for arms purchases from Russia under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) law that restricts defence purchases from Russia, Iran and North Korea.
- ⇒ Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has released Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidelines to advise hospitals in setting up Antimicrobial Stewardship Programmes (AMSP) to ensure judicious use of antibiotics in healthcare facilities. AMSP is a hospital-based programme dedicated to improving antibiotic use. Since inappropriate use of antibiotics is rampant in India, there was an urgent need to improve antibiotic use in hospitals. The increasing consumption of antibiotics is one of the key drivers of antimicrobial resistance seen in bugs. Some of the key factors driving antimicrobial resistance in our country are irrational prescription

of broad-spectrum antibiotics, poor regulations around sale of antibiotics, self-medication, lack of education and awareness regarding responsible use of antibiotics.

- ⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Singapore to participate in the ASEAN-India informal Breakfast Summit and the 13th East Asia Summit.
- ⇒ Himachal Pradesh has become the first State in the country to implement Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) as Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched ERSS number 112 for the State. Under this system, all emergency numbers like 100 for police, 101 for fire, 102 for ambulance and disaster response have been integrated into one number '112'. This emergency number has been introduced on the basis of the US emergency number 911. Gradually this emergency number will be started in other states of the country.

International

- ⇒ The Pacific Island of New Caledonia, some 18,000 kilometres from the French mainland, voted to remain a part of France in an independent referendum.
- ⇒ Around 70 leaders of the world, including Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin gathered in Paris on November 11, 2018 and led commemoration to mark 100 years since the end of the World War 1. India was represented by the Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu.
- ⇒ Russia's state space corporation (Roscosmos) has planned to venture into Internet of things (IoT) with the launch of new satellite system named 'Marathon'. The new satellite system will be part of Russia's Sphere Satellite Constellation, which will be fully established by 2026. The number of satellites in Marathon system is not revealed yet. Internet of Things (IoT) is a network of devices such as smartphones, wearable devices, home appliances and vehicles, connected to internet, which enables these objects to connect and exchange data.

Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 10.01.2019) are :
 - * Repo Rate (*Repo Rate is the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the central bank, i.e., RBI*) : 6.50%.
 - * Reverse Repo Rate (*Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the commercial banks deposit their surplus money to the central bank*) : 6.25%
 - * Statutory Liquidity Ratio (*SLR is the percentage of deposits that commercial banks have to maintain with themselves*) : 19.5%
 - * CRR (*Cash Reserve Ratio is the proportion of deposits which the banks have to keep with the central bank*) : 4%
 - * Bank Rate (*Bank rate is the rate at which central bank, i.e. RBI, rediscounts the bills of exchange of commercial banks*) : 6.75%



- * MSF (*Marginal Standing Facility is the loan banks are permitted to avail themselves from the RBI on overnight basis, using its SLR securities*) : 6.75%.
- * Base Rate (*Base Rate reflects the actual cost of banks that has to be covered through lending. Banks cannot lend money below the Base Rate, which varies from bank to bank*) : 8.95% - 9.45%.
- * Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit) Rate (more than 1 year): 6.25% - 7.50%.
- * Savings A/c.: 3.50% - 4.00%.
- * MCLR (Overnight) : 8.15% - 8.55%.
(*MCLR, the Marginal Cost of Fund-based Lending Rate, is the new benchmark lending rate at which banks will now lend to new borrowers. Till 31 March 2016, banks used the Base rate as the benchmark lending rate. MCLR is built on four components – Marginal cost of funds, Negative carry on account of CRR, Operating costs and Tenor premium*).
- ⇒ India has ranked 77th among 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) 2018 rankings. In the 2017 rankings, India ranked 100th, i.e., India has recorded a jump of 23 positions in 2017. EODB 2018 was topped by New Zealand (consecutive third time), followed by Singapore, Denmark, and Hong Kong.
- ⇒ The USA temporarily allowed countries including India, Japan and South Korea to continue buying oil from Iran.
- ⇒ The second edition of International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency (INSPIRE 2018) was launched in New Delhi. It was jointly organised by the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and the World Bank.
- ⇒ The 13th edition of Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2018 was released by Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide. Out of 119 countries, India stood 103rd along with Nigeria and has been categorised as a country 'with serious level of hunger'.
- ⇒ India and Japan signed a Loan Agreement worth Rs. 1817 crore for construction of 'Turga Pumped Storage (I)' Hydel Project on the river Subarnarekha in West Bengal.
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) approved operationalisation strategy for Operation Greens, which was announced by the Union Government in Budget 2018-19 to stabilise supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) crops. It is aimed at ensuring availability of TOP crops throughout the country round the year without price volatility.
- ⇒ The Finance Ministry has launched a mobile app called Jan Dhan Darshak as a part of financial inclusion initiative. This app will act as a guide for the common people in locating a financial service touch point at a given location in the country. Over 5 lakh financial points like bank branches, ATMs, Post Offices, etc. have been mapped on this app.
- ⇒ The government of India recently privatized six airports – Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Guwahati.
- ⇒ Union Bank of India celebrated its centenary year (100th year). It was established on November 11, 1919.
- ⇒ In a first for India, HSBC Bank has executed a trade finance transaction involving an export by Reliance Industries to an American client using 'blockchain'. (*A blockchain is a growing list of records, called blocks which are linked using cryptography. Each block contains a cryptographic hash of the previous block and transaction data. Blockchain was invented by Satoshi Nakamoto in 2008 to serve as a public transaction ledger of the cryptocurrency Bitcoin*).
- ⇒ The United Nation's World Food Programme (WFP) and the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group have formed strategic partnership to support the efforts to eliminate hunger globally by 2030.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Karnataka by Abu Dhabi National Oil Companies. Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL) has constructed and commissioned underground rock caverns for the storage of total 5.33 MMT of crude oil at three locations namely Mangalore (1.5 MMT), Vishakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), and Padur (2.5 MMT).
- ⇒ Brand Finance, one of the world's leading brand valuation and strategy consultancies released the 'Nation Brands 2018' report. With brand rating of AA, India got the 9th position in the list of the most valuable nations. The USA topped the list followed by China, Germany, UK, Japan, France, Canada and Italy.
- ⇒ IndusInd Bank has launched the first interactive Credit Card in India with buttons called 'IndusInd Bank Nexxt Credit Card'. This interactive Credit Card provides customers with flexibility of three payment options at the Point of Sale (POS) terminal – Credit, Converting Transactions into EMI's with 4 tenure options (6, 12, 18 & 24 months) or using accumulated Reward Points by simply pushing a button on the card.
- ⇒ Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Ministerial meeting at Singapore failed to reach a consensus on chapters related to e-commerce, competition and investment. RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) or comprehensive regional economic integration agreement between 10-ASEAN countries and its six FTA partners. The 10 ASEAN countries are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and its six FTA partners are Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan and Korea.
- ⇒ Online fashion retailer Myntra will merge its sister firm Jabong, an Indian fashion and lifestyle e-commerce portal.



- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched APIX (Application Programming Interface Exchange), a banking technology platform at Fintech Festival in Singapore. The Fintech platform aims to connect companies to financial institutions globally and become a banking solution for two billion people without bank accounts worldwide.
 - ⇒ Asia's oldest bourse BSE has decided to snap ties with S&P Dow Jones, which manages and operates benchmark Sensex. Now it is planning to develop indices through its own in-house development team.
 - ⇒ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved to expand the scope of mandatory packaging norms under Jute Packaging Material (JPM) Act, 1987. It has approved that 100% of the foodgrains and 20% of sugar shall be mandatorily packed in diversified jute bags.
 - ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a farmers' conclave 'Krishi Kumbh 2018' at Lucknow to promote modern technique and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmers' income.
 - ⇒ According to an Asian Development Bank report, most of the international migrants in 2017 were from India (17 million), followed by China (10 million) and Bangladesh (7.5 million).
 - ⇒ The Supreme Court ordered that no Bharat Stage IV, but only BS VI compliant vehicles shall be sold in the country from April 1, 2020.
 - ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of City Gas Distribution (CGD) Projects of Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in 65 Geographical Areas (GAs) in 129 districts under 9th CGD bidding round. Natural gas is a superior fuel as compared with coal and other liquid fuels, as it is environment friendly, safer and the cheaper fuel.
 - ⇒ Andhra Pradesh Government has launched Bhuseva and Bhudaar web portal through which people can view land records online using Aadhaar cards. Bhudaar is an 11-digit unique identification code to be assigned to each agriculture land holding and rural and urban property. It will allow people to get land details on their mobile phones. It will help to transparency in land records. It provides information related to all transactions of particular land or property in single source.
 - ⇒ Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched 'PAiSA' – Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access during National Workshop on Municipal Finance and Urban Planning held in New Delhi. PAISA Portal is a centralised electronic platform for quicker processing of loans under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM). It aims to connect directly with beneficiaries and ensure there is a greater efficiency in the delivery of services. It has been designed and developed by Allahabad Bank, the nodal bank under the scheme. All 35 States and Union Territories (UTs) and all scheduled commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks are expected to be on board the PAiSA portal the year end.
 - ⇒ The first Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was held in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. It was organized by Kenya and co-hosted by Japan and Canada. The theme of this conference was 'The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.' The Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was held on the momentum of UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over 17,000 plus participants from some 184 countries participated in the conference. India was represented by the Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari. Blue Economy is a term in economics relating to the exploitation and preservation of the marine environment. Sustainable Blue Economy is marine-based economy that provides social and economic benefits without degrading the environment.
- Sports**
- ⇒ India defeated the West Indies by 3-0 matches in the Twenty-20 Bilateral Series 2018. Rohit Sharma was the captain of the Indian team. Kuldeep Yadav was adjudged the Man of the Series.
 - ⇒ India-Australia Twenty-20 Series ended in a 1-1 draw. Shikhar Dhawan was adjudged the Man of the Series.
 - ⇒ Australia defeated England to become the champion of the ICC Women's World T20 Cup 2018.
 - ⇒ India's Harmanpreet Kaur has been named the skipper of the ICC Women's T20 team.
 - ⇒ Wasim Jaffer, the cricketer of the Vidarbha team became the first batsman to reach 11,000 runs milestone in the Ranji Trophy Tournament.
 - ⇒ Indian Railways defeated Punjab National Bank to clinch the 55th Nehru Senior Hockey Crown, 2018.
 - ⇒ Pankaj Advani won IBSF World Billiards Championship – both in points format and long (time) format.
 - ⇒ Magnus Carlsen of Norway defeated Fabiano Caruana of the USA to retain the World Chess Championship in London.
 - ⇒ MC Mary Kom won the gold medal in the Women's Boxing World Cup in 48 kg category at the Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex, New Delhi. With six gold medals and one silver medal since 2001, she emerged as the most successful boxer in the Women's World Boxing Championship, surpassing Ireland's Katie Taylor (five gold and a bronze).
 - ⇒ The 23rd edition of the World Corporate Games will be held in Qatar in 2019.
 - ⇒ Istanbul New Airport in Turkey is the world's largest airport terminal 'under one roof' with a capacity to serve 90 million passengers in a year.
 - ⇒ 76 people have died and 1,300 missing in the USA's deadliest wildfire in Northern California.



- ⇒ Dipa Karmakar won a bronze medal at the vault event at the Artistic Gymnastics World Cup in Cottbus, Germany.
- ⇒ Pooja Dhanda of India won a bronze medal in the women's freestyle 57 kg weight category in the Wrestling World Championship (WWC) at Budapest, Hungary. Earlier only three Indian women won one bronze medal each – Alka Tomar, Geeta Phogat and Babita Phogat.
- ⇒ Bangladesh's Krida Shiksha Prothisthan won the Under-17 school tournament 'Subroto Cup International Football Tournament' (Junior Boys Category) at Dr. Ambedkar Stadium, Delhi.
- ⇒ India's Sameer Verma has won Syed Modi India Grand Prix Gold badminton title 2018 in men's singles category in Lucknow, by defeating China's Lu Guangzu. Women's singles title was won by China's Han Yue after defeating Saina Nehwal.

Awards

- ⇒ Famous lyricist, poet and film director, Gulzar has been conferred with the Indira Gandhi National Integration Award.
- ⇒ Malala Yousafzai has been selected by the Harvard University (US) for its 2018 Gleitsman Award in recognition of her work promoting girls' education.
- ⇒ Renowned French scholar Jawahar Lal Sarin was presented with France's highest civilian honour Chevalier de la Lgion d'Honneur in recognition of his outstanding contribution to enhancing Indo-French cultural cooperation and promoting French language.
- ⇒ Bangalore based 'NOPO' has become the first Indian start-up to be selected for Creative Destructive Lab's (CDL) globally renowned mentorship programme. NOPO, which has worked with Indian Space Research Organisation, manufactures space-grade carbon nanotubes.
- ⇒ The Centre for Science and Environment, a Delhi-based environment think tank has been given the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development, 2018.
- ⇒ The 49th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) was organised in Panaji, Goa. The theme of the IFFI was 'New India' and the country of focus was 'Israel'. Some awardees –
 - Golden Peacock Award for Best Film – Donbass, directed by Sergei Loznitsa
 - IFFI Lifetime Achievement Award – Dan Wolman of Israel
 - Special Award for Lifetime Contribution – Salim Khan of India.
- ⇒ M S Swaminathan, the renowned agricultural scientist and the chief architect of the Green Revolution in India has been awarded with the first world Agriculture Prize by the Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.
- ⇒ The Infosys Science Foundation (ISF) on the occasion of its 10th anniversary announced six winners of the Infosys Prize 2018 in the six different categories of the award. The Infosys Prizes are given to six categories -- Life Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Engineering and Computer Science, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences and Humanities. Each category awardees receives a 22-carat gold medallion, a citation certificate and a prize money of US \$100,000. It is one of the highest monetary awards in India that recognizes the scientific research.
- ⇒ Delhi-based environment think-tank Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) will be awarded Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development 2018 for its work in environmental education and protection.
- ⇒ Mexican government has honoured Indian academician Shyama Prasad Ganguly with "Orden Mexicana del Águila Azteca" (Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle), the highest civilian honour given to a foreigner by Mexico. He was awarded for disseminating Spanish language and Mexican culture to strengthen Mexico-India cultural relations. He is the first Indian Academician to get this award.
- ⇒ United Nations Environment Program has selected Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) and its enforcement officer RS Sharath for 2018 Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards. They were selected under organization and individual categories respectively for their outstanding contributions in combating the trans-boundary environmental crimes.
- ⇒ Azim Premji, the Chairman of the IT major Wipro and philanthropist was bestowed with the highest French civilian distinction Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour). He was awarded for his outstanding contribution to developing information technology industry in India, his economic outreach in France and his contribution to the society as philanthropist through the Azim Premji Foundation and Azim Premji University.

Persons

- ⇒ Anupam Kher, the veteran actor, resigned as Chairman of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII). He was appointed Chairman of FTII in October 2017 by replacing Gajendra Chauhan. With this, Kher became first chairperson of FTII to resign before completion of his full term.
- ⇒ Ashok Kumar Gupta has been appointed Chairperson of Competition Commission of India (CCI). He replaces the acting Chairperson Sudhir Mittal. CCI aims to eliminate practices that adversely affect competition in different industries and protect interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade.



- ⇒ Varun Dhawan has been appointed brand ambassador by Maruti Suzuki India for its Arena line of showrooms.
 - ⇒ Jair Bolsonaro is the new President of Brazil.
 - ⇒ Giuseppe Conte, the Prime Minister of Italy recently visited India.
 - ⇒ Hima Das, India's ace sprinter and Asian Games gold-medallist sprinter was appointed the first ever youth ambassador of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India.
 - ⇒ Union Government has appointed senior IAS officer Jalaj Srivastava as Chairman of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI). It is a nodal statutory body in charge of development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation. It is headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
 - ⇒ Nahid Afrin, a popular singer of Assam has been appointed by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) as the first 'Youth Advocate' of the north-eastern region to fight for child rights.
 - ⇒ Sunil Arora has been appointed new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). He is the 23rd CEC and succeeded OP Rawat who retired in December 2018.
- Died**
- ⇒ Anant Kumar, the Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and BJP leader from Karnataka passed away.
 - ⇒ Raymond Chow, the Godfather of Hong Kong Cinema passed away. Chow was responsible for successfully launching martial arts (Kung Fu) in cinema and the producer behind Bruce Lee.
 - ⇒ Alyque Padamsee, a veteran adman and theatre personality passed away.
 - ⇒ Jamal Khashoggi, a Saudi dissident and journalist for the Washington Post and former general manager and editor-in-chief of Al-Arab news channel was allegedly assassinated at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.
 - ⇒ T S Kanaka of Chennai, Asia's first woman neurosurgeon passed away.
 - ⇒ Stan Lee, who dreamed up Spider-Man, Iron-Man, the Hulk and a Cavalcade of other marvel comic superheroes, passed away.
 - ⇒ Madan Lal Khurana, a veteran BJP leader and former Chief Minister of Delhi passed away.
 - ⇒ Fahmida Riaz, a noted Pakistani progressive Urdu writer, poet and women's rights activist passed away.
- Miscellaneous**
- ⇒ NASA has retired Kepler space telescope after it ran out of fuel. This brings end of the nine-and-a-half year mission of Kepler space telescope. The unmanned Kepler space telescope was launched in 2009 on a 3.5-year mission (from 2009 until November 2012), but operated for 9 years. It was NASA's first planet-hunting mission.
 - ⇒ Indian Railway has eliminated all Unmanned Level Crossings on Broad Gauge routes from 12 of its total 16 zones.
 - ⇒ Satyajit Ray's 'Pather Panchali' has been included in the BBC's 100 Best Foreign Language Films, the only film from India. Ray's film was placed at number 15th in the list, which has been topped by Akira Kurosawa's Japanese film 'Seven Samurai'.
 - ⇒ The first ever India-US Dialogue on Intellectual Property (IP) was launched in New Delhi to deepen bilateral strategic cooperation on IP policy. The dialogue aims to identify solutions and also share technical knowledge and expertise between both countries in IP domain.
 - ⇒ The 10th joint military exercise between Indian and Russia EXERCISE INDRA 2018 was conducted at Babina Field Firing Ranges, Babina Military Station Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.
 - ⇒ Indian Air Force (IAF) and US Air Force (USAF) participated in bilateral exercise 'COPE INDIA 2019' in West Bengal. The bilateral flying training programme was held at two important airbases in West Bengal – Air Force Station Kalaikunda and Air Force Station Arjan Singh at Panagarh.
 - ⇒ India-US Joint Special Forces Exercise 2018 named Vajra Prahar commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR), Bikaner in Rajasthan.
 - ⇒ The inaugural edition of India-Indonesia Bilateral Naval Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' was held at the port of Surabaya, Indonesia.
 - ⇒ India and Singapore held the 25th (silver jubilee) joint naval exercise SIMBEX, acronym for Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise, in India off Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.
 - ⇒ The naval exercise Konkan 18 between India and United Kingdom was conducted off Goa with units participating from both navies.
 - ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved renaming of Jharsuguda Airport in Odisha as 'Veer Surendra Sai Airport, Jharsuguda' after Veer Surendra Sai who was a well-known freedom fighter of Odisha.
 - ⇒ Uttar Pradesh Government has decided to rename the newly-built Ekana International Stadium in Lucknow as 'Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Cricket Stadium'.
 - ⇒ Uttar Pradesh Government has approved the renaming of Faizabad and Allahabad divisions as Ayodhya and Prayagraj respectively.
 - ⇒ The first joint military exercise named 'Dharma Guardian' between India and Japan has begun at Indian Army's Counter-Insurgency Warfare School at Vairengte (Mizoram).
 - ⇒ Odisha Government has launched 'Saura Jalnidhi' scheme to encourage the use of solar energy in irrigation by farmers. Under this scheme, farmers will be given 90% subsidy and 5,000 solar pumps.
 - ⇒ The United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) has issued special stamps with 'Diyas' lamps (special event sheet) to commemorate India's Hindu festival of Diwali.



- ⇒ The researchers from Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) have designed India's first indigenous microprocessor called 'Shakti'. It will help to reduce dependency on imported microchips and risk of cyber-attacks. Microprocessors are the brain of all computing and electronic devices and are used to operate larger high-speed systems and supercomputers.
- ⇒ India has successfully carried out the night user trial of Agni-I short-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile. The test flight was conducted by Indian Army's Strategic Forces Command off Abdul Kalam Island in the Bay of Bengal, off the coast of Odisha. The test was the second known night-time trial of Agni-I since its first such successful test in April 2014. Agni-I missile is a short range nuclear capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- ⇒ Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of Central Tribal University at the Relli village of Vizianagaram District, Andhra Pradesh.
- ⇒ The Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities (GITC) 2018 was held in New Delhi from November 9 to 11, 2018.
- ⇒ Twitter India has launched #PowerOf18 campaign aimed at encouraging youth to contribute in public debates and participate in civic engagement for the 2019 general elections.
- ⇒ Tata Trust and The Global Fund backed Indian Health Fund (IHF) has chosen four innovators for early detection of tuberculosis (TB) and malaria to effectively tackle and eradicate these diseases. The government has set a target of eliminating TB by 2025 and malaria by 2030.
- ⇒ The 10th anniversary celebration of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was held in Kochi, Kerala. The theme for this year's seminar was 'IONS as Catalyst for SAGAR'. SAGAR stands for 'Security and Growth for All in the Region'.
- ⇒ Union Ministry of Finance has announced to release Rs 75 commemorative coins on December 30 on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the hoisting of the Tricolour for the first time by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at Cellular Jail, Port Blair on December 30, 1943.
- ⇒ Union Ministry of Human Resource Development launched two new initiatives viz., Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) and Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching (ARPIT) for higher education faculty. LEAP is a three weeks flagship leadership development training programme for second level academic functionaries in public funded higher education institutions. ARPIT is a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty using Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) platform SWAYAM.
- ⇒ Shri Ramayana Express, a special tourist train to run on the Ramayana circuit to cover major spots related to the Hindu epic was flagged off by Indian Railways from Safdarjung Railway Station, New Delhi. The pilgrimage circuit of Shri Ramayana Yatra will have two travel components — one each in India and Sri Lanka. Shri Ramayana Express in India, after leaving New Delhi, will make its first stop in Ayodhya followed by Hanuman Garhi Ramkot and Kanak Bhawan temple. Then it will cover important destinations of the Ramayana circuit such as Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi, Prayag, Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Hampi and Rameshwaram.
- ⇒ Indian Navy has successfully completed refitting and repairing of Maldivian Coast Guard Ship (MCGS) Huravee at Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam.
- ⇒ India's first specialized hospital for elephants was formally opened at Churmura village in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh.
- ⇒ Union Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) Ministry celebrated the first Naturopathy Day on November 18.
- ⇒ The 14th edition of JashneBachpan, a theatre festival for children was held at the Sammukh, Abhimanch, Abhikalp and Little Theatre Group (LTG) auditorium in New Delhi. Its main aim was to bring theatre into prominence.
- ⇒ The Union Government will set up the first-of-its-kind institute of Inter-Faith Studies in Punjab to promote brotherhood and diversity. It is being established as a part of the year-long activities to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of the first Sikh Guru and founder of the Sikh religion Guru Nanak.
- ⇒ The Union government cleared the 'Kartarpur Corridor Project, a religious corridor between India and Pakistan, aimed at providing easy passage to pilgrims to visit a historic gurudwara in Pakistan where Guru Nanak was believed to have spent the last 18 year of his life.
- ⇒ Cyclone 'Gaja' hit Tamil Nadu's coastal districts, killing about 35 people.
- ⇒ The 'Signature Bridge' over the river Yamuna in Delhi has been inaugurated. It is the first asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge in India and will offer a panoramic view of the city.
- ⇒ Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu recently embarked on a seven-day visit to three South Asian countries – Botswana, Zimbabwe and Malawi.
- ⇒ According to the World Cooperative Monitor 2018 report, The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) is the biggest cooperative in the world.
- ⇒ The PM Narendra Modi inaugurated the 'Statue of Unity', a memorial dedicated to India's first Home Minister Sardar Ballabhbhai Patel near the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River in Gujarat.



- ⇒ Maldives has decided to rejoin the Commonwealth, two year after withdrawing from the 53-nation grouping.
- ⇒ A team of biologists has discovered four new species of Indian horned frogs from the forests of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. The team also comprised S D Biju, famously known as the 'Frogman of India'.
- ⇒ The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has inked an agreement with the US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) to develop a roadmap for the modernisation of its air traffic services.
- ⇒ The 27th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change, held in New Delhi, has urged advanced countries to enhance their support to developing nations in effectively implementing Paris Agreement to combat climate change. BASIC countries comprise Brazil, South Africa, India and China. This comes ahead of UN Conference of Parties (COP) scheduled to be held in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland.
- ⇒ Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) Program of Ministry of Human Resource Development's (HRD) Innovation Cell was launched in New Delhi by Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar with the purpose to systematically foster culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country.
- ⇒ The annual Sangai Festival was celebrated in northeastern state of Manipur. The festival is named after the State animal Sangai, the critically endangered brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur.
- ⇒ The Fuego volcano in Guatemala erupted for the fifth time this year.
- ⇒ The United Nations has selected the twin-cities Noida and Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh to participate in its Global Sustainable Cities 2025 initiative. They have been selected in the 'University City' category. Overall 25 cities across the world have been selected in five categories.
- ⇒ Indian Railways has introduced its first engine with aerodynamic and ergonomic design produced at the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works.
- ⇒ India's first gallery on robotic dinosaurs has been opened to the public at the Pushpa Gujral Science City, Kapurthala in Punjab.
- ⇒ The Leaning Tower of Pisa (in Italy) is now stable and has been straightened slightly. Thanks to the engineering work to save this world-renowned tourist attraction.
- ⇒ The scientists of China's Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST) reactor have produced the temperature necessary for nuclear fusion on the Earth. The project is called 'Artificial Sun'. According to the scientists, this technology could possible become a safe and reliable option for limitless and clean energy some day.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of a medical college in Silvassa of Dadar and Nagar Haveli.
- ⇒ India International Cherry Blossom festival was held recently in Shillong, Meghalaya. This festival is the world's only autumn cherry blossom festival.
- ⇒ Nongkrem Dance Festival, an annual event of prayers for good harvest, peace and prosperity was celebrated at the Khasi Hills in Meghalaya.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved building and development of Kartarpur Corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district of Punjab to international border with Pakistan.
- ⇒ The 7th edition of the 'International Tourism Mart' was held in Agartala, the capital city of Tripura. The theme for this year was 'Adventure Tourism'. Total of 41 foreign delegates from 18 countries and 23 tour operators and travel agents participated in this edition of the tourism mart.
- ⇒ Andaman & Nicobar Islands are the home to the tenth of India's fauna species and hosts 1,067 endemic faunal species found nowhere else. A&N Islands comprise only 0.25% of India's geographical area but is home to more than 10% of country's fauna species. Thus, presence of such large number of species in such small area makes A&I Islands one of the richest ecosystems and biodiversity hot spots in India.
- ⇒ The International Gita Festival 2018 was organised in Kurukshetra in Haryana from December 7 to 23, 2018. This year it was the third year of this mega cultural event, where Mauritius is the partner country and Gujarat is the partner state. The Gita festival will also be organised in Mauritius next February. The objective behind this event is to spread the messages of Gita to the world.
- ⇒ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched the country's first advance earth observation satellite Hyper Spectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS) along with 30 other satellites from eight countries. These satellites were launched on board of ISRO's workhorse PSLV-C43 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- ⇒ Indian Railways unveiled 'eDrishti' software that will help the Union Railway Minister to keep track of punctuality of trains as well as freight and passenger earnings and much more from anywhere in the country.

Books & Authors :

- ⇒ The Twice-Born : Life and Death on the Ganges – Atish Taseer
- ⇒ Smart : The Digital Century – Frederic Martel
- ⇒ Kama : The Ridde of Desire – Gurcharan Das
- ⇒ The Town That Laughed – Manu Bhattathiri
- ⇒ Becoming – Michelle Obama.
- ⇒ Nirbochon – Dr. Debabhuson Borah
