

examspundit Finance and Banking

Reserve Bank of India gives licence to Kirloskar Capital

- Kirloskar Capital, the non-banking financial company, has received the Reserve Bank of India's licence for its lending business. The move assumes significance at a time when the whole non-banking sector has been going through a crisis of confidence.
- Kirloskar Oil Engines Ltd (KOEL) distribution network, the company said in a release on Thursday. Corporate lending will be to help companies by providing debt funds for their growth. The initial focus will be on lending to small and medium-sized enterprises.

GST collections cross Rs one lakh crore mark

- Revenue collections under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) crossed the Rs 1 lakh crore mark in October, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Thursday.
- This was a marked improvement over the September GST collection (for August) which stood at Rs 94,442 crore.
- Jaitley attributed the rise in the tax mop-up to lower tax rates and higher compliance.

Meeting of Financial Stability and Development Council held

- The Financial Stability and Development Council, FSDC, held a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday which was presided over by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.
- RBI Governor Urjit Patel, financial sector regulators and top officials of the Finance Ministry attended the meeting.
- It reviewed the progress in setting up a Computer Emergency Response Team in the financial sector under a statutory framework.

ICICI Bank Launches Instant Digital Credit Facility for Small Payments "PayLater"

- India-based banking group ICICI Bank announced on Thursday the launch of its instant digital credit facility, PayLater, which was created to enable customers small-ticket items immediately in a completely digital and paperless manner.
- The launch of this new feature was announced days after ICICI Bank announced the launch of its new co-branded credit card with Amazon.

ICICI Bank organises 60 coin exchange 'melas' across Goa

- ICICI Bank recently organised over 60 coin exchange 'melas' at its select branches across Goa.
- According to a statement here on Thursday, the 'melas' were held under the aegis of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The purpose of the 'melas' were to distribute coins and fresh currency notes to the general public in exchange of soiled and mutilated notes. The initiative was in line with RBI's Clean Note Policy.

PM Modi launches support, outreach programme for MSME; announces series of measures to spur growth in the sec

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that every GST registered Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise, MSME, will be given a rebate of 2 percent interest on the amount of a new loan or incremental loan up to one crore rupees.
- Announcing a series of measures during the launch of MSME Support and Outreach Programme in New Delhi this evening, Mr Modi said, the government has also decided to increase interest subvention on pre and post shipment credit for exports by MSMEs from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.

Banks get RBI nod to raise credit to NBFC bonds

- In a move that could provide some liquidity to the cash-starved non-banking financial companies (NBFC), the RBI on Friday allowed banks to raise credit to bonds issued by the systemically important NBFCs and housing finance companies (HFCs).
- Credit enhancements have been allowed for corporate bonds for the infrastructure sector but there weren't many takers for this, said bond arrangers. Through such an arrangement, credit of the issue gets enhanced as banks take responsibility of a part of the issue. This enables corporates to access funds from the bond market on better terms.

India, Japan sign loan agreement for development project in West Bengal

- India and Japan on Friday signed a loan agreement of Rs 1,817 crore for the construction of the Turga Pumped Storage in West Bengal.
- The deal was signed by the Additional Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), C.S. Mohapatra, and Katsuo Matsumoto, chief representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- The objective of the project is to strengthen the capability to respond to fluctuation in supply and demand of power and to improve the stability of the power supply by constructing pumped storage facilities, thereby contributing to industrial development and improvement of living standards in the state of West Bengal.

India to extend USD 310 million loan for Zimbabwe power plant

- India on Saturday announced that it would extend a USD 310 million loan to Zimbabwe to finance a rehabilitation project for a thermal power plant that would entail upgrading the station and extending its lifespan.
- The decision was taken during a meeting between Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Zimbabwe President Emmerson Mnangagwa and delegation-level talks between senior officials of the two countries here, T S Tirumurti, Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs, said while briefing media on the deliberations.

RBI initiates process to set up digital Public Credit Registry

- The Reserve Bank of India has initiated the process to set up a digital Public Credit Registry to capture all the details of borrowers, including wilful defaulters and also the pending legal suits in order to check financial delinquencies.
- The public credit registry will also include data from entities like market regulator SEBI, the corporate affairs ministry, Goods and Service Tax Network and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India to enable the banks and financial institutions to get a 360-degree profile of existing and prospective borrowers on a real-time basis.
- The Reserve Bank has invited expression of interest (EOI) for developing the registry from companies with a turnover of over Rs 100 crore in the last three years.

- Currently, there are multiple granular credit information repositories in India, with each having somewhat distinct objectives and coverage.
- Within the RBI, CRILC is a borrower level supervisory dataset with a threshold in an aggregate exposure of Rs 5 crore.

Reliance receives India's first LC payment via blockchain from HSBC

- Banking major HSBC on Sunday announced India's first trade finance transaction through blockchain, with the bank executing one for an export from Reliance Industries (RIL) to one of its American clients.
- According to a statement from HSBC and RIL, the blockchain-enabled letter of credit (LC) transaction facilitated a shipment between Reliance and the US-based Tricon Energy, massively reducing the time taken for processing the documents.
- Many domestic lenders, including ICICI Bank, SBI and Yes Bank, are working on blockchain solutions and count trade finance as one of the best use cases for the technology because of the ability to cut down on time.

YES BANK launches village adoption programme YES Digi Villages

- YES BANK, India's fourth largest private sector bank launched a first-of-its-kind village adoption programme, one of the largest in India, by committing to adopt 2000 villages across the country.
- Digital and Financial inclusion of villages by furthering literacy and technology infrastructure – YES SCALE Agritech Accelerator to support the programme

Ministry of Food Processing Industries issues guidelines for 'Operation Greens'

- The Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) on November 5, 2018 approved the operationalisation strategy for Operation Greens.
- The Operation Greens was announced in the Budget speech of 2018-19 with an outlay of Rs 500 crores to stabilise the supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) crops. It will ensure availability of TOP crops throughout the country round the year without price volatility.

The Strategy will comprise of a series of measures as decided by the Ministry:

- Short term Price Stabilisation Measures
- NAFED will be the Nodal Agency to implement price stabilisation measures.
- MoFPI will provide 50 percent of the subsidy on transportation of Tomato Onion Potato (TOP) Crops from production to storage; and hiring of appropriate storage facilities for TOP Crops.
- Long Term Integrated value chain development projects
- Capacity Building of FPOs & their consortium

Major objectives of Operation Greens

Operation Greens was announced on the line of "Operation Flood" to promote Farmer Producers Organizations, agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management. The major objectives are:

- Enhance value realisation of TOP farmers by targeted interventions to strengthen TOP production clusters and their FPOs
- Price stabilisation for producers and consumers by proper production planning in the TOP clusters
- Reduction in post-harvest losses by creation of farm gate infrastructure, development of suitable agro-logistics, and creation of appropriate storage capacity linking consumption centres

USITC rules against anti-dumping duty on PTFE resin from India, China

- The US International Trade Commission on November 2, 2018 ruled against putting an anti-dumping duty on the import of a synthetic fluoropolymer from India and China. The fluoropolymer is a key ingredient in the non-stick coating for pans and other cookware.
- The US International Trade Commission (USITC) noted in its ruling that polytetrafluoroethylene or PTFE resin from India and China were sold in the US at less than fair value.
- The USITC announced that no antidumping duty orders will be issued on the imports of PTFE resin from China and India, as a result of its negative determinations.

India and Japan sign loan Agreement for Turga Hydel Project

- India and Japan signed loan agreement worth Rs 1817 crore for construction of Turga Pumped Storage Hydel Project.
- On completion, this project will contribute to Industrial Development and Living Standard Improvement in the West Bengal.
- This loan agreement was signed between Union Ministry of Finance and Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- The objective of project is to strengthen capability to respond to fluctuation in supply and demand of power.

RBI relaxes external commercial borrowing norms, reduces holding period

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday relaxed external commercial borrowing (ECB) norms for infrastructure companies and tweaked certain hedging provisions.
- The central bank has reduced the minimum average maturity requirement for ECBs in the infrastructure space to 3 years from 5 years at present, while also reducing the average maturity period requirement for eligible borrowers exempted from hedging their exposure fully to 5 years from 10 years currently.

PSBs need Rs 1.2 lakh crore fresh capital infusion in next 5 months: CRISIL

- The differences between the government and the Reserve Bank of India are out in the open and one of the contentious issues has been the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA), which restricts the weak and bad debt-ridden banks.
- It is a tight rope walk for the government — keeping its fiscal deficit under control and also adequately capitalising the banks it owns, so that they are able to lend freely.
- This is going to get tougher as a CRISIL estimate shows that public sector banks need around fresh tier-I capital of Rs 1.2 lakh crore infusion in five months to meet the Basel III norms.
- This is Rs 21,000 crore more than what was estimated earlier, when the government announced Rs 2.11 lakh crore recapitalisation in October 2017 to meet the Basel III norms.

RBI Fines Fino Payments Bank \$137K For Opening Accounts Despite Ban

- In a fresh notification on Monday (November 5), the Reserve Bank of India said that it has imposed a fine of \$136.9K (INR 1 Cr) on Fino Payments Bank Limited.
- The central bank imposed the fine on October 31, 2018, for allegedly opening new accounts despite directions not to do so.
- The central bank noted that Mumbai-based Fino Payments Bank has been charged for “contravention of the direction to stop opening of new accounts until further instructions on account of violation of certain licensing conditions and operating guidelines for payments bank.”

Punjab signs MoU with Quarkcity for second phase of project over 5,000 acres

- Punjab Government on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with QuarkCity India Private Limited to create state-of-the-art industrial parks, industrial model towns and integrated townships in the second phase of the project, to be spread over 5,000 acres across the state.
- The MoU was signed by the Department of Information Technology in the presence of Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh and several cabinet ministers.

US exempts India, China from its sanctions for buying Iranian oil

- The United States on November 5, 2018 temporarily exempted eight countries, including India from the US sanctions for buying Iranian oil.
- Addressing a press conference in Washington, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced the list of the countries temporarily exempted from the sanctions. The countries include India, China, Japan, Italy, Greece, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey. Pompeo said that these countries showed a significant reduction in oil purchase from the Persian Gulf country after the Trump administration reimposed sanctions on Tehran.

Union Home Ministry releases Rs 113 crore to 6 Border States for development purpose

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs on November 5, 2018 released Rs 113.36 crore to 6 Border States under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) to improve the condition of people living in these isolated locations.
- These 6 Border States are Assam, Nagaland, Sikkim, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

RBI may set-up a digital payments ombudsman by March 2019

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may set-up an ombudsman for digital payments by March to reduce the burden on banking ombudsman because of a rising number of complaints, The Economic Times reported.
- Owing to a rapid adoption of digital payments across the country, the number of complaints related to digital transactions have shot up. The central bank, in its Annual Report for 2017-18, said it was considering a plan to establish a separate ombudsman to handle such complaints.
- At present, RBI is in the process of creating a scheme for establishing offices across the country for the digital payments ombudsman, the report said.

Paytm partners with govt departments for payment service

- Paytm, one of the largest digital payments company has tied up with two government departments for seamless payment experience.
- One97 Communications Limited, which owns Paytm, said in a press release that it has partnered with the Directorate of Electronic Delivery of Citizen Services (EDCS) and DPAR (Department of Personnel and Administrative Service) to facilitate that experience.

SBI enters into MoU with Kakatiya University

- Kakatiya University (KU), Warangal, and State Bank of India (SBI) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on Thursday. In the presence of Vice-Chancellor Prof R Sayanna, SBI Chief General Manager J Swamy Nathan, General Manager UNN Mayya and KU Registrar Prof K Purushotham exchanged the documents related to the MoU.

- With this agreement, the students of Kakatiya University can avail the payments of fees etc., the transactions can be done online (electronic payment method) between Kakatiya University and SBI. These transactions will be done via fully secured payment gateway method.

Nokia, Infosys establish strategic alliance to support digital transformation of major industries, enterprises

- Nokia and Infosys, a global leader in consulting, technology and next-generation services, have established a strategic alliance to drive digital transformation in a wide array of enterprises and industries, addressing vertical markets including transportation, energy and manufacturing, media and entertainment and education.
- This collaboration will couple technology, products and services from Nokia with platform solutions, engineering and operations management expertise from Infosys.

Cabinet sings MoU with Italy for training programmes on labour, employment

- The Centre on Thursday approved the signing of a pact with Italy for facilitating customised training programmes on labour and employment.
- "The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Italy for training and education in the fields of labour and employment," an official statement said.

Cabinet approves mechanism for sale of enemy shares worth Rs 30 bn

- The government on Thursday approved a mechanism for sale of enemy shares which at the current price estimated at around Rs 30 billion.
- According to Enemy Property Act, 1968, "Enemy property" refers to any property belonging to, held or managed on behalf of an enemy, an enemy subject or an enemy firm.

Cabinet approves proposal to manage 6 AAI airports under PPP model

- The Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal to manage Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow and three other airports under public-private partnership (PPP).
- The three other aerodromes are those at Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru.
- The operation, management and development of all these aerodromes, owned by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), would be done under PPP, an official tweet said.

RBI cancels registration of 31 NBFCs

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday cancelled the certificate of registrations of 31 Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The RBI cancelled the registration in the exercise of powers conferred on it under Section 45-IA (6) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- It also cancelled the certificate of registrations of 17 NBFCs following a request by them for the same. The action comes amid difficulties faced by the NBFCs sector.
- A majority 27 of the 31 companies which lost their licences are from Bengal, the central bank said in a statement.

India to resume exporting raw sugar to China from early 2019

- India plans to resume exporting raw sugar to China beginning 2019, almost after a decade. The move is a part of a larger goal of shifting focus to the overseas markets to shed surplus stocks that have muted prices and created financial distress in the Indian sugar mills.

- The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry said in a statement that Indian Sugar Mills Association and COFCO, a public sector company of China have entered into a contract for exporting 15 thousand tonnes of raw sugar.
- India plans to export two million tonnes of raw sugar to China beginning next year.
- Raw sugar is the second product after non-basmati rice that China will import from India.

Cabinet approves laying down procedure and mechanism for sale of enemy shares

- The Union Cabinet has given its 'in principle' approval for the sale of enemy shares under the Custody of Home Ministry/ Custodian of Enemy Property of India (CEPI), as per sub-section 1 of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968.
- The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management has been authorised under the provisions of sub-section 7 of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968, to sell the same.
- The sale proceeds are to be deposited as disinvestment proceeds in the government account maintained by the Ministry of Finance.

Defence Ministry enhances financial powers of Vice Chiefs of three Services

- The Defence Ministry has enhanced financial powers of Vice Chiefs of the three Services.
- The move is aimed at expediting the decision-making process involved in the procurements for the Armed Forces.
- With this, the Vice Chiefs will be able to exercise financial powers up to five times more than the existing powers with an enhanced ceiling of Rs 500 crore.

Moody's forecasts a fall in India's GDP to 7.3% in 2019

- Indian economy will expand 7.4 per cent in 2018, but the growth will slow down to 7.3 per cent in the next year as domestic demand tapers on higher borrowing cost due to rising interest rates, Moody's Investors Service said Thursday.
- In its report titled 'Global Macro Outlook 2019-20', Moody's said the economy grew 7.9 per cent in the first half (January-June) of 2018, which reflects post demonetisation base effect.
- Stating that borrowing costs have already increased on higher interest rates, Moody's said it expects the Reserve Bank will continue to steadily raise the benchmark rate through 2019, which will further dampen domestic demand.

CIC issues show-cause notice to RBI governor for non-disclosure of wilful defaulters' list

- The Central Information Commission (CIC) has issued a show-cause notice to RBI Governor Urjit Patel for "dishonouring" a Supreme Court judgment on disclosure of wilful defaulters' list.
- The CIC has also asked the Prime Minister's Office, the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to make public the letter of former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan on bad loans.
- Irked over the denial of information on the disclosure of the names of wilful defaulters who have taken bank loans of Rs 50 crore and above by the RBI in spite of a Supreme Court order, the CIC has asked Patel to explain why a maximum penalty be not imposed on him for "dishonouring" the verdict which had upheld a decision taken by then Information Commissioner Shailesh Gandhi, calling for disclosure of names of wilful defaulters.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates Inland Multi-Modal Terminal Port in Varanasi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 12, 2018 inaugurated an Inland Multi-Modal Terminal Port on river Ganga at Ramnagar in Varanasi.

- Constructed at the cost of Rs 207 crore, this inland waterways terminal is the first of the four Multi-Modal Terminals being constructed on National Waterways-I on River Ganga as part of the World Bank-aided Jal Marg Vikas project of the Inland Waterways Authority of India.
- The other three terminals are under construction at Sahibganj, Haldia and Gazipur.
- The Jal Marg Vikas Project aims to enable commercial navigation of vessels with the capacity of 1500 - 2000 tons on National Waterway-1.
- The development and operations of the National Waterway-1 project will lead to direct employment generation to the tune of 46000 and indirect employment of 84000 in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.
- The project includes development of fairway, Multi-Modal Terminals at Varanasi, Haldia and Sahibganj, strong river navigation system, modern River Information System (RIS), Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS), night navigation facilities, construction of a navigational lock at Farakka.

PM Modi inaugurates projects worth over Rs 2,400 crore in Varanasi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday dedicated to the nation several projects including two National Highways and an Inland Waterways Terminal on River Ganga at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. The total cost of these projects is 2413 crore rupees.
- Addressing a public meeting at Vazidpur in his parliamentary constituency Varanasi this evening, Mr Modi said that the inauguration of an Inland Multi-Modal Terminal Port constructed on river Ganga at Ramnagar is a major push to India's Inland Waterways Transportation.
- The Prime Minister also received the country's first container cargo transported on inland waterways from Kolkata.

Oriental Bank partners Fisdom to offer wealth management solutions to its customers

- Public Sector lender, Oriental Bank of Commerce, (OBC) has tied up with Fisdom, operated by Finwizard Technology Pvt. Ltd., a fin-tech startup to assist in personal wealth management services through a technology platform.
- With this, the bank is aiming to make wealth management more understandable and accessible to its customers, a statement said.

Digital payment transactions jump to 244 cr in Aug 2018

- The number of digital payment transactions in India touched 244.81 crore in August 2018, more than three-fold rise from October 2016, underlining the massive adoption of digital payment modes over the last two years.
- The statement by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology read that new payment modes such as BHIM-UPI, AePS and NETC have transformed digital payment ecosystem by increasing Person to Person (P2P) as well as Person to Merchant (P2M) payments.

China's largest bank sets up \$200 million fund to invest in Indian MSMEs

- The Indian unit of China's largest bank, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China has set up \$200 million fund for investing in the promising Indian micro, small and medium enterprises and ventures, its official said here.
- Zheng Bin, CEO of the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) India on Monday gave an overview of Indian start-up ecosystem and how to invest in them at the 2nd 'Start-up India' Investment Seminar organised by the Indian Embassy here.

- The ICBC, a top state-run Chinese bank which is the country's largest lender by market value, opened its branch in Mumbai in 2011.

Cipla to acquire US specialty drugmaker Avenue Therapeutics for Rs 15.6 bn

- Cipla has entered into an agreement to acquire US-based specialty pharma company Avenue Therapeutics Inc for \$215 mn or around Rs 15.6 bn. This is in line with Cipla's strategy of building a specialty drugs pipeline in the US.
- Cipla's US subsidiary InvaGen Pharmaceuticals Inc will make the acquisition in two stages, the company said. In the first stage, InvaGen or its affiliates will acquire a 33.3 per cent stake in Avenue's via new shares for around \$35 mn (currently expected to be 5,833,333 shares at \$6.00 per share).

ISPRL, ADNOC sign MoU to explore storage of crude oil at Padur

- The Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL) on November 12, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) in Abu Dhabi to explore the possibility of storing ADNOC crude oil at ISPRL's underground oil storage facility at Padur in Karnataka, which has a 2.5 million tonne capacity.
- The agreement was signed by Abdulla Salem Al Dhaheri, Director of Marketing, Sales and Trading at ADNOC and ISPRL CEO, MD HPS Ahuja on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC).

Flipkart co-founder, CEO Binny Bansal steps down

- Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal on November 13, 2018 announced his resignation as the CEO of the group, effective immediately.
- Kalyan Krishnamurthy will continue to be the CEO of Flipkart that now includes Myntra and Jabong, which will continue to operate as separate platforms within the Flipkart business.
- Further, Ananth Narayanan will continue to be the CEO of Myntra and Jabong and will report directly to Kalyan.

India International Trade Fair to begin from tomorrow

- The 38th India International Trade Fair (IITF) will begin from tomorrow at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The 14-day annual event will continue till 27th of this month. This year the theme of the fair is - Rural Enterprises in India.
- Afghanistan is the Partner Country, while Nepal will be the Focus Country. Jharkhand is participating as a Partner State in the event.
- Around 800 participants from States and Government Departments, domestic and International companies are taking part to showcase their product.

IndusInd Bank launches India's first interactive credit card with buttons

- IndusInd Bank has announced the launch of IndusInd Bank Nexxt Credit Card, which empowers customers with a choice of payment options such as EMI, Reward Points or Credit at the push of a button, on the card, at the point of sale (POS).
- The bank claims it to be the nation's first interactive credit card with buttons.
- According to the bank, this card provides customers with the flexibility of 3 payment options at a POS terminal — Credit, Converting Transactions into EMIs with 4 tenure options (6, 12, 18 & 24 months) or using accumulated Reward Points, by simply pushing a button on the card.

- The card has been created in partnership with Dynamics Inc, which is headquartered in Pittsburgh USA, and designs and manufactures intelligent, battery powered payment cards.

Arunachal signs MoU with investors for projects worth Rs 1,200

- The Arunachal Pradesh government Wednesday signed MoUs with 17 private investors for projects worth Rs 1,200 crore during the fifth edition of North East Connectivity Scheme at Tawang, an official release said.
- The MoUs with private investors across sectors like tourism and hospitality, oil and gas, retail, power, equipment manufacturing and sports has potential to create over 8000 gainful employment opportunities in the state, it said.

UAE to be partner country in Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit for 2nd consecutive year

- UAE will participate in the 'Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit', as a partner country for the second consecutive year.
- The Summit is scheduled to be held from January 18-20, 2019. The UAE will participate in the summit through a high-level delegation.

Union Agriculture Ministry launches NCDC's 'Yuva Sahakar Scheme' to promote young entrepreneurs

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Radha Mohan Singh on November 14, 2018 launched the 'Yuva Sahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme' of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- The NCDC has come up with this youth-friendly scheme for attracting youth to cooperative business ventures. It has created a dedicated fund with liberal features enabling youth to avail the scheme.
- The scheme will be linked to Rs 1000 crore 'Cooperative Start-up and Innovation Fund (CSIF)' created by the NCDC.
- It would have more incentives for cooperatives of North Eastern region, Aspirational Districts and cooperatives with women or SC or ST or PwD members.
- The funding for the project will be up to 80 percent of the project cost for these special categories against 70 percent for others.
- The scheme envisages 2 percent less than the applicable rate of interest on term loan for the project cost up to Rs 3 crore including 2 years moratorium on payment of principal.
- All types of cooperatives in operation for at least one year are eligible to avail of the scheme.
- It would encourage cooperatives to venture into new and innovative areas.

Ashok Chawla steps down as non-executive chairman of YES Bank

- Two members of the board of directors at YES Bank have resigned with immediate effect — Ashok Chawla, its non-executive chairman, and Vasant Gujarati.
- The bank, fourth largest among private lenders, has appointed Uttam Prakash Agarwal, a chartered accountant, as an independent director in place of Gujarati. The appointment will have to be confirmed at the next shareholder meeting.

Asian Development Bank signs agreement to lend \$169 mn loan to Tamil Nadu

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India on Friday signed an agreement for a \$169 million loan as the First Tranche of a \$500 million multi-tranche financing to develop climate-resilient water supply, sewerage, and drainage infrastructure in at least 10 cities in the Tamil Nadu.

- The signatories to the loan for the Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program were Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary (Fund Bank and ADB), Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, who signed for the Government of India; and Kenichi Yokoyama, Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission, who signed for ADB.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) Sign \$105 Million Loan to Support Hydropower Transmission in Himachal Pradesh

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India today signed a \$105 million loan to continue financing the transmission system upgrades in Himachal Pradesh for increased supply of hydropower to the state and the national grid.
- The tranche 3 loan is part of the \$350 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) for Himachal Pradesh Clean Energy Transmission Investment Program approved by the ADB Board in September 2011.
- The program is aimed at developing and expanding the transmission network to evacuate clean and renewable power generated from the State's hydropower sources to load centers within and outside the State.

ADB extends \$300 mn to support IIFCL's lending

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Centre have signed a \$300-million loan agreement to support lending by India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL).
- The move is expected to enhance the availability of long-term finance for public-private partnership projects, improve operational capacity of IIFCL, and expand the portfolio of infrastructure financing instruments available to the company.

NITI Aayog organises South Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure

- The South Asian Regional Conference on "Urban Infrastructure: New Approaches to Public and Private Partnerships and Municipal Finance Innovations" began on November 15, 2018 in New Delhi.
- The two-day conference is being organised by NITI Aayog, the premier think tank of the Union Government in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

NITI Aayog constitutes 'Himalayan State Regional Council'

- NITI Aayog on November 15, 2018 constituted the 'Himalayan State Regional Council' to ensure sustainable development of the Indian Himalayan region.
- The Himalayan State Regional Council will be chaired by the Dr VK Saraswat, Member of NITI Aayog.
- It will consist of the Chief Secretaries of the Himalayan States as well as the Secretaries of key Central Ministries, senior officers of NITI Aayog as well as special invitees.

PM Modi inaugurates KMP Expressway, Ballabgarh-Mujesar Metro rail link

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 19, 2018 inaugurated the Kundli-Manesar section of the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) western peripheral expressway. Along with this, he also inaugurated the 3.2 km-long Ballabgarh-Mujesar Metro rail link, which would facilitate travel for people of Delhi and Faridabad, and laid the foundation stone of the Shri Vishwakarma Skill University, which will come up at Dudhola in Palwal district.
- Ballabgarh becomes the fourth city in Haryana to get metro connectivity after Gurgaon, Faridabad and Bahadurgarh.

- Earlier this year, Manesar to Palwal stretch of the KMP, whose entire length is 135.65 km, was opened for public.
- KMP expressway will pass through five districts of Haryana: Gurugram, Sonipat, Mewat, Jhajjar and Palwal.

Kerala govt inks MoU with Airbus Bizlab to set up Aerospace Innovation centre

- Kerala's startup eco-system got a major fillip as the state government signed an MoU with Airbus BizLab, a global aerospace accelerator which is part of the Airbus group, to set up an Aerospace Innovation Centre.
- The MoU was exchanged between Siddharth Balachandran, Leader, Airbus Bizlab India and Dr. Saji Gopinath, CEO, Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), in the presence of Chief Minister Mr. Pinarayi Vijayan in his chamber on Saturday.

PayPal to soon host third edition of Recharge

- Digital payments provider PayPal on November 18, 2018 announced the third edition of 'Recharge' aimed at serving women who plan to take up job opportunities after a career break.
- The third edition of 'Recharge' is a six week programme focused on empowering women technologists to get back to workforce after a hiatus.

Baba Kalyani committee submits report on India's SEZ policy

The Baba Kalyani led committee constituted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to study the existing SEZ policy of India submitted its report to Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu, in New Delhi on November 19, 2018.

The key objectives of the committee included:

- To evaluate the SEZ policy and make it WTO compatible
- To suggest measures for maximising utilisation of vacant land in SEZs
- To suggest changes in the SEZ policy based on international experience
- To merge the SEZ policy with other Government schemes such as coastal economic zones, Delhi-Mumbai industrial corridor, national industrial manufacturing zones and food and textiles parks.

RBI to set up expert panel to look into issues on capital surplus

- The RBI board on November 19, 2018 decided to set up a high-powered committee to examine issues related to surplus capital of Rs 9.69 lakh crore with the central bank and advised it to consider a scheme for restructuring stressed assets in the MSME sector.
- During the crucial meeting, it was also decided that the Board for Financial Supervision (BFS) of the RBI would examine the issues concerning the banks health under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework and the Economic Capital Framework - ECF of RBI.

AMRUT scheme: Govt approves Rs 740 bn for over 2,400 sanitation projects

- The Centre has approved projects worth Rs 740 billion towards ensuring an improved water supply, sewerage and drainage, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Tuesday.
- The housing and urban affairs minister was addressing the gathering at the National Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Innovation Summit, which is being organised by the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in association with Elets Technomedia Private Limited here.

- "Under AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation), over 2,400 projects worth Rs 740 billion, targeted towards ensuring an improved water supply, sewerage, and drainage, have been approved under the state annual action plans for 2015-2020.

India, Russia sign \$500 mn deal for constructing 2 warships for Indian Navy

- India and Russia Tuesday signed a \$500 million deal for construction of two warships in Goa for the Indian Navy under the technology transfer model, officials said.
- They said the agreement for the project was signed between defence PSU Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and Russia's state-run defence major Rosoboronexport under the government-to-government framework for defence cooperation.

India Post announces soft launch of its e-commerce portal

- Leveraging its parcel business network, India Post has announced the soft launch of its e-commerce portal.
- The Department of Posts has done only soft launch of the portal and full fledged operations of the service will start after mid-December.

Centre approves additional assistance of over Rs 546 crore from NDRF to Karnataka

- The Government on November 19, 2018 approved the additional assistance of over Rs 546 crore from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to Karnataka.
- The decision was taken during a High-Level Committee, chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi to consider the additional Central Assistance to the State affected by floods during 2018-19.

Prime Minister launches Ease of Doing Business Grand Challenge

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 19, 2018 launched the Ease of Doing Business grand challenge on resolving seven identified ease of doing business problems with the use of cutting-edge technologies.
- The Doing Business Ranking is an annual assessment conducted by the World Bank that measures aspects of regulation affecting 10 areas of the life of a business, evaluating 190 countries on 10 specific indicators.

Commerce Minister releases report on Industrial Park Rating System

- The Union Commerce Minister, Suresh Prabhu on November 19, 2018 released a report on Industrial Park Rating System. The report was prepared by the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Speaking on this occasion, Commerce Minister said that manufacturing has emerged as one of the high growth sectors in India and it has moved 23 places up in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EODB-2019) and achieved the rank of 77 out of 190 countries.

IRDAI gives in-principle approval for IndiaFirst Life Insurance stake sale

- The insurance regulator has given its in-principle approval for UK-based Legal and General Group to sell its stake in IndiaFirst Life Insurance Company to private equity firm Warburg Pincus LLC, two sources confirmed.

- IndiaFirst is a joint-venture between Bank of Baroda (which has a 44 per cent shareholding), Andhra Bank (30 per cent) and Legal and General. Legal and General announced in June it would sell its 26 per cent stake in the life insurer to Warburg Pincus for Rs 7.1 billion.

India asks WTO to set up panel against US for high import duty on steel, aluminium

- India's trade dispute with America has reached to a next level in the World Trade Organization (WTO), as India asked the WTO to form a panel against the USA for imposing high import duties on aluminium and certain steel products.
- India decision to urge WTO to set up panel came after both countries failed to resolve the issue in a bilateral talk process under the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism.

50% ATMs in India may shut down by March, 2019: CATMi Report

- Nearly 50 per cent Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) may be shut down by March 2019 due to unviability of operations, hitting hard both urban and rural population, the Confederation of ATM Industry (CATMi) warned on Wednesday.
- India has approximately 2,38,000 ATMs, of which around 1,13,000 ATMs, including 1,00,000 off-site and more than 15,000 white label ATMs, are expected to down their shutters, said a CATMi spokesperson.

RBI to set up expert panel to look into issues on capital surplus

- The RBI board on Monday decided to set up a high-powered committee to examine issues related to surplus capital of Rs 9.69 lakh crore with the central bank and advised it to consider a scheme for restructuring stressed assets in the MSME sector.
- At the crucial meeting of the board, concluded in Mumbai this evening, it was also decided that the Board for Financial Supervision (BFS) of the RBI would examine the issues concerning the banks health under Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework and the Economic Capital Framework - ECF of RBI.

India, Australia sign five agreements

- India and Australia on November 22, 2018 signed five agreements to boost investments and enhance cooperation in areas including services to the disabled, bilateral investment, scientific collaboration and agricultural research and education.
- The agreements were signed during the talks held between Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison in Sidney, Australia. The Indian President has become the first-ever Indian head of state to visit Australia. He arrived in the country on November 21, as a part of the second leg of his two-nation trip.

The following are the five pacts:

1. Agreement between the Government of India and the Government of Australia for cooperation in the area of disability and to deliver services to the differently-abled.
2. Agreement between Invest India and Austrade to facilitate bilateral investment.
3. Agreement between the Central Mine Planning and Design Institute, based in Ranchi and the Commonwealth Scientific and Research Organisation, based in Canberra, to foster scientific collaboration and innovation.
4. Agreement between the Acharya NG Ranga Agricultural University, Guntur and the University of Western Australia, Perth, for cooperation in agricultural research and education.

5. Joint Ph.D. agreement between the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi and the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.

India, Vietnam signs four MoUs

- India and Vietnam released a Joint Statement on November 21, 2018 after extensive talks between Vietnam President Nguyen Phu Trong and Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, during the latter's state visit to Vietnam from November 18-20, 2018.
- Following the talks between President Kovind and Vietnamese President Nguyen Phu Trong, four MoU's were signed between the two nations.

The agreements include:

- The MOU between Vietnam's Ministry of Information and Communications and the Indian Ministry of Communications on cooperation in the field of Communications
- The MOU on cooperation between Vietnam's Department of Foreign Affairs and the Indian Business Chamber in Viet Nam (INCHAM)
- The MOU between the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, Ha Noi, Vietnam and the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India
- The Cooperation Agreement between Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)

Cabinet approves development of Kartarpur corridor project

- In the landmark decision, Union Cabinet has approved building and development of Kartarpur corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district to International Border.
- Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, Kartarpur corridor project with all modern amenities and facilities will be implemented with Central Government funding. It will provide a smooth and easy passage to pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib throughout the year.

Jindal Stainless joins hands with Railways for rail infrastructure modernisation

- Jindal Stainless has joined hands with the Railways for modernizing rail infrastructure, particularly in the bridge segment.
- The company, which is one of the largest domestic stainless steel players and has a 60% market share in coaches, has partnered with Railways' arm Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO) in the third edition of InnoRail India 2018.
- The first such stainless steel foot-over-bridge is coming at Bhayandar station in Mumbai next year.

CCEA approves extension of norms for mandatory packaging in Jute Materials

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval to expand the scope of mandatory packaging norms under the Jute Packaging Material (JPM) Act, 1987.
- The CCEA approved that 100 per cent of the food grains and 20 per cent of the sugar shall be mandatorily packed in diversified jute bags. The decision to pack sugar in diversified jute bags will give an impetus to the diversification of the jute industry.
- Initially 10 per cent of the indents of jute bags for packing food grains would be placed through reverse auction on the Gem portal. This will gradually usher in a regime of price discovery.
- The decision will give a fillip to the development of jute sector, increasing the quality and productivity of raw jute, diversification of jute sector and also boosting and sustaining demand for jute product.

Indian embassy in Nepal, CII to organise exhibition ConMac 2018 in Nepal

- The Embassy of India in Nepal and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) are organising an exhibition of construction equipment and technology-ConMac 2018 in Bhaktapur near Kathmandu from November 22, 2018.
- More than 150 business exhibitors and companies from India will showcase their products and services during the 3-day exhibition.
- With more than 200,000 sq ft of display area, the exhibition is poised to be Nepal's largest exhibition of construction equipment. More than 4000 business visitors are expected during the exhibition.

Gujarat Govt announces new measures for water scarcity hit farmers

- Gujarat Government has announced new measures for water scarcity hit farmers in the state.
- Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said that 19,920 cusecs of water is being released in Narmada canals since November 12 from Sardar Sarovar Dam for the farmers who plan to sow Rabi crops.

PM Modi lays foundation stone of City Gas Distribution Projects

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 22, 2018 laid the foundation stone of City Gas Distribution (CGD) Projects in 65 Geographical Areas (GAs) in 129 districts under the 9th CGD bidding round, remotely from Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The PM also launched the 10th CGD Bidding Round in 50 GAs spread over 124 districts in 14 states. Speaking on the occasion, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan said that the Government is working to move towards creating a gas-based economy.
- Currently, the share of gas in the India's energy mix is just over 6 per cent and the aim is to reach the 15 per cent figure, while the world average is 24 per cent.

Kotak Mahindra Bank launches Open Banking platform for a collaborative fintech ecosystem

- Kotak Mahindra Bank on Friday launched its Open Banking platform.
- The platform provides an open access window to fintechs and app developers to design customised offerings addressing specific customer needs in consultation with the bank.
- The Open Banking platform enables Kotak to nurture strong relationships with fintechs and developers, the bank said in a statement.

Govt transfers over Rs 16 bn to 4.8 mn eligible mothers under PMMVY scheme

- The government has transferred over Rs 16 billion to eligible mothers under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana through direct benefit transfer till Friday, Centre for Digital Financial Inclusion (CDFI) that uses technology for financial inclusion said.
- "Rs 16,04,66,63,000 transferred through direct benefit transfer to 4.8 million women," CDFI said.
- The non-profit organisation CDFI conceptualised, designed and implemented the PMMVY-CAS (Common Application Software) System through which disbursements were made.

Government decides to set up a domestic Gold Council in India

- The government on November 23, 2018 has decided to set up domestic Gold council in India to promote the growth of the sector and boost exports of jewellery. Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu said this while inaugurating the 2nd Edition of India Gold and Jewellery Summit in New Delhi.

- The gold council will have representations from all stakeholders including artisans, traders, miners and purifiers. The council would work in the direction of promoting the gold and jewellery industry, job creation, building of regional clusters.

RBI reduces hedging provision for external commercial borrowings to 70%

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monday relaxed norms for external commercial borrowings (ECBs) by reducing the mandatory hedging provision to 70 per cent from the current 100 per cent.
- The relaxed norms will apply to the ECBs with a maturity period between 3 and 5 years, the central bank said in a notification.
- Further, the RBI also clarified that the ECBs raised prior to this circular will be required to mandatorily roll over their existing hedge only to the extent of 70 per cent of outstanding ECB exposure.

Government appoints Akhilesh Ranjan as Convenor of Task Force drafting a New Direct Tax Legislation

- The Union Government on November 26, 2017 appointed Akhilesh Ranjan as Convenor of the Task Force that was constituted in November 2017 for drafting a New Direct Tax Legislation.
- Akhilesh Ranjan is presently serving as the Member (Legislation) of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). The other members of the Task Force remain unchanged.
- Besides, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Arvind Subramanian will be a permanent Special Invitee in the Task Force.

First-ever India Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue being held

- The first-ever India Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue was held at St. Petersburg in Russia on November 25, 2018.
- The Indian side was led by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar, while the Russian delegation was headed by Economic Development Minister Maxim Oreshkin.
- The two-day forum is expected to bring together key business figures from both countries. The participants will discuss the development of bilateral ties in trade, investment, technology and industry.

High-level panel for 'unambiguous' mandate for negotiations with US

- The issues pertaining to import tariffs on information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, on which the US has sought duty elimination, has reached the highest corridors of the government with an inter-ministerial panel comprising finance minister Arun Jaitley, commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad discussing the US' demand at a meeting last week.
- According to sources, in the high-level meeting, it was discussed that "India may have to take a considered stand on the issue" so that the commerce ministry's mandate for negotiations with the US is "unambiguous".

India, ADB sign USD 200 million loan agreement to improve highways in Bihar

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Union Government on November 26, 2018 signed a USD 200 million loan agreement to finance widening and upgrading of about 230 kilometers state highways in Bihar to all-weather standards with road safety features.
- This loan agreement for the Bihar State Highways III Project (BSHP-III) was signed by Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary (Fund Bank and ADB), Union Ministry of Finance and Rajeev P Singh, Officer in-Charge of ADB's India Resident Mission.

Government launches 'PAiSA' Portal under National Urban Livelihoods Mission

- The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs on November 26, 2018 launched the 'PAiSA' - Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access, a centralised electronic platform for quicker processing of loans under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).
- PAiSA is yet another effort by the government to connect directly with the beneficiaries, ensuring that there is greater transparency and efficiency in delivery of services.
- All 35 States and Union Territories (UTs) & all scheduled commercial banks, RRBs and Cooperative Banks are expected to be on board the PAiSA portal the year end.
- The web platform was designed and developed by Allahabad Bank, the nodal bank under the scheme.

ADB to provide 75 mn loan for water supply project in Karnataka

- The Asian Development Bank ADB will provide a 75 million dollar loan for a water supply project in four coastal towns of Karnataka.
- The project would ensure round the clock water supply in four towns Kundapura, Mangalore Puttur and Udipi.
- An agreement regarding the tranche 2 loan of the programme was signed in New Delhi today.
- An official released said that the fund will also be used to improve sanitation infrastructure for Mangalore town.

NPCC conferred with the status of 'Miniratna'

- The National Projects Construction Corporation Limited (NPCC) was conferred with the status of Miniratna : Category –I by the Union Government.
- The empowerment of Miniratna Status to NPCC will help the company in taking speedy decisions by enhancing the delegation of powers to the Board.
- NPCC, a schedule 'B' CPSE under the administrative control of Union Ministry of Water Resources RD & GR, has also been awarded ISO 9001:2015 Certification.

India, China sign protocol to amend Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement

- India and China signed protocol to amend Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) for the avoidance of double taxation and for prevention of fiscal evasion.
- Under Section 90 of Income-tax Act, 1961, India can enter into agreement with foreign country or specified territory for the avoidance of double taxation of income.
- The Protocol to amend DTAA with China updates existing provisions for exchange of information to latest international standards.

RBI launches survey to gauge their scope with respect to turnover, profitability, workforce

- With an aim to create a profile of India's startup sector, the Reserve Bank has launched a survey to gauge their scope with respect to turnover, profitability and workforce.
- A RBI press release issued from Mumbai on Tuesday informed that the survey would also throw light on the problems faced by the startup sector.
- RBI said the survey forms have been mailed to all startup entities registered with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.

Centre to divest 100% stake in Air India arm

- The government on Tuesday gave its nod for divesting its 100 per cent stake in Air India's profitable ground handling arm — Air India Air Transport Services (AIATSL).
- Civil Aviation Secretary RN Choubey said an inter-ministerial panel headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has approved the bid document.

Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu launches logo and brochure of 'Logix India 2019'

- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu on November 27, 2018 launched the logo and brochure of 'Logix India 2019'.
- Logix India will enable effective international trade logistics and help provide efficient and cost-effective flow of goods on which other commercial sectors.
- Logix India 2019 is scheduled to take place in New Delhi from January 31 to February 2, 2019.
- This mega logistics event will be organised by the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) as a major initiative to improve logistics cost effectiveness and operational efficiencies for India.

HDFC Bank launches upgraded mobile banking app with biometric log-in features

- India's biggest private sector lender (according to market value) HDFC Bank Tuesday launched its next-gen mobile banking application that provides enhanced security features like fingerprint and facial recognition based log-in.
- HDFC Bank customers can undertake more than 120 transactions over the mobile application, the bank said in a release.
- The new banking app was launched at the Bank's annual Digital Innovation Summit 2018 (DIS) in New Delhi.

RBI Reduces Minimum Holding Period For Securitisation Of Loan Portfolios

- To help further ease liquidity condition for non-bank lenders, the Reserve Bank of India has made changes to the holding period for securitised loan portfolios.
- In a notification on Thursday, the Reserve Bank of India said that the minimum holding period requirement for non-banking finance company originating loans, will now be set at six monthly or two quarterly installments. Earlier the holding period was 12 months.
- The revised rules are applicable for loans of original maturity of above 5 years. This will help housing finance companies in particular who have longer maturity loans.
- However, the RBI has increased the holding amount from 10 percent to 20 percent of the loan portfolio. This has been done to ensure that NBFCs selling loan portfolios have adequate skin in the game even after securitisation.

Casio launches world's first GST calculator

- Japanese electronics company 'CASIO' launched world's first Goods and Services Tax (GST) calculator in India for simplifying the GST calculations for tax payers.
- The company has two variants of GST calculators MJ-120GST and MJ-12GST in the Indian market.
- These new GST calculators will provide solutions for GST based invoicing.
- These GST calculators feature built-in GST tabs for all five tabs- 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%.
- It includes separate buttons for GST slabs to reduce time required for processing invoice.

India, China sign protocol on hygiene requirements for export of fish meal, fish oil

- India and China on November 28, 2018 signed a protocol on hygiene and inspection requirements for the exports in New Delhi during the visit of Hu Wei, the Vice Minister of China's General Administration of Customs. The information was shared by the Union Commerce Ministry.
- Hu Wei, who led a six-member delegation to India, met India's Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan during his visit and discussed various issues of market access for different products.

RBI makes LEI mandatory for market participants regulated by it

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to make Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) code mandatory for all market participants regulated by the central bank.
- "All participants, other than individuals, undertaking transactions in the markets regulated by the RBI — government securities markets, money markets (markets for any instrument with a maturity of one year or less) and non-derivative forex markets (transactions that settle on or before the spot date) — shall obtain LEI codes by the due date," it said in a notification.
- The LEI code has been conceived of as a key measure to improve the quality and accuracy of financial data systems for better risk management post the global financial crisis.
- The LEI is a 20-character unique identity code assigned to entities who are parties to a financial transaction.
- Globally, use of LEI has expanded beyond derivative reporting and it is being used in areas relating to banking, securities market, credit rating and market supervision.

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

- India's economy grew at 7.1 per cent for the second quarter of 2018-19 according to data released by Central Statistics Office today.
- These estimates represent a sizable jump from last year's second quarter growth rate estimates, indicating sustained acceleration in country's economic growth. The Gross Domestic Product, GDP at constant prices had grown at 6.3 per cent in July-September quarter of the last fiscal.
- The CSO estimates state that GDP at constant prices was 33.98 lakh crore rupees for second quarter this fiscal, which is a marked increase from 31.72 lakh crore rupees for the same period in 2017-18.

India and states

IIT-Madras creates 'Shakti', India's first microprocessor

- India's first indigenous microprocessor may soon power your mobile phones, surveillance cameras and smart meters.
- 'Shakti', designed, developed and booting by Indian Institute of Technology Madras, and with a microchip fabricated in the Semi-Conductor Laboratory of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at Chandigarh, will reduce dependency on imported microchips and the risk of cyber attacks making it ideal for communication and defence sectors.

India, Botswana agree to act tough on terror

- India and Botswana on Thursday strongly condemned against terrorism and agreed to take determined and credible steps to eradicate the global menace.

- The vice presidents of both the countries "unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and stressed the importance of international efforts to prevent and fight the scourge of terrorism", according to an official statement from the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The two leaders witnessed the signing of the agreement on the exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports.

Railways rolls out Unreserved Mobile Ticketing facility

- Railway passengers can now book unreserved general tickets online from today (November 1).
- To avail the facility passengers have to download UTS on the mobile app from the google play or window store. After registering by providing the required details, the passengers will be given user ID and password through which the user can login and book the ticket.
- With this facility, passengers will not have to stand in long queues to buy tickets from the reservation counter window.

KJ Alphons presides over the Program and Budget Committee meeting of UNWTO

- The Minister of State for Tourism, KJ Alphons along with a delegation of senior officials attended the 109th session of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Executive Council in Manama, Bahrain.
- The three day Session of UNWTO Executive Council began on October 30, 2018.
- Alphons chaired the 'Programme and Budget Committee' meeting of UNWTO.
- The Minister highlighted the role of tourism in socio-economic development through job creation, enterprise and environment development and foreign exchange earnings.
- As the chair of the Committee, the Minister informed the session that for the first time, UNWTO had a surplus budget and most of the arrears due have been paid.

Live-in partner can seek maintenance: Supreme Court

- The Supreme Court on October 31, 2018 ruled that a live-in partner can seek maintenance under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005.
- The bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justices U.U. Lalit and K.M. Joseph observed that the 2005 Act provides an "efficacious remedy" for maintenance even if the victim is not a legally wedded wife.

Satyajit Ray's film 'Pather Panchali' included in BBC's 100 best foreign language films list

- Satyajit Ray's epic masterpiece film 'Pather Panchali' has been included in BBC's 100 best foreign language films list.
- The list was formed from a poll where over 200 critics from 43 countries picked their best foreign language film. The list was brought down to 100 films from 67 different directors, 24 countries and in 19 languages.
- Ray's film, released in 1955, was placed at number 15 in the list, which has been topped by Akira Kurosawa's 'Seven Samurai'.

Netherlands will be the Partner Country for the 25th DST – CII Technology Summit

- The Kingdom of Netherlands will be the Partner Country for the 25th DST - CII Technology Summit.
- The Summit will be organised in 2019.
- The first CII Technology Summit was organised in 1995 with an aim to facilitate global technology collaborations.

Andhra Pradesh govt to launch awareness drive about swine flu

- The Andhra Pradesh government on Tuesday decided to launch an awareness drive about the precautionary measures to prevent spread of swine flu in the backdrop of likelihood of higher occurrence of the seasonal influenza due to onset of winter.
- Special chief secretary to the chief minister, Satish Chandra, held a tele-conference with district collectors and senior health officials and directed them to conduct a mass awareness campaign to help people secure themselves against the flu.

Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and S Korea

- The Cabinet has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between India and South Korea.
- The main objective of the MoU is to expand bilateral cooperation in tourism and to increase the exchange of information and data related to the sector.
- India and South Korea have enjoyed a strong diplomatic and long economic relationship and now desire to strengthen and further develop the established relationship for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism.

Cabinet apprised of India-Russia MoU and MoC in railways

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, was informed about two memoranda signed with Russia last month.
- The two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) respectively.

Delhi government, Indian Railways sign MoU for Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana

- The Delhi government signed a memorandum of understanding with the railways on Thursday to cater to pilgrims availing the Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana, an official statement stated.
- It stated the MoU was inked by officials of the Delhi government and the railways in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia at the Delhi Secretariat in New Delhi.
- A tourism department official said as per the agreement, Railways will provide separate coaches to pilgrims who are selected under the Yojana.

Kerala signs MoU for implementation of Ayushman Bharat

- The Kerala government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the National Health Agency on November 1 for the implementation of the Centre's flagship health insurance scheme -- Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana Abhiyan (AB-PMJAY) -- in the state.
- With Kerala signing the MoU, total 33 states and union territories have become a part of the scheme, said Ayushman Bharat CEO Indu Bhushan.
- Punjab, Delhi and Telangana are yet to join the scheme.

CRPF launches bike ambulance in Jharkhand

- The Jharkhand sector of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has launched an ingeniously designed bike ambulance in order to provide health facilities to people in the interior areas of Latehar district.
- The bike ambulance was launched at the Matlong Campo of 133 Battalion of the CRPF on Thursday.

- The vehicle consists of a foldable canopy with a backrest, hand rest and seat extension for patients. It also has wheel guards on both sides, along with a footrest with grip.

CJI establishes in-house 'Think Tank' for research & planning

- The Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogi established an in house 'think tank' to strengthen the knowledge infrastructure of Supreme Court of India.
- To this end, the CJI redefined the mandate of Centre for Research and Planning (CRP) to meet the "fast expanding knowledge needs of judiciary".
- The in-house think tank in the SC will complement the vibrant network of national and state judicial academies that have been built over 15 years ago.

MHA approves Rs 194.44 crore Safe City Project for Lucknow

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) approved a Safe City project for Lucknow at a total cost of Rs. 194.44 crore under the Nirbhaya Fund Scheme.
- The project would be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with Centre and State sharing the funding in 60:40 ratio.
- The Safe city proposal for Lucknow will be implemented by Uttar Pradesh Police, assisted by the Municipal bodies and city transport authorities.

10-day long Clean Air Campaign launched in Delhi and four major NCR Cities.

- A ten day long Clean Air Campaign from November 1- 10, 2018 was launched in Delhi by Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan.
- To monitor and report polluting activities as well as to ensure quick action, 52 teams were jointly flagged off.
- These teams will be visiting different parts of Delhi and adjacent towns of Faridabad, Gurugram, Ghaziabad and Noida.

Indo - Japan joint military exercise Dharma Guardian 2018 begins

- Exercise Dharma Guardian - 2018, a joint military exercise between Indian and Japanese Armies, commenced at Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School, Vairengete, Mizoram, India on November 1, 2018.
- Being first of its kind, the 14 days long joint exercise is being conducted from November 1, 2018 to November 14, 2018.

Cabinet approves renaming of 'Jharsuguda Airport, Odisha' as 'Veer Surendra Sai Airport, Jharsuguda'

- The Union Cabinet approved renaming of Jharsuguda Airport, Odisha as "Veer Surendra Sai Airport, Jharsuguda"
- Veer Surendra Sai is a well-known freedom fighter of Odisha.
- Renaming of the Jharsuguda airport in his name will fulfill long-pending demand of the Odisha Government, which reflects the sentiments of the local public of the respective area.

India and Japan for the first time to cooperate in Yoga, Ayurveda

- India and Japan on Monday decided to cooperate for the first time in the areas of Indian traditional medicinal systems such as Yoga and Ayurveda to provide holistic healthcare and wellness in both the countries.

- The Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India's Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) and the Kanagawa Prefectural Government was signed during the ongoing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan.

Japan backs India's membership bid for Nuclear Suppliers Group

- Japan on Monday backed India's membership bid to join the elite Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which is opposed by China.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe during their summit talks also sought "expeditious and meaningful" reforms of the United Nations.

Central Rlys' 1st 'Utkrisht rake' starts on Nov 4 between Mumbai & Pune

- The Central Railways will press into service the first Utkrisht rake of Pragati Express, running between Pune and Mumbai with upgraded features, from November 4, 2018.
- This Railway Board has sanctioned a project of upgrading existing rakes covers, upgradation of toilets, vinyl wrapping in interiors, upgraded interior amenities and fresh PU paint of each coach.

Signature Bridge, India's 1st asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge, is double the height of Qutub Minar

- Signature Bridge, connecting Wazirabad across the Yamuna to the inner city, was inaugurated on November 4, 2018, by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.
- The new landmark is double the height of Qutub Minar and has been delayed for over 14 years.
- The bridge will be thrown open for public today onwards and is expected to significantly reduce traffic in areas of north and northeast Delhi.

India, Malawi sign MoUs in Extradition Treaty, Atomic Energy and VISA Waiver

- India and Malawi have signed three MoUs on Extradition Treaty, cooperation in the field of Atomic Energy for peaceful purposes and VISA Waiver for Diplomatic and Official Passports.
- This was informed by Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, T S Tirumurti, at a press briefing about Vice President Venkaiah Naidu visit in Malawi today.

India, South Korea sign MoU to boost tourism

- Ministry of Tourism on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Tourism of South Korea for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism in New Delhi.
- An official release said, the main objectives of the MoU are to expand bilateral cooperation and increase Exchange of information and data related to tourism.

FSSAI and Japan's health ministry ink MoU to cooperate on food safety

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), India's apex food safety regulator, and Japan's Food Safety Commission, its Consumer Affairs Agency and its Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further cooperation between the agencies of the two nations in the area of food safety during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Japan.

INS Arihant: India's first indigenous nuclear-powered submarine completes Nuclear Triad

- The indigenous INS Arihant India's first nuclear-powered submarine successfully completed its first deterrence patrol. The ship submersible ballistic, nuclear (SSBN) submarine is part of Indian Navy's India's Eastern Naval Command.

- The name Arihant derives from two words – Ari meaning enemy and Hanth meaning destroy. The second SSBN under the project, INS Aridhaman, is undergoing sea trials.

Odisha Government launches Saura Jalnidhi scheme

- Odisha Government launched Saura Jalnidhi scheme to encourage use of solar energy in irrigation by farmers.
- Under this scheme, farmers will be given 90 percent subsidy and 5000 solar pumps.
- This will provide irrigation benefits in 2500 acres of the state.
- The beneficiary of this scheme will be farmers who have valid farmer identity cards and have minimum 0.5 acres of agricultural land.

Maharashtra Government approves conversion of aircraft carrier INS Viraat into floating museum

- Maharashtra State Cabinet approved conversion of Indian Navy's longest-serving aircraft carrier INS Viraat into India's first-ever maritime museum-cum-marine adventure centre.
- At present, INS Viraat is at Mumbai's Naval dockyard after it was decommissioned (retired) in 2017.
- As per state government's plan, INS Viraat's conversion will be on public private partnership (PPP) basis.

Mizoram Speaker Hiphei resigns

- Mizoram Speaker Hiphei resigned from his post from the House as well as the Congress.
- He would join the BJP, just three weeks ahead of the Assembly elections.
- The seven-time Congress legislator submitted his resignation letter to Deputy Speaker R. Lalrinawma who accepted it.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath renames Faizabad as Ayodhya

- After renaming Allahabad as Prayag Raj, UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday rechristened Faizabad as Ayodhya, in a move that experts said could potentially give the ruling BJP to give its Hindutva agenda a further push ahead of Lok Sabha elections due next year. He also announced that the airport in Ayodhya would be named after Lord Ram.
- The announcement comes days after the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) demanded that Faizabad be named Sri-Ayodhya. Speaking on the eve of Diwali, Yogi said that no injustice can be done to Ayodhya, amid repeated chants of 'Yogi Ji Mandir Ka Nirman Karo'.

Manipur govt inks MoU to implement smart city project

- Manipur Government Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with IL&FS Township and Urban Assets Limited and Pricewaterhouse Coopers Pvt. Ltd. as a project management consultant for implementation of smart city project in Imphal at Chief Minister's Secretariat.
- The company will design, develop, manage and implement smart city projects under Smart City Mission in Imphal which is expected to be completed within three years.

India's nuclear submarine INS Arihant completes first 'deterrence patrol'

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 5, 2018 announced that India's first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant has successfully completed its "first deterrence patrol".
- The development signifies that the underwater warship has completed its maiden long-range mission with "live" nuclear-tipped missiles. On the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated all those involved in the process, especially the crew of INS Arihant for the great accomplishment.

Tourism Minister inaugurated Tourist Facilitation Counter at IGI airport

- Tourism Minister K J Alphons on November 5, 2018 inaugurated the Tourist Facilitation and Information Counter at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi.
- The facilitation counter is located at the terminal-3 arrival gates of the IGI Airport.
- The centre is aimed at helping the tourists who will visit the country. The counter will be connected to the 24x7 Helpline - 1363 of the Tourism Ministry.

HAL to roll out more Tejas fighters from new facility

- State-run aerospace major Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) will roll out more Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas from its new production facility at Nashik in Maharashtra.
- The company is investing Rs 1,300-crore for the Tejas fighter production augmentation.
- The defence company has two production units in Bengaluru where the advanced fourth generation multi-role light fighters are built for the Indian Air Force (IAF) combat fleet.

'BhubaneswarMe Wi-Fi' launched

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on November 5, 2018 launched the 'BhubaneswarMe Wi-Fi' by Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited to make the city accessible across its major happening places.
- On the first day 100 hotspots located in major locations with 275 access points (APs) went live.
- One wi-fi hotspot would be able to handle 150 users at a given point of time and the Internet speed will be available at 2 mega bytes per second (MBPS).

BSNL launches alternate digital KYC process for new connections across circles

- State-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has launched an alternate digital KYC process for issuing new connections across various circles, a top official has said.
- The telecom PSU has informed the Department of Telecom (DoT) about the new system which has been rolled out, Chairman and Managing Director Anupam Shrivastava told PTI.
- Earlier this week, large private telecom operators including Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel said they have begun rolling out 'alternate digital KYC (know your customer) process for new connections, which will replace Aadhaar-based electronic verification process.

India elected as Member of ITU Council for another 4-year term: Manoj Sinha

- India has been elected as a Member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council for another 4-year term (2019-2022), Union Communications Minister Manoj said on Tuesday.
- The elections to the Council were held during the ongoing ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 at Dubai, UAE.

Defence minister inducts 3 major artillery gun systems into Army

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on November 9, 2018 inducted three major artillery gun systems, including the globally combat proven M777 A2 Ultra Light Howitzers, K-9 Vajra-Tracked Self Propelled Guns and 6x6 Field Artillery Tractors into the Army.
- The 155mm, 39 Calibre Ultra light Howitzers have been procured from the US under Government to Government Foreign Military Sales and will be assembled in India by BAE Systems in partnership with Mahindra Defence.

- The Gun System is versatile, light weight and can be heli-lifted, thereby providing the much needed flexibility in deployment in various terrains. The Howitzer is currently in service in the US, Canadian, Australian and some other armies of the world.

Bihar approves funds worth Rs 25000 for graduate girls

- The state cabinet of Bihar on November 8, 2018 approved a proposal to pay Rs 25000 to every girl graduating in 2018 and onwards.
- The decision was taken at the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. As per the decision, the one-time payment will be made to every girl who graduated from the colleges of the state on or after April 25, 2018, irrespective of the pass division, community or region.

Cabinet approves setting up of Central Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh

- The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of a Central Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh.
- The "Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh" will be set up in Relli village of Vizianagaram District as provided under the Thirteenth Schedule to the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.

India, Singapore bilateral naval exercise ' SIMBEX 2018' begins

- The 25th edition of SIMBEX, "Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise" is scheduled to be held from November 10- 21, 2018 in the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.
- The 2018 edition marks the silver jubilee of SIMBEX. To mark the historical occasion, the navies of both nations are undertaking exercises over an extended geography.
- The 2018 edition of the bilateral maritime exercise will be the largest edition since 1994 in terms of scale and complexity.

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurates first India-built war memorial in France

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu Saturday inaugurated the first India-built war memorial in northern France to pay tribute to thousands of Indian soldiers who fought selflessly and made supreme sacrifices during the World War I.
- Naidu, who is on a three-day visit to Paris starting Friday, also interacted with French armed forces veterans and children at the inauguration of the Indian War Memorial at Villers Guislain.

CIMAP signs pact with RIFM to standardize fragrant oils

- The Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) on Friday signed an agreement with US-based Research Institute for Fragrant Materials (RIFM) for improving the quality of fragrant oils, a spokesman of the institute said.
- The pact was signed by Anil Kumar Tripathi, Director CSIR-CIMAP and Jim Romane, President of the RIFM at the conclusion of the two-day annual conference of the International Fragrance Association in Paris.

ISRO to launch its GSAT-29 communication satellite on November 14

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch its GSLV MkIII-D2 mission, carrying India's high throughput communication satellite GSAT-29, on November 14, subject to weather conditions.
- GSLV MkIII-D2 is the second developmental flight of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mark III. In this flight, the vehicle will carry the 3,423 kg GSAT-29 satellite and place it in Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

Goa government bans fish imports for 6 months

- The Goa government on November 10, 2018 announced a ban on import of fish into the state for six months.
- The move comes against the backdrop of a scare in the coastal state that formalin, a potential cancer-causing chemical, was being used to preserved fish.
- Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane announced the ban and said that its duration could be extended by another six months, if needed, till measures to check the quality of fish are in place in the state.

Army dedicates 2018 to welfare of Disabled Soldiers

- Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat said on November 12, 2018 that the Indian Army has dedicated the Year 2018 to the welfare of Disabled Soldiers who have been disabled in the line of duty, while serving the Nation.
- The Army Chief was speaking at a function organised by Indian Army to observe year 2018 as the Year of the Disabled Soldier, at Mammon Cantt in Pathankot.

India, Morocco sign Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters

- India and Morocco on November 12, 2018 signed an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters in Delhi.
- The agreement was signed by Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Home on behalf of the Union Government and Mohamed Aujjar, Minister of Justice on behalf of the Moroccan Government.

Largest apparel manufacturing unit of Meghalaya becomes operational

- Meghalaya's largest apparel manufacturing unit near Ampati has started production after remaining idle for nearly two years.
- Located at Hatisil in South West Garo Hills and covering an area of 45,000 sq feet, the apparel factory was originally set up at a cost of Rs 14.26 crore by the Union Ministry of Textiles.

Three-day event of Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities concludes

- The three-day event of Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities- 2018 concluded in New Delhi today.
- This year 96 youth with disabilities from 18 countries including India, Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Philippines, UK and UAE participated in it.

Narendra Singh Tomar given charge of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs

- Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar will now hold the charge of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs following the demise of Union Minister Ananth Kumar.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has assigned the charge to Mr Tomar.
- While Minister for Statistics and Programme Implementation D V Sadanand Gowda has been given the charge of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, in addition to his existing portfolio.

HRD Ministry launches Leadership for Academicians Programme

- Minister of State for Human Resource Development Satya Pal Singh launched the Leadership for Academicians Programme, LEAP and Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching, ARPIT in New Delhi on Tuesday.

- Addressing the gathering, the Minister said that developing good teachers is an arduous task and if teachers show enough commitment, ARPIT will go a long way in empowering the teaching faculty.
- He said, committed teachers, will develop confidence and competence. He also added that combining the qualities of a good teacher and an effective leader is very difficult.

Government sets up National Data Repository

- The Union Government has set up a state of -the- art National Data Repository. The information was shared by Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan while speaking at the DG Carbons Roadshow programme in Abu Dhabi.
- The Minister said that the repository is a database of all the geo-scientific data of hydrocarbon resources in the country. He added that it is equipped with cutting-edge technology and will provide ready access to interested companies.
- With the introduction of the National Data Repository, India has joined the league of countries like UK and Norway which have a National Data Repository for the upstream sector.

Rs 75 commemorative coin to mark 75th anniversary of Tricolour hoisting by Bose

- The government Thursday decided to release a Rs 75 commemorative coin on the occasion of 75th anniversary of the hoisting of Tricolour for the first time by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at Port Blair.
- A notification has been issued by the Ministry of Finance in this regard.
- This coin will bear the portrait of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose saluting the flag on the background of cellular jail.
- The 35-gram coin will be composed of 50 per cent silver, 40 per cent copper and 5 per cent each of nickel and zinc.

Indian Navy - Indonesian Navy bilateral exercise 'Samudra Shakti' begins

- The inaugural edition of Indian Navy -Indonesian Navy Bilateral Exercise 'Samudra Shakti' began on November 12, 2018 at Surabaya, Indonesia. The exercise will conclude on November 18, 2018.
- The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Rana of the Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam under the Eastern Naval Command arrived at the port of Surabaya to participate in the exercise.
- The exercise aims to strengthen bilateral relations, expand maritime co-operation, enhance interoperability and exchange best practices.

Government approves constitution of new boards of Governors for IIMs

- The Union Government on November 12, 2018 approved the process of constitution of new boards of Governors for 20 IIMs as per the IIM Act 2017.
- Speaking on the same, Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar said that the process of constitution of boards for the IIMs, which have been given full powers of running the institutions, is a major development which signals complete autonomy of quality institutions in higher education and will ensure a quality expansion of higher education.

India's Department of Biotechnology, Wellcome Trust of UK complete 10 year of partnership

- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under the Union Ministry of Science and Technology and the Wellcome Trust (WT) of the United Kingdom on November 12, 2018 celebrated 10 years of their joint partnership at an event in New Delhi.
- The DBT and Wellcome Trust jointly support a three-tier fellowship programme on biomedical research at post-doctoral level.

- While speaking on the occasion of 10 years of their joint partnership, President Ram Nath Kovind suggested four frontlines in the battle to safeguard planet, species and future.

India, Morocco sign agreement for assistance in legal and commercial matters

- India and Morocco on November 13, 2018 signed an agreement to further mutual legal assistance in Civil and Commercial Courts. The agreement will enhance co-operation in the service of summons, judicial documents, letters of request and the execution of judgments decrees and arbitral awards.
- The agreement was signed in the presence of Union Minister of Law and Justice and Electronics & IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad and his Moroccan Counterpart Mohammed Auajjar.

ISRO launches communication satellite GSAT-29

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on November 14, 2018 launched the communication satellite GSAT-29 aboard ISRO's heavy-lift rocket GSLV Mark-III.
- The launch took place at 05.08 hours from the second launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh. The countdown for the launch had begun at 2.50 pm on November 13. The GSLV Mark-III rocket weighs around 640 ton and has a height of 43.4 metres.
- With the launch, GSLV Mark-III will put India's second high-throughput communication satellite GSAT-29 into its planned geostationary transfer orbit just over 16 minutes into its flight.

NITI Aayog, UNICEF launch UNICEF- Atal Tinkering Lab Hackthon

- NITI Aayog and UNICEF on November 14, 2018 launched the UNICEF- Atal Tinkering Lab Hackthon to encourage children towards making new innovations.
- The Hackthon is a 72-hour problem solving quest. The winners of the competition will be announced on November 20, 2018.
- Speaking on the occasion NITI Aayog vice chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar said, Atal Tinkering Labs and Atal Innovation Mission are a bridge between innovation and schools across the country, providing solutions to grassroot problems.

India, Russia conduct joint military exercise 'INDRA 2018'

- The joint military exercise between India and Russia, 'INDRA 2018' aimed at combating insurgency under the aegis of United Nations (UN) began on November 18, 2018 in India.
- The joint exercise is being conducted at Babina Field Firing Ranges, Babina Military Station in Uttar Pradesh.
- The training exercise that will span across eleven days will see participation from company-sized contingents of the 5th Army of the Russian Federation and a Mechanised Infantry Battalion of India including induction and de-induction of the Russian contingent.

Ministry of Renewable Energy prepares draft of Indian Wind Turbine Certification Scheme

- The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), in consultation with National Institute of Wind Energy Chennai, has prepared a draft of a new scheme called Indian Wind Turbine Certification Scheme (IWTCS), which incorporates various guidelines of the Turbine Certification Scheme.
- The scheme is a consolidation of all relevant national and international standards, technical regulations and requirements issued by Central Electricity Authority (CEA), guidelines issued by MNRE and other international guidelines.

Delhi Air Pollution: NGT forms committee to check air quality during functions at hotels, banquets

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on November 13, 2018 formed a committee to stop activities that lead to degradation of the environment, taking note of pollution and traffic congestion during functions at banquet halls, farmhouses and hotels in Delhi.
- Delhi's air quality has been deteriorating rapidly and continues to be in the 'severe' category.
- The green panel formed a joint committee with representatives of municipal corporations, the Central Ground Water Authority, the Delhi Jal Board, the Delhi Police and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee.

IIT Madras signs MoU with Japanese firms to set up joint research cell

- The Indian Institute of Technology Madras or IIT Madras has said that it was going to establish a joint research cell in collaboration with two Japanese manufacturing firms.
- It signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Japan's alfaTKG Co. Ltd. and OKABE Manufacturing Co. Ltd. for collaborating in the core areas of the manufacturing sector including research and development (R&D).

Delhi Police launches e-learning portal 'NIPUN' for training its personnel

- Delhi Police launched e-learning portal 'NIPUN' to impart training and provide up to date information to police officers.
- The initiative is aimed at imparting in-service online training and information to police personnel through specialised courses available online.
- The online courses on NIPUN portal have been designed in collaboration with University Grant Commission (UGC), FICCI, NHRC, NCPDR and Janaki Devi Memorial College, Delhi University under project CLAP "The Collaborative Learning and Partnership".

Department of Biotechnology, Cancer Research UK sign MoU for India-UK Cancer Research Initiative

- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT) of India and Cancer Research UK on November 14, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the India-UK Cancer Research Initiative.
- The India-UK Cancer Research Initiative is a collaborative 5-year bilateral research initiative by the Department of Biotechnology under Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Cancer Research UK (CRUK).
- The Initiative was launched at the Inaugural Researchers' Summit, which was held in New Delhi from November 14 to November 16, 2018.

India, China hold 9th Annual Defence & Security Dialogue after one-year gap

- Top officials of India and China held the ninth Annual Defence and Security Dialogue here after a one-year gap due to the Doklam standoff, as both countries agreed to enhance military exchanges and interactions.
- The dialogue on November 13 was held between the two defence delegations headed by Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra and China's Deputy Chief of Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission.

Delhi Government to have 13 fitness testing centres for autos

- The State Transport Department proposed to decentralise the lone auto-rickshaw testing unit in Delhi.
- This comes after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal pulled up officials for not having enough anti-corruption measures in place.

WCD Ministry approves 3 proposals under Nirbhaya Fund

The Empowered Committee of Officers under Nirbhaya Fund, under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Women and Child Development Ministry on November 16, 2018 approved the following three major proposals:

1. Law Ministry's proposal to set up 1023 Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) to dispose of pending cases of rape, and POCSO Act across the country. The project has a total financial implication of Rs 767.25 crores. In the First phase, 777 FTSCs may be set up in 9 states and in second phase 246 FTSCs will be set up.
2. The Proposal of Home Ministry for procurement of forensic kits for sexual assault cases to kick start usage of such kits in States/UTs through TOTs (Training of Trainers), capacity building/training for forensics in sexual assault cases and strengthening of State FSLs under Nirbhaya Fund with a total financial implication of Rs 107.19 crores.
3. The Proposal from Konkan Railway Corporation Limited for setting up video surveillance system at 50 Railway Stations with a total Project cost of Rs 17.64 crores that will be utilised for surveillance hardware and accessories, local connectivity equipment and power supply devices.

India's first specialised hospital for elephants opens in Mathura

- India's first specialized hospital for elephants was on Friday formally opened by Agra Divisional Commissioner Anil Kumar at Farah block's Churmura village.
- The unique medical centre offers wireless digital X-ray, laser treatment, dental X-ray, thermal imaging, ultrasonography, hydrotherapy and quarantine facilities.
- Located close to the elephant conservation and care centre, the hospital is designed to treat injured, sick or geriatric elephants and is equipped with a medical hoist for lifting elephants, as also an elephant restraining device with a dedicated indoor treatment enclosure for long duration medical procedures.

ICF despatches DEMU coaches to Sri Lanka

- Integral Coach Factory on Monday despatched a set of 'Made in India' Diesel Electric Multiple Units (DEMU) – used for short and medium distance travel in non-electrified sections – to Sri Lanka.
- The first rake of 13-car DEMUs for the Sri Lanka Railways was handed over to senior officials of RITES Ltd at ICF and will be shipped to the island nation from the Chennai port in a few days.

Government to refund employers for seven weeks of maternity leave given to employees

- The Union Women and Child Development Ministry announced on November 15, 2018 that the government will refund the employers the salaries for the first seven of the 26 weeks of maternity leave for women earning more than Rs 15,000 a month.
- The Ministry's decision came in the wake of complaints that many companies were reluctant to hire pregnant women after maternity leave was extended from 12 to 26 weeks and some were even firing women employees.

Rural Jharkhand declared ODF

- The rural Jharkhand was declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) on November 15, 2018 during a regional review meeting of the eastern states held in Kolkata, West Bengal.

- The workshop comprised discussions on sustaining Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM), and rural water supply. It saw participation from teams belonging to West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar and Odisha.

Commerce Minister launches AirSewa 2.0 to make air travel hassle-free

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu and Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Jayant Sinha on November 19, 2018 launched the upgraded version of AirSewa 2.0 web portal and mobile app in New Delhi.
- Speaking on the occasion, the Civil Aviation Minister said that a need was felt for development of an upgraded version of AirSewa to provide a superior user experience with enhanced functionalities.
- The major improvements in the upgraded version of the web portal include features such as secure sign-up and log-in with social media, chatbot for travellers support, improved grievance management including social media grievances.

India's Statue of Unity visible from space: Commercial satellite network 'Planet'

- Commercial satellite network 'Planet' on November 17, 2018 revealed that India's Statue of Unity, the world's tallest statue, is visible from the space. The network Planet photographed the statue from the space on November 15.
- The memorial was inaugurated on October 31, 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district to honour India's first Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his 143rd birth anniversary.

MoS for Health flags off Organothon to support, pledge for organ donation

- An Organothon, to support and pledge for organ donation, was flagged off at Connaught place in New Delhi on November 18, 2018 by Minister of State for Health Ashwini Kumar Choubey.
- Speaking on the occasion, Choubey said, organ donation gives a chance of life to others and is like living after death.

Delhi Government forms committee to revise auto fares

- The Delhi Government has formed a committee to revise auto fares, in an attempt to woo autorickshaw drivers ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
- The 11-member fare revision committee chaired by Special Commissioner (Transport) Anil Banka will submit its report to the government in 30 days. The auto fares were last revised by the Sheila Dikshit government in 2013.

Cyber "war room" to be set up BIT in Sathyamangalam

- Lucideus Technologies, an IT Risk Assessment and Digital Security Services provider is setting up a "cyber war room" at Bannari Amman Institute of Technology in Erode district, for grooming students to combat increasing cyber crime.
- The "war room", claimed to be the first such in India, would be launched by the next academic year.

Google begins rolling out 'Neighbourly' Q&A app across Indian cities

- Tech giant Google will roll out its 'Neighbourly' app, which aims to help people source local information from their neighbours, across India starting today.

- In May, Google had launched the beta version of the app in Mumbai and later expanded to Jaipur. In September, it expanded the availability of the app to five more Indian cities, including Ahmedabad, Coimbatore and Mysore.

Bengal to come out with interactive app for restaurants

- The West Bengal Tourism Department has decided to launch an interactive mobile app next month, listing all the good restaurants in Kolkata and other places across the State.
- The move comes as tourists visit the Department website for locating restaurants.
- The restaurants already listed on the Department's website will find a place in the app.
- More restaurants will be added gradually.

Govt asks Twitter to ensure 24x7 mechanism for prompt removal of objectionable content

- The Union Government has asked the social media platform, Twitter to ensure 24x7 mechanism for prompt removal of objectionable content from their platform as per requirement of law enforcement agencies.
- According to an official release, Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba had held a meeting with Twitter officials in New Delhi for effective action against objectionable content.

Patients save around Rs 15,000 cr under govt's initiative of ensuring 'Affordable, Quality Medicines for All'

- Patients across the country have saved around Rs 15,000 crore under government's initiative of ensuring 'Affordable, Quality Medicines for All'.
- The Union Chemicals and Fertilisers Ministry has taken the step of fixation of ceiling prices and Maximum Retail Prices of essential and lifesaving drugs. This has resulted in patients saving over Rs 5,000 crore since then.
- This is in addition to approximately 10 lakh heart patients saving around Rs 8,000 crore since fixation of ceiling prices of coronary stents.
- Around 1.5 lakh knee patients saved around Rs 2,000 crore since price fixation of knee implants.

Sikkim increases forest cover by over 4 per cent since 1993: CM

- A plethora of initiatives for preserving biodiversity in Sikkim such as spreading mass awareness and adopting an eco-friendly policy has led to an increase of its forest cover by over four percent since 1993, as per the state's Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling.
- The green cover in the tiny north-eastern state has risen to 47.62 per cent in 2017 from 43.95 per cent in 1993.
- The state is "very committed" about conserving biodiversity by spreading mass awareness and necessary legislation.

Gujarat launches intensive project to conserve Gir lions

- Gujarat government on November 20, 2018 launched a Rs 351-crore project for the conservation of the Gir lions. The project is launched in the backdrop of the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) outbreak that claimed 23 Asiatic lions lives in their only dwelling Gir National park in Saurashtra.
- This intensive project will also include an emergency ambulance van akin to the 108 emergency services.

WB passes bill to give land rights to enclave dwellers

- To end an era of undecided future for the people residing West Bengal (WB) enclaves, the WB Assembly unanimously passed a bill to provide land rights to enclave dwellers in north Bengal.
- The bill was moved by Minister of State for Land and Land Reforms Chandrima Bhattacharya, the West Bengal Land Reforms (Amendment) Bill, 2018, was passed in the House unopposed.
- The WB Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee termed it as a “historic Bill” that would help the enclave dwellers to get full-fledged status as citizens of India, along with all civic amenities and citizenship rights.

Reliance Jio launches India’s first VoLTE international roaming

- Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. (Jio) on Wednesday announced the launch of VoLTE-based inbound international roaming between India and Japan.
- With this, Jio has become India’s first 4G mobile operator to provide VoLTE-based international roaming services in India, whereby international roamers will be enjoying HD voice and LTE high-speed data.

HRD Minister launches ‘Institution’s Innovation Council’ programme

- The Union HRD Minister, Prakash Javadekar launched the Institution’s Innovation Council (IIC) programme under Innovation cell of the Ministry of Human Resource Development through video conferencing in New Delhi on November 21, 2018.
- The HRD Ministry has established an 'Innovation cell' at AICTE to systematically foster the culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that it is a significant step in institutionalising innovation and developing a scientific temperament in the country.

President Kovind unveils the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Parramatta in Sydney

- President Ram Nath Kovind on November 22, 2018 unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Parramatta in Sydney, Australia.
- A large number of people from the Indian community were present on the occasion to welcome the Indian President. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison was also present on this occasion.

Cabinet approves setting up of Medical College at Silvassa

- The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of Medical College at Silvassa in the Union Territory (UT) of Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
- The medical college is expected to be set up at a capital cost of Rs 189 crore to be incurred in two years, 2018-19 – Rs 114 crore and 2019-20 – Rs 75 crore with yearly intake of 150 students.

Cabinet approves continuation of nine sub schemes under umbrella scheme ‘ACROSS’

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved continuation of the nine sub-schemes of the umbrella scheme "Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)" during 2017-2020 at an estimated cost of Rs 1450 crore.
- It will be implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences through its institutes namely India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) and Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Service(INCOIS).

Allied and Healthcare Council of India to be set up: Cabinet approval

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 22, 2018 approved the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 for regulation and standardisation of education and services by allied and healthcare professionals.
- The Bill provides for setting up of an Allied and Healthcare Council of India and corresponding state allied and healthcare councils, which will play the role of a standard-setter and facilitator for professions of allied and healthcare.
- The bill provides for the establishment of central and corresponding state allied and healthcare councils and 15 major professional categories including 53 professions in allied and healthcare streams.

WCD Ministry links 'SHe-Box' to central, state ministries for speedy disposal of cases

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has linked the sexual harassment complaints portal 'SHe-Box' with all the Central Ministries, Departments and 653 districts across 33 states and union territories.
- SHe-Box is an online portal, which has been created by the WCD Ministry to report complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace.
- With the linkage of the SHe-Box with central and state governments, once a case is reported on the portal, it will go directly to the concerned central and state authority having jurisdiction to take action in the matter, in order to enable prompt disposal of complaints.

80-feet Buddha statue planned in Gujarat

- After the 182-meter tall 'Statue of Unity' of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Gujarat may get a gigantic Buddha statue.
- Sanghakaya Foundation, a non-profit Buddhist organisation, said on November 22, 2018 that it has demanded land from the government for installing an 80-feet high statue of Lord Buddha in Gandhinagar district.
- It has roped in Ram Sutar, the sculptor behind the Statue of Unity, for the project.

India-UAE Strategic Conclave to be held in Abu Dhabi

- The second edition of the India-UAE Strategic Conclave will be held in the capital city of Abu Dhabi on November 27, 2018.
- The day-long conclave will initiate a dialogue to widen the scope of bilateral investments.

IMD develops new technology to monitor impact of rain & deal with natural disasters

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has developed a new technology to assess the rise of water level in rivers and reservoirs by rain.
- The technology, called 'Impact Based Forecasting Approach', which shows pre-event scenario, can help state governments to minutely monitor the impact of rain and take real-time decisions.

U.P. to build 221-metre Ram statue on the banks of Saryu

- BJP government in Uttar Pradesh has cleared a 221-metre-tall statue of Lord Ram, to come up on the banks of the Saryu in the temple town.
- While the government did not reveal the details of cost, funding, or exact location, it announced the expected size of the statue, which seems to outdo the 182-metre Sardar Patel statue in Gujarat.

- The Lord Ram statue would consist of a 151-metre statue, a 20-metre umbrella overhead, and a 50-metre pedestal; the total being 221 metre, a government spokesperson said.

United Nations selects Noida to participate in Global Sustainable Cities 2025 plan

- The United Nations Sunday selected Uttar Pradesh's Noida and Greater Noida to participate in its Global Sustainable Cities 2025 initiative, officials said.
- The twin-cities in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, adjoining the national capital, have been selected in the "University City" category ahead of Mumbai and Bengaluru as the only invitee from India, a senior UN official said.

UP Govt launches Women empowerment resolution campaign

- Uttar Pradesh Government launched the Women Empowerment Resolution Campaign to develop abilities in women for leadership and rights on November 20, 2018.
- The campaign was launched by the incumbent Chief Minister Yogi Aditya Nath.
- The Women Empowerment Resolution Campaign will help to ensure the women empowerment in the state

Uttarakhand cabinet ratifies renaming Jolly Grant airport after Vajpayee

- The Uttarakhand cabinet has ratified a proposal to rename the Jolly Grant airport in the state capital after late prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, an official said on Sunday.
- The proposal will now be sent to the Aiprorts Authority of India and the Union Civil Aviation Ministry for approval.
- Built by the Birla industrial group in the early 80s, the Jolly Grant airport is now used to operate several flights everyday.

Delhi government launches portal for spotting location of cluster buses

- Delhi bus commuters will now be able to spot locations of cluster buses at intervals of 10 seconds with the help of open transit data (OTD) which will be shared on a dedicated portal launched by the Delhi government Friday.
- Delhi becomes the first city in the country to open up transit data of city buses, that will provide static and real time data through the website — www.otd.delhi.gov.in — including geo-coordinates of bus stops, route maps, timetables, and real time GPS feeds of bus locations every 10 seconds, said a government statement.

WCD Ministry empanels 223 Institutes to conduct awareness programmes on Sexual Harassment at Workplace

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has empanelled institutions and organisations to conduct awareness exercises on the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, in order to ensure security of women at all workplaces.
- Around 223 institutes and organisations have been empanelled from across the country to impart training in local languages as of November 2018.
- The empanelled institutes will be required to submit quarterly reports through SHe-Box, an online complaints portal, of all the training programmes and workshops conducted by them under the SH Act.

Venkaiah Naidu lays down foundation stone of Dera Baba Nanak - Kartarpur Sahib Corridor

- The Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on November 26, 2018 laid the foundation stone for the construction of Dera Baba Nanak - Kartarpur Sahib Road Corridor at a function in Mann village in Gurdaspur district of Punjab.
- The foundation stone was laid in the presence of Union Minister for Road Transport Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Food Processing Harsimrat Kaur Badal, and Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amrinder Singh.

Bihar CM unveils 70 ft tall Lord Buddha's statue in Rajgir

- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar unveiled a 70-foot tall statue of Lord Buddha at Rajgir in Nalanda district on November 25, 2018.
- It is the second tallest statue of Buddha in the country. It was unveiled in the presence of Mahabodhi temple's chief monk Bhante Chalinda amid the chanting of hymns.

AAI cancels Air Odisha's UDAN license for poor performance

- The Airport Authority of India has served a termination clause to Air Odisha for failing to operate 70 per cent of its scheduled flights over the last three months, as per the Director of Biju Patnaik International Airport (Bhubaneswar) Suresh Chandra Hota on Friday.
- Last month, the Civil Aviation Ministry had issued a show cause notice to the airline operator.

World-class township for autistic children, adults to be built in Kolkata

- The India Autism Centre (IAC), a world-class autism township is being planned to be built near Kolkata, where children and adults suffering from the developmental disorder would receive training, treatment and boarding facilities.
- The one-of-its-kind initiative is a joint effort between a private firm and the state government. It is expected to come up over a 52-acre plot at Sirakol in South 24 Parganas in the next five years.

Kerala Water Resources minister Mathew Thomas resigns

- Kerala Water Resources Minister Mathew T Thomas, a nominee of the Janata Dal (Secular) in the CPI (M)-led LDF government, submitted his resignation to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on November 26, 2018.
- The move comes after the JD(S), a key partner in the LDF, decided to replace Thomas with Chittur MLA K Krishnankutty.

Defence Minister launches 'Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti'

- The Union Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman on November 27, 2018 formally launched 'Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti' in New Delhi.
- During the event, salient inventions and innovations achieved by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and Ordnance Factories (OFs) that have resulted in successful filing of Intellectual Property Right (IPR) applications were showcased.

Andaman & Nicobar Islands home to 10% of India's fauna species: ZSI

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands are home to tenth of India's fauna species and hosts 1067 endemic faunal species found nowhere else, as per the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) publication titled 'Faunal Diversity of Biogeographic Zones: Islands of India'.

- The publication has come up with database of all faunal species found on the island. It has database of species found in particular category of animals and also highlights most vulnerable among them.

ISRO to launch new imaging satellite 'HysIS'

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will soon launch 'HysIS', the country's first hyperspectral imaging satellite for advanced Earth observation.
- About 30 small satellites of foreign customers will be its co-passengers on the PSLV launcher, numbered C-43.

Health Ministry launches modern Information Platform to monitor public health surveillance

- The Union Health Ministry launched the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) segment of Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) in seven states.
- The path-breaking initiative will provide near-real-time data to policy makers for detecting outbreaks, reducing the morbidity and mortality and lessening disease burden in the populations and better health systems.
- The first one-of-its-kind initiative by India, IHIP uses the latest technologies and digital health initiatives.

SSB to patrol Dudhwa tiger reserve

- Dudhwa Tiger Reserve and Sashastra Seema Bal have joined hands to provide security to Dudhwa forests and its rich wildlife.
- It was agreed that joint long route patrolling comprising SSB, STPF and DTR field staff would be held at regular intervals.

CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurates 7-day long National Tribal Craft Mela 2018

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the 7-day-long National Tribal Crafts Mela-2018 at Schedule Caste & Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) in Odisha's Bhubaneswar on November 24.
- The event is organised under the aegis of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Uttarakhand CM Rawat launches India's first hi-tech State Data Centre

- Chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Monday launched the "country's first hi-tech" State Data Centre (SDC) stating online data repository of all departments would help check leakages of funds besides speeding up delivery and generating employment for local youth.
- Amit Sinha, director ITDA, said the three-tier State Data Centre was developed by Information Technology Development Agency.
- He dubbed the SDC as the first such centre in the country with 100% software based on the Hyper Converged Infrastructure technology.

UGC to set up a consortium for approved journals

- University Grants Commission, UGC has decided to set up a Consortium of Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) which will prepare a fresh list of credible quality journals in the non-science disciplines.
- The commission said the percentage of research articles published in poor quality journals is reported to be high in India which has adversely affected its image. CARE will be headed by the UGC Vice Chairman.

- Members of CARE will prepare lists of quality journals in their respective disciplines within a defined timeframe. These lists will be critically analysed and curated for quality by a special cell at the entrusted institution using defined criteria. Reference List of Quality Journals' will be maintained by the CARE and this will be used for all academic purposes.

PM to inaugurate International conference on maternal, newborn and child health

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate a two-day international conference on Maternal, newborn and child health in New Delhi on December 12, 2018.
- The heads of state from 16 countries and about 1200 participants from across the world are expected to attend the fourth Partners' forum.

WCD Minister inaugurates sports meet for children living in child-care institutions

- The Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi on November 28, 2018 inaugurated a sports meet for children living in child-care institutions at JLN stadium in New Delhi.
- The event was organised as a part of the National Festival for Children of Child Care Institutions, Hausla 2018. It saw participation from the contingents of 18 states with over 600 children.

BPRD to organise 2nd National Conference of Heads of Investigating Agencies

- The 2nd National Conference of Heads of Investigating Agencies will be organised by the Bureau of Police Research and Development in New Delhi on November 29, 2018.
- The two-day Conference will deliberate on various legal aspects, procedures and use of technology in investigation to improve its quality and secure effective prosecution.

Southern Railway to introduce weekend premier train services between Coonoor and Mettupalayam in Udhagamandalam

- The Southern Railway has decided to introduce weekend premier train services between Coonoor and Mettupalayam in Udhagamandalam (Ooty), which is a part of the world-renowned Nilgiri Mountain Railway that has been awarded the Heritage Railway Status by United Nations.
- The premier trains will run from Mettupalayam, on the foothills of the Western Ghats on all Saturdays from December 8, 2018, while the return trip will run on all the Sundays.

Government launches 'Bhasha Sangam' to introduce school students to 22 Indian languages

- The government launched a unique initiative called Bhasha Sangam to introduce school students to 22 Indian languages.
- The initiative, under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, was launched on November 22 and will continue till December 21, 2018.
- Bhasha Sangam is a programme for schools and educational institutions to provide multilingual exposure to students in Indian languages.

Delhi Commuters using Common mobility card will get 10% discount on DTC buses

- Delhi Commuters using common mobility card in DTC buses will be given a 10 percent discount in fares from November 30.
- DTC will provide 10 percent discount in fares on usage of "Delhi Metro Card/Common Mobility Card" for purchasing tickets.

Himachal Pradesh becomes first state to launch Single Emergency Number '112'

- Himachal Pradesh on November 28, 2018 became the first Indian state to launch a single emergency number '112' which will connect to police, fire, health and other helplines through an Emergency Response Centre (ERC) in the state.
- The emergency number was launched by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS).
- For this purpose, state established an ERC in Shimla along with 12 District Command Centres (DCCs) covering the entire state.
- The ERC has been integrated with police (100), fire (101), health (108) and women helpline (1090) services to provide emergency services via single emergency number 112.

India's first indigenous film festival to be hosted in Odisha

- India's first international indigenous film festival will take place in February next year in Odisha.
- An initiative of activist film collective Video Republic, that has been campaigning for indigenous communities in the State, the three-stop event will kick off in Bhubaneswar on February 19 and 20, moving on to Puri from February 21 to 23 to eventually culminate in an interaction with the adivasi communities at Niyamgiri.

IAF, US air force to conduct joint exercise 'Cope India 2019'

- The air forces of the United States and India are scheduled to participate in a 12-day- long joint exercise 'Cope India 2019' at two air force stations in West Bengal in December 2018.
- The exercise will be held from December 3-14 at Air Station Kalaikunda and Air Station Arjan Singh in Panagarh airbase. It showcases efforts and commitment of the two nations to build a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

DAIC, JNU sign MoU to enhance research activities for sustainable development

- Dr Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC) and the Jawaharlal Nehru University on November 30, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to facilitate and enhance research activities and policy formulation aimed at socio-economic transformation and sustainable development.
- The MoU was signed by Prof M Jagadesh Kumar, Vice Chancellor of JNU and Atul Dev Sarmah, Director of DAIC.

NITI Aayog organises dialogue on health system for New India

- The Indian Government's policy think tank, NITI Aayog organised a conference on "Health Systems for A New India: Building Blocks" on November 30, 2018.
- The event is a part of a series of Development Dialogues that NITI Aayog aims to organise to engage experts, thought leaders and government stakeholders across key avenues of long-term social and economic development.

Jharkhand to provide free mobile phones to 28 lakh farmers, says CM

- Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das on November 29, 2018 announced that the government will provide free mobile phones to 28 lakh farmers and a separate electric feeder for them for agriculture purpose by 2019/2021.
- The information was shared by the Chief Minister while speaking at the inaugural function of the two-day Agriculture and Food Summit in Ranchi. The CM said that a separate electric feeder would be set up by May 2019 for farmers for agriculture purpose, providing them six hours of uninterrupted electricity.

Appointments

Person Name	Appointed As	Organisation/Country
S S Deswal	Director General	Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)
P.S. Rajeshwar	Chief	Integrated Defence Staff
Atul Kumar Goel	MD & CEO	UCO Bank
Justice Hemant Gupta	Judge	Supreme Court
Justice R Subhash Reddy	Judge	Supreme Court
Justice M R Shah	Judge	Supreme Court
Justice Ajay Rastogi	Judge	Supreme Court
R Chandranathan	Director General of Police	Meghalaya
Abhay Kumar	Indian Ambassador	Madagascar
Ashok Kumar Gupta	Chairman	Competition Commission of India (CCI)
MS Dhoni	Ambassador	Bharat Matrimony
D V Sadananda Gowda	additional charge	Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizer
Narendra Singh Tomar	Minister	Parliamentary Affairs
Hima Das	India's first ever Youth Ambassador	United Nations Children's Fund-India (UNICEF)
Justice S K Seth	Chief Justice	Madhya Pradesh High Court
Ashish Kundra	Chief Electoral Officer	Mizoram
Ajay Bhushan Pandey	Revenue Secretary	India
Abhijit Bose	Head	Whatsapp India
Sanjay Kumar	Chief Operating Officer	AirAsia India
Sumer Juneja	Head	Softbank Vision Fund
Subramanian Jambunathan	MD & CEO	Shriram Housing Finance
Alia Bhatt	Ambassador	Uber Eats India
Nahid Afrin	first 'Youth Advocate' of the north-eastern region	UNICEF India
Justice Vineet Kothari	Judge	Madras High Court
Vijay Kumar Dev	chief secretary	Delhi
Sunil Arora	Chief Election Commission	India
Ranbir Singh	Chief Electoral Officer	Delhi
Arvind Saxena	Chairman	Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
Anil Manibhai Naik	Chairman	National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)
Seon Seob Kim	Head	Hyundai India

World

Person Name	Appointed As	Organisation/Country
Robyn Denholm	Chairman	Tesla

Days

Day	Observed on	Theme/Info
International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists	2 November	Truth Never Dies
Rosogolla Day	14 November	Celebrated by West Bengal
International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict	6 November	
World Tsunami Awareness Day	5 November	
World Science Day for Peace and Development	10 November	Science, a Human Right
Public Service Broadcasting Day	12 November	
World Pneumonia Day	12 November	Stop Pneumonia: Invest in Child Health
World Diabetes Day	14 November	The Family and Diabetes
International Day for Tolerance	16 November	TOGETHER
2018 World Philosophy Day	15 November	Observed on 3 rd Thursday of November
National Press Day	16 November	Journalistic Ethics and Challenges in Digital Era
World Toilet Day	19 November	toilets and nature
Universal Children's Day	20 November	Children are taking over and turning the world blue
World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims	18 November	Roads have Stories
Africa Industrialization Day	20 November	Promoting Regional Value Chains in Africa: A pathway for accelerating Africa's structural transformation, industrialization and pharmaceutical production
World Television Day	21 November	Lights, Camera, Action on the SDGs: The power of storytelling to create change
International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women	25 November	Orange the World: #HearMeToo
69th Constitution Day	26 November	
National Milk Day	26 November	
14th Formation Day of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	27 November	Early Warning for Disasters
9th Indian Organ Donation Day	27 November	

China launches new high-orbit satellite BeiDou-3

- China successfully launched a high orbit satellite BeiDou-3 to boost BeiDou global satellite navigation system being built to rival United States Global Position System (GPS).
- The satellite was launched from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in the southwestern Sichuan Province.

Japan cabinet approves bill to accept foreign workers

- Japan's Cabinet approved a draft bill to bring more blue-collar foreign workers into the country to address chronic labour shortages.
- The Bill will now be submitted to parliament.
- However, the draft legislation has come under attack from both the opposition and members of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's own party.

Turkey unveils world's largest airport in Istanbul

- The world's largest airport was unveiled by Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan outside Istanbul.
- The new \$11.7 billion will be one of the world's busiest, though it will not be fully operational until January. The name of the new airport will be Istanbul Airport.
- The airport uses mobile applications and artificial intelligence for customers, is energy efficient and boasts of a high-tech security system.

First interstellar object Oumuamua could be alien probe, say Harvard scientists

- The cigar-shaped interstellar object -- originating from a star system not our own -- discovered last year and nicknamed Oumuamua' may actually be an alien probe, states a new study by Harvard scientists.
- Oumuamua, which means "a messenger from afar arriving first" in Hawaiian, looped around the sun on September 9 and made its closest pass by Earth on October 14.
- It was first thought to be an asteroid. But when its trajectory and velocity was measured, that was ruled out and then it was thought to be a comet.

UN Releases Special Diwali Stamp

- The UN Postal System has issued two stamps with diyas in celebration of Diwali as "the quest for the triumph of good over evil".
- The stamps are in the \$1.15 denomination, which is the basic rate for international air mail letters.

World's first AI news anchor unveiled in China

- China's state news agency Xinhua this week introduced the newest members of its newsroom: AI anchors who will report "tirelessly" all day every day, from anywhere in the country.
- Chinese viewers were greeted with a digital version of a regular Xinhua news anchor named Qiu Hao. The anchor, wearing a red tie and pin-striped suit, nods his head in emphasis, blinking and raising his eyebrows slightly.

Palau Becomes First Nation to Ban Chemical Sunscreens

- Palau is the first country to ban “reef-toxic” sunscreens. It passed a law this week banning sunscreens that contain any one of ten chemicals, including oxybenzone and octinoxate, which are the same chemicals targeted in Hawaii’s chemical sunscreen ban earlier this year.
- Palau, which is home to 500 islands and over 21,000 people in the Micronesia region of the Pacific Ocean, is drawing ever greater numbers of tourists, but with this has come environmental degradation.

33rd ASEAN Summit begins in Singapore

- The 33rd edition of the ASEAN Summit began on November 11, 2018 at Suntec Singapore Convention Centre, Singapore. The opening ceremony of the summit will take place on November 13, 2018. Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of Singapore, is the Chairman of this year’s Summit.
- The Summit will continue till November 15, 2018 along with other related summits like East Asia Summit (EAS), Regional Comprehensive Economic Summit (RCEP) and ASEAN plus summits.
- The Summit will see the presence of leaders of partner countries such as Russian President Vladimir Putin, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Indian PM Narendra Modi and Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

UN World Food Programme and Alibaba join hands to achieve zero hunger

- United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Alibaba Group (Alibaba), the world’s largest e-commerce company by transaction value, have entered into a strategic partnership to support efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 a world with zero hunger.
- WFP’s Executive Director, David Beasley, and Alibaba Partner and Chairman of the Alibaba Foundation, Sun Lijun, signed the agreement at Alibaba’s headquarters in Hangzhou, China.
- Under the framework, Alibaba will provide its leading technology and resources to support the digital transformation of WFP’s operations.

World's largest 'human brain' supercomputer with 1 million processors switched on

- The world's largest neuromorphic supercomputer designed and built to work in the same way a human brain does has been fitted with its landmark one-millionth processor core and is being switched on for the first time.
- The newly formed million-processor-core 'Spiking Neural Network Architecture' or 'SpiNNaker' machine is capable of completing more than 200 million actions per second, with each of its chips having 100 million transistors.

Amnesty International strips Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi of 'Ambassador of Conscience' Award

- Amnesty International on November 12, 2018 stripped Myanmar’s de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi of its highest honour, the ‘Ambassador of Conscience’ award, over her indifference to atrocities committed by the Myanmar military against and increasing intolerance of freedom of expression.
- The Amnesty International, an international human rights group, named Suu Kyi as its 2009 Ambassador of Conscience Award recipient when she was still under house arrest for her opposition to Myanmar's oppressive military.

WhatsApp selects 20 teams to curb fake news globally, including India

- Facebook-owned WhatsApp selected 20 research teams worldwide including experts from India and those of Indian origin who will work towards how misinformation spreads and what additional steps it could take to curb fake news.

- Shakuntala Banaji from London School of Economics and Political Science, Anushi Agrawal and Nihal Passanha from Bengaluru-based media and arts collective “Maraa” and Ramnath Bhat from LSE were selected for the paper “WhatsApp Vigilantes? WhatsApp messages and mob violence in India.”

17th AEC Council Meeting held in Singapore

- The 17th ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) Council Meeting was held in Singapore as part of the 33rd ASEAN Summit and Related Summit Meetings.
- Apart from taking stock of regional economic integration efforts during the year, the meeting reiterated ASEAN’s commitment to free and open trade by deepening the integration of its economies and realising the AEC Blueprint 2025.
- The meeting was attended by the ASEAN Economic Ministers and AEC Ministers.
- They signed the ASEAN Agreement on e-Commerce, Concluded the ASEAN Trade in Services Agreement (ATISA) and Finalised the Fourth Protocol to Amend the ASEAN Comprehensive Investment Agreement (ACIA).

Regional meeting of World Customs Organisation held in Jaipur

- Four-day regional meeting of World Customs Organisation (WCO) was held in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
- It was attended by representatives of 33 member countries of Asia.
- The meeting was jointly chaired by WCO Deputy Secretary General, Ricardo Travino and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Chairman, S Ramesh.
- The meeting deliberated upon amended Kyoto protocol, digital customs, e-commerce among other issues.

Setback for Theresa May as Dominic Raab resigns as Brexit Secretary

- British Prime Minister Theresa May suffered a blow on November 15, 2018 after the Brexit Secretary Dominic Raab resigned over a proposed EU withdrawal agreement.
- Raab said he cannot reconcile the terms of the proposed deal.
- Raab, who had been in place since July 2018, resigned soon after the resignation of Shailesh Vara as a junior Northern Ireland Minister over the draft accord.

World Tolerance Summit held in Dubai

- The World Tolerance Summit (WTS) 2018 was inaugurated on November 16, 2018 in Dubai, UAE. The theme of the summit was ‘Prospering from Pluralism: Embracing Diversity through Innovation and Collaboration’.
- The two-summit is the biggest gathering of government leaders, ambassadors, change-makers and key figures from the public and private sectors. Over 2,000 ministers and government leaders from around the world are expected to participate in the event. It is being held in the UAE for the first time.

UNSC condemns killing of UN peacekeepers & national soldiers in DRC

- UN Security Council has condemned the killing of at least 20 soldiers during operations against insurgents in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- In a press statement, the council members expressed condolences to the families of the killed, including seven Malawian and one Tanzanian UN peacekeepers and at least 12 Congo soldiers, and wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

Maldives to rejoin Commonwealth, 2 years after withdrawing

- The Maldives cabinet has approved the proposal to rejoin the Commonwealth, two years after withdrawing from the 53-nation grouping.
- The announcement was made by the nation's newly inaugurated President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih on November 19. President Solih said that the proposal will be sent to the Parliament for ratification.

Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn arrested over financial misconduct

- Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn has been arrested in Tokyo over claims of financial misconduct.
- The company's Chief Executive Hiroto Saikawa said, Ghosn will be sacked from the Japanese firm after a board meeting on November 22.

26th General Conference on Weights and Measures redefines standard definition of Kg

- The 26th meeting of the General Conference on Weights and Measures (CGPM) was held from November 13-16, 2018 at Palais des Congrès, Versailles, France. The CGPM is the highest international body of the world for accurate and precise measurements.
- The 26th CGPM was special and historic, as the members voted for the redefinition of 130-years-old "Le grand K – the SI unit of kg" in terms of the fundamental Planck's constant (h). The new definitions will come into force on May 20, 2019.
- The CGPM comprises 60 countries including India and 42 Associate Members. India was represented by Consumer Affairs Secretary Avinash K Srivastava, National Physical Laboratory (NPL) Director D K Aswal and Head of NPL's Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation TD Senguttuvan.

Australia refuses to sign UN migration pact

- The Australian Government announced on November 21, 2018 that it would not sign the UN Global Compact for Migration saying that the agreement would undermine its existing immigration policies.
- Speaking on the decision, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said that the government believes that the Compact is inconsistent with its well-established policies and not in Australia's interest.

UN environment Chief Erik Solheim resigns amid audit on travel expenses

- UN Environment Chief Erik Solheim resigned from his post on November 20, 2018 following an audit report questioning his huge travel expenses.
- In an official statement, Solheim said that he had received the final audit report of his travel expenses and after deep reflection, he decided to step down. A UN audit had found that Solheim had spent nearly five lakh US dollar on travel.

Saudi, UAE announce USD 500 million in aid to war-torn Yemen

- Saudi Arabia and the UAE, which lead a military coalition against the Huthi rebels in Yemen, on November 20, 2018 announced USD 500 million in aid to the country on the brink of famine.
- Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will each give USD 250 million in response to the food crisis to support more than 10 million people.

US suspends USD 1.66 bn security assistance to Pakistan

- The United States has suspended its 1.66 billion dollar security assistance to Pakistan. The decision has been taken on the directions of President Donald Trump.

- Deputy Assistant Secretary Defense for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asia under the previous Obama administration, David Sedney said that the blocking of military assistance, which began in January this year, is a strong signal of American frustration.

US, South Korea scale down joint military exercise 'Foil Eagle'

- The United States and South Korea have scaled down an annual joint military exercise, Foal Eagle, scheduled for the spring of 2019.
- According to US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis, the move is to facilitate nuclear talks with North Korea.

International Space Station completes 20 years

- The International Space Station (ISS) turned 20 years old on November 20, 2018. The project was kicked by Russian space agency Roscosmos when it launched its Zarya module from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on November 20, 1998.
- The launch was followed by NASA's Unity module. The pair was joined in low-earth orbit, which kick-started a 13-year construction effort of the most ambitious construction project in the history of humanity. The result of the effort was a habitable artificial satellite, which currently serves as a giant orbiting observatory and laboratory.

Nepal's largest exhibition 'ConMac 2018' starts in Bhaktapur

- Nepal's largest exhibition on construction equipment and technology "ConMac 2018" started in Bhaktapur near Kathmandu on November 22, 2018.
- Development is the main agenda of the present government and it is committed to infrastructure development in Nepal and machines and technology are very essential to achieve this goal.
- The Nepal government plans to construct 6,000 to 8,000 KM roads and prepare Detail Project Report (DPR) for 2,800 KM railway lines in the next four years.

UN's atomic watchdog calls on North Korea to re-admit nuclear inspectors

- The head of the UN's atomic watchdog, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has called on North Korea to allow inspectors back into the country to monitor its nuclear program.
- Speaking at a board meeting of the IAEA, Director General Yukiya Amano noted that Pyongyang had in September talked about denuclearization measures including the permanent dismantlement of the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon a reactor where it produces plutonium.

Britain, EU agree on draft text of Brexit

- Britain and the European Union have agreed on a draft text setting out a close post-Brexit relationship.
- However, wrangling with Spain over control of Gibraltar must still be settled before EU leaders meet on November 25 in order to rubber-stamp the pact.

Beijing's Population falls for the first time in 2 Decades

- The population of China's capital, Beijing, declined for the first time in two decades in 2017.
- The number of permanent residents reached 21.707 million in 2017 which is 22,000 fewer than 2016. The number of people in the city's six urban districts has also declined by 3 percent

NASA, SpaceX to launch test flight on January 7, ahead of historic crewed flight

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States is planning to send humans to space for the first time in eight years, in a historic flight through SpaceX Crew Dragon.
- Prior to the historic launch, as a part of the preparation, the space agency will shoot out a test flight on January 7, 2019. The announcement comes as the race between Boeing and SpaceX to launch their first crewed space missions is heating up.

NASA's InSight Mars explorer lands safely on the Red Planet

- NASA's InSight explorer successfully touched down on Mars on November 26, 2018, after an almost seven-month journey through deep space.
- This is the eighth time in human history that NASA has executed a successful landing on the red planet and the first in six years.

Nepal launches Social Security Scheme

- Nepal government launched a Social Security Scheme for formal sector workers of the country. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli unveiled the scheme in Kathmandu.
- The scheme aims to strengthen the system in which the government is accountable to its people. People of all ages and categories would be included in the scheme.

G20 Summit 2018 begins in Argentina

- The 2018 G20 Summit began on November 28, 2018 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Nineteen leaders of the world's biggest economies and a representative of the European Union will be holding a meeting on November 30 as part of the G20 summit.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be representing India at the Summit and is scheduled to meet US President Donald Trump, Chinese President Xi Jinping, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Argentina President Mauricio Macri, Chilean President Sebastian Pinera and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on the sidelines of the summit.
- US President Donald Trump is expected to hold a trilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi and Japanese Premier Shinzo Abe on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit.

A section of stairs from Eiffel Tower sold for 170,000 euros

- A section of stairs from the Eiffel Tower in Paris was sold for almost 170,000 euros, around three times the pre-sale estimate.
- The auctioneers announced that more than two dozen wrought-iron steps from the original spiral structure, from between the second and third floors of the Paris landmark, were sold to a Middle East collector.

EU aims to be first carbon neutral economy by 2050

- The European Union on November 28, 2018 urged government, businesses, citizens and regions to join it in an ambitious plan to cut emissions and make the bloc carbon neutral by 2050.
- The EU climate commissioner Miguel Arias Canete said in a press conference in Brussels that the bloc is kicking off a process to determine how Europe's energy and climate policy will evolve between now and 2050.

South Korea tests space rocket engine

- South Korea conducted a rocket engine test launch, paving the way for the development of its own space launch vehicle.

- A liquid-fuel engine successfully propelled a single-stage rocket from the Naro Space Center on the country's southern coast.

China plans to deliver free WiFi to the world by 2026

- Chinese internet technology firm is planning to launch a constellation of 272 satellites by 2026 with an aim to provide free WiFi service worldwide.
- LinkSure Network, founded in Shanghai in 2013, markets itself as a global innovative mobile internet company specialising in free internet access, content and location-based services on its official website.
- It unveiled its first satellite in the constellation plan on November 27, 2018.
- The satellite, 'LinkSure-1,' will be launched from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in Northwest China's Gansu province next year, and by 2020 there will be 10 satellites in space.
- The constellation will have 272 satellites by 2026.

Kenya hosts inaugural Sustainable Blue Economy conference

- Africa is hosting a historic conference that has to do with environmental protection. The first ever Sustainable Blue Conference starts today in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.
- The three-day conference has high global support with over twenty world leaders in Nairobi for the event. A number of environment friendly civil society organizations are also in attendance.

Congo's Ebola outbreak now second-largest in history: WHO

- The World Health Organization has said that Congo's deadly Ebola outbreak is now the second largest in history, behind the devastating West Africa outbreak that killed thousands a few years ago.
- According to Congo's health ministry, the total death toll has reached 426, among which 379 are confirmed cases and 47 are probable ones.

Sports

Manipur hosts 1st Northeast Olympic Games

- Players of national and international level geared up for the first-ever Northeast Olympic Games in Manipur's host city Imphal.
- Organized by the Manipur Olympic Association under the aegis of Northeast Olympic Association, the championship acted as a platform for the players to showcase and nurture their talent in different sports discipline.
- The game was a first-of-its-kind which saw a competition in 12 different disciplines including Athletics, Archery, Badminton, Boxing, Football, Judo, Karate-Do, Shooting, Table Tennis, Taekwondo, Weightlifting and Wushu.

Lucknow stadium renamed after Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- The newly-built Ekana International Stadium of Lucknow was on November 5, 2018 renamed after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The stadium will now be known as 'Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Cricket Stadium'.

- The stadium was renamed just ahead of the first-ever international cricket match - the T20 International between India and West Indies. The city hosted its first international match at the stadium on November 6, 2018 when India played against West Indies in the second T20 International match.
- Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh announced to rename the upcoming capital Naya Raipur as Atal Nagar.

Uber joins forces with ICC in world first partnership to support ICC Women's World T20

- Cab aggregator Uber and the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a world first partnership to support the first ever standalone ICC Women's World T20 in the West Indies.
- Uber and the ICC aim to leverage one of the world's most popular sports to engage the broader cricketing community in a conversation around the important role sport plays in empowering girls and women around the world, according to a statement here.

Angad Vir Singh Bajwa wins historic skeet gold at Asian Shotgun Championship

- India's Angad Vir Singh Bajwa won the gold medal with a world record score in the men's skeet final at 8th Asian Shotgun Championship in Kuwait.
- With the feat, he became the first Indian skeet shooter to win gold at a continental or world level event.
- Angad shot a perfect 60 out of 60 in the final round to claim top spot ahead of China's Di Jin who shot 58. UAE's Saeed Al Maktoum won bronze with a score of 46.

Munaf Patel retires from all forms of cricket

- 2011 World Cup winning bowler Munaf Patel announced his retirement from all forms of the game on Friday. The 35-year old pacer, who made his international debut in March 2006 against England in Mohali, has played 13 Tests, 70 ODIs and 3 T20Is for India bagging 125 international wickets.
- Born in Ikhar in Gujarat, Munaf represented Mumbai, Maharashtra, Baroda and Gujarat in domestic cricket. In IPL, he has played for Mumbai Indians, Rajasthan Royals and Gujarat Lions.

Wrestler Bajrang Punia achieves World No. 1 rank in 65 Kg category

- Indian wrestler Bajrang Punia recently touched a new high in his career by achieving the number one rank in the world in the 65kg category.
- Bajrang was placed atop the ranking table with 96 points in the United World Wrestling (UWW) list.
- United World Wrestling is the international governing body for the sport of amateur wrestling. Its duties include overseeing wrestling at the Olympics.

Sushil, Swapna dropped from revised TOPS list

- Double Olympic medallist wrestler Sushil Kumar and India's first Asian Games gold medallist heptathlete Swapna Barman were on November 15, 2018 dropped from the latest Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) that was revised keeping in mind the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- Sushil, who won bronze and silver medals respectively in 2008 Beijing and 2012 London Olympics in 66kg freestyle category, crashed out in his first qualification bout at this year's Jakarta Asian Games in the 74kg and the latest result didn't go in his favour.

Alexander Zverev upsets world number one Novak Djokovic to claim ATP World Tour Finals

- Alexander Zverev on November 18, 2018 upset world number one Novak Djokovic in straight sets 6-4, 6-3 to claim the season-ending ATP Finals and ended the year with the biggest victory of his career.

- With the win, the 21-year-old became the youngest champion of the season-ending event since Djokovic claimed the first of his five titles a decade ago and the first from Germany since 1995.

Indian gymnasts win two bronze medals in Acrobatic Gymnastics World Cup

- Indian gymnasts won two bronze medals in the men's and women's group events of the FIG Acrobatic World Cup in Baku.
- Prins Aris and Rejilesh Suribabu finished third after scoring 20.560 in the two-day event to bag the bronze medal at the National Gymnastics Arena.

ICC rejects Pakistan compensation claim against India

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) on November 20, 2018 dismissed a compensation claim by Pakistan over India's refusal to honour an agreement to play bilateral series.
- The ICC said in a statement that following a three-day hearing, the Dispute Panel has dismissed the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB)'s claim against the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

Mary Kom wins record sixth World Championships gold

- Mary Kom scripted history by clinching a record sixth World Championship Gold medal in the light flyweight 48 kilogram category after outclassing Ukraine's Hanna Okhota by an unanimous 5:0 verdict.
- The 35-year-old Mary, a mother of three and a pre-tournament favourite for the gold, rewrote the record books when she eclipsed her joint haul of five golds with Katie Taylor of Ireland. Watch this video to know more.

Mary Kom named best boxer of AIBA Women's World Boxing Championships

- India's M C Mary Kom, who won a historic sixth world title, was adjudged the best pugilist of the 10th World Women's Boxing Championships here.
- The AIBA panel which chose the Indian as the best among the competitors was a richly deserved honour to the 35-year-old Manipuri, whose endurance, perseverance and the never-say-die attitude is unparalleled in history.

Australia beats England by 8 wickets to win the 2018 T20 World Cup final

- Australia are women's World Twenty20 champions again after they romped to an eight-wicket victory over England in the final in Antigua.
- Gardner then combined with captain Meg Lanning to steer Australia to their target with 29 balls to spare.

Australia to host newly renamed ICC T20 World Cup 2020

- After registering their convincing fourth title against formidable England in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's World T20 finals, Australia on Sunday have been officially declared as the host of the newly renamed ICC T20 World Cup.
- Women's T20 World Cup comprising of 10 teams playing 23 matches from February 21 - March 8, followed by the Men's T20 World Cup, involving 16 teams playing 45 matches from October 18 - November 15, will be played in Australia in 2020.

Harmanpreet Kaur named captain of ICC Women's World Twenty20 XI

- India's batting star Harmanpreet Kaur was on November 26, 2018 named the captain of the ICC Women's World Twenty20 XI, which also features Indian opener Smriti Mandhana and leg-spinner Poonam Yadav.
- The Women's World Twenty20 XI was decided upon by an ICC selection panel in Dubai on the basis of the players' performances in the tournament that concluded on November 24 with Australia winning the title.

Netherlands wins FIH Women's Hockey Champions Trophy

- The Netherlands outclassed Australia 5-1 to win its seventh Women's Hockey Champions Trophy at the Wujin Hockey Stadium here on Sunday.
- With the win, the reigning world champion has kept its record intact during the tournament and extended its winning streak to 43 matches.

Croatia win Davis Cup 2018 final by defeating France

- Croatia won the final Davis Cup title of the old system on Sunday. Marin Cilic, the world No 7, was far too good for his French opponents throughout, and overcame Lucas Pouille in straight sets to complete a 3-1 victory.
- It was the Frenchmen, however, whose response may come to define the tie.
- The home-and-away element of the Davis Cup has been greatly reduced by the new model, but not eliminated.

BCCI announces two-year ban for age fraud

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India on November 27, 2018 announced that a cricketer guilty of age fraud will be barred from all its recognised tournaments for a period of two years.
- The cricketing body said in a statement, "The BCCI has a zero-tolerance policy for age fraud in sport and has taken strict action against cricketers found guilty of manipulating their date of birth certificates while registering for BCCI tournaments."

AIFF to launch school-level project with FIFA

- The All India Football Federation (AIFF) will launch a school-level project by March-April next year in association with the game's world governing body FIFA. This was stated by AIFF General Secretary, Kushal Das at the Star Sports India Football Forum 2018 organised by SportzPower in Mumbai today.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs & TRIFED felicitate Mary Kom at Aadi Mahotsav"

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED felicitated sixth time Women's World Boxing Champion Mary Kom at the closing ceremony of Aadi Mahotsav" at Dilli Haat today.
- Ms Kom is the Brand Ambassador for the TRIBES India's Panchatantra range of products handcrafted by tribal master-craftsmen from across the country.

Books

VP Venkaiah Naidu launches 'Yoga And Mindfulness' by Mansi Gulati

- Famous yoga exponent and author, Mansi Gulati launched her book, "Yoga and Mindfulness" yesterday.
- The book was launched by the Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu amidst the presence of Member of Parliament from the Rajya Sabha, Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Member of Parliament from the Lok Sabha Manoj Tewari, at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Conference Hall, Vice President's House.

Former PM Manmohan Singh launches "Fables of Fractured Times"

- Former PM Manmohan Singh launched "Fables of Fractured Times" by former union minister Manish Tewari where former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah was also present.
- The Fables of Fractured Times is a compilation of articles written by Manish Tewari between 2017 and 2018 which have appeared in the columns of leading newspapers.

Index and Reports

India ranked 12 globally in web-borne threats: Kaspersky Lab

- Globally, India ranks 12th when it comes to the dangers associated with surfing the web, according to a new report from Russia-based global cybersecurity firm Kaspersky Lab.
- About a third of Internet users in the country were attacked by web-borne threats between the July-September period of this year, the report said.
- Among other methods, the attackers exploited vulnerabilities in browsers and their plugins (drive-by download). Infection in this type of attack takes place when visiting an infected website, without any intervention from the user and without their knowledge.
- And this is the number one method utilised by cybercriminals.
- "Social engineering" was another form of attack that users in India frequently fell prey to. These attacks require user participation, with the user having to download the malicious file to their computer.
- This happens when the cybercriminal tricks the victim into believing they are downloading a legitimate programme.

The UK India Business Council Launches New Report - 'Beyond the Top 200'

- A new UK India Business Council report, 'Beyond the Top 200', sets out how India's new higher education policy could accelerate India's rise to superpower status by enabling young Indians to receive the world's best higher education in India through greater availability of the top courses provided globally.
- The report launched in the margins of the FICCI Higher Education Summit, advocates for effective international collaboration in Indian Higher Education. On the path to becoming a 21st global superpower, India will need is rightly placing excellence, equal access, and employability at the heart of expanding its Higher Education system.

- As the report highlights, UK Higher Education institutions can, and want, to play an important role in supporting this goal at every level.

Bengaluru India's most-congested city: US study

- Bengaluru is the country's most congested and second slowest city.
- A research paper, 'Mobility and congestion in urban India', published by US-based National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) recently, revealed that Bengaluru is one of the 20 most-congested cities in India.
- It is followed by Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad. When it comes to traffic speed, Kolkata is the slowest city, followed by Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Varanasi.
- The study, conducted by a team of researchers from the University of California, Berkeley and other institutions, used Google Maps and analysed 22 million trips in 154 cities in the country.

Andhra Pradesh tops in employability level among states: India Skills Report 2019

- Andhra Pradesh has emerged on top in terms of employability among the states with the engineering graduates having the highest level of employability, according to India Skills Report-2019.
- Employability level of B.Tech and B.E graduates from the state shot up significantly to 63.11 per cent this year from 42.08 per cent last year, a release here said Thursday.
- MBA and polytechnic graduates' employability increased to 47.18 per cent and 45.90 per cent respectively against 44.90 per cent and 35.85 per cent respectively the previous year.
- The report is a joint initiative of Wheebox, a global talent assessment company, PeopleStrong, a leading HR Tech company and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- Andhra Pradesh was one of the preferred hiring destinations and one of the most preferred states of work by both men and women job-seekers, said the report, supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the Association of Indian Universities.

4 Indian-origin women among Forbes list of top 50 women tech moguls of US 2018

- Four Indian-origin women have been named by Forbes among America's top 50 female technology moguls, a list that includes tech heavyweights IBM CEO Ginni Rometty and Netflix executive Anne Aaron.
- The 2018 Inaugural Top 50 Women In Technology list identifies three generations of forward-thinking technologists leading more than a dozen tech sectors across the globe," Forbes said in its America's Top 50 Women in Tech 2018.

Four Indian-origin women have been named by Forbes among America's top 50 female technology moguls which are:

- Padmasree Warrior, former chief technology officer (CTO) of Cisco
- Komal Mangtani, senior director at app-based cab aggregator Uber
- Neha Narkhede, chief technology officer and co-founder of streaming platform Confluent
- Kamakshi Sivaramakrishnan, CEO and founder of identity-management company Drawbrige

India home to 46.6 million stunted children, a third of world's total: Global Nutrition Report 2018

- According to the Global Nutrition Report 2018, India is facing a major malnutrition crisis as it holds almost a third of world's burden for stunting.

- The findings should be alarming for the policymakers because when India began the National Family Health Survey, its stunting and wasting among children were on a par with Thailand.
- Today, Thailand has all but overcome the problem while we have made slow and uneven progress, even after then President Pranab Mukherjee launched a nationwide mass communication campaign against malnutrition in November 2012, with actor Aamir Khan as its face.
- With 46.6 million children who are stunted, India tops the list of countries followed by Nigeria (13.9 million) and Pakistan (10.7 million), the Global Nutrition Report 2018 said.
- India also accounted for 25.5 million children who are wasted, followed by Nigeria (3.4 million) and Indonesia (3.3 million).

42% of world's coal power stations run at loss, building new renewables would be cheaper by 2030: Report

- Carbon Tracker said that two-fifths of the world's coal power stations, including in India, are running at a loss. It has analysed 6,685 coal power plants worldwide to study its financial condition and to understand its profitability.
- The findings challenge the need for new coal generation and show that it makes economic sense to close plants in line with the 2015 Paris Climate Change Agreement.
- Carbon Tracker finds that 42 per cent of global coal capacity is already unprofitable because of high fuel costs and by 2040 that could reach 72 per cent as existing carbon pricing and air pollution regulations drive up costs.

Awards

Swati Chaturvedi Wins RSF Press Freedom Award for Courage

- Indian journalist Swati Chaturvedi has won the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Press Freedom Award for Courage. Chaturvedi, a freelance journalist and contributor to The Wire, is the author of the book I Am a Troll on the Bharatiya Janata Party's IT cell.
- The award was announced in London on November 8, and the RSF said that Chaturvedi "has been the target of vicious online harassment campaigns, like many other outspoken journalists in India".

Jawahar Lal Sarin to be conferred with France's highest civilian honour

- Jawahar Lal Sarin, president of the governing body of Alliance Francaise here, will be conferred with France's highest civilian honour by French Ambassador to India Alexandre Ziegler at an event on Friday.
- France's highest civilian honour 'Knight of the Legion of Honour' will be bestowed on Sarin in recognition of his outstanding contribution to enhancing Indo-French cultural cooperation and promoting the French language, a French Embassy statement said.

Union Environment Minister launches Global Cooling Prize

- The Global Cooling Innovation Summit was inaugurated by Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan on November 12, 2018 in New Delhi.
- While speaking at the inaugural event, the Union Minister announced the launch of the Global Cooling Prize, an international competition to incentivise the development of a residential cooling

technology that will have five times less climate impact in comparison to the standard Room Air Conditioning (RAC) units sold currently.

Ladakh's LAMO Centre wins UNESCO Asia-Pacific Award, 2 Mumbai projects get Honourable Mention

- The LAMO Centre of Ladakh won the 2018 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation on November 9, 2018. This aristocratic house was restored from a state of partial ruin.
- The centre won the 'Award of Distinction' for its systematic restoration project that used local building materials and indigenous construction techniques while skilfully introducing modern amenities to assure its ongoing use.
- Apart from Ladakh's centre, two Mumbai projects fetched Honourable Mention under the 2018 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards.

Veteran journalist N Ram to receive Raja Ram Mohan Roy Award

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will inaugurate National Press Day celebrations in New Delhi on November 16, 2018.
- The winners of National Awards for Excellence in Journalism will be honoured on the occasion of the Day.
- Eminent journalist and Chairman of the Hindu Publishing Group, N Ram was selected under prestigious award category of Raja Ram Mohan Roy award.

Nandita Das to receive FIAPF Award

- Filmmaker Nandita Das will be honoured with the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF) Award at the 12th Asia Pacific Screen Awards (APSA) in Brisbane on November 29, 2018.
- Das will be presented the award in recognition of her achievement in film in the Asia Pacific region.

India's Wildlife Crime Control Bureau wins UN Environment award

- The United Nations Environment has awarded India's Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) with the Asia Environment Enforcement Award, 2018 for the excellent work done by the Bureau in combating transboundary environmental crime.
- The Asia Environmental Enforcement Award recognises the excellent work done by government officials and teams from the bureau who are diligently involved in combating transboundary environmental crime.

Wipro Chairman Azim Premji conferred highest French civilian honour

- Indian business tycoon and philanthropist Azim Premji was bestowed with the highest French civilian distinction Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour) in Bengaluru on November 28, 2018.
- Premji, who is the chairman of Wipro, received the honour from Alexandre Ziegler, the Ambassador of France to India.

International Film Festival of India 2018

The 49th International Film Festival of India was held from 20 to 28 November 2018 in Goa.

There were total 212 films showcased in the International Film Festival of India 2018.

The country in focus for International Film Festival of India 2018 is **Israel**. While Israel was the focus country, **Jharkhand** was the focus state this year.

Another new section at IFFI this year was the screening of six Indian sports biopics as an extension of the **Khelo India initiative**.

Two movies, **Sholay** and **Hichki**, were also screened at this year's IFFI as part of a special package for visually impaired persons.

The closing ceremony was held at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Indoor Stadium in Taleigaon, Goa.

Opening Film of IFFI 2018: The Aspern Paper

Closing Film of IFFI 2018: Sealed Lips

Awards in International Film Festival of India 2018

- Best Film: **Golden Peacock Award: Donbass by Sergei Loznitsa**
- Best Director: **Lijo Jose Pellissery for Ee.Ma.Yau**
- Best Debut Film of a Director: **Alberto Monteras II for Respeto**
- IFFI Best Actor Award (Male): Silver Peacock Award: **Chemban Vinod Jose for Ee.Ma.Yau**
- IFFI Best Actor Award (Female): Silver Peacock Award: **Anastasiia Pustovit for When the Trees Fall**
- ICFT UNESCO Gandhi Medal: **Praveen Morchhale for Walking With the Wind**
- Special Jury Award: **Milko Lazarov for AGA**

Special Awards in International Film Festival of India 2018

- Lifetime Achievement Award: **Dan Wolman**
- Indian Film Personality of the Year: **Salim Khan**

Obituaries

BJP candidate Devisingh Patel passes away

- BJP candidate and Former Minister, Devisingh Patel died of a heart attack. He was 66 and is survived by wife and two sons.
- He contested from the Rajpur Assembly seat in Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh
- Patel served as a minister of state in the Cabinet of former chief minister Uma Bharti.

Union Minister Ananth Kumar passes away

- Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Ananth Kumar passed away on November 12, 2018 at a private hospital in Bengaluru. He was 59. He is survived by his wife and 2 daughters.
- He was diagnosed of lung cancer just three months ago and had returned to Bengaluru recently after undergoing treatment in the United States and Britain.
- He was the youngest minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Cabinet during 1999-2004 and had held Civil Aviation; Tourism, Sports, Youth Affairs and Culture; Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation portfolios.

T N Srinivasan, who shook traditional economic thinking, is no more

- T N Srinivasan, or TN as he was popularly called, provided an intellectual framework along with Jagdish Bhagwati and Padma Desai for economic reforms that India undertook in 1991 when the balance of payments crisis hit it hard.
- A Padma Bhushan awardee, he through his papers showed that the 1966 rupee devaluation had narrowed the trade deficit.

Veteran sports journalist Roshan Lal Sethi passes away

- Veteran sports journalist Roshan Lal Sethi passed away on November 11, 2018 after a prolonged illness. He was 81. He is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters.
- Sethi started his sports journalism career in 1964 with 'Motherland' newspaper and remained associated with it till 1975 as sports editor.

Marvel Comics legend Stan Lee dies at 95

- Stan Lee, person behind Spider-Man, Iron Man, the Hulk and a convoy of other Marvel Comics superheroes that became mythic figures in pop culture, died on November 12, 2018. He was 95.
- As a writer and editor, Lee was the main person behind the expansion of Marvel into a comic book in the 1960s.
- In collaboration with artists such as Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, he created superheroes who would enthrall generations of young readers.

Padma Shri awardee saint Narayan Das Maharaj passes away

- Padma Shri awardee and revered saint Narayan Das Maharaj of Triveni dham near Jaipur passed away on November 17, 2018.
- The nonagenarian breathed his last at the ashram. His funeral took place on November 18.

Hero of 1971 Indo-Pak War, Brigadier Kuldip Singh Chandpuri passes away

- Brigadier Kuldip Singh Chandpuri (retd), who is known as the hero of the historic 1971 battle of Longewala, died on November 17, 2018 in a private hospital in Mohali in Punjab. He was 78.
- Brig Chandpuri was a Maha Vir Chakra awardee. He had fought in the battle of Longewala (1971), one of the first major engagements in the western sector during the Indo-Pak war of 1971.

Noted Indian classical musician Ustad Imrat Khan passes away

- Indian classical music stalwart Ustad Imrat Khan, who dedicated his life to propagating the Sitar and the surbahar worldwide, passed in the United States on November 22, 2018 after a brief illness. He was 83.
- Imrat Khan famously turned down the Padma Shri last year saying the recognition had come too late and diminished his achievements.

Former railway minister and Congress leader C K Jaffer Sharief dies at 85

- Former Union railway minister C K Jaffer Sharief passed away this morning at a hospital in Bengaluru, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president Dinesh Gundu Rao said.
- He was admitted to a private hospital here a few days ago after he collapsed while getting into his car for Friday namaz.

Former Union Minister Ambareesh passes away

- Kannada actor and politician Ambareesh passed away on November 24, 2018 due to cardiac arrest, sources said. He was 66.
- A former Union minister, Ambareesh was rushed to a private hospital at around 9 pm after he complained of breathing problems and died shortly thereafter.

IndiGo chairman Devadas Mallya passes away

- InterGlobe Aviation, which operates the country's largest airline IndiGo, Sunday said its Chairman Devadas Mallya Mangalore passed away in the morning.
- He was also a Non-Executive Independent Director.