



Current Affairs - December 2018

Month Type



- ▶ [143 Current Affairs were found in Period - December 21 - 31, 2018 for Type - All](#)

Appointments

- ▶ Andry Rajoelina won presidential elections of Madagascar (East Africa).
- ▶ B V P Rao elected as President of Archery Association of India(AAI).
- ▶ C A Kuttappa appointed as India's chief boxing coach.
- ▶ Government appointed Sudhir Bhargava as New Chief Information Commissioner (CIC), along with four new information commissioners - Yashwardhan Kumar Sinha, Vanaja N Sarna, Neeraj Kumar Gupta and Suresh Chandra.
- ▶ Misc. Appointments (December 2018) -
 1. National Healthcare Foundation NATHEALTH appointed Siddhartha Bhattacharya as Secretary-General.
 2. Yes Bank appointed former IRDAI chief T.S. Vijayan as an additional director (Independent).
 3. Indian-origin Shamila Batohi appointed as South Africa's first female chief prosecutor.
 4. Heather Nauert - New US Ambassador to United Nations.
 5. Mark Milley - Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff of USA (senior most military officer in USA and principal military advisor to President).
 6. Government appointed Lalit Kumar as new government nominee on private sector ICICI Bank Board.
 7. Bharat Bhushan Vyas - Member in Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
 8. Anil Srivastava - Re-designated as Principal Adviser in NITI Aayog.
 9. Ashok Kumar Singh - Appointed as Secretary in National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).
 10. Ashley Giles appointed as managing director of England's cricket team.
 11. Justice Tarun Agarwala appointed as Securities Appellate Tribunal presiding officer.
 12. T.C. Barupal appointed new Ambassador of India to Republic of Guinea (West Africa).
 13. Andreas Goss - Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Thyssenkrupp Tata Steel B.V., proposed joint venture (JV) between Tata Steel and Thyssenkrupp (Germany based industrial engineering and steel production Firm).
 14. Madhavi Divan Appointed as ASG (Additional Solicitor General) in Supreme Court.
 1. Solicitor General of India is subordinate to Attorney General of India. He is 2nd law officer of the country and assists Attorney General. Solicitor General is assisted by 4 Additional Solicitors Generals.
 2. Current solicitor general of India is Tushar Mehta.
 3. Current Attorney General of India is K. K. Venugopal.
 15. Ashok Kumar appointed as Ambassador of India to Djibouti (East Africa).
 16. M Nageswara Rao - Appointed as Additional Director in CBI.
 17. Mohinder Pratap Singh appointed as Ambassador of India to Mongolia.
 18. Infosys appointed Nilanjan Roy as its chief financial officer.
 19. Sangeeta Verma appointed as a member of Competition Commission of India (CCI). Current chairperson of CCI is Ashok Kumar Gupta.
 20. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) Secretary General Rajeev Mehta elected as President of South Asian Fencing Federation (SAFF).
 21. Rajeev Sachdeva appointed as Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations) (DCIDS).

22. FedEx Express (U.S. multinational courier delivery giant) named Indian-American Rajesh Subramaniam as President & CEO.
23. Y.K. Sailas Thangal appointed as New Indian ambassador to Liberia.
24. Ambika Prasad Panda appointed as Chairman and Managing Director of South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL).
25. Riva Ganguly Das appointed as India's next High Commissioner to Bangladesh.
26. Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Ltd appointed Bijay Kumar as its deputy managing director.
27. Rahul Chhabra appointed as next Ambassador of India to Somalia.
6. ▶ P.V Bharathi is appointed as managing director and chief executive officer of PSB Corporation Bank.
7. ▶ Patrick Shanahan appointed as acting Defence Secretary of USA, replacing Jim Mattis who resigned recently.
8. ▶ Sheikh Hasina won her 3rd consecutive term and fourth overall, as Prime Minister of Bangladesh.
9. ▶ WV Raman appointed as coach of the Indian women's cricket team.

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Awards

1. ▶ Divya Patidar Joshi from Madhya Pradesh won Mrs. India 2018 title.
2. ▶ Former PM Manmohan Singh received South Indian Education Society (SIES) Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati National Eminence Award as part of Kanchi Mahaswami festival.
3. ▶ Indian Women Cricketer Smriti Mandhana won Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year 2018, also adjudged as ICC Women's ODI Player of the Year. Noted Awardees are -
 1. Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award for ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year - Smriti Mandhana (India)
 2. ICC Women's ODI Player of Year - Smriti Mandhana (India)
 3. ICC Women's T20I Player of the Year - Alyssa Healy (Australia)
 4. ICC Women's Emerging Player of the Year - Sophie Ecclestone (England)
4. ▶ Industrial Awards (December 2018)
 1. *Outstanding Case Writer* award presented to ICAFI Business School by UK- Based *The Case Centre*.
 2. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has been conferred the Skoch Award for National Significance, for its critical role in installing about 73 GW renewable energy capacity in country. India ranks 4 in in wind energy capacity and 5th in solar & total renewable energy.
 1. Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu has been conferred Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award at 55th Skoch Summit in New Delhi.
 2. Chief Minister of West Bengal has been awarded the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award for 2017.
 3. IIT Kharagpur won DSCI Excellence Award 2018 by Data Security Council of India (DSCI), for its contributions in Cyber Security education.
 4. Sundaram Finance MD T T Srinivasaraghavan presented the lifetime achievement award at Trinity Arts Festival in Chennai.
 5. IIT Mandi Professor Rajanish Giri has been given Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA) 2018 for his proposed innovative idea on Zika virus Capsid Folding and inhibitor discovery.
 6. Tata Steel declared as winner of Prime Minister's Trophy for 'Best Performing Integrated Steel Plant' for 2016-17, as 4th consecutive year for Tata Steel being honored with this award.
 7. Jharkhand selected for "Krishi Karman" award in rice category from Ministry of Agriculture. Award to be given away in February next year carries a cash prize of Rs 2 crores.
 8. Energy efficient pumps maker CRI pumps won National Energy Conservation Award 2018 in pumps category for fourth time. While, Indian Railways won 17 awards, as highest number of awards bagged by a single organisation.
 9. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation awarded Best Capital City in Solid Waste Management in Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings.
5. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Government conferred its annual Tansen Samman upon eminent Sitar Player Manju Mehta.
6. ▶ Manipur CM N Biren Singh has been conferred 'Champions of Change' award by Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, for his good governance practices.
7. ▶ Mohammed Rafi Awards instituted by NGO Spandan Arts bestowed upon late music composer Laxmikant Shantaram Kudalkar and playback singer Usha Timothy.

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Books

1. ▶ Book *A Rural Manifesto – Realising India's Future through her Villages*, authored by Varun Gandhi has been released.
2. ▶ Book *Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Came From* written by Tony Joseph has been released. It talks about migration of First Indians also known as 'Aryans' who arrived here 65000 years ago.
3. ▶ Book 'Prince, Patron and Patriarch Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala', co-authored by Maharaja's grandson Sukhjit Singh, and Cynthia Frederick, has been released.

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Committees

1. ▶ A single-member DS Hooda panel, set up by Defence Ministry and National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) has recommended creation of new specialised units for information warfare in areas where counter-insurgency operations are being conducted. Mr Hooda oversaw surgical strikes conducted across Line of Control (LoC) in 2016.
2. ▶ Government will soon appoint a committee to oversee the implementation of recommendations of the Doubling Farmers' Income (DFI) committee headed by Ashok Dalwai.
 1. DFI Committee was formed in 2016, headed by Ashok Dalwai, to suggest ways to reform agricultural ecosystem, so that farmers' income can be doubled by 2022.
3. ▶ Logistics Development Committee under Chairmanship of Bibek Debroy (Chairman of Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister) submitted its report about key challenges in logistics development and associated commerce and suggest policy reforms for ease of doing trade in India. Reform agenda comprises of a number of specific policy actions covering entire logistics value chain.
4. ▶ Ministry of Women and Child Development constituted a committee under Vinod K. Paul, for deciding parameters and operational modalities for Conditional Cash Transfer to be carried out in few blocks of two districts each in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.
5. ▶ RBI has set up an expert committee headed by its former governor Bimal Jalan, to suggest how the central bank should handle its reserves and whether it can transfer its surplus to the government. Former RBI deputy governor Rakesh Mohan is committee's vice chairman.

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Days

1. ▶ Dec 22 - National Mathematics Day in India, marking birth anniversary of Noted Indian Mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan. It is observed Since 2011.
 1. Sh. Ramanujan was born in 1887. He compiled nearly 3,900 results, mostly identities and equations, on his own without any assistance.
 2. Number 1729 is famously known as the Hardy-Ramanujan number.
2. ▶ Dec 23 - National Farmers' Day (Kisan Diwas) in India. It honours former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, who did substantial work for upliftment of farmers.
 1. On This Occasion, Jharkhand Govt. announced INR 2250 crores scheme called *Mukhya Mantri Krishi Yojana*, to help around 22.76 lakh medium and marginal farmers to double their income by 2022.
3. ▶ Dec 24 - National Consumer Day in India, with 2018 theme *Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints*.
 1. On this day in 1986, Consumer Protection Act 1986 received assent of the president.
4. ▶ Dec 25 - Birth Anniversary of Former PM and Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It is observed as Good Governance Day in India, since 2014.
 1. Sadaiv Atal, Samadhi of Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee was dedicated to Nation in New Delhi.
 2. PM Narendra Modi released a commemorative coin worth Rs 100 in honour of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The years 1924 and 2018 are inscribed below Vajpayee's portrait to mark year of his birth and death respectively.
5. ▶ Winter solstice 2018 took place on December 21, as time of the year when one of the Earth's poles has its maximum tilt away from the Sun. Winter Solstice happens twice yearly, once in each hemisphere. It marks shortest day of the year in the northern hemisphere.

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Defence

1. ▶ India Russia Joint Airforce Exercise Avaiandra held in Jodhpur (Rajasthan), as 2nd edition of this exercise.
2. ▶ Indian Coast Guards deployed two new hovercrafts to enhance its surveillance capabilities and to protect against any filtration bids from Pakistan Side in contentious area around Sir Creek in Gujarat. Sir Creek (Kutch district) is a disputed area between India and Pakistan.
3. ▶ Indian Navy commissioned naval hospital ship INHS Sandhani at Naval station Karanja in Raigad district of Maharashtra.
4. ▶ Indo China Joint Military Exercise Hand-in-Hand held at Chengdu (China), as 7th edition of this exercise.

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Economy

1. ▶ 31st GST Council Meeting held in New Delhi. Key Highlights are
 1. Approved Creation of a Centralised Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling (AAAR) to conflicting decisions by several State Appellate Advance Ruling Authorities on the same issue.
 2. GST rates on 23 goods and services have been reduced.
 3. 7 Goods and 1 Service went out of 28% tax slab. Among Goods, Notable was *Parts and accessories for carriages for disabled persons*, on which GST was reduced from 28 % to 5 %. Among Services, GST rate on cinema tickets above INR 100 reduced from 28% to 18% and on cinema tickets upto 100 from 18% to 12%.
 4. Services supplied by banks to Basic Saving Bank Deposit (BSBD) account holders under Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) shall be exempted.
2. ▶ According to research firm CRISIL, compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of security-service small and medium enterprises(SMEs) would be at 18-20% over next 2 years.
3. ▶ As per Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18 -
 1. Top 5 Most Profitable PSUs - Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC, NTPC Coal India and Power Grid Corporation.
 2. Top 10 profitable CPSEs accounted for 61.83 % of total profit earned by all 184 profitable CPSEs.
 3. BSNL, Air India and MTNL incurred highest losses for 2nd consecutive year, with 52.15 % of total loss incurred by CPSEs in 2017-18.
 4. There were 339 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) in 2017-18, out of which 257 was in operation. Remaining 82 of CPSEs are under construction.
4. ▶ As per RBI Data, Banks swas a significant improvement in recovery of stressed assets in FY 2018, helped by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and amendments in Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interests (SARFAESI) Act. In FY 2018, banks recovered INR 40400 crore worth of bad loans as against INR 38500 crores recovered in FY17.
 1. Also, As per RBIs *Trends & Progress of Banking in 2017-18* report, system-wide Gross Non-Performing Assets (NPA) of banks rose to 11.2 % or at Rs 10.39 trillion in FY18 from 9.3 % a year ago.
 2. Share of public sector banks stood at 8.95 trillion (14.6 %), where as Private sector banks' NPA ratio is much lower at 4.7 %.
5. ▶ Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for MIG Scheme has been extended by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs by another 12 months i.e..till 31-03-2020.
 1. CLSS for MIG scheme, launched originally for 12 months till 31-12-2017, covered Beneficiaries of MIG seeking housing loans for construction of houses from Banks, Housing Finance Companies etc.
 2. Dwelling unit carpet area was revised to 'upto 120 Sq.m' and upto '150 Sq.m' for MIG I and MIG II respectively in November 2017 and further enhanced to 'upto 160 Sq.m' and 'upto 200 Sq.m' for MIG I and MIG II respectively in June 2018.
6. ▶ ESAF small finance bank received RBI approval to operate as a scheduled bank, making it 5th scheduled bank from Kerala.
7. ▶ Govt. approved additional assistance from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) of 1146 crores to Tamil Nadu, which was affected by cyclone 'Gaja' recently. The deciding High Level Committee (HLC) was chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh.
8. ▶ HDFC Group overtook Tata Group to become India's largest business house in terms of market value. Combined market capitalisation of five listed companies from HDFC Group stood at 10.4 lakh crores, as per Bloomberg data. This is higher than 10.38 lakh crore market value of 25 listed companies of Tata Group.
9. ▶ India and Japan signed agreement for official development assistance loan for Yen 105 billion (INR 6666 crores approx) for 3 Projects -

1. Chennai Metro Project (Phase 2) (I) for JPY 75 billion
 2. Program for Japan-India Cooperative Actions towards Sustainable Development Goals in India for JPY 15 billion
 3. Project for Dairy Development for JPY 15 billion
10. ▶ Indian GDP Growth Forecasts (December 2018) -
1. Crisil has cut India's growth forecast for current fiscal (2018-19), by 10 basis points to 7.4 %.
 2. Fitch Ratings, in its report- Global Economic Outlook, slashed India's GDP growth forecast to 7.2 % for current fiscal, lower than RBI's projection of 7.4%.
 3. Asian Development Bank (ADB) retained India's growth forecast at 7.3% for current fiscal (2018-19) and 7.6% in following financial year (2019-20).
 4. ICICI Bank projected Indian GDP to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19 and 7.4 % in FY 2019-20.
11. ▶ India's fiscal deficit in first eight months of FY2018-19 rose to Rs 7.17 lakh crore, being 115% of budgeted target for current FY, breaching target of Rs 6.24 lakh crore set by government - Fiscal Deficit is difference between total revenue and total expenditure of the government. It gives indication about total borrowings required.
12. ▶ Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) of Public sector banks gone up from 46.04 on March 2015 to 66.85% in September 2018, reflecting improvement in their financial health. Provision coverage ratio (PCR) gives an indication of the provision made against bad loans from the profit generated. Higher the PCR, lower is unexposed part of bad debts.
13. ▶ Punjab National Bank (PNB) in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh government launched a special card called PNB Rupay card, for Kumbh Mela 2019, aimed at convenient and hassle-free transactions for over 12 crore devotees.
14. ▶ RBI approved Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to use a INR 1000-crore corpus for funding microlenders, kept by SIDBI for some other purposes. SIDBI recently sought RBI's approval for using it for microfinance sector.
15. ▶ RBI decided to have a rule-based dynamic limit for outstanding stock of External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) at 6.5% of GDP at current market prices.
16. ▶ RBI extended relaxation offered to banks for offering liquidity support to non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) until March 31st 2019.
1. To facilitate banks to lend to NBFCs / Housing Finance Corporations (HFCs), RBI allowed banks to use government securities equivalent to their outstanding credit for non-bank lenders(NBFC and HFC), in addition to outstanding credit they had, to comply with requirements of liquidity coverage index (LCR).
 2. Highly liquid assets that banks and financial institutions hold to meet their short-term obligations is known as LCR.
17. ▶ RBI launched a 'Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals', to capture payment habits of individuals in six cities Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru and Guwahati. Sigma Research & Consulting Pvt Ltd has been engaged to conduct fieldwork of survey.
18. ▶ RBI shortlisted 6 major IT firms to set up a wide-based digital Public Credit Registry (PCR) for capturing details of all borrowers and wilful defaulters. Shortlisted Firms are TCS, Wipro, IBM India, Capgemini Technology Services India, Dun & Bradstreet Information Services India, and Mindtree Ltd.
1. PCR is a digital registry of authenticated granular credit information and will work as a financial information infrastructure providing access to various stakeholders and enrich existing credit information ecosystem.
 2. It would be mandatory for reporting for all material events for each loan to Public Credit Registry.
19. ▶ Russia successfully tested a new hypersonic missile dubbed "Avangard," with speeds of more than 30,000 kilometres per hour. It can fly at 20 times speed of sound and could manoeuvre up and down, to breach defence systems.

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International

1. ▶ According global capital markets data provider Dealogic, India is now getting more FDI than China for first time in two decades. In 2018, India saw more than \$38 billion of inbound deals compared with China's \$32 billion.
2. ▶ American Space Exploration Firm SpaceX launched U.S. Air Force's newest 'GPS III' satellite, to replace aging GPS 2R spacecraft launched in 1997. The solar-powered spacecraft, dubbed "Vespucci," is company's first official "National Security Space" mission. Vespucci's nickname honours Italian cartographer and explorer Amerigo Vespucci, after whom North and South America were named.
3. ▶ Central Asian Nation Turkmenistan launched its first messaging app BizBarde. ex-Soviet Nation Turkmenistan has blocked Western social services including Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp.

4. ▶ China launched 6 Yunhai-2 atmospheric environment research satellites and a test communication satellite of Hongyan constellation into orbit. Yunhai-2 satellites will study environment and first test satellite of Hongyan constellation will be used to verify function of mobile communications in low earth orbit (LEO).
5. ▶ China launched its first communication satellite to offer broadband internet services to users worldwide, as CASIC's (China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation) first satellite under Hongyun project. It aims to rival companies which have similar plans for providing Internet services worldwide.
 1. Hongyun Project began in September 2016. Under this, China plans to give broadband internet connectivity to users globally by building a space-based communications network.
 2. CASIC will be placing than 150 Hongyun satellites on orbits about 1,000 km above ground around 2023.
 3. OneWeb, a USA Firm, will launch 648 low-Earth orbit microsattellites by end of 2019 to provide broadband services.
6. ▶ China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) started offering global navigation services, to rival America's Global Positioning System (GPS). Pakistan became first foreign nation to use BeiDou system.
 1. BeiDou is 4th global navigation system after US's GPS, Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.
 2. India's Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) (named NAVIC) is a regional satellite navigation system that provides accurate real-time positioning services covering region extending 1500 km around India. Plans are to expand NavIC system by increasing number of satellites from 7 to 11.
7. ▶ Government of Burundi (East Africa) declared Gitega as country's new political capital, replacing Bujumbura, that will from now on serve as economic capital of the country.
8. ▶ India extended ban on import of milk products from China for 4 months, upto 23rd April 2019. Ban was imposed due to concerns about presence of melamine in some of milk consignments from China. Melamine is toxic non-edible chemical used for making plastics and fertilisers.
 1. India is largest producer and consumer of milk.
9. ▶ India-China Film Festival held at Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi, to deepen cultural understanding between two countries.
10. ▶ Indian Short film Finding Beauty in Garbage won best short documentary award at Asia South East Short Film Festival recently held at Phnom Penh in Cambodia. Its based on issues surrounding mountains of garbage in Dibrugarh town of Assam.
11. ▶ Indian Stock market overtook Germany to become world's seventh largest stock market.
12. ▶ India's national accreditation body National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) secured equivalence for its accreditation programme for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) Certification Bodies in Asia-Pacific region, by signing Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) of Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC).
 1. Now, Any industry carrying ISO 45001 certificate with NABCB logo will be recognized in Asia Pacific region. It will benefit Indian Industry as it is exporting products to various countries in Asia Pacific region.
 2. Now, NABCB can facilitate export of Indian goods into the world market by attesting that these are certified as per international standards by competent certifying bodies.
 3. NABCB is 3rd accreditation body in Asia Pacific Region to become internationally equivalent in the region, after accreditation bodies of Hong Kong and Mexico.
 4. MLA with PAC would now facilitate signing MLA with International Accreditation Forum (IAF) to secure full international equivalence.
13. ▶ Italy's Mount Etna volcano erupted with triggering over 130 earthquakes of up to 4.3 in magnitude.
 1. Mount Etna is Europe's highest and most active volcano outside Caucasus. It lies above convergent plate margin between African Plate and Eurasian Plate.
14. ▶ Japan announced to withdraw from International Whaling Commission (IWC) and resume commercial whaling in its territorial waters next year, after 30 years.
15. ▶ Nepal imposed a monthly limit on the amount of Indian currency its citizen can spend in India. Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) stated that a Nepali citizen would be unable to spend more than INR 1 lakh per month while paying for goods and services in India.
 1. Recently, Nepal banned Indian currency above Rs 100 (Including New Indian notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations).
16. ▶ Nevada became first US state with a majority female legislature, with Women holding 32 of 63 seats in state's legislature.
17. ▶ New Zealand government announced phasing out single-use plastic shopping bags from July 2019, applicable for plastic up to 70 microns in thickness.
18. ▶ Pakistan cabinet approved issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated 'Panda Bonds' to raise loans from China's capital markets, as country moved a step forward to give Chinese currency status at par with US dollar.

19. ▶ South East Asian Nation Indonesia hit by giant Tsunami waves, causing large scale losses.
 1. Tsunami waves are different from normal sea waves as Normal waves are generated due to wind and gravitational pull of Moon / Sun.
 2. Tsunami is generated by an abrupt movement on the ocean floor due to triggering points like Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, underwater explosions, landslides, glacier calving or meteorite impacts.
 3. Tsunami which Indonesia witnessed on 22nd December was due to collapse in west-southwest flank of Anak Krakatau volcano.
20. ▶ Thailand became first Southeast Asian nation to legalise use of marijuana and kratom for medical use and research.
 1. Also, Israel's parliament (Knesset) approved exporting of medical marijuana, making Israel 3rd country after Netherlands and Canada, to take its medical cannabis global.
21. ▶ UN General Assembly adopted two Russian Resolutions on International Information Security (IIS), aimed at achieving inclusive and transparent UN negotiations process on security in use of information and communication technologies. Resolutions are *Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security* and *Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes*.
22. ▶ US Central Bank Federal Reserve has raised key interest rates to a range of 2.25 to 2.5 %, as 4th such raise this year, reaching highest point since 2008. It would result in increased borrowing costs for individuals and businesses.
23. ▶ US regulator Federation of Aviation Administration (FAA) retained highest aviation safety ranking for India, at 'Category 1', based on an audit of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
24. ▶ United Arab Emirates resumed its diplomatic services at its embassy in Syria, after six years of suspension, amid syrian civil war.
25. ▶ Uzbekistan named 2019 as *Year of Active Investment and Social Development*, after proposed investments from India to boost its economy.

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Meetings

1. ▶ 42nd Indian Social Science Congress held at KIIT University campus in Bhubaneswar (Odisha), with theme *Human Future in Digital Era*.
2. ▶ National Children's Science Congress 2018 held at SOA (Deemed to be university) in Bhubaneswar (Odisha), as 26th edition of National Science Congress. Theme of 26th National Children's Science Congress is *Science, Technology and Innovation for a Clean, Green and Healthy Nation*.

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National

1. ▶ A new generation Mainline Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) with underslung equipments and some advanced features from Train 18 is launched by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai. It is capable of running at around 130 kilometres an hour.
2. ▶ 55th SKOCH Summit held in Constitution Club of India (New Delhi), hosted by socio-economic issues think tank *SKOCH group*. Various Awardees in this year's SKOCH Summit -
 1. Skoch Golden Jubilee Challenger Award - Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu
 2. Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award - Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal won 31 SKOCH awards for its performance in different fields)
 3. Skoch IT minister of the Year - Nara Lokesh
 4. Skoch Governance Person of the Year - K T Rama Rao
3. ▶ NITI Aayog released Baseline Report of the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index*, stating Indian progress towards 2030 SDG targets.
 1. *SDG India Index* is developed in collaboration with Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Global Green Growth Institute and United Nations.
 2. SDG India Index tracks progress of all States / UTs on 62 Priority Indicators selected by NITI Aayog, guided by MoSPI's National Indicator Framework comprising 306 indicators. *Index* spans 13 out of 17 SDGs. Progress on SDGs 12, 13 & 14 could not be measured as relevant State/UT level data were not available and SDG 17 was left out as it focuses on international partnerships.
 3. Classification Criteria based on *SDG India Index* Score is as -

1. Aspirant (0-49) - Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh
 2. Performer (50-64) - Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Delhi and Lakshadweep
 3. Front Runner (65-99) - Himachal Pradesh (Top State), Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh (Top UT) and Puducherry
 4. Achiever (100) - *Not Available*
4. ▶ A postal stamp dedicated to Nabin Chandra Das, inventor of Rosogolla launched during Bagbazar-O-Rosogolla Utsob in West Bengal, marking 150th year of its invention.
 1. Tussle between Bengal and Odisha over originship of Rosogolla started in 2015. GI authorities ruled in the favour of West Bengal. Odisha has now applied to get GI tag for a variant of Rosogolla, the Odishara Rosogolla.
 5. ▶ An MoU signed between Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment's National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and BSE Institute Ltd., for facilitating Skill Development Training to target group of NBCFDC. BSE Institute is a promoter of Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) Sector Skill Council of India under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
 6. ▶ Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh were the top three performing states under the maternity benefit programme Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY).
 7. ▶ Annual river festival named Dwijing held on the bank of River Aie at Chirang district in Assam.
 8. ▶ Atal Ayushman Yojana launched in Uttarakhand, enabling every household to avail medical treatment of up to 5 lakh rupees annually.
 9. ▶ Bills passed in Winter Session 2018-2019 -
 1. Lok Sabha passed Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, known as Triple Talaq Bill. It would replace the ordinance passed in September 2018. It makes all types of declaration of triple talaq to be void and illegal. Declaration of Triple Talaq would be a cognizable offence, attracting up to three years' imprisonment with a fine.
 1. Cognizable offence is one for which a police officer may arrest an accused person without a warrant.
 2. A Muslim Women against whom the triple talaq is pronounced is entitled to seek subsistence allowance from her husband for herself and for her dependent children and the amount of the allowance will be determined by Magistrate.
 2. Lok Sabha passed Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016, banning commercial surrogacy and allowing only altruistic surrogacy. It protects rights of the surrogate mother and child born from surrogacy and promotes ethical surrogacy.
 1. Surrogacy is defined as an agreement between a couple who cannot conceive and a surrogate mother to carry their child.
 2. The bill is applicable to all Indian states, except Jammu and Kashmir.
 3. Bill provides for constitution of National Surrogacy board and State Surrogacy board for regulation of surrogacy process.
 4. It bars couple who already have children, to go for surrogacy.
 5. Women can only surrogate once in her lifetime and her age should be in between 25 to 35 years.
 6. Couple who intend for surrogacy should be aged between 23 to 50 years and married for at least 5 years.
 3. Lok Sabha passed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2016, which seeks to empower the transgender community in the country by providing them a separate identity.
 4. Lok Sabha passed Consumer Protection Bill 2018 -
 1. It aims to protect consumers' interests through a redressal mechanism that would ensure timely and effective settlement of disputes.
 2. It seeks to establish a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to protect consumer rights and look into the issues related to false or misleading ads. It calls for strict punishment and fines for misleading advertisements and food adulteration.
 3. District Commissions will have mandate to hear complaints having claim worth one crore rupees. In the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 this limit was 20 lakh rupees. Limit of Commissions' at State level enhanced from 1 to 15 crore rupees. Complaints above 15 crore rupees worth of claim will be settled by National Commission.
 10. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Dec 28, 2018) -
 1. General Approvals -

1. Approved Submission of India's second Biennial Update Report (BUR) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change towards fulfilment of reporting obligation under Convention.
 1. BUR contains five major components - National Circumstances, National Greenhouse Gas Inventory, Mitigation Actions, Finance, Technology and Capacity Building Needs and Support Received and Domestic Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) arrangements.
 2. Approved draft National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill 2018, that seeks to replace existing regulator Central Council for Homoeopathy (CCH) with a new body to ensure transparency. It includes constitution of a National Commission with three autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Ayurveda.
 3. Approved National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill 2018, to replace existing regulator (Central Council for Indian Medicine). National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine aims to promote transparency and accountability. It provides for constitution of a National Commission with four autonomous boards.
 1. Board of Ayurveda would be responsible for overseeing the overall education of Ayurveda.
 2. Board of Unani, Siddha and Sowaigpa will be responsible for overseeing the overall education of Unani, Siddha and Sowaigpa.
 3. The bill provides for two common boards, Board of Assessment and Rating and Board of Ethics and Registration.
 4. Approved proposal for Amendment in Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012, to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children, including death Penalty.
 1. Section-4, Section-5 and Section-6 are proposed to be amended to provide option of stringent punishment, including death penalty, for aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child.
 2. Amendments are also proposed in section-9 to protect children from sexual offences in times of natural calamities and disasters.
 3. Section-14 and 15 are proposed to be amended to address menace of child pornography.
 5. Approved Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification 2018, which was last reviewed and issued in 2011. It will lead to enhanced activities in coastal regions while conserving the coastal environment. Features Include -
 1. Allowing Floor Space Index (FSI) or Floor Area Ratio (FAR) as per current norms in CRZ areas, which was frozen as per 1991 Development Control Regulation (DCR) levels in As per CRZ 2011 Notification
 2. Densely populated rural areas to be afforded greater opportunity for development
 3. Tourism infrastructure for basic amenities to be promoted.
 4. Procedure for CRZ clearances has been streamlined.
 5. A No Development Zone (NDZ) of 20 meters has been stipulated for all Islands.
 6. All Ecologically Sensitive Areas have been accorded special importance
 7. Pollution abatement has been accorded special focus
 8. Defence and strategic projects have been accorded necessary dispensation.
 6. Approved Gaganyaan Programme with demonstration of Indian Human Spaceflight capability to low earth orbit for a mission duration ranging from one orbital period to a maximum of seven days. A human rated GSLV Mk-III will be used to carry orbital module which will sustain a 3-member crew for the mission. Total fund requirement for Gaganyaan Programme is within 10000 crores.
2. MOUs -
1. Cuba and South Korea in area of Biotechnology.
 2. Approved Framework Agreement with Sao Tome & Principe (Central Africa) on Cooperation in Exploration and Uses of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes.
3. CCEA Approvals -
1. Approved listing 7 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) on Stock Exchange through Initial Public Offering (IPO) /Further Public Offer (FPO) -
 1. Telecommunication Consultants (India) Ltd. [TCIL]- IPO
 2. RailTel Corporation India Ltd. - IPO
 3. National Seed Corporation India Ltd. (NSC) - IPO
 4. Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Limited (THDC) - IPO
 5. Water & Power Consultancy Services (India) Limited [WAPCOS Ltd.] - IPO
 6. FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals (India) Limited [FAGMIL]- IPO
 7. Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Limited (KIOCL) – FPO

2. Approved increase in Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of "Milling Copra" to 9521 per quintal for 2019 season (Hike of INR 2000 per quintal).
 3. Increased export incentives granted for Onions under Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) from existing 5% to 10%, to benefit farmers.
11. ▶ Central Railways developed an in-house robot named 'USTAAD' - 'Undergear Surveillance Through Artificial Intelligence Assisted Droid', to checks for safety in under gear parts of train coaches.
 1. Also, Central Railways' Nagpur division introduced technology called Automated Train Examination System (ATES) for enhancement of train safety, developed by Konkan Railway. It eliminates mechanical examination of parts of trains, to uplift efficiency and safety
 12. ▶ Civil aviation ministry and Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched an official mobile app for the global aviation summit to be held in Mumbai in January 2019. App is named *GAS 2019*.
 13. ▶ Country's first music museum will be set up in Thiruvaiyaru, birthplace of Saint Tyagaraja, one of Trinities of Carnatic music. Other two Trinities are Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri.
 14. ▶ Delhi Police became first police force in country to digitise all malkhanas across every police station in state under e-malkhana project.
 1. Makhanas are rooms for keeping seized arms and ammunition.
 15. ▶ General Conferences (Dec 21 - 31, 2018) -
 1. To commemorate 200th Birth Anniversary of Sikh philosopher, reformer and freedom fighter, Sri Satguru Ram Singhji, an International Seminar held in New Delhi.
 2. World Herbal Forest Project inaugurated as a collaboration of Patanjali and Haryana Government, at Morni Hill, near Chandigarh. It is aimed at developing a forest of medicinal plants which will provide a boost to Ayurvedic industry. About 25 different varieties of plants found in the country will be housed in this forest.
 3. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated Centre of Excellence Genetic Blood Disorders at Prathima Institute of Medical Sciences in Karimnagar (Telangana).
 4. Sahitya Kala Parishad, Department of Art, Culture and Languages (Delhi Government) organized 6th edition of Yuva Natya Samaroh at Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi.
 5. 15th edition Global SME Business Summit organised by Ministry of MSME and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in association with Government e-marketplace in New Delhi.
 6. First meeting of Follow-up Committee for implementation of the Trilateral Chabahar Agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran held in the port city of Chabahar in Iran.
 1. India Ports Global Limited Company has opened its office and took over operations at the Shaheed Behesti port at Chabahar.
 7. A Joint workshop between ICRC and CUNPK on "Integrated Protection on Civilians (IPOC)" in UN peacekeeping operations conducted at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.
 8. International Gita Festival 2018 organised in Kurukshetra in Haryana, as 3rd edition of the event. Mauritius is partner country and Gujarat is partner state.
 9. 12th edition of annual Global Healthcare Summit held in Mumbai, jointly organized by American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI) and Global Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (GAPIO).
 10. India submitted its Sixth National Report (NR6) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), during 13th National Meeting of the State Biodiversity Boards (SBBs) in New Delhi.
 1. Submission of national reports is a mandatory obligation on Parties to international treaties, including CBD.
 2. NR6 provides an update of progress in achievement of 12 National Biodiversity Targets (NBT) developed under Convention process in line with the 20 global Aichi biodiversity targets.
 11. 3 state level campaign on "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" organized in Maharashtra, Goa and Dadra & Nagar Haveli to spread awareness among people to save and educate girls.
 16. ▶ Government banned Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for its unsocial activities during its violent campaign for secession of Punjab. KLF is 40th organisation to be proscribed under UAPA law.
 1. KLF came into existence in 1986 with objective of establishing an independent Khalistan by secession of Punjab from India through violent means.
 17. ▶ Government launched Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskaar annual awards to recognise exemplary work done in field of disaster management. 3 institutions and individuals will be given the award annually with cash rewards between 5 - 51

lakh. For 2019, award would be announced on January 23, birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

18. ▶ Government renamed Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island in Andaman and Nicobar as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, Shaheed Dweep and Swaraj Dweep respectively.
19. ▶ Government revised Minimum Support Price of 23 items of Minor Forest Produce items and introduced MSP for 17 new MFP items. Items whose MSP has been revised include those Minor Forest Produce items which have been covered under the scheme since its inception in 2013-14.
20. ▶ Haryana Govt. renamed Child Care Institutes in state as Jagannath Ashrams, stating that since all Child Care Institutions have a similar goal of all-round development of children, it would be appropriate to give a single name to all.
21. ▶ Home Ministry declared Nagaland as *disturbed area* for six more months till June-end under Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA).
22. ▶ IT Industry Body National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) partnered with IIT-Madras to provide re-skilling/upskilling of four million people on digital skills.
23. ▶ Indian Railways will build India's first vertical-lift bridge to connect Rameswaram to mainland India, allowing ships to pass without any hindrance. It would replace 104-year-old Pamban bridge, to be ready by 2023.
 1. New Vertical Bridge will have a 63-metre stretch which will lift up while remaining parallel to the deck to allow access to the ships.
 2. Pamban Bridge was first sea bridge of India and was the longest sea bridge in India until the Bandra-Worli Sea Link was opened in 2010.
24. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Government announced setting up of a new Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department), to be set up by merging several existing departments.
25. ▶ Madhya Pradesh government declared Kuno wildlife sanctuary as a national park, in compliance with condition imposed by Supreme Court for 'translocation of Asiatic lions from Gir in Gujarat.'
26. ▶ Maharashtra Govt. launched 'Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Schools' for students in rural areas.
27. ▶ Maharashtra government approved INR 4089 crores for Tembhu lift irrigation scheme in Tembhu village of Satara district. The perennially drought prone areas of Satara, Solapur and Sangli districts will get benefit by this scheme.
28. ▶ Manipur Assembly passed bill named *The Manipur Protection from Mob Violence Bill 2018*, which recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence if it results in death of a person.
29. ▶ Meghalaya Govt. launched Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme(MHIS-IV) in convergence with that of Centre's Ayushman Bharat scheme. It targets to cover over 8 lakh households offering over 2300 medical and surgical packages and up to Rs 5 lakh per family, functional from February 2019. It covers all citizens in state while Ayushman Bharat(Centre's Scheme) targets bottom 40 % of lower income families.
30. ▶ Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment and Forests & Climate Change, Harsh Vardhan inaugurated newly constructed International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOcean) Complex in the INCOIS (Hyderabad).
 1. UNESCO Category 2 Centre established as a training facility at INCOIS will give an opportunity to Nations bordering Indian Ocean and small island nations in Pacific to benefit from expertise of INCOIS in areas of ocean science and management.
 2. UNESCO approved offer of Government of India to establish ITCOcean as a UNESCO Category 2 Centre in November 2017, Aimed at assist Member Nations of IOC/UNESCO in areas of ocean science and management.
31. ▶ NITI Aayog released 2nd Delta ranking for Aspirational Districts, measuring progress made by them between June - October 2018 across six developmental areas - *Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure* -
 1. Most Improved (June - October 2018 Period) -
 1. Virudhunagar (Tamil Nadu)
 2. Nuapada (Odisha)
 3. Siddharthnagar (Uttar Pradesh)
 4. Aurangabad (Bihar)
 5. Koraput (Odisha)
 2. Least Improved (June - October 2018 Period) -
 1. Pakur (Jharkhand) - Rank 111
 2. Hailakandi (Assam) - Rank 110
 3. Chatra (Jharkhand) - Rank 109

32. ▶ National Film Archive of India (NFAI) and Film & Television Institute of India (FTII) signed MoU for transfer of three acres of land for the construction of storage facility for films and film material, at FTII Kothrud campus in Pune.
33. ▶ National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned all mining activities within 10 km of the Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, following a plea challenging environmental clearance granted to 24 mines within 10 km radius. Supreme Court in 2006 had prohibited mining within 1 km of national parks and sanctuaries.
34. ▶ National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) launched a toll-free number 14433 and a facility to file complaints through Common Service Center (CSC). People can now send their complaints related to human rights violation through both the free number and CSCs.
35. ▶ New State government of Rajasthan abolished condition of a minimum educational qualification to contest local body elections, which was put in place in 2015 by previous Government.
 1. Candidates were Required to have passed Class X for contesting municipal elections, Class VIII for contesting panchayat polls for the post of a sarpanch, and Class X for contesting zila parishad or panchayat samiti elections.
36. ▶ Odisha Govt. announced INR 10000 crores Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme to empower small, marginal & landless farmers as well as landless labourers. It would cover 92% (over 30 lakh) of cultivators, loanee and non-loanee, share-croppers & landless labourers.
37. ▶ Odisha forest department will add another olive ridley mass nesting site to its wildlife map, after preparing beach at Bahuda river mouth in Ganjam district, to lure endangered turtles to come over for mass nesting next year.
 1. Gahirmatha marine sanctuary and Rushikulya rookery coast in Ganjam district are main Olive Ridley Nesting sites in Odisha.
 2. Olive Ridley turtle is smallest and most abundant of all sea turtle found in world, known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach each year to lay eggs.
38. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Bogibeel Bridge as India's longest rail-road bridge with length of 4.94 km.
 1. Former PM HD Deve Gowda laid foundation stone for Bogibeel bridge in January 1997, work started in April 2002 by Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
 2. Its India's only fully welded bridge and for first time European codes and welding standards were adhered to. It has lifespan of over 120 years.
 3. It connects southern bank of Brahmaputra River in Assam's Dibrugarh district with Silapathar in Dhemaji district, bordering Arunachal Pradesh. It is constructed at a cost of Rs 5,900 crores and it is Asia's second-longest railroad bridge.
 4. It is referred to as "Lifeline of Assam", and is an important asset for entire north-eastern region.
 5. Benefits include reducing travel time from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh to four hours and eliminate a detour of over 170 km via Tinsukia. It also reduces train travel time between Delhi and Dibrugarh by about three hours.
39. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated International Rice Research Institute South Asia Regional Centre (IRRI SARC) in Varanasi, as 6th campus of IRRI SARC. IRRI SARC will educate scientists and agriculture leaders about latest technologies and innovations for sustainable farming.
40. ▶ PM Narendra Modi released commemorative stamp on Maharaja Suheldev, who is said to have defeated and killed Ghaznavid general Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud at Bahraich, in early 11th century.
41. ▶ Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan launched 'Ujjwala Sanitary Napkin' initiative In Odisha, to improve accessibility to basic sanitary pads and create employment opportunity to women.
 1. In February 2018, Odisha government had launched 'Khushi' scheme, to provide free sanitary napkins in government schools.
42. ▶ Power Ministry mandated use of smart prepaid electricity meters in the country beginning April 2019, to be completed in 3 years. This would help in reduction in AT&C losses, better health of DISCOMs, ease of bill payments and doing away with paper bills.
 1. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways mandated fitting of high security registration plates (HSRP) for all vehicles from April 2019. An HSRP is a chromium-based hologram on number plates, making it easier to track in case of stolen vehicle.
43. ▶ Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced annual Sardar Patel Award for National Integration, to be given annually for outstanding efforts to further national integration.
44. ▶ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched several developmental initiatives in Odisha, worth over INR 14500 crores, as part of Mission Purbodaya : a prosperous East for building a new India -
 1. Released a commemorative stamp and coin on Paika Rebellion. The Paika Rebellion (Paika Bidroha) was fought against British rule, in Odisha in 1817. It is noted as First ever armed conflict as part of Indian Freedom movement. A Chair on Paika Rebellion has been set up in Utkal University Bhubaneswar.

2. Inaugurated Lalitgiri Museum, a famous Buddhist centre of archaeological importance, comprising Stupa, Viharas (monasteries) and images of Lord Buddha.
 3. Dedicated IIT Bhubaneswar campus and inaugurated new ESIC Hospital at Bhubaneswar.
 4. Laid foundation of Paradip-Hyderabad Pipeline Product Project by IOCL and Bokaro-Angul section of Jagdishpur-Haldia & Bokaro-Dhamra Gas Pipeline Project by GAIL.
45. ▶ Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Andaman and Nicobar Islands, to mark 75th anniversary of hoisting of Tricolour on Indian soil by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
1. On December 30 in 1943, Indian tricolour was hoisted at Cellular Jail in Port Blair for first time by legendary freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. It was before India attained Independence, declaring island as the free territory from British rule.
 2. Central Government released Rs 75 coin to commemorate this historic event.
 3. On this occasion, Govt. renamed Ross Island as Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Dweep, Neil Island as Shaheed Dweep and Havelock Island renamed as Swaraj Dweep.
46. ▶ Telangana's MNJ Institute of Oncology and Regional Cancer Centre entered Guinness Book of World Records 'for organising the largest men's Health Awareness programme on prostate cancer on a single day.'
47. ▶ Tourism Ministry handed over an MOU to Resbird Technologies under 'Adopt a Heritage' project for development of a mobile audio guide application for five iconic sites - Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Kaziranga (Assam), Colva Beach (Goa), Kumarakom (Kerala), Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).
48. ▶ Tribal Baduga community in Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu celebrated their annual Heddaiyamman festival.
49. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved constituting Bundelkhand Development Board (BDB) and Purvanchal Development Board (PDB). Cabinet also approved setting up of the UP Traders Welfare Board to address problems faced by traders in state with regards to the GST.
50. ▶ Uttar Pradesh government initiated One District, One Product scheme to encourage indigenous and specialized products and crafts of state. It aims to revive Rich traditional heritages of state by reviving them through modernization and publicisation.
51. ▶ West Bengal Govt. approval for an online system for mutation of propert, to ease property mutation and check illegal practices. State Cabinet also approved a proposal by Flipkart to set up a logistic hub at Haringhata in Nadia district, at investment of Rs INR 991 crores.
52. ▶ government notified 10 Central Agencies giving them power to intercept, monitor and decrypt all data contained in any computer system in India. The Agencies are *Intelligence Bureau, Narcotics Control Bureau, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, CBI, National Investigation Agency, Enforcement Directorate, Central Board of Direct Taxes, Research and Analysis Wing, Directorate of Signal Intelligence (in Jammu & Kashmir, the North-East and Assam) and the Delhi Police.*
1. Section 69 of Information Technology Act 2000 provides for interception and monitoring along with decryption for cyber-crime investigations. This notification by government caused oppositon in Parliament.
 2. Government clarified that it has not given *blanket power* to any agency to intercept information from any computer and they have to strictly adhere to existing rules and stick to the book while carrying out such action.

Top

Persons

1. ▶ Obituaries (Dec 2018) -
 1. George H .W. Bush - Former USA President.
 2. Arun Kumar Shaw - Swimmer (Seven-time former national champion).
 3. Jagdish Thakkar - Senior journalist and Public Relations Officer (PRO) in PM office.
 4. Lyudmila Alexeyeva - Noted Russian rights activist and former Soviet dissident.
 5. Mushirul Hasan - Noted Historian. He has extensively written on India's Partition.
 6. Thoppil Ajayan - National award winning Malayalam film director.
 7. Nancy Wilson - 3 times Grammy award winner american jazz singer.
 8. Pandit Arun Bhaduri - Noted classical singer. She is named as one of masters of Bengali songs and bhajans.
 9. Tulsi Giri - Former Nepalese Prime Minister.
 10. Tulsi Ramsay - Filmmaker. He is noted for directing old Bollywood Horror flicks.
 11. Sulagitti Narasamma - Padma Shri awardee Noted Social worker.
 12. Dipali Borthakur - Noted Assamese singer, also known as the "Nightingale of Assam".

13. Prabhanjan - Noted Tamil writer and Sahitya Akademi award winner.
 14. Dwijen Mukhopadhyay - Noted Rabindra Sangeet singer.
 15. Jai Narain Prasad Nishad - Former Union Minister, served as Minister of state, Environment and Forests (IC) during 1996-97.
 16. Hamidi Kashmiri - Noted Urdu Literataur.
 17. Mrinal Sen - Noted filmmaker.
 18. Lawrence Gilman Roberts - American Scientist, known for development of ARPANET, called early Internet.
 19. Norman Gimbel - the Oscar and Grammy-winning American lyricist.
 20. Nirendranath Chakraborty - Noted Bengali poet.
 21. Shehu Shagari - 2nd President of Nigeria.
2. ▶ Chagari Praveen Kumar is appointed as acting Chief Justice of Andhra High Court. Andhra HC is newly created and 25th High Court in India.
 3. ▶ Colin O'Brady (USA) became first person to complete a solo journey across Antarctica, unaided and unsupported, after finishing a two-month expedition.
 4. ▶ India's Aadi Sai Vijaykaran won Junior Debate Championship at World Scholar's Cup at Yale University (USA), becoming first Indian to do so.
 5. ▶ Maharashtra's 20-year-old cyclist Vedangi Kulkarni completed 29,000-km distance required to qualify as bicycling across globe in 159 days. She reached Kolkata after pedalling up to 300 km a day in 14 countries across 159 days.
 6. ▶ Persons Retired / Resigned (December 2018) -
 1. Gautam Gambhir - Indian cricketer.
 2. Paul Polman - Resigned as CEO of Unilever (consumer goods firm).
 3. Urjit Patel - Resigned as Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Mr. Patel is First RBI governor to resign before completion of term, which was to end in September 2019.
 4. Upendra Kushwaha - Resigned as Minister of State in Ministry of Human Resource Development.
 5. Ananth Narayanan - Resigned as CEO of Fashion e-tailer Myntra, with his position set to be abolished. Flipkart's Amar Nagaram appointed as head of Myntra.
 6. Dharmesh Mehta - Resigned as MD & CEO of Axis Capital. Salil Pitale and Chirag Negandhi appointed as Joint MD and Co-CEO of the entity.
 7. Surjit S Bhalla - resigned as Member of Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister. Council is headed by NITI Aayog member Bibek Debroy.
 8. Charles Michel - Resigned as Belgian Prime Minister.
 9. Anup Kumar - Indian Kabaddi player and former World Cup-winning captain.
 7. ▶ Visits to India (Dec 21 - 31, 2018) -
 1. Prime Minister of Bhutan, Lotay Tshering Visited India.
 1. India announced to contribute INR 4500 crores to Bhutan for 12th five-year plan.
 2. 2018 also marks 50th (Golden Jubilee year) of establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan.
 3. 2018 also marks 50th (Golden Jubilee year) of establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan.
 2. Wang Yi, Foreign Minister of China Visited India, to attend first-ever meeting of India-China High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges, held in New Delhi.

Top

Science

1. ▶ Indian American Mahum Siddiqi won inaugural "Digital Transformation Hackathon" at Cornell University in USA, for designing a device which can detect actual level of pain of a patient during a diagnosis.
2. ▶ NASA's new Mars lander InSight has set up its first instrument on planet Mars, a quake monitor (seismometer) that will listen for quakes and wobbles. It is first time that a scientific instrument has ever been placed on another planet's surface. InSight will also put a wind cover over the seismometer next month and initiate a new experiment.

Top

Sports

1. ▶ Former Australian Cricketer Ricky Ponting formally inducted into ICC Cricket Hall of Fame.
2. ▶ Misc. Sporting Events (December 2018) -
 1. Commonwealth Senior Fencing Championships held in Canberra (Australia). India won 3 medals (2 gold and 1 bronze). Medal tally topped by England with 6 gold, 6 silver and 4 bronze.
 2. Ullas Narayan became first ever Indian individual medal winner in an international ultra running event by clinching a bronze in 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championships in Taipei.
 3. Australian Golfer Minjee Lee became first woman to win prestigious Greg Norman Medal as best Australian golfer.
 4. Atlawim Debebe of Ethiopia won Men's Full Marathon Title in Pune International Marathon 2018, with timing of 2 hours 17 minutes 17 seconds. In women's Full Marathon, Pascalina Chepkogei from Kenya stood first with timing of 2 hour 50 minutes 27 seconds.
 5. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) submitted formal expression of interest to bid for 2032 Olympics, with Mumbai and Delhi as top two options under consideration. Bidding process will start in 2022 and host city will be decided by 2025.
 6. International Olympic Committee IOC has set up an advisory committee on human rights chaired by Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini. Human rights standards will be included in Olympic host-city contracts beginning with 2024 Olympic in Paris.
 7. Senior National Wrestling Championships held at Nandini Nagar in Gonda (Uttar Pradesh).
 8. 9th Admirals Cup Sailing Regatta (2018) held at Ettikulam Beach at Indian Naval Academy Ezhimala (INA) Kerala. tonight. Team Italy won it with Team Singapore staying 2nd. Host country (Indian Naval Academy) finished 4th.
 9. 2nd Edition of Khelo India school games will begin from January 9, 2019 in Pune (Maharashtra). It will allow participants to compete in two categories, (Under 17) and (Under 21). Now, these games will be known as Khelo India Youth Games, also allowing students from colleges and Universities to compete.
 10. Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah became fastest bowler to take 200 Test wickets (in 33 Test matches), Breaking an 82-year-old record held by Australian leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett who did it in 36 Tests.
 11. Golfer Shubhankar Sharma won 2018 Asian Tour Order of Merit champion Title, becoming 5th overall and youngest Indian to top Asian Tour money list in a particular season.
 12. Madhya Pradesh's Ajay Rohera slammed highest first-class score world record on debut, with unbeaten 267 score against Hyderabad in Ranji Trophy Match.
 13. First event of the US Kids Golf India Tour was held Classic Golf & Country Club in Gurugram(Haryana).
 14. 62nd National Shooting Championship Competitions (NSSC) Shotgun organized by National Rifle Association of India at Jaipur (Rajasthan).
 15. SAIL won 115th All India Aga Khan Gold Cup hockey tournament, defeating Army XI.
 16. American professional basketball team Golden State Warriors named 2018 Sports Illustrated Sportsperson of the Year. Other Winners of 2018 Sports Illustrated Awards. WWE Player John Cena received Muhammad Ali Legacy Award.
 17. 21st Usha National Athletics Sports Championships held in New Delhi.
 18. Joshna Chinappa won National Squash Women's Singles title as her 16th National title.
 19. 37th Senior National Rowing Championships held in Pune.
 20. Indian Cricketer Virat Kohli became second fastest player to score 25 Test Centuries, only behind former Australian legend Sir Don Bradman.
 21. Belgium ranked at number one position in end-of-the-year FIFA global Football team rankings, 1 point ahead of current World Champions France.
 22. Lewis Hamilton (UK) has been awarded with Drivers' Driver of the Year after claiming 5th F1 World Drivers' Championship, becoming 3rd racer to secure 5th world title.
 23. Croatia Footballer Luka Modric named Balkan Athlete of the Year, becoming only 2nd soccer player to win this title.
 24. 3rd women's national boxing championships held in Vijayanagara (Karnataka).
 25. Indian bowler Jasprit Bumrah became highest wicket-taker in international cricket in 2018, picking 78 wickets in 2018.
 26. Cricketer Dale Steyn became highest wicket-taker for South Africa in Test cricket, overtaking Shaun Pollack.
 27. American alpine skier Mikaela Shiffrin became youngest woman to win 50 World Cup ski races with victory in slalom in French Alps.
 28. Wrestler Bala Rafiq Shaikh won Maharashtra Kesari Wrestling Championship 2018, by defeating Abhijeet Katke.
 29. Indian Junior Golfers won 11 medals, including 4 Gold at US Kids Golf World Championship.
3. ▶ Spain's Real Madrid won Club Football World Cup for 3rd consecutive year (and its 4th in total), by beating Abu Dhabi side Al Ain in final.

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