



Current Affairs - January 2018

Month Type



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Appointments

- ▶ Ajendra Bahadur Singh is appointed as Chief of Western Naval Command of Indian Navy.
- ▶ Anandiben Patel has been appointed as Governor of Madhya Pradesh.
- ▶ Anil Khanna is appointed as Chairman of Finance Commission of Indian Olympic Association (IOA).
- ▶ Facebook appointed outgoing American Express CEO Kenneth Chenault to its board, making him first African-American to be on board.
- ▶ Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) appointed Pramod Agarwal as its new chairman.
- ▶ Indian American Manisha Singh has been appointed as Assistant Secretary of State of USA for economic and business affairs. She is the first woman appointed to the post.
- ▶ Kerala Government appointed V J Mathew as Chairman of Maritime Board.
- ▶ S Selvakumar is appointed as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd (SPMCIL).
- ▶ Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved appointment of Vijay Kumar as Managing Director and CEO of National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX).
- ▶ Sudeep Lakhtakia is appointed as new Director General of National Security Guard (NSG).
- ▶ Supreme Court collegium recommended senior advocate Indu Malhotra for appointment as a judge of Supreme Court. She is first woman lawyer from India to be directly elected for post of judge of Supreme Court.
- ▶ Viorica Dancila is appointed as First Female Prime Minister of European Nation Romania.

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Awards

- ▶ Actor Sudhir Dalvi is honored with Janakavi P Sawlaram award, instituted by Thane Municipal Corporation and Janakavi P Savlaram Kala Samiti.
- ▶ Afghanistan residents awarded Donald Trump a bravery medal for rebuking Pakistan over its failure in curbing terrorist havens.
- ▶ Odisha's Mangalajodi Ecotourism Trust won United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Award for Innovation in Tourism Enterprise at 14th UNWTO Awards in Madrid (Spain), in recognition of Mangalajodi's business model that is both economically viable and environmentally sustainable based on principles of community ownership and Eco Tourism.
- ▶ P.P. Chaudhary (Minister of State for Law and Justice & Corporate Affairs) has been conferred Honorary Fellowship of Institute of Company secretaries of India (ICSI).
- ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind honored four 4 artists and scholars in performing arts with *Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships* and 43 artists with *Sangeet Natak Akademi awards 2016*.
 1. Fellowship awardees receive INR 3 lakh and Akademi Puraskar Awardees receive INR 1 lakh, along with angavastram and a tamrapatra.

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Books

1. ▶ Book *Home at Last: A Journey to Higher Consciousness*, written by Sarada Chiruvolu has been released.
2. ▶ Book *Majuli: Resources and Challenges*, that appreciates beauty and challenges of Majuli (Assam) has been released. It is by Sanjib Kumar Borkakoti.
3. ▶ Book *The Heartfulness Way*, authored by Kamlesh D. Patel has been released.
4. ▶ Former Indian Cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar's autobiography *Imperfect* has been launched.

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Committees

1. ▶ Election Commission constituted a 14 member committee headed by Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha, to suggest changes to Section 126 of Representation of People Act 1951 (RP Act) in view of social media expansion.
 1. It will study impact of new media and social media during the silence period(48 hours period prior to elections) and its implications. It will suggest modifications to election law and model code of conduct.
2. ▶ Retired Justice Shiv Narayan Dhingra is appointed as head of a new committee to re-investigate 186 closed cases related to 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

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Days

1. ▶ Jan 12 - National Youth Day in India. It marks birth anniversary of legendary social reformer Swami Vivekananda.
 1. On this occasion, 22nd National Youth Festival (NYF) organised in New Delhi by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports at Gautam Buddha University (Greater Noida).
 2. On this occasion, Jharkhand Govt organized Skill Summit and Provided Employment to 27852 Youth in Private Sector.
2. ▶ Jan 15, 2018 - 70th Indian Army Day. It commemorates the day when K.M Carriappa took over command of Indian Army from F.R.R Bucher, the last British Commander-in-Chief in 1949.
3. ▶ National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrated its 13th Raising Day on Jan 19, 2018.
4. ▶ On 16th January, Goa celebrated Opinion Poll Day as Asmitai Dis (Identity Day). It marks historic poll in 1967, when people of Goa voted not to merge with Maharashtra.

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Defence

1. ▶ Biennial Joint exercise by Indian and Japanese Coast Guards held in Bay of Bengal, as 8th in series of *National Maritime Search and Rescue Workshop and Exercise*.
2. ▶ Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved procuring 72,400 assault rifles and 93,895 carbines on fast track basis for INR 3,547 crores, to meet needs of Army that is countering continuous threats from Pakistan and China.
3. ▶ Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched 'Bharat Ke Veer' graphic novel series on Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) martyrs.
4. ▶ Indian Navy decommissioned INS Nirbhik and INS Nirghat warships.
5. ▶ Indian Navy's largest ship and only aircraft carrier, INS Vikramaditya IS formally affiliated to Indian Army's Bihar Regiment and No. 6 Squadron of the Indian Air Force.
6. ▶ Indo-US joint military exercise *Vajra Prahar* will be held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle (USA) in last week of Jan 2018.
7. ▶ Long Range Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile Agni-5 has been successfully fired for 5th time, for its full range of above 5000 KM.

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Economy

1. ▶ 25th Meeting of GST Council held in New Delhi, chaired by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. Changes made in GST Regime -
 1. Late fee for failure to furnish FORM GSTR-1 (supply details), FORM GSTR-5 (Non-resident taxable person), FORM GSTR-5A (OIDAR) or FORM GSTR-6 (Input Service Distributor) is reduced to 50 rupees / day (20 rupees per day for NIL filers).
 2. Facility for generation, modification and cancellation of e-way bills is provided on trial basis on ewaybill.nic.in.

3. Recommended reduced GST rates for 29 goods and 53 services, to come into force from January 25.
2. ▶ AU Small Finance Bank signed MoU with LIC to offer Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY). It will provide life cover of INR 2 lakh, at a premium of Rs 330 per annum.
3. ▶ According to RBI's *Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies 2016-17* -
 1. Mauritius was largest source of foreign investment (FDI) in India (21.8% share at market value) followed by USA, UK, Singapore and Japan.
 2. Singapore (19.7%) was major ODI (Outward Direct Investment) destination, followed by Netherlands, Mauritius, and US.
 3. The census carries information on market value of foreign liabilities and assets of Indian companies arising on account of FDI, ODI and other investments.
4. ▶ As per RBI, housing loans in up to Rs. 2 lakh slab had the highest level of non-performing assets (NPAs).
 1. For housing loan slab up to 2 lakh, NPAs of Public Sector Banks and HFCs was 10.4 % in FY17 as compared to 9.8 % in FY16.
 2. Lowest NPAs were reported for housing loans in Rs. 25 lakh and above slab.
5. ▶ Bank of Baroda tied up with Digital invoice discounting marketplace *Invoicemart*, as TReDS (*Trade Receivables Electronic Discounting System*) partner. TReDS is an online platform through which, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) can access funds for working capital without hassle of applying for loans. Invoicemart is a joint venture between Axis Bank and mjunction services.
6. ▶ Bombay Stock Exchange's India International Exchange (India INX) listed Indian Railway Finance Corporation's (IRFC's) green bonds on its debt listing platform, Global Securities Market (GSM). India INX lists IRFC's green bonds, becomes first debt security at IFSC.
 1. Green Bonds: Main difference between regular bond and Green Bond is that funds raised through Green Bonds are used for financing projects/business activities that are environment-friendly.
7. ▶ Central Government divested 2.52 % of paid-up capital in National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) for approx INR 1200 crores.
8. ▶ Chinese Bike Sharing Firm *OFO* launched its services across seven Indian cities (*Indore, Ahmedabad, Bangalore, Delhi, Pune, Coimbatore, and Chennai*), in partnership with digital payments firm *Paytm*.
9. ▶ Chkfake Brand Protection Solutions launched global app named *Chkfake* to check authenticity of currency notes of all major currencies worldwide.
10. ▶ Department of Commerce signed MoU with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), for integrated development of Logistics sector. Government aims to reduce Logistics cost from 14% of GDP to under 10% by 2022.
11. ▶ Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)'s Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), launched IPrism for university students as a unique Intellectual Property (IP) Competition, in association with ASSOCHAM and ERICSSON India.
 1. It aims to foster culture of innovation and creativity in younger generation and invites students to submit films on piracy & counterfeiting under categories of 30 and 60 seconds.
12. ▶ Dev Information Technology will set up *DevX*, largest Accelerator Center for startups in Gujarat.
13. ▶ Federal Bank partnered with *Hedge Equities Ltd* for providing Portfolio Investment Scheme (PIS) services to NRIs.
14. ▶ Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister Arun Jaitley launched India's First Agri-commodity Options in Guar Seed by National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX). It is first-of-its-kind hedging tool in India, as an effort to make agri-economy more efficient and bring huge amount of value for the farmers.
15. ▶ Government lowered additional borrowing requirement for current fiscal to INR 20000 crores from previous estimate of 50000 crores, considering revenue receipts and expenditure pattern. Lesser borrowing will enable restricting fiscal deficit within target.
16. ▶ Government signed agreement with ONGC for strategic sale of its 51.11% equity share-holding in HPCL for INR 36,915 crores. After this, ONGC will become India's first vertically integrated 'oil major' company, having presence across entire value chain. However, HPCL will continue to be a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE).
17. ▶ Haryana Government will form a non-banking financial company named *Haryana State Financial Services Limited*, for efficient management of funds. It will be in-house treasury manager and will be responsible for efficient management of surplus funds of State public enterprises. Authorised capital of this NBFC will be Rs.10 crore while the paid up capital will be Rs. 2 crore.
18. ▶ Indian IT Firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) signed over GBP 500 million (USD 690 million) deal with M&G Prudential (UK and European savings and investments business of Prudential plc).
19. ▶ Indian Institute of Information Technology and Management-Kerala (IIITM-K) and Blockchain Education Network (BEN) will jointly set up Kerala Blockchain Academy in Thiruvananthapuram, as first of its kind in India and aims to utilise blockchain technology for welfare of public, promote innovations and entrepreneurship with blockchain technology.

20. ▶ India's factory output, measured by Index of Industrial Production (IIP) rose to 17 Months high of 8.4% in November 2017, up from 2% in October 2017, due to better performance by manufacturing and capital goods sectors.
21. ▶ India's most-valued Bank *HDFC Bank* crossed INR 5 trillion market capitalisation for first time (Approx 85 Billion USD), making it only 3rd Indian company (after TCS and Reliance) to achieve this milestone.
22. ▶ IndusInd Bank will introduce India's first battery-powered, interactive payment cards, in association with Dynamics Inc (Pennsylvania(USA) based firm that manufactures intelligent, battery-powered payment cards). New card will have multiple buttons which will allow consumers to pay in multiple ways (through credit points / monthly instalments).
23. ▶ Karnataka Government will hold a Blockchain Hackathon for Governance, for students, startups, and other IT professionals. Cloud-based blockchain technology providers will be invited to provide platforms for use in this hackathon. Karnataka is 3rd Indian State (After Andhra Pradesh and Telangana) to announce plans to adopt blockchain for governance.
24. ▶ Karnataka topped among all states with investment intentions of Rs. 1.49 lakh crore till October 2017, accounting for 43 % of India's total investment intentions.
25. ▶ Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) and Zone Startups India launched *Accelerator Program for three months*, to promote startups in early revenue stage. It will help startups achieve product-market fit through a curated customer validation process. It will introduce startups to investors, relevant customers and industry connects.
26. ▶ Maharashtra Government approved Nanaji Deshmukh Krishi Sanjivani Yojna, with expenses of INR 4000 Crores INR. It will be active between 2018-19 to 2023-24.
 1. Scheme will be implemented in 5,142 villages across 15 districts, to improve soil quality, develop foodgrain varieties which can sustain climate variations and effect necessary changes in crop pattern as per availability of water.
 2. 70% of cost will be borne by World Bank while state will contribute 30% over six years.
27. ▶ Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) launched National CSR Data Portal & Corporate Data Portal for bringing accountability and transparency for corporate India It aim to provide easy accessibility to general public and also ensure high level of compliance and will help in institutionalising and consolidating CSR activities.
28. ▶ NBFC *Capital First* has been merged with IDFC Bank. Merged entity will have assets under management of Rs 88000 crore, customer base of over 5 million and branch network of 194.
29. ▶ Norway's fertiliser firm *Yara International* acquired India's Tata Chemicals' 1.2 million tonnes per annum production capacity urea plant at Babrala in Uttar Pradesh, for INR 2682 crores. It is first foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's urea sector.
30. ▶ Reliance Communications (RCom) unveiled Eagle express submarine cable system to lay a 68000-km undersea cable for carrying data across Europe and Asia, as a *cloud and fiber initiative* which will be laid at a cost of \$600 million. This submarine cable system will connect its base in India with Italy to west and Hong Kong on east. It is expected to be operational by 2020.
31. ▶ Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd will launch its own cyptocurrency based on Blockchain Technology, named JioCoin, led by Mukesh Ambani's son Akash Ambani.
32. ▶ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that all the 14 designs of Rs 10 coin are valid and legal tender for transactions, as it was observed that some traders and members of public were reluctant to accept INR 10 coins owing to a doubt about it genuineness.
33. ▶ World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) will provide \$440 million debt to *Mahindra Renewables Pvt. Ltd, Acme Group and global private equity fund Actis Llp* to build Rewa solar park in Madhya Pradesh.
 1. Earlier, three 250MW projects were awarded to *Acme Solar Holdings, Mahindra Renewables and Actis LLP's Solenergi Power*.
34. ▶ YES Foundation (*social development arm of YES Bank*) launched 5th *YES! i am the CHANGE' (YIAC)* campaign to inculcate spirit of responsible youth citizenship and drive social impact through the medium of films.
 1. Yes foundation invited participation in *YIAC Social Filmmaking Challenge*, to depict stories of change in a three-minute film. Selected entities will receive a grant of Rs 7.5 crore, for scaling up and capacity building and will also receive three-year mentoring for creating onground tangible social impact.

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International

1. ▶ *Global Manufacturing Index* released by World Economic Forum (WEF, titled *Readiness for the future of production report* -
 1. Japan is at top, while India is ranked 30th. Top 5 Nations -
 - 2.

1	Japan
2	South Korea

3	Germany
4	Switzerland
5	China

2. ▶ A 910-carat gem diamond, considered 5th largest gem-quality diamond ever found has been discovered in a Lesotho mine (Africa). It is more valuable as it is colourless, with worth of approx \$40 million.
3. ▶ According to wealth index based on data from 4th National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16,
 1. Wealth index was prepared on basis of information of scores on ownership of consumer goods and household characteristics such as availability of clean drinking water, classified into wealth quintiles.
 2. State wise wealth Distribution -
 1. Delhi and Punjab are richest with over 60% of their households in top wealth quintile. They are followed by Goa (54.5% in top bracket). Bihar is poorest with half of its households in bottom quintile. Rajasthan has most equitable wealth distribution with similar number of households in all quintiles.
 3. Wealth distribution in religious groups -
 1. Jains - 70% population in top quintile.
 2. Sikhs - 59.6% in top quintile.
 3. Hindus and Muslims have similar and also most equitable wealth distribution across all quintiles.
 4. Community wise wealth distribution -
 1. Scheduled tribes are poorest with 45.9% of their people in lowest quintile.
 5. Rural and Urban wealth -
 1. 29% of rural India belongs to bottom quintile, while it is just 3.3% for urban India.
4. ▶ American and Japanese armies launched 13th edition of their joint exercise named Iron Fist, in California (USA).
5. ▶ Annual survey of *Gallup International* ranked Indian PM Narendra Modi as 3rd among world leaders, with German chancellor Angela Merkel at top and French president Emmanuel Macron at 2nd place.
6. ▶ As per data by *International Air Transport Association (IATA)*, India topped worldwide growth chart of domestic air passenger traffic for November 2017 with growth by 16.4 %, highest in world.
7. ▶ Bangladesh, India and Nepal approved operating procedures for passenger vehicle movement (Passenger protocol) in sub-region under Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA).
8. ▶ Brazil's securities regulator prohibited local investment funds from buying cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum.
9. ▶ China Navy commissioned indigenously developed missile frigate named *Rizhao* and a new 4000-ton Type 054A Jiangkai II-class guided-missile frigate.
10. ▶ China constructed a 330-foot tall air purifying tower in Xian (Shaanxi Province), biggest in world. It has produced more than 10 million cubic meters of clean air since launch.
11. ▶ China has set up world's first 3D-printed bus stops in Fengjing (Shanghai). The bus stops have a closed loop design, accommodating two-round stools inside the structure.
12. ▶ China launched 2 BeiDou-3 satellites to provide navigation and positioning services to countries along Belt and Road initiative (BRI) by end of 2018. Launched satellites were BeiDou-3 M7 and BeiDou-3 M8 (26th and 27th satellites) in BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS).
13. ▶ China will provide financial support to construct counter-terrorism base in Badakshan province of northern Afghanistan that would prevent cross-border infiltration of Chinese Uyghur militants.
14. ▶ Ecuador granted citizenship to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.
 1. In 2012, Assange, an Australian-Ecuadoran, was granted asylum at Ecuadorian Embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he faced an investigation over rape allegations.
15. ▶ First India-UK Createch Summit will be held in Mumbai in February 2018, to explore convergence of creativity and technology, 'Createch' and its application across a range of areas.
16. ▶ Government of South Australia approved building a major solar thermal plant which will be largest such thermal power plant in world and will power 35 % of households in South Australia. It will be developed by a US Firm, Solar Reserve at cost of Australian Dollar 650 million.
17. ▶ India and Buhtan jointly unveiled *Special logo* for Golden Jubilee (50 years) celebrations through video-conference. During 2018, India and Bhutan will conduct several high-level exchanges.
18. ▶ India become top borrower from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with USD 1.5 billion worth of loans in 2017.
 1. Indonesia is at second position with USD 600 million worth loans.

2. AIIB is headquartered in Beijing (China) and has authorized capital of 100 Billion USD. India is 2nd largest shared holder in AIIB (8.52%) after China (26%). AIIB is preferred lender as it charges only 1 to 1.5 % interest with long term repayment and 5 year grace period.
19. ▶ India contributed \$50,000 to United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres's Office of Envoy on Youth to help with its mission of involving young people in UNs goals.
 20. ▶ India joined *Australia Group*, an informal bloc (group) of countries that keeps a tight control over exports of substances used in making of chemical weapons. It is expected to strengthen India's bid to enter 48-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
 1. India is now part of 3 of 4 key export control groups in world dealing with non-proliferation. Other 2 are -
 1. Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) - an informal partnership among 35 countries that regulates trade in sensitive equipment and technologies to ensure there is no proliferation of missile and unmanned aerial vehicle technology capable of carrying payloads above 500kg for more than 300km.
 2. Wassenaar Arrangement - An informal grouping of 42 countries, exercising control over the export of dual-use goods and technologies in December 2017.
 21. ▶ India provided financial assistance of USD 45.27 million to Sri Lanka for upgrading Kankesanthurai (KKS) Harbour (northern Sri Lanka) into a commercial port, through Export and Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).
 22. ▶ Indian peacekeepers in UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have re-built a 300-metre-long river bridge in Akoka village in record time. This bridge will enable people to cross the river and reach a town to access basic services.
 23. ▶ India's IndiGo is ranked 4th most *Punctual mega carrier* in world, ahead of British Airways and Lufthansa in a List by Aviation Analytics Company OAG. The list ranks Japan Airlines is at top.
 24. ▶ Iranian government lifted restrictions on use of Internet, including messaging app Telegram, that were put after protests against unemployment and rising consumer prices in December 2017.
 25. ▶ Japan's Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched *new Earth observation satellite ASNARO-2*. It will perform Earth-observation tasks for 5 years from its orbit at an altitude of about 500 km.
 26. ▶ Kazakhstan surpassed Iraq as biggest oil over-producer in among Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Nations. Kazakhstan's oil output in November and December 2017 was nearly 130000 barrels a day and Kazakhstan promised to pump out 20000 barrels a day less as per OPEC pact.
 27. ▶ Maitre-2, second passenger bus to Kolkata via Dhaka flagged off from Agartala (Tripura), to boost trans-border relationship between India and Bangladesh.
 28. ▶ Messaging App WhatsApp launched *Business app*, to help small enterprises to connect efficiently with their customers, initially in Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, the UK and USA. In it, a small enterprise owner can create a Business Profile containing details like business description, contact details etc. It will be highlighted to regular users on WhatsApp.
 29. ▶ Nepal started accessing internet from China after commercial operations began at Nepal-China optical fibre link via Rasuwagadhi gateway across Himalayan Mountains. It ends Nepal's dependence on India for internet bandwidth, considered strategic loss for India. It is believed that initial speed by Chinese fibre link will be 1.5 Gigabit per second (gbps), less than 34 gbps provided by India.
 30. ▶ Philippines expressed its displeasure over construction of an apparent airbase on a man-made island in the South China Sea by China.
 1. China reportedly uses cabbage strategy for militarization of large areas in disputed south china sea, which is protsetd by neighboring nations (including *India, Japan, Bhutan, Philippines, Japan, Malaysia and Brunei*) claiming control on various parts of mineral rich south china sea.
 2. Cabbage strategy is also called *salami-slicing* strateg, Under which a contested area is surrounded by multiple security layers to deny access to the rival nation and is claimed subsequently. As per the observers, China, for a long time, has been pursuing this strategy.
 31. ▶ South Korea and Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) signed MoU for industrial co-operation, with a focus on automobile, defence and textiles sectors. It aims to help Gujarat-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to explore opportunities through joint ventures with South Korean firms.
 32. ▶ Thomson Reuters Corp's First *'Top 100 Global Technology Leaders* list 2018 -
 1. Top 3 - Microsoft (1), Intel (2), Cisco Systems (3)
 2. 45 % of 100 tech companies are headquartered in USA. Japan and Taiwan are tied for second place with 13 companies each, followed by India with 5 tech firms (TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra).

33. ▶ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Health Organisation (WHO) will collaborate to accelerate curbing environmental health risks.
34. ▶ World Economic Forums's (WEF's) Global Risks Report 2018 -
 1. On dimensions of Likelihood and impact, 5 environmental risks - *extreme weather, major natural disasters, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, man-made environmental disasters, and failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation* are accorded highest weightage.
 2. Top-ranking global risk on dimension of impact was *use of weapons of mass destruction* while on dimension of likelihood, *extreme weather events* ranked top.

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Meetings

1. ▶ 4th ASEAN-INDIA Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry held in New Delhi .ASEAN stands for *Association of SouthEast Asian Nations*.
2. ▶ India attended meeting of international military cooperation departments of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for first time, in Beijing(China).
3. ▶ International Solar Alliance (ISA) hosted *International Solar Alliance Forum* at Future World Energy Summit (WFES) 2018 in Abu Dhabi (UAE). It is ISA's first global Outreach Program after it came into force On 6th December 2017, upon being ratified by 15 Nations. Some key announcements were made during the event -
 1. Raj Kumar Singh (*Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy*) stated that India will achieve its target of 175 GW of installed Renewable Energy capacity well before 2020. India will set up of a \$ 350 million solar development fund for solar projects financing.
 2. Upendra Tripathy (Interim DG of ISA) informed that 2nd RE-INVEST meet will be held in India in April 2018, and over 100 projects shall be signed by ISA by April 2018.
 3. YES Bank committed financing solar projects of over \$5 Billion. While CLP and NTPC announced partnership with ISA and committed contribution of \$1 million each to ISA fund corpus. Yes Bank also tied up with *Amplus Energy Solutions* to co-finance solar energy projects in India.

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National

1. ▶ Election Commission announced that State Assembly elections will be held for 3 North East states in Feb 2018 - Meghalaya and Nagaland (Feb 27) and Tripura (Feb 18).
2. ▶ 10th Global Forum for Food & Agriculture was held in Berlin (Germany) with theme *Shaping the future of livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently*. India was represented by Minister of State (MoS) for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
3. ▶ 12th International Film Festival on Art and Artist began in Bhubaneswar, organised by Bhubaneswar-based Jatin Das Centre of Art (JDCA).
4. ▶ 3rd Science Film Festival of India will held in Goa, titled *SCI-FFI Goa*.
5. ▶ 4th India International Science Festival will be held in Lucknow, on dates to be decided later.
6. ▶ A Kashmiri publishing house *Gulshan Books* entered Limca Book of Records for a huge collection of 80,000 books. It is the only bookshop-library on a lake.
7. ▶ An important heritage attraction at National Rail Museum (New Delhi) - a 108 years old monorail became operational, that was used by Maharaja of Patiala *Bhupinder Singh*. The Museum takes visitors on an exciting journey into Railway history and heritage and depict their contribution to industrial and economic progress of country.
8. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government signed MoU with NITI Aayog to create an online dashboard for the 115 most backward districts of India, under *Transformation of Most Aspirational Districts* Scheme.
 1. Backward districts were selected based on education, health, nutrition, rural road connectivity, rural household electrification, access to potable water, individual toilets, etc.
 2. Jharkhand has the highest number of the listed backward districts.
 3. Note that West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha recently opted out of Central Government's *Transformation of Aspirational Districts* scheme. Bringing down number of districts to 102 (from 115).

9. ▶ As per a survey by *Ixigo*, Kozhikode railway station (Kerala) is ranked best in terms of cleanliness, while Hazrat Nizamuddin (Delhi) is ranked lowest. Among trains, Swarna Jayanti Rajdhani is rated cleanest train while Karnataka Express is given lowest ratings.
10. ▶ Bhogali Bihu harvest festival, also called as *Magh Bihu* festival began in Assam.
11. ▶ Bikaner camel festival celebrated in Rajasthan to honour camels.
12. ▶ Chhattisgarh High Court asked all trial courts in state to obtain Aadhaar Cards of accused persons and sureties before issuing release warrant of a prisoner/accused, to curb rampant practice of obtaining bail on the basis of forged revenue papers or by impersonating real surety.
13. ▶ Committee of Governors submitted report titled *Rajyapal –Vikas Ke Rajdoot: Catalytic Role of Governors as Agents for Change in Society* to President Ram Nath Kovind. Committee of Governors was Formed in October 2017 during 48th Conference of Governors in New Delhi.
14. ▶ External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj inaugurated Puducherry's First Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) at Karaikal. It will enable locals to avail passport related services without having to travel to Puducherry.
15. ▶ External Affairs Ministry announced that Passports will no longer serve as a valid proof of address as Its last page will not printed from now onwards, that includes Names of father / guardian, and address.
 1. Additionally, Passport holders with ECR (Emigration Check Required) status would be issued a passport with orange passport jacket and those with non-ECR status would continue to get a blue passport. As per Govt., This is meant to identify less educated (under 10th) labourers and prevent them from exploitation abroad.
 1. Note that Indian passports have a blue cover, diplomatic and official passports have white and red jackets, respectively. Applicants who haven't cleared 10th standard are given a passport with ECR category (now with orange jackets).
16. ▶ GAIL will set up *coal to synthesis gas* conversion plants in Odisha, with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) as technology partner.
 1. Synthesis gas is expected to be cheaper than domestic gas as its a mixture comprising of hydrogen, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.
17. ▶ General Conferences (Jan 11 - 20, 2018) -
 1. Ministry of Culture organized 7th *Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav* under *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat* matrix in Karnataka.
 2. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 'Economic Democracy Conclave at Thane (Maharashtra), organised by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (charitable organisation in domain of training of social-political activists).
 3. International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) organized by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in Delhi.
 4. 65th Meeting of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) held under Chairmanship of HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar in Delhi.
 5. 3rd geo-political conference *Raisina Dialogue* held in New Delhi, attended by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and jointly organised by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF). 2018's theme is *Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idiom*.
 1. Raisina Dialogue is an annual conference held in New Delhi, envisioned as India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics.
 2. Indian and Israeli PM duo also launched *I4Fund Call for Proposal*, that provisions establishing a 40 million USD Fund by India's Department of Science and Technology and National Innovation Authority of Israel.
 6. A single day Conclave called *Nirman Samvaad*, first ever interaction between Railways Ministry and Construction Industry held in Delhi, organized by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL).
 7. Lalit Kala Akademi's 59th National Exhibition of Art held in New Delhi, to exhibit brilliance of works of various artists.
 8. 60th India International Garment Fair (IIGF) held at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi).
 9. National Conference on Improving Accessibility held in New Delhi. During this, 100 accessible websites for Divyangs have been launched to empower Divyang persons.
18. ▶ German auto major Mercedes-Benz unveiled India's first BS-VI-compliant S Class car produced at its Pune facility.
 1. Government's deadline for switching to new BS-VI emission norms is of April 2020.
 2. BS-VI-compliant S Class can run on BS-IV fuel, which will bring down NOx emissions by 68% and PM by 82% and will lower CO2 burden by 13% and fuel demand by 10%.
19. ▶ Government announced names of 9 new cities selected under Smart Cities Mission, with proposed investment of INR 12824 crores. After four rounds of selection, 99 cities have been selected for Smart Cities Mission so far.

20. ▶ Government approved 2018 as *National Year of Millets* to boost production of the nutrient-rich millets and the sunrise agri industry involved in it.
21. ▶ Government decided to end Haj subsidy from this year, as a part of its policy to 'empower minorities without appeasement'.
 1. Note that despite withdrawal of subsidy, record number of 1.75 lakh Muslims would be Haj undertaking pilgrimage this year from India after Saudi Arabia increased India's quota by 5,000.
22. ▶ Government sanctioned projects over 10,000 crore rupees in North East for better network connectivity, Including uncovered areas in North Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
23. ▶ India's first food testing lab in IITs opened in IIT Kharagpur campus, after National Accreditation Board for Calibration and Testing Laboratories (NABL) approved it for certifying food items based on nutritional value and perform adulteration checks.
24. ▶ Indian Army established a Skill Training Centre in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, to empower nd Train Kashmiri youth.
25. ▶ India's first automatic Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) will be lcunahed in March 2018 in Odish, under *National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project*.
 1. It will provide Odhisa's entire population residing on 480 km length coastline a pre-warning siren in event of occurrence of natural disasters like tsunami or cyclone.
26. ▶ J & K government signed MoU with Central Govt. to create normalcy in Jammu & Kashmir by means of education reforms, named *School Education Transformation Roadmap*.
27. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir will host its first international martial arts games event in Srinagar in October 2018, named *Asian Martial Arts Games*.
28. ▶ Kerala government allowed prisoners in Kerala jails to donate organs to their close relatives.
29. ▶ Madhya Pradesh became first state to completely implement door-to-door garbage collection in all urban areas, using measures like solid waste management at landfill sites and processing through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.
30. ▶ Maharashtra Government approved 1% reservation for orphans in government jobs and education.
 1. It is termed as *parallel reservation* as It will be provided under general category. It means that government does not need to increase its caste reservation quota that has already reached 52%. Out of total jobs available under general category, 1% will be only for orphans.
31. ▶ Maharashtra Health department and Johnson and Johnson signed MoU to train rural midwives and social health activists regarding tuberculosis and maternal and infant mortality. Nearly 10,000 auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and 60,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in Maharashtra will be trained by Johnson and Johnson at district level.
32. ▶ Maharashtra became first state to unveil Public Cloud Policy that virtually mandates state government departments to shift their data storage onto cloud.
33. ▶ Ministry of *Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation* signed A MOU with Bihar and Jharkhand state governments for completion of balance works of North Koel reservoir project at an estimated cost of INR 1622 crores.
 1. North Koel project was started in 1972 but was later halted in 1993. It is situated on North Koel river (a tributary of Sone river), that will provide irrigation to 1,11,521 hectares of land annually in most drought prone areas of Palamu and Garhwa districts in Jharkhand and Aurangabad and Gaya districts in Bihar.
 2. Out of cost of balance works of INR 1622 crores, component of INR 1013 crores shall be borne by central Govt. as a grant from LTIF under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY).
34. ▶ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched *Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative* to strengthen cybersecurity ecosystem in India, in association with National e-Governance Division (NeGD). It will leverage expertise of the IT industry in cybersecurity and will be operated on principles of awareness, education and enablement.
35. ▶ Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) refused captive breeding of Chiru (Tibetan antelope), whose underfur is used for making famous shahtoosh shawls.
 1. Chiru have been for long time for their underfur, which is renowned for its quality which is traditionally woven into an extremely fine fabric to make Shahtoosh shawls.
36. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will set up Cyber Warrior Police Force (CWPF) and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to tackle internet-related crimes such as cyber threats, child pornography and online stalking, under MHA's new Cyber & Information Security (CIS) Division.
37. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs (MoHUA) launched Liveability index to rate 116 Indian cities, funded by World Bank.
 1. It aims to measure quality of life in 99 smart cities, capital cities and those with a population of over one million.
 2. Index will rank cities based on set of 79 paarmeters related to various aspects.

38. ▶ NITI Aayog launched first course on Sustainable Urban planning using remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) at IIT Kanpur's outreach centre in Noida (UP). This is first course under Global Initiative on Academic Network (GIAN) Program of HRD Ministry, that aims to boost quality of higher education through international collaboration.
1. Course aims to impart high level remote sensing and GIS skills to allow them managing rapidly changing urban environment, with focus on water related activities.
39. ▶ Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) launched India's internationally benchmarked Forest Management Certification Standard (FMCS). FMCS enlists measures to be taken for responsible utilisation of natural resources and trade of forest products.
40. ▶ North Korea and South Korea will march together under a single unified Korean flag at Winter Olympics 2018 in Pyeongchang (South Korea). They agreed to field a joint women's ice hockey team after rare peace talks. These are first high-level talks between 2 Koreas in over 2 years.
41. ▶ Odisha Government launched *Odisha e-Hospital Management Information System (OeHMIS)* online platform that hosts all clinical parameters of patients and reporting of performance criteria of hospitals. It also enables viewing and downloading individual electronic health records.
42. ▶ Odisha State Government announced 'Mukshyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Jojana' (MMKSJ), under which artists from across the state will get a monthly assistance of Rs 1200, to benefit approx 50000 artists from across state.
1. Odisha government also changed eligibility criteria as compared to previous artist assistance scheme, under which only 4000 artists were being given Rs 1000 per month. As per new criteria, any male artist can avail assistance under scheme after attaining the age of 50 years (earlier 60 years), while females have relaxation of 10 years.
43. ▶ Odisha government signed agreement with Software Technology Park of India (STPI), to set up an incubator at IIT Bhubaneswar for promoting research, named *Centre of Excellence for Virtual & Augmented Reality (VARCoE)*.
44. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated project commencement of Rajasthan oil refinery at Pachpadra in Barmer district, as first one to be set up in Rajasthan. It is as a joint venture of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Rajasthan government, with budget of INR 43000 crores and expected to be operational in 4 years.
45. ▶ Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas launched month long Saksham 2018 (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav, that aims at creating focused attention on fuel conservation through people centric activities and sensitize masses about efficient use of petroleum products.
46. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind on recommendation of Election Commission of India (ECI) disqualified 20 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLAs from Delhi, citing that they held offices of profit.
1. In 2016, ECI issued show cause notices to 27 AAP MLAs from Delhi who held offices as parliamentary secretaries.
 2. Office of Profit is a Term used in Article 102 (1)(A) of Constitution that bars member of Indian Parliament / Legislative Assemblies from holding an office that would give its occupant the opportunity to gain a financial advantage or benefit. It refers to a post under central/state government which yields salaries, perks and other benefits.
47. ▶ Punjab Government signed MoU with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to set up bio-gas and bio-CNG plants in state, to find sustainable solutions to paddy straw burning. Total 400 such plants will become operational in 3-4 years with investment of INR 5000 crores.
48. ▶ Railways launched SFOORTI (*Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information*) App for Freight Managers which provides features for monitoring and managing freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) Views and Dashboard. Features Include -
1. *Freight Operation Information System Map View* provides Layered views of freight trains on Railways, that can help plan traffic flows and optimize freight operations.
 2. *Forecasted Rakes Awaiting Interchange* enables Monitoring of all loads, which have been forecasted for the divisional interchange, but the same interchange has not yet reported.
 3. *Stock Specific / Commodity specific Rake Position* can be viewed. Loaded and Empty Rakes of specific Rake Types are plotted on Railways network map in Different colours.
 4. Monitoring of New Origination-Destination Added in Railways.
 5. Loading Trends for Major Commodities during a period.
 6. Performance of Freight Trains can be monitored
49. ▶ Road transport ministry Mandated All taxis, buses and public transport vehicles (except three-wheelers and e-rickshaws) to have location tracking device (GPS) and an alert button from April 1, 2018 onwards.

50. ▶ Sikkim Government allowed people to forge fraternal ties with trees, under *Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules 2017*. Purpose is to preserve trees by encouraging people to forge relationship of brotherhood with trees through tradition locally known as Mitini / Mith.
51. ▶ Telangana government signed MoU with *Clean Authority of Tokyo (Japan)*, for municipal solid waste incineration facilities.
52. ▶ Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDA) introduced face authentication as an additional means of Aadhaar authentication along with fingerprint and iris scan, to enable easy authentication for those who face difficulties in other biometric authentication such as fingerprint and iris scan. It will be available by 1 July, 2018.
53. ▶ West Bengal Govt. launched water ATM project to ensure bacteria-free drinking water in schools, initially in Kolkata.
54. ▶ West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha opted out of Central Government's *Transformation of Aspirational Districts* scheme.
 1. Aspirational districts refer to selected 115 backward districts that are lagging on specific development parameters. Central Government undertook a major policy initiative for rapid transformation of these districts. With exit of 3 states, total districts under this scheme is now reduced to 102.
 2. These states objected that criteria for identifying backward districts was fixed without taking respective State Governments into confidence.
 3. Transformation of Aspirational Districts' conference was held in New Delhi in recently, in which NITI Aayog said it will come out with a ranking of 115 aspirational districts by April 2018.
55. ▶ Western Railways introduced modern Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Kiosk Machines for fast and easy printing of tickets booked through UTS App, in Mumbai. Additionally, Bhopal became first railway station to have Sanitary napkin Vending Machine.

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Persons

1. ▶ A health worker from Mandi district in Himachal Pradesh, Verma has featured in World Health Organization (WHO) calendar for 2018, for her efforts to ensure hundred per cent coverage of her area of operation under measles and rubella programme.
2. ▶ Actress Kajol became an advocacy ambassador for a *Swachh Aadat Swachh Bharat* initiative.
3. ▶ American Actor Angelina Jolie will be honoured by American Society of Cinematographers with ASC Board of Governors Award.
4. ▶ Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman became woman defence minister to fly in an IAF Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter aircraft.
5. ▶ Mihai Tudose resigned as Prime Minister of Romania (Southeastern Europe).
6. ▶ Tracey Crouch is appointed as UK's first-ever minister for loneliness, charged to tackle loneliness and combat social isolation. This role has been created in memory of Labour MP Jo Cox, who was murdered in 2016.
7. ▶ Visits from India (Jan 11 - 12, 2018)
 1. Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju Visited UK. On this occasion, India and UK signed 2 MoUs dealing with return of Indians residing in Britain as illegal migrants and sharing of criminal records and intelligence.
 2. Minister for Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad visited Sri Lanka. During His Visit, India and Sri Lanka signed agreements for
 1. Collaboration in Information and communication technology (ICT) sector
 2. Connecting National Knowledge network (NKN) for collaboration among universities and academics
 3. Setting up of e-office system.
8. ▶ Visits to India (Jan 11 - 20, 2018)
 1. Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu Visited India. Several MOUs were signed during his visit -
 1. Cyber Security.
 2. Oil and Gas
 3. Air Transport
 4. Film-co-production
 5. Homeopathic Medicine
 6. Space
 7. During this Visit, central Delhi's Teen Murti Chowk is formally renamed as *Teen Murti-Haifa* after Israeli City Haifa.
 8. Both PMs dedicated to nation, the iCREATE facility located near Ahmedabad (Gujarat). *iCreate* is an independent Centre created with the objective of facilitating entrepreneurship through a blend of creativity, engineering and leveraging emerging technologies to deal with major issues such as food security, water, cybersecurity, IT and electronics, energy, bio-medical equipment etc.
 9. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu also visited India-Israel Business Summit in Mumbai.

Science

1. ▶ A new research at Bhopal's Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IIS) has proved D - 29 virus as capable of destroying cancer cells. The research is led by Scientist Soumya Kamilla. Now challenge is to transmit this virus to cancerous cells in body. Upon success in this, the method can be much more successful than Chemotherapy in eliminating cancer.
2. ▶ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched 31 satellites along with Cartosat-2 surveillance satellite (weighing total 1383 KG), onboard 42nd Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C40) rocket.
 1. Among 31 satellites, 3 belong to India and rest 28 are of six other countries.
 2. Cartosat-2 series Satellite weighs 710 KG, making it heaviest satellite that PSLV has carried till now. It will beam high-quality images for cartographic, urban and rural applications, coastal land use and utility management.
3. ▶ NASA's Hubble and Spitzer space telescope discovered *SPT0615-JD* as farthest known galaxy in universe so far (2,500 light-years away). It is a cluster of 500 million year-old stars. SPT0615-JD was found in Hubble's Reionization Lensing Cluster Survey (RELICS) and companion S-RELICS Spitzer programme.
4. ▶ Researchers discovered 161 million-year-old fossils of a tiny bird-like dinosaur named *Caihong juji* from China that sported flashy rainbow feathers and a bony crest on its snout to attract mates.
5. ▶ Researchers from Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) discovered a new species of moth, scientifically named *Elcysma Ziroensis* in Talley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh.
6. ▶ World's biggest flooded cave has been discovered in Mexico, after researchers connected 2 underwater caverns in eastern Mexico to reveal biggest flooded cave on planet. It is significant discovery as it could shed new light on ancient Maya civilization. The total length of cave is 347-kms, after connecting cave system named Sac Actun (262 km) with 83-km long Dos Ojos cave system.

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Sports

1. ▶ Assam Hockey won 8th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2018 (B Division) in Assam, defeating Rajasthan.
2. ▶ Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Football Delhi (governing body for football in Delhi) signed MOU for development of sport in Capital.
3. ▶ Bahrain will hold first ever Baby Olympics in April 2018, where medals will be contested by 2 - 4 year-olds, to promote Olympic principles at very young age.
4. ▶ Hyderabad Hunters won 3rd Premier Badminton League championship in Hyderabad, after beating Bengaluru Blasters in final.
5. ▶ ICC Cricket Awards 2018 -
 1. Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for Men's Cricketer of the Year - Virat Kohli (India). It is Kohli's 2nd Title as ICC Cricketer of the year after 2012.
 2. Men's Test Cricketer of the Year - Steve Smith (Australia)
 3. Men's ODI Cricketer of the Year - Virat Kohli (India)
 4. Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year - Hasan Ali (Pakistan)
 5. Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year - Rashid Khan (Afghanistan)
 6. David Shepherd Trophy for ICC Umpire of the Year - Marais Erasmus
 7. ICC Spirit of Cricket - Anya Shrubsole (England)
6. ▶ Noted Brazilian Footballer Formally announced his retirement. He was although not playing for national side since last 2 years.
7. ▶ South Africa's Kagiso Rabada became youngest bowler ever (22 years age) to top ICC Test Bowlers' rankings.
8. ▶ Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore launched official anthem and mascot of Khelo India School Games, beginning January 31.
 1. Government will extend cash incentives to grassroots level coaches of medal-winning athletes in International Games. Now, when an athlete wins a medal at Commonwealth / Asian / Olympic Games, 20 % of money will go to coaches who worked on them at grass-root level and 30 % will be given to developmental coaches.
 2. Under Khelo India, Sports Ministry will select 1000 athletes every year Through School Games, for a scholarship of Rs 5 lakhs each for eight successive years.
 3. Mascots of Khelo India School Games are *Vijay the tiger* and *Jaya the black buck*. While, *Aur khelna chahte hain hum* is official anthem.

9. ▶ WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment) will induct retired player Goldberg into WWE Hall of Fame class, first in 2018.

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