Pakistan to set up $1.51 billion hydropower project in PoK
Pakistan has decided to set up a new hydropower project of over 700 megawatts in PoK through foreign financing at an estimated cost of USD 1.51 billion by 2022.

- The Azad Pattan Hydropower Project (APHP) is a run of river scheme located on Jhelum River in the Sudhanoti district of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and about 90 kilometres from Islamabad.
- The project would be completed by 2022 for which the authorities have sought an import tariff at Rs 8.05 per kilowatts.

India ranked 90th among 163 countries in the positive peace index
Despite the unrest in the last one year, there is an atmosphere of peace in 93rd countries.

- In the ranking released by the Institute of Economics and Peace named Positive Peace Index 2017, India has been ranked 90th among 163 countries.
- Sweden, Switzerland and Finland are the top three countries respectively in the index.

Saudi Arabia, UAE introduce VAT in first for Gulf
Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates introduced value-added tax, a first for the Gulf which has long prided itself on its tax-free.

- The five percent sales tax applies to most goods and services and analysts project that the two governments could raise as much as $21 billion in 2018, equivalent to 2.0 percent of GDP.
- The other four Gulf states, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar are also committed to introducing VAT but have delayed the move until early 2019.

India Cancels $500 Million Deal For Israeli Anti-Tank Missiles
India has cancelled a $ 500 million deal to buy 1,600 Spike anti-tank guided missiles from Israel, the state-owned defence contractor Rafael Advanced Defence Systems announced.

- Spike is a man-portable “fire and forget' missile that can hit moving targets such as a tank.
- India had opted for the Israel’s Spike over the Javelin missiles offered by Washington in 2014.

World Braille Day: 4 January
World Braille Day is annually celebrated on January 4, the birthday of Braille inventor, Louis Braille.

- The day recognizes the contributions of Louis Braille in helping blind and visually impaired people to read and write.
- Braille is a code that uses bumps and indentation on a surface to represent letters, which can be recognized by touch.
- Louis Braille, a French man who was blinded in an accident at a very young age, invented it.

Iceland Becomes First Country to Enforce Equal Pay Laws
Iceland has become the first country in the world to legalize equal pay, charting a new history.

- Under the new law, companies and government agencies that employ at least 25 people will be fined if they can’t prove they pay men and women equally.
- Iceland has been ranked by the World Economic Forum (WEF) as No. 1 in gender equality for the past nine years.

US puts Pakistan on Special Watch List
The US has placed Pakistan on a ‘Special Watch List’ for “severe violations” of religious freedom.

- It is the only country to be put under the newly-formed list.
- The Special Watch List is for countries that engage in or tolerate severe violations of religious freedom but may not rise to the level of the CPC.

Iran bans English from being taught in primary schools
Iran has banned teaching the English language in primary schools, calling the subject a "cultural invasion".

- The education ministry "envisages strengthening Persian language skills and Iranian Islamic culture of pupils at the primary school stage”.
- Iran’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has previously expressed concern about the teaching of English.
Annual Meeting 2018 of World Economic Forum
The Annual Meeting 2018 of the World Economic Forum shall be held from 23-26 January 2018 at Davos in Switzerland with the theme of ‘Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World’.
- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi will be participating in the Annual Meeting.
- He will be the first Prime Minister to attend the Annual Meeting of the Forum since 1997.
- The Annual Meeting will be attended by 350 political leaders (among them over 60 heads of state or government), the chairs and chief executive officers of the world’s most important companies and over 1,000 leaders from among other walks of life.

Points to Remember
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a Swiss nonprofit foundation, based in Cologny, Geneva, Switzerland.
- It was established in 1971. Klaus Schwab is the executive chairman of the World Economic Forum.

World's largest solar thermal plant to be built in South Australia
The world’s largest solar-thermal power plant has been given development approval by the South Australian government.
- Construction on the 150-megawatt Aurora plant, to be built by utility-scale solar power company Solar Reserve, will begin in 2018 at an estimated cost of $509 million.
- It will have the capacity to power 90,000 homes with eight hours of full load storage.

India contributes $50,000 to UN Youth Envoy's office
India has contributed $50,000 to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres's Office of Envoy on Youth to help with its mission of involving young people in the world body's goals.
- Paulomi Tripathi, a First Secretary in India’s UN Mission, handed over the contribution to the Youth Envoy, Jayathma Wickramanayake.
- The Youth Envoy’s mission is to promote the engagement of youth across all the four pillars of the UN’s work - sustainable development, human rights, peace and security and humanitarian action.

WEF ranks India 30th on global manufacturing index
The World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked India at 30th position on a global manufacturing index -- below China’s 5th place but above other BRICS peers, Brazil, Russia and South Africa.
- Japan topped the Geneva-based WEF’s first ‘Readiness for the future of production report’ and is followed by South Korea, Germany, Switzerland and China.
- India has been placed in the ‘Legacy’ group along with Hungary, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, Thailand and Turkey, among others.
- China figures among ‘leading countries’, while Brazil and South Africa are in ‘nascent’ ones.

Romania's PM Mehai Tudose resigns
Romania’s Prime Minister Mehai Tudose resigned after his party withdrew its support for him amid a power struggle with the party chairman.
- Social Democratic Party officials said Development Minister Paul Stanescu would serve as interim prime minister.
- Tudose is the second prime minister ousted by the Social Democrats since they won Romania’s December 2016 general election.

Points to Remember
- Romania is a sovereign state located in Southeastern Europe.
- Its capital and largest city, Bucharest, is the sixth-largest city in the EU.
- Klaus Lohannis is the President of Romania. Leu is the Currency of Romania.

India attends its first SCO military cooperation meeting
India, for the first time, took part in a meeting of the international military cooperation departments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) since joining the bloc last year.
- An Indian delegation led by Major General Ajay Seth participated in the meeting in Beijing, which discussed issues of practical cooperation among SCO nations.
- India and Pakistan were admitted last year into the grouping in which China plays an influential role.
The SCO comprises of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.

10th Global Forum for Food & Agriculture, Berlin, Germany
Union Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is leading the Indian delegation to 10th Global Forum for Food & Agriculture from 18-20 January, 2018 which includes the 10th Berlin Agriculture Ministers’ Conference.
- The theme of this year’s event is “Shaping the future of livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently”.
- The discussions will focus on sustainable and productive animal production among other issues.

Points to Remember
- The Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) is an international conference that focuses on central questions concerning the future of the global agri-food industry.
- The GFFA is organised by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection (BMEL) in cooperation with GFFA Berlin e.V., the Senate of Berlin and Messe Berlin GmbH.

China Opens 'World's Largest Air Purifier'
China has built a 100 metre high, nearly 328 feet tall air purifier, touted to be world's largest, to combat the deadly pollution in the country.
- The world's largest air purifier is built in Xian in Shaanxi province of northern China and the preliminary results have shown that smog levels have come down and there is some improvement in the air quality.

International Solar Alliance Forum at World Future Energy Summit
In one of its first outreach programmes post-ratification, the ISA hosted a two Day Event ‘International Solar Alliance Forum’ during 17-18th January, 2018 at the Future World Energy Summit (WFES) 2018.
- WFES is a signature event of a global initiative, Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week, hosted by Masdar scheduled during 15-18th January, 2018 at Abu Dhabi (UAE).
- During the ISA event an ISA Pavilion was also set up for dissemination of information about ISA and its activities and programmes.

Points to Remember
- On receipt of 15 ratifications, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement entered into force on the 6th December, 2017 thereby making ISA a de jure treaty based international intergovernmental organisation.
- So far 19 countries have ratified and 48 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.

Boost for NSG membership, India joins Australia Group
After gaining entry into two export control regimes - MTCR and Wassenaar, India has joined the Australia Group (AG), which seeks to ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.
- On 19 January 2018 India formally became the 43rd member of the Australia Group (AG).
- It is a cooperative and voluntary group of countries working to counter the spread of materials, equipment and technologies that could contribute to the development or acquisition of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) by states or terrorist groups.

Malta's Valletta becomes Europe's Capital of Culture
Valletta has been officially inaugurated as the European Capital of Culture.
- Over 140 projects and 400 events have been planned in 2018 around three main themes: Island Stories, Future Baroque and Voyages.
- With about 6,000 inhabitants, Valletta is the smallest capital in the European Union.
- It is located in a fortress and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

India at 62nd Position on WEF’s Inclusive Development Index
India ranks 62nd among emerging economies on the Inclusive Development Index, falling from its last year’s ranking of 60th, according to a report released on Jan. 22 by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum.
- The rank is also much below that of its neighbors, with China taking the 26th spot while Pakistan is at 47th place.
Norway is once again the world’s most inclusive advanced economy while Lithuania tops the list of emerging economies.

Points to remember
- The World Economic Forum (WEF) is a Swiss nonprofit foundation, based in Cologny, Geneva, Switzerland.
- The Forum is best known for its annual meeting at the end of January in Davos.
- It was founded in 1971. Klaus Schwab is the executive chairman of WEF.

India fifth most attractive market for investments: PwC survey
India has emerged as the fifth most attractive market for investments and the optimism over global economic growth is at a record level, a survey of CEOs by global consultancy PwC said.
- Around 46 per cent of global CEOs consider the US as one of the three most important countries for growth, followed by China (33 per cent) and Germany (20 per cent) at second and third places, respectively. At the fourth spot is the UK (15 per cent).
- India (9 per cent) bumps Japan (8 per cent) as the fifth most attractive market in 2018.

WEF launches Global Centre for Cybersecurity
In a bid to safeguard the world from hackers and growing data breaches, the World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced a new Global Centre for Cybersecurity.
- Headquartered in Geneva, the centre will become operational from March.
- Cyber breaches recorded by businesses are on the rise. In the last five years, these have almost doubled to an average of 130 breaches per business in 2017.

World Economic Forum Summit in Switzerland Concludes
Prime Minister Narendra Modi returned India after concluding his visit to Davos, Switzerland for World Economic Forum Summit.
- During this visit the Prime Minister delivered a keynote address at the plenary session of 48th Annual meeting of world economic forum.
- He became the first Indian Prime Minister in two decades to join the world’s top business leaders in the Swiss report town of Davos.
- Mr Modi outlined climate change, terrorism and protectionism as 3 Global threats.

India Ranks 81st On Global Talent Competitiveness Index
India has moved up on a global index of talent competitiveness to the 81st position, but remains a laggard among the BRICS nations.
- While Switzerland continues to top the list released every year on the first day of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting, India has improved its position from 92nd last year.
- European countries dominate the top ranks, with 15 out of the top 25 places.

India ranks 177 out of 180 in Environmental Performance Index
India is among the bottom five countries on the Environmental Performance Index 2018, plummeting 36 points from 141 in 2016, according to a biennial report by Yale and Columbia Universities along with the World Economic Forum.
- Its overall low ranking — 177 among 180 countries — was linked to poor performance in the environment health policy and deaths due to air pollution categories.
- While India is at the bottom of the list in the environmental health category, it ranks 178 out of 180 as far as air quality is concerned.

India offers to create digital villages in ASEAN countries
India has offered to enhance rural connectivity in fellow Association of Southeast Asian Nations during the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit.
- Prime Minister, Narendra Modi said, “India offers to undertake a pilot project on rural connectivity, which would create digital villages in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam.”
- PM Modi also proposed the ASEAN countries declare 2019 as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism.

India Second Cheapest Country to Live in: Survey
India is ranked second only to South Africa as the cheapest country to live or retire, according to a recent survey of 112 countries.

- The survey by GoBankingRates ranked nations on the bases of four key affordability metrics provided by online pricing database Numbeo.
- Bermuda, Bahamas, Hong Kong, Switzerland and Ghana are the five most expensive countries in the survey respectively.

**India 6th wealthiest country with total wealth of $8,230 billion: Report**

India has been ranked sixth in the list of wealthiest countries with total wealth of USD 8,230 billion, while the United States topped the chart, says a report.

- According to a report by New World Wealth, the United States is the wealthiest country in the world as the total wealth held in 2017 amounted to USD 64,584 billion.
- It was followed by China at the second place with USD 24,803 billion and Japan with USD 19,522 billion at third.

Centre releases Rs 24,500 crore to compensate states post GST

The revenue loss to states on account of GST implementation was Rs 24,500 crore between July-October and the Centre has released compensation to make up for it, Parliament was informed.

- As per the details of GST compensation released to states as on November 30, Karnataka got maximum compensation from the Centre at Rs 3,271 crore, followed by Gujarat (Rs 2,282 crore) and Punjab (Rs 2,098 crore).
- The other states that required hefty compensation include Rajasthan (Rs 1,911 crore), Bihar (Rs 1,746 crore), Uttar Pradesh (Rs 1,520 crore), West Bengal (Rs 1,008 crore) and Odisha (Rs 1,020 crore).

Arunachal Pradesh has been emerged as the second state in the Northeast, after Sikkim, to be declared Open Defecation Free.

- The three remaining districts - Upper Subansiri, Siang and Changlang -- were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) officially.
- Arunachal has 21 districts and the state attained the feat much before the national deadline of October 2, 2019.

**Kolkata cops ban public display of weapons**

The Kolkata police has issued a notification banning public display of weapons in the city, to be effective from January 2, 2018, to January 1, 2019.

- The notification issued by the Commissioner of Police, Rajeev Kumar prohibits "carrying of swords, spears, bludgeons, or other offensive weapons in any public place in the 'Town of Calcutta' or in the suburbs of the 'Town of Calcutta'."

Centre approves Rs 4,066 cr for internet in all panchayats

The government has approved Rs 4,066 crore for providing internet connectivity to people in all gram panchayats under BharatNet project, Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha informed the Parliament.

- “Rs 4,066 crore has been approved for providing last-mile connectivity, through Wi-Fi or any other suitable broadband technology, at all the Gram Panchayats (approximately 2,50,000) in the country,” Sinha said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.
- The government is rolling BharatNet project to provide high-speed broadband connectivity at gram panchayat (GP) levels.
- The government plans to connect all GPs with high-speed broadband by March 2019.

**Maneka Gandhi to inaugurated online portal ‘NARI’**

In a big leap forward to empower women, the Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has inaugurated an online portal NARI in New Delhi.

- Developed by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, the portal will provide women citizens with easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women.
• Further to provide a platform for NGOs and Civil Societies to interact with the Ministry of Women & Child Development, e-Samvad portal has also been developed which was inaugurated by the WCD Minister.
• The NARI portal summarizes over 350 government schemes and other important information for the benefit of women, with more being added everyday.
• There are tips on good nutrition, suggestions for health check ups, information on major diseases, tips for job search and interview, investment and savings advice, information on crimes and against women and reporting procedures, contacts of legal aid cells, simplified adoption procedures and much more.

UP declares Noida, Yamuna E-way as electronics manufacturing zone
The Yogi Adityanath government has released its 'Uttar Pradesh Electronics Manufacturing Policy' under which Noida, Greater Noida and the Yamuna Expressway region has been declared as an electronics manufacturing zone.
• A minister said the aim of this policy is to ensure that the state gets the status of a favourite investment destination.
• The target of the policy is to attract investments worth Rs 20,000 crore in the ESDM sector and 3 lakh jobs by 2022.

Nagaland declared as 'disturbed area' for 6 more months
The entire Nagaland has been declared as "disturbed area" for six more months, till June- end, under the controversial AFSPA, which empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior notice.
• There have been demands from various organisations in the northeast as well as in Jammu and Kashmir for repealing the controversial Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which, they say, gives "sweeping powers" to security forces.
• The AFSPA has been in force in Nagaland for several decades.

Andhra CM declares 2018 as Telugu promotion year
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has declared 2018 as Telugu promotion year.

• He made this announcement at 29th edition of Annual Book Exhibition of Vijayawada.
• Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and the Chief Minister inaugurated the fest, which will remain open till January 11 at Swaraj Maidan.
• He also recognised Vijayawada as the centre for Telugu magazines, newspapers, and literary publications.

Jharkhand CM launches programme
Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das has launched "Saubhagya Yojana", a programme that would provide electricity to all the 29,376 villages in the state.
• Launching the "Saubhagya Yojana" here, Das said only 38 lakh households out of 68 lakh households in the state could get electricity in 67 years.
• However, this government has provided electricity to 13 lakh households in just three years.
• By December 2018, the target is to provide electricity to the rest 17.64 lakh households.

Joint Schemes for SC, OBC, Safai Karamcharis and Disabled Persons
The Government is implementing a Scheme, namely the Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS) that provides grant-in-aid to non-governmental organizations for various projects relating to rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.
• The objective of the scheme is to enable persons with disabilities to reach and maintain their optimal, physical, sensory, intellectual, psychiatric or social functional levels.

UP theme state for Surajkund crafts mela
The Haryana tourism department has disclosed that Uttar Pradesh would be the theme state for the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela, which would be organized at Surajkund, Faridabad from February 2 to 15.
• Apart from all other states, about 24 countries would also participate in it.
• The fair organized by the Haryana Tourism and Surajkund Fair Authority in collaboration with the Union ministries of tourism, textiles, culture and external affairs, exhibited handicrafts, handloom variety and prosperity of India at global level.
Indian Railways to install GPS devices on 2,700 electric locomotives
In a bid to provide real time train information, the government plans to install GPS devices on over 2,700 electric locomotives by December 2018. Parliament was told.

- “Railway Ministry in collaboration with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is implementing Real-Time Train Information System (RTIS) which involves tracking of train by placing GPS/GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation System) based devices on locomotives,” Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain told the Lok Sabha in a written reply.
- “In Phase one, the RTIS project will cover about 2,700 electric locomotives in which the GPS device will be installed.
- This phase is planned to be completed by December 2018,” he said.

Government approves Rs 6,809-crore Zojila Pass tunnel project in J&K
The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of Asia's longest bi-directional Zojila Pass tunnel at an estimated cost of Rs 6,089 crore, which will reduce the travel time between Srinagar and Leh to 15 minutes from the current 3.5 hours.

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave its go-ahead to the 14.2-km long tunnel project in Jammu and Kashmir to provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh, which remains cut-off from the rest of India during winters due to heavy snowfall.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and ‘Transport for London’
The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing and implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ministry of Road Transport & Highways and ‘Transport for London’, a statutory body established under the Greater London Authority Act, 1999 (UK) to improve Public Transport in India.

- The MoU will help to improve the overall public transport system in the country, improve passenger services and promote the use of high capacity buses in India.

- It will go a long way in strengthening ties and promoting bilateral relations between India and United Kingdom.

Cabinet approves setting up of new AIIMS in Bilaspur
The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for establishment of new AIIMS in Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh) under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

- The cost of the project is Rs.1351 crore.
- Under this scheme, AIIMS have been established in Bhubaneswar, Bhopal, Raipur, Jodhpur, Rishikesh and Patna while work of AIIMS Rae Bareli is in progress.

Setting up of National Security Commission
In pursuance of directions given by the Hon’ble Supreme Court for setting up a National Security Commission, a Committee namely “Committee on National Security and Central Police Personnel Welfare (CNS & CPPW)” has been constituted for recommending the names of IPS officers to the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet for appointment at the level of Director General at the centre on 2nd January, 2017.

The composition of the Committee is as under:-

- Union Home Minister- Chairman
- National Security Adviser- Member
- Cabinet Secretary- Member
- Union Home Secretary- Member
- Director, Intelligence Bureau - Member

Govt launches Swachh Survekshan 2018
The government has announced the launch of cleanliness survey for this year as part of Swachh Bharat Mission.

- The Swachh Survekshan 2018 will rank 500 cities on national level which have more than 1 lakh population, while 3,541 cities with less than 1 lakh population will have State and Regional ranking.
- The 2017 edition was conducted in January-February 2017 covering 434 Urban Local Bodies. Indore emerged as the cleanest city in the country in that survey.
Health Ministry launch first digital Online Oncology Tutorial
Smt Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) launched the country’s first digital Online Oncology Tutorial Series designed by the Tata Memorial Center in collaboration with the Health Ministry.

- The oncology tutorial series aim to train the doctors across the country to educate them in early detection, prevention, palliation, rehabilitation and treatment of various cancers.
- This is part of a national program that will be rolled out across the country by Tata Memorial Centre in collaboration with state governments.

Namami Gange projects worth Rs. 295 crore approved by NMCG
National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has approved five projects worth Rs. 295.01 crore.

- Three projects pertain to sewage management in West Bengal at an estimated cost of Rs 278.6 crore, one relates to sewage management in Uttar Pradesh at an estimated cost of Rs 4.68 crore and one project worth Rs 11.73 crore is related to ghat improvement works in Varanasi.
- With these approvals, all projects related to sewage management in high pollution load towns along river Ganga have been sanctioned.

Rs 372.51 crore sanctioned by NABARD to Odisha
The NABARD has sanctioned Rs 372.51 crore loan assistance under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) to Odisha towards irrigation and rural bridge projects for the last quarter of this fiscal.

- A total number of 17,322 lift irrigation projects including bore wells, shallow tube wells, digging wells, micro river lifts shall be taken up with Rs 130.17 crore from the assistance.
- This will provide assured irrigation to about 36,440 hectares of agricultural land directly benefiting about 40,000 farmers of state.

Tamil Nadu leads the nation in higher education enrolment
Tamil Nadu has emerged as the leader in the country in terms of Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education.

- The All India Survey on Higher Education report (2106-2017), released by Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar, saw the State lead with a GER of 46.9%.
- Among Union Territories, Chandigarh recorded 56.1%.
- GER for higher education is calculated with reference to the age group 18-23.

Mamata Banerjee launches West Bengal govt's official emblem
The West Bengal government has launched its official emblem in a programme at Nabanna, two days after getting the approval from the central government.

- The official emblem is conceptualised and designed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.
- Terming the occasion as historic, she said the state emblem – the “Biswa Bangla” logo with Ashoka Pillar of the national emblem – would be used in all the official works and documents of the Bengal government from now on.

New Delhi World Book Fair 2018
The New Delhi World Book Fair (NDWBF), which has emerged as one of the most significant events in the publishing world, will be held in the Capital during January 6-14 at Pragati Maidan.

- The fair, organised by National Book Trust, India, promotes titles, trade, co-publication titles and the habit of reading.
- The fair serves as a meeting point of readers and publishers and had started in 1972.
- Considering the ramifications of climate change and in a bid to promote the same, this year the theme of the event is “Environment & Climate Change”.
- European Union will be the guest of honour for this year.

3rd meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion
Shri Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry will chair the 3rd meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on 8th of January, 2018.
The Council for Trade Development and Promotion was constituted on 03.07.15 under the chairpersonship of the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, in pursuance to the provisions of Foreign Trade Policy statement 2015-20.

The objective was to ensure a continuous dialogue with the governments of states and Union Territories on measures for providing an international trade enabling environment in the states and to create a framework for making the states active partners in boosting India’s exports.

Nitin Gadkari to inaugurate ASEAN India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation is in Singapore to inaugurate the ASEAN India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 6th of January 2018.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated every year to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government, reconnect them with their roots and celebrate their achievements and contributions.

Goa to host third edition of Science Film Festival

Goa will be hosting the third edition of the Science Film Festival of India between January 16-19.

- The festival, titled SCI-FFI Goa, is being organised by the state-based Vidnyan Parishad, Goa's Department of Science and Technology, the Entertainment Society of Goa and the Goa College of Art.
- There would be cash prizes for the best film apart from awards for categories including Direction/Research Presentation, Cinematography, Editing and Design.

Bengaluru most well read city in India: Survey

Bengaluru has emerged as the most well read city in India, while Mumbai and Delhi stands at second and third position, respectively, according to a survey conducted by Amazon India’s Annual Reading Trends Reports for 2017.

Among books, ‘Indian Polity (5th Edition)’ ranked as the top selling book on Amazon India across the country while ‘Sita – Warrior of Mithila’ emerged as the highest selling fiction book of 2017.

Govt to set up FTII in Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh would get its first Film and Television Institute, being set up by the union government as part of tapping the potential of the North Eastern region, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said.

- This would be the second such one in the country.

Points to Remember

- The first Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) was set up in Pune, an autonomous institute operating under the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
- It was established in 1960. Anupam Kher is its present Chairman.

18th All India Whips Conference to start from Jan 8

Deliberations on paperless parliament and state legislatures by rolling out e-Sansad and e-Vidhan are on the agenda of 18th All India Whips Conference to be held in Udaipur.

- Union Parliamentary Affairs minister Ananth Kumar is slated to inaugurate the conference to be held on January 8 and 9.
- It will be attended by whips of various political parties from different states.

India's first National Park for differently abled people inaugurated in Hyderabad

Telangana government has inaugurated country's first National Park for people with special needs.

- Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister K.T. Rama Rao inaugurated the park, which has speech therapist, physiotherapist, vocational training instructors for the differently-abled children.

International kite festival begins in Gujarat

The international kite festival was inaugurated by Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad.

- Governor O P Kohli was also present on the occasion.
- Kite enthusiasts from across India and also foreign countries are participating in the week-long festival that is being celebrated across cities in Gujarat.
• The state government-sponsored festival will culminate on January 14, which is celebrated as Uttarayan (Makar Sankranti).

Nearly 8,500 stations to get Wi-Fi facility at Rs 7-bn cost: Railways

All railway stations, nearly 8,500 across the country, including those in rural and remote areas - will be equipped with Wi-Fi facilities at an estimated cost of Rs 7 billion.

• As part of the government's ambitious Digital India initiative, the national transporter has currently commissioned Wi-Fi services at 216 major stations enabling about seven million rail passengers to log on to the free Internet facility.

• According to the the plan finalised at a recent meeting, while 1,200 stations have been identified for this facility to primarily cater to rail passengers, about 7,300 stations have been earmarked to not only serve passengers but also local people in rural and remote areas.

Himachal CM announces 24X7 helpline for women

In a significant decision after taking over as Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister, Jai Ram Thakur has announced setting up of a 24x7 helpline, called Gudiya, for women.

• Thakur, who was at Press Club Shimla, said three special crime cells would be set up, one each at Mandi, Shimla and Kangra, as part of this initiative.

• Officers of these cells will be entrusted with the task to report cases of crime against women without any delay.

• Gudiya is a nickname given to the 16-year-old Kotkhai victim of rape and murder during the rule of the previous Congress government.

BSF Launches 'Operation Alert' Along 200 Km Border

The Border Security Force (BSF) has launched "Operation Alert" along the over 200 kilometer long International Border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir to curb the increasing movement of infiltrating terrorists from across the border.

• "There are inputs that there is movement of militants and accordingly, we have declared 'Operation Alert' on the border," Inspector General of BSF Jammu Frontier, Ram Awatar told.

Annual Haj 2018 agreement between India and Saudi Arabia

Union Minister for Minority Affairs Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said that Saudi Arabia has given the green signal for India’s decision to revive the option of sending Haj pilgrims through sea route also.

• Officials from both the countries will discuss on all the necessary formalities and technicalities so that Haj pilgrimage through sea route can be started in the coming years.

• A decision in this regard was taken, during the signing of bilateral annual Haj 2018 agreement between India and Saudi Arabia by Shri Naqvi and Haj and Umrah Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Dr Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benten at Makkah.

• Shri Naqvi said that sending pilgrims through ships will help cut down travel expenses significantly.

• The practice of ferrying Haj pilgrims between Mumbai and Jeddah by waterways was stopped from 1995.

India unveils Pratyush, its fastest supercomputer yet

India’s supercomputing prowess moved up several notches after it unveiled Pratyush, an array of computers that can deliver a peak power of 6.8 petaflops.

• One petaflop is a million billion floating point operations per second and is a reflection of the computing capacity of a system.

• Pratyush is the fourth fastest supercomputer in the world dedicated for weather and climate research, and follows machines in Japan, USA and the United Kingdom.

PM attends Conference of DGsP and IGsP

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi arrived at the BSF Academy at Tekanpur in Madhya Pradesh, for the Conference of Director Generals of Police and Inspector Generals of Police.

• Through the day, there were presentations and useful discussions on various subjects relating to security. A presentation was also made on the implementation status of decisions taken during the last three years.

Defence Innovation Centre to be set up at Coimbatore

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced the release of ₹20 crore to the Coimbatore District Small
Industries Association (Codissia) for setting up a defence innovation centre.

- The proposed centre will help the micro, small and medium enterprises and start-ups engaged in the manufacture of components for the defence sector conduct tests and trials of the components, the Minister said.
- She said India is the third biggest armaments procurement country in the world.

PM addresses inaugural session of PIO-Parliamentarian Conference
The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, addressed the inaugural session of the PIO-Parliamentarian Conference in New Delhi.

- The Prime Minister praised External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj for continuously keeping an eye on issues being faced by Indian citizens abroad.
- In this context, he mentioned the "MADAD" portal for real time monitoring and response of consular grievances.

‘First Health Ministers Roundtable on Food Safety & Nutrition’
Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare presided over the ‘First Health Ministers Roundtable on Food Safety & Nutrition’ organized by FSSAI, in New Delhi.

- Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, MoS (Health) along with the Health Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Telangana, Puducherry, Jharkhand and Delhi were also present at the roundtable.

Gujarat tops logistics performance index chart
Gujarat has topped a perception-based index of mobility of goods and efficiency of logistics chain, closely followed by Punjab and Andhra Pradesh.

- Commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu released the report at the third meeting of Council for Trade Development and Promotion.

Goa to host second bird festival from January 12
The second edition of the Goa Bird Festival will be held from January 12 to 14 at Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, Canacona.

- The State Forest department is organising the event with the support of Goa Tourism, the Goa Bird Conservation Network (GBCN) and Birderpics.com.
- Goa is said to have over 440 species of birds out of over 1,200 in the country.
- The festival will host some of the country’s top naturalists, photographers and artists as resource persons.

President inaugurate 4th International Conference on Dharma-Dhamma
The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, will visit Bihar on January 11, 2018 to inaugurate the 4th International Conference on Dharma-Dhamma at Rajgir.

- The Conference is being organised by Nalanda University in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Religion and Society, India Foundation, and the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, with an aim to provide an opportunity to academics and policy makers from India and abroad to share ideas and build collaboration for a better world.

Cabinet approves fixed term for Chairperson and Members of the National Trust
The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to amend Section 4(1) and Section 5(1) of the National Trust for the Welfare of Person with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999 to fix the term of the Chairperson and Members of the Board of National Trust for three years.

- Section 4(1) of the National Trust Act, 1999 provides that the Chairperson or a Member of the Board of National Trust would continue in office beyond the prescribed term of three years until his successor shall have been duly appointed. In case of resignation of the Chairperson, section 5(1) of the Act provides for him to continue in office until his successor is duly appointed by the Government. The wording of the above provisions of the Act in its present form has resulted in continuation of a Chairman for an indefinite period as no suitable successor could be found eligible for appointment.
- The proposed amendments in these provisions of the Act seek to avoid such a situation and will thus
eliminate any chance of prolonged continuation in the same post by any incumbent.

5th Meeting on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine
The 5th Bilateral Technical Meeting on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine between Govt. of India and Malaysia was held at New Delhi which was a part of agreement signed between both countries in 2010.
- The Meeting was presided by Sh. Pramod Kumar Pathak, Joint Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH from Indian side and Deputy Director General Health (Medical), Ministry of Health Malaysia.
- The Meeting had discussed the following agenda:-
  - Establishment of Ayurveda Chair in University of UTAR, Malaysia
  - Professional training in Panchakarma therapy for Malaysian experts in India
  - The evaluation of safety and efficacy of combination Ayurvedic/ traditional products for clinical trials.
  - Safety evaluation of Ayurvedic products based on Good Laboratory Practices (GLP)
  - Bilateral MoU between National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH and Malaysia for Cooperation in the field of Medicinal Plants.
  - Registration of Homeopathic Practitioner and their capacity building module in Malaysia.

5 Day National Youth Festival to begin from 12 January, 2018
Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the events of the National Youth Festival(NYF) on 12 January 2018 through Video conferencing and will also address the gathering.
- The Festival will commence on the occasion of birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, the youth icon of India.
- The inaugural function will be co-presided by Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath, and Union Minister for State (Independent Charge) of Youth Affairs and Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore.
- Union Minister for Culture (Independent Charge) Shri Mahesh Sharma will be the guest of honour on the occasion.
- The Festival is organised by Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of India in collaboration with State Govt. of Uttar Pradesh at Gautam Buddha University, Gautam Budh nagar, Greater Noida from 12th to 16th January, 2018.
- This is the first time that the National Youth Festival is being organized in NCR.
- The objective of organizing NYF is to provide a platform to bring the youth of the country together in an attempt to provide them opportunity to showcase their talents in various activities.
- National Youth Festival (NYF) is the biggest Youth Festival of its kind in the Country.
- This is the 22nd National Youth Festival. The 1st National Youth Festival was held in 1995 in Bhopal.

Indian Air Force Conquers ‘Seven Summits’
An expert team of IAF mountaineers had successfully scaled highest peaks of six different continents earlier and had recently embarked upon its culminating expedition to Mt Vinson in Antarctica to complete Mission Seven Summits.
- A five member team led by Gp Capt RC Tripathi VM(G) was flagged off by Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa PVSM AVSM YSM VM ADC, Chief of Air Staff, on 08 Dec 17.
- The team now has returned successfully after proudly flying the Tricolour and IAF flag on the highest peak of Antarctica on 25 Dec 2017 at 1845 hrs and thus created yet another glorious moment for the IAF.
- With this, Indian Air Force becomes the first organisation in India to have completed ‘Seven Summits’, indeed a rare feat to achieve.

Ministry of Railway launches SFOORTI Application
In a major digital initiative to help plan the traffic flows and optimize freight operations, Ministry of Railways have launched Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information (SFOORTI) App.
- This is an app for Freight Managers which provides features for monitoring and managing freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) Views and Dashboard.
GAIL to Set Up India's 1st Coal-to-gas Conversion Plant
India's first plant to convert coal to synthetic gas is to be set up in Odisha under the supervision of state-run gas transmission utility GAIL, the Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said.

- This synthetic gas is expected to be cheaper than natural gas,” the Minister said.
- According to sources here, GAIL has roped in other public sector undertakings like Coal India, Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers and Fertilizer Corp of India for the project, which will generate ammonia synthesis gas from coal.

ISRO to launch 100th satellite on 12 January
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch its 100th satellite at 9.29 am on January 12 from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

- The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C40), on its 42nd mission, will carry ‘Cartosat-2’, a weather observation satellite and 30 other satellites.
- With the countdown for lift-off already underway, this is ISRO’s first launch in 2018.
- It is also the first after the unsuccessful mission of IRNSS-1H in August last year.

PSLV successfully launches 31 satellites in a single flight
ISRO’s Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its forty second flight, successfully launched the 710 kg Cartosat-2 Series Remote Sensing Satellite along with 30 co-passenger satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota.

- This flight is designated as PSLV-C40.
- The lift-off of PSLV-C40 occurred at 0929 hrs (9:29 am) IST from the First Launch Pad.
- After a flight lasting 16 minutes 37 seconds, the satellites achieved the polar Sun Synchronous Orbit of 503 km inclined at an angle of 97.55 degree to the equator.
- In the succeeding seven minutes, Cartosat-2 series satellite, INS-1C and 28 customer satellites successfully separated from the PSLV in a predetermined sequence.

- The fourth stage of PSLV-C40 fired twice for short durations to achieve a polar orbit of 365 km height in which India’s Microsat successfully separated.
- After separation, the two solar arrays of Cartosat-2 series satellite deployed automatically and ISRO's Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) at Bengaluru took over the control of the satellite.
- The 11 kg INS-1C and the 100 kg class Microsat, the two Indian co-passenger satellites of Cartosat-2, are also being monitored and controlled from ISTRAC, Bengaluru.
- The 28 international customer satellites belong to Canada, Finland, France, Republic of Korea, UK and the USA.

‘Short Film’ making competition on ‘SAUBHAGYA’ Scheme
Pradhan Mantri Har Ghar Sahaj Bijli Yojana (SAUBHAGYA) has been launched by Government of India with the objective of achieving universal household electrification by providing last mile connectivity to all household in rural and urban areas by March 2019.

- Rural Electrification Corporation (REC), a Navratna Company functioning under the purview of the Ministry of Power, is organizing a 'Short Film' making contest to create awareness about the SAUBHAGYA scheme and to involve general public as ambassadors of the programme.
- Categories of the Short Films/Videos should include
  - Role of Electrification in Nation Building
  - Real life stories of impact of Electrification on Women Empowerment
  - Real life stories of impact of Electrification on Entrepreneurship
  - Real life stories of impact of Electrification on Healthcare Improvement
  - Real life stories of impact of Electrification on Education Improvement
  - Real life stories of impact of Electrification on Agriculture

Mumbai to host first summit on Createch in India
The United Kingdom's Department for International Trade (DIT) will hold the India-UK Createch Summit in Mumbai on February 6.

- This first-of-its-kind conference will celebrate and explore the convergence of creativity and technology - Createch - and the innovations produced by its application across a range of sectors.
- The conference will be followed by an evening reception marking the launch of the new VisitBritain marketing campaign in India titled 'Find Your GREAT Britain'.

**Delhi and Punjab richest states, Jain wealthiest community**

Jains are the wealthiest religious community in India. Delhi and Punjab are the richest states. Bihar is the poorest.

- These are the findings of the fourth round of National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), recently released by the ministry of health and family welfare.
- Conducted over 6 lakh Indian households in 2015-16, it also reveals poverty as a largely rural phenomenon.

**Election Commission sets up panel to suggest new poll rules**

The Election Commission has set up a 14-member panel to study how social media and other digital platforms are used ahead of polls and make suggestions on how to adapt the Model Code of Conduct to these changes.

- The panel has three months to suggest changes to Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, which currently prohibits all campaigning 48 hours before voting.
- The Election Commission said Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha will head the committee.

**7th edition of ‘Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav-2018’ to be held in Karnataka**

To celebrate the idea of unity in diversity, the Ministry of Culture is organising the 7th edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat matrix in Karnataka beginning January 14, 2018.

- The Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananth Kumar and The Union Minister of State for Culture (I/C) and Environment, Dr. Mahesh Sharma will inaugurate the Mahotsav on 14th January 2018 at the Jnana Jyothi Auditorium, Palace Road, Gandhi Nagar, and Bengaluru.

- The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme was launched by the Prime Minister on 31st October, 2016 to promote engagement amongst the people of different states/UTs so as to enhance mutual understanding and bonding between people of diverse cultures, thereby securing stronger unity and integrity of India.
- The State paired with Karnataka is Uttarakhand.

**President of India Inaugurates Economic Democracy Conclave**

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the ‘Economic Democracy Conclave’ organised by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini at Thane, Maharashtra on January 14, 2018.

- The President said that it is very important for our country and society to strengthen economic democracy through entrepreneurship.
- He praised the Prabodhini team for its contribution to strengthening the political, economic and social dimensions of our democracy for the past 35 years.

**Delhi’s Teen Murti Chowk renamed Teen Murti Haifa Chowk**

As a symbolic gesture of friendship with Israel, India renamed the iconic Teen Murti Chowk, a war memorial, during the visit of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

- The new name of the war memorial located in a roundabout near the Teen Murti Bhavan, the official residence of the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru will be, Teen Murti Haifa Chowk.
- Teen Murti War Memorial has three life-size bronze statues representing the Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers who participated in the Battle of Haifa for the 15 Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade.

**Ministry of Petroleum launches Saksham 2018 Campaign**

The Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has launched month long Saksham 2018 (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav).

- Saksham is annual flagship event of PCRA with active involvement of Oil & Gas PSUs along with other stakeholders like State Governments.
During this month long Saksham-2018, various interactive programs and activities are planned with the campaign on fuel conservation, getting a kick-start in a mega inaugural function to be held at Siri Fort Auditorium in Delhi on 16th January, 2018.

**Government plans to auction 'enemy' properties worth Rs 1 lakh crore**

Over 9,400 'enemy' properties, worth more than Rs 1 lakh crore, are set to be auctioned with the home ministry starting the process of identifying all such estates, officials said.

- The properties were left behind by people who took citizenship of Pakistan and China.
- The move came after the amendment of the 49-year-old Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Act which ensured that the heirs of those who migrated to Pakistan and China during Partition and afterwards will have no claim over the properties left behind in India.

**Government to raise 15 new battalions for Pakistan, China borders**

The government is planning to raise 15 new battalions in the country's two important border guarding forces - the BSF and the ITBP - to fortify defence along the strategic frontiers with Pakistan, Bangladesh and China.

- A senior official in the Union Home Ministry told PTI that it is "actively considering" raising six fresh battalions in the Border Security Force (BSF) and nine in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force.
- Each battalion of these forces comprises about 1,000 operational jawans and officers.

**70th Army Day; 15 January 2018**

The Indian Army is all set to celebrate 70th Army Day, with parades and shows at its major locations across the country.

- The celebration marks the day Field Marshal KM Cariappa took over as the first Indian chief of the nation's Army in 1949.
- The parade will be reviewed by Army chief General Bipin Rawat. He will also present gallantry and other awards to army personnel.

**List of MoUs signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Israel to India**

MoU on Cyber Security Cooperation between India and Israel

- MoU between the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the Ministry of Energy on Cooperation in oil and Gas Sector
- Protocol between India and Israel on Amendments to the Air Transport Agreement
- Agreement on Film-co-production between India and Israel
- MoU between the Central Council for Research in Homeopathy, Ministry of AYUSH and the Centre for Integrative Complementary Medicine, Shaare Zedek Medical Center on Cooperation in the field of Research in Homeopathic Medicine
- MoU between Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and the Technion- Israel Institute of Technology for cooperation in the field of space
- Memorandum of Intent between Invest India and Invest in Israel
- Letter of Intent between IOCL and Phinergy Ltd for cooperation in the area of metal-air batteries
- Letter of Intent between IOCL and Yeda Research and Development Co Ltd for cooperation in the area of concentrated solar thermal technologies

**Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurates Gigabit Connectivity with Sri Lanka**

Union Minister for Law and Justice and Electronics and IT Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad is on an official visit to Sri Lanka.

- On the first day of his visit, he inaugurated the gigabit connectivity between the National Knowledge Network of India and LEARN network of Sri Lanka.
- This dedicated high speed internet connectivity will boost the collaboration among the academic institutions of India and Sri Lanka.

**Union Home Minister inaugurates IWDRI 2018**

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) in New Delhi.

- The two-day workshop is being organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
• Underlining the importance of Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Shri Rajnath Singh said that it creates opportunities for economic growth and is at the core of sustainable development.

UIDAI to add face verification option for Aadhaar authentication
The Unique Identification Authority of India, the Aadhaar-issuing authority, has decided to enable face recognition as another means of authentication from July 1, 2018.
• The decision comes at a time when problems arising due to mismatch of biometrics are being reported about, including those faced by senior citizens with fading fingerprints.

Odisha CM launches Mukhya Mantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana
Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has launched the Mukhya Mantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana for the welfare of the artistes in Odisha.
• The age limit of the male artistes has been relaxed from 60 to 50 years of age, and from 50 to 40 years of age for female artistes to get pension.
• Currently, 4000 artistes are getting the monthly pension. However, with the new age relaxation, around 50,000 artistes will be enlisted and reap the benefit.

Israeli PM Inaugurates Raisina Dialogue In Delhi
Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is in India for a 6-day official visit, inaugurated the 3rd annual Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi.
• The Raisina Dialogue is India’s premiere foreign policy and geo-political conference.
• Prime Minister Netanyahu will be the first foreign head of government to speak at the Raisina Dialogue.
• The Raisina Dialogue is jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Observer Research Foundation.
• The theme of the Raisina Dialogue this year is ‘Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms’.

MoS, Textiles inaugurates 60th India International Garment Fair
The 60th edition of India International Garment Fair (IIGF) was inaugurated by Minister of State for Textiles, Shri Ajay Tamta, at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
• Recalling that business worth US $200 million was conducted in the previous edition, the Minister extended his best wishes to all participating buyers and exporters.
• A total of 294 exporters from 11 states are participating at the 60th IIGF.

PM Modi, Israeli PM Netanyahu dedicate iCreate to the nation
Prime Minister Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu dedicated to the nation, the iCREATE facility located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad.
• iCreate is an independent Centre created with the objective of facilitating entrepreneurship through a blend of creativity, innovation, engineering, product design and leveraging emerging technologies to deal with major issues such as food security, water, connectivity, cybersecurity, IT and electronics, energy, bio-medical equipment and devices etc.
• iCreate aims to develop an ecosystem in India to generate quality entrepreneurs.

65th meeting of Central Advisory Board of Education held in New Delhi
The 65th Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) was held under the Chairmanship of Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi.
• The meeting was attended by the Union Minister for Culture and MoS(Independent Charge) Ministry of
Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr. Mahesh Sharma and Dr. Satya Pal Singh, Minister of State for HRD.

- The Education Ministers of the States, CABE Members actively participated in the discussions.

Successful Fifth Flight Test of Agni-5 Ballistic Missile
Long Range Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile, Agni-5, was successfully flight tested for its full range from Dr Abdul Kalam Island, Odisha.

- This was the fifth test of the Missile and the third consecutive one from a canister on a road mobile launcher.
- All the five missions have been successful.
- The flight performance of the missile was tracked and monitored by radars, range stations and tracking systems all through the mission.

Government to set up $350 million fund to finance solar projects
Government will set up a $350 million fund to finance solar projects, Power Minister R.K. Singh said, as the country steps up efforts to achieve its ambitious target of adding 175 gigawatts (GW) in renewable energy by 2022.

- India will need at least $125 billion to fund a plan to increase the share of renewable power supply in the country's grid by 2022.
- The country, which receives twice as much sunshine as European nations, wants to make solar central to its renewable expansion.
- Installed renewable power capacity is currently about 60 GW

Andhra CM launches e-Pragati platform
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu has launched the e-Pragati CORE platform, which will be a common portal for all citizen services online.

- As envisioned by the Chief Minister, a single source of truth and one portal to monitor everything, from insights to action, will be enabled by this platform.

MEITY launches Cyber Surakshit Bharat to strengthen Cybersecurity
The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), announced the Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative in association with National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and industry partners at an inaugural event in Delhi.

- It will include an awareness program on the importance of cybersecurity; a series of workshops on best practices.
- Cyber Surakshit Bharat is the first public-private partnership of its kind and will leverage the expertise of the IT industry in cybersecurity.

Silvassa tops the List of Cities selected in Round 4 of Smart Cities
Shri Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing & Urban Affairs has announced the Round 4 winning cities of National Smart Cities Challenge.

- The Minister informed that Silvassa from Dadar & Nagar Haveli has topped the list of winning cities in this round of competition.
- Other winning cities are –
  - Erode, Tamil Nadu
  - Diu, Daman & Diu
  - Biharsharif, Bihar
  - Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh
  - Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh
  - Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh
  - Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh and
  - Kavaratti, Lakshwadeep

Gehlot inaugurates national conference on improving accessibility
In a path breaking initiative to empower Persons with Disabilities, 100 Accessible websites of various State Governments/UTs under Accessible India Campaign were launched by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot in New Delhi.

- Websites were launched on the occasion of ‘National Conference on Improving Accessibility’.
- Accessible Websites are those websites into which Persons with Disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web, and that they can contribute to the Web.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) initiated a “Website
Accessibility Project” for State Government/Union Territories

Maitre-2 bus services to connect India and Bangladesh
Maitre-2, the second passenger bus to Kolkata via Dhaka is started from Agartala, Tripura, to give a boost to the trans-border relationship between India and Bangladesh.

- Recently, the Maitre-2 buses were flagged off by Tripura Road Transport Corporation Chairman Rajendra Reang and MLA Ratan Das in Agartala.
- The first Maitre bus service was launched in the year 2015.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban Launches Smart Star-Rating
Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs along with the Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Manohar Parrikar launched the ‘Protocol for Star Rating of Garbage-Free Cities’ in Goa.

- The star-rating initiative, developed by the Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban will be rating cities on a 7-star rating system based on multiple cleanliness indicators.
- Cities can be rated as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 star based on their compliance with the protocol conditions specified for each of the rating.
- Further city should be ODF(Open Defecation Free) before it could be given rating of 3 star or above.
- While cities may self-declare themselves as 1-star, 2-star or 4-star, MoHUA will carry out an additional verification through an independent third party to certify cities as 3-star, 5-star or 7-star.
- Cities will need to get recertified themselves every year to retain their star-status.

Fourth India International Science Festival to be held in Lucknow
The fourth edition of the India International Science Festival will be held in Lucknow.

- The decision to hold the Festival in Lucknow was taken at the first preparatory meeting for the 4th India International Science Festival (IISF) chaired by Union Minister for Science & Technology, Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
- The 1st IISF was held at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) New Delhi in December, 2015.

Delhi launches Girl Child Week
Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched Girl Child Week programme to celebrate the girl child and spread awareness on gender equality.

- The Girl Child Week is held from 18 January to 24 January 2018.
- 24 January is celebrated as National Girl Child Day.

Centre to declare 2018 as ‘national year of millets’
Nutrient-rich millets have got a boost with the Union government deciding to declare 2018 as the ‘national year of millets’.

- This decision has been taken following a request by Karnataka, which is the country’s leader in the millet sector.
- At the inauguration of the three-day international trade fair of organics and millets, Union Statistics and Programme Implementation Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda said the Union Agriculture Ministry had already completed the formalities in this regard.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) Crosses One Crore Mark
Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for his un-daunting support to the Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA), as the programme crossed one crore mark in antenatal check-ups.

- The Union Health Minister stated that Hon’ble Prime Minister of India had envisioned that 9th of every month, symbolizing the 9 months of pregnancy, should be dedicated to pregnant women.
- The PMSMA programme was launched in 2016 to fulfil his vision and ensure comprehensive and quality antenatal checkups to pregnant women across India.

Centre bans import of pet coke for trading purpose in Delhi and NCR
As part of measures to control air pollution, the Union environment ministry has banned import of pet coke for purpose of trading in Delhi and its neighbouring states.

- It has notified do's and don'ts for its sale and use in cement plants and other end user industrial units, including refineries.
- The ministry listed 13 points to regulate use of pet coke which is one of the key sources of air pollution in the region.
- The notification was issued in compliance with the 2017 Supreme Court order.

**Chennai to host DefExpo in April**

For the first time, Tamil Nadu will host DefExpo 2018, an international exhibition on Defence, in April, showcasing some of the latest technologies and products manufactured by both Indian and foreign companies.

- It will also give an opportunity for the State to showcase its strength as one the largest manufacturing hubs for defence production.
- The event, which is the largest in the defence sector in India, will attract visitors from over 80 countries, said Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

**National Conference of State, PSBs and RRBs of NHFDC held**

A National Conference of the State channelizing Agencies, Public Sector Banks and Regional Rural Banks of National Handicapped Finance and Development Corporation (NHFDC) held on 19th January 2018 in New Delhi.

- Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot and Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar addressed the participating agencies and advised for better coordination with NHFDC and Channelising agencies for the smooth and better implementation of NHFDC Schemes for the benefit of larger number of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan).

**International Dam Safety Conference to be held at Thiruvananthapuram**

India will be hosting the International Dam Safety Conference - 2018 at Thiruvananthapuram on January 23-24.

**AP-Zurich sign sister state agreement**

The Andhra Pradesh Government and the Canton of Zurich have signed a letter of intent, to promote mutual prosperity and development.

- The agreement was signed in the presence of Chief Minister Naidu by Finance Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu and Government Counselor Minister Carmen Walker Spah for sister state relation.
- This will bring the State of Andhra Pradesh and Canton of Zurich closer and ensure that a framework is created, which supports the exchange between both the parties.

**AYUSH Minister lays foundation stone for Homeopathy Research Institute**

The Minister of State (IC), for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik laid the foundation stone for Central Research Institute (CRI) in Jaipur on 22nd January 2018.

- This will be the third CRI under the aegis of Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), an autonomous body of Ministry of AYUSH for undertaking scientific research in Homoeopathy, with 23 institutes across the country.
- The institute is also contributing to the Swasthya Rakshan Program at five adopted villages.

**Inauguration of ASEAN India Business and Investment and Expo**

The ASEAN – India Business and Investment Meet and Expo was jointly inaugurated by Mr Suresh Prabhu, Hon’ble Minister of Commerce and Industry, India with the ASEAN Ministers and Gen. (Dr.) (Retd.) V K Singh, Hon’ble Minister of State for External Affairs, India.
The inaugural plenary, on the theme of ‘Promoting Mutual Trade and Investment for Shared Prosperity’ covered discussions on strengthening India’s economic relations with the countries in the East with both sides aiming to scale up bilateral trade and investment in the region.

The session focused on trade facilitation measures taken to promote trade between India and ASEAN countries in manufacturing sector, promoting SME ecosystem to enhance entrepreneurship quotient in the region and startup culture to create new pipeline of ideas.

2500 government buildings to be fitted with super-efficient ACs

The Government has decided to install super-efficient air-conditioners in 2,500 of its buildings for the first time in the country.

- Launching the replacement of conventional lights with LED lights in East Delhi, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan said that one lakh conventional air conditioners will be replaced by super-efficient ACs that will consume 30% less power and will be environment-friendly.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that all automobiles will be converted to electric vehicles, keeping in view the government’s commitment to shift to electric mobility by the year 2030.
- “Over 88 crore LED bulbs have been distributed across India, both by government and private agencies under the Mission Innovation scheme of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.
- The procurement cost of these bulbs was Rs. 310/- in 2014, whereas it is procured at Rs. 70/- now,” the Minister said.

Raipur organises nation's first 'Kachra Mahotsav'

The Raipur Municipal Corporation in Chhattisgarh has organised the India’s first garbage festival that in Raipur.

- The aim is to increase awareness, use the waste generated in the city creatively and to showcase multiple techniques for reusing things that are labelled as garbage.

The three-day festival was filled with workshops, talks, performances and also some interesting installations.

Maharashtra to launch weather advisory system for farmers

The Maharashtra government is all set to introduce a system to issue daily district-wise weather advisory to farmers across the state.

- The system has a capacity to generate weather alerts for every ten minutes, if required.
- The state is taking a step forward to explore the possibility of issuing weather advisory for farmers to minimise their crop losses due to adverse weather conditions,” Agriculture Commissioner Sachindra Pratap Singh told.

Khandu inaugurates World War II Memorial Museum in Arunachal

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated the World War II Memorial Museum in the state’s Changlang district bordering Myanmar.

- Built by the Union Culture Ministry, the Rs 2.25 crore museum in memory of those who laid down their lives in WWII is located adjacent to the historic Stilwell Road.
- Khandu visited the war memorial where remnants of the war, personal belongings of the soldiers and others involved were preserved.

International Conference on ‘Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Election Process’

Flagging off the 8th National Voters Day Celebrations scheduled to be held on 25th January 2018, Election Commission of India (ECI) hosted a one-day International Conference on the subject ‘Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in the Election Process’ in New Delhi.

- Chief Election Commissioner of India Mr. O.P.Rawat, reiterated ECI’s resolve to uphold the sanctity of free, fair and peaceful elections in keeping with the rich democratic traditions of India.
SARAS PT1N makes its maiden flight
SARAS PT1N (14 seater) designed and developed by CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL), a frontline aerospace research laboratory, has successfully made its maiden flight.
- Union Minister for Science & Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, has congratulated the scientists of CSIR-NAL and other agencies involved in the successful maiden flight.
- The aircraft took off at about 11 a.m from HAL airport and flew for about 40 minutes at the maximum height of 8500 ft at the speed of 145 knots.

Rapid Reporting System for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls launched
Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shri Rakesh Srivastava launched the Phase -1 i.e. the beneficiary module of the Rapid Reporting System for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls - a web based online monitoring for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls in New Delhi.
- This Portal has been developed in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC).

Nitin Gadkari to lay the foundation stone for Ghazipur Intermodal Terminal
Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari, will lay the foundation stone for an Intermodal Terminal at Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh.
- The Rs 155 Cr terminal is being constructed by the Inland Waterways Authority of India as part of the World Bank aided Jal Marg Vikas Project on river Ganga or the NW-I, that aims to augment the navigational capacity of the river.
- The terminal is expected to provide between 5000 direct and indirect jobs. The first phase of the terminal construction is expected to be completed by April, 2020.

India to host 16th International Energy Forum meet
The 16th International Energy Forum (IEF) Ministerial meeting will be held in New Delhi on April 10 to 12.
- It will be hosted by Government of India in New Delhi and co-hosted by the Government of China and South Korea.
- Representatives from 92 countries will be participating in the conference, including 72 member countries of IEF and 20 guest countries.
- India had last hosted the IEF ministerial conference in 1996.

7th Asia Steel International Conference from Feb 6
The 7th Asia Steel International Conference will be held in Bhubaneswar from February 6 to 9.
- Tata Steel, in association with the Indian Institute of Metals, announced it.
- The last Asia Steel conference was held in 2015 at Yokohama, Japan.
- This major conference is held every three years and provides a platform for exchange of knowledge on various aspects of the global steel industry.

National Voters' Day: 25 January
In order to encourage more young voters to take part in the political process, Government of India has decided to celebrate January 25 every year as 'National Voters' Day'.
- It started from January 25, 2011 to mark Election Commission’s foundation day.
- This year, National Voters’ Day theme is ‘Accessible Elections’.

Jammu & Kashmir Student Exchange Programme
‘Maitreyi Yatra’ concludes
The closing ceremony of Jammu & Kashmir Student Exchange programme ‘Maitreyi Yatra’ was held at National Bal Bhawan.
- The Student Exchange Programme organized by Ministry of Human Resource development provides a good opportunity for the youth of J&K to be acquainted with culture, language and development story of different parts of the country.
- Union Minister for Human Resource Development Shri Prakash Javadekar was the chief guest for the function.
President of India Receives ASEAN Heads of State and Government
The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, received the ASEAN Heads of State and Government at Rashtrapati Bhavan on January 25, 2018 and hosted a lunch in their honour.

- Speaking on the occasion, the President said that India-ASEAN relations have come a long way since we established our Dialogue Partnership with ASEAN on January 28, 1992.
- Today, ASEAN is a Strategic Partner for India.
- We have 30 dialogue mechanisms between India and ASEAN, including Annual Summits and 7 Ministerial Meetings in a wide range of sectors.

Ministry of Highways signs MoU with IL&FS for construction of Zojila tunnel
An MoU was signed between National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDCL) under the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, and M/S IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd for construction of the 14.150 km long, 2-lane bi-directional Zojila Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir.

- This would be India’s longest road tunnel and the longest bi-directional tunnel in Asia.
- The construction of this tunnel will provide all weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh and will bring about all round economic and socio-cultural integration of these regions.

Kolkata becomes first Indian metro to get a floating market
Kolkata is now witness to a floating market, the first of its kind across any metro.

- The market, as the name suggests, will be located on a water-body with boats doubling up as shops.
- The market, located on the eastern fringes of the city, was inaugurated by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and it is now open to the public.

India is the leading country in coconut production
Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that the Coconut Development Board’s (CDB) major schemes are focusing on coconut production, productivity, processing for coconut products, value addition, marketing, and export promotion in Bihar.

- The Minister said this on the occasion of the inauguration of the Farmers’ Training Centre cum Regional Office Building of Coconut Development Board in Patna.
- The Minister said that India is leading in the global coconut production and productivity.
- He said that the annual coconut production is 2395 crore from 20.82 lakh hectare and the productivity is 11505 coconuts/hectare.
- Coconut contributes to about Rs.27900 crore to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Himachal CM launches women safety helpline and mobile app
Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has launched 24X7 ‘Gudiya’ helpline, named after 16-year old rape and murder victim of Kotkhai.

- Chief Minister also launched ‘Shakti Button’- a mobile app linked to police control rooms for ensuring the safety of women in the state.
- Any women at the time of an untoward incident can press the red button on the mobile app and an alert will immediately reach the police response team.
- Also, the Chief Minister also launched Hoshiyar Singh help line on toll free number 1090.

Delhi to host informal WTO Ministerial meet in March
India will host an informal WTO Ministerial meeting in March this year. The meeting will be held in Delhi on March 19 – 20.

- India’s offering to host the meeting was made after trade ministers from various countries including Australia, Japan and Switzerland met for an informal WTO ministerial gathering in Davos.
- Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the WTO Deepak Jagdish Saksena attended the informal meeting held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) annual summit in Davos.

21st edition of India International Seafood Show opens in Goa
The 21st edition of the biennial India International Seafood Show opened in Margao in South Goa.
Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar inaugurated the three-day flagship trade event.

It is being organized by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) and the Seafood Export Association of India (SEAI).

Government to set up apex cyber crime coordination centre
To deal with cyber crimes such as financial frauds, circulation of communal and pornographic contents, the Union Home Ministry is planning to set up an apex coordination centre and has asked states to establish a similar mechanism in every district.

- It has also released Rs 83 crore for setting up of a cyber forensic training laboratory-cum-training centre for police officials in each state.
- The funds were given under the Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children Scheme.
- The apex centre - Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) - would be set up in Delhi.

Siddheshwar Swami turns down Padma Shri
Karnataka-based seer, Siddheshwar Swami, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to express his unwillingness to accept the prestigious Padma Shri award.

- In the letter, he mentioned that he was grateful to the Indian government, but he has little interest in awards.
- According to media reports, he has clarified that his refusal has nothing to do with politics. He has never accepted honours in his life.
- He even refused to receive Hon. Doctorate Award announced by Karnataka University a few years back.

‘Aadhaar’ is Oxford’s first Hindi word of the year
The Hindi Word of the Year for 2017 is ‘AADHAAR’. This was announced by Oxford Dictionaries at the Jaipur Literature Festival.

- ‘Aadhaar’ also becomes the first Oxford Dictionaries Hindi Word of the Year.
- The accompanying shortlisted words include Notebandi, Swachh, Vikaas, Yoga and Bahubali.

Over Rs 5 lakh crore allocated for Bharatmala project
President Ram Nath Kovind said that Rs 5,35,000 crore have been allocated for the Bharatmala Project aimed at boosting road connectivity in the country.

- About 53,000 km of national highways have been identified to increase efficiency of the national corridor.
- Bharatmala is an umbrella programme of the Centre that seeks to improve efficiency of road traffic movement in the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps.

Acid attack victims to get quota in central government jobs
People with autism, mental illnesses, intellectual disability and victims of acid attacks will now get quota in central government jobs.

- In case of direct recruitment, four per cent of the total number of vacancies, up from the existing three per cent, in groups A, B and C shall be reserved for people with benchmark disabilities.
- Benchmark disability means a person with not less than forty per cent of a specified disability.

First ever ‘Khadi Haat’ inaugurated in Delhi
Marking the 69th Republic Day celebrations, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) have launched the first ever ‘Khadi Haat’ in the country.

- The Khadi Haat was inaugurated on January 25 by Union Minister of State Giriraj Singh in Connaught Place, New Delhi.
- New Delhi Lok Sabha MP Meenakshi Lekhi, KVIC Chairman V K Saxena and NDMC Chairman Naresh Kumar were present on the occasion.

3-day international bird festival at Dudhwa National Park
A three-day international bird festival will be held at the Dudhwa National Park in Uttar Pradesh from February 9 with nearly 200 leading ornithologists expected to attend.

- Eminent documentary maker Mike Pandey would act as the brand ambassador of the festival.
- During the three-day event, the bird experts would visit various parts of Dudhwa to gather information about the 450 bird species existing there.

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International spice conference in Jaipur from Feb 4-7
The third edition of international spice conference will be held at Jaipur from February 4 to 7.
- Over 750 delegates from various countries, including representatives of international spice associations, policy makers, and farmers, are expected to participate in the four-day meet.
- The central theme of the 2018 conference would be 'Managing Disruptions through Transformation and Collaboration'.

Stree Swabhiman Initiative launched for Women Health and Hygiene
The Information Technology and Electronics Ministry of the country has announced to launch the new scheme initiative under Stree Swabhiman Drive.
- The new initiative has been introduced by the Ministry and CSC to ensure and maintain perfect health for Women and at the same time to maintain Health Hygiene.

Indian, Vietnamese armies hold first military exercise
Armies of India and Vietnam have began a six-day-long military exercise in Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.
- It is the first military exercise between the two countries.
- The exercise named 'VINBAX' will continue for six days.
- India and Vietnam have been exploring ways to strengthen defence cooperation.

Prime Minister to launch Khelo India School Games in the Capital
Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will launch the first Khelo India School Games at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on January 31, 2018.
- The Khelo India programme has been introduced to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country and establishing India as a great sporting nation.
- Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by a High-Powered Committee will be provided annual financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.
- The Khelo India School Games are being held from 31st January to 8th February, 2018 in New Delhi.
- Under-17 athletes have been invited to participate across 16 disciplines.

Ripple becomes second-largest crypto currency by market cap
Ripple surged nearly 56 percent to an all-time high, surpassing ethereum as the second-largest cryptocurrency by market capitalization.
- Officially called XRP, ripple climbed 55.9 percent to a record high of $2.23, according to Coin Market Cap.
- The digital currency had a market cap of $86.3 billion, surpassing ethereum's $73 billion.

Banks gearing up to refer 24 of 28 large NPA accounts to NCLT
With the closure of RBI's deadline to resolve the 28 identified large stressed accounts in the second list, banks are gearing up to refer as many as 24 of them for insolvency proceedings.
- In August, the Reserve Bank had asked banks to either resolve the 28 more large stressed accounts or refer them to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) by December 31.
- These accounts together account for 40 per cent of bad loans of around Rs 4 lakh crore.
- The biggest of the 28 cases is Videocon Industries at Rs 47,000 crore.
- RBI has also asked SBI to move to NCLT against Anrak Aluminium.

SBI to start insolvency proceedings against 12 defaulters
State Bank of India is set to initiate insolvency proceedings against at least a dozen defaulting companies including Videocon Industries after failing to recast their loans by the December deadline.
- The country's largest bank in terms of assets will refer Videocon Industries, Visa Steel, Monnet Power, Uttam Steel, Essar Projects, Videocon Telecom, Jaiswal Neco and Jai Balaji to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) starting January 2.
India's GDP growth rate may accelerate to 7% in 2018-19: HSBC
India’s growth rate is expected to accelerate over the coming year and is likely to improve further to 7.6 per cent by 2019-20 as key sectors would revive from disruptions related to the implementation of GST and demonetisation.
• According to an HSBC report, India's GDP growth rate is expected to accelerate to 7.0 per cent in 2018-19 from 6.5 per cent in this fiscal.

Parliament gives nod to NABARD (Amendment) Bill, 2017
The Parliament has gave its nod to a Bill that allows the central government to increase from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 30,000 crore the limit to which it can increase the capital of NABARD.
• The bill seeks to amend the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981.
• The 1981 Act provides for the establishment of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), responsible for providing and regulating facilities like credit for agricultural and industrial development in the rural areas.

RBI puts Allahabad Bank under prompt corrective action
Public sector Allahabad Bank said the Reserve Bank has put the lender under prompt corrective action framework post an on-site inspection of high NPAs and negative return of assets for fiscal 2016-17.
• The RBI inspection has revealed high net NPAs (non-performing assets) and negative ROA (return on assets) for two consecutive years, it said further.
• For the fiscal 2016-17, the bank had trimmed its net losses to Rs 313.51 crore against Rs 743.31 crore in 2015-16.

Nabard, SBI sign MoU with NGOs for financing of JLGs in Bengal
The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) and State Bank of India (SBI) have jointly signed an MoU with non-government organisations (NGOs) from West Bengal for financing of 2,500 Joint Liability Groups (JLGs), or informal credit group of farmers.
• The agreement was with five NGOs for promotion of JLGs in Purulia, Paschim Medinipur, Purba Medinipur, Burdwan and North 24 Parganas districts of the state.
• SBI's Chief General Manager, Kolkata circle, Partha Pratim Sengupta said JLGs are basically are credit groups of small and marginal farmers who do not have proper title to their farmland.

GOI announces launch of 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018
Government of India has announced to launch of 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018 commencing from 10th January 2018 to enable resident citizens/HUF to invest in a taxable bond, without any monetary ceiling.
• The Bonds are open to investment by individuals (including Joint Holdings) and Hindu Undivided Families. NRIs are not eligible for making investments in these Bonds.
• The Bonds will be issued for a minimum amount of Rs.1,000/- (face value) and in multiples thereof. Accordingly, the issue price, will be Rs.1,000/- for every Rs.1,000/- (Nominal).
• There will be no maximum limit for investment in the Bonds.
• The Bonds will have a maturity of 7 years carrying interest at 7.75% per annum payable half-yearly. The cumulative value of Rs. 1,000/- at the end of seven years will be Rs. 1,703.

ICICI Bank takes Western India Shipyard to NCLT
Private lender ICICI Bank has initiated insolvency proceeding against Western India Shipyard, a subsidiary of ABG Shipyard which too is facing bankruptcy proceedings.
• The company has outstanding debt of Rs 130 crore and had reported losses of Rs 39 crore as on March 2016.
• Over 475 companies have been referred to National Company Law Tribunal by lenders for recovery of dues.

APGVB introduces Desktop ATMs in rural India
In a trendy initiative, the Andhra Pradesh Grameena Vikas Bank (APGVB) has operationalised it’s first desktop ATM at Kasibugga in Mandi Bazar of Warangal.
The mini-ATM within the branch premises will facilitate customers to withdraw small amounts. At the same time, regular bank account holders can withdraw money and do other banking activities. The model will be scaled up to 100 in the near future, said Narasi Reddy, Chairman.

**RBI to issue new Rs 10 currency notes**
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will shortly introduce new Rs 10 currency notes under the Mahatma Gandhi series.
- The old Rs 10 banknotes will remain legal.
- The central bank has already printed around 1 billion pieces of the new Rs 10 banknotes.
- The new banknotes will have chocolate brown colour as the base and will also bear the picture of Odisha’s Konark Sun Temple on the reverse side.

**Govt pegs GDP growth rate at 6.5% for the current fiscal**
The advance estimates of the GDP growth stood at 6.5% for the current fiscal FY18, according to the Central Statistics Office.
- The GDP growth in the previous fiscal (FY 17) stood at 7.1%.
- The GDP for the first half of FY18 registered a growth rate of 6%. The GDP growth rate for the first quarter of FY18 fell to a three-year low of 5.7%.
- The numbers come just days ahead of the Union Budget 2018 which will be presented on February 1, 2018.

**Yes Bank, Nearby Tech bring cardless-pinless ATM service**
Fintech startup Nearby Technologies has tied up with Yes Bank to provide Aadhaar-enabled cardless and pinless ATM service by which customers can deposit or withdraw money at retailers’ place.
- Using the PayNEARBY mobile application on a smart phone, a retailer can become an Aadhaar ATM/Aadhaar Bank branch for cash withdrawals and deposits by a customer.
- Yes Bank and Nearby worked closely with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to launch this service.

**Paytm Payments Bank, IndusInd tie-up for fixed deposit facility**
Paytm Payments Bank has partnered IndusInd Bank to introduce a facility to create a fixed deposit when the customer balance exceeds Rs 1 lakh at the end of day.
- Paytm Payments Bank customers can redeem their deposits instantly, anytime without paying any pre-closure or miscellaneous charges and can earn up to 6.85% annual interest.
- Additionally, if a customer becomes a senior citizen before the maturity period, the account will be auto renewed under the senior citizen scheme.

**TIHCL gets RBI nod to operate as NBFC**
Telangana Industrial Health Clinic Ltd (TIHCL), a State government initiative, has got RBI clearance to register and function as a non-banking finance company (NBFC).
- It will be the first State promoted and co-financing NBFC, according to B Yerram Raju, TIHCL’s advisor and director.
- TIHCL was floated in 2017 with a corpus of ₹100 crore, which included contributions from the State and Central governments, financial institutions, industrial units and high networth individuals.

**PNB ties up with NSFDC for assisting SC families**
Punjab National Bank (PNB) and National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) have tied up to provide financial assistance for economic empowerment of persons belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) families living below Double Poverty Line (DPL).
- Under this tie-up, PNB would act as a channelising agent for the loan schemes of NSFDC.
- Concessional finance and skill training grants would be provided to unemployed SC persons living below Double Poverty Line.

**World Bank projects 7.3% growth for India**
India’s growth rate in 2018 is projected to hit 7.3% and 7.5% in the next two years, according to the World Bank, which said the country has “enormous growth potential” compared to other emerging economies.
- India is estimated to have grown at 6.7% in 2017 despite initial setbacks from demonetisation and the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

**IndusInd Bank to roll out battery-powered payment cards**
IndusInd Bank and Dynamics Inc announced plans to introduce the first battery-powered, interactive payment cards in the Indian market in 2018.

- The new IndusInd Bank card from Pennsylvania-based Dynamics has multiple buttons that let the consumer use a single card to pay in multiple ways.

**India top borrower from China-sponsored AIIB in 2017**
India has emerged as a top borrower from the China-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with USD 1.5 billion worth of loans last year and USD three billion more in the pipeline.

- Next to India, Indonesia has emerged as the second largest borrower with about USD 600 million loans.

**Points to Remember**
- India is the second largest share holder in the bank which has an authorised capital of USD 100 billion.
- China is the largest shareholder with 26.06 per cent voting shares in the bank. India is the second largest shareholder with 7.5 per cent followed by Russia 5.93 per cent and Germany with 4.5 per cent.
- Its headquarters is in Beijing. Jin Liquin is the president of AIIB.
- AIIB has 61 members. It was established on 25 December 2015.

**IDFC Bank, Capital First announce the merger**
IDFC Bank has announced its merger with the Mumbai-based Capital First, which has more than 5 million customers in retail and small and medium enterprises.

- Shareholders in Capital First will receive 139 shares of the bank for every 10 shares held, the lender said in a stock exchange filing.
- The deal is conditional on central bank and other regulatory approvals.
- Vaidyanathan, currently Chairman and MD of Capital First, will succeed Rajiv Lall as MD and CEO of the combined entity.

**Italy to ‘partner’ in Bengal Global Business Summit**
Italy will participate as a partner country in the upcoming Bengal Global Business Summit (BGBS) for the second year in a row.

- A delegation of over 30 companies from Italy, mostly from transport, infrastructure, metals and leather sectors, will be present at the two-day annual investment summit to be held on January 16 and 17.
- The delegation, headed by Italian Ambassador to India Lorenzo Angeloni, will open the celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

**Federal Bank ties up with Hedge Equities**
Federal Bank has entered into a strategic partnership with Hedge Equities Ltd for providing Portfolio Investment Scheme (PIS) services to NRIs.

- A formal agreement was executed in which Jose K Mathew (EVP & Head Retail Business, Federal Bank) and Alex Babu (MD, Hedge Equities Ltd) exchanged the MoU announcing the tie-up.
- Federal Bank is authorised by the RBI to issue permission letter to NRIs on behalf of the RBI to transact in secondary market.

**Haryana to set up NBFC for efficient management of funds**
The Haryana government has decided to form a non-banking financial company (NBFC) — Haryana State Financial Services Limited — to act as an in-house treasury manager for efficient management of surplus funds of State public enterprises and autonomous bodies.

- The NBFC will provide better deposit rates on overnight funds of State government entities.
- Besides, it would provide better deposit rates throughout the year to State government entities, said State Finance Minister Abhimanyu.
- The NBFC would enable quick and hassle-free lending and create financial discipline among the State government entities.

**Bank of Baroda partners with Invoicemart as TReDS partner**
Digital invoice discounting marketplace - Invoicemart has tied up with state-run lender Bank of Baroda to discount invoices for MSMEs.

- Buyers and sellers registered on the marketplace will now be able to access funding from Bank of Baroda.
- Invoicemart is a joint venture between Axis Bank Ltd and mjunction services ltd.
- TReDS is an online mechanism that helps MSMEs unlock working capital without the hassle of applying for loans.
- Recently Government of India advised all public sector banks and undertakings to get registered on TReDS platforms.

**FY'19 growth at 7.1%: India Ratings**

India's economic growth is set to bounce back to 7.1 per cent next fiscal, from the estimated 6.5 per cent in 2017-18,, rating agency India Ratings said.

- In its outlook for 2018-19, the agency projected average retail inflation at 4.6 per cent.
- The World Bank too has projected a 7.3 per cent growth for India in 2018.

**Yes Bank ties up with Amplus Energy Solutions**

Amplus Energy Solutions announced entering into a pact with private sector lender Yes Bank for strategic tie-up to co-finance projects in the solar energy space in India.

- The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed at International Solar Alliance pavilion at the World Future Energy Summit, Abu Dhabi.
- Under the partnership, the total projects capacity is likely to be up to 1,000 mw and these projects would be developed by Amplus by 2023.

**HDFC first Indian bank to cross Rs5 trillion market cap**

India’s most-valued lender HDFC Bank Ltd crossed Rs5 trillion market capitalisation for the first time, making it only the third Indian company to achieve this milestone.

- Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) are the other two companies which crossed market capitalisation of Rs5 trillion.
- The bank also reports bad loan ratio below 1%, the lowest among Indian lenders.

**Microsoft tops Thomson Reuters top 100 global tech leaders list**

Thomson Reuters Corp has published its debut “Top 100 Global Technology Leaders” list with Microsoft Corp in the no. 1 spot.

- Microsoft was followed by chipmaker Intel Corp and network gear maker Cisco Systems Inc.
- According to the list, 45 percent of these 100 tech companies are headquartered in the United States.
- Five Indian Companies have also made to the list.

**Axis Bank partners NGO Srijan to mentor IIM graduates**

Axis Bank is partnering with NGO Srijan through an initiative called Buddha Fellowship Programme to help nurture talent for the development sector.

- The bank is mentoring 15 graduates from the Indian Institutes of Management at Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Shillong, who have been taken on board by Srijan as campus hires.

**Mauritius largest source of FDI in India, says RBI**

Mauritius was the largest source of foreign investment in India, followed by the US and the UK, according to a census by the Reserve Bank.

- Singapore and Japan were the next two sources of foreign direct investment (FDI), said the Reserve Bank of India.

**ONCG acquires 51.11pc of Govt stake in HPCL**

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC), the largest producer of crude oil and natural gas in India, has acquired the government’s shareholding of 51.11 per cent in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL)

- ONONGC Board on January 19, 2018 considered the proposal and approved acquisition of the entire 51.11
per cent shareholding at a cash purchase consideration of Rs 473.97 per share with a total acquisition cost of Rs 36,915 crore.

Mercedes-Benz becomes first to launch BS-VI, locally made car
German auto major Mercedes-Benz unveiled a BS-VI-compliant S Class produced at its Pune facility, more than two years ahead of the government deadline of April 2020 for switching to new emission norms.
- Along with the unveiling of the new car, the company also received the certificate of compliance to the CMVR (Central motor vehicles rule) from the Automotive Research Association of India.

CBI registers Rs. 80-cr bank fraud case against PNB officials
The CBI has registered 22 cases against officials of Punjab National Bank relating to fraud in bank loans processed by them on the basis of forged documents causing a loss of over Rs. 80 crore to the bank.
- The cases relate to four branches of the bank in Bhopal and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.
- It said the bank alleged in its complaint that the officials had fraudulently sanctioned and disbursed loans to private persons dealing in coal business from 2011 to 2016.

India to overtake China as fastest growing large economy in 2018: Report
India will overtake China to be the fastest growing large economy in 2018 and the country's equity market will become the fifth largest in the world, says a report.
- According to a Sanctum Wealth Management report, when the rest of the world offers low growth and insufficient structural change, India, by contrast, is seen as a reforming economy with the prospect of strong long-term growth.
- At a time when developed economies are cheering 2-3 per cent growth, India is focused on breaching 7.5 per cent, it said.

India, Uttarakhand and the World Bank sign $120 million Loan Agreement
The Government of India, the Government of Uttarakhand and the World Bank Board signed a $120 million Loan Agreement which will help increase access to improved water supply services in peri-urban areas in the State of Uttarakhand.
- The Uttarakhand Water Supply Program for Peri-Urban Areas will help the State increase water supply coverage as well as ensure sustainable water supply service delivery in peri-urban areas.
- It will develop and implement a service-oriented and efficient water supply policy for peri-urban areas, strengthen the current monitoring and evaluation systems, and provide dedicated incentives for preparation and adoption of water supply ‘master-plans’ in peri-urban areas.

NIIF makes its First Investment
The Government of India is pleased to take note that the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) has made its First investment.
- NIIF has partnered with DP World to create an investment platform for ports, terminals, transportation and logistics businesses in India.
- The platform will invest in opportunities in the ports sector, and beyond sea ports into areas such as river ports and transportation, freight corridors, port-led special economic zones, inland container terminals, and logistics infrastructure including cold storage.
- The first close of the NIIF Master Fund took place on October, 16, 2017 with contributions from a subsidiary of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and four Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs), viz., HDFC Group, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Life and Axis Bank.
- An India-UK Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF) is also being set-up under the fund of funds vertical of NIIF, and shall have anchor commitments of GBP 120 million each from Government of India (through NIIF) and Government of UK.

IMF forecasts 7.4% growth for India in FY19
On the eve of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s keynote address at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said India’s growth will pick up in FY19.
That will see the country regain the tag of fastest-growing major economy, backing the government’s revival theme.

The IMF also said 2017 saw the best global growth in seven years.

India is forecast to grow 7.4% in FY19 against 6.7% this year, gaining pace to 7.8% in FY20, the IMF said in its January update of the World Economic Outlook: Brighter Prospects, Optimistic Markets, Challenges Ahead

The global economy is expected to grow 3.9% this year.

RIL becomes India’s first firm to cross Rs 6-lakh crore market cap
Reliance Industries (RIL) become the first Indian company to cross the Rs 6-lakh crore mark in market capitalisation as its shares touched a 52-week high of Rs 974.5.

- RIL is owned 40% by its chairman Mukesh Ambani, making him the richest Indian with personal wealth of $40.7 billion and the 20th richest globally.
- India’s largest software exporter, Tata Consultancy Services follows RIL with market capitalisation of Rs 5,95,946 crore.
- HDFC Bank become the first bank to cross market capitalisation of Rs 5 lakh crore recently.

IOB, NHB tie up for rural housing push
Indian Overseas Bank has signed a MoU with National Housing Bank for the Rural Housing Interest Subsidy Scheme (RHISS) of the Ministry of Rural Development.

- The aim of the RHISS is to provide subsidy for housing loans taken by those living in rural areas for construction and modifications of their dwelling units.
- The interest subsidy under the scheme is 3 per cent for a loan amount of Rs 2 lakh for 20-year tenure.

WEF to set up C4IR in Mumbai in partnership with RIL
The World Economic Forum (WEF) in partnership with India’s most valued firm Reliance Industries (RIL) has agreed to set up a new Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution (C4IR) in Mumbai.

- This would be first (C4IR) opened outside Silicon Valley at San Francisco, which is already home to several exciting developments in the digital space.

Japan’s Development Loan Assistance to India for an amount of Yen 45 billion
The Government of Japan has committed JICA Official Development Assistance loan for an amount of Yen 45 billion (Rs.2587 crore approx.) for the project.

- The Notes in this regard were exchanged between Mr. S. Selvakumar, Joint Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India and H.E. Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan to India on Japanese official development assistance loan for Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Project (Phase 3) (I).
- This Project will provide residents of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagar Palike (BBMP) area especially in 110 villages with safe and stable water supply and sewerage services by carrying-out construction of water treatment plant and sewage treatment plants thereby improving living conditions of the residents as well as the investment environment in the concerned areas in BBMP in the State of Karnataka.
- India and Japan have had a long and fruitful history of bilateral development cooperation since 1958. In the last few years, the economic cooperation between India and Japan has steadily progressed.
- This further consolidates and strengthens the Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan.

Centre to infuse over Rs. 88,000 cr in PSU banks this fiscal
The Centre has announced that it would infuse over Rs. 88,000 crore as capital in public sector banks this fiscal, including Rs. 80,000 crore through recapitalisation bonds and Rs. 8,139 crore as budgetary support.

- Financial Services Secretary Rajeev Kumar said that banks would have to first accept and adopt the reforms package finalised by the Finance Ministry.
- The recapitalisation bonds will be non SLR status and non-tradeable.

Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks to offer Atal Pension Yojana
To strengthen the existing channels of APY distribution, it is felt that these new Payments Banks and Small Finance Banks will provide a boost to the outreach of subscribers under APY.

- Participation in APY not only builds a pensioned society but also adds sustainable fee income to
Points to Remember

- Atal Pension Yojana (APY) is a Government of India's Old Age Pension Scheme being implemented through all Banks across the country as per the mandate received from the Ministry of Finance and monitored periodically at PMO.
- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi had launched the Social Security Scheme on 9th May 2015 and dedicated the First Ever Guaranteed Pension Product to the people of the country.

Highlights of Economic Survey 2018

The Economic Survey, which sets the stage for Finance Minister Arun Jaitley's annual budget on February 1, was by Arvind Subramanian.

- The survey was prepared by the finance ministry's Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian.

Growth

- 2018/19 Growth seen at 7 Percent to 7.5 Percent.
- 2017/18 GDP growth seen at 6.75 Percent.
- 2017/18 industry growth seen at 4.4 Percent.
- 2017/18 farm sector growth seen at 2.1 Percent.
- Economic management will be challenging in the coming year.
- Biggest source of upside to growth to be from exports.
- Cyclical conditions may lead to lower tax and non-tax revenues in 2017/18.
- Private investment poised to rebound.

FISCAL DEFICIT

- Target for fiscal consolidation specially in a pre-election year can carry a high risk of credibility.
- Current account deficit for 2017/18 expected to average 1.5-2 pct of GDP.

INFLATION, POLICY RATES

- Persistently high oil prices remain a key risk, to affect inflation.
- If inflation doesn't deviate from current levels policy rates can be expected to remain stable.
- Average CPI inflation seen at 3.7 pct in 2017/18.

SBI inks information utility pact with NeSL

State Bank of India said it has signed an Information Utility (IU) agreement with National E-Governance Services Ltd (NeSL) to share financial and security information under the
Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IU) regulation 2017.
- NeSL is the first IU registered with IBBI.
- The company has been set up by 17 financial institutions, including State Bank of India, Life Insurance Corporation of India, Bank of Baroda, Canara Bank, ICICI Bank.

Vijay Keshav Gokhale appointed foreign secretary

Senior diplomat Vijay Keshav Gokhale was appointed foreign secretary for a two-year fixed term, succeeding S Jaishankar who completes his tenure on January 28, according to an official order.
- Gokhale, a 1981 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), was India's envoy to China.
- He is at present secretary (economic relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Jaishankar was appointed foreign secretary on January 29, 2015, for two years. He was given a one-year extension in January last year.

Mali president names new govt after PM's shock resignation

Mali President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has appointed Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga - a former defence and foreign minister and intelligence chief - as the new prime minister.
- Boubeye Maiga is expected to form a new government in the coming day after his predecessor Abdoulaye Idrissa Maiga and his entire cabinet resigned.

Government appoints Rajinder Khanna as Deputy National Security Advisor

Rajinder Khanna, former chief of the country's external intelligence agency RAW, was appointed as Deputy National Security Adviser.
- The post was lying vacant since Arvind Gupta, a former Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, completed his tenure in August last year. Gupta was in August 2014 appointed to the post.
- Khanna is at present Officer on Special Duty (Neighbourhood Studies) in the National Security Council Secretariat.

Salil Parekh takes over as Infosys CEO and MD

Salil S Parekh has formally takes over as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Infosys.
- Parekh, who was one of Capgemini's five deputy CEOs, has experience in the cloud computing business, ability to handle large acquisitions and a strong grip on technology and sales.
- On December 2, 2017, Infosys had announced that its Board of Directors has appointed Salil S Parekh as CEO and MD of the company effective January 2, 2018.

AB Mathur appointed government interlocutor for talks with ULFA

The Central Government announced the appointment of AB Mathur as the interlocutor on their behalf to hold talks with the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA).
- A 1975-batch IPS officer, Mathur served as the former Special Secretary of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), following his appointment on December 10, 2009.
- The ULFA is a separatist outfit operating in Assam for the indigenous Assamese and seeks to establish a sovereign Assam with an armed struggle in the Assam conflict.
- In 1990, the government of India banned the organisation, citing it as a terrorist organisation.

Diplomat T S Tirumurti Appointed Economic Relations Secretary

India's High Commissioner to Kuala Lumpur T S Tirumurti was appointed the Secretary (Economic Relations) in the External Affairs Ministry.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment to the post, in place of Vijay Keshav Gokhale, who was recently named as the Foreign Secretary.

FM Arun Jaitley -chaired panel to look into old port projects
The government has formed a ministerial committee headed by finance minister Arun Jaitley to decide what to do with old, pre-existing projects in ports, which have become unviable.

- Around 10 old projects, under the shipping ministry, have been stuck in non-profitability because operating under the contract conditions which existed a decade or so ago have kept them in a state of unviability for years.
- The government wants to address this legal tangle.
- The combined value of the projects is an estimated Rs 20,000 crore, shipping ministry officials said.

**Dilip Asbe appointed MD & CEO of NPCI**

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an umbrella organisation for retail payment systems in India, has appointed Dilip Asbe as Managing Director and CEO of the organisation.

- Prior to this, Asbe was CEO-in-charge of NPCI.
- Asbe was appointed CEO-in-charge in August last year.
- He had come in place of AP Hota, whose term as MD and CEO had ended on August 10 last year.

**12-member panel to take a call on National Anthem in cinema halls**

The Union Home Ministry has appointed a 12-member inter-ministerial committee, which would take a final call on the playing of the national anthem in cinema halls and public places.

- The committee, led by Additional Secretary B.R. Sharma, will recommend changes.
- The first meeting of the committee will be held on January 19 and it will submit its report within six months.

**Indian-origin businessman appointed WBCSD Chairman**

Singapore-based Indian-origin businessman Sunny Verghese has been appointed as the Chairman of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

- Verghese, 57, Co-Founder and the CEO of Singapore’s agri-business group Olam International Limited, is the first World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) Chair from the agri-sector.
- He succeeded Paul Polman, the CEO of Unilever, on January 1 and will serve a two-year term.

**Points to Remember**

- WBCSD is a global network of more than 200 CEOs who are responsible for a combined revenue of more than USD 8.5 trillion and 19 million employees.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

**A R Rahman becomes Sikkim’s brand ambassador**

Music composer A R Rahman has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Sikkim.

- The declaration was made by Sikkim chief minister Pawan Kumar Chamling who felicitated the legendary music composer during an inauguration of the 11-day Sikkim Red Panda Winter Carnival at Palzor Stadium in Gangtok.
- Sikkim hopes that Rahman’s appointment as the brand ambassador would give a huge fillip to the tourism of the state.

**ISRO names Sivan K as new chairman**

The government has appointed renowned scientist Sivan K as the chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to replace A S Kiran Kumar.

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet approved his appointment as secretary, Department of Space and chairman of Space Commission for a tenure of three years.
- Sivan, at present Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, will succeed Kumar, who was appointed on January 12, 2015.

**Kajol named ambassador for Swachh Aadat Swachh Bharat**

Actress Kajol, an active supporter of eradicating preventable deaths from hygiene-related issues, has become an advocacy ambassador for a Swachh Aadat Swachh Bharat initiative.

- Kajol took to Twitter to urge people to become "swachhta doot" and contribute to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

**GJEPC announces Pramod Agarwal as its new chairman**

The Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) announced the appointment of the new chairman and vice-chairman after the results of the high-voltage counting for the election.
Pramod Agarwal has been appointed as the chairman of GJEPC, while Colin Shah has been appointed as the vice-chairman for the year 2017-19.

Agarwal will take over the reigns from the outgoing chairman Praveen Shanker Pandya.

Indu Malhotra becomes 1st woman lawyer directly appointed for SC judgeship
The Supreme Court collegium has recommended the name of senior advocate Indu Malhotra as the first woman lawyer to be directly appointed as a judge of the apex court.

- She will be the seventh woman judge since independence to make it to the Supreme Court.
- At present, Justice R Banumathi is the lone woman judge in the apex court.
- The first woman to be appointed as a judge of the apex court was Justice M Fathima Beevi in 1989.

Anil Khanna to head IOA Finance Commission
Senior sports administrator Anil Khanna was named Chairman of the Finance Commission of the Indian Olympic Association, which also formed a four-member advisory committee.

- The IOA also formed a Medical Commission and Games Technical Conduct Committee and nominated office bearers of IOA and National Sports Federations (NSFs) to the Committees.
- The advisory committee comprises Tarlochan Singh, GS Mander, S Regunathan and BS Landge.

Sebi approves Vijay Kumar's appointment as NCDEX MD & CEO
Market regulator Sebi has approved appointment of Vijay Kumar as Managing Director and CEO of the country’s largest agri-commodity bourse NCDEX.

- Kumar, a former chief business officer at NCDEX, is likely to assume the office next week.
- He will replace Samir Shah, whose more than four years tenure comes to end this month.

Romania to have first female prime minister, Viorica Dancila
Viorica Dancila has been named as Romania's first female PM following the sudden resignation of Mihai Tudose.

- Ms Dancila, 54, is Romania's third prime minister in seven months.

Anandiben Patel to be next Governor of Madhya Pradesh
Former Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel has been named the next Madhya Pradesh Governor.

- She replaces Om Prakash Kohli, who has additional charge of the office of MP Governor along with the office of Gujarat Governor.
- Ms. Patel succeeded Narendra Modi as Gujarat CM after the 2014 parliamentary polls.

Sudeep Lakhtakia appointed new NSG DG
IPS officer Sudeep Lakhtakia was appointed as the new director general of National Security Guard (NSG).

- Lakhtakia is a 1984-batch IPS officer of Telangana cadre.
- He is currently serving as a special DG of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) headquarters.
- He will take over incumbent SP Singh, who will retire from the post on January end.

OP Rawat appointed New Chief Election Commissioner
Om Prakash Rawat has been appointed as the next Chief Election Commissioner, the law ministry said.

- Mr Rawat, who is currently an Election Commissioner, will succeed the outgoing Achal Kumar Joti, who is retiring on January 22.
- Ashok Lavasa, a former finance secretary and an Indian Administrative Service officer of the 1980 batch, has been appointed as an Election Commissioner, to fill up the vacancy left behind by Mr Rawat in the three-member poll panel.
- Sunil Arora is currently the other Election Commissioner.

Somanath takes charge as VSSC director
Noted scientist S Somanath took charge as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.

- He succeeds K Sivan, who was appointed as ISRO Chairman recently.
- Somanath took charge at a function in ISRO headquarters Bengaluru.
- He is currently the Director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre at Valiamala, the lead centre
responsible for liquid engines and stages for all launch vehicles and satellite programs of ISRO.

**Dilip Chenoy appointed FICCI Director General**

Industry Chamber FICCI said that it has appointed Dilip Chenoy as its Director General.
- He had resigned from NSDC in late 2015 amid reports that the government was unhappy with the functioning of the skills development body.
- He was appointed by the previous Congress-led UPA government.

**Government appoints six new Joint Directors in CBI**

Gujarat-cadre senior police officer Praveen Sinha is among six newly appointed Joint Directors in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- Sinha and two other police officers Ajay Bhatnagar and Pankaj Kumar Srivastava have been inducted in the CBI as Joint Directors.
- Three other IPS officers Sharad Aggarwal, Gajendra Kumar Goswami and V Murugesan have also been appointed as JDs in the probe agency.

**Usha Ananthasubramanian elected as first woman Chairman of IBA**

Usha Ananthasubramanian, MD & CEO, Allahabad Bank, has been elected as the first woman Chairman of Indian Banks’ Association (IBA).
- Ms Usha was elected IBA Chairman for the year 2017-18 by its Managing Committee.
- IBA Chairman's position was vacant following the superannuation of Jatinder Bir Singh.
- Rajnish Kumar, Chairman, State Bank of India was elected as Deputy Chairman of IBA for the year 2017-18.

**US Senate confirms Jerome H Powell as next Federal Reserve chairman**

The United States Senate has confirmed Jerome H Powell as the next chairman of the Federal Reserve, a powerful post having an influence on global economy.
- Powell (64) will replace Janett Yellen, whose term ends in February.
- He was confirmed by the US Senate by an overwhelming vote of 84-12.
- Currently a Fed governor and former financial-firm executive, Powell is expected to mostly continue with Yellen’s policies.

**Finland re-elects President Sauli Niinisto for 2nd term**

Finland has re-elected its popular and pragmatic president Sauli Niinisto, who is credited for maintaining a balanced relationship with the nation's powerful neighbour Russia.
- Niinisto, 69, avoided the need for a second-round of voting and won outright, a first since Finland introduced a two-round presidential election by popular vote in 1994.
- Niinisto's main rival Pekka Haavisto of the Green party won just 12 percent of the votes.

**Points to Remember**

- Finland, officially the Republic of Finland is a sovereign state in Northern Europe.
- Helsinki is its capital and largest city. Euro is the currency of Finland.
- Juha Sipila is the prime minister of Finland.

**JNPT wins ‘Samudra Manthan – Caring Organisation of the Year’ award**

The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust, India’s Premier Container Port, has won the ‘Samudra Manthan – Caring Organisation of the Year’ award.
- The award was instituted by Bhandarkar Shipping, which is a leading publication in the maritime industry.
- JNPT is India’s top container port in terms of volume and efficiency parameters.

**MAS chief Ravi Menon named best central bank governor in Asia-Pacific**

The managing director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), Ravi Menon, has been named the best central bank governor in Asia-Pacific for 2018 by UK-based magazine, The Banker.
- Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat was also given this award in 2011 when he was then MAS's managing director.
Over the last three years, the award went to the central bankers of Vietnam, India and Bangladesh.

Nitish conferred with 1st Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Award
Bihar CM Nitish Kumar has been selected for the 1st Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Award for Probity in Public Life.
- He was conferred the award at an official function of Jammu & Kashmir government held at Jammu.
- The award was constituted recently by the Jammu and Kashmir government to commemorate the death anniversary of PDP founder and two-time J&K chief minister Sayeed.
- Sayeed was father of J&K CM Mehbooba Mufti.

The full list of winners of the Golden Globes 2018
- Best actress in a limited series or television movie: Nicole Kidman
- Best supporting actor in a motion picture (drama): Sam Rockwell
- Best supporting actor in a series, limited series or TV film: Alexander Skarsgård
- Best actor (comedy/musical): James Franco
- Best animated film: Coco
- Best foreign film: In the Fade
- Best film director: Guillermo del Toro
- Best actress in a film (comedy/musical): Saoirse Ronan
- Best film (comedy/musical): Lady Bird
- Best actor (drama): Gary Oldman
- Best actress (drama): Frances McDormand
- Best film (drama): Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

Shahrukh Khan to get Crystal Award at WEF Davos Summit
Hollywood megastar Shahrukh Khan will get the Crystal Award at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, along with Hollywood star Cate Blanchett and legendary musician Sir Elton John.

Khan will get the award for "his leadership in championing children's and women's rights in India," the World Economic Forum (WEF) said.

The past awardees from India include Amitabh Bachchan, Mallika Sarabhai, A R Rahman, Shabana Azmi, Ravi Shankar and Amjad Ali Khan.

India’s first all-women railway station in Mumbai enters Limca records
The first all-women station in India, Matunga on Central Railway (CR), manned by a staff of 41 women, has entered the Limca Book of Records.
- The unique initiative was taken by CR General Manager D.K. Sharma in July 2017 with the aim of empowering women.

Kozhikode railway station cleanest, Nizamuddin gets lowest
The Kozhikode railway station in Kerala was ranked the best by travellers while the Hazrat Nizamuddin here was given the lowest ratings in terms of cleanliness, a survey by an app-based travel portal ixigo said.
- It also found that around 40 per cent stations, found cleanest by users, were in the south followed by 20 per cent in central India and the same in the west.
- Swarna Jayanti Rajdhani has been rated the cleanest train, while the Karnataka Express got the lowest ratings for the same.

Actor Sudhir Dalvi gets Janakavi P Sawlaram award
Actor Sudhir Dalvi was honoured with the Janakavi P Sawlaram award at a function in Thane, Maharashtra.
- The award is jointly given by the Thane Municipal Corporation and the Janakavi P Savlaram Kala Samiti.
- Well-known dancer Jaishree T was bestowed with the Ganga Jamuna award, which is instituted in memory of a popular song written by Sawlaram.

Afghans award Trump 'Medal of Bravery'
The residents of Afghanistan's Logar province have awarded United States President Donald Trump a 'Medal of Bravery' over his recent stance against Pakistan.
- The medal is made with funds collected by Afghans from the Logar province, 60 kilometers in the south of Kabul.
• The bravery award has been handed over to the US Embassy in Kabul.

ICSI confers Honorary Fellow Membership to Shri P.P. Chaudhary
Shri P.P. Chaudhary, Hon’ble Union Minister of State for Law and Justice & Corporate Affairs, was conferred the Honorary Fellowship of Institute of Company secretaries of India (ICSI) at the headquarters of the institute at New Delhi.

• ICSI president CS (Dr) Shyam Agrawal presented the certificate conferring Honorary membership to Shri Chaudhary and administered an oath to him.

• Shri Chaudhary has conducted around 11,000 cases, mostly Constitutional Litigations for the last 38 years.

ICC Awards 2018: Full List of the Winners
• Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for ICC Cricketer of the Year - Virat Kohli (India)
• ICC Test Cricketer of the Year - Steve Smith (Australia)
• ICC M ODI Cricketer of the Year - Virat Kohli (India)
• ICC Emerging Cricketer of the Year - Hasan Ali (Pakistan)
• ICC Associate Cricketer of the Year - Rashid Khan (Afghanistan)
• ICC T20I Performance of the Year - Yuzvendra Chahal (6-25 v England for India)
• David Shepherd Trophy for ICC Umpire of the Year – Marais Erasmus
• ICC Spirit of Cricket - Anya Shrubsole (England)
• ICC Fans Moment of the Year - Pakistan stun India to win the ICC Champions Trophy 2017

The Test and ODI teams of the year were also introduced, with Virat Kohli being named the captain of both the sides.

Mangalajodi Ecotourism Trust of Odisha wins prestigious UNWTO Award
Mangalajodi Ecotourism Trust in Odisha has won prestigious United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) Award for Innovation in Tourism Enterprise at 14th UNWTO Awards ceremony held in Madrid, Spain.

• The award was given in recognition of Mangalajodi’s business model that is both economically viable and environmentally sustainable based on principles of community ownership and Eco Tourism.

63rd Jio Filmfare Awards 2018: Complete list of winners
• Best Film: 'Hindi Medium'
• Critics' Award for Best Film: 'Newton'
• Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female): Vidya Balan for 'Tumhari Sulu'
• Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male) : Irrfan Khan for 'Hindi Medium'
• Critics' Award for Best Actor (Male): Rajkummar Rao for 'Trapped'
• Critics' Award for Best Actor (Female): Zaira Wasim for 'Secret Superstar'
• Best Director: Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari for 'Bareilly Ki Barfi'
• Best Debut Director: Konkona Sensharma for ‘A Death in the Gunj’
• Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male): Rajkummar Rao for 'Bareilly Ki Barfi'
• Best Actor in a Supporting Role (Female): Meher Vij for 'Secret Superstar'
• Best Original Story: Amit Newton for 'Newton'
• Best Actor (Male) in a Short Film: Jackie Shroff for 'Khuji'
• Best Actor (Female) in a Short Film: Shefali Shah for 'Juice'
• People's Choice Award for Best Short Film: 'Anahut'
• Best Short Film (Fiction) : 'Juice'
• Best Short Film (Non Fiction): 'Invisible Wings'
• Best Playback Singer (Male): Arijit Singh for 'Roke na ruke naina' - 'Badrinath Ki Dulhania'
• Best Playback Singer (Female): Meghna Mishra for 'Nachdi phira' - 'Secret Superstar'
• Best Lyrics: Amitabh Bhattacharya for 'Ullu ka pattha' - 'Jagga Jasoos'
• Lifetime Achievement Award: Mala Sinha and Bappi Lahiri

Nara Lokesh receives Dr. Kalam Innovation in Governance Award 2018
Andhra Pradesh Information Technology (IT) Minister Nara Lokesh was felicitated with Dr. Kalam Innovation in Governance Award 2018 at the Dr. Kalam Centre.

- Nara Lokesh outlined a number of innovative initiatives that the Andhra Pradesh Government is taking to improve its governance.
- The award was presented by Rajya Sabha Secretary-General Desh Deepak Verma during the second edition of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Summit on innovation in governance.

**Naveen Patnaik conferred 'Ideal Chief Minister' award**

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik was conferred the “Ideal Chief Minister” award by former President Pratibha Patil at Bharatiya Chhatra Sansad in Pune.

- He received the award in a special event organised by Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT) School of Governance.

**Aishwarya Rai Bachchan receives First Ladies Award**

Aishwarya Rai Bachchan received the prestigious First Ladies Award by President Ram Nath Kovind at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

- The Ministry of Women & Child Development has selected 112 women who have been the first to achieve a milestone in their respective fields and Aishwarya was one of them.

**Tamilnadu CM Edappady K Palaniswami receives Unesco award**

Tamilnadu Chief Minister Edappady K. Palaniswami received the Unesco Award of Merit awarded to the iconic Ranganathaswamy temple in Srirangam (Tiruchy).

- The Award of Merit, 2017, was given by Unesco Asia Pacific region for the cultural heritage conservation activities taken up at the temple without altering its original splendor.
- The ancient Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu who is seen in reclining form.

**Padma awards 2018 announced**

This year 85 recipients have been selected for the prestigious Padma awards including two duo cases.

- Fourteen of the awardees are women, while 16 persons are foreigners and three are being awarded posthumous.
- Padma Vibhushan:
  - Illaiyaraaja
  - Ghulam Mustafa Khan
  - P. Parameswaran
  - Padma Bhushan:
  - Pankaj Advani
  - Philipose Mar Chrysostom
  - Mahendra Singh Dhoni
  - Alexander Kadakin (Foreigner/Posthumous)
  - R. Nagaswamy
  - Ved Prakash Nanda (Overseas Citizen of India)
  - Laxman Pai
  - Arvind Parikh
  - Sharda Sinha

**Republic Day Parade: Maharashtra wins best tableau award**

The tableau from Maharashtra depicting the coronation of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the Republic Day Parade at the Rajpath won the first prize.

- Among the three military services, the contingent from the Army’s Punjab Regiment was awarded the best marching contingent trophy, while the Indo-Tibetan Border Police team won the best marching contingent prize among the para-military and other auxiliary forces.
- Among the ministries, the best tableau award went to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The tableau depicted 'Khelo India', the national programme for development of sports.
- Among performances by schoolchildren, South Central Zone Cultural Centre's 'Baredi Dance' (from Madhya Pradesh) was awarded the first prize.

**Najma, Azad among 5 to be conferred outstanding Parliamentarian Awards**

Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) has decided to confer Outstanding Parliamentary Awards to five Parliamentarians which includes senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad and Manipur Governor and former Minority Affairs Minister Najma Heptulla.
The Parliamentarians who have been chosen for the award include three MPs from Lok Sabha and two from Rajya Sabha.

The awards are being given for the years starting from 2013 till 2017.

**Here is the year wise list:**
- Bhartruhari Mahatab: 2017
- Dinesh Trivedi: 2016
- Ghulam Nabi Azad: 2015
- Hukumdev Narayan Yadav: 2014
- Najma Heptulla: 2013

**Documentary based on Kailash Satyarthi wins top honour**

The documentary film Kailash, which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, has won the US Grand Jury Prize at the festival.
- The Derek Doneen-directed documentary is based on Nobel Peace Prize-winning activist Kailash Satyarthi.
- Satyarthi’s crusade against child slavery has helped rescue thousands of children.
- He also heads the organisation Bachpan Bachao Aandolan in India.

**Asha Bhosle To Get Yash Chopra Memorial Award**

Bollywood playback doyenne Asha Bhosle will be given the ‘Yash Chopra Memorial Award’.
- She will be the fifth winner of the award.
- Previous recipients are Asha Bhosale’s elder sister and Bollywood playback singer Lata Mangeshkar, and actors Amitabh Bachchan, Rekha, and Shah Rukh Khan.
- Evergreen Asha Bhosle has been giving playback in Hindi films for nearly seven decades, earning her an entry into the Guinness World Records for recording over 11,000 songs in 20 different languages.

**Venkiah Naidu confers BAI’s Lifetime Achievement Award on Padukone**

Vice President Venkiah Naidu conferred Badminton Association of India (BAI) Lifetime Achievement Award to 1983 World Championship medallist Prakash Padukone.

**Indian golfer Shiv Kapur wins Royal Cup at Pattaya**

Indian golfer Shiv Kapur won the Royal Cup at Pattaya, which is his third Asian Tour title of 2017.
- The 35-year-old, who had just one win in almost 11 years till April this year, has now won three times in last eight months
- Kapur first won on Asian Tour in his debut season in December 2005, but it took more than 11 years and four months for the next Asian Tour win, which came in April 2017.

**Ranji Trophy: Vidarbha beat Delhi to win maiden title**

Vidarbha claimed their maiden Ranji Trophy after beating Delhi by nine wickets in the final of India’s premier domestic tournament in Indore.
- Chasing a target of 29, Vidarbha completed the task with loss of skipper Faiz Fazal’s wicket.

**Global Recognition for Dr Vinod Paul, Member, NITI Aayog**

Dr Vinod Paul, Member, NITI Aayog has been awarded the prestigious IhsanDoğramacı Family Health Foundation Prize by the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- He is the first Indian to receive this global honour, which is conferred in recognition to his services in the field of family health.
- The award, confirmed by the WHO Executive Board on 27th January, will be presented to Dr Paul formally at the World Health Assembly to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2018.
- He was chosen unanimously from six other shortlisted candidates from Algeria, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Russian Federation, Uzbekistan.
• The Ranji Trophy is a domestic first-class cricket championship played in India between teams representing regional and state cricket associations.
• The competition is named after first Indian cricketer who played international cricket, Ranjitsinhji, who was also known as "Ranji".
• Mumbai is the most successful team in the Ranji Trophy winning the title 41 times.

Shahzar Rizvi Wins Men’s 10m Air Pistol Gold
Shooter Shahzar Rizvi ended a brilliant 2017 by winning the Men's 10m Air Pistol Gold at the 61st National Shooting Championship (NSCC), at the Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.
• Representing the Air Force, Shahzar won with a new finals national record score of 241.7, leaving Army's Yashwant Singh in silver medal position with a score of 237.7.
• Yashwant's teammate Omprakash Mitherwal won bronze, securing 218.0 in the finals.
• Earlier this year, the 23-year-old Meerut shooter won gold medals at the Commonwealth Shooting Championships and at the 10th Asian Airgun Championship in Japan as well.

Meghalaya signs deal to host National Games in 2022
The Meghalaya government, the Indian Olympic Association and the Meghalaya State Olympic Association has signed the host city contract to hold the 39th National Games in the state in 2022.
• The mega sports event will coincide with the 50th year of Meghalaya's statehood.
• An estimated 14,450 athletes and officials are expected to visit the state during the Games.

Roger Federer & Belinda Bencic win Hopman Cup for Switzerland
Switzerland's Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic beat Germany's Alexander Zverev and Angelique Kerber to win the Hopman Cup for the first time since 2001.
• Federer went a set down to Zverev in the opener, but the 19-time Grand Slam champion recovered to win 6-7 (4-7) 6-0 6-2 and give Switzerland a 1-0 lead.
• Federer was joined by Martina Hingis when Switzerland last won the trophy in Perth 17 years ago.

Khelo India logo launched
The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore has launched the simple yet vibrant Khelo India logo at the Nehru Stadium.
• Khelo India School Games will be staged from January 31.
• The three-stroke Khelo India logo was designed by Ogilvy India, and offers flexibility in adapting to numerous pictorial forms.

Simon beats Anderson to win inaugural Tata Open Maharashtra
Gilles Simon defeated second seed Kevin Anderson in straight sets to lift the inaugural Tata Open Maharashtra trophy.
• The unseeded French player, ranked 89, tamed big-serving Anderson, ranked 14 in the world, 7-6(4), 6-2 in the summit clash.

Yusuf Pathan Suspended by BCCI After Dope Violation
In a shocking revelation, all-rounder Yusuf Pathan had failed a dope test during a domestic match last season.
• The member of the 2011 World Cup winning side has been suspended for the violation.
• Pathan had provided a urine sample as part of the BCCI's anti-doping testing program during a domestic T-20 competition on 16th March 2017 in New Delhi.
• His sample was subsequently tested and found to contain Terbutaline.
• Terbutaline, a specified substance, is prohibited both In & Out of Competition in the WADA Prohibited List of Substances.

Aditya wins Kolkata Open Snooker meet
Veteran cueist Aditya Mehta won the Kolkata Open 2018 International Invitation Snooker Championship at the Hindustan Club in Kolkata.
• He edged out Englishman Alfie Burden 5-4 in a thrilling final.
• In other semi-final, Aditya Mehta beat Brijesh Damani 5-4 to meet Alfie in the final.

Aanchal Thakur gives India its 1st international medal in skiing
Manali resident Aanchal Thakur made history by winning India's first-ever international medal in skiing.
• The 21-year-old clinched bronze in the coveted Alpine Ejder 3200 Cup organised by the Federation Internationale de Ski in Turkey.

• She won the medal in the slalom race category.

**Sarjubala Devi claims gold in National Women’s Boxing Championship**
Former world silver-medallist Sarjubala Devi (48kg), representing Manipur, claimed the gold as well as the best boxer trophy in the National Women’s Boxing Championships.

- Sarjubala edged past Haryana’s Ritu 3-2 to clinch Manipur’s lone gold medal and her second successive national title.
- Railways Sports Promotion Board emerged overall champions.

**Hyderabad Hunters claim maiden title in PBL 3**
Hyderabad Hunters overcame a fighting Bengaluru Blasters 4-3 in a thrilling summit clash to claim their maiden title at the third Premier Badminton League (PBL) in Hyderabad.

- Mixed Doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Pia Bernadet put up a dominant display in the last match of the encounter to clinch the the title and the winners’ prize purse for the Hunters.

**Assam wins 8th Sub-junior National Hockey C’ship**
Hosts Assam Hockey rallied back from a 0-2 setback in the first half to beat Hockey Rajasthan 3-2 in the final of the 8th Hockey India Sub Junior Men National Championship 2018 (B Division).

- In the third and fourth placing match, Hockey Himachal beat Hockey Him 1-0 in a closely-fought encounter.

**24 hours sports radio channel launched**
India’s first online radio channel dedicated to broadcasting sports content including live updates and chat commentaries 24×7 was launched.

- The internet radio channel, launched by Sports Flashes, will provide special sports programmes, experts comments, sports news and updates for over 400 sports events from around the world including Premier League, IPL and the FIFA World Cup.

**Brazilian World Cup winner Ronaldinho has formally confirmed his retirement from football, more than two years since his last appearance as a professional.**

- The 37-year-old former Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona star, a key member of the Brazil side which won the World Cup in 2002, last played in 2015.
- Ronaldinho made 97 appearances, scoring 33 goals, including two in the 2002 World Cup.
- He was awarded the Ballon D’Or in 2005.

**Blind Cricket World Cup: India beat Pakistan to retain title**
India retain Blind Cricket World Cup title after beating arch-rivals Pakistan by two wickets in a thrilling final played at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in UAE.

- Chasing a huge 308-run target in 40 overs, India romped home in the penultimate over of the match.
- Earlier, riding on Badar Munir's fine half-century, Pakistan scored 307/8 to give India big target in the final of the fifth edition of the tournament.

**Wozniacki beats Simona Halep to win Australian Open women's title**
Caroline Wozniacki has beaten Simona Halep in a classic Australian Open final 7-6(2) 3-6 6-4 to claim her first grand slam title.

- The result ensured Wozniacki swiped Halep’s world number one ranking, six years after losing it at the 2012 Australian Open.

**Delhi wins Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy 2018**
In the finals of the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy final Delhi defeated Rajasthan by 41 runs to lift the title for the first time.

- Chasing a competitive total of 154, Rajasthan began well but folded up for just 112.

**Points to Remember**
- The Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy is a Twenty20 cricket domestic championship in India, organized by Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), among the teams from Ranji Trophy.
The 2008-09 season was the inaugural season for this trophy.
It is named after a famous Indian cricketer, Syed Mushtaq Ali.

Roger Federer wins sixth Australian Open and 20th Grand Slam title
Roger Federer won his sixth Australian Open and 20th Grand Slam title with a five-set victory over Marin Cilic.
- He beat Marin Cilic 6-2 6-7 (5-7) 6-3 6-1 to win.
- Federer, 36, becomes only the fourth player after Margaret Court, Serena Williams and Steffi Graf to win 20 or more major singles titles.
- Here is the list of winners this year:
  - Men’s Singles: Roger Federer
  - Women’s Singles: Caroline Wozniacki
  - Men’s Doubles: O. Marach and M. Pavic
  - Women’s Doubles: K. Mladenovic and T. Babos
  - Mixed Doubles: G. Dabrowski and M. Pavic

Sandeep Lamichhane becomes first Nepal player to get IPL contract
Sandeep Lamichhane became the first cricketer from Nepal to land a deal an IPL contract when he was picked by Delhi Daredevils in the ongoing players auction.
- The 17-year-old, the only Nepal player in the IPL auction, was sold at his base price of Rs 20 lakh.
- The leg-spinner rose to prominence with a successful outing at the 2016 U-19 World Cup where he guided Nepal to a creditable eighth place.

Paes wins 25th Challenger doubles title at Newport Beach
Veteran Indian tennis star Leander Paes won his 25th ATP Challenger level doubles title with partner James Cerretani after beating Denis Kudla and Treat Huey in the final of the Newport Beach event.
- The second-seeded Indo-American pair defeated the American-Filipino combine 6-4 7-5 in the summit clash of the USD 150,000 hard court tournament.
- Paes, winner of 11 singles titles on the Challenger Tour, had ended the 2017 season with consecutive trophies.

Sunil Chhetri’s birthday to be celebrated as Delhi’s Football Day
Football Delhi honoured the Indian football captain Sunil Chhetri and announced his birthday to be celebrated as Delhi’s Football Day.
- The 33-year-old Sunil has appeared in 97 International matches for India and scored 56 goals for the national team since his first appearance in 2005.
- Football Delhi also decided to celebrated Coach Santosh Kashyap’s birthday ‘June 12’ as Football Delhi’s Coach Education Day.

Eminent Urdu poet Anwar Jalalpuri dies at 71
Eminent Urdu poet Anwar Jalalpuri, also known for his translation of the Bhagavad Gita from Hindi to Urdu, passed away following cardiac arrest.
He was 71.
- Jalalpuri was admitted to the trauma centre of King George's Medical University (KGMU) on December 28 following a brain stroke.
- Jalalpuri was awarded the Yash Bharati by the Uttar Pradesh government.

Former WTO, Goldman Sachs chief Peter Sutherland dies at 71
Former World Trade Organisation director general and Goldman Sachs international chairman Peter Sutherland died at the age of 71.
- Sutherland, who also served as Ireland's European Union commissioner and as attorney general during the 1980s, had been ill for some time.

Bollywood actor Shrivallabh Vyas passes away
Bollywood actor Shrivallabh Vyas of 'Lagaan' and 'Sarfarosh' fame passed away at the age of 60 in Jaipur.
- Owing to financial crisis, he had apparently shifted to Jaipur.
- The late actor has done films like 'Sarfarosh', 'Lagaan', 'Abhay', 'Aan : Men at Work', 'Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero' and 'Sankat City'.
Veteran Hindi writer Doodhnath Singh passes away

Eminent Hindi writer Doodhnath Singh passed away on 12 January 2018. He was 81.

- His literary journey had many milestones. He is known for his works like "Sapaat Chehre Wala Aadmi", "Aakhri Kalaam", "Nishkaasan", "Bhai Ka Shok Geet", "Dharmakshetra-Kurukshetra" and "Surang se Lautate Huye".
- Awarded the Bharat Bharti award, Singh was very active in political commentaries.

Former Union Minister Raghunath Jha passes away in Delhi

Senior Rashtriya Janata Dal leader and former Union Minister Raghunath Jha passed away at Delhi’s Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

- Raghunath Jha, 78, was Union Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise in the UPA government led by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.
- He was elected Member of Parliament twice from Gopalgunj and Bettiah Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar and was also six-time legislator from Sheohar Assembly constituency of the State.

Sarod maestro Pt Buddhadev Dasgupta passes away

Sarod maestro Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta was died of cardiac arrest at his residence in south Kolkata. He was 84.

- The Padma Bhushan awardee had been suffering from respiratory problems for the past few days.
- He was conferred Sangeet Mahasamman and Bangabibhusan in 2015.
- The musician, born in 1933 at his maternal home in Bhagalpur, Bihar, learnt sarod under the tutelage of Pt Radhikamohan Moitra.

Renowned cinematographer W B Rao passes away

Renowned cinematographer W B Rao passed away at a suburban hospital of Mumbai.

- Rao, known for his works in Bollywood hits like "Rangeela", "Hum" and "Khuda Gawah", breathed his last at the Bhartiya Arogya Nidhi Hospital.
- Some of his other notable films include "Dhadkan", "Judwaa", "Har Dil Jo Pyar Karega" and others.

Veteran actress Ava Mukherjee passes away

Veteran actress Ava Mukherjee, known for playing Shah Rukh Khan's grandmother in Devdas has passed away the age of 88.

- Ava is also the mother of filmmaker Romilla Mukherjee.
- One of her final appearances on the big screen was in the film 'Darna Zaroori Hai' directed by Ram Gopal Varma.

NBA Hall of Famer Jo Jo White dies at 71

Celtics legend Jo Jo White, a two-time NBA champion and Finals MVP, passed away at the age of 71.

- White, a seven-time All-Star, averaged 17.2 points in 12 NBA seasons.
- He was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015.
- White won a gold medal with the USA Olympic basketball team at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

Iconic cartoonist Chandi Lahiri passes away

Cartoonist Chandi Lahiri breathed his last after a brief period of illness, marking the end of a chapter in Bengal's history of cartoon. Lahiri was 86.

- He began his career in 1952 at the 'Dainik Loksevak' newspaper as a reporter and took to drawing cartoons in 1961.
- A year later, he joined 'Anandabazaar Patrika' and continued there for 50 years before working with other media outlets.

Veteran Bengali actress Supriya Devi passes away

Veteran Bengali film actress and Padmashri awardee, Supriya Devi (Supriya Chowdhury), passed away at her residence in Kolkata. She was 83.

- Supriya Devi made her debut in the Uttam Kumar-starrer Basu Parivar in 1952.
- During her over five-decade career in the Bengali film industry she delivered many hit and classic films.

Chhattisgarh's first governor D N Sahay passes away

Former governor of Chhattisgarh and Tripura Dinesh Nandan Sahay has died after prolonged illness. He was 82.

- Born in 1936, Sahay began his career with the Indian Police Service and rose to the position of the DGP of Bihar.
• He became the first Governor of Chhattisgarh after the state was carved out of Madhya Pradesh in 2000.
• In 2003, Sahay took over as the Governor of Tripura and held the post till 2009.

Maharashtra BJP MP Chintan Wanaga dead
A senior BJP MP from Maharashtra Chintaman Wanaga died in New Delhi at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital. He was 67.
• Mr. Wanaga, who was born on June 1, 1950, was elected to the Lok Sabha from Palghar in Maharashtra.
• He was a Member of the 11th and the 13th Lok Sabha as well.

Sanjay Manjrekar launches autobiography
Dilip Vengsarkar has released Former Indian Test player Sanjay Manjrekar’s autobiography, named “Imperfect” published by Harper Collins in Mumbai.
• Sanjay, who played 37 Tests after making his debut in the Delhi Test against the West Indies under the captaincy of Dilip Vengsarkar in 1987, scored 2,043 runs with a career-best 218 against Imran Khan’s Pakistan at Lahore in 1989.

‘Namaste Shalom’ magazine launched during Benjamin Netanyahu’s Mumbai visit
The Jewish community has marked Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s Mumbai visit with the launch of ‘Namaste Shalom’, a regular monthly magazine on bilateral relations between the two friendly nations.
• The magazine was launched at the Magen David Synagogue at Byculla in south Mumbai.
• President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Israeli ambassador to India Daniel Carmon have welcomed the magazine.

President Kovind unveils book on self development in Delhi
President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled a book on heartfulness techniques and principles titled ‘The Heartfulness Way’.
• Authored by Kamlesh Patel, the book promises to be a treat for those who are curious about what is heartfulness and how it can change our day-to-day lives.
• The Heartfulness Way has already achieved the Number One Best-Seller Status on Amazon with pre-orders flooding the website.

• The pictorial book traces the evolution of the city of Delhi over the centuries, and puts in perspective its impressive transformation since the beginning of the new millennium.