TAMIL NADU

- Hon’ble CM of Tamil Nadu, Edappadi K Palaniswami laid the foundation for constructing a dam across Pennaiyar river – through video-conferencing

- The Rs 25.35 crore dam will be constructed between Enathirimangalam in Panruti block of Cuddalore district and Thalavanur village in Villupuram
- The Nabard-funded project will enrich 87 wells and irrigate 2,114 acres in the two districts
STATES

- Gujarat CM, Vijay Rupani – inaugurates the ‘Honorary Consulate Office’ of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Gandhinagar

- The Consulate will be headed by Dilip Chandan, the Managing Director of Chandan Steel Limited.
- It was inaugurated on the eve of the 27th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan

NATIONAL

- Government – streamlines ‘National Pension Scheme’ (NPS)
- The changes were suggested by a ‘Committee of Secretaries’ constituted by the Government in 2016 and which submitted its report in 2018
- The major impact of the move would be an increase in the accumulated corpus of around 18 lakh Central Government employees and greater pension payouts after retirement

- Highlights
  - The mandatory contribution by the Central government for its employees covered under NPS Tier-I has been increased from the existing 10% to 14%
  - Employees contribution remains at the same 10%, making the total contribution to 24%
  - Tax exemption limit for lump sum withdrawal on exit has been enhanced to 60%. With this, the entire withdrawal will now be exempt from income tax
  - Central government employees to have the option of selection of Pension Funds and pattern of investment
NPS
- The NPS was launched in January 2004 for Government employees and opened to Private sector employees in May 2009 to provide a pension option
- It is being implemented and regulated by the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)
- The new entrants to the central government service on or after January 1, 2004 are covered under the National Pension System (NPS)

Indian Railways – launches new ‘Buddhist Circuit Tourist Train’

- It will undertake a 16-day tour covering various pilgrimage centers associated with Lord Buddha
- Earlier, Indian Railways launched another tourist circuit train called the Shri Ramayana Express on November 14, 2018

INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine – ends the 20-year old treaty on friendship, cooperation and partnership with Russia
- This was announced by the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko
- The treaty, which was signed in 1997 and brought into effect on April 1, 1999, will be terminated on April 1, 2019
- The relations between Russia and Ukraine have been hit since March 2014, when Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula in Ukraine
- It further worsened this year on November 25, when 3 Ukrainian ships attempting to sail through the Kerch Strait from the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov were captured by the Russian forces for the Russian border violation
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **39th session of GCC Summit – held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**
  - At the end of the summit, the council issued the ‘Riyadh Declaration’, which included issues related to the Persian Gulf countries, the region and the world.
  - The summit saw the participation of Premiers of five countries except Qatar, which has sent its State Minister for Foreign Affairs.

- The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic alliance of six Arabian countries - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.
- The 40th session of the GCC summit will be held in the UAE.

PERSONALITIES

- **Urjit Patel – resigns as the Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI)**
  - Patel’s three-year term was to end in September 2019.
  - With the resignation, he becomes the first RBI governor in the post liberalization era - to resign before the completion of the term.
  - During his tenure, he dealt with the ‘Demonetisation’ move launched by the Union Government on November 8, 2016 - to counter black money, fake currency and curb terrorism funding.
  - **RBI Governor- Facts**
    - With Raghuram Rajan not getting an extension in 2016, it was the second time since 1992 that the RBI governor did not serve out a full five-year term.
    - Before Rajan, the only other governor not getting a five-year term was S. Venkitaraman, who was RBI boss from December 22, 1990 to December 21, 1992.
However, since 1992, all RBI governors have received full-five year terms except Raghuram Rajan and Urjit Patel.

It will also be the fourth time in the history of RBI that a governor has officially resigned without completing the full five year term, with the earlier two exits both happening before 1960.

The last time an Indian central bank governor officially quit before the end of his five year tenure was when Sir Benegal Rama Rau, the fourth RBI boss who quit in 1957 after Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sided with finance minister T.T. Krishnamachari (TTK).

Before Rau, the first RBI governor to resign was Sir Osborne Smith, the first-ever boss of the central bank.

Holding office for over 7 years, Sir Benegal Rama Rau is the longest-serving governor, while Amitav Ghosh's 20-day term is the shortest.

**Urjit Patel – A biography**

Patel was earlier appointed as the 24th Governor of RBI on August 20, 2016 and took charge on September 4, 2016, succeeding Raghuram Rajan.

He was previously serving as the Deputy Governor of RBI.

Initially, he worked as an advisor in RBI followed by the role of a consultant in the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

He was a former non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution since 2009.

He served at IMF India desk during the 1991–94 transition period and posted to IMF country mission in India between 1992 and 95.

Kenya-born Patel had completed his Bachelor’s in Economics from the London School of Economics and received his doctorate in Economics from Yale University in 1990.

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT**

**India – successfully test-fires Agni 5, nuclear capable ballistic missile**

The ballistic missile, with a strike range of 5,000 km, was launched from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast in the Bay of Bengal.

This is the seventh successful trial of the surface-to-surface missile after April 2012, September 2013, January 2015, December 2016, January 2018 and June 2018.
Agni-5 is a three stage missile capable of carrying 1.5 tonne of nuclear warheads.

It was indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

It is also a fire and forget missile, which once fired cannot be stopped, except by interceptor missile which only US, Russia and Israel have at present.

India currently has Agni-1 with 700 km range, Agni-2 with a 2,000-km range, Agni-3 and Agni-4 with 2,500 km to more than 3,500-km range.

Once Agni 5 is inducted into the military, India will join an exclusive club of countries like the US, Russia, China, France and Britain which have intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capabilities.

Scientists from Fujian Normal University, China - developed a “rewritable” long-lasting paper, which is controlled by temperatures.

The paper can be written or drawn over 100 times on it - by wiping or cleaning – based on the principle of change in the temperature.

The new material consist of three layers in a sandwich-like structure.

The messages can last more than half a year, compared to other re-writable papers.

It will be used in applications involving long-lasting information recording and reading, rewritable label and reprintable display.

Researchers from California Institute of Technology and NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory – have developed a new ‘Fluoride-based batteries’ – that can last up to 8 times longer than the present batteries.

They can have a higher energy density, which means that they may last longer for several weeks.

The drawback being the corrosive and reactive nature of fluorides, the negatively charged form of fluorine.

DEFENCE

CROSS BOW 18, a combined Guided Weapons firing of Surface-to-Air Missiles – was conducted by Indian Air Force (IAF) on December 5, 7 and 8.

The first-of-its-kind two-day exercise was held at Suryalanka in Andhra Pradesh.

It was carried out during day and night in an integrated networked environment.

In the exercise, successful firing of 4 different classes of missiles, like Akash, Spyder, OSA-AK-M and IGLA, took place.
ECONOMY

- Ananth Narayanan, the CEO of Myntra – resigns from his position

  ✔️ Amar Nagaram, a Flipkart Executive will take over as the new Head of Myntra
  ✔️ Myntra, an online Fashion Retailer, is a unit of Walmart-Owned Flipkart

APPOINTMENTS

- Shaktikanta Das – appointed 25th Governor of Reserve Bank of India (RBI)

  ✔️ He is the current member of India’s 15th Finance Commission and India’s Sherpa, the government’s representative at the Group of 20 (G-20) summits
  ✔️ He has been appointed the governor of the Reserve Bank of India for a period of three years
  ✔️ He was the Economic affairs Secretary from August 2015 to May 2017 and spearheaded the country’s demonetisation drive in November 2016
  ✔️ He had also served in various capacities in the Indian Government including Union Economic Affairs Secretary, Union Revenue Secretary, Union Fertilizers Secretary, special secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs of the Ministry
of Finance and as a joint secretary in the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance

- He is a retired IAS officer of Tamil Nadu cadre belonging to 1980 batch
- He also served in several capacities in the Government of Tamil Nadu as Principal Secretary (Industries), Special Commissioner (Revenue), Secretary (Revenue), Secretary (Commercial Taxes), project director of Tamil Nadu State AIDS Control Society and as the district magistrate and collector of Dindugul and Kancheepuram districts

- **James Quincey – elected as the 14th Chairman of the Coca-Cola Company**

  - He succeeds Muhtar Kent, who is going to retire in April 2019 after starting his career in 1978 in Coca-Cola
  - Currently, Quincey serves as the President and CEO of the company
  - Brian Smith will take over his position on January 1, 2019

**AWARDS**

- **IIT, Kharagpur – wins ‘DSCI Excellence Award 2018’ - for its contributions in Cyber Security education**

  - The award is given by Data Security Council of India (DSCI)
  - It is given for the institution’s pioneering research work in the areas of cryptography, hardware security, cyber security and network security
T T Srinivasaraghavan, Managing Director, Sundaram Finance – presented with ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ at the Trinity Arts Festival in Chennai

- The award was presented to him by N Ravi, Chairman of Press Trust of India (PTI)
- He was awarded for his leadership qualities in Sundaram Finance
- Over the last 13 years, he has been organising ‘Mikeless Kutcheries’ for children aged below 15 years which got him an entry into the ‘Limca Book of Records’ for the longest open air kutcheri in the country

Prathamesh Maulingkar, Mr.India (Goa) – wins Mr.Supranational 2018 award in Krynica-Zdrój, Poland

- Mr Poland was declared as the first runner up followed by Mr Brazil as the second runner up
- Prathamesh, a footballer and model - became the first Indian (and Asian) man to win the prestigious title
- He was also crowned as the winner of 'The Best Body' category in the competition
- He represents Goa U-19 in Junior National Football tournaments
Kanimozhi, DMK MP – wins ‘Best Woman Parliamentarian – Rajya Sabha’ Award

- She will receive the award from M. Venkaiah Naidu, Vice-President of India in New Delhi
- A 10-member board of Jury of eminent personalities headed by Murali Manohar Joshi selected Kanimozhi for the award
- The award is presented by Lokmat Group of Newspaper
- It recognises her outstanding contribution to democratic values and principles in Parliament for several decades

OBITUARY

- Professor Mushirul Hasan, renowned historian and former vice-chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia University (71 years)
Calcutta-born Hasan was the Pro Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia university between 1992-96 and later became the VC between 2004-09.

He was also the Director of Academy of Third World Studies in Jamia Millia Islamia from July 2000 to January 2010.

He was also the former director general of the National Archives of India in May 2010.

He also served as vice-chairman, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, president of the Indo-Iran Society of the Iran embassy and president of the Indian History Congress (2002).

He wrote extensively on Partition and the history of Islam in South Asia.

He was awarded Padma Shri by the Hon’ble President of India, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, 2007.

He was also conferred with the highest French Civilian Award - 'Officer dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques' (Officer of the Order of Academic Palms) by the Prime Minister of France.

He received the Ford Foundation (SARC) Fellowship by the Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Oxford in 2002-2003 and the DP Singhal Scholarship from University of Queensland, Brisbane in 2003.

Some of the books he authored include –
- India Partition: The Other Face of Freedom
- When Stone Walls Cry
- Partners in Freedom: Jamia Millia Islamia (co-authored with Rakshanda Jalil)
- From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbas in Colonial India

He did his masters from the Aligarh Muslim University in 1969 and Doctorate (PhD) from the University of Cambridge, 1977.

Jagdish Thakkar, Public Relations Officer in the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) (72 years)

Thakkar, a Senior Journalist, had worked with the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi in Gujarat and Delhi.
He had also served as PRO for 10 different leaders in Gujarat between 1986 to 2014.

The CMs include Congress’s Madhavsinh Solanki, Janata Dal’s Chimanbhai Patel, BJP’s Keshubhai Patel, rebel Rashtriya Janata Party’s Shankersinh Vaghela, and finally Narendra Modi.

He had joined the state information department of Gujarat in 1966-67 and had retired in the year 2004.

Thanjavur T R Kamala Murthy, Prominent Harikatha exponent (88 years)

She was an acclaimed female voice in the male-dominated art form of Harikatha.

During her childhood, she received training from Harikatha exponents like Raja Bhagavathar and D Annaswami Bhagavathar.

She started performing when she was barely 10 years old.

Apparently, she was the only artist who never left her native town, Thanjavur.

Kamala Murthy received Kalaimamani award from the Tamil Nadu Eyal Isai Nataka Manram in 1978 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2000.

Sports

Akila Dananjaya, Sri Lankan off-spinner – was suspended from Bowling by the International Cricket Council (ICC)

He was reported over a suspect bowling action during last month’s first Test of the England series in Sri Lanka.

After the analysis of his bowling action in Brisbane, it was revealed his deliveries exceeded the 15-degrees level of tolerance.
INTERNATIONAL DAY

- International Anti Corruption Day – December 9

- The observance of the day intends to raise public awareness about corruption and the measures to fight it
- It was designated on October 31, 2003, when the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption

SAHITYA AKADEMI AWARDS 2018 – FACT FILE

- Sahitya Akademi Awards 2018 – ‘Unsung’ Writers emerging winners

- Mushtaq Ahmad Mushtaq, Kashmiri writer and broadcaster – bagged the award for literature in Kashmiri language
- He was given this year’s award for his collection of short stories titled ‘Aakh’
- The writer is presently the head of the regional news unit at Radio Kashmir, Srinagar
- He has served in Doordarshan news unit at Srinagar Kendra for 9 years apart from having worked in other media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as an Indian Information Service (IIS) officer
- He has earlier bagged Akashwani Annual Award and also the best book award in Kashmiri at the State level from State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages for the year 2014
Inderjeet Kesar, Prominent Dogri writer – won the award for his Dogri Novel “Bhagirath”
✓ Mr Kesar, who retired from the Secretariat Service in 2004 as Deputy Secretary, has so far written 21 books, including six Novels, two short stories, 11 poetry collections, an Essay and one Bhaint collection

Shyam Sundar Besra, Chief Ticket Inspector, working in Asansol Division of Eastern Railway of Indian Railways - has been conferred the Award for his novel "Marom" in the Santhali language
✓ Two of his works, ‘Dullar khatir’ and ‘Damin Riya (udas) Kahani Ko’ are part of syllabus for Post Graduation courses in Sidhu Kanhu University, Jharkhand
✓ Mr Besra writes in the name of GB Rarek in Santhali language and as Santhal praganvi in Hindi.
✓ He had earlier won Dr Ambedkar Fellowship given by Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Academy in the year 1992

Rahman Abbas, Mumbai-based ‘Urdu’ writer - won the prestigious Award for his fourth Urdu Novel ‘Rohzin’
✓ At 46 years, he is the youngest and first Maharashtrian Urdu novelist to win the award
✓ He had earlier returned the award of the Maharashtra State Urdu Sahitya Akademi given to him for his 2011 novel ‘Khuda Ke Saye Mein’
✓ The 2016 novel ‘Rohzin’ has been translated into English, Hindi and German
✓ The book is the best seller in Pakistan
✓ The author first hit the headlines when he was arrested and later acquitted by the High Court - for allegedly depicting obscenity in his first novel ‘Nakhlistan Ki Talash’ (Search of an Oasis)
Ramesan Nair, Tamil Nadu born writer – wins Sahitya Akademi award for his Malayalam work ‘Guru Pournami’, capturing the essence of Narayana Guru’s philosophy

- He is the third writer of Tamil Nadu origin but settled in Kerala to win the Sahitya Akademi Award
- The other two are Neela Padmanabhan and A. Madhavan, who won the award for Tamil literature
- Both Mr. Padmanabhan and Mr. Nair are from Kanniyakumari district
- Mr. Nair is a famous lyricist who has written songs for 170 films and 3,000 devotional songs
- Mr. Nair had also translated Silappatikaram and Tirukkural into English
- Mr. Nair worked for the All India Radio for 20 years
- He was earlier felicitated by the Tamil Nadu CM, Dr Kalaignar Karunanithi at a function in 2000
- He is currently translating Kamba Ramayanam and Balakanda into Malayalam