TAMIL NADU

- The Tamil Nadu Vanniyakula Kshatriya Public Charitable Trusts and Endowments (Protection and Maintenance) Bill 2018 – gets the approval of the President, Ram Nath Kovind
  - The new bill proposed by the Government aims to create a board to maintain and administer public charitable trusts and endowments created by vanniyar community members
  - The establishment of a board will prevent misuse, misappropriation of properties and income by people for causes other than those for which these endowments were created

- Baduga tribal Community in Nilgiris district – celebrates their annual ‘Heddaiyamman’ festival

- During the festival, thousands of devotees in traditional white dress of the community will walk across villages to worship Baduga goddess
- People observe 48 days fast and walk in religious processions, holding up a holy shaft which symbolizes the miracle of the presiding deity
- It is celebrated in places like Kannerimukku and Kerbetta near Kotagiri and Hallu Kerai near Coonoor - apart from various villages including Petthala, Beragani, and Ketti
Directorate of Tamil Etymological Dictionary – to release three dictionaries for the youth by March 2019 – in order to preserve Tamil words for the future generations

- The 3 dictionaries are –
  - Maanavar Ilakkiya Thamizh Agara Mudali (students’ literary Tamil dictionary)
  - a glossary of Tamil equivalents for words from other languages
  - Nadaimurai Tamil Peragara Mudali (contemporary Tamil dictionary)
- Each dictionary consists of 400 pages and over 10,000 words
- The Tamil term ‘Agaarathi’ is known as ‘Agaramudali’ in chaste Tamil
- The 45-year old Directorate also planning to update 31 volumes of the Tamil etymological dictionary by Devaneya Paavaanar, a multi-linguist from 1974 to cater to current needs

Aadi Sai Vijaykaran, a 13 years old- class VIII student from KC High School in Chennai - became the first Indian to win the Junior Debate Championship - at the World Scholar’s Cup held at Yale University, USA

- The Theme for the cup - ‘An Entangled World: diplomacy, human relationships, the science of memory, and literature, art and music’

Tamil Nadu government - to close noon-meal centres with less than 25 students across the state

- The move aims to shuffle the workforce and food from centres in schools with low enrollment to centres with a higher number of beneficiaries
- The scheme has more than 50 lakh beneficiaries at 43,200 centres in Tamil Nadu
- It was introduced by the former CM, K Kamaraj in primary schools in 1962 and later expanded to all the class students upto Class X under the new name ‘Nutritious noon meal scheme’ by the former CM, M G Ramachandran in 1982
Government – constitutes a 6-member committee under Dr S Madhavi, Additional director of medical services – to enquire into the case of negligence in transfusion of HIV-infected blood to a pregnant woman

M V Le Laperouse, an ultra-modern cruise vessel – becomes the first luxury ship to berth in the newly built ‘modernized cruise terminal’ at the Chennai port

- This was the maiden visit of the Romania-built vessel this year
- It came from Trincomalee in Srilanka with 151 passengers and 113 crew members and sailed to Port Blair in Andaman
- The new cruise terminal, recently inaugurated in October 2018, was built at a cost of Rs 17.24 crore

STATES

Andhra Pradesh – to get its own High court at its new capital Amravati - from January 1, 2019

- After the bifurcation of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh in 2014, both the states were being served by the common high court at Hyderabad
- The new ‘High court of Andhra Pradesh’ at Amravati will be led by Justice Ramesh Ranganathan, who is presently the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court
- The creation of the newest high court brings the total number of such courts nationwide to 25
Madhya Pradesh – notifies ‘Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary’ as a National park

- The move would enable translocation of lions from Gir in Gujarat to Kuno park
- Kuno Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary, now extended by 413 sq km, has been developed for translocation of Asiatic Lions project
- At present, Kuno Palpur Sanctuary is spread over 345 sq km of area, which is not sufficient for the translocation of lions
- Asiatic lions are present only in Gir National Park of Gujarat

**NATIONAL**

- Coal India Ltd (CIL) - to use ‘Made-in-India’ 205-tonne ‘Electric dumper’ for the very first time in the country
  - It was manufactured by BEML (Bharat Earth Movers Ltd.), a state-owned undertaking
  - It is on trial at one of the largest CIL subsidiaries - Northern Coalfields (NCL) Amlohri coal mine

- The current ‘electric dumper’ supply to CIL is dominated by Russia’s Belaz, Tata Hitachi and Caterpillar
- These high-capacity dumpers used for mining operations come at prices upwards of Rs 15 crore each
Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) - is planning to establish ‘Pod hotel’ near the Mumbai Central railway station

- Each pod will be 5 feet by 7 feet with all the essential comforts for a 7-8 hour stay time for passengers
- The pod will also have dining facilities, lounge areas, changing rooms and washrooms
- IRCTC is awaiting approval from Western Railway before sanctioning a feasibility study for the project
- Mumbai already has a pod hotel, Urbanpod, which opened in Andheri in 2017
- Usually, the rate for a pod is around Rs 2,500

Indian Railways – to use ‘USTAAD’, an Artificial Intelligence-Powered Robot – to ensure safety on trains in the Central Railways Zone

- USTAAD - Undergear Surveillance Through Artificial Intelligence Assisted Droid
- It was built by the mechanical branch of Central Railways Nagpur division
- The robot will click photos and record videos of the train, under the gears and then send the footage to engineers for maintenance and repair
- It will examine the coaches in real-time through an HD camera and then channel them over WiFi
Election Commission – prohibits the usage of all kinds of ‘Tobacco’ in Polling booths during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections

- The first-of-its-kind guideline issued by the EC prohibits not just smoking but also the use of chewable tobacco in all polling booths in the country
- The presiding officer of each polling booth will be nominated as the nodal officer for ensuring tobacco-free status at their booths.
- The move comes after the Delhi government's Health Department urged the Election Commission to declare all polling stations as tobacco-free zones rather than just smoke-free

INTERNATIONAL

Israel – legalizes the medical use of Marijuana

- It joins other countries like Thailand, Canada which have passed similar laws recently
- Israel will become the third country behind Canada and Netherlands to take its medical marijuana global
- iCAN, Israel’s medical cannabis company, predicts that the global demand will reach $33 billion in the next five years

Palestine – to apply for Full membership at the United Nations in January 2019

- The country is a non-member observer state at the UN since 2012
- Palestinians would require the support from at least 9 out of the 15 member states of UN Security Council - in order to secure the full membership
- In October 2011, UNESCO voted to admit Palestine as a full member, becoming the first UN agency to do so

COMMITTEES

RBI – constitutes an 6-member expert committee under ‘Bimal Jalan’, former RBI Governor - to review its Economic Capital Framework

- The committee will arrive at the ideal level of reserves RBI should hold - in consultation with the Union Government – and decide how much to be transferred to the Government
- Former deputy RBI governor, Rakesh Mohan will be its vice chairman
- Economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, RBI central board members Bharat Doshi, Sudhir Mankad and deputy governor NS Vishwanathan will be the other members of the committee
- The committee will submit its report by the end of March
- RBI had earlier constituted 3 different panels to review its economic capital framework -- headed by YH Malegam, Usha Thorat and V Subrahmanyam
APPOINTMENTS

- Rajesh Subramaniam, an Indian-American – named President and CEO of FedEx, Multinational courier delivery giant from US

- Subramaniam is currently serving as the executive vice-president, chief marketing and communications officer of FedEx Corporation
- He replaces David L Cunningham at the company headquarters in Tennessee
- He is expected to assume his new role from January 1, 2019
- Subramaniam, who has been with Fed Ex for more than 27 years, is from Thiruvananthapuram and holds a graduate degree from IIT-Bombay

AWARDS

- Manju Mehta, eminent Sitar Player – conferred with the ‘Tansen Samman’ – for her contribution in the field of Hindustani classical music

- The award was presented by Narendra singh Tomar, Union Minister on the inaugural function of Tansen Music festival in Gwalior on December 25
- She was given a cash award of Rs 2 lakh and a memento
- Manju Mehta learnt music from legendary sitar maestro, Late Pandit Ravi Shankar
- She runs Saptak School of Music at Ahmedabad in Gujarat
- Tansen Award
- Tansen award was instituted by the Government of Madhya Pradesh
- Ustad Abdul Haleem Jafar Khan, Sitar Maestro – was the first recipient of the prestigious honour in 2000
- Renowned classical musician, Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar – was honoured with the Tansen Samman for 2017
- Tansen Music Festival
- The Tansen Music Festival is organised every year by the MP culture department in the memory of Tansen, the Court musician of Akbar
- It is held in Gwalior for the past 94 years
SPORTS

Heena Sidhu, former World No 1 shooter – equals women’s 10m air pistol qualification world record – at the National selection trials

Her score of 587 equalled the world record - held by reigning Olympic and world champion, Anna Korakaki of Greece

Youth Olympic Games winner Manu Bhaker came in second with a score of 579

CA Kuttappa – takes over as India’s new chief boxing coach

He succeeds veteran boxing coach, SR Singh, who has now retired

The 39-year-old, 2018 Dhronacharya awardee, who was an assistant coach earlier, is credited with developing some of the country’s best boxers such as Vijender Singh, M Suranjoy Singh and Shiva Thapa

CA Kuttappa has been coaching the Indian men’s boxing team since May 2009

Prior to that, he was serving as a Subedar in the Indian Army
Ricky Ponting, former Australian cricket captain - became the 25th Australian cricketer to be officially inducted into the International Cricket Council’s Hall of Fame - at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG)

- He became the third player to be inducted into the hall of fame in 2018 after India's Rahul Dravid and England's Claire Taylor
- The total number of hall of fame members now stands at 87
- Ponting was a three-time World Cup winner, including 2 World Cups as captain in 2003 and 2007
- He is the highest run scorer for Australia in both Tests and ODIs, with 13,378 runs in the longest format and 13,704 runs in the 50-over format

RANKINGS

Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP) – released by NITI Aayog CEO, Amitabh Kant

- The ranking details the incremental progress achieved by 111 aspirational districts between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018 across six key development sectors -- Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development and Basic Infrastructure
- The rankings are based on the data that is publicly available through the Champions of Change Dashboard, which includes data entered on a real-time basis at the district level
- The rankings, for the first time, considered inputs from household survey conducted by NITI Aayog’s knowledge partners, TATA Trusts & the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Of 115 aspirational districts, only 111 participated in the survey
- Three aspirational districts from West Bengal did not participate, while one district of Kerala could not take part because of floods
- The aspirational district programme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 5, 2018
- The first Delta Ranking for the Aspirational Districts was released in June 2018
### Rankings

#### Most Improved Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Virudhunagar</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nuapada</td>
<td>Odisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Siddharthnagar</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aurangabad</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Koraput</td>
<td>Odisha</td>
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</table>

#### Least Improved Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>107</td>
<td>Kiphire</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
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<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>Giridih</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
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<tr>
<td>109</td>
<td>Chatra</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
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<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>111</td>
<td>Pakur</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
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#### ‘Fast Movers’ Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District, State</th>
<th>June 2018 Rank</th>
<th>October 2018 Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ranchi, Jharkhand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>Jamui, Bihar</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>25</td>
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</tbody>
</table>