Tamil Nadu Government – issues new guidelines to declare School holidays due to rain or local festivities

- The district collectors declaring holidays should ensure the classes are held on Saturdays to make up for the days lost.

Chennai Corporation – to implement ‘Red Light Violation Detection’ system by installing ‘Automatic Number Plate Recognition’ (ANPR) cameras under the Smart City plans for Chennai.
The Stop light violators will be punished ‘automatically’ at 159 busy junctions of the city, thanks to the new ‘Intelligent Traffic management system’ (ITMS) to be implemented

The ANPR cameras will be powered by ‘Optical Character Recognition technology’ to read the number plates of violating vehicles and issue ‘Challans’ for fine automatically

S Ramakrishnan, 52 years old Tamil writer – honoured with ‘Sahitya Akademi’ Award for his novel ‘Sancharam’, which deals with the lives of Nadhaswaram artistes

He has been writing several short stories, novels, plays, children’s literature and translations for the last 27 years

He has authored and published 5 novels, 4 books for children, 10 collections of short stories, 24 collections of articles and 9 plays so far

He had won Tagore Literary Award, Sangeetha Nataka Academy, Iyal Award and award for best novel from Tamilnadu Government.

Sanjai Gandhi – has been appointed as Head – IPR (Intellectual property rights) panel to the Tamil Nadu Chamber of commerce, Chennai

He is an additional government pleader before the Madras High court
The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate court complex – was inaugurated by V K Tahilramani, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court in Egmore, Chennai

- The court, which earlier functioned in Egmore, was shifted to Allikulam complex due to construction works
- With the inauguration, all the 12 courts have been shifted back to Egmore now

Chennai Police – to launch ‘Paid service’ next week – to help the general public to verify tenants, maids and job seekers
- Any individual can apply for verification in the state police website
- The application should be accompanied by a consent letter from the person to be verified, without which the application will be rejected
- The Government had fixed the charges at Rs 500 per application for individuals and Rs 1000 for private companies
- District crime branch offices and city intelligence wing officials will be responsible for verification
- The report will be issued within 15 days from the receipt of the letter

STATES

- Odisha’s Kandhamal Haldi (Turmeric) – to get GI tag soon
The turmeric, grown in Kandhamal, is famous for its healing properties. It also has medicinal and cosmetic usage. Graphical Indicator (GI) tag for a product corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin. It is valid for a period of 10 years after which it has to be renewed. The Registrar of GI is based in Chennai and the functions of GI are governed by Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999.

- Delhi Government – launches ‘Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana’

The newly launched scheme offers free travel packages for senior citizens above 60 years from Delhi to five religious circuits. 1,100 senior citizens from every constituency of Delhi will be eligible for the scheme. The Government will incur a cost of Rs 7000 per pilgrim in the scheme. Employees of central, state and local government or autonomous bodies are not eligible for the scheme. The selected pilgrims will be covered with an insurance of Rs 1 lakh each. Even though there is no income criterion, preference will be given to those from economically weaker sections on first-come-first-serve basis.

- Odisha Government – launches ‘PEETHA’ programme – to raise awareness and promote transparency on the implementation of various Government schemes
PEETHA - Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability

It is part of the government’s flagship scheme, Ama Gaon Ama Bikas Yojana

As per the programme, camps will be organised at the gram panchayat level from the 15th to the 20th of each month, starting this month

In these camps, benefits like LED bulb, Old Age pension, etc will be distributed to the beneficiaries

Every month, the best panchayat in each Block will be given an incentive of Rs. 5 lakh for organising PEETHA

NATIONAL

Government – allocates Rs 850 crore – to upgrade Doordarshan and All India Radio

The announcement follows the recommendation of Sam Pitroda committee constituted in 2014 to audit the ‘Prasar Bharati’
The sanctioned amount will be for a period of 2 years over FY19 and FY 20

High Security Number Plates (HSNP) – to be fixed in all the vehicles from April 2019

Ministry of Road transport issues directives to all the vehicle manufacturers to fix them before selling the vehicle
The vehicle manufacturers will also produce a third ‘Registration mark’ indicating the color coding for the fuel used in the vehicle
It will be fixed by the authorized dealers before releasing the vehicle
The HSNP number plates have 5 years guarantee period
The sticker will have the details of registering authority, registration number, laser-branded permanent number, engine number and chassis number making the vehicle more secure from theft
HSNP was earlier rolled out in 2005

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

Supreme Court – approves ‘Witness Protection Scheme 2018’ on December 5, 2018

The bench comprising, Justice AK Sikri and Justice S Abdul Nazeer held that the scheme will become ‘law’ under Article 141/142 of the Constitution
The court had asked the States to implement it by 2019
The scheme was finalised in consultation with National Legal Services Authority
As part of the scheme, the court had directed the states to set up ‘vulnerable witness deposition complexes’ by the end of 2019
INTERNATIONAL

- United States – re-establishes Permanent diplomatic mission in Somalia – after 27 years
  - The US has been handling Somalian diplomatic mission from Nairobi, Capital of Kenya since 2013

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- India & Peru – signs an agreement for co-operation and mutual assistance in customs matters
  - It was signed on the sidelines of 80th Session of the Policy Commission meeting of the World Customs Organisations (WCO), held in Mumbai from December 3-5, 2018
  - The Agreement was signed by S Ramesh, Chairman of Central Board of Indirect taxes and Customs (CBIC) of India

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- India Water Impact Summit – held in New Delhi
  - Inaugurated by – Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation
  - Organised by - National Mission for Clean Ganga and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies and the Ministry
  - During the event, Green Ganga App, developed by Remote Sensing Centre of ISRO, was also launched
  - The App will be used for geo-tagging of saplings and delineation of plantation boundaries under ongoing afforestation activities of Namami Gange programme
European space agency, Arianespace – launched Gsat-11, India’s heaviest satellite weighing 5,854 kg from Kourou, French Guiana on December 5, 2018

- The launch vehicle, Ariane 5 VA-246, carried India’s Gsat-11 and South Korea’s GEO-KOMPSAT-2A satellites
- Ariane 5 is one of three launch vehicles operated by Arianespace along with Soyuz and Vega
- The payload of Gsat-11 includes 32 Ku-band transmitters and 8 Ka-band transmitters (used for the first time)
- It will be useful to provide high data rate connectivity up to 14 gigabit per second (Gbps) data transfer speed to Indian urban and rural population
- Satellite is configured around ISRO’s I-6K Bus and has a designed lifetime of more than 15 years.

- NASA’s 1st ever OSIRIS-REx mission – lands on its target Asteroid ‘Bennu’ after two years of its launch
✓ OSIRIS-Rex - Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer
✓ It was launched in September 2016 to study 101955 Bennu, a carbon-rich asteroid
✓ It is NASA’s first asteroid sampling mission, which will study and survey its surface, collect dust sample and reach back to the earth by 2023
✓ Bennu is an asteroid which orbits close to earth
✓ It was discovered in September 1999 by the LINEAR Project
✓ It is potentially a dangerous asteroid which could impact Earth in the late 22nd century
✓ Japan’s Hayabusa spacecraft launched by JAXA holds the record for the World’s 1st ever Asteroid mission

➢ World’s first 3D printed, fully-functional, e-motorbike ‘NERA’ – was developed in Germany by two firms, BigRep and NOWlab

✓ It was developed within a short span of 12 weeks with just 15 parts excluding the electrical components

**ECONOMY**

➢ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) – announced that the pricing of home loans will not be decided by the banks from April 1, 2019
✓ It makes mandatory for the banks to link all floating rate loans to an external benchmark related to the markets, like RBI’s repo rate, or the 91st day/181st day treasury bill or any other produced by the Financial Benchmarks of India
✓ Thus, the cost of the home loan will be at a ‘constant’ spread over the benchmark throughout the tenure of the loan
APPOINTMENTS

- Shamila Bhatohi, Indian-origin Lawyer – appointed as the head of South Africa’s ‘National Prosecuting Authority’ (NPA)

- She will start her new role as the National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) in February 2019
- She is the first woman to head the NPA
- Batohi shot to fame as the evidence leader during the King Commission that probed the Hansie Cronje match-fixing saga of 2000
- She replaces the previous prosecutor, Shaun Abrahams
- Batohi has worked for the past nine years as a legal adviser to the prosecutor in the International Criminal Court in The Hague

AWARDS

- Sahitya Akademi Awards 2018 – announced to honour 24 different language writers
  - Overall, 7 books of poetry, 6 novels, 6 short stories, 3 of literary criticism and 2 of essays won the awards this year
  - This year, works in three unrecognized languages, Koshali-Sambalpuri, Paite and Hariyanvi, will also be awarded apart from the recognized language winners
  - The awards will be presented on January 29, 2019 during the Festival of Letters, organised by Sahitya Akademi
  - The awards were established in 1954
  - Satyajit Ray, Indian film-maker was the designer of the plaque awarded by the Sahitya Akademi

- Bhasha Samman Awards 2017 and 2018 – announced by Sahitya Akademi
  - 2017 - North zone - Yogendra Nath Sharma ‘Arun’ (Hindi)
  - 2017 - South zone - G Venkatasubbiah (Kannada)
  - 2018 - Eastern zone - Gagendra Nath Das (Odia)
OBITUARY

➢ ‘Nel’ Jayaraman, renowned agriculturist (54 years)

✓ He was instrumental in the protection and propagation of indigenous paddy varieties in Tamil Nadu
✓ His notable achievement is bringing back 174 varieties of Paddy and successfully farming them
✓ He also served as the coordinator of ‘Save Our Rice’ Campaign of Tamil Nadu, which was launched in 2004
He is the Training Director of a consumer based organization called CREATE (Consumer Research, Education, Action, Training and Empowerment) in Tamilnadu, which is a major partner in the ‘Save our Rice’ Campaign

Earlier, he worked in the Federation of Consumer Organisations, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry (FEDCOT) as Director of agriculture.

He worked tirelessly to preserve native paddy seeds, following the footsteps of his Guru Dr G Nammalvar.

He is the main organizer of the annual Paddy seed festival, which is held in his native village Adhirengam, Tiruvarur district, since 2005.

During the festival, he distributes traditional varieties of Paddy seeds to thousands of farmers on the condition that they should return it two-fold next year.

The 17th edition of the festival was held successfully in June 2017.

In 2011, he received the State Award for best organic farmer for his contribution to organic farming.

In the year 2015, he received the National Award for best Genome Savior.

Last year, he received the State Award for best organic farmer for his contribution to organic farming.

He was invited by the Philippines Government to give a talk at the International Rice Research Institute on his work and mission.

**SPORTS**

- **International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Athletics Awards 2018, Monaco**
  - **World Athlete of the Year**
    - Men’s - Eliud Kipchoge (Kenya) - Marathon world record holder and Olympic champion
    - Women’s - Caterine Ibarguen (Colombia) – Long jumping and Triple jumping
Eliud Kipchoge also won the London Marathon 2018 earlier

INTERNATIONAL DAY

World Soil Day – December 5

The day is observed annually by UN’s Food and Agricultural Organisation since 2013
✓ The observance of the day highlights the importance of soil quality for human well being apart from stressing the need of soil resources management
✓ Theme 2018 - ‘Be the Solution to Soil Pollution’
✓ The date, December 5, was chosen because it marks the official birthday of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the King of Thailand, who officially sanctioned the event

Maharparinirvas Diwas – December 6
✓ The day marks the death anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar, the Father of Indian Constitution
✓ He passed away on December 6, 1956 and the nation observes the 63rd Maharparinirvas Diwas to pay homage to the great leader with various functions across the country
REPORT


- The number of patents granted by India increased from 8,248 in 2016 to 12,387 in 2017
- Of these, 1,712 patents were granted to Indian individuals and organisations and 10,675 to foreigners in 2017
- India ranked 10th in the number of patents given last year
- No Indian company or university figures in last year’s global list of the top 50 patent applicants.
- Globally, 1.4 million patents were granted in 2017 with China leading at 4,20,144 patents followed by US at 3,18,829 patents
- Japan’s ‘Canon’ ranked at the top with 24,036 patent applications during the years 2013–2015 followed by South Korea’s ‘Samsung’ with 21,836 and China’s ‘State Grid Corporation’ with 21,653 patents
- WIPO – is a global organization for promotion and protection of intellectual property rights (IPR)
- It was established in 1967 with its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland

Global Passport Power Rank 2018 – released by Arton Capital

- UAE - 1st
- India - 66
✓ UAE Passport ranked as No 1 among 197 nations – and declared as the Most Powerful Passport
✓ UAE passport holder can fly to 113 countries without Visa and a total of 167 countries without prior-visa requirement.
✓ UAE is followed by Singapore & Germany in the 2nd place with 166 countries.
✓ India stood at 66th position
✓ Afghanistan was ranked as the bottom most country at 93rd position