Tamil Nadu

- Chennai Port Trust has acquired a new vessel, ‘Marutham’ – to handle Oil spill issues along the Chennai coast

- The new vessel was flagged off by minister of state for shipping Mansukh L Mandaviya on November 14
- This oil recovery vessel was designed to tackle first-line oil spill and suited to provide immediate assistance in combating oil spills
- The vessel was bought at a budget of ₹14 crore.
- The shipping ministry provided 50% of the fund for purchasing the vessel and the balance amount was sourced from Indian Oil Corporation, Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited.
- These companies are operating in the port and have agreed to provide the cost for buying the vessel.
- The vessel has two tanks which will be able to collect spilled oil from water.
- The two storage tanks have a capacity of 7,500 litre each.
- At any given time, the vessel can collect 15,000 litres of spilled oil.
- The officials decided to commission oil spill recovery vehicle after Chennai beaches were polluted in 2017 following a collision of two ships off Ennore.
The Tamil Nadu state police - have inaugurated a pilot project, ‘Tollscope’, to link all toll plazas to monitor live movements of vehicles.

Tollscope IN TN
26 toll plazas in the state have been interlinked so far

- Thiruppouchethi
- Kappalur
- Elayarpadi
- Chittampatti
- Etturvatam
- Saliapudur
- Purupandiyapuram
- Purukottai (Vegaikulam)
- Naguneri
- Bogalur
- Pamban Bridge (MORTH)
- Shenbagampettai
- Lembalakudi
- Lechhumnanapatti
- Palaya Gandhvakottai
- Boothakudi
- Valavanthakottai
- Samayapuram
- Thiruppanganthurai
- Ponnambalapatti
- Manavasi
- Velanchettiyur
- Rasampalayam
- Kodai Road
- Thirumandurai
- Sengurichi

- Sivaganga superintendent of police Rohit Nathan R has developed the project and it will be inaugurated at an event at the SP’s office in Sivaganga on November 15.
- Through the project, the police have interlinked at least 26 toll plazas and connected to the control centre in Sivaganga district.
- The project was approved by Tamil Nadu DGP J K Tripathy and the technical know-how was provided by WBC software firm in Karaikudi.
- As part of the pilot project, 20% of state’s toll plazas have been mapped and the vehicle data is crosschecked live with the police criminal database (CCTNS, crime and criminal tracking system).
- If a vehicle involved in any crime crosses a toll booth, the control room will be alerted immediately.
- This project is a first step in using live analytics in crime prevention and detection.
- It also assists in handling sensitive cases like terrorists attacks, kidnapping, sand smuggling, organized crime etc.

The Tamil Nadu schools - will soon have breaks for children to drink water.

- The state School education minister K A Sengottaiyan announced, on the sidelines of the Children’s Day celebrations, that a 10-minute breaks at regular intervals will be given for children to drink water.
- Kerala already has a system of ringing a ‘water bell’, which serves as a reminder for students to drink water.
- Such a system is also prevalent in Karnataka.
The Tamil Nadu government appointed an IAS officer, Sigy Thomas Vaidhyan, as commissioner of school education

- The 2002-batch officer will be based at the DPI campus and look after directorates of school, elementary education and matriculation schools.
- The directorates are so far headed by officials promoted from the school education department.
- The appointment seeks to ensure better monitoring and improve the quality of education, considering number of reforms being introduced, including the introduction of new syllabus in the state.

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

The Supreme Court – ruled out a CBI inquiry into the Rafale deal on November 14 and dismissed review petitions of its December 14, 2018 order.
In its earlier order, it had given clean chit to the NDA government in procuring 36 fully loaded Rafale fighter jets through an intergovernment deal with France.

A bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and K M Joseph unanimously noted that the price of the basic Rafale jet negotiated by the NDA government was marginally cheaper than that considered by the UPA government.

Justice K M Joseph, however, noted that the SC’s dismissal of the PILs would not prevent a preliminary investigation into the case and that a regular case (FIR) could be lodged if substantial material was discovered.

The Supreme Court – refused to alter its ruling decided on September 28, 2018 allowing women of all ages to enter the Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala.

A five-judge bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra, by a 3-2 majority, had directed a seven-judge bench to frame guidelines to decide other cases involving a conflict between the right to equality and believer’s faith in religious practices and customs.

The conflict has also involved the petitions “regarding entry of Muslim women in dargah/mosque, Parsi women married to a non-Parsi in agiyaris and the practice of female genital mutilation in the Dawoodi Bohra community.”

But in their minority opinion, Justices Nariman and Chandrachud criticised the CJI for involving other future cases of likely faith versus fundamental rights scenarios, as the present case is related only regarding the entry of women into Sabarimala temple.
The majority judgment said the seven-judge bench would also decide if the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965, allowing the entry of all Hindus into all temples, applied to Sabarimala.

In 2018, then CJI Dipak Misra and Justices A M Khanwilkar, Nariman and Chandrachud had all pronounced that women of all ages be allowed to enter Sabarimala as the custom barring females in the 10-50 age group suggests a gender bias that violated the right to equality.

However, Justice Malhotra had written a strong dissent, warning courts against venturing into the field of faith and customs.

The Supreme Court – to examine the scope and ambit of Article 110 of the Constitution, which defines a money bill.

While observing that it’s not been discussed during its verdict in the Aadhaar case, the court referred the issue to a seven-judge bench for an authoritative ruling.

A five-judge constitution bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices N V Ramana, D Y Chandrachud, Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna observed that there should be an absolute clarity with regard to the provisions of the Money bill.

The court rejected the Centre’s plea that passage of bills in Parliament was exempted from judicial scrutiny.

ECONOMY

Moody’s Investors Service - slashed India’s economic growth forecast to 5.6% for 2019 from 7.4% in 2018 on November 14

Moody’s had, on October 10, slashed India’s economic growth forecast for 2019-20 fiscal to 5.8% from an earlier estimate of 6.2%.

Last week, it downgraded India’s outlook to negative from stable.
A TEMPLE IN TIGER TERRAIN

Sabarimala Sri Ayyappa Temple is on Sabari hills inside Periyar Tiger Reserve in the Western Ghats

LEGEND HAS IT...
The temple is dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, also known as Dharma Sastha, who, according to belief, is the son of Shiva and Mohini, the feminine incarnation of Vishnu. He was brought up by the king of Pandala. After completing his mission to destroy the demon Mahishi, who could only be defeated by a son born to Shiva and Vishnu, Ayyappa revealed his true identity to his foster parents and returned to Devaloka. A temple was built on Sabari hill as suggested by Ayyappa and where he is worshipped as Dharma Sastha.

GUTTED BY A FIRE
- The Pandalum royal family was the custodian of the temple till 1821
- In 1821, the kingdom of Pandalum was added to the neighbouring kingdom of Travancore and 48 temples, including the Sabarimala temple, came under Travancore
- In May 1950, the temple was gutted in a devastating fire. The temple was rebuilt and the earlier stone idol of the deity was replaced by one made of panchaloha (five sacred elements)

A 41-DAY Penance
- Devotees who visit the temple must observe a 41-day 'vratam' (penance) during which they follow celibacy, avoid alcohol and non-veg food and don't cut their hair and nails. Once they start the 'vratam', they are also known as Ayyappans, after the deity of the temple
- The annual pilgrimage to the temple begins on the first day of Malayalam month Vrischikam (Nov 17 to Dec 15) and ends on the 11th day of Dhanu (Dec 26). This 41-day period is known as Mandala season

AYYAPA’S MUSLIM FRIEND
The pilgrims to the temple also visit the mosque of Vavarurwami at Erumely. Vavarurwami was believed to be a friend and companion of Lord Ayyappa

ONE WOMAN’S ETERNAL WAIT
- Another important deity worshipped by Ayyappa devotees is the goddess Mallakapurathamma, whose temple is situated close to the main shrine
- Legend has it that Mallakapurathamma, who was demoness Mahishi, wanted to marry Lord Ayyappa after she was released from the curse by the latter. Being a celibate, Ayyappa could not agree to the request. But he promised to marry her if no first-time devotee (kaniy Ayyappa) came to Sabarimala during a Mandala season
- During Makara Vilakku festival, a procession from Mallakurputtam temple carrying the deity’s idol goes to Sharamkutti, where the first-time pilgrims leave an arrow to announce their presence. Every year, after finding thousands of arrows, Mallakapurathamma returns, doomed to wait forever

60 lakh devotees visit the site during the annual Mandalam-Makara Vilakku season, making Sabarimala one of the largest pilgrimages in the world.