TAMIL NADU

➢ The Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department – to launch a 24x7 TV channel to showcase the state’s Temples and culture
  ✓ This would be the first TV channel of a state Government department
  ✓ It would be operated on the lines of Sri Venkateswara Bhakthi Channel of Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam
  ✓ All programmes will be telecast in Tamil language
  ✓ The department now publishes a monthly magazine ‘Thirukoil’, which contains stories on temples, their festivals and on Tamil culture

➢ Tamil Nadu Government – places order with Lenovo for supplying 1.5 million laptops for free distribution to Students in the state
  ✓ The order is valued at Rs 2,300 crore
  ✓ The company will supply the laptops at the cost of Rs 10,000 plus tax per unit
  ✓ Lenovo outbid others including HP to bag the deal
  ✓ The scheme was started in 2011 to provide free laptops to higher secondary students in Government and aided schools and college students
  ✓ Over 38 lakh free laptops have been distributed so far in the last 7 years

➢ Indian Oil Corporation – launches its ‘Fuel at doorstep’ service in the city on December 20
  ✓ The company intends to supply fuel through mobile dispensers similar to fuel tanks
  ✓ A fuel delivery vehicle fitted with Mobile dispenser and 6000 litre fuel tank was flagged off – at Chandini Enterprises, Indian oil petrol pump, Kolathur
  ✓ The customers can place order through an Android app (REPOSE APP)
  ✓ The minimum order would be 200 litres
  ✓ The scheme was introduced first in Pune in May 2018
IIT, Madras – partners with NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies) - to provide skill development training of four million people on digital skills

- The partnership will be directly with the Sector Skills Council (SSC), the education and skill development initiative of Nasscom, through its FutureSkills Platform
- The training will be in emerging technological areas like AI, IOT, CyberSecurity, Big Data, Cloud and BlockChain

STATES

- Assam Government – approves the release of ‘Chah Bahgicha Dhan Puraskar Mela’
  - As per the scheme, the beneficiaries comprising of tea garden workers - will get Rs 2,500 in their bank accounts by January 15, 2018
  - Government will be spending Rs 200 crore for the scheme
  - Earlier, the Government had announced that Rs 5000 will be provided to tea garden workers who had opened bank accounts after demonetization

NATIONAL

- Lok Sabha – passes ‘Consumer Protection Bill’ on December 20
The bill was introduced by Ram Vilas Paswan, Consumer affairs minister and it now awaits the approval of Rajya sabha to become a law.

It will replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and repeal the 2015 Consumer Protection Bill.

The bill was originally introduced in the Lok Sabha in January 2018.

The bill calls for strict punishment with jail terms and hefty fines for food adulteration and false advertisements.

Highlights:
- The bill provides for the recall of faulty products, allowing buyers to seek compensation for defective items or deficiency in services.
- It also prescribes a penalty for manufacturing or selling adulterated items – ranging from 7 years to life term depending on the severity of the impact of adulteration and atleast Rs 10 lakh fine in case of death caused by any adulterated products.
- The proposed law also imposes fines on celebrities for endorsing false or misleading advertisements and penalties including jail term for manufacturers.

Penalties for False advertisements:
- 1st time offence of endorser or manufacturer – Fine - Rs 10 lakh
- 1st time offence of manufacturer – Jail term – up to 2 years
- 2nd offence for endorser or manufacturer – Fine - Rs 50 lakh
- 2nd offence for manufacturer – Jail term – up to 5 years

It intends to set up ‘The Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions’ at District, State and National levels.

Claim limits for the Commissions:
- District Commissions – Upto Rs one crore (Earlier, as per the Consumer Protection Act, 1986, this limit was Rs 20 lakh)
- State level Commissions - 15 crore rupees (Earlier, it was Rs 1 crore)
- National Commission - Above 15 crore rupees

It also proposes to set up a ‘Central Consumer Protection Authority’ to act on consumer complaints against the violators.
Government – launches “Asiatic Lion Conservation Project”

- The project was launched by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at a budget of Rs. 97.84 crores for the next 3 years
- It will be funded through a centrally sponsored scheme - the ‘Development of Wildlife Habitat’ - with the contributing ratio of 60:40 between Centre and State
- The 2015 census showed a population of 523 Asiatic Lions in the Gir forests of Gujarat
- Asiatic Lions are classified as 'Endangered' under the IUCN Red List

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi – to release commemorative coin and postage stamp on Paika Rebellion on December 24, 2018 in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

- The Government will also set up a Chair in memory of the Paika Rebellion in Utkal University, Bhubaneswar at a cost of Rs 5 crore.
- During the visit, the PM will also inaugurate the Lalitgiri Archaeological Museum, which displays huge sculptures of Buddha and other Buddhist deities apart from architectural fragments of Viharas and Chaityas
- Lalitgiri is one of the earliest Buddhist settlements in Odisha
- Paika Rebellion
  - The Paik Rebellion, also called the Paika Bidroha, was an armed rebellion against the British East India Company's rule
  - It took place in Odisha in 1817
  - It was led by Bakshi Jagabandhu, former commander of forces of the Raja of Khurda and the last King of Khurda, Raja Mukunda Deva
  - It quickly spread across most of Odisha before being ruthlessly crushed by the East India Company

Prime Minister – to inaugurate the Permanent campus of IIT, Bhubaneswar (IIT-BBS) on December 24
He will also lay the foundation stone for permanent campus of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER), Berhampur

The IIT-BBS, one of the 8 IITs established in 2008, has five Centres of Excellence (CoE) now in the fields of Augmented and Virtual Reality, Energy Materials, Design Innovation, Bay of Bengal Coastal Observatory and Probiotics

IISER, established in 2016, is currently functioning from the building of Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in the Silk City

The construction of new buildings for IIT-BBS will complete by the end of 2019 and IISER by the end of 2021

**India – retains the highest ‘Aviation Safety Ranking’ of ‘Category 1’ – as per the US Regulator, Federation of Aviation Administration (FAA)**

The top ranking showed India’s adherence to the standards laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) – following an audit of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in July 2018

The ranking was last upgraded in 2015 after a downward revision to Category 2 in 2014

**Civil Aviation Ministry in association with AAI – launches ‘Gas 2019’, a mobile App for Global Aviation Summit to be held in Mumbai in January 15-16, 2019**

The App will facilitate the connection of co-delegates and speakers in the summit through networking chats

Around 22 Aviation and transport ministers of different countries would participate in the summit
Ministry of Culture announced that - 10 Monuments were adopted under the ‘Adopt A Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan’ scheme

- The scheme was launched on September 27, 2017
- It envisages involvement of Private/Public Companies and Individuals to adopt Monuments and Natural Heritage Sites in the country, primarily under their CSR initiative

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<tr>
<th>Agency/Institution/Organization</th>
<th>Name of Monument</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalmia Bharat Ltd.</td>
<td>Red Fort</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
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<td>Golconda Fort</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
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<td>Adventures Tour Operators Association of India</td>
<td>Area surrounding Gangotri Temple and Trail to Gaumukh</td>
<td>Uttarakhand</td>
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<td>Mt. Stok Kangri Trek, Ladakh</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apeejay Park Hotels</td>
<td>Jantar Mantar</td>
<td>Delhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bliss Inns (V-Resorts)</td>
<td>Surajkund</td>
<td>Haryana</td>
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<td>Yatra Online</td>
<td>Qutub Minar</td>
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<td>Ajanta Caves</td>
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<td>Leh Palace, Leh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hampi (Hazara Rama Temple)</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
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**COURT VERDICT**

- Madras High Court – suspends its ban on ‘Online’ sale of medicines
  - A division bench of Justice M Sathyanarayanan and Justice P Rajamanickam – reserved the judgement on appeal against the December 17 order of a single judge
  - The suspension order will be in operation till the judgement is delivered in the appeal
PERSONALITIES

- Jim Mattis, US Defence Secretary – resigns citing policy differences with the President, Trump

- The resignation comes after a day when the US President announced the pulling out of around 2000-member troop from Syria and also planning to withdraw troops from Afghanistan
- Mattis would be retiring at the end of February 2019
- As per the analysts, the withdrawal of US troops from Syria will clear the way for Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime, Russia and Iran
- James Norman Mattis is the 26th US Secretary of Defense, nominated on January 20, 2017
- He has served in the Persian Gulf War, Afghanistan, and Iraq
- Earlier, in March 2018, Trump had fired Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson
- Recently, Trump announced that John F Kelly, Chief of Staff would step down by the end of the year

APPOINTMENTS

- Nilanjan Roy – appointed as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Infosys
He was Bharti Airtel’s Global CFO for 13 years and instrumental in driving Airtel Africa’s upcoming IPO scheduled for next year
Prior to Airtel, he worked for 15 years with Unilever’s global operations
The appointment is effective March 1, 2019

Arti Chhabra Srivastava – appointed as the first Full time ‘Chief Vigilance Officer’ of SEBI
She would be in charge for a period of 3 years

AWARDS

Mamta Banerjee, Chief Minister of West Bengal – awarded the ‘Skoch Chief Minister of the Year’ Award for the year 2017

The award recognizes her contribution to the state’s overall development, as it had emerged as the ‘Best-performing’ state in the field of Governance
West Bengal has won 31 Skoch Awards this year for its performance in different fields for various projects
Earlier, West Bengal’s Kanyakashree scheme (Launched in 2012) won the highest public service award from the United Nations
West Bengal has also won the top Skoch Award for creating the maximum number of man-days and for the maximum amount spent in paying people for their labour under the 100-days work scheme
The state has also been conferred with five consecutive Krishi Karman awards in the field of Agriculture
It had also bagged the IPPAI Award for rural electrification in the state
Andhra Pradesh CM, N Chandrababu Naidu - was awarded ‘SKOCH Sprinter of the Year’ Award
Commerce and Industry and civil aviation minister, Suresh Prabhu - won the ‘Steady Reformer’ Award

Prime Minister Shram Awards 2017
40 workers (including 3 women) were selected to receive 31 awards from the Government of India - in recognition of their distinguished performances
The awardees are employed in the Departmental Undertakings & Public Sector Undertakings of the Central and State Governments and also in Private Sector Units This year, no one was conferred with the prestigious Shram Ratna Award
3 nominations for the Shram Bhushan Award, 12 nominations for Shram Vir/Shram Veerangana and 16 nominations for Shram Shree/Shram Devi Awards have been selected
These include 23 workers from the public sector and 17 workers from the private sector
Last year, 50 workers were conferred with the PM’s Shram awards
Shram Bhushan Winners
Myneni Sharada from BEL
B.B.V. Prasada Rao from Naval Dockyard
Sudip Pachhal from Tata Steels
It carries a cash award of Rs. 1,00,000/- and a 'Sanad'
Shram Vir/Shram Veerangana
It carries a cash award of Rs. 60,000/- and a 'Sanad'
Shram Shree/Shram Devi
It carries a cash award of Rs. 40,000/- and a 'Sanad'

BOOKS & AUTHORS

Changing India – written by Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister
✓ It is a set of five volumes having a compilation of speeches and writings of Dr Manmohan Singh, a distinguished alumnus of both Cambridge and Oxford Universities – since 1956
✓ The book describes his life's entire journey as a student, economist, policymaker, and a politician and PM during the UPA government
✓ 5 Volumes of the Book
   ✓ 1st volume - ‘India’s Export Trends and the Prospects for Self-Sustained Growth’
   ✓ 2nd volume - ‘Thoughts on Trade and Development’
   ✓ 3rd volume - ‘The International Economic Order and the Quest for Equity in Development’
   ✓ 4th volume - ‘Economic Reforms: 1991 and Beyond’
   ✓ 5th volume - ‘The Prime Minister Speaks’ (in 2 parts dealing with his PM years from 2004-2014)
✓ Dr Singh was the Governor of RBI in 1982-85, followed as the Chief of Planning Commission in 1985-87
✓ He later became the Finance minister in PV Narasimha Rao Government in 1991-96

SPORTS

➢ W V Raman – appointed as the new Coach of the Indian Women’s Cricket team

✓ The Ad-hoc committee comprising three former players - Kapil Dev, Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy - had recommended Kirsten as their best choice, followed by W V Raman and Venkatesh Prasad
✓ Kirsten, who won the 2011 ICC World Cup as a coach, lost the three-way race despite being the preferred candidate – to avoid the conflict of interest - as he was
unwilling to give up his coaching job at Royal Challengers Bangalore, Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise
✓ Raman replaces the interim coach Ramesh Powar, whose contract was not renewed, for the next 2 year period
✓ Raman is currently working as batting consultant at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru
✓ He played 11 Tests and 27 ODIs for India between 1988 and 1997
✓ He retired from all forms of cricket in 1999
✓ He was the first Indian to score a hundred against South Africa in ODIs
✓ Raman had earlier coached Tamil Nadu and Bengal Ranji teams and also the Indian U-19 team
✓ This is the fourth time that the women’s head coach was replaced in the last 19 months - after Purnima Rau was sacked just before the 2017 World Cup and Tushar Arothe resigned citing "personal reasons"

- Missy Franklin, 5-time Olympic swimming champion – retires at the age of 23 citing shoulder pain

- At age 17, in the 2012 London Olympics, she became the first woman to win 4 gold medals in a single Olympics in any sport
- She had also won 6 gold at the 2013 world championships in Barcelona
- In 2016 Rio Olympics, she won only one Gold medal in the 4x200 meter freestyle relay
- She won a record 11 gold medals at the World Aquatics Championships, which was later overtaken by Katie Ledecky in 2017
RANKINGS

- Baseline Report of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index 2018 – Released by NITI Aayog

- It documents the progress made by India’s States and Union Territories (UTs) towards implementation of the 2030 SDG targets
- It was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Global Green Growth Institute and United Nations in India
- An index score of 100 signifies that the state had achieved the 2030 national targets
- The SDGs came into effect from September 2015
- Rankings
  - Achiever – Index Score of 100 – None
  - Front Runner – Index Score between 65-99 - Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh and Puducherry
  - Performer – Index score between 50-64 - Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Delhi and Lakshadweep
  - Aspirant – Index Score between 0-40 - Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh

- Annual worldwide round-up of deadly violence and abusive treatment of journalists – report released by Reporters without Borders (RSF)
✓ India is ranked as 5th most deadliest country for Journalists in 2018
✓ Afghanistan was the most dangerous country for journalists, with 15 killed, followed by Syria with 11 deaths and Mexico with nine.
✓ It was followed by Yemen with the killing of 8 journalists and then by India and US jointly with 6 journalists killed.

- [Image of bar chart showing violence against journalists]

✓ China continues to be the world's top jailer of journalists, with 60 behind bars, 46 of them non-professional bloggers
✓ Egypt and Iran also made the blacklist of the worst offenders with 38 and 28 reporters and bloggers in prison respectively.
INTERNATIONAL DAY

- International Human Solidarity Day- 20 December

The day aims to celebrate unity in diversity in the world, reminding people on the importance of solidarity in working towards eradicating poverty.

- On December 22, 2005, the UN General Assembly proclaimed that International Solidarity Day would take place on December 20 each year.