School Education Department – to install ‘Electric’ sanitary napkin incinerators within a month in Government schools in Chennai – to improve sanitation and hygiene conditions in the schools

- The state government had allotted around Rs 14 crore for the purpose
- The department had already installed 1,136 incinerators across government schools in 13 districts
- The Solid waste management rules, 2016 mandates installing incinerators or special disposal dustbins to prevent pollution

Tamil Nadu Government - to set up India’s first Music Museum in Thiruvaiyaru – with the assistance of Central Government

It was announced by K Pandiarajan, Minister for culture and tamil development
Thiruvaiyaru is the birthplace of Saint Tyagaraja, one of the Trinities of Carnatic music, apart from the other two, Muthuswami Dikshitar and Syama Sastri.

Union Government – approves a new Broad gauge railway line – connecting Rameshwaram with Dhanushkodi

- Dhanushkodi, a major pilgrim destination, is believed to be the starting point of Ram Sethu
- The 17-km line will cost around Rs 208 crore
- It has to be recalled that the Dhanushkodi railway station was destroyed after the 1964 Rameshwaram cyclone
- The Railways had also approved building a new bridge on Pamban channel
- It will replace the 104-year old structure over the sea
- The vertical-lift bridge to be built alongside the existing bridge at Rs 249 crore will have the first vertical lift span in the entire country
- A vertical-lift bridge (or a lift bridge) is a movable bridge in which the span rises vertically while remaining parallel with the deck
- When the ship or high tide passes through, the span will be lifted up ‘automatically’ using electric operation

Awards of Tamil Literary Garden, Canada

- 2018 ‘Iyal’ award – conferred to the writer ‘Imayam’

- 2017 ‘Vilakku’ award – conferred to the writers ‘Pa. Venkatesan’ (Fiction category) and ‘A. Ra. Venkatachalapathy’ (Non-fiction category)

Pa Venkatesan is the author of famous fictions ‘Thaandavarayan kadhai’ and ‘Bhagirathiyin madhiyam’

Iyal award is a Lifetime Achievement Award, given annually to a writer, scholar, critic or editor, who has made a significant contribution to the growth or study of Tamil literature from any country.
Writer Vannadasan and Sugumaran were conferred the Iyal award for the year 2017 and 2016 respectively
The awards will be given in Toronto in June 2019
Tamil Literary Garden is a charitable organization founded in Toronto in 2001
It is committed to the promotion of studies and literary activities in Tamil, both nationally and internationally
Writer Imayam
Imayam is an acclaimed writer with 25 years of literary experience, hailing from Cuddalore district
His first novel-par-excellence ‘Koveru kathudhaigal’ was translated in English as ‘Beasts of Burden’
His long novel ‘Pethavan’ has been translated in Telugu and included as a subject in Tirupati university
He was the previous recipient of Agni award, Periyar award, Tirupur tamil sangam awards etc.

NATIONAL

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi – to inaugurate ‘Bogibeel bridge’ over the river Brahmaputra on December 25

It is the country’s longest Rail cum Road bridge at 4.94 km, connecting Dibrugarh (Assam) to Itanagar-Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh)
It is the fourth bridge across Brahmaputra
The railway track providing direct connectivity between both the states will reduce the travel distance by 705 km
The lower deck has double line broad gauge rail tracks & upper deck is a road of three lanes
It is the country’s only bridge with fully welded steel-concrete composite girders, strong enough to withstand the movement of heavy military tanks of Indian Army
Built at a cost of Rs 5,900 crore, it will reduce travel time from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh to four hours
✓ It will also cut down train travel between Delhi to Dibrugarh by 3 hours
✓ Till now, the Vembanad rail bridge in Kerala had the distinction of being the longest rail bridge in the country at 4.62 km
✓ History of the Bridge
✓ The Bogibeel bridge project was sanctioned in 1997-98 as a part of the 1985 Assam Accord
✓ The foundation stone of the project was laid by then Prime minister, HD Deve Gouda on January 22, 1997
✓ Commencement of work on the project was done by the former PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee on April 21, 2002
✓ The initial project cost of Rs 1,767 crore escalated to Rs 5,800 crore due to various changes in bridge design and revisions
✓ It is hailed as the first bridge in the country in which the European welding standards are adhered

➢ Government – to merge 12% and 18% slab in the GST rates and remove the 28% slab completely soon

➢ Government – to rename 3 islands in Andaman and Nicobar – to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Nethaji Subhash Chandra Bose hoisting the national flag in Port Blair
✓ The new names will be announced by the Prime Minister during his visit to Port Blair on December 30
✓ During the visit, the PM will hoist a 150-metre flag and release a commemorative stamp and coin
✓ **Islands with new name**
  ✓ Ross Island – renamed as ‘Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island’
  ✓ Neil Island – renamed as ‘Shahid Dweep Island’
  ✓ Havelock Island – renamed as ‘Swaraj Dweep Island’

✓ **Historical Background**
✓ Bose, leading the Indian National Army, hoisted the national flag in Port Blair on December 30, 1943 after the Japanese captured the island during the World War II
✓ He then suggested that Andaman be renamed as ‘Shahid Dweep’ and Nicobar as ‘Swaraj Dweep’

✓ Havelock Island is named after British general, Sir Henry Havelock, who served in India during the British administration
✓ It is the largest island in the union territory
INTERNATIONAL

- Nawaz Sharif, former PM of Pakistan – was sentenced to seven years imprisonment and a fine of $25 million – by an anti-corruption court in Pakistan

- The sentence was announced on an hearing in a graft case related to the ownership of a steel mill in Saudi Arabia (Al-Azizla steel mill)
- The court acquitted him in another case related to investments in UK (Flagship investments) and imposed a fine of 1.6 million pounds
- It has to be recalled that the former PM was framed with 3 corruption cases on the orders of Supreme Court, following its Panama Papers case verdict
- The verdict had disqualified Sharif from office on July 28, 2017
- In another case related to the purchase of upscale apartments in London (Avenfield), he was offered 10 years prison sentence, which was then suspended and he was granted bail later

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- 6th edition of ‘Yuva Natya Samaroh 2018’ – being held in New Delhi
It is a theatre festival of 5 young directors displaying some of the best modern, mythological and Parsi style drama

Duration – December 22 – 26 (5 day event)

Organised by – Sahitya Kala Parishad in association with Department of Art, Culture and Languages, Government of Delhi

PERSONALITIES

Khamshajiny Gunaratnam, a Sri Lankan Tamil – has been elected as ‘Deputy Mayor’ of Oslo, Capital of Norway

She moved to Norway when she was 3 years old

Sangeeta Verma – joins ‘Competition committee of India’ (CCI) as its member

She was a former Indian Economic Services (IES) officer

She will be in charge for a period of 5 years after taking over the position

In April 2018, the Government had reduced the number of members of CCI from 6 to 3

Currently, Ashok Kumar Gupta is the chairperson, while Sangeeta Verma, Augustine Peter and UC Nahta are the members of CCI

The CCI was established in 2003 under the competition act 2002 – to create a level-playing field for all the producers by ensuring fair competition in the economy
NASA’s ‘New Horizon’ spaceship – to flyby ‘Ultima Thule’, the most distant planetary object ever studied on January 1, 2019

The unmanned spaceship, at a distance of 4 billion miles away currently, will be at a distance of just 2,200 miles from the frozen relic of the early solar system called ‘Ultima Thule’ on the New year’s day.

If New Horizon survive this flyby, it will snap hundreds of pictures of Ultima Thule, revealing its shape and geology for the very first time.

Ultima Thule - Facts

- Ultima Thule is the most primitive object ever encountered by a spacecraft.
- It is believed to be about 100 times smaller than Pluto, which measures about 1,500 miles in diameter.
- It lies in the Kuiper Belt, a vast cosmic disc left over from the days when planets first formed.
- Astronomers call it the ‘attic’ of the solar system.
DEFENCE

- Indian Navy – commissions its 10th naval Hospital ship, INHS Sandhani – at the naval station ‘Karanja’ in the Raigad district of Maharashtra

  ✓ The hospital was established in 1955 as a small primary health care unit
  ✓ The upgrade to develop it was sanctioned by the ministry of defence in September 2016
  ✓ The Navy had earlier commissioned its ninth hospital ‘INHS Navjivani’ at the Indian Naval Academy in Kerala’s Ezhimala

ECONOMY

The card will come handy for convenient and hassle-free transactions for around 12 crore participants of Kumbh Mela

**APPOINTMENTS**

- P V Bharathi – appointed as the Managing Director and CEO of Corporation Bank

  She is the current Executive Director in the Canara Bank
  She will take charge on or after 1st February 2019 and remain in the post till March 31, 2020

**SPORTS**

- Abhinav Mukund – becomes the highest run-scorer for Tamil Nadu in Ranji Trophy

  The 28-year former Captain of Tamil Nadu team reached the landmark during the course of his century knock against Himachal Pradesh in Dharamsala on December 24
✅ Abhinav, who made his debut at 17 years, went past S Sharath (6597 runs) when he reached 73 runs during his unbeaten century
✅ He had earlier gone past S Badrinath (6383 runs) and Dinesh Karthik (6120 runs)
✅ Abhinav made his Ranji debut in 2007-08 season
✅ He played 7 seven tests for India, the last one against Sri Lanka in Galle in 2017

➤ Lewis Hamilton – awarded ‘Drivers’ Driver of the Year’ – after winning his 5th World Driver’s championship

✅ Hamilton was the third man to secure 5 world titles after Juan Manuel Fangio (5 titles) and Michael Schumacher (7 titles)
✅ He was followed by Max Verstappen in the second place, Fernando Alonso in the third place and then by Sebastian Vettel (4th) and Daniel Ricciardo (5th)

INTERNATIONAL DAY

➤ Good Governance Day – December 25
The day marks the birth anniversary of former PM of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee
The day was established in the year 2014 by the PM, Narendra Modi
On December 25, 2018, the Samadhi of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Sadaiv Atal will be dedicated to the Nation
Vajpayee was the first non-Congress leader to complete a 5-year term as India's Prime Minister
He was also the first Indian to address the United Nations in Hindi
Besides Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, Vajpayee is the only Indian leader to take the Prime Minister's oath on three occasions
Prime Minister, Narendra Modi released a commemorative Rs 100 coin in the memory of the former prime minister on December 24, 2018
Atal Bihari Vajpayee passed away on August 16, 2018 in Delhi