Tamil Nadu

- Public Works Department (PWD) – releases a handbook to guide engineers dealing with Construction
  - The handbook titled ‘Technical handbook on building construction for field engineers’, is released for the first time by the PWD to guide public building constructions outside its purview
  - It deals with various aspects in civil engineering, quality of construction materials, maintenance and demolition of public structures
  - Apart from PWD, Greater Chennai corporation, Tamil Nadu Housing Board, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance board, Tamil Nadu Adi Dravidar Housing and Development Corporation also have their own construction wings

- Greater Chennai Corporation – has began the trial run of the 3 beach cleaning machines for Marina and Besant Nagar beaches

  - The initiative is part of the tourism department’s Bharat Darshan project funded by the Central Government
The machines cost Rs 70 lakhs each and a total of 5 are to be purchased, 3 for Marina Beach and 2 for Besant Nagar beach.
The corporation at present has 2 such machines to clean the beaches for one hour in the mornings.
These machines save time and labour instead of the usual manual sweepers employed by the corporation.

NATIONAL


The Director General of Civil Aviation’s (DGCA) new drone policy has come into effect from December 1, 2018.
The policy makes the flying of drones or Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) legal from the said date.
The government will give 30 days’ time to register and the operation is expected to start from January 1, 2019.
A drone owner has to register on ‘www.dgca.nic.in’ to get a unique identification number (UIN).
A user will need to pay a fee of Rs 1,000 to get UIN and Rs 25,000 to get a fresh Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP).

5 Categories of Drones
- Nano - Less than or equal to 250 grams
- Micro - From 250 grams to 2 kg
- Small - From 2kg to 25 kg
- Medium - From 25 kg to 150 kg
- Large - Greater than 150 kg

As per the new policy, Nano drones will not need to be registered.

3 Zones of Airspace
- Green Zone (Automatic permission) - Needs intimation of the time and location of the flights through the Digital sky portal or app
- Yellow Zone (Controlled airspace) – Needs Permission for flying in this zone
- Red Zone (Flying not permitted) - No drones will be allowed to operate in this zone.
India and Spain – signs agreement to swap each other’s sentenced prisoners
- Both the countries have agreed that the prisoners sent back home will be spared from the capital punishment
- They have also agreed to review the judgement after receiving the prisoners and may grant amnesty or pardon in accordance with its own laws

Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh at the height of 3,630 metres – could be the highest tiger habitat in the country
- A three-year camera trap study conducted in the valley confirms the presence of Tigers in the valley
- Earlier, in Bhutan, a tiger was photographed at a height of 4,200 metres in 2012

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) – to stop fixing third party (TP) insurance premium from 2020-21
- It means that the regulatory authority will not notify the amount every application has to pay from 2021, which will result in significant drop in TP premium
- Currently, the authority notifies TP premium for each category of vehicles before the beginning of the financial year

INTERNATIONAL

Qatar – to withdraw from OPEC in January 2019
- Qatar has been an official member of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) since 1961
- Qatar’s oil production is only around 600,000 barrels per day, while it is the world’s biggest exporter of liquefied natural gas (LNG)

Nomophobia – was declared as the ‘People’s word of 2018’ by UK’s Cambridge Dictionary
- It means the “fear or worry at the idea of being without your mobile phone or unable to use it”
COMMITTEES

- Government – forms a 6-member committee headed by Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog – to look at selling 149 small and marginal oil and gas fields of ONGC and OIL to private and foreign firms – to boost domestic output

- National Green Tribunal (NGT) - appoints former Uttarakhand High Court judge, Justice U C Dhyani, as head of the three-member committee to oversee rejuvenation and Cleaning work of the Ganga River

- Earlier on 6th August 2018, Justice Arun Tandon was appointed as the head of the said panel - but later he was replaced

- Other Members of the committee include a nominee of Central Pollution Control Board and a nominee of IIT Roorkee

- International Olympic Committee (IOC) - sets up an advisory committee on human rights - chaired by Zeid Ra’ad al-Hussein, the former United Nations commissioner for Human rights - starting in 2024

- Thomas Bach, President of IOC – said that “human rights standards” will be included in Olympic host-city contracts - beginning with the 2024 Olympics in Paris
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

 COP 24: UN Conference on Climate Change – begins in Poland

✓ The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP24) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began on December 3 at Kawotice, Poland
✓ Delegates from over 200 nations were attending COP 24
✓ It will continue till December 14, 2018
✓ The conference is expected to finalise guidelines for implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted in 2016
✓ Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Environment Minister, is leading the Indian delegation at the conference
✓ India will be setting up a Pavilion titled ‘One World- One Sun- One Grid’ to create awareness about its positive climate actions
✓ Background
✓ On December 2015, 195 countries pledged to restrict global warming by signing the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
✓ The primary objective is to limit the global average temperature to well below 2 °C
✓ On June 1, 2017, US President Donald Trump had withdrawn United States from the 2015 Paris agreement

 President, Ram Nath Kovind – inaugurates 2nd International Ambedkar Conclave in New Delhi – as part of the Constitution Day celebrations on November 26, 2018
✓ Organised by - The Forum of SC and ST Legislators and Parliamentarians and the Dr Ambedkar Chamber of Commerce
1\textsuperscript{st} India-ASEAN InnoTech Summit - held in New Delhi

- Organised by - Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) in association with Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Ministry of External Affairs
- Participating ASEAN countries - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
- India is a full dialogue partner of the ASEAN
- The summit discussed global trends in technology management apart from creating partnership between industry-academia-government to connect research and development communities

80\textsuperscript{th} session of the Policy Commission of the World Customs Organization (WCO) - to commence in Mumbai

- Organised by - World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Hosted by - Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), India
- S Ramesh, Chairman, CBIC, leads the Indian delegation along with Member PK Das and their team of senior officers

The first ‘Completely Online’ Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) - is being held in the Marshall Islands

- It is an intergovernmental meeting represented by Heads of Government level ministries
- It focuses on Global warming and set a target to keep the rising temperature beyond 1.5 degree Celsius
- Climate Vulnerable Forum - was founded by Maldives government
- India is one of the Observer States of the Forum.
PERSONALITIES

- Cyril Ramaphosa, South African President – will be the chief guest at India’s 70th Republic Day celebrations on 26 January 2019
- Indian PM, Narendra Modi invited him on the sidelines of G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina

- It has to be recalled that Donald Trump, US President declined India’s invitation last month to be the Chief Guest, due to ‘Scheduling constraints’
- Background
- The chief guest at India’s first Republic Day on January 26, 1950 was President of Indonesia
- In 2018 celebrations, for the first time, 10 Heads of State from ASEAN regional group were the Chief Guests on the Republic Day
- The Indian Republic Day on January 26 marks the day in 1930 when Purna Swaraj (Declaration of Indian Independence) was proclaimed by Indian National Congress (INC) at Lahore session, 1929
- On this day, the Constitution of India came into effect on 26 January 1950 replacing Government of India Act (1935) as the governing document of India.
- Constitution was adopted by Indian Constituent Assembly on 26 November 1949

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- India’s heaviest Satellite ‘Gsat-11’ weighing 5,854 kg – to be launched on December 5, 2018 – from French Guiana by Europe’s Ariane-5 rocket
Gsat-11 is a communication satellite which will boost the Internet speed in the country

Its launch was earlier postponed suspecting technical issues by the ISRO, which has taken an unusual step of recalling the satellite in April 2018 as a precautionary measure.

It has to be recalled that Gsat-6A failed in its mission around the same time as the satellite went out of control and signal was lost soon after its launch on March 29, 2018.

Gsat-11 is a high-throughput satellite that carries 40 transponders in the Ku-band and Ka-band frequencies.

It is capable of providing high bandwidth connectivity with up to 14 gigabit per second (GBPS) data transfer speed.

DEFENCE

“Ex Cope India-2018” – A joint exercise between Indian and US Air forces – begins in West Bengal

The 12-day bilateral exercise is the 4th edition of the series.
It will be held for the first time in 2 Air force bases in West Bengal’s Kalaikunda and Panagarh.
Indian Air Force (IAF) is participating with Su-30 MKI, Jaguar, Mirage 2000, C-130J and AWACS aircrafts.
The first edition of the exercise was conducted at IAF air force station in Gwalior in February 2004.
The exercise was repeated in 2005, 2006, 2009 and was last held in 2010.

Vajra kayaa, a 3-day tactical exercise between the Special Forces of India and United States – completed on December 1, 2018.
It is part of their joint military drill ‘Vajra Prahar 2018’ in Jaipur.
The exercise is based on an imaginary country going into a civil war due to weak democratic structure.
ECONOMY

European Central Bank (ECB) - launches a new Smartphone payment system called ‘TARGET Instant Payment Settlement’ (TIPS) in Rome

- It enables people and companies in Europe transfer Euros to each other within seconds irrespective of working hours of banks
- U.S. firms PayPal, Google, Facebook and Amazon, and China’s Alibaba and Tencent currently dominate such services in Europe
- TIPS system is only restricted to European Union banks
- The platform was developed by the Banca d’Italia – in cooperation with the central banks of Germany, France and Spain.

APPOINTMENTS

Sunil Arora – takes over as the new Chief Election Commissioner

- He is the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner of India, succeeding O P Rawat, who retired on December 1, 2018
- His tenure will be for two and half years
- Prior to the appointment, he was the Election Commissioner in Election Commission of India (ECI) from September 2017
- Sunil Arora was a retired bureaucrat from Rajasthan cadre
- He had retired in April 2016 as Information and Broadcasting secretary
- He has served as CMD of Indian Airlines for five years besides working in several ministries
- In Rajasthan, he worked as principal secretary of CM, Vasundhara Raje from 2005 to 2008
- Election Commission of India – was established under Article 324 to ensure free and fair elections in the country
- It has 3 members with one Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two election commissioners (ECs), all appointed by the President
- They hold office for term of six years or until they attain age of 65 years, whichever is earlier
Raninder Singh – becomes first Indian to be elected as the vice-president of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)

Raninder is currently the president of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI)
He was also awarded the ISSF diploma of Honour gold medal at the General Assembly
Vladimir Lisin of Russia was elected as the seventh president of ISSF
Alexander Rather was elected as the new secretary general of ISSF
The outgoing longest serving President of the ISSF, Olegario Vazquez Rana, was at the helm for 38 years

Andrés Manuel López Obrador - was sworn in as new President of Mexico
It is the first “leftist” government in the country since 1940.
Foreign dignitaries including US Vice-President Mike Pence, first daughter Ivanka Trump and Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro attended the inauguration in the capital

AWARDS

UNESCO/Emir Jaber al Ahmad al Jaber al Sabah Prize for Digital Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities – has been awarded to – Vashkar Bhattacharjee, Bangladeshi disabilities’ advocate (Individual category) and Chinese private sector ICT enterprise, Tencent (Organisation category)
They will be presented with award in a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters on December 3, International Day of Persons with disabilities.

Vashkar Bhattacharjee has successfully developed Bangladesh’s first Accessible Dictionary in four forms, dedicated to persons with visual, print and learning disabilities.

In China, Tencent products have helped persons with special needs to acquire more access to digital information.

The biennial award given for the year 2018-19 was sponsored by Kuwait in memory of its late ruler Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

**SPORTS**

- **India’s Chikkarangappa** – finishes tied 2nd at the AfrAsia Bank Mauritius Open in Mauritius

- This was the best result at the European GA tour event so far in his career

- **Lakshya Sen and Ashmita Chaliha** – won the Men’s and Women’s singles title in the Tata Open India International Challenger in Mumbai

- Lakshya defeated Kunlavat Vitidsarn of Thailand, the defending World Junior champion in the final.

- It has to be recalled that Lakshya was defeated by Kunlavat last month in Canada to win the World Junior Single’s event.

- Ashmita defeated India’s Vrushali Gummadi in the final.
Atlawim Debebe of Ethiopia - wins Pune International Marathon
- In women’s Full Marathon, Pascalia Chepkogei from Kenya stood first
- Dekebe Tafa and Degefa Gezmu both from Ethiopia - are winners of the men’s and women’s half marathon
- Among Indian runners this year also, Karan Singh of Bombay Engineering Group stood first in Men’s category
- In women’s Full marathon, Urvi Tambe stood first amongst Indian participants.

Amit Dhankar – becomes the National Champion in 74 kg at Tata Motors Senior National Wrestling Championship in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh

Dhankar, former Asian and Commonwealth champion, claimed his 7th national title in the men’s freestyle competition

The famous ‘Hornbill Rally’ – returns after a gap of 3 years in Kohima, Nagaland
- It is held as part of the 10-day Hornbill festival which was inaugurated on December 1, 2018 in the state
- The rally is organized by Nagaland adventure and motor sports association and sponsored by JK Tyres
- The 9th edition of the rally will have 29 contestants in 2 categories – Open and North-east
- The open section will have 9 contestants, with the defending champion in 2014, Gagan Sethi of Delhi
- The rally will start in Kohima and end at Heritage village in Kisama after a travel of 55km outside the city

Wrestling Federation of India - rolls out contract system for Wrestlers
- The contracts will be reviewed after one year
- The wrestlers have been placed in four Grades –
  - Grade A – Rs 30 lakh financial assistance – includes Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Pooja Dhanda
  - Grade B – Rs 20 lakh financial assistance – includes Sushil Kumar, Sakshi Malik
  - Grade C - Rs 10 lakh financial assistance – includes Sandeep Tomar, Sajan Bhanwal, Ritu Phogat, Divya Kakran
  - Grade D - Rs 5 lakh financial assistance - includes Rahul Aware, Naveen, Sachin Rathi, and Anshu Malik
INTERNATIONAL DAY

➢ World Disability Day or International Day of Persons with Disabilities – December 3

✓ The day is observed by the United Nations since 1992
✓ The day seeks to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities
✓ It was originally called "International Day of Disabled Persons" until 2007
✓ In 1976, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons
✓ The UN General Assembly had proclaimed the decade, 1983–1992 as the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons
✓ Theme 2018 - "Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality"

➢ International Day for the abolition of Slavery – December 2
The observance of the day intends to raise awareness about slavery and its impact on the society.
The day marks the adoption of resolution ‘Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Prostitution of Others’ by United Nations (UN) General Assembly on December 2, 1949.
The Day was first celebrated in 1986.
The year 2004 was observed as the International Year to Commemorate the Struggle against Slavery and its Abolition.
As per ILO, more than 40 million people are worldwide victims of modern day slavery.
For every 1000 people, 5.4 people were the victims of slavery with 1 in every 4 being children.