TAMIL NADU

- Thamirabarani Maha Pushkaram – begins on Oct 11, 2018 at Papanasam in Tirunelveli district and will be observed till October 23

- The event was last organised in 1864 on the Thamirabarani river course in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts
- The Pushkaram is organised once in every 12 years for the 12 zodiac signs
- Each of the 12 signs has a holy river, where the Pushkaram is organized
- Thamirabarani was the holy river for the Viruchigam Rasi (Scorpio)
- Pushkaram is celebrated when Guru Peyarchi (transit of Jupiter from one zodiac sign to the other) takes place
- Since the pushkaram is being organized after 144 years (after completion of 12 zodiac cycles) it is called a maha pushkaram
Jeremy Pilmore-Bedford - takes over as the new British deputy high commissioner in Chennai

- He succeeds Bharat Joshi
- He comes from UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's US Network, where he served as Consul General in the United States Southeast for four-and-half years
- Earlier, he worked as the head of the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America department in London

Dr KV Thiruvengadam Awards – given to Dr Ravi Kannan, Dr Gopi Nallaiyan and Dr Hemapriya M by Rotary Club of Madras (East)

- Dr Ravi Kannan runs Cachar Cancer Hospital in Cachar, Assam
- He opened the first radiation unit there in 2006
- Madurai-based Couple, Dr Gopi Nallaiyan and Dr Hemapriya M were awarded for their contribution to Children's health
- In 2014, Dr Nallaiyan received an award from Chhattisgarh CM, Raman Singh
- Dr Hemapriya, founder and editor of ‘My Little Moppet’- was awarded for her contribution to post maternal care and her contribution to child nutrition

German Development Bank – to take over the integrated stormwater drain project along the Kovalam basin

- It is the major project for flood mitigation in south Chennai without disturbing the ecologically sensitive Palliakaranai marshland
NATIONAL

- **Union Cabinet – approves the establishment of ‘National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)’**
  - It will be set up by merging National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and National Skill Development Agency (NSDA)
  - The Council will be headed by a Chairperson and will have Executive and Non-Executive Members.
  - **Functions of NCVET**
    - To regulate the entities engaged in Vocational education and training
    - To establish standards for the entities
    - Conduct Research
    - Redress grievances

- **Union Cabinet – approves the payment of ‘Productivity Linked Bonus’ (PLB) for Railway employees in the FY 2017-18**
  - The PLB, equivalent to 78 days wages, will be applicable to all non-gazetted employees of Railways except RPF Personnel
  - Indian Railways was the first departmental undertaking of Central Government to adopt concept of PLB in 1979-80
  - PLB was introduced in India against the concept as per ‘The Payment of Bonus Act – 1965’

- **India’s 1st National Environment Survey – to start from January 2019**
  - It will be undertaken to map environment data of 55 districts across 24 states and 3 Union Territories
  - It will also be used as a tool for ranking the districts based on their environmental performance and document the best green practices adopted by them
  - The first set of documents of the survey will be available in 2020
  - It will be carried out by Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change - through the Environmental Information System
  - Initially the survey will be focusing on 55 districts and later will be scaled up to all districts in the country

- **Government – exempts ‘Low frequency range’ operating devices from the Licensing norms**
  - The frequency bands of 302 to 435 KHz (kiloherz), 855 to 1050 KHz and 1.89 to 2.31 MHz will not require any licensing from the Government
  - This will facilitate the usage of bluetooth, wireless chargers, internet-of-things (IoT) products, medical devices etc on non-interference, non-protection and shared (non-exclusive) basis
Union Cabinet – approves closure of ‘National Jute Manufactures Corporation Ltd’ and its subsidiary ‘Birds Jute & Exports Ltd’
✔️ The proposal will help in closing loss making companies and ensuring release of valuable assets for productive use

NASSCOM – signs MoU with UNICEF – to strengthen child rights through "meaningful business interventions"

✔️ With this MoU, the 2 organisation will work together on –
✔️ 'child online protection'
✔️ 'encouraging innovations for child rights'
✔️ As partners, both The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) India will co-create workshops across India
✔️ Signatories
✔️ Yasmin Ali Haque - UNICEF India, Country Representative
✔️ Shrikant Sinha - CEO, NASSCOM Foundation

INTERNATIONAL

Sri Lanka – enacts a new Law to compensate Civil war victims – nearly a decade after the end of the conflict (May 2009) that claimed 1,00,000 lives
✔️ The legislation was approved with a voting of 59-43 majority

Hurricane Michael – hits Florida in the United States

✔️ It is the strongest US storm since 1992 to hit the state with a wind speed of 155mph
✔️ Hurricane Andrew ravaged southern Florida in the year 1992
INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- The Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium – inaugurated in Sri Lanka at the University of Ruhuna, Matara in Southern Province

- It was built with an Indian grant assistance of 30 crore Sri Lankan rupees
- The state-of-the-art auditorium with 1500 seating capacity has been designed by the famous Sri Lankan architect, Geoffrey Bawa conforming the philosophy of ‘Tropical Modernism’

FESTIVALS

- 17th edition of Old World Theatre Festival – to start from Oct 20 in New Delhi

- It is one of the oldest and most prestigious theatre festivals in the country
- The 9-day event will be organized by ‘India Habitat Centre’ featuring 15 plays
- The theatre festival will open with "Kutiyattam" (Kerala), one of the most stylised and earliest forms of Sanskrit theatre (Sangam era - 3rd century BC - 3rd century AD) and has been recognised by UNESCO as a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity"
- The line-up will see, for the first time, a National Theatre Live Broadcast of "Julie" by British theatre director, Carrie Cracknell.
- A pan Indian constellation of original scripts from Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai and Kerala are also scheduled
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- ‘Goa Maritime Symposium – 2018’ – to be hosted by the Indian Navy on October 16, 2018

- It aims at establishing academic excellence and sharing of ideas with the country’s maritime neighbours
- The event is a follow-on to the maiden Goa Maritime Conclave held in 2017
- It is likely to be attended by senior naval officers from 16 Indian Ocean countries, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, Oman, South Africa, Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique
- Theme for the One-day symposium - ‘Building Stronger Maritime Partnerships in IOR’
- The symposium will be inaugurated by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of Naval Staff

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- United States Scientists – have developed World’s first Bio-electric medicine

- It is an implantable, biodegradable wireless device which speeds up nerve regeneration and improves healing of damaged nerve
- It operates for about two weeks before naturally absorbing into the body
- It has the thickness of a sheet of paper
- It is powered and controlled wirelessly by a transmitter outside the body
- It has been successfully tested in rats and yet to be tested on humans
Daksh - A Remotely Operated Vehicle, designed and developed by the DRDO – was inducted in ‘Pune Police’ on an experimental basis to help in detection and disposal of bombs

- The vehicle has been developed at the DRDO’s Research and Development Establishment (Engineers), Pune
- It is capable of climbing stairs, towing a suspected vehicle away from a crowded area and break the windshield to handle likely car bombs

DEFENCE

3rd edition of The International Fleet Review, Republic of Korea

- It is a naval event designed to promote trust and cooperation among world navies
- The once-in-a-decade event kicks off on October 10 in the waters off the southern island of Jeju Naval Base, South Korea
- It was held for the first time in 1998 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Republic of Korea Navy
- The review of warships will take place on October 11 with the participation of more than 40 vessels and over 20 military aircraft from 13 countries
- Japan and China are not participating in this edition of the review
- India’s Participation
- As per India’s ‘Act East’ Policy, it has dispatched a Kahin class 5500-ton Destroyer INS Rana of the Indian Navy for the exercise
- The Destroyer is on an operational deployment to the North West Pacific region currently between October 8 to15
- On its way out next month, the INS Rana is also expected to hold PASSEX exercise with the Republic of Korea Navy
✓ Other Countries Participation
✓ Australia - 4,270-ton frigate – Melbourne
✓ Brunei - 1,600-ton patrol ship - Darut Taqwa
✓ Canada - 4,800-ton frigate – Calgary
✓ America - 103,600-ton, Nimitz-class aircraft carrier of the U.S. 7th Fleet – USS Ronald Reagan
✓ America - 2 Cruisers - Chancellorsville and Antietam
✓ Republic of Korea - 7,600-ton Aegis destroyer, Yulgok YiYi
✓ Republic of Korea - 4,400-ton destroyer, Dae Jo Yeong
✓ Republic of Korea - 10,000-ton logistical support ship, Soyang
✓ Republic of Korea - 3,200-ton destroyer, Gwanggaeto the Great
✓ Vietnam - 015-Tran Hung Dao, Gepard 3.9- class vessel

APPOINTMENTS

➤ Tushar Mehta – appointed as the new ‘Solicitor General of India’

✓ He holds the position of Additional Solicitor General since June 2014
✓ He replaces Ranjit Kumar, who resigned from the post of the country’s second highest law office after the Attorney General of India, in October 2017
✓ He will remain in office till June 30, 2020 or until further orders
✓ Tushar Mehta was serving as the Gujarat Advocate General when PM Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of the state
✓ Mehta was named as the special public prosecutor for 2G spectrum scam case
✓ He is also representing the UP government in the Ayodhya land dispute case pending before a three-judge SC bench
✓ He started his legal career as an advocate in 1987 from Gujarat
Lieutenant General Asim Munir – is the new Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief of Pakistan

- ISI is the country’s most powerful spy agency
- He replaces Lt Gen Naveed Mukhtar
- Lt Gen Munir was the current DG- Military Intelligence (MI) and had also served as commander of the Force Command Northern Areas

Brett Kavanaugh – sworn-in as the Supreme Court Justice of United States

- He was sworn-in after the 50-48 majority verdict by the senators providing the ‘Conservative’ majority
- He replaces retired Justice Anthony Kennedy and was sworn-in by Chief Justice John Roberts
AWARDS

- Veena Sendre (Chhattisgarh) - was selected as India’s first ‘Miss Trans Queen’ - in Mumbai

- She defeated Namita Ammu of Tamil Nadu and won the title at the national-level beauty contest
- Veena Sendre is a former Miss Chhattisgarh
- She had dropped out of school when she was in 5th standard

- New Delhi based ‘Indus Towers’, World’s largest telecom tower company (outside China) – wins Deming Prize 2018

- It is the first Indian company in the service sector and fifth globally to achieve this feat
- It received this award for distinctive performance improvements through the application of Total Quality Management (TQM) practices
- Indus became the 29th Indian company to win this coveted award
- Other companies who had received this award earlier - Tata Steel, Ashok Leyland, Mahindra and Mahindra, and NBC Bearings etc.
- The Deming Prize for 2018 was announced by JUSE – Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers

- Deming Prize
- Established – 1951
- Objective – Given to the companies implementing TQM practices to achieve business objectives
SPORTS

- 3rd Youth Olympic Games, Buenos Aires, Argentina
  - Saurabh Chaudhary (Uttar Pradesh - Shooting - 16 years) - won the gold in the men’s 10m air pistol event

  This is Saurabh’s third big medal after he became senior Asian Games champion and junior World Champion earlier in August and September.
  - Saurabh is supported by a not-for-profit organization, Olympic Gold Quest.
  - With this, all the 4 Indian shooters have won medal in their respective categories
    - Manu Bhaker - clinched gold in the women’s 10m air pistol
    - Shahu Tushar Mane and Mehuli Ghosh - won silver medals in men and women’s 10m air rifle events respectively

- Para Asian Games, Jakarta
  - Harvinder Singh (Haryana) - created history by winning India’s first-ever Para Asian gold medal in archery

  - He won the Gold in the final of W2/ST category of the men’s individual recurve event
Brooks Koepka, this year’s US Open and PGA Championship winner - was announced as the US PGA Tour Player of the Year 2018

The 28-year-old American captured the Jack Nicklaus Trophy after a historic 2017-18 campaign defending the US open crown

INTERNATIONAL DAY

International Day of the Girl Child – October 11

The day recognizes the Girl children’s rights and the unique challenges faced by them, highlighting the Gender inequality around the world

The day was observed since 2012

Theme 2018 - ‘With Her: A Skilled Girl Force’

The day was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting Resolution moved by Canada in December 2011
National Postal Week – October 9 to 15, 2018

- India celebrates the World Post Day (Oct 9) with the observance of ‘National Postal Week’ by the Department of Post
- **Events during the week**
  - 9.10.2018 – World Post Day
  - 10.10.2018 – Postal Banking Day
  - 11.10.2018 – Postal Life Insurance (PLI) Day
  - 12.10.2018 – Philately Day
  - 13.10.2018 – Business Development Day
  - 15.10.2018 – Mails Day

REPORT

2018 Henley Passport Index for World's Most Powerful Passport

- Japanese Passport replaces Singaporean Passport as the World’s most powerful passport for the year 2018
- As per the Index, the people having Japanese passport can travel without a visa or can get an on-arrival visa across 190 countries
- The passport of Singapore allows visa-free or on-arrival visa travel to 189 countries
- India, meanwhile, stands at a far 81st number - which grants access to 60 destinations.
Natural Disaster Losses – a Report released by UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)

- India has been ranked among world’s top five countries in absolute economic losses
- India had suffered economic losses of $80 billion during the 20-year period of 1998 to 2017
- Globally, disaster losses during this period have been estimated at $3 trillion
- These losses have increased by more than 120% in the past 20 years compared to the preceding two decades (1978-1997)
- Climate-related disaster losses alone have accounted for 151% losses in the past 20 years
OBITUARY

- M N Paloor, Malayalam poet (86 years)

- He had worked with Indian Airlines and retired as ground support division senior operator in 1990
- Some of his important works are: ‘Kalikalam’, ‘Pedithondan’, ‘Theerthayathra’ and ‘Bhangiyum Abhangiyum’ and ‘Kathayillathavante Katha’
- He had received Sahitya Akademi Award in 2013, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award in 1983, and the Asan Prize for poetry in 2009

- Sarvagya Singh Katiyar, Former Vice Chancellor of Kanpur University (86 years)

- The scientist was vice chancellor of Kanpur’s Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University from 1994 to 2007
- He had received Padma Shri in 2003 and Padma Bhushan in 2009