

WEEKLY

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02ND DECEMBER – 08TH DECEMBER 2018

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Table of Contents

Awards & Honours.....	3
Days & Events	3
International Affairs	4
National Affairs.....	5
India & World	6
Personalities in News	6
Environment.....	7
Government Policies & Schemes.....	7
Science & Technology.....	8
Place In News.....	9
Books and Authors	9
Committees & Recommendations	9
Business & Economy.....	9
Sports.....	10
Defence.....	11
Polity.....	12

Awards & Honours

IIT-Mandi professor won Biotechnologist Award

- Rajanish Giri has been awarded the 'Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award (IYBA) 2018'.
- He was selected for his proposed innovative idea on Zika virus Capsid Folding and inhibitor discovery.
- He is the assistant professor from the Indian Institute of Technology-Mandi (IIT-Mandi).
- The 'Innovative Young Biotechnologist Award' (IYBA) was instituted by the Department of Biotechnology in 2005.

Rattan Lal won 'Glinka World Soil Prize 2018'

- Rattan Lal has won the 'Glinka World Soil Prize 2018' in a ceremony held at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) headquarters in Rome on 6 December 2018.
- He was awarded for his outstanding contribution to sustainable soil management and the protection of soil resources.
- The 'Glinka World Soil Prize' is considered the highest honour in the soil science profession.

MNRE conferred 'Skoch Award 2018'

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has been conferred the 'Skoch Award for National Significance 2018' in New Delhi on 7 December 2018.
- The award has been conferred on the Ministry considering its purpose and critical role played in installing about 73 GW renewable energy capacity in the country.
- The award was received by Ministry of New Renewable Energy Secretary Anand Kumar.

S. Ramakrishnan won Sahitya Akademi Award

- Tamil writer S. Ramakrishnan has won the 'Sahitya Akademi Award 2018' on 5 December 2018.
- He has been awarded for his novel 'Sancharam'.
- The novel deals with the lives of nadhaswaram artistes.
- The Sahitya Akademi award is among the most prestigious literary honours bestowed on writers for their works across genres and languages.

G. Venkatasubbaiah got Bhasha Samman for South

- G. Venkatasubbaiah has been chosen for the Sahitya Akademi's 'Bhasha Samman' for South (2017) on 5 December 2018.
- The award has been given in recognition of his contribution to the field of classical and medieval literature.
- The other winners of 'Bhasha Samman': Yogendra Nath Sharma was awarded for the North zone, Gagendra Nath Das for the East zone, and Shailaja Bapat for the West zone.

Delhi Minister Imran Hussain awarded by PETA

- Delhi environment minister Imran Hussain received 'Hero to Animals Award' by the People for the Ethical

Treatment of Animals (PETA)-India on 2 December 2018.

- He received the award for banning the Chinese manjha, or the glass-coated kite strings, across Delhi.
- Mr Hussain in July 2018 had called for a complete ban on the sale, production, storage and import of the Chinese manjha.

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Days & Events

Aero India and aviation expo to be merged

- For the first time, the country's civil aviation exhibition will be merged with the 'Aero India 2019'.
- The Aero India 2019 and the aviation exhibition will be held at Bengaluru from 20 to 24 February 2019.
- So far, 'Aero India' has been defence-oriented while a separate civil aviation exhibition is held in Hyderabad.
- The tagline of Aero India 2019 is 'Runway for a billion opportunities'.

Armed Forces Flag Day: 7 December

- Armed Forces Flag Day is observed throughout India on 7 December.
- The aim of the day is to honour the martyrs as well as men and women in uniform, who valiantly fight on borders to safeguard India.
- The 'Armed forces Flag Day Fund' (AFFDF) has been constituted by the Government of India for the welfare and rehabilitation of the Ex-Servicemen (ESM) community.

International Civil Aviation Day: 7 December

- International Civil Aviation Day is observed every year on 7 December.
- The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the importance of international civil aviation to the social and economic development of States.
- For 2018, the theme of the day is 'Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind'.

Startup India summit to be organised

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Government of Goa will organise the annual 'Startup India Venture Capital Summit' in Goa on 7 December 2018.
- The theme of the Summit is 'Mobilizing Global Capital for Innovation in India'.
- The event will showcase the Indian startup opportunity for funds from around the world.
- India has the world's third largest startup base.

International Volunteer Day: 5 December

- International Volunteer Day (IVD) is observed every year on 5 December.
- It is an international observance mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1985.
- The theme for IVD 2018 is 'Volunteers build Resilient Communities'.
- IVD is a chance for individual volunteers, communities and organisations to promote their contributions to development at the local, national and international levels.

World Soil Day observed on 5 December

- World Soil Day is observed every year on 5 December.
- The aim of the day is to focus attention on the importance of healthy soil and advocating for the sustainable management of soil resources.
- The theme for World Soil Day 2018 is 'Be the Solution to Soil Pollution'.

'Water Impact Summit' to be held from 5 Dec

- 'India Water Impact Summit 2018' will be held in New Delhi from 5 December 2018 to 7 December 2018.
- The summit will be organised by the National Mission for Clean Ganga and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies.
- It is an annual event where stakeholders get together to discuss, debate and develop model solutions for some of the biggest water related problems in the country.

Conference on bears began in Agra

- International conference on bears is being organised in Agra from 3 December 2018 to 6 December 2018.
- The conference is hosted by Wildlife SOS, a conservation non-profit.

- The conference aims to share knowledge on principles of welfare of bears and other wild animals in zoos, sanctuaries and rescue centres.

Indian Navy Day celebrated on 4 December

- Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on 4 December.
- The day is celebrated in honour of the Indian Navy's role during the war with Pakistan in 1971 when Indian warships attacked Karachi port.
- The day is also celebrated to highlight the role the Navy plays in securing the country's marine borders during peacetime and carrying out humanitarian missions.

WCO policy commission commenced on 3 Dec

- The 80th session of the three-day Policy Commission of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) began in Mumbai from 3 December 2018.
- The meeting will conclude on 5 December 2018.
- Issues like trade facilitation and controlling illicit financial flow will be discussed at the meeting.
- The meeting is being organised by the WCO and hosted by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs.

Day of Persons with Disabilities: 3 December

- The International Day of Persons with Disabilities is observed every year on 3 December.
- The aim of the day is to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life.
- The theme for 2018 is 'Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'.

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

- The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery is observed every year on 2 December.
- The focus of this day is on eradicating contemporary forms of slavery.
- Slavery includes trafficking of persons, sexual exploitation, the worst forms of child labour, forced marriage and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict.
- The day was first celebrated in 1986.

International Affairs

Japan govt enacts new law for foreign workers

- On 7 December 2018, the Japanese government enacted a new law to bring more blue-collar foreign workers into the country to address chronic labour shortages.
- Under the new law, Japan plans to bring in 3.45 lakhs foreign workers in construction, food services, nursing and other sectors.
- The law allows foreign nationals with skills in sectors facing severe shortages to obtain five-year visas.

Ebola outbreak spreads to a Congo city

- The Ebola outbreak has spread to a major city in eastern Congo.
- Butembo in Congo, with more than one million residents, is now reporting cases of the deadly hemorrhagic fever.
- The Ebola virus is spread via bodily fluids of those infected, including the dead.
- The current Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the second largest and second deadliest in history.

UN launches new framework to combat terrorism

- On 7 December 2018, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has launched a new framework to combat international terrorism.
- The name of the framework is 'UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact'.
- It will replace the 'Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force'.
- It is an agreement between the UN Chief, 36 organisational entities, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organisation.

Luxembourg to make all public transport free

- Luxembourg is set to become the first country in the world to make all its public transport free.
- It will remove fares on trains, trams, and buses in 2019.
- In 2018, the Luxembourg government made public transport free for every person under the age of 20.
- Luxembourg City is the capital of Luxembourg and its currency is Euro.
- Xavier Bettel is the Prime Minister of Luxembourg.

WB unveils \$200 Billion in climate action

- The World Bank unveiled \$200 billion in climate action investment for 2021-25 on 3 December 2018.
- World Bank said it has doubled funding of its current five-year plan.
- This move represents a significantly ramped up ambition to tackle climate change.
- The World Bank said the breakdown of the \$200 billion would comprise 'approximately \$100 billion in direct finance from the World Bank.'

Qatar to quit OPEC in January 2019

- Qatar will withdraw from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in January 2019.
- Qatar is the first Gulf country to leave the bloc of oil-producing countries.
- Qatar is the world's biggest supplier of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).
- The OPEC is an intergovernmental organisation of 15 nations, founded in 1960 in Baghdad and headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

'Nomophobia' declared 'People's Word of Year'

- Cambridge Dictionary has named 'nomophobia' as 'People's Word of 2018'.

- 'Nomophobia' means the fear or worry at the idea of being without your mobile phone or unable to use it.
- Nomophobia is a blend, which means it is made up of syllables from two or more words, in this case, it was made from 'no mobile phone phobia'.

Asia Pacific Summit 2018 began in Kathmandu

- The 'Asia Pacific Summit-2018' was held in Kathmandu on 1 December 2018.
- The theme of the Summit is 'Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values'.
- It was organised by the South Korea-based 'Universal Peace Federation' and supported by the Government of Nepal.

Andres Manuel sworn in as Mexico President

- Leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador sworn in as the new Mexican President on 1 December 2018.
- He won the Presidential election on 1 July 2018.
- Prior to becoming President, he was the Mayor of Mexico City.
- The capital of Mexico is Mexico City and its currency is Mexican Peso.

India to host G20 summit in 2022

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India will host the G-20 summit in 2022.
- Argentina hosted the G20 summit in 2018.
- The G-20 is a group of the world's 20 major economies : Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, and the US.

National Affairs

Global Hackathon On AI launched by NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog launched 'AI 4 All Global Hackathon' on 7 December 2018.
- NITI Aayog partnered with 'Perlin', a Singapore-based AI (Artificial Intelligence) startup, to launch this Hackathon.
- The objective of this Hackathon is to promote awareness and subsequently develop solutions that deliver the twin benefit of efficient computing to address the infrastructure challenges.

Kolkata-Patna : 2nd inland cargo sector

- After Varanasi, Patna will become the second city in India to receive container cargo via waterways.
- According to the shipping ministry, Gaihat terminal at Patna, on Ganga river, will receive cargo consignment from PepsiCo and Emami Agrotech after 10 December 2018.
- India's first multi-modal terminal in Varanasi under Jal Marg Vikas Project was inaugurated in November 2018.

Pune court is first to get e-payment facility

- The Pune district and sessions court have become first courts in India to launch the e-payment system.
- This will help in reducing corruption and bring in transparency.
- The practising lawyers and litigants in various cases will be able to make payments online. .
- The e-payment facility will be available on 'https://pay.ecourts.gov.in/epay'.

Govt approves 'SCord' to tackle smuggling

- The Central government has approved 'Anti-Smuggling National Coordination Centre' (SCord) under the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
- 'SCord' will help the government of India to formulate a 'National Anti-Smuggling' policy.
- All the border agencies like BSF, ITBP, Assam Rifles, SSB, and Coast Guards will be the members of 'SCord'.

India & World

2023 is international year of millets: FAO

- The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) approved India's proposal to observe 2023 as the 'International Year of Millets'.
- Millets consist of Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and minor millets, together termed as nutri-cereals.
- FAO also approved India's membership to the Executive Board of the 'World Food Program' for 2020 and 2021.
- This decision was taken at the 160th session of FAO Council in Rome.

Defence Min on a 5-day official visit to US

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is on an official visit to the United States of America from December 02-07, 2018.
- During the meeting, discussions were held on the growing partnership between India and US in the defence sphere.
- She also paid respect at the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier' by laying a wreath at the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial.

'Gandhi-Zayed Digital Museum' inaugurated

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Sheikh Abdullah, Foreign Minister of the UAE jointly inaugurated the 'Gandhi-Zayed Digital Museum' in Abu Dhabi on 4 December 2018.
- The inauguration is to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and centenary celebrations of the birth of Shaikh Zayed.
- Sheikh Zayed is the founding father of the modern UAE.

Sushma Swaraj began her UAE visit

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 3 December 2018.

- She will co-chair the 12th India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting for Economic and Technical Cooperation with UAE Foreign Minister, Sheikh Abdullah in Abu Dhabi.
- She will also inaugurate a 'Gandhi-Zayed Digital Museum' in Abu Dhabi.
- The capital of UAE is Abu Dhabi and its currency is Dirham.

Personalities in News

Swapna Barman appointed as Brand Ambassador

- State Bank of India (SBI) has appointed Swapna Barman as Brand Ambassador for its digital app 'YONO' on 3 December 2018.
- YONO, the bank's digital platform that makes both lifestyle and banking available through a single app, was launched in 2017.
- Swapna Barman won the gold medal in Heptathlon in Jakarta Asian Games 2018.

Prez Kovind to be on 5-day visit to Myanmar

- President Ram Nath Kovind will be on a 5-day visit to Myanmar from 10 December 2018.
- A Joint Statement will be adopted during the President's visit, along with the signing of several agreements.
- The capital of Myanmar is Naypyidaw and its currency is Burmese kyat.
- U Win Myint is the President of Myanmar and Aung San Suu Kyi is the State Counsellor.

Pawan Singh elected in ISSF's judges committee

- Pawan Singh has become the first Indian to be elected one of seven member's of the Judges Committee of the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF).
- He also holds the post of the Joint Secretary General of the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).
- ISSF is the governing body of the Olympic Shooting events in Rifle, Pistol and Shotgun disciplines.

President Ramaphosa will be the Chief guest

- South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations on 26 January 2019.
- The celebrations are held every year before the President of India.
- In 2018, the chief guest at Republic Day celebrations were the 10 heads of state from ASEAN countries.
- The Chief guest at India's first Republic Day on 26 January 1950 was the President of Indonesia.

Andres Manuel sworn in as Mexico President

- Leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador sworn in as the new Mexican President on 1 December 2018.
- He won the Presidential election on 1 July 2018.
- Prior to becoming President, he was the Mayor of Mexico City.

- The capital of Mexico is Mexico City and its currency is Mexican Peso.

Environment

Conference on climate change began in Poland

- The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began in Poland on 3 December 2018.
- The Conference will conclude on 14 December 2018.
- COP-24 is very significant as it is expected to finalise guidelines for implementation of the 'Paris Agreement' adopted in 2016.

Government Policies & Schemes

Tourism Ministry formulates guideline for OTAs

- The Ministry of Tourism has formulated the guidelines for approval and reapproval of Online Travel Aggregators (OTAs) on 7 December 2018.
- This is a voluntary scheme open to bonafide online travel aggregators to bring them on a common platform in the organised sector.
- The guidelines will come out by 31 December 2019.
- OTA is an intermediary or an agent, selling travel products and services.

National challenge for Youth launched

- A National Challenge for Youths named 'Ideate for India - Creative Solutions using Technology' was launched on 6 December 2018.
- The aim of this challenge is to give school students across the country a platform and opportunity to become solution creators for the problems.
- The Challenge has been designed and launched by the National e-Governance Division, Ministry of Electronics & IT.

Govt. approves freight village in Varanasi

- The Ministry of Shipping approved a freight village in Varanasi on 6 December 2018.
- It will boost the professional logistics industry in Varanasi.
- It will be developed by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- A freight village is a designated area where facilities for various modes of transportation, distribution of goods and other logistics are available on a large scale.

Union Cabinet approves NM-ICPS

- The Union Cabinet approved the 'National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems' (NM-ICPS) on 6 December 2018.
- The Mission addresses the various requirements of Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) and associated technologies.

- The mission will be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology.
- A CPS is a mechanism that is controlled or monitored by computer-based algorithms.

Cabinet approves 'Shahpurkandi Dam project'

- The Union Cabinet has approved the implementation of 'Shahpurkandi Dam Project' in Punjab on Ravi river.
- Implementation of this project would help in minimising the wastage of water of the Ravi river.
- On completion of the project, an additional Irrigation Potential of 5000 hectares in Punjab and 32173 hectares in J&K would be created.
- The project would be completed by June 2022.

Cabinet approves agri export policy

- The Union Cabinet approved the Agriculture Export Policy on 6 December 2018.
- The new policy aims to double India's farm exports to \$60 billion by 2022
- It is aimed at boosting exports of agriculture commodities such as tea, coffee and rice and increase the country's share in global agri-trade.
- The policy is also expected to provide an institutional mechanism to tackle market barriers.

Maharashtra CM launched 'SMART' initiative

- Maharashtra's Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has launched a unique initiative called 'State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation' (SMART) on 5 December 2018.
- The aim of the 'SMART' initiative is to revamp agricultural value chains, with a special focus on marginal farmers across 1,000 villages.
- The initiative is assisted by the World Bank.

Free pilgrimage scheme launched by Delhi CM

- Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the 'Mukhyamantri Teerth Yatra Yojana' on 5 December 2018.
- Under the scheme, a city resident above 60 years will be eligible to take free pilgrimage along with his or her spouse.
- The Delhi government will bear the expenses of pilgrims every year.
- It has also signed a MoU with the railways to cater to the pilgrims availing the scheme.

Government of India notifies dual-fuel usage

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified dual-fuel usage for agricultural and construction equipment vehicles.
- These include tractors, power tillers, construction equipment vehicles and combine harvesters which have originally been manufactured as dual-fuel with diesel as the primary fuel
- This move will help in reducing both cost and pollution.

Gangotri, Yamunotri included under 'PRASAD'

- The government of India has included Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttarakhand, Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh and Parasnath in Jharkhand under the 'Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive' (PRASAD) scheme.
- 'PRASAD' is a central scheme to develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country.
- PRASAD scheme was launched by the Ministry of Tourism.

Swadesh Darshan proj. inaugurated in Nagaland

- Project 'Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha Project' was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Shri Neiphiu Rio.
- This is the first project to be implemented in the state under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.
- Under the project the ministry has developed facilities like tribal tourist village, open-air theatre, cafeteria, helipad etc.

AB-PMJAY scheme launched in Jammu & Kashmir

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik launched the 'Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (AB-PMJAY) scheme on 1 December 2018.
- The scheme will benefit over 31 lakh residents in the state.
- The AB-PMJAY is the world's largest healthcare scheme which aims at providing coverage of Rs 5 lakh per entitled family annually.

'PEETHA' programme launched in Odisha

- Odisha's Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the 'Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability' (PEETHA) programme on 3 December 2018.
- The aim of the programme is to create transparency and awareness of various government schemes.
- 'PEETHA' is a sub-scheme of the Odisha government's flagship 'Ama Gaon Ama Bikas Yojana'.

'Digital Sky Platform' launched

- The Civil Aviation Ministry launched the 'Digital Sky Platform' for the registration of drones and their operators on 1 December 2018.
- To get permissions to fly drones, operators or remote pilots will have to file a flight plan.
- Payments for Unmanned Aerial Operator's Permit and Unique Identification Numbers (UIN) will be accepted through the Bharat Kosh (bharatkosh.gov.in) portal.

ERSS launched in Nagaland

- Pan-India single emergency number '112' under 'Emergency Response Support System' (ERSS) was launched in Nagaland on 1 December 2018.

- It will connect to Police, Fire, Health and other helplines.
- Nagaland is the first amongst the North-Eastern States and the second State in India to launch the emergency number '112'.
- Himachal Pradesh is the first state to launch the emergency number '112'.

Science & Technology

China mission launched to far side of Moon

- China launched the first mission to land a robotic craft on the far side of the Moon on 7 December 2018.
- The name of the mission is 'Chang'e-4'.
- The mission, which consists of a stationary lander and a rover, will explore the 'Von Kármán' crater which is located on the far side of the Moon.
- The payload was carried by Long March 3B rocket.

NASA's 'OSIRIS-REx' reached asteroid Benu

- NASA's 'Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer' (OSIRIS-REx) spacecraft arrived at the asteroid named 'Benu' on 3 December 2018.
- 'OSIRIS-REx' was launched in September 2016.
- The spacecraft's mission involves a close-up survey of the asteroid Benu.
- It is the part of NASA's New Frontiers Programme.

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'GSAT-11' launched from French Guiana

- ISRO's heaviest and most-advanced high throughput communication satellite 'GSAT-11' was launched from French Guiana.
- It is also known as 'Big Bird'.
- The launch vehicle 'Ariane 5 VA-246' carried India's 'GSAT-11' along with South Korea's 'GEO-KOMPSAT-2A' satellite.
- The 5,854-kg 'GSAT-11' will provide high data rate connectivity through 32 user beams in Ku-band and 8 hub beams in Ka-band.

Four new gravitational waves detected

- Scientists have made four new detections of gravitational waves emanating from separate black hole mergers.
- The gravitational waves were detected by the US-based LIGO and Europe-based VIRGO gravitational-wave detectors.
- The new waves are known as 'GW170729', 'GW170809', 'GW170818', and 'GW170823', in reference to the dates they were detected.

Three astronauts set to launch to ISS

- According to NASA, 3 space travellers are scheduled to launch to the International Space Station (ISS) on 3 December 2018 for a six-and-a-half month mission.
- They will officially become the part of 'Expedition 58' crew.
- Anne McClain of NASA, David Saint-Jacques of the Canadian Space Agency and Oleg Kononenko of Russian space agency are preparing to launch aboard the Soyuz MS-11 spacecraft.

Place In News

PM to inaugurate Bogibeel bridge on Dec 25

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 'Bogibeel Bridge' on Brahmaputra river on 25 December 2018.
- It is India's longest rail-cum-road bridge connecting Dibrugarh in Assam to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is 4.94 km long and 32 metres above the water level of the Brahmaputra.
- It has been constructed by the Indian Railways.

AB-PMJAY scheme launched in Jammu & Kashmir

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik launched the 'Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (AB-PMJAY) scheme on 1 December 2018.
- The scheme will benefit over 31 lakh residents in the state.
- The AB-PMJAY is the world's largest healthcare scheme which aims at providing coverage of Rs 5 lakh per entitled family annually.

Books and Authors

Books on President's speeches to be launched

- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting will launch the books on selected speeches of President Ram Nath Kovind on 8 December 2018.
- The titles of the books are 'The Republican Ethic' and 'Loktantra Ke Swar'.
- The book is a collection of 95 selected speeches out of a total of 243 speeches made by President Ram Nath Kovind in the first year of his office.

'Blue Waters Ahoy!' book released

- Admiral Sunil Lanba, chief of the Naval Staff, released a book titled 'Blue Waters Ahoy!'.
- It tells Indian Navy's History from 2001-10.
- It was unveiled on the occasion of the Indian Navy Day, celebrated every year on 04 December 2018.
- The book is authored by Vice Admiral Anup Singh, who retired as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command in 2011.

Committees & Recommendations

Panel to look at selling OIL, ONGC fields

- The government of India has constituted a six-member panel to look at selling small and marginal oil and gas fields of state-owned ONGC and Oil India.
- The panel is headed by NITI Aayog's Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and includes Cabinet Secretary P. K. Sinha and Oil Secretary M. M. Kutty.
- The smaller fields of ONGC and Oil India accounted for just 5% of the domestic crude oil production.

Business & Economy

Sale of REC to PFC approved by cabinet

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the strategic sale of 52.63% stake in Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to Power Finance Corporation (PFC).
- This deal is expected to fetch the exchequer around ₹5,000 crore.
- This transaction will help the government meet its ₹0,000-crore disinvestment target for 2018-19.
- The transaction will be through the acquisition route.

SBI to cease to be EPFO fund manager

- State Bank of India (SBI) will cease to be a fund manager of retirement fund body EPFO by the end of March 2019.
- According to RBI rules, a bank cannot function as an asset management company.
- Currently, SBI, ICICI Securities Primary Dealership, Reliance Capital, HSBC AMC and UTI AMC are fund managers of the EPFO.

RBI to implement an Ombudsman scheme

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will implement an 'Ombudsman Scheme for Digital Transactions' covering services provided by entities falling under Reserve Banks regulatory jurisdiction.

- The aim of the scheme is to provide a cost-free mechanism to redress grievances of customers related to digital transactions.
- The scheme will be notified by the end of January 2019.

Loans to be linked to external benchmarks

- The RBI proposed that floating interest rates on loans will be linked to external benchmarks like repo rate or treasury yields.
- The new guidelines will be applicable from 1 April 2019.
- Currently, banks follow a system of internal benchmarks including the Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rate (MCLR), Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR), and Prime Lending Rate (PLR).

New norms on loan system for large borrowers

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) came out with guidelines for enhancing credit discipline among large borrowers.
- Borrowers having aggregate fund based working capital limit of Rs 150 crore and above, a minimum level of 'loan component' of 40% will be applicable.
- The 40% loan component will be revised to 60% with effect from 1 July 2019.
- The guidelines will be effective from 1 April 2019.

RBI to cut SLR gradually to 18% by mid-2019

- The RBI will reduce the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) by 0.25% every quarter beginning January 2019.
- The reduction in SLR will continue till it reaches 18%.
- The current SLR is 19.5%.
- The move is likely to release funds locked in government securities.
- SLR is the portion of funds which banks are required to maintain in the form of gold reserves and the government approved securities.

RBI to inject Rs 10,000 cr through OMO

- The Reserve Bank of India will inject Rs 10,000 crore into the banking system through purchase of government securities on 6 December 2018 to increase liquidity.
- The purchase will be made through Open Market Operations (OMOs).
- The RBI also announced auction of 'Cash Management Bill'.
- Cash Management Bill is short term instrument to meet the temporary cash flow mismatches of the Government.

RBI left key interest rate unchanged

- The Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5% on 5 December 2018.
- The reverse repo rate was also kept unchanged at 6.5%.

- Repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends to other banks.
- This means that home loan and car loan rates will not change.
- The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is headed by RBI Governor Urjit Patel.

HUL board approves merger with GlaxoSmithKline

- Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) approved the merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) through an all-equity deal on 3 December 2018.
- GSKCH India sells consumer healthcare products, including the popular drink brand 'Horlicks'.
- The merger includes all the operations of GSKCH India and including a consignment selling contract to distribute GSKCH India.

'eATM' launched by ICICI Securities and BSE

- ICICI Securities and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has launched 'eATM' facility on 3 December 2018.
- Through 'eATM' facility, clients of the domestic brokerage entity will be able to receive the pay-out within 30 minutes of selling the shares.
- The new service would have a cap of ₹50,000 per client a day and would be applicable on about 600 stocks listed on the BSE.

Sports

Shubhankar won the 'Asian Tour Order of Merit'

- Golf player Shubhankar Sharma became the youngest Indian to win the 'Asian Tour Order of Merit' on 8 December 2018.
- He is the fifth Indian to win the 'Asian Tour Order of Merit'.
- Before him, Jyoti Randhawa (2002), Arjun Atwal (2003), Jeev Milkha Singh (2006 and 2008), and Anirban Lahiri (2015) won the 'Asian Tour Order of Merit'.
- Jeev is the only golf player to win the Merit honours twice.

Italy won 'Admiral's Cup' Sailing Regatta 2018

- The ninth edition of 'Admiral's Cup' Sailing Regatta 2018 concluded on 6 December 2018 in Kerala.
- Team Italy won the 'Admiral's Cup' Sailing Regatta 2018.
- Team Singapore came second and Team USA came third.
- 'Admiral's Cup' Regatta is a prestigious international military sailing event hosted annually by Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala.

Kylian Mbappe won best young player trophy

- French footballer Kylian Mbappe was named the winner of the 'Kopa Trophy' at the Ballon d'Or ceremony in Paris on 3 December 2018.

- The trophy is given to the best young football player under 21 years of age.
- He is the first-ever winner of the trophy.
- The new award was named after the former Ballon d'Or winner Raymond Kopa.

Delhi Daredevils renamed as 'Delhi Capitals'

- Delhi Daredevils was renamed as 'Delhi Capitals' on 4 December 2018.
- Parth Jindal, representing JSW Sport, and Kiran Kumar Grandhi of GMR are the Co-owners of 'Delhi Capitals'.
- Shreyas Iyer will be the captain of 'Delhi Capitals'.
- Australian great Ricky Ponting is the coach the 'Delhi Capitals'.

Budapest to host 2023 Athletics Championships

- The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) announced that Budapest will host the 'World Athletics Championship' in 2023.
- Budapest has twice hosted the IAAF world indoor championships and the European athletics championships.
- The 2019 'World Athletics Championship' will be held in Doha and the 2021 edition in Eugene, Oregon.
- Budapest is the capital of Hungary.

Kipchoge and Ibarguen won IAAF awards

- Marathon world-record holder Eliud Kipchoge of Kenya and Colombian long jumper Caterine Ibarguen won the 'IAAF Athletes of the Year' awards on 4 December 2018.
- Kipchoge had set a new marathon world record in Berlin in September 2018.
- Ibarguen had won the long and triple jumps at the Central American and Caribbean Games, the IAAF Continental Cup, and at the IAAF Diamond League finals in 2018.

Ullas won first Int'l medal in ultra running

- Ullas Narayan became the first ever Indian individual medal winner in the '2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championship' on 2 December 2018.
- He won the bronze medal in the event.
- Japan won the team event Gold at the event.
- Ultra races involved running over extremely long distances which are far longer than the traditional races.

Luka Modric won 'Ballon d'Or 2018'

- Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder Luka Modric won 'Ballon d'Or 2018' in Paris on 3 December 2018.
- He was awarded the FIFA's World Cup 2018 Most Valuable Player Award, UEFA's Player of the Year 2018, and Best FIFA Footballer of the 2018.
- Norwegian forward Ada Hegerberg won the 'Ballon d'Or 2018' for women's players.

Maheshwari Chauhan won women's skeet title

- Rajasthan's Maheshwari Chauhan won the women's skeet title at the '62nd National Shooting Championship Competition' (NSCC) for shotgun events in Jaipur on 3 December 2018.
- She defeated Ganemat Sekhon in the final match.
- The bronze medal was won by Punjab's Simran Preet Kaur Johal.
- Simran won the women's team, junior women's and junior women's team gold medal.

Vinesh won the national title in wrestling

- In Wrestling, Vinesh Phogat won the 57-kilogram national title at the 'Tata Motors Senior National Championship 2018' in Gonda, Uttar Pradesh on 1 December 2018.
- She had earlier won five national titles in a row from 2012 to 2016.
- Sakshi Malik also won the national title at the 'Tata Motors Senior National Championship 2018' in the 62-kilogram category.

Defence

Indian Navy celebrating Submarine Day on 8 Dec

- The Indian Navy is celebrating Submarine Day on 8 December.
- The day commemorates the induction of the first submarine, the erstwhile INS Kalvari, into the Navy on this day in 1967.
- The Foxtrot class submarine was decommissioned on 31 May 1996, after 29 years of service.

ICG conducted exercise 'Clean Sea 2018'

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted the Regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise titled 'Clean Sea 2018' at Port Blair on 6 December 2018.
- Coast Guard ships Viswasth, Vijith, Rajveer, Rajshri, and Chetak helicopters participated in the exercise.
- The ICG is the designated authority for oil spill response in Indian waters.
- ICG comes under the Ministry of Defence.

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Indian Navy to conduct 'TROPEX' from Jan 2019

- The Indian Navy will be conducting its flagship 'Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise' (TROPEX) from January 2019.

- The aim of the exercise is to test the combat capability of the Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force, and Coast Guard
- As part of TROPEX, the Indian Navy will also be conducting a large-scale coastal defence exercise 'Exercise Sea Vigil'.

Indian Navy Day celebrated on 4 December

- Indian Navy Day is celebrated every year on 4 December.
- The day is celebrated in honour of the Indian Navy's role during the war with Pakistan in 1971 when Indian warships attacked Karachi port.
- The day is also celebrated to highlight the role the Navy plays in securing the country's marine borders during peacetime and carrying out humanitarian missions.

Air exercise 'SHINYUU Maitri-18' began

- Indian Air Force (IAF) and Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) began their air exercise 'SHINYUU Maitri-18' at Air Force Station Agra on 3 December 2018.
- The theme of the exercise is joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft.
- IAF participated in the exercise with 'An-32' and 'C-17' aircraft with aircrew & observers.

ASEAN Defence Ministers meeting begins

- The ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) Experts' Working Group on 'Military Medicine' began at the Central Command in Lucknow on 2 December 2018.
- The meeting will conclude on 6 December 2018.
- The meeting is being co-chaired by India and Myanmar.
- The aim of the conference is to establish better co-operation in medical operations amongst ASEAN and ASEAN-Plus countries.

Tactical exercise 'Vajra Kayaa' completed

- On 1 December 2018, the Special Forces of India and United States completed their three-day tactical exercise called 'Vajra Kayaa'.
- 'Vajra Kayaa' is a part of the joint military drill 'Vajra Prahar 2018'.
- 'Vajra Kayaa' was based on the narrative of an imaginary country going into a civil war due to a weak democratic structure.
- 'Vajra Prahar 2018' is being held between India and the US.

Polity

Lt Governors can set up special courts

- Lieutenant Governors (LGs) and Administrators of Union territories have been empowered by the central government to designate civil courts as

special courts to adjudicate contracts relating to infrastructure projects.

- The Union Home Ministry passed an order to this effect on 3 December 2018.
- The decision was taken due to the large pendency of cases relating to infrastructure projects in UTs.

Witness protection scheme approved by SC

- The Supreme Court approved the government of India's draft 'Witness Protection Scheme 2018' on 5 December 2018.
- The aim of the scheme is to safeguard witnesses and their family members from any threats against their lives and reputation.
- It said that the scheme shall be the 'law' under Article 141 and 142 of the Constitution.
- It asked all the states to implement the scheme.