



# Monthly **GK** Mania



January - 2019

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### **IIT KGP won DSCI Excellence Award 2018**

In December 2018, Data Security Council of India of NASSCOM awarded the DSCI Excellence Award 2018 for Cyber Security Education to IIT Kharagpur at the NASSCOM DSCI Annual Information Security Summit 2018. IoT security and associated areas in Artificial Intelligence of the Institute was rewarded for its focused curricula and research work in cryptography, hardware security, cyber security, network security, that generated awareness among students. It concentrated on online and offline security of data in the digital space.

### **NEET is mandatory for Veterinary sciences aspirants**

In December 2018, Pondicherry state veterinary council announced that National eligibility cum entrance test (NEET) (UG) 2019 will be mandatory for students aspiring to join undergraduate programme in veterinary science and animal husbandry under all India quota (15%) for the academic year 2019-20 in recognized colleges. The NEET (UG) 2019-qualified merit list will be used for enrolling students into BVSc & AH degree course in recognized veterinary colleges in the country leaving J&K.

### **The Books “The Republican Ethic” & “Loktantra Ke Swar”**

On 8th December 2018, selected speeches of Ram Nath Kovind, President of India compiled in books titled “The Republican Ethic” and “Loktantra Ke Swar” were unveiled at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi by Directorate of Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The books have topics viz. Addressing the nation, Diversity of India, Window to the world, Educating India, Equipping India, Dharma of Public Service, Honouring our Sentinels, Spirit of the Law, Acknowledging Excellence to help the readers navigate through the vision of nation and individual citizen’s duty towards the nation.

### **Project Shahpurkandi Dam of river Ravi**

In December 2018, Union Cabinet gave nod to implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam Project on river Ravi in Punjab. Punjab Government will complete the project by June 2022 at an estimated expenditure of Rs. 1973.53 crore out of which the Central government has granted Rs. 485.38 crore. This will create irrigation potential of 5,000 hectares in Punjab and 32,173 hectares in Jammu & Kashmir on completion. Besides this, Punjab will be able to produce 206 MW of hydropower.

## **National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems**

In December 2018, Union Cabinet has approved launch of National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS). Department of Science & Technology under Ministry of Science and Technology will implement this for a period of five years to cater ever increasing technological demands of the society. NM-ICPS will bring Cyber Physical Systems (CPS) and associated technologies within reach of India and will also take into account international trends and road maps of leading nations from across the globe for next generation technologies.

## **Development of New camouflage applications**

In December 2018, the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) announced development of textile-based metamaterials that can help defence personnel and vehicles avoid getting detected by enemy radars, motion-detecting ground sensors and thermal imaging systems. This material can be used as uniforms for personnel and skirting or covering ground vehicles. Kumar Vaibhav Srivastava of the electrical engineering department and J Ramkumar of the mechanical engineering department of the institute worked on this project with support of DRDO.

## **Resignation of RBI Governor Urjit Patel**

On 10th December 2018, Reserve Bank Governor Urjit Patel resigned from his post after completing two years due to some personal reasons. He had succeeded Raghuram Rajan as the 24th Governor of RBI in September 2016 for three-years. During his tenure, RBI succeeded in bringing financial stability, steering the banking system from chaos to order and ensuring discipline. On account of his insightful understanding of macro-economic issues and a thorough professional impeccable integrity, he dealt well with the aftermath of demonetisation, oversaw a turn in the monetary policy cycle and undertook various major initiatives to boost the Indian economy.

## **PRASAD Scheme witnessed inclusions**

In December 2018, Union Government enlisted Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttarakhand, Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh and Parasnath in Jharkhand under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) to develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in India. With the new additions, the number of sites under PRASAD has now touched the figure of 41 in 25 states. Launched in 2014-15 by Union Ministry of Tourism, the scheme targets integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in planned, prioritised and sustainable manner to offer complete religious tourism experience.

## **Resignation of MP Upendra Kushwaha**

On December 9, 2018, Member of Parliament and Chief of Rashtriya Lok Samta Party (RLSP) Upendra Kushwaha has resigned from the Union council of ministers. He has quit the BJP-led NDA alliance just a day ahead of the start of the Winter Session, which is likely to trigger a realignment of political equations in Bihar. Over this, BJP has declared that the RLSP would not be given more than two seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Bihar sends 40 MPs to Lok Sabha.

## **Shalindra Kumar, The Chief Election Officer of J&K**

On 12th December 2018, the 1995-batch IAS officer, Shalindra Kumar has been appointed as the Chief Electoral Officer of Jammu and Kashmir replacing the incumbent Shaleen Kabra. With this, Kabra will be the principal secretary to the government, industries and commerce department as well as housing and urban development department to look after work of smart cities and proposed new Jammu and Srinagar metropolitan regional development authorities. J&K is witnessing the panchayat elections that started on 17th November 2018 after a gap of seven years. Shalindra Kumar's office will be in effect from 12th December 2018.

## **International conference on human computer**

In December 2018, Prof P Nagabhushan, Director of Indian Institute of Information Technology, Allahabad (IIIT-A) inaugurated three day international conference on Human Computer Interaction (HCI) at Jhalwa campus. HCI is the study of how people interact with computers and to what extent computers are or are not developed for successful interaction with human beings. HCI is employed in varied technological application areas, from e-teaching and e-learning to office applications, entertainment, remote healthcare and assistive technologies, robotics, advertising and design of new technological products.

## **Madhya Pradesh Elections 2018 Results**

On 11th December 2018, Madhya Pradesh Elections 2018 results were declared in which Congress won 114 seats. Congress fell short of majority as the number of seats required to form the government is 116. The party is likely to get support from the Samajwadi Party, which has one seat, but the Congress will still need support of one more MLA. Among 230 total seats, BJP won 109, BSP 2, SP 1 and independents won a total of 4 seats. The state was ruled by the BJP for the last 15 years.

## **Telangana Assembly Elections 2018 Results**

On 11th December 2018, Telangana Assembly Elections 2018 results were announced in which Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) claimed majority with 88 seats for the second straight term. In the 119-member state assembly of Telangana Congress won 21 seats, BJP 1 and the others won 9

seats. Chief Minister KCR had dissolved the Telangana assembly in September 2018, almost nine months before its term was supposed to end and is now all set to form the government in the state for the second straight term. 1821 candidates contested in this election and the voter turnout was recorded as 73.20%.

### **Rajasthan Election Results 2018**

On 11th December 2018, Rajasthan Election Results 2018 were announced in which Congress won majority with 100 seats. In the 200-member legislative assembly of Rajasthan, BJP won 73 seats, BSP 6 seats and other parties 20 seats. It is worth knowing that former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje won from Jhalarapatan defeating her nearest Congress rival Manvendra Singh who left BJP just before the elections. She has already submitted her resignation to the Rajasthan governor.

### **Mizoram Assembly Elections 2018 Results**

On 11th December 2018, Mizoram Assembly Elections 2018 results were announced in which former ally of BJP, the Mizo National Front has won majority with 26 seats out of total 40 seats. Among rest of the seats, Congress won 5 seats, BJP 1 seat and others won 8 seats. Mizoram had conducted polling in a single phase on November 28, 2018 and the voter turnout in Mizoram was recorded at around 80%.

### **Chhattisgarh Election Results 2018**

On 11th December 2018, Chhattisgarh Election 2018 results were announced in which, out of 90 seats, Congress led with 68 seats, followed by BJP with 15 seats and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) with 7. For claiming majority in this state at least 46 seats were required. Chief Minister Raman Singh of BJP resigned from his post after serving the state for 15 years.

### **Mushtaq Ahmad scripted Sahitya Academy Award**

In December 2018, eminent Kashmiri short-story writer and broadcaster, Mushtaq Ahmad Tantray received Sahitya Academy Award for his collection of eighteen short stories “AAKH”. Published in the year 2012, the book gained popularity among literary circles of Kashmiri language. Prior to this, the book was well acknowledged with the best book award in Kashmiri at the state level from State Academy of Art, Culture and Languages for the year 2014. The awardee is presently working in capacity of Head of the Regional News Unit at Radio Kashmir Srinagar.

### **Shaktikanta Das became the 25th Governor of RBI**

In December 2018, India's former economic affairs secretary and current member of the Finance Commission, Shaktikanta Das got appointed as the 25th RBI Governor for upcoming three years. The 1980 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu Cadre has been a very prominent bureaucrat who

served both NDA and UPA governments. He worked as economic affairs secretary from 2015 to 2017; and had been an important official in both big economic moves of the government viz. demonetisation and implementation of GST.

### **New milestone of LUH**

In December 2018, Indigenously developed Light Utility Helicopter (LUH) achieved a significant milestone of flying at 6 km altitude in Bengaluru, capital of Karnataka. With this, LUH can now soar at high altitude cold weather trials scheduled in January 2019. Built by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the 3-ton class new generation helicopter will replace aging fleet of Cheetah and Chetak helicopters used by Indian Armed Forces. It has potential of flying at 220 kmph. Equipped with Glass Cockpit and empowered by TM/HAL Ardiden 1U/Shakti 1U single turbo shaft engine, it can cater demanding high altitude missions.

### **Zoramthanga : The next Mizoram CM**

On 15th December 2018, Zoramthanga of Mizo National Front (MNF) will take oath as Chief Minister of Mizoram at Raj Bhavan. 74-yr old Zoramthanga will become Chief Minister of Mizoram for the third term. Prior to this, he has ruled for two terms from 1998 to 2008. He was also a former underground leader and a close associate of the legendary MNF leader Laldenga. After the death of Laldenga in 1990, Zoramthanga was elected as the MNF party chief, the post he continues to hold till date.

### **Telangana welcomed KCR as CM again**

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) President, K Chandrasekhar Rao has become the Chief Minister of Telangana for the second time at Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad. Besides him, Mohammad Mohamood Ali, also took oath as a minister. Former ministers of his cabinet along with the sitting high court judges attended this oath ceremony. It is worth recollecting here that the TRS claimed two-thirds of the 119 seat state Assembly when the youngest state of the country gone for an early-poll. The new CM will soon form a full-fledged cabinet.

### **Mary Kom scripted the Meethoileima title**

In December 2018, Manipur Government honoured AIBA World Women Boxing Gold medalist MC Mary Kom with the title "Meethoileima" (par excellent queen) for her outstanding achievement in the field of boxing at a function in Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal. The boxing legend received a cheque of ten lakh rupees by the State Chief Minister N. Biren Singh. Besides this, the CM has decided to name the Imphal West DC Road towards Game Village as 'MC Mary Kom Road'.

## **The First Agriculture Export Policy 2018**

In December 2018, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has put out the Year End review of the policies to envision the creation of a 'Vision of New India' which would steer India to become a USD 5 trillion economy by the end of 2025. It has revealed the first ever Agriculture Export Policy having plan to boost India's agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022 and to achieve Agriculture Ministry's target of USD 100 billion. The plan also encourages Services sector contribution to USD 3 trillion and Manufacturing to USD 1 trillion.

## **'Korean Won' & 'Turkish Lira' Entered List of currencies for Exchange Rate**

In December 2018, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has added two currencies viz. Korean Won and Turkish Lira in the list of currencies and notified the exchange rate for them. With this, the total number of currencies for the purpose of valuation of imported and exported goods reached 22. The move will ease trade and business by simplifying the process of conversion of these currencies into INR and vice versa. In 2017-18, the bilateral trade between India-South Korea grew to USD 16.36 billion and between India and Turkey stood at USD 7.2 billion.

## **Delhi HC banned online sale of medicines**

On December 12, 2018, Delhi High Court banned online sale of medicines via e-pharmacists across the country. The court directed both Central and state government to ensure immediate implementation of the order in response to a PIL filed by Delhi-based dermatologist, Zaheer Ahmed, who complained that lakhs of medicines were being sold on the internet every day without much regulation, posing a huge risk to patients and doctors alike. It is worth knowing that the online sale of medicines is illegal under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Pharmacy Act, 1948.

## **Two Indian teachers in Global Teachers Prize race**

In December 2018, two Indian teachers Arti Qanungo and Swaroop Rawal have been shortlisted for \$1 million Global Teachers Prize. The duo will compete with 48 other teachers for the prestigious award. Arti Qanungo is an English teacher at Government Girls Senior Secondary School at Shakarpur in Delhi, who made efforts to protect children, particularly girls, from poor backgrounds, from abuse and neglect and enhanced their confidence. Swaroop Rawal is a Life Skills teacher at Lavad Primary School in Gujarat, who has enlightened the children on the streets and in rural communities with unique teaching methods.

### **Kamal Nath: The Next CM of Madhya Pradesh**

On 17th December 2018, veteran leader of the Grand Old Party, Congress, Kamal Nath will take oath as the new Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh uprooting BJP, which was in the ruling position for three consecutive terms. His young rival Jyotiraditya Scindia has accepted the decision. The Congress has opted for its experienced hands to play a big role in the heartland state without upsetting the younger leaders or risking any rebellion. It is worth knowing here that this was a critical decision as the Congress and its allies have a wafer-thin majority in Madhya Pradesh.

### **Ashok Gehlot : The Next Rajasthan Chief Minister**

Ashok Gehlot is all set to take oath as Chief Minister of Rajasthan for the third time. He had been the the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, once from 1998 to 2003 and then from 2008 to 2013. Since 1999, he has represented the Sardarpura assembly constituency, winning five consecutive terms in the House. Gehlot has also been the Union Minister of Tourism; Civil Aviation; Sports; and Textiles in different stints between 1982 and 1993. Besides him, Sachin Pilot will take oath as the Deputy Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

### **Brijendra Pal Singh: The New president of FTII**

On 13th December 2018 the Information and Broadcasting Ministry nominated Brijendra Pal Singh as the new President of Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) in place of actor Anupam Kher. Currently, he is the Vice Chairman of the FTII Governing Council. He is best known as the producer-director of popular TV series 'CID'. In 2004, he scripted the Limca Book of Records for taking a single continuous shot of 111 minutes to mark the completion of six years of 'CID'.

### **Author Amitav Ghosh became the 54h Jnanpith awardee**

In December 2018, Eminent English writer Amitav Ghosh received year's Jnanpith Award, a literary award given to an author for "outstanding contribution towards literature." Known for a series of novels like "Shadow Lines", "The Glass Palace", "The Hungry Tide", and Ibis Trilogy - "Sea of Poppies", "River of Smoke" and "Flood of Fire", which chronicled the Opium trade between India and China run by the East India Company, Amitav is a path- breaking novelist. He has steered his novels through historical settings to the modern era and has crafted a space where the past links with the present in relevant ways.

### **National Energy Conservation Day 2018**

On 14th December 2018, National Energy Conservation Day 2018 was celebrated across India under the aegis of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power. It was to



drive mass awareness about the importance of energy efficiency and conservation. The day was instituted in 1991 with distribution of the National Energy Conservation Awards to various organizations that made efforts to reduce energy consumption. To celebrate the day, painting competition for students were organized at the School, State and at National levels.

### **Some recent approvals of ACC**

On 14th December 2018, Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) gave nod to extension of 6 months to chiefs of Intelligence Bureau, Rajiv Jain and Research and Analysis Wing, Anil K Dhasmana in wake of forthcoming general elections. Rajiv Jain is a 1980-batch IPS officer from Jharkhand and a proud recipient of the President's Police Medal. Anil K Dhasmana is a 1981-batch officer from the Madhya Pradesh cadre and had served the R&AW for 23 years. Besides them, the ACC has re-designated Anil Srivastava from Advisor to Principal Advisor in NITI Aayog.

### **Bhupesh Baghel : The New CM of Chhattisgarh**

On 17th December 2018, Bhupesh Baghel became the Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh. Governor Anandiben Patel administered the oath of Baghel at the Science College Grounds in Raipur. The decision came after four days of discussions. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and Congress President Rahul Gandhi attended the ceremony. With this, Bhupesh Baghel has become the third Chief Minister of the state. Earlier, he was a minister in undivided Madhya Pradesh.

### **Demise of Filmmaker Tulsi Ramsay**

In December 2018, filmmaker Tulsi Ramsay passed away at the age of 77 in Mumbai. The deceased was known for directing cult horror films like 'Veerana', 'Purani Haveli', 'Bandh Drawaza', 'Do Gaz Zameen Ke Niche', 'Hotel', 'Purana Mandir', and the popular 90's TV series, 'Zee Horror Show'. He ran a production company named Tulsi Ramsay Production located at Andheri in Mumbai. Tulsi was one of the seven Ramsay brothers who combined to handle most departments of a film project.

### **Women Transforming India Awards 2018**

In December 2018, NITI Aayog presented Women Transforming India Awards to 15 women entrepreneurs in New Delhi. In this third edition of these awards, M. Venkaiah Naidu, the vice-president of India, was the chief guest who launched the upgraded version of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform web portal to promote and support both established and aspiring Indian women entrepreneurs. This first of its kind unified access platform enables the partner organizations like Google, UN India Business Forum, CRISIL, SIDBI, NIC, NASSCOM, WEE Foundation, SEWA bank etc. to provide various support services to Indian women entrepreneurs

## **GSAT- 7A is all set to touch the space**

On 19th December the 35th Indian communication satellite 'GSAT- 7A' built by ISRO will be launched onboard GSLV-F11 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. ISRO's fourth generation launch vehicle with three stages, GSLV-F11 will place the satellite in the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) using the onboard propulsion system for providing communication capability to users in Ku-band over the Indian region. The satellite will have a mission life of eight years.

## **J&K's law on Sexual Exploitation**

In December 2018, the state assembly of J&K has approved a law to ban sexual extortion of woman in offices and with this, J&K has become the first state in the country to amend law on Sextortion. The State Administrative Council headed by Governor Satya Pal Malik gave nod to Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and Jammu and Kashmir Criminal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018. It makes sexual harassment a criminal offence with three years of imprisonment. The new amendments have been done in Ranbir Penal Code which is popular in J&K. It was introduced by Ranbir Singh during the Dogra Dynasty that came into effect from 1932.

## **19th December : Goa Liberation Day**

Goa celebrated its Liberation Day on 19th December 2018. It is worth knowing that India got independence from British rule on 15th August 1947 while Goa was still under Portuguese Rule. Indian armed forces liberated the coastal state from Portuguese colonial yoke on December 19, 1961. Goa was under Portuguese rule for 450 years. The first fight for Goa's liberation from the Portuguese had begun on 18 June 1946 by freedom fighter Ram Manohar Lohia but it took 14 long years for the Portuguese to leave Goa. Nation celebrates Goa liberation day every year.

## **Fishermen received ISRO-made satphones**

On 17th December 2018, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edappadi K. Palaniswami distributed 200 satellite phones named 'NaVIC' to fishermen involved in deep sea fishing for assisting their navigation during the high seas. Designed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), NaVIC will warn the fishermen about the weather or any natural disaster via messages received through Bluetooth technology with the help of India Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS). Besides this, the CM inaugurated, 1840 housing units in Ukkadam in Coimbatore district.

## **Distribution of Handicrafts Export Awards**

In December 2018, Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, bestowed 136 Handicrafts Export Awards under different categories to handicrafts exporters for their remarkable

performance in exports for the year 2015-16 and 2016-17 at a function at India Expo Centre & Mart in Greater Noida, Delhi. For this field, an Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) in India establishes infrastructure facilities in craft clusters, creates brand image of handcrafted products across the globe and helps exporters in innovating new designs and styles. Besides this, EPCH has begun a diploma course for the children of the artisans working in the handicraft sector .

### **Uday Shankar : The Vice President Of FICCI**

Star India's Chairman and President of The Walt Disney Company Asia Pacific, Uday Shankar has been elected as the Vice President of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) for 2018-19. The appointee is the first-ever Indian media and entertainment executive to play the leadership role in a national industry chamber. Earlier he was a political journalist with The Times of India and has also served as chief executive officer and editor of Star News, besides leading Hindi news channel Aaj Tak in 2000.

### **E-payment facility started at Pune District court**

In December 2018, Pune District court became the first Court in India to get facility of e-payment. Court fee, judicial deposits, fines and penalties all can be paid via e-payments using <https://pay.ecourts.gov.in/epay/> portal in the Shivajinagar district and sessions court of Pune. The person making the e-payment will get a unique case number record (CNR). Besides this, the court administration has signed a contract with State Bank of India (SBI) for 24x7 service with no additional bank charges for payments up to Rs. 2,000.

### **Sonam Kapoor : PETA India's Person of the Year for 2018**

In December 2018, Sonam Kapoor got named as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India's Person of the Year for 2018. She is an advocate for animal rights and has kept animal skin out of her handbag line for her fashion brand Rheson. In 2017 she had earned a Compassionate Business Award for her cruelty-free handbag line. She participates in animal welfare programmes. Prior to this, in year 2016, the actress was named PETA India's Hottest Vegetarian Celebrity.

### **On December 18, 2018, India's largest cancer institute**

which is a part of the AIIMS-II campus in Haryana's Jhajjar got inaugurated. Spanning in 35 acres, the 710-bed National Cancer Institute hospital opened its OPD services. Its foundation stone was laid by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in year 2014. Built at an expenditure of Rs. 2,035 crore, the hospital is meant to strengthen the research and it will become fully operational by December 2020.

### **Book on R.K. Laxman**

In December 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi released a book 'Timeless Laxman' a book on the life and times of legendary cartoonist, the late R.K. Laxman that has been authored by his daughter-in-law, Usha Srinivas Laxman. Laxman's cartoons are worth studying to have an insight into the troubles in society and its several colors, viewed through the eyes of his famed creation, 'The Common Man' with which every Indian citizen and each generation can easily relate itself. Laxman had died in January 2015 in Pune at the age of 93.

### **NITI Aayog's suggestion for UPSC Civil Services Exam**

On 19th December 2018 NITI Aayog released a 'Strategy for New India @75' document in context to UPSC Civil Services Exam. The document advocated reduction in upper age limit to 27 years from the present 30 years for general category candidates in a phased manner by 2022-23. Besides this, the government think tank has recommended reduction of the existing 60-plus separate civil services at the central and state level via rationalisation and harmonisation of services. It emphasized on conduction of only one exam for civil services with all-India ranking.

### **Mamata Banerjee : Skoch CM of the Year Awardee**

In December 2018, the Chief Minister of West Bengal has been awarded the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award for her contribution in the overall development of West Bengal as West Bengal emerged as the best-performing state in the field of Governance. Besides this, it is worth knowing that West Bengal has also won the top Skoch Award under the 100 days' work scheme; IPPAI Award for rural electrification in the state as well as five consecutive Krishi Karman awards in the field of Agriculture.

### **New Additions in 'Adopt A Heritage' Project**

In December 2018, ten monuments have been enlisted under 'Adopt A Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan', scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Red Fort, Delhi; Gandikota Fort, Andhra Pradesh; area surrounding Gangotri Temple, Trail to Gaumukh in Uttarakhand and Mt. Stok Kangri Trek, Ladakh; Jantar Mantar, Delhi; Surajkund, Haryana; Qutub Minar, Delhi; Ajanta Caves, Maharashtra; Leh Palace, Leh, Jammu & Kashmir and Hampi (Hazara Rama Temple), Karnataka are the monuments that have been adopted by various organizations for enhancing tourism potential and cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.

### **B V P Rao : The new President of AAI**

On 22nd December 2018, Advisor of Telengana government and former Vice President of the archery association of the northeastern state, B V P Rao won the presidential elections of Archery Association of India that were held under the supervision of former Chief Election Commissioner

S. Y. Quraishi. Rao was also associated with Sports Authority of India in past. Vijay Kumar Malhotra has been the president of AAI for 40 years from 1973 to 2012 then later he was conferred the Honorary Life President of AAI.

### **Old Clothes can now be building materials**

In December 2018, IIT-Kanpur alumna, Veena Sahajwalla from University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney created building materials from old clothing, devising the best out of waste. She along with her team created new building materials by collecting a random assortment of garments from charity bins, removing zippers, buttons, buckles and passed the leftover mix of cotton, polyester, nylon and other fabrics via a fine-grained shredder. They then glued the different fibre components together by treating it with a chemical and then compressed it under heat to form solid building panels.

### **India : The Seventh largest stock market in the world**

On 22nd December 2018, Indian Stock market overtook Germany and became the world's seventh largest stock market globally. India is presently a South Asian Giant, projected to grow at 7.5% in 2018 and 7.3% in 2019 while Germany managed to grab a growth rate of only 1.6% in 2018. This new milestone of India reflects its positive returns this year as companies' dependency on domestic demand enabled them to avoid meltdown in other emerging markets spurred due to U.S. – China trade war.

### **National Consumer Day**

24th December 2018 was observed as National Consumer Day on “Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints” theme. It is being celebrated every year to commemorate President's approval for the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 and the enactment of this Act was seen as a historic milestone in the consumer movement across the nation. The Act envisaged the promotion and protection of rights of consumers like Right to Safety, Right to be informed, Right to Choose and Right to be heard to safeguard the consumer against several types of exploitations and unfair dealings.

### **India's Agni-IV missile**

In December 2018, India successfully test-fired strategic surface-to-surface nuclear-capable Agni-IV missile from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Dr Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast. Designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation, it has the latest features to correct and guide itself for in-flight disturbances. Equipped with advanced Avionics, 5th generation On Board Computer and distributed architecture, it has a strike range of 4,000 km. This was the 7th trial of Agni-IV missile by the Indian Army. The last trial was conducted on January 2, 2018.

### **Rafi Awardees : Late music composer Laxmikant & singer Usha Timothy**

In December 2018, the Mohammed Rafi Award instituted by an NGO headed by Mumbai BJP Chief Ashish Shelar was conferred upon late music composer Laxmikant Shantaram Kudalkar and playback singer Usha Timothy at a programme held in suburban Bandra. Laxmikant's daughter received 1 lakh rupees and a trophy as Mohammed Rafi Lifetime Achievement Award on behalf of her father. The deceased had paired with Pyarelal Ramprasad Sharma and composed hit tracks like 'Bindiya Chamkegi', 'Main Shayar Toh Nahin' and 'Hansta Hua Noorani Chehra' among others. While Timothy, who has sung 1,000 songs in multiple Indian languages received 51,000 rupees.

### **Sangeeta Verma joined CCI**

In December 2018 former Indian Economic Services (IES) officer Sangeeta Verma has joined the Competition Commission of India (CCI) as a member for a period of 5 years from the date of assumption of charge of the post, or until further orders, whichever is earlier. With this CCI has gained its full strength with Ashok Kumar Gupta as chairperson, Sangeeta Verma, Augustine Peter and UC Nahta as its members. CCI is meant to ensure fair competition in the economy via a 'level playing field' to the producers and make the markets work for the welfare of the consumers.

### **P. V. Bharathi is now MD and CEO of Corporation Bank**

As per the order issued by the Personnel Ministry on 24th December 2018, the Executive Director in the Canara Bank, P.V Bharathi has got appointed as Managing Director and Chief Executive officer of the Corporation Bank. She will take charge on 1st February 2019, and will remain on the post till March 31, 2020. Besides her, General Manager in the Central Bank of India, Birupaksha Mishra, Balakrishna Alse S and K Ramachandran have been appointed as Executive Directors in the Corporation Bank, the Oriental Bank of Commerce and Allahabad Bank respectively.

### **New draft of rules for Information Technology**

On 24th December 2018, the Union Ministry for Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced draft rules of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2018. The main objective of this is to end the complete encryption system to trace 'unlawful' activities for better national security. As per the amended rules under Section 79 of the IT Act, it will be mandatory for online platforms to deploy technology to enable access to content seen as "unlawful". Information about "unlawful acts" can be sought from the intermediaries by "court order" the parameter to judge unlawful acts would be Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which places restriction on freedom of speech and expression. The online platforms will keep a record of "unlawful activity" for a period of "180 days", double the older version.

### **Swachh Bharat Grand Challenge Awards presented**

On 26th December 2018, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) organized Swachh Bharat Grand Challenge as a part of the Swachhta Pakhwada held from 1st to 15th November 2018 to reward innovative solutions by DIPP recognized Start-ups in the country. In this, four areas of sanitation, waste management, water and wastewater management and air management were selected for the grand challenge. First prizes won by Maclec technical project laboratory Private Limited of Delhi (Air sector), Altersoft Innovations India Private Limited of Kerala (Cochin)(sanitation sector), Sanshodhan An E-Waste Exchange Private Limited of Telangana (waste sector) and REVY Environmental Solutions Private Limited of Gujarat (water sector). Prize money for this award was Rs. 2 lakh.

### **Release of 'Prince, Patron and Patriarch Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala'**

In December 2018, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh released the book 'Prince, Patron and Patriarch Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala' that has been written by the Maharaja's grandson, Brigadier (Retd) Jagjit Singh, and Cynthia Frederick in Chandigarh. The book is a candid tribute by a grandson to the erstwhile exceptional royal king of Kapurthala. Maharaja Jagatjit Singh was considered as one of the scripters of modernization of Kapurthala who highlighted Patiala and Kapurthala on the world map.

### **Divya Patidar Joshi became Mrs. India 2018**

On December 26, 2018, Divya Patidar Joshi from Ratlam of Madhya Pradesh got crowned as 'Mrs. India 2018' at the Mrs. India My Identity Beauty Pageant 2018 finale in New Delhi. Joshi outshone 24 promising contestants and won all the rounds of Beauty with Brain contest along with Best Cat Walk title. After this win, the lady will represent the nation in Mrs. Universe Pageant in the year 2019.

### **CM N Biren Singh: 'Champions of Change' awardee**

On December 26, 2018, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu presented the 'Champions of Change' award to Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh for his leadership role in transforming the governance in the north-eastern state. It is worth learning that Manipur was selected as one of the 'aspirational' districts for its all-round development on various parameters. The award selection jury was comprised of former Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishna and former Supreme Court judge Sudha Mishra.

### **Beginning of 'Dwijing Festival'**

On December 27, 2018, a twelve day long third edition of 'Dwijing Festival' started on the banks of the Aie river in Chirang district of Assam. Assam Tourism and Bodoland Tourism have together organised this festival. This Dwijing Festival is meant to promote river tourism in the rural areas under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC). It was initially named as 'Aie River Winter Festival' that later got changed in year 2017.

### **Bimal Jalan will head economic capital framework**

On 26th December 2018, former RBI Chief, Bimal Jalan has got appointed as head of RBI expert panel for reviewing economic capital framework of the Central Bank. Besides him, former Deputy RBI governor, Rakesh Mohan has been appointed as Vice-Chairman, economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg, RBI central board members Bharat Doshi and Sudhir Mankad and Deputy Governor N S Vishwanathan are the members of this committee. The committee is meant to suggest handling of its reserves and transfer of the bank's surplus to the government.

### **Lok Sabha approved Triple Talaq bill**

In December 2018, the Lok Sabha has passed the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill with two hundred forty-five votes in favour. The Bill will replace the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Ordinance-2018. The approved bill declared instant triple talaq void and illegal and anybody found practising it, will get entitled for imprisonment of up to three years. This is a historic step ensuring justice, equality and dignity for the Muslim women. The National Commission for Women applauded this move of Lok Sabha.

### **Maharashtra implemented recommendations of 7th Pay Commission**

On December 27, 2018 Government of Maharashtra implemented the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission. Rs. 38655 crore will be disbursed as arrears to officers, employees, teachers from the unaided schools and those from Zilla Parishad institutions with effect from January 1, 2016 and it will be given in 5 instalments directly into the GPF account of the employees. Group A and Group B officers will get an increase of around Rs. 9,000 - Rs. 14,000 per month; Group 'D' employee will get Rs 15,000 per month (a hike of around Rs. 4,000- Rs. 5,000), whereas a Group 'C' employee will get Rs. 18,000 per month (hike of Rs. 5,000 - Rs. 8,000). The pensioners will also get a hike in their monthly pension.

### **Mobile audio guide app of Tourism Ministry**

On December 27, 2018, Tourism Ministry inked agreement with Resbird Technologies under the 'Adopt a Heritage' project for the development of a mobile audio guide application for five iconic sites viz. Amer Fort (Rajasthan), Kaziranga (Assam), Colva Beach (Goa), Kumarakom (Kerala) and Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar). Besides this, the Ministry also handed over the Letters of Intent to seven shortlisted agencies for consideration under the project in the presence of Tourism Secretary Yogendra Tripathi. The shortlisted agencies will become 'Monument Mitras' and will be given the opportunity to associate their CSR activities with a heritage site

### **Delhi Police pioneered digitisation of all malkhanas**

On December 28, 2018, the Delhi Police became the first police force in country to digitise all malkhanas across every police station in the state under the e-malkhana project. Malkhanas are



rooms for keeping seized arms and bullets and shells. Around 3,11,600 case properties have got encrypted in digital form. Besides this, the e-malkhana project of 10 districts at Chinamaya Mission was also inaugurated by the Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik and the personnel involved in the project were acknowledged with certificate of merit. In addition to this a booklet on e-malkhana functioning was also released.

### **Demise of film maker Mrinal Sen**

On 30th December 2018, Legendary filmmaker Mrinal Sen died of cardiac arrest at the age of 95 in Kolkata. The Padma Bhushan and Dada Saheb Phalke awardee was credited for making way for parallel cinema in the country with films like Ek Din Achanak, Padatik, Mrigaya, Akaler Sandhane, Chorus, Kharij, Khandahar, Bhuwan Shome, Akash Kusum and Calcutta 71. The recipient of 12 international film awards and a member of the Indian People's Theatre Association made his directorial debut with Raat Bhore in 1955. He made films that focussed on socio-political issues.

### **HDFC Group became India's largest business house**

On December 28, 2018, as per Bloomberg data, Deepak Parekh-led HDFC group overtook Tata Group to become the country's largest conglomerate in terms of market capitalisation. The total market capitalization (MACP) of its five listed companies is presently valued at Rs 10.40 lakh crore, which is Rs 1,185 crore more than that of Tata Group. With this, HDFC Bank became the third company in Indian corporate history to cross the Rs 5-lakh crore market capitalisation threshold, after TCS (Rs 7.16 trillion) and RIL (Rs 7.09 trillion).

### **Mahum Siddiqi won Cornell University hackathon**

In December 2018, Indian-American teenager Mahum Siddiqi won "Digital Transformation Hackathon" at Cornell University, New York (USA) for developing a device which can detect the actual level of pain of a patient during a diagnosis. The innovation of this 17-year old Indian-American teenager of class 12 student at Vestal High School employs the neurological activity occurring in one's brain to determine the patient's pain level effectively and efficiently.

### **Ashok Chakra recipients are on postage stamps**

In December 2018, the Keonjhar Police, Odisha, in collaboration with India Post has issued 10 postage stamps under the "My Stamp" scheme, each featuring the Ashok Chakra Awardees from Police Department (State Police and Central police) across India. The stamps which are of Rs 5.00 denomination and have the background picture of Sun Temple, Konark, recognizes the acts of valour by khaki-clad personnel viz. Randhir Prasad Verma, Kamlesh Kumari Yadav, Pramod Kumar Satapathy, R. P. Diengdoh, Mohan Chand Sharma, K Prasad Babu, Tukaram Omble, Vijay Salaskar, Hemant Karkare and Ashok Kamte.

### **Swachh Surveysahan 2018 award**

In December 2018, Karvy Group appointed by MoHUA conducted a survey and presented Swachh Surveysahan 2018 award for Best Capital city in the Solid Waste Management to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). Launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) in January 2016, Swachh Surveyshan survey is conducted to rank the cities on several sanitation and cleanliness parameters for generating a spirit of healthy competition towards the concept of 'Swachhata'.

### **Arunachal touched record high revenue generation**

On 28th December 2018, Arunachal Pradesh government succeeded in increasing the state revenue generation in the past two years with the record revenue collection of Rs 1598.49 crore during the year 2017-18. The revenue generation had crossed the Rs 1,000 crore mark for two consecutive years since Arunachal Pradesh attained statehood in 1987. In 2016-17, the revenue generation of the state was Rs 1,253.57 crore. The credit goes to the Team Arunachal mantra which has ignited minds of the employees to deliver goods to the people of the state.

### **It was a DRDO day**

1st January 2019 was celebrated as the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) day. The organization was set up to make the nation self-reliant in fields of missiles, radars, sonars and torpedoes and several other systems. Headquartered in New Delhi, the organisation is dedicated to development of state of the art weapon system for the country's armed forces. Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, and Airborne Early Warning and Control System are its latest developments. DRDO works under Ministry of Defence and "Strength's Origin is in Science" is its motto.

### **IIT Delhi alumnus scored 171 out of 170 in America**

IIT Delhi alumnus Ankur Garg scored 171 out of 170 in Macroeconomics exam under 'International Development' programme at Harvard University by virtue of the extra credit opportunity in American education system. Only the brightest in a batch happen to achieve this feat. His score card was signed by Jeffrey Frankel who is a leading International macroeconomist. Prior to this, Ankur did the feat of topping IAS exam at the age of 22 that made him one of the youngest persons to clear IAS exam.

### **Some new appointments**

Secretary to the Ministry of Social Justice, Sudhir Bhargava has been appointed as the new Chief Information Commissioner of the Central Information Commission (CIC). The CIC is the highest

appeal body under the Right to Information Act. In Railway Board, the General Manager of South-Central Railway (SCR), VK Yadav has succeeded Ashwani Lohani as the new chairman of Railway Board. IIM-A alumnus and former MD and CEO of HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company, Amitabh Chaudhry has become MD & CEO of Axis Bank. Pankaj Sharma is the new Chief Operations Officer of RBL Bank.

### **ISRO launched Samwad for space Science activities**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched 'Samwad' as part of its outreach programme for students to engage them in space Science activities. It was inaugurated in Bengaluru and around 40 students and 10 teachers from chosen schools got the opportunity of interaction with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan about the Indian Space Programme and their benefits to the common man. The Chairman suggested students to study Science and Mathematics with absolute seriousness for pursuing challenging careers.

CAREER FLITE



### **Miss Mexico Vanessa Ponce de Leon became Miss World**

26 year old, Miss Mexico Vanessa Ponce de Leon became the 68th Miss World at a glitzy event on the tropical Chinese island of Hainan on 8th December 2018. The Mexican model holds a degree in international business, volunteers for "Migrantes en el Camino" and is on the board of directors of a rehab centre for girls. Thailand's Nicolene Pichapa Limsnukan and Miss Belarus Maria Vasilevich, were the first and second runner up respectively. They were followed by Miss Jamaica Kadijah Robinson and Miss Uganda Quiin Abenakyo to complete the top five.

### **The world's largest Arabic audio library**

In December 2018, Dubai Crown Prince Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum launched the largest Arabic audio library of the world in Dubai, UAE. The Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) of Dubai in collaboration with the website Bookshare.org. will serve seven million visually impaired people in the Arab world via 300,000 books in Arabic. 'Zayed Diwan' of Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai was the first book that got uploaded on the audio library. It is a collection of 87 poems.

### **The Asian Tour Order of Merit**

In December 2018, Shubhankar Sharma received the Asian Tour Order of Merit in the Hong Kong Open golf tournament. With this, he has become the fifth and the youngest Indian to conquer the Asian Tour Order of Merit after Jyoti Randhawa (2002), Arjun Atwal (2003), Jeev Milkha Singh (2006 and 2008) and Anirban Lahiri (2015). Sharma had won his first Asian – European Tour win at Joburg Open in mid-December with the Malaysian Championships in February that fetched him cheque of USD 500,000.

### **China pioneered rover landing on Moon's Far Side**

On 7th December 2018, China launched Rover 'Chang'e-4 lunar probe mission' via Long March 3B rocket from the southwestern Xichang launch centre to make first landing on moon's far side. This side of the moon is said to be different from moon's near side. In 1959 the Soviet Union had captured the first images of the heavily cratered surface of the moon's "dark side" but no rover had ever touched the surface there. With this, China has become the first nation to endeavour this most meaningful deep space exploration research project.

### **Preeti Saran is now on UN's CESCR**

In December 2018, former Indian Diplomat Preeti Saran got elected to UN's Socio-Economic, Cultural Panel i.e. Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) for a term beginning on January 1, 2019 and expiring on December 31, 2022. The 18-member committee of experts monitors the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR) in which all members serve in their personal capacities as experts and do not represent their countries even though they might have been nominated by their own nation.

### **UAE doubled women's representation in Parliament**

In December 2018, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) announced landmark decision of increasing the representation of Emirati women in the Federal National Council from 22.5% to 50% from the upcoming Parliamentary term. It has been done to grant full empowerment to Emirati women and underline their pioneering and effective role in all vital sectors of UAE. Presently, Dr. Amal Al Qubaisi is the Chairperson and the Speaker of the Federal National Council and she was also the first woman elected to the FNC in 2006.

### **World's 100 most powerful women : Forbes**

In December 2018, Forbes has put out the World's 100 Most Powerful Women of 2018. German Chancellor Angela Merkel emerged as the topper for the eighth consecutive year. She was followed by UK PM Theresa May, IMF's MD Christine Lagarde, General Motors CEO Mary Barra and Fidelity Investments CEO Abigail Johnson on second, third, fourth and fifth positions respectively. The list also featured four Indian women viz. IT stalwart Roshni Nadar Malhotra (51), Biotechnology pioneer Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (60), Media mogul Shobhana Bhartia (88) and Actress Priyanka Chopra (94).

### **Rattan Lal became Glinka World Soil Prize 2018**

In December 2018, UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) felicitated Rattan Lal with Glinka World Soil Prize 2018 for his outstanding contribution to sustainable soil management in Rome, Italy. He is a distinguished university professor of soil science at the Ohio State University and also the President of the International Union of Soil Science (IUSS). Established after name of the pioneering Russian scientist Konstantin D. Glinka, this new award is being funded by Thailand.

### **Year 2023: International Year of Millets**

Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of United Nations has given nod to India's proposal of observing year 2023 as 'International Year of Millets' in its 160th session in Rome. India made this proposition in wake of dropping cultivation of millet which resulted in decline of level of nutrients like proteins, Vitamin-A, iron and iodine in women and children of the country. The

proposed observance is likely to increase global awareness to bring back nutri-cereals to the plate for food and nutrition security, thus, increasing their production for resilience to challenges posed by climate change.

### **Israel became a FATF member**

On 10th December 2018, Israel became a full member of an international body set up to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other threats to the international financial system, “Financial Action Task Force (FATF)”. It is worth knowing here that in year 2000 the Jewish state was blacklisted by the organization and was removed from the list in year 2002. Now this FATF membership will tag Israel as an attractive country for international investment which will improve the status of the Israeli financial sector and its ability to operate in the global economy.

### **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

In December 2018, 164 nations including India adopted ‘Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration’ to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities of migrants at the Intergovernmental Conference which was held under auspices of United Nations General Assembly at Marrakesh, Morocco. It is the first intergovernmental agreement to encompass wide-ranging dimensions of international migration in holistic and comprehensive manner and agreed upon by all the UN member states excluding United States. The global compact has laid 23 objectives to deal issues like compelling people to move, legalizing channels for migration, combating trafficking and smuggling, harnessing economic benefits of migration and returning of the migrants.

### **12 December came as International Universal Health Coverage Day**

International Universal Health Coverage Day (UHC Day) got observed globally on 12th December 2018. The theme for this year was “Unite for Universal Health Coverage: Now is the Time for Collective Action”. The day created awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage with multi-stakeholder partners. The United Nations instituted 12th December as International Universal Health Coverage Day via resolution 72/138 in year 2017.

### **The Climate Change Performance Index**

In December 2018, the Climate Change Performance Index was put out on the sidelines of COP24 UN Summit in Katowice, Poland. No countries were in the top three ranks as none stood up to the mark among parameters like GHG Emissions, Renewable Energy, Energy Use, Paris compatibility of their current status and targets sets, Countries’ ambition and Progress in the field of Climate policy. However, among the league of nations, Sweden topped as the 4th country (for the second time as on 2017) followed by Morocco in the 5th position and India stood at 11th position.

## **Jamal Khashoggi: Time magazine's "Person of the Year"**

In December 2018, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered in October at his country's Istanbul consulate, has been named Time magazine's "Person of the Year". With this, he has become the first person to receive this title after his death. Besides Khashoggi, three other journalists were also felicitated with the honour. Among them are two Reuters reporters, Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo for their work exposing the mass killing of Rohingya Muslims, and the CEO of the Rappler news website, Maria Ressa, who has been made a legal target in the Philippines.

## **Japan defined 2018 as year of 'disaster'**

In December 2018, Japan selected the Chinese character for defining year 2018 as 'disaster'. The symbol was written by the master of the ancient temple in Kyoto, Seihan Mori. In July, 200 people died of floods and millions were forced to evacuate from their homes and after that 65 people died of heatwave out of hospitalised 20,000 people. Japan was also hit by an earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 as well as with a strongest typhoon which appeared in last 25 years.

## **Beginning of World's first floating nuclear plant**

In December 2018, Russian state-run atomic energy corporation Rosatom has started the first reactor unit of the world's first floating nuclear plant, 'Akademik Lomonosov'. 'Lomonosov' is basically a mobile, low-capacity reactor unit operable in remote areas isolated from the main power distribution system, or in places hard to access by land. It is meant to maintain both uninterrupted power and abundant desalinated water supply in remote areas. Equipped with two reactors of 35MW each, it has a capacity of 70MW. Its operational life span is of 40 years, that can be extended up to 50 years.

## **Planet GJ 3470b vanishing at record speed**

In December 2018, Astronomers announced discovery of evaporation of Neptune sized planet 'GJ 3470b', 96 light-years away from the Earth. It is evaporating at a rate 100 times faster than a previously identified exoplanet of similar size. Using the Hubble Space Telescope, astronomers found that it circles a red dwarf star in the general direction of the constellation Cancer. It is the low density of GJ 3470b' that snatches its potential of hanging gravitationally on to the heated atmosphere.

## **India- Saudi Arabia Haj 2019 agreement**

On December 13, 2018, India and Saudi Arabia inked bilateral annual Haj 2019 agreement at Jeddah for ensuring safety and better facilities to the Indian Haj pilgrims. The Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Haj and Umrah Minister of Saudi Arabia, Dr.

Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen were the signatories. A big number of Muslim women are likely to go to Haj 2019 without “Mehram” (male companion). So far 2100 women have already applied for the same.

### **Nepal banned Indian currency notes above Rs 100**

In December 2018, Nepal government has banned all Indian notes above the denomination of Rs 100. After this, the Nepalese citizens working in India will no longer be able to use Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations and will now have to send money home electronically or those sending physical currency will need to do so in notes of up to Rs 100. The Nepal government has not legalized these notes in wake of discovery of fake currency in these denominations which had an adverse effect on Nepal’s economy.

### **Shree Saini of USA : The New Miss India Worldwide**

On December 15, 2018, New York-based India Festival Committee (IFC) organized the 27th annual global pageant in the Fords City of New Jersey in which Indian-American Shree Saini got crowned as Miss India Worldwide 2018. In this event, Sakshi Sinha from Australia and Anusha Sareen from United Kingdom were adjudged as the first runner up and the second runner up respectively. Besides this, in Mrs. India Worldwide 2018 Category, India’s Mandeep Kaur Sandhu from Haryana won the title. Jeya Priya Pandian from Malaysia and Kavita Malhotra Pattani from USA became the first and second runner ups of the Mrs India Worldwide 2018.

### **Ranil Wickremesinghe is back in power**

Sri Lanka’s former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe who was sacked from the post in October 2018 has sworn in as Prime Minister again on 16th December 2018 after resignation of Mahinda Rajapaksa on 15th December after failing to prove majority in Parliament. With this, he has become Prime minister of the island nation for the 5th time, creating a record in Sri Lanka. This reinstatement of Ranil Wickremesinghe happened after the Sri Lanka’s Supreme Court verdict that condemned President Sirisena for his illegal act of dissolving the Parliament in November 2018 before completion of its four-and-a-half year term and refused Sirisena’s request of holding snap elections in early January.

### **Creation of a new bee vaccine**

In December 2018, Researchers of Helsinki University in Finland have developed the world’s first vaccine to protect bees against disease to combat severe microbial diseases that can prove deadly for pollinator communities. This vaccine will curb the drastic decline in insect numbers which could cause a global food crisis. As kids are given polio drops, in the same fashion the treatment has been given via a sugar lump to the queen bee. The queen then passed the immunity to her offspring, spreading it through the bee community. Bees play vital role in plant pollination.



### **Germany introduced word 'diverse' for third gender**

In December 2018, the German parliament created an option "diverse" for third gender on the birth register. The move has brought Germany in row of other countries like Austria, Australia, New Zealand, India, Canada and Portugal that have introduced measures to recognize intersex people or a third gender. Building of the Federal Constitutional Court, Germany's highest advocated third option besides "male" and "female". Until now, people had to choose between "male" and "female" while giving their gender, or had to leave the option blank.

### **2019 : 'Year of Tolerance'**

In December 2018, United Arab Emirates President H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al has declared year 2019 as the "Year of Tolerance." This declaration is on purpose of highlighting UAE as the Global Capital of Tolerance, instilling the values of co-existence and peace in local, regional and international communities. This year is likely to promote tolerance via teaching of the youth on the values of tolerance; running series of projects with dialogue between various cultures and civilizations; enacting multiple cultural programmes; implementing legislative and policy-oriented objectives and last about promoting tolerance and co-existence through media initiatives.

### **World's oldest known plant virus**

In December 2018, Scientists of Native American archeological site announced discovery of world's oldest plant virus dating back 1,000 years via carbon 14 dating. The discovery came their way when the researchers were examining ancient plant material from Antelope House, an Ancestral Puebloan ruin located at Canyon de Chelly National Monument, Arizona. The Ancestral Puebloans survived in the canyon planted crops like maize, beans and squash giving clear indications that maize was a major food source for the inhabitants.

### **International Conclave On Energy Storage Devices**

In December 2018, Department of Physics of IIT Roorkee conducted first International Conclave on 'Energy Storage Devices: Recent Advances and Future Challenges'. This first of its kind conclave saw participation of over 300 participants from 14 nations across the globe. The role of Energy Storage Devices in reducing the carbon footprint in accordance to Paris Agreement were discussed at length in this conclave. Companies working in the area of storage devices like Amar Raja Batteries Ltd., TVS Motors, XNRGI, USA, BHEL, BEL, MNRE, DRDO showed keen interest to support IIT Roorkee storage program.

### **AI that predicts risk of infection after surgery**

In December 2018, Scientists from the Aalto University and the University of Helsinki in Finland announced development of an Artificial Intelligence tool that can predict if a patient is at risk of

developing a serious, and possibly life-threatening infection caused by *Staphylococcus epidermidis* which is an ever-present coloniser of healthy human skin. As per the research publication in the journal *Nature Communications*, the high-risk genotypes are identified proactively when a person is to undergo a surgical procedure, which has high potential to reduce the burden of infections.

### **'Farout': the most-distant solar system object**

In December 2018, Scott S Sheppard from Carnegie Institution for Science, David Tholen from University of Hawaii, and Chad Trujillo from Northern Arizona University in the US discovered the most-distant body ever observed in our solar system, "2018 VG18" or "Farout" at 120 astronomical units (AU) away i.e. located over 100 times farther than Earth is from the Sun. 1 AU is defined as the distance between the Earth and the Sun. Currently, Eris is the second-most-distant observed solar system object about 96 AU.

### **UN members adopted Global Compact on Refugees**

On 17th December 2018, UN members voted for the Global Compact on Refugees, conforming international solidarity and cooperation for refugee protection and host community development. 181 UN members in the 193-member assembly voted in favour of the Global Pact, which is an architecture for a stronger, more predictable and more equitable international response to large refugee situations. The United States and Hungary were the only two nations that voted against the Compact. The UN General Assembly had decided to develop this Compact after adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016.

### **Former Nepal PM Tulsi Giri passed away**

In December 2018, 93 year old former Prime Minister of Nepal, Tulsi Giri died of liver cancer in Kathmandu. The deceased had started his long political stint from Nepali Congress party. He was appointed as the Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1962. He served the post of Prime Minister twice from 1962 to 1964 and again from 1975 to 1977. He was a strong supporter of the panchayat system and had left Nepal to live in Sri Lanka when country uprooted the panchayat system.

### **Asma Jahangir : 2018 UN Human Rights Prize awardee**

On December 18, 2018, Late Pakistani human rights activist, Asma Jahangir was rewarded the 2018 UN Human Rights Prize posthumously which was received by her daughter Munizae Jahangir on her behalf at the award ceremony at the UN Headquarters in New York. Asma was

known for her outspoken nature and unrelenting pursuit for human rights. Asma has become the fourth Pakistani woman to receive this award and has joined the row of Begum Ra'Ana Liaquat Ali Khan (1978), Benazir Bhutto (2008) and Malala Yousufzai (2013) who were also felicitated with this prestigious award in past.

### **'Period. End of Sentence' got shortlisted in Oscars**

In December 2018, Indian Film 'Period. End of Sentence' made its way in 91st Oscar nominations in the Documentary Short Subject category. Produced by Guneet Monga's Sikhya Entertainment and directed by Rayka Zehtabchi, the film features women in India fighting against the deep rooted stigma of menstruation and is based upon the work of real-life 'Pad Man' Arunachalam Muruganatham. Besides this, India's entry under the Foreign Language Film Category, 'Village Rockstars' has got out of the Oscar race.

### **Andreas Goss is the new CEO of Thyssenkrupp Tata Steel B.V**

In December 2018, Tata Steel and Germany's Thyssenkrupp Steel division appointed Andreas Goss, as the future Chief Executive Officer of their proposed European steel joint venture 'Thyssenkrupp Tata Steel B.V'. that will be headquartered in Amsterdam. The duo in June 2018 had inked a definitive agreements to combine their European steel businesses in a 50/50 Joint Venture. Besides this, Hans Fischer, the CEO of Tata Steel Europe, has been appointed as the Deputy CEO & Chief Technology Officer of the Joint Venture.

### **Global telecom's research centre in Bengaluru**

In December 2018, British Telecommunications giant, Global telecom in partnership with the Indian Institute of Science announced establishment of a research centre in Bengaluru to focus on the development of artificial intelligence, mobility and cyber-security technologies for use in the company's programmes, products, and services. The proposed research centre's structure and organization is likely to follow a model used for the British firm's global research locations, combining academic, industry and government partnerships. It will add to BT's network of collaborative research facilities in China, Northern Ireland, the UAE, and the US.

### **International Migrants Day**

18th December 2018 was observed as International Migrants Day on 'Migration with Dignity' theme. The international migration usually happens in the search of a bright future, a well-paid job in a developed nation. In this context, on September 19, 2016 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a set of commitments on large movements of refugees and migrants to increase and upgrade the protection of refugees and migrants. These commitments are known as the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (NY Declaration).

## **20 December: International Human Solidarity Day**

United Nations observed International Human Solidarity Day on 20th December 2018 to celebrate unity in diversity; to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements and to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity. The new Sustainable Development Goals agenda of UN is to lift people out of poverty, hunger and disease which is possible only through global cooperation and solidarity. On this occasion UN organized debates on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

## **Resignation of Belgium's PM**

In December 2018, Charles Michel, the Prime Minister of Belgium submitted his resignation from the post over migration issue. However, he will continue to play leader in a minority government. Michel lost the support of the nationalist New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) over his support for a UN migration deal signed in Marrakesh in recent past. Charles Michel had taken the office in October 2014 after forming a right-wing coalition and with that he became the country's youngest Prime Minister since 1841.

## **U.S. Senate approved the First Step Act**

In December 2018, U.S. Senate passed the First Step Act to reform the criminal justice system. America's national war on drugs had led to the imprisonment of too many Americans for non-violent crimes without preparing them enough for their rehabilitation in society. The act would reduce mandatory minimum sentences for a number of drug-related crimes, allowing judges to bypass federal mandatory minimum sentences for non-violent offenders when they see fit, expanding rehabilitative opportunities for federal prisoners, and banning some correctional practices criticized as inhumane, such as the shackling of pregnant women.

## **US Watchdog FAA's IASA rating**

In December 2018, US Watchdog, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) released International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) rating after carrying out an audit of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in July 2018. Placed in 'Category 1', India was conferred Highest Aviation Safety Ranking. It implies that carriers from the assessed state may initiate or continue service to the US in a normal manner and take part in reciprocal code-share arrangements with American carriers. An IASA assessment determines if the foreign Civil Aviation Authority provides oversight to its carriers that operate to the US as per the international standards.

## **China's First Satellite for Space-based Broadband Services**

On 22nd December 2018, China launched its first communication satellite via Long March 11 carrier rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in north-western China to offer broadband

internet services to users across the globe. It is state-owned company, China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation (CASIC) 's first satellite launch under China's Hongyun project which is presently the main contractor for Chinese space programs. The satellite is on purpose of competing with Google, SpaceX, OneWeb and Telesat which have similar plans for providing Internet services worldwide.

### **InSight placed its first instrument on Mars**

In December 2018, NASA's new Mars lander, InSight has stationed its first instrument on planet Mars. It is a quake monitor (seismometer) that will detect quakes and wobbles. It has become the first scientific instrument that has been placed on another planet's surface. The InSight will facilitate understanding of the evolution of the Solar System's terrestrial planets and Earth's Moon. InSight will also , provide accurate 3D models of the interior of Mars and will establish a heat probe called HP3 on Mars that will measure internal heat flow.

### **Gitega: The new political capital of Burundi**

On 22nd December 2018, the Republic of Burundi in Africa declared the small central city of 'Gitega' as the country's new political capital. Burundi is a landlocked country in the African Great Lakes region of East Africa, bordered by Rwanda to the north, Tanzania to the east and south, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the west. Burundi's previous capital Bujumbura, on the north-eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika, has now become country's economic capital. Frank-Walter Steinmeier is the President and Euro is the currency of this country.

### **The Google News Initiative Funding Drive**

In December 2018, Google has chosen 87 news organisations from 23 nations for funding under its Global News Initiative (GNI). Among them 10 are from India viz. Factly, Asianet News Media and Entertainment, NDTV, India Today, Bharatiya Digital Party, Nyooz, Video Volunteers etc. The funding is on purpose of helping the organisations in building video capabilities and experiment with new formats for video journalism that includes reaching younger audiences online to exploring live and fact-checking formats.

### **Indonesia hit by Volcanic Tsunami**

On 22nd December 2018, giant tsunami waves crashed into coastal towns on the islands of Sumatra and Java of Indonesia killing 281 people and injuring 1,016. This Tsunami was attributed to the collapse in the west-southwest flank of the Anak Krakatau volcano. Tsunami refers to a series of waves in a water body caused by the displacement of a large volume of water triggered by an abrupt movement on the ocean floor due to the triggering points like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, underwater explosions, landslides, glacier calving or meteorite impacts.

### **Patrick Shanahan is now the new US Defence Secretary**

US President Donald Trump announced appointment of Patrick Shanahan as the new US Defence Secretary on December 23, 2018. He will succeed James Mattis from January 1, 2019. He is a native of Aberdeen, Washington and a mechanical engineer who joined Boeing in 1986 and played key role in the recovery of Boeing's 787 programme. He has also worked in capacity of Vice President of Boeing Commercial Airplanes and General Manager of the Boeing 757 program, where he saw the design, production and profitability of the 757 family of planes.

### **World's smallest tic-tac-toe game board with DNA**

In December 2018, researchers from California Institute of Technology, United States of America (USA) announced development of world's smallest tic-tac-toe game board using dynamic DNA microscopic organic structures that can be programmed to transform into predesigned patterns. They fashioned microscopic game of tic-tac-toe in which players place their X's and O's by adding special DNA tiles to the board. They had chosen to make the world's smallest version of the Italian polymath Leonardo Da Vinci's iconic painting Mona Lisa.

### **Thailand permitted medical use of marijuana**

On 25th December 2018, Thailand has become the first Southeast Asian country to approve medical use of marijuana. This has legalized the production, import, export, possession and use of marijuana products for medical purposes like stimulant and painkiller. However, the recreational use of the drugs still remains illegal and subject to prison terms and fines commensurate with the quantities involved. The approval has come as new year gift to Thai people. The National Legislative Assembly's 166 members voted in favor of the change and there were no votes objecting to the motion.

### **BizBarde App: First messaging app launched by isolated Turkmenistan**

On 24th December 2018, the isolated central Asian country, Turkmenistan has launched the first Turkmen messaging app BizBarde that will allow the exchange of messages, files, photos and videos. The app can be installed via the Google Android platform in addition to Apple's iOS and Microsoft home windows. Turkmenistan, is one of world's most isolated regimes that has blocked many western services including Facebook, Twitter and Viber.

### **Rajesh Subramaniam became FedEx President**

The executive Vice President, chief marketing and communications officer of FedEx Corporation, Rajesh Subramaniam has been appointed as President of FedEx. The Indian

American will assume his new role on January 1, 2019. He has succeeded David L Cunningham at the Tennessee-headquartered company. The appointee is an IIT-Bombay graduate from Thiruvananthapuram, who has worked with FedEx for more than 27 years. He started his career in Memphis and then moved to Hong Kong where he took care of marketing and customer service for the Asia Pacific region.

### **China tested Russian Missile S-400 Triumph**

In December 2018, China successfully tested Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system 'S-400 Triumph'. This was the first time the People's Liberation Army (PLA) tested the system since it received the last shipments of the weaponry from Russia in July under a USD 3 billion agreement of 2015. The duo have been bolstering their military ties in the last ten years to give tough competition to the US in regional and global influence.

### **Andry Rajoelina has come in power again**

On December 27, 2018, Ex-President of Madagascar won the 2018 Presidential elections after defeating Marc Ravalomanana, who was also another former President of the country. Rajoelina garnered 56% of the votes while Ravalomanana received only 35% votes. And the former President Hery Rajaonarimampianina who also took part in this race, got terminated in the very first round with only 9% votes. Rajoelina had been the President of the country from 2009 to 2014 and Ravalomanana from 2002 to 2009.

### **Palestine is looking for full UN membership**

On December 26, 2018, Foreign Affairs Minister of Palestine, Riyad al-Maliki announced that Palestine will apply for full state membership at the United Nations in January 2019. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has decided to apply for upgradation of Palestine's status from an observer state to a full-member state. Palestine has been a non-member observer state in UN since 2012. UNESCO was the first UN agency that voted in October 2011 to admit Palestine as a full member.

### **UAE reopened its embassy in Syria**

After six years of suspension, the United Arab Emirates resumed its diplomatic services at its embassy in Damascus in Syria on December 27, 2018. The move is seen as one of the efforts by Gulf Arab states to improve relations with President of Syria, Bashar al-Assad as the civil war is witnessing ceasefire phase. Moreover, the Arab involvement will aid in protection of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The UAE and Syria shared friendly relations until the political landscape across the Middle East changed with the beginning of Syrian uprising in 2011.

## **Sheikh Hasina is in power again**

In December 2018, Sheikh Hasina became Prime Minister of Bangladesh for the third consecutive term. She won the elections with a thumping majority and the victory consolidated her decade-long rule over the South Asian country. Her Awami League-led grand alliance won 287 seats out of 298 seats in the 300-member Parliament as per the announcement of the commission. 71 year old Sheikh Hasina became Prime Minister for the first time in year 1996 and then continuously for 10 years or two terms since 2008.

## **Spacecraft New Horizons' Historic Flyby**

The American space agency NASA's New Horizons spacecraft conducted the farthest flyby in history by approaching the Kuiper Belt object Ultima Thule on 1st January 2019. Being 6.5 billion km from Earth, this encounter was the most distant ever exploration of a Solar System body. Ultima is a band of frozen material that revolves around the Sun over 2 billion km (1.25bn miles) further out than the Neptune; and 1.5 billion km beyond even the dwarf planet Pluto, which this spacecraft visited in year 2015.

## **U.S. & Israel left UNESCO**

On 31st December 2018, The United states of America (USA) and Israel officially left the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as the organization fostered anti-Israel bias. Established in 1945, UNESCO is meant to propagate peace across the globe. The United states is one of the founding members of UNESCO, demanded "Fundamental Reform" in the organization and stopped paying dues to UNESCO after disputed part of Israel, 'Palestine' was voted in as a member state of UNESCO in 2011.

## **Australia acknowledged the 60 Superstars of STEM**

In December 2018, the Australian government presented awards to 60 Superstars of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) initiative. Among them were three Indian-origin women scientists Onisha Patel, Devika Kamath and Asha Rao, who emerged as influencers in science field for women and girls. 32-year-old, Devika Kamath is an astrophysicist, Onisha Patel is working in research for generating a cure for various cancers and Asha Rao is a cyber mathematics expert and specialises in detection of money laundering.





### **Manika Batra : The First Indian 'Breakthrough Table Tennis Star' Awardee**

On 12th December 2018, the table tennis star of India, Manika Batra was presented the prestigious 'Breakthrough Table Tennis Star' award at the ITTF Star Awards in South Korea. She has become the first Indian to win this award. The lady led India to its first-ever gold medal in the Women's Team category at the 2018 Commonwealth Games after defeating the four-time gold medallists and defending champions Singapore by 3-1. She had won another gold in the Women's singles category after defeating former World No.4 Feng Tianwei on her way to the first spot.

### **P V Sindhu won World Tour Finals trophy**

On 16th December 2018, Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu won the prestigious season-ending World Tour Finals trophy at Guangzhou, China after defeating the Olympic silver medallist Japan's Nozomi Okuhara by 21-19, 21-17 in the summit clash. Rio Olympics Silver medallist has now become the gold medallist of the women's singles event at the Badminton World Federation 2018. The Badminton Association Of India (BAI) has felicitated Sindhu with a cash reward of 10 lakh rupees for winning the women's singles championship.

### **Djokovic and Halep won 2018 ITF world championship**

In December 2018, Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep scripted 2018 International Tennis Federation (ITF) world champions' title in their names by courtesy of the governing body of global tennis. World number one Djokovic received this title from the ITF for the sixth time, while Romania's top-ranked Halep earned this title for the first year. Djokovic displayed maximum speed of 36.02kph, second to Andy Murray in terms of average speed, the Brit scored 15.89 kph as compared to Djokovic's 14.89 kph.

### **Joshna Chinappa scripted National Squash Women's Singles Title**

In December 2018, Indian Squash champion, Joshna Chinappa won the National Squash Women's Singles title after defeating Urwashi Joshi in the final match of the competition by 9-11, 11-1, 11-6, 11-5. This was her 16th National title and with this victory, she has come at par with Bhuvaneshwari Kumari who won 16 titles. Chinappa is the first Indian squash player who claimed the British Squash Championship under 19 category in year 2003. In 2014, she along with Dipika Pallikal Karthik won the squash women's doubles gold medal at the Commonwealth Games.

### **The 37th Senior National Rowing Championship**

On 18th December 2018 the 37th edition of Senior National Rowing Championship began at Army Rowing Node (ARN) in College of Military Engineering (CME) campus in Pune. This senior national championship is likely to witness mixed event viz. 'Mixed Doubles Sculls over 500 meters' for the first time. Around 500 rowers and coaches from several rowing associations across the country are participating in this Championship. The Rowers for the World Championships-2019 will be chosen from this event.

### **Ashley Giles became England cricket's new MD**

In December 2018, the England and Wales Cricket Board broke the news that former England left-arm spinner, Ashley Giles has been appointed as the new Managing Director of England men's cricket. He has succeeded Andrew Strauss who stepped down in October. He was a part of England's 2005 Ashes-winning team. Prior to that, he has served several key posts in English cricket, as Warwickshire's coach, as a Test selector and as England's ODI/T20 coach during Andy Flower's stewardship. He was a national team selector from 2008 to 2014.

### **Lewis Hamilton : Driver of the Year**

On December 22, 2018, Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton has been honored with the "Driver of the Year" award 2018 after claiming the 5th World Drivers' Championship. He was followed by Max Verstappen in the second place, Fernando Alonso in the third, Sebastian Vettel in fourth and Daniel Ricciardo in the fifth place. With this, he has become the third man in history to secure the 5th world title.

### **Shiffrin scripted history in ski races**

In December 2018, American Mikaela Shiffrin became the first woman to secure a half century of World Cup ski race victories after winning a giant slalom by overcoming a 0.08sec deficit and blizzard-like conditions in the French Alps. This was her fourth consecutive victory in the French resort. She finished this race in 0.29 sec ahead of Slovakia's Petra Vlhova and 0.37sec ahead of Sweden's Frida Hansdotter in third place to win in Courchevel victory. Shiffrin leads the overall standings on 889 points after 13 out of the 38 events.

### **Arjun Bhati wins US Kids Jr Golf World Championship**

In December 2018, Indian junior golfer Arjun Bhati has won the U.S. Kids Junior Golf World Championship 2018 held in Malaysia. In the final, he defeated Aksel Moe of America. To win the

first position in the championship, Arjun scored a total of 222 points followed by America and Vietnam at second and third position with 225 and 226 points respectively. Indian Junior Golfers won 11 medals, including 4 gold, scripting history by hallmarking India's name at the US Kids Golf World Championship.

### **Ricky Ponting inducted into ICC Hall of Fame**

On 26th December 2018, former Australian captain Ricky Ponting has become the 25th Australian cricketer to be officially inducted into the International Cricket Council's Hall of Fame at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). In February 2018, he was also inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame. He is the highest run scorer for Australia in both Tests and ODIs, with 13,378 runs in the longest format and 13,704 runs in the 50-over format.

### **CA Kuttappa became India's chief boxing coach**

In December 2018, the 39-year-old CA Kuttappa has been appointed as India's chief boxing coach at the ongoing national camp. The Dronacharya awardee is being credited for carving some of the country's most successful boxers like Vijender Singh, M Suranjoy Singh and Shiva Thapa etc. He has succeeded veteran coach SR Singh at the beginning of the camp which started on December 10, 2018. The boxers who will succeed in the upcoming trial rounds of January will be considered for selection for the India Open and the prestigious Strandja Memorial in Bulgaria.

### **Virat Kohli crushed Rahul Dravid's Record**

On December 26, 2018, Indian skipper Virat Kohli surpassed Rahul Dravid to become the highest Indian run-getter in overseas Tests in a calendar, although he missed out on a Test century on Day 2 of the third Test in Melbourne after getting dismissed on 82 by Mitchell Starc. Virat Kohli surpassed Dravid's 1137 run score (2002) on the second day of the Melbourne Test as India scored a formidable 443 for 7 declared. Virat Kohli so far has scored 259 runs in the ongoing Test series against Australia.

### **India defeated Australia in the third Melbourne test**

On 30th December 2018, India defeated Australia by 137 runs in the third cricket test at Melbourne to take an unassailable 2-1 lead in the four-match series. India posted a stiff target of 399 runs and Australia were all out for 261. Jasprit Bumrah was adjudged as 'Man of the match'. Ishant Sharma (2/ 40) took the final wicket of Nathan Lyon. This was India's first win at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground in 37 years as well as India's 150th Test victory. The final test match is scheduled to start from January 3, 2019 at Sydney Cricket Ground.

### **Smriti Mandhana became ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year**

On December 31, 2018, International Cricket Council declared India's left-handed opener Smriti Mandhana as ICC Women's Cricketer of the Year. She has claimed Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award. In Addition to this, she has also won title of the ICC Women's ODI Player of the Year. She has scored 669 runs at an average of 66.90 in 12 ODIs and 622 runs at a strike-rate of 130.67 in 25 T20Is during the voting period, which started from January 1st to December 31st, 2018.

### **World Memory Championships recognized Indian brain**

In December 2018, 12-year-old Indian-origin Singapore student, Dhruv Manoj, won two gold medals at World Memory Championships in Hong Kong. He won in the "names and faces" and "random words" disciplines, among 56 other contestants in the "kids category." Dhruv, who has just finished primary school, memorised over seven decks of shuffled cards in an hour; 1,155 binary numbers in half that time; and 87 names and faces in 15 minutes. He has mastered the Roman memory technique of creating "memory palaces", which advocates association of the ideas or objects to be memorised with scenes imagined at familiar locations.

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

- Which district was ranked as the most improved district in the Second Delta Ranking under Aspirational District Programme?  
(a) Nuapada (b) Virudhunagar (c) Siddharthnagar  
(d) Koraput (e) Aurangabad
- Who among the following wrote the book 'Changing India' ?  
(a) Manmohan Singh (b) Narendra Modi  
(c) Pranab Mukherjee (d) Hamid Ansari (e) Sheila Dikshit
- In December 2018, who has been appointed as the new Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) of India?  
(a) Jagdish Bhagwati (b) Jayati Ghosh  
(c) Krishnamurthy Subramanian (d) Pranab Bardhan (e) None of above
- Which ministry has been honored with the Skoch Award 2018?  
(a) Ministry of Home Affairs  
(b) Ministry of Urban Development  
(c) Ministry of Science and Technology  
(d) Ministry of New and Renewable Energy  
(e) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- Kandhamal Haldi (turmeric) of \_\_\_\_\_ got Geographical Indications (GI) tag in December 2018.  
(a) Odisha (b) Jharkhand (c) West Bengal  
(d) Gujarat (e) Bihar
- Who has been honored with the Glinka World Soil Prize 2018?  
(a) Rattan Lal (b) M. Krishna Reddy  
(c) A. K.Srivastava (d) P.S. Rawat (e) Sadhna Tripathi
- Who has won the US Kids Jr Golf World Championship 2018 title?  
(a) Aksel Moe (b) Arjun Bhati (c) Sean Kato  
(d) Vicky Kumar (e) Vikas Kumar

8. Who has won “Mrs India 2018” title?  
(a) Radhika Pal (b) Kajol Bhatia  
(c) Ujala Sabharwal (d) Avantika Srivastava (e) Divya Patidar Joshi
9. In December 2018, P. V. Bharathi has been appointed as the new MD and CEO of which bank?  
(a) Canara Bank (b) Bank of India (c) Corporation Bank  
(d) Axis Bank (e) Dena Bank
10. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated India’s longest railroad bridge “Bogibeel” in which state?  
(a) Manipur (b) Assam (c) Tripura  
(d) Meghalaya (e) Sikkim
11. Which Indian documentary film has won the Best Short documentary film award in Asia South East International Short Film Festival 2018?  
(a) India’s Daughter  
(b) 7 Notes of Infinity  
(c) Legends of the wild: Kahani Beehad Ki  
(d) Finding Beauty in Garbage  
(e) None of above
12. In December 2018, Amitabh Chaudhry has been appointed as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of which bank?  
(a) Axis Bank (b) UCO Bank (c) Dena Bank  
(d) Bank of India (e) Bank of Baroda
13. Which among the following countries has announced 2019 as the ‘Year of Active Investment and Social Development’ in backdrop of wider business with India?  
(a) Tajikistan (b) Uzbekistan (c) Turkmenistan  
(d) Kazakhstan (e) Kyrgyzstan
14. Which player has been named as the ICC Women’s ODI Player of the Year 2018?  
(a) Alyssa Healy (b) Sophie Ecclestone (c) Mithali Raj  
(d) Harmanpreet Kaur (e) Smriti Mandhana

15. In January 2019, Vinod Yadav has been appointed as the new \_\_\_\_\_ of Railway Board.  
(a) Director (b) Executive Director (c) Managing Director  
(d) Chairman (e) Vice-Chairman
16. In December 2018, Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of \_\_\_\_\_, has won election for third consecutive term.  
(a) Belgium (b) Fiji (c) Bangladesh  
(d) Hungary (e) Malaysia
17. Jayanta Kumar Ghosh, the professor of \_\_\_\_\_, has been honored with the National Geospatial Award for Excellence -2017.  
(a) IIT Roorkee (b) IIT Bombay (c) IIT Indore  
(d) IIT Kharagpur (e) IIT Kanpur
18. In January 2019, Pankaj Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Operations Officer (COO) of which bank?  
(a) HDFC Bank (b) RBL Bank (c) Axis Bank  
(d) UCO Bank (e) ICICI Bank
19. Who has been honored with the National Nritya Shiromani Award 2019?  
(a) Anindita Neogy Anaam (b) Gudiseva Shyam Prasad  
(c) Upmaka Durga Prasad Rao (d) Talluri Sunil Chowdary (e) None of above
20. In January 2019, Jair Bolsonaro has been elected as the new President of which country?  
(a) Bolivia (b) Botswana (c) Brazil  
(d) Bulgaria (e) Comoros

# • ANSWERS •

- 1.(b) **Virudhunagar** district of Tamil Nadu was ranked as the most improved district in the Second Delta Ranking under Aspirational District Programme released by NITI Aayog. The ranking represented the incremental progress made by districts between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018. The list was followed by Nuapada, Siddharthnagar, Aurangabad and Koraput.
- 2.(a) The book 'Changing India' has been written by former Prime Minister of India, Dr. **Manmohan Singh**. It is a set of 6 volumes having a compilation of speeches and writings detailing Singh's life as an economist as well as his 10-year period at the helm of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance regime.
- 3.(c) Dr. **Krishnamurthy Subramanian** has been appointed as the new Chief Economic Advisor of India for a period of three years. Currently, he is working as an Associate Professor at the Indian School of Business, Hyderabad. He replaced Arvind Subramanian
- 4.(d) **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** has been honored with the Skoch Award 2018 for National Significance. The award was received by Secretary of Ministry of New Renewable Energy, Anand Kumar. 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
- 5.(a) Kandhamal Haldi (turmeric) of **Odisha** got Geographical Indications (GI) tag in December 2018. Its registration was applied by Kandhamal Apex Spices Association for Marketing (KASAM) and was accepted under sub-section (1) of Section 13 of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. Kandhamal Haldi is famous for its healing properties.
- 6.(a) Indian origin scientist, **Rattan Lal** has been honored with the Glinka World Soil Prize 2018 for his outstanding contribution to sustainable soil management. He is a distinguished university professor of soil science at the Ohio State University and also the President of the International Union of Soil Science (IUSS).
- 7.(b) Indian junior golfer **Arjun Bhati** has won the U.S. Kids Junior Golf World Championship 2018 held in Malaysia. In the final, he defeated Aksel Moe of America. To win the first position in the championship, Arjun scored a total of 222 points.



- 8.(e)** **Divya Patidar Joshi** of Madhya Pradesh has won “Mrs India 2018” title. To win this title, she defeated 24 contestants. She won all the rounds of Beauty with Brain contest along with Best Catwalk title. Now, she will represent India at the Mrs Universe 2019 event.
- 9.(c)** In December 2018, P. V. Bharathi has been appointed as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the **Corporation Bank**. Currently, she is working as the Executive Director in the Canara Bank. She will take charge from 1st February 2019.
- 10.(b)** In December 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated India’s longest railroad bridge “Bogibeel” in **Assam**. The cost of this 4.94 km long bridge is Rs. 5900 crores. It is India’s only fully welded bridge for which European codes and welding standards were adhered to for the first time in the country. It has been designed like a bridge that links Sweden and Denmark.
- 11.(d)** "**Finding Beauty in Garbage**", a documentary film based on the garbage of Dibrugarh town in Assam has won the Best Short documentary film award in Asia South East International Short Film Festival 2018. The film gives a satirical take to the problem of garbage disposal. The film was produced, directed and scripted by Satyamam Dutta.
- 12.( a)** In December 2018, Amitabh Chaudhry has been appointed as the new Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of **Axis Bank** for the period of 3 years. He succeeded Shikha Sharma. Amitabh Chaudhry is the former MD and CEO of HDFC Standard Life Insurance Company.
- 13.(b)** President of **Uzbekistan**, Shavkat Mirziyoye has announced 2019 as the ‘Year of Active Investment and Social Development’ in backdrop of proposed investments from India to boost economy of this Central Asian country. It will be taken on creating an open economy, radically improving the business environment and investment climate, reducing the state presence in the economy.
- 14.(e)** Stylish left-handed Indian opener, **Smriti Mandhana** has been named as the International Cricket Council (ICC) Women’s Cricketer of the Year 2018. She has also won the Rachael Heyhoe Flint Award 2018. She scored 669 runs at an average of 66.90 in 12 ODIs and 622 runs at a strike-rate of 130.67 in 25 T20Is from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

- 15.(d)** In January 2019, Vinod Yadav has been appointed as the new **Chairman** of Railway Board. He succeeded Ashwani Lohani. Prior to this, Vinod is the General Manager of South-Central Railway (SCR). He is an electrical engineer and belongs to the 1980 batch officer of the Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers.
- 16.(c)** In December 2018, Sheikh Hasina, the Prime Minister of **Bangladesh**, has won the election for third consecutive term. The win consolidated Hasina's decade-long rule over Bangladesh. There are 300 constituencies in the country. Her party won 287 seats out of 298 seats.
- 17.(a)** Jayanta Kumar Ghosh, the professor of **IIT Roorkee**, has been honored with the National Geospatial Award for Excellence -2017. The award was given by the "Indian Society for Remote Sensing" for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications. In this award, he received a citation, a medal and a cash prize of Rs. 1,00,000.
- 18.(b)** Pankaj Sharma has been appointed as the new Chief Operations Officer (COO) of **RBL Bank**. Prior to this, he was heading retail operations of Axis Bank. Under his leadership, the ATM channel, phone banking and branch automation and digital initiatives at Axis Bank took shape.
- 19.(a)** US-based Kathak exponent **Anindita Neogy Anaam** has been honored with the National Nritya Shiromani award 2019 for promoting the dance Kathak form all over the world. She is also recipient of prestigious national awards like Jayadev Rashtriya Puraskar and Bidagdha Nartaki Samman for her outstanding achievement in the preservation and promotion of Indian art in India and abroad.
- 20.(c)** In January 2019, Jair Bolsonaro has been elected as the new President of **Brazil**. He has won the presidential election by a wide margin against Fernando Haddad of the left-wing Workers' Party. He has become the 42nd President of Brazil.