

Abhyaas Newsboard...

For the quintessential test prep student

Persons in News

1. Government appointed Krishnamurthy Subramanian as new Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) for 3 years, replacing Arvind Subramanian.
2. Kenyan distance runner Eliud Kipchoge and Colombian long and triple jumper Caterine Ibarguen named male and female world athletes of the year by IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations).
3. Indian-origin Shamila Batohi appointed as South Africa's first female chief prosecutor.
4. Croatia's Footballer Luca Modrich won Ballon d'Or, the prestigious football honor. He was instrumental in Croatia's historic run to FIFA World Cup final (defeated by France). Women's Ballon d'Or was won by Norway's Ada Hegerberg, as inaugural edition of Women's Ballon d'Or.
5. International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) appointed Jon Ridgeon as its new CEO.
6. Shooter Raninder Singh became the first Indian to be elected as one of the four vice-presidents of the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). Also, Pawan Singh became first the Indian to be elected one of 7 members of Judges Committee of International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF).
7. Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah became fastest bowler to take 200 Test wickets (in 33 Test matches), Breaking an 82-year-old record held by Australian leg-spinner Clarrie Grimmett who did it in 36 Tests.
8. Sandip Somany has been appointed as President of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) for 2018-19. Uday Shankar was appointed as Vice President of FICCI.
9. Novak Djokovic (Serbia) and Simona Halep (Romania) named as 2018 International Tennis Federation (ITF) world champions by International Tennis Federation (ITF). It is Djokovic's 6th honour and Halep's first time with this honour.
10. New CMs of the 5 States that went for state assembly elections recently: Chhattisgarh - Bhupesh Baghel (Indian National Congress), Mizoram - Zoramthanga (Mizo National Front (MNF)), Tawnlua (Deputy CM), Madhya Pradesh - Kamal Nath (Indian National Congress), Rajasthan - Ashok Gehlot (Indian National Congress), Sachin Pilot (Deputy CM), Telangana - K Chandrasekhara Reddy (President of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS)). It's his 2nd consecutive term as CM.
11. Olympic silver medallist PV Sindhu made history on December 16, 2018 by becoming the first Indian to win the BWF World Tour Finals. Sindhu claimed the coveted gold medal with a win over 2017 world champion Nozomi Okuhara in straight sets of 21-19, 21-17.
12. Former India opener Woorkeri Venkat Raman was on December 20, 2018 appointed as the new Head coach of the Indian women's national cricket team. The announcement was made by the Board of Control for Cricket in India. The 53-year-old will take over the role from Ramesh Powar, whose contract was not renewed after the controversies and fall-out with senior women's cricket team player Mithali Raj.
13. India's Vedangi Kulkarni has become the fastest Asian to cycle the globe. The 20-year-old Indian completed the 29,000 kilometers' distance required to qualify as bicycling across the globe on December 23, 2018.
14. Noted agriculturalist Nel Jayaraman (54), who pioneered the protection and propagation of indigenous paddy varieties in Tamil Nadu, passed away in Chennai on December 6, 2018. Hailing from Thiruthuraiipoondi, in the heart of Tamil Nadu's delta rice bowl, Jayaraman has been credited with documenting and protecting more than 170 paddy varieties.
15. Saudi Arabian journalist Jamal Khashoggi, who was murdered in October 2018 at his country's embassy in Istanbul, has been named Time magazine's "Person of the Year" for his work in journalism along with other journalists who faced political persecution for their work. Time Magazine referred to Khashoggi as a "Guardian of the Truth". The magazine has also honoured Philippine journalist Maria Ressa, Reuters reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo -- currently imprisoned in Myanmar among others.

16. Rajiv Mehrishi, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, has been appointed as Vice-Chair of UN Panel of Auditors for the year 2019. The United Nations Panel of Auditors consists of External Auditors of the United Nations and its agencies.
17. Arundhati Bhattacharya, former chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) has been appointed as SWIFT India Chairman. She will succeed former banker M V Nair. SWIFT India is a joint venture of top Indian public and private sector banks and SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications).
18. DMK MP Kanimozhi has been selected for the Best Woman Parliamentarian (Rajya Sabha) set up by Lokmat newspaper for 2018. A jury of eminent personalities headed by Murali Manohar Joshi selected her for the award and it was presented to her by Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on December 13.
19. Prof. Mushirul Hasan (69), a renowned historian & former vice-chancellor Jamia Millia of Islamia, passed away in New Delhi on December 10, 2018. He wrote extensively on the partition of India, communalism, and on the history of Islam in South Asia. He has also served as the DG of the National Archives of India (NAI) and President of the Indian History Congress (IHC). Some of his notable works are as follows: India Partition: The Other Face of Freedom, When Stone Walls Cry, Partners in Freedom: Jamia Millia Islamia (co-authored with Rakshanda Jalil) and From Pluralism to Separatism: Qasbas in Colonial India.
20. Tulsi Giri (93), Nepal's two-time prime minister and senior politician, passed away in Kathmandu, Nepal on December 18, 2018. Born in 1926 in Siraha district, Giri started his political career from Nepali Congress party. He later turned a die-hard supporter of Panchayat system after then King Mahendra Shah imposed the system. He served as the country's Prime Minister twice during the tenure of slain King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah in 1975 and 1977.
21. Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel peace laureate & Myanmar leader, was stripped of Freedom of Paris award over her failure to speak out against a crackdown on Myanmar's Rohingya minority. The move follows similar decisions by Glasgow, Edinburgh and Oxford.
22. Veteran leftist leader Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador was sworn in as the 58th President of Mexico. Obrador won a landslide victory in the July 1 Presidential Elections, the biggest win for any president and the first for a leftist since Mexico transitioned to multi-party democracy in 2000.
23. The winner of Miss World 2018 is Miss Mexico Vanessa Ponce De Leon. Manushi Chhillar, who was Miss World 2017, crowned her successor. 118 contestants from all around the world participated in the pageant.
24. The UK court has ordered the extradition of Indian businessman and liquor baron Vijay Mallya from Britain to India to face charges of fraud filed against him. The decision follows a nine-month-long trial on an extradition warrant, which began with Mallya's arrest in April 2017. India has been seeking the businessman's extradition on charges of fraud and money laundering amounting to Rs 9000 crore.
25. Urjit Patel on December 10, 2018 resigned as the Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) with immediate effect, citing personal reasons. With his resignation, Patel became the first RBI governor since 1990 to resign before the completion of the term. Patel's three-year term was to end in September 2019.
26. Shaktikanta Das in December 2018 assumed charge as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, made his appointment within 24 hours of Urjit Patel's sudden resignation as RBI Governor. Das will have a three-year term.
27. India appointed Harsh Vardhan Shringla as the next Ambassador of India to the United States on December 20, 2018. Harsh Vardhan Shringla, a 1984-batch Indian Foreign Service diplomat, will succeed Navtej Sarna.
28. Salome Zurbishvili, a French-born Georgian politician, has elected the first woman president in the history of Georgia. She will be inaugurated as President of Georgia on 16 December 2018. The President of Georgia is head of state and a guarantor of national independence and unity of the country.
29. Government released a Commemorative Postage Stamp on Rajkumar Shukla, who drew attention of M K Gandhi to the plight of peasants suffering under an oppressive system established by European indigo planters in Champaran (Bihar). He had made a great contribution in the launch of the Champaran Satyagraha in 1917.
30. Sascha Bajin (coach of Naomi Osaka (Japan)) became the first-ever recipient of Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Coach of the Year Award.

Places in News

1. Kerala became the first Indian state to have 4 international airports, with the inauguration of the Kannur Airport. The other three international airports are at Trivandrum, Cochin and Calicut.
2. Shi Yomi became the 23rd district of Arunachal Pradesh, created by bifurcating West Siang district with its headquarters at Tato. 2 more districts Pakke-Kesang and Lepa Rada will be formally inaugurated in state.
3. Ministry of Shipping approved development of INR 156 crore freight village in Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), adjoining Inland Waterways Terminal on River Ganga. It will serve as a cargo hub, and a centre for aggregation and value addition.
4. Government included Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttrakhand, Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh and Parasnath in Jharkhand under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD), meant to develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in country. Number of sites under PRASAD has now reached to 41 in 25 states.
5. Railways' National Rail Museum (NRM) signed MoU with Madame Tussauds Wax Museum to foster tourism in Delhi NCR region, as the first ever public-private museum collaboration. Under this, a discount of 35 percent will be offered on ticket prices to National Rail Museum visitors when they visit Madame Tussauds Museum Delhi.
6. Nagaland became the first North-Eastern State and 2nd State in India to launch Pan-India single emergency number '112' under ERSS, after Himachal Pradesh.
7. Silao Khaja, the Traditional delicacy of Nalanda district of Bihar, has been granted GI tag by Geographical Indications Registry (Chennai). Silao Khaja is a crisp, multi-layered dough sheeted sweet, made up of wheat-flour, sugar, maida, ghee, cardamon and aniseeds as ingredients.
8. Odisha's Kandhamal Haldi (turmeric variety), famous for its healing properties, will soon get the Geographical Indications (GI) tag. 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.
9. India's largest Cancer Institute named National Cancer Institute (NCI) opened in Jhajjar (Haryana), to be formally inaugurated in January 2019 for public services. It will be headed by G.K. Rath. NCI is built at cost of Rs 2035 crores, and will act as thenodal institution for all cancer-related activities in India.
10. Railways Minister Piyush Goyal dedicated India's first railway university to the nation in Vadodara (Gujarat). It is the 3rd such institution in the world after Russia and China, and is named as National Rail and Transportation Institution (NRTI). Chairman of Railways Board Ashok Lohani is named Vice Chancellor of University.
11. Indian Railways is building the country's first vertical-lift bridge to connect Rameswaram in the Arabian Sea to mainland India. The bridge will allow ships and steamers to pass through without any hindrance. The new bridge would replace the existing 104-year-old Pamban bridge. It is expected to get ready in the next four years.
12. Luxembourg became first country to make all public transport free, implementing it from 2020. It is aimed at addressing environmental issues and problem of traffic congestion.
13. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will rename three islands of Andaman and Nicobar after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on December 30, 2018. These three islands are - Ross Island, Neil Island and Havelock Island. These islands will be renamed during PM Modi's visit to Port Blair to mark the 75th Anniversary of hoisting of the National Flag at Port Blair by freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose. These islands will be renamed during PM Modi's visit to Port Blair to mark the 75th Anniversary of hoisting of the National Flag at Port Blair by freedom fighter Subhash Chandra Bose.
14. As per latest report of Reporters without Borders (RSF), Afghanistan is the most deadliest country for journalists in 2018, with 13 deaths, followed by Syria (11) and Yemen (8). India has emerged among the world's fifth-most deadliest place for journalists alongside a first-time entrant in the list- the United States. The report titled 'Worldwide Round-up of Journalists Killed, Detained, Held Hostage', highlighted that the risk journalists face even in countries like India which are not even at war.

Events of Significance

1. The Lok Sabha on December 19, 2018 passed the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 which is aimed at prohibiting commercial surrogacy and unethical practices relating to it. As per the Bill, Surrogacy is defined as "a practice whereby one woman carries the child for another with the intention that the child should be handed over after birth". Under its provisions, the intending couple must be Indian citizens and married for at least five years with at least one of them being infertile.
2. Delhi government launched a common mobility card called 'One', with a tagline of 'One Delhi One Ride'. It would enable access to Metro and bus services with a single card at a 10 % discount. Further provision of coverage of auto-rickshaws, taxis and other modes would be inducted soon.
3. Maharashtra government allowed citizens to inspect records in district-level offices and local bodies throughout the state under Right To Information (RTI) for 2 hours every Monday (3 pm to 5 pm). It aims to bring transparency in functioning of government and reduce RTI applications. People can directly go to the offices and inspect the records.
4. UK's Cambridge Dictionary named "nomophobia" as inaugural People's Word of the Year (2018). It means fear or worry at the idea of being without your mobile phone or unable to use it. 'Toxic' has been chosen as the 'Word of the Year 2018' by Oxford Dictionaries, Stating that it had become a "descriptor for year's most talked about topics". While, Dictionary.com chosen misinformation as its word of the year.
5. National Green Tribunal (NGT) has put INR 5 crore penalty on West Bengal Govt for its failure to comply with orders to improve air quality of Kolkata and Howrah.
6. Indian Premier League franchise Delhi Daredevils renamed as Delhi Capitals ahead of the 2019 Indian Premier League season.
7. Supreme Court (SC) introduced witness protection regime, amid several incidents of witnesses turning hostile due to no security given to them. Witness Protection Scheme 2018 will come into effect immediately across all States, to stay a law till Parliament enacted suitable legislation.
8. India's first indigenously designed locomotive-less (engine less) train known as Train 18, breached 180 kmph speed limit during test run in Kota-Sawai Madhopur section. Once made operational, it will become country's fastest train. It is capable of touching 200 kmph, replacing 30-year-old Shatabdi Express.
9. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched media campaign "Heart Attack Rewind", calling for elimination of industrially produced trans-fat in food supply. It will support FSSAI's target of eliminating trans-fat in India by 2022, a year ahead of global target by World Health Organization (WHO).
10. Haryana Government launched a mobile app named as 'Shiksha Setu', aiming to help students and bring transparency in Education administration. It will contain information about attendance, fee, online admission and scholarships in all the Haryana government colleges.
11. Jammu and Kashmir assembly passed a law to ban sexual extortion of woman in offices and became first Indian state to amend law on Sextortion. New law amended section 154, 161 and schedule of Criminal Procedure Code and Section 53 of Evidence Act to bring Sextortion as a similar offence prescribed under RPC. New Section E has been added to Section 354 of Ranbir Penal Code that makes sexual harassment a criminal offence with 3 years of imprisonment.
12. Delhi Police entered Limca Book of Records for training 208125 women and girls in 989 self-defence programme in 2017. Self-defence programme of Delhi Police was started in 2002.
13. Supreme Court gave clean chit to Central government for purchase of 36 Rafale fighter Jets from Dassault Aviation (France), stating nothing wrong found in purchase of 36 fighter jet instead of 126 from France.
14. Delhi government launched a 10-day special inspection drive named- "Operation Minimum Wage", to check implementation of minimum wage rules set by state government. Violation would be checked as per Minimum Wages Act 2017 and labourers can lodge a complaint by calling 155214.
15. The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 28, 2018 approved the proposal for Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 to make punishment more

stringent for committing sexual crimes against children. The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.

16. According to the study by the Global Carbon Project, India is the fourth highest emitter of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) in the world, accounting for 7% of global emissions in 2017. India's emissions look set to continue their strong growth by an average of 6.3% in 2018, with growth across all fuels -- coal 7.1%, oil (2.9%) and gas (6%). The world's top 10 Co₂ emitters were China, the US, the EU, India, Russia, Japan, Germany, Iran, Saudi Arabia and South Korea.
17. The armies of India and China held the 7th edition of joint military exercise 'Hand-in-Hand 2018' from Dec 11-23 at Chengdu in China. The purpose of the joint military drill is to improve the capabilities of the two armies in fighting terrorism and promote mutual understanding. The exercise was held after a gap of one year as both the sides were locked in a 73-day standoff in Doklam in the Sikkim sector of the border in 2017.
18. The International Human Rights Day (IHRD) is observed every year on December 10 to commemorate the day when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris in 1948. The 2018 theme is 'Stand up for the human rights'.
19. Israel has recently become a full member of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global financial watchdog on money laundering, terror financing and other threats to the international financial system. The FATF is empowered to ensure that financing of UN-designated terrorist organisations is blocked. It has the power to publicly name countries not abiding by its norms, making it difficult for such countries to source financial flows internationally. Now, FATF has 38 members, including all five permanent members of the Security Council, and countries with economic influence.
20. The Indian Railways has won 17 awards at the National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) 2018. This is the highest number of awards bagged by a single organisation. These awards are given by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) of the Ministry of Power to various institutions for adopting measures for reducing energy consumption and cost.
21. The 106th Indian Science Congress (ISC-2019) will be held at Lovely Professional University in Jalandhar, Punjab on January 3-7 with theme 'Future India: Science and Technology'. It will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) has been organising the event annually to bring together science fraternity from across the world to discuss innovations and researches.
22. The Knesset, Israel's parliament, has unanimously approved a long-awaited, controversial law to allow exports of medical marijuana, allowing Israel to tap the lucrative global market. The bill still needs approval from the cabinet and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. With this approval, Israel will become the third country, after the Netherlands and Canada, to do so.
23. Thailand on December 25, 2018 approved the licensed use of marijuana for medical use and research. The changes will legalise the production, import, export, possession and use of marijuana products for medical purposes.
24. India was handed the Chairmanship of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) by the European Union during the KPCS Plenary 2018, which was held in Brussels, Belgium. India will take over the role from January 1, 2019.
25. India will host the G20 Summit in 2022, when the country celebrates its 75th year of Independence. The announcement was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the ongoing meet of the G20 Leaders in Argentina.
26. The Asia Pacific Summit 2018 was held from 1-3 December, 2018 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The Theme of two-day Summit was "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values."
27. The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP24) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) began on December 3, 2018 at Katowice, Poland.
28. Qatar's Energy Minister Saad Sherida al-Kaabi on December 3, 2018 announced that the country will withdraw from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in January 2019. This decision to quit OPEC was confirmed by Qatar Petroleum, the state oil company.

29. The first-ever bilateral air exercise "EX SHINYUU Maitri-2018" started between Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) and Indian Air Force at AF Station Agra in Uttar Pradesh. The IAF is participating with An-32 and C-17 aircraft with aircrew & observers.
30. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's longest rail-road bridge - Bogibeel Bridge on December 25, 2018. December 25, the birth anniversary of Atal Behari Vajpayee is observed as Good Governance Day (GGD) in India. The 4.94 km long bridge connects the north and south banks of the Brahmaputra and falls in the eastern part of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
31. India's heaviest and most-advanced communication satellite GSAT-11, also called the "Big Bird", was successfully launched into space on December 5, 2018 from the Spaceport in French Guiana, South America. The satellite will help provide satellite-based internet to remote places where cable-based internet cannot reach.
32. India has started granting visa on arrival to South Korean nationals, a move that is expected to boost inflow of tourists and business visitors. South Korea is the second country whose nationals are now given visa on arrival by India after Japan, whose citizens have been getting the privilege since March 2016.
33. On December 11, 2018, the world's first Floating Nuclear Power Plant (FNPP) 'Akademik Lomonosov' became operational at the Baltiysky Zavod shipyard in Saint Petersburg, Russia. It is constructed by the state nuclear power firm Rosatom.
34. India will launch its latest communication satellite, GSAT-7A aboard Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F11) on December 19, 2018 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The satellite, built by ISRO, will provide communication capability to users in Ku-band over the Indian region. It will have a mission life of eight years.
35. According to the scientists of NASA, Saturn's iconic rings are being rapidly pulled apart into a dusty rain of ice particles under the influence of the planet's magnetic field, . At this rate, the Saturn's rings are likely to disappear in the next 100 million years.
36. The Nepal government has banned all Indian notes above the denomination of Rs.100, in a move that would impact tourists visiting the Himalayan nation where Indian currency is widely used. The government has asked the people to refrain from keeping or carrying Indian bank notes higher than Rs 100 denomination as it has not legalised them.
37. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) government officially declared 2019 as Year of Tolerance to strengthen the nation's role of encouraging stability and prosperity in the region. As per officials, the 'Year of Tolerance' would be an extension of the current 'Year of Zayed', which celebrates the values of the country's founding father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan.
38. The National Consumer Day was observed across India on December 24, 2018 with the theme "Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints". On this day, the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the president.
39. India observed the Good Governance Day on December 25, 2018 to mark the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who passed away on August 16, 2018 at the age of 93. The Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to honor former-Prime Minister Vajpayee by fostering awareness among the Indian people of accountability in governance.
40. Andhra Pradesh got its own High Court on December 26, 2018. It will start functioning from January 1, 2019. Ministry of Law and Justice notified the constitution of the High Court in Amaravati.

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News Contributors

Ram Dheeraj Appasani NALSAR(Hyderabad)
Ajay Kranthi- NALSAR(Hyderabad)

Newsboard Developed by - Lavanya Bompally (Bonsagar Publications)