

CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS: DECEMBER 2017BUSINESS**Paytm Payments Bank unveils Paytm FASTag across India**

Paytm FASTag provides electronic toll fee collection on highways across the country, in line with the government's move to make FASTag mandatory on every new vehicle sold from Dec 1. The Paytm FASTag - which is a simple and reusable tag based on radio-frequency identification technology (RFID) that can be placed on a vehicle's windscreen. It will allow commuters to pass through 380 toll plazas across India covering 55,000 kms without having to stop. Each Paytm FASTag is linked to a registered Paytm account to facilitate instant automatic deduction of toll charges.

Iraq overtakes Saudi Arabia as top oil supplier to India

Saudi Arabia has traditionally has been India's top oil source. However, in April-October period of 2017-18, Iraq dethroned it due to discounted price. Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia for the first time to become India's top crude oil supplier in the current fiscal, helped by sales of discounted heavy crude. Saudi Arabia supplied 21.9 million tonnes of crude oil in the first seven months of 2017-18, while Iran supplied 25.8 million tonnes. India's lower Saudi purchases were partly due to firmer Saudi prices following the production cuts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) since January. Iran, facing the potential threat of further US sanctions, has also cut oil prices in efforts to retain Asian customers and boost the appeal of its crude compared with other Middle Eastern supply. I

Disney acquired 21st Century Fox's film and TV studios in a landmark deal worth over \$52 billion.

The arrangement covers the movie studio 20th Century Fox, the company's TV production arm 20th Century Fox Television, Fox-owned cable networks (including FX and National Geographic), and the company's stakes in international networks

like Star TV and Sky (which Fox is planning to acquire full ownership of, before the sale is completed)

Amazon acquires connected security camera maker 'Blink'

Amazon bought Massachusetts-based company 'Blink' that makes Internet-connected doorbells and security cameras. The move could help Amazon compete in the fast-growing home security camera market and against similar devices made by Nest, a subsidiary of Google parent company Alphabet.

GOVERNMENT**Taj Mahal, the second-Best UNESCO World heritage site**

The Taj Mahal, India's iconic ivory white marble mausoleum in Agra, is the second best UNESCO world heritage site in the world, according to a new survey by online travel portal TripAdvisor. The Taj Mahal is rated after Cambodia's Angkor Wat, a temple complex & the largest religious monument in the world. Other popular heritage sites on the survey include the Great Wall of China (Third) built by Xu Da of Northern Qi Dynasty in 1368 AD.

MSME Sambandh: Public Procurement Portal for MSMEs launched

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched Public Procurement Portal 'MSME Sambandh' for Public Procurement Portal for MSMEs. The objective of the portal is to monitor implementation of Public Procurement from MSEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs). It will help MSMEs in participating in procurement process. Besides, it will help Ministries and CPSEs to assess their procurement performance

ASEAN-India Connectivity Summit held in New Delhi

The ASEAN-India Connectivity Summit (AICS)

was held in New Delhi. The theme of summit was 'Powering Digital and Physical Linkages for Asia in the 21st Century'. It was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in collaboration with AIC (ASEAN-India Centre) and CII (Confederation of Indian Industry).

Govt. sets up NIC-CERT center to detect, prevent cyber-attacks

Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad launched first NIC-CERT, a setup of National Informatics Centre to prevent and predict cyber-attack on government utilities. NIC-CERT has been set up with the objective of creating a comprehensive framework that integrates world-class security components and inbuilt threat intelligence for detection, prevention and incident response

Mahesh Sharma Inaugurates Bodhi Parva, BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage

Minister of State for Culture (Independent Charge) Dr. Mahesh Sharma inaugurated a three-day long 'Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage' in New Delhi from 8-10 December as part of celebrations of 20th anniversary of BIMSTEC

INS Kalvari: First Scorpene-class submarines inducted in Indian Navy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has commissioned scorpene-class submarine INS Kalvari into Indian Navy in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It is first of six Scorpene-class submarines built under strategic 'Project 75', by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) with assistance & technology transfer from France's DCNS

Made-In-India Surface-to-Air Missile QRSAM successfully test fired from Odisha coast

QRSAM (Surface-to-Air Missile), developed in India was successfully test fired by the DRDO from a defense base off Odisha coast. The homegrown canister-based high-speed weapon system can deceive enemy radars making it difficult to be detected. It is capable of destroying aerial targets, tanks, bunkers and short-range missiles.

DARPAN Project launched to improve financial inclusion of Rural Population.

The Union Ministry of Communications has launched DARPAN (The Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India), an IT modernization project to improve quality of service, add value to services and achieve financial inclusion of un-banked rural population. It offers core banking services to account holders

Mumbai Gets India's First Ever AC Local Train

The first service of the 12-coach EMU commenced service in Mumbai. This is the first train with automatic doors in the suburban system. Out of 12 services of AC Local train, 8 will run fast and will only halt at major stations. The services of AC local train will replace existing 12 non-AC services.

Bengaluru Becomes First Indian City to have its Own Logo

Karnataka's capital city Bengaluru has become the first Indian city to have its own logo after the state government launched it. The logo was designed by a start-up and uses both English and Kannada alphabets with red and black colors. With this, Bengaluru joins a select group of global cities like New York City, Melbourne and Singapore to have a tourism logo of its own.

INDIA'S GLOBAL RANKINGS

Global Innovation Index- India Ranked 60th Most Innovative Country, Switzerland Tops

The GII 2017 report, co-authored by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Cornell University and INSEAD, added that India maintains its top place in Central and Southern Asia, moving up six spots from 66th last year(2016) to 60th this year(2017) overall. Switzerland, Sweden and Netherlands are ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd respectively

India ranks 109th in mobile internet speed: Ookla

India ranked 109th out of 122 countries in mobile internet speed and 76th out of 133 countries in broadband space in the November 2017 Global Index (SGI).The index was released by popular

internet speed testing service provider Ookla. It ranked average internet speeds in different countries on mobile and home broadband to understand a real state of the networks that internet users are relying on.

INTERNATIONAL

ADB Funds \$580 Million for Reliance's Bangladesh Power Plant Project

The Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Board of Directors approved debt financing and partial risk guarantees totaling \$583 million to develop Reliance Bangladesh LNG and Power Projects. The financing package of ADB includes loans and partial risk guarantees for power generation facility, as well as for LNG terminal and the power project, being set up for \$1 billion.

UNESCO names Kumbh Mela in list of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO has inscribed 'KumbhMela' on UNESCO's representative list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity. The inscription of Kumbh Mela in list was undertaken following recommendation by expert body that examines nominations submitted by member countries of UNESCO during 12th session of Committee held at Jeju, South Korea. Kumbh Mela is the 14th intangible cultural heritage from India to be listed in UNESCO's list.

Youthquake is Named Word of the Year by Oxford Dictionaries

Oxford Dictionaries crowned "youthquake" as its word of 2017 in a nod to the unexpected level of youth engagement in this summer's election in the UK. An amalgamation of "youth" and "earthquake", the noun is defined as "a significant cultural, political, or social change arising from the actions or influence of young people."

World's Longest Glass Bridge Opened in China

Zhangjiajie Glass Bridge is opened in China to the public. It has a capacity to hold 2000 people, but only 500 would be allowed at a time. It is located in Shijiazhuang, the magnificent bridge lies 218 meters above hanging between the two cliffs. The

bridge is 488 meters long and 2 meters wide, with two dragon statues on top that could produce smoke.

SCIENCE, AEROSPACE, DEFENCE and TECHNOLOGY

Akash Missile Successfully Launched

The Surface to Air Missile AKASH with indigenous radio frequency seeker against target Banshee has been successfully launched from the Launch Complex-III at ITR Chandipur, Odisha. The Radars, telemetry and electrooptical systems along the coast have tracked and monitored all the health parameters of the missile. This missile is being inducted into Army as Short Range Surface to Air Missile (SRSAM).

Kepler-90i: Eighth planet in Kepler-90 solar system discovered

NASA has discovered eighth planet circling Kepler-90, a Sun-like star which is 2545 light-years far from Earth. It was dubbed as Kepler-90i. It was discovered by Researchers Christopher Shallue and Andrew Vanderburg by applying Google's machine-learning technology to data collected by NASA's Kepler Space Telescope.

AG600: World's largest amphibious aircraft takes off

China's home-grown AG600, nick named as 'Kunlong', the world's largest amphibious aircraft took off from the southern city of Zhuhai and landed after roughly an hour-long flight. Its successful maiden flight adds China to the club of world's few countries capable of developing a large amphibious aircraft.

NISAR: ISRO, NASA jointly working Dual Frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar Imaging Satellite.

ISRO and Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) of NASA are jointly working on the development of NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR), a Dual Frequency Synthetic Aperture Radar Imaging Satellite. NISAR is a dual frequency (L & S Band) Radar Imaging Satellite. It will be the first radar imaging satellite to use dual frequency.

Prithvi supersonic interceptor missile successfully test fired

Indigenously developed Prithvi Advanced Air Defence (AAD) supersonic interceptor missile was successfully test-fired from a test range in Odisha. It is capable of destroying any incoming ballistic missile in low altitude.

ISRO to launch 31 satellites in single mission in January 2018

ISRO has announced to launch 31 satellites, including India's Cartosat-2 series earth observation space in a single mission onboard on January 10, 2018.. These satellites will be launched onboard of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)-C40 from the spaceport in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. It will be first PSLV mission after the unsuccessful launch of backup navigation satellite IRNSS-1H in August 2017 on board PSLV-C39, due to technical fault on final leg following perfect launch.

SPORTS

India Wins 9 Medals in Asian Archery Championships

Indian archers produced an impressive performance, grabbed three gold, four silver and two bronze medals at the Asian Championships in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Two Indian boys and girls also booked quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympics.

Shiva Keshavan Wins Gold in Asian Luge Championships

India's veteran Winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan won a gold medal at the Asian Luge Championships at Altenberg, Germany. The sole Indian participant and defending Asian champion retained his title with a time of 55.60 seconds.

Deepika Kumari Wins Bronze at Indoor Archery World Cup

India's Deepika Kumari has won bronze medal at the Indoor Archery World Cup Stage 2 that concluded in Bangkok, Thailand. Deepika, seeded third, defeated 13th seeded Sayana Tsyrempilova of Russia 7-3 in the women's recurve bronze play-off.

India Wins First-Ever South Asian Regional Badminton Team Championship

In the title clash played in Guwahati, India defeated Nepal, 3-0. In the Boys' singles competition, Aryaman Tandon defeated Dipesh Dhami 21-9, 21-15 while, Ashmita Chaliha defeated Rashila Maharjan 21-9, 21-6 in the Girls' singles event.

Cristiano Ronaldo wins 2017 Ballon d'Or Award.

Real Madrid and Portugal superstar Cristiano Ronaldo was awarded the 2017 Ballon d'Or (Golden Ball) for world player of the year in Paris, France for the fifth time. With this he equals record of his great Barcelona rival Lionel Messi. Earlier Ronaldo had won Ballon d'Or in 2008, 2013, 2013, 2014 and 2016.

Mehuli Ghosh and Tushar Mane became the first Indian shooters qualified for 2018 Youth Olympic Games

Mehuli Ghosh and Tushar Mane became the first Indian shooters to secure women's and men's quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) by winning a gold and bronze each at 10th Asian Championship 10M Rifle/Pistol at Wako City, Japan.

India Beat Germany, Win Bronze at Hockey World League Final

India defeated Germany 2-1 in the Hockey World League Final to grab bronze medal at the event, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. SV Sunil and Harmanpreet Singh scored for the world number six Indian side.

Khelo India programme to be launched at cost of 1,756 crore rupees for period 2017-18 to 2019-20

Union Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore confirmed that the union government will launch a 'Khelo India' programme at a cost of 1,756 crores for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The initiative marks a crucial moment in the history of Indian sports, as the programme aims at mainstreaming sports as a tool for individual development, community

development, economic development and national development.

Rohit Sharma becomes only batsman to score three ODI double tons in ODIs.

Rohit scored an unbeaten double century as India scored 392 for 4 at the PCA cricket stadium in Mohali, Chandigarh. The right-handed batsman became the first ever player to cross 200-run mark thrice in ODIs.

Jitu Rai and Heena Sidhu win medals at Asian Championships

Jitu Rai and Heena Sidhu bagged a bronze each to continue India's medal charge at 10th Asian Championship in 10m Rifle/Pistol category in Japan. Jitu won an individual bronze in the men's 10m Air Pistol, which also helped the Indian team comprising Shahzad Rizvi and Omkar Singh besides Jitu, to bag the Team gold in the event.

Australia Beat Argentina to win Gold in Hockey World League Final

Australia beat Argentina 2-1 in the finals of the Hockey World League Final (HWLF) to win gold at Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Argentina beat India (who won bronze earlier) in the semifinals. Blake Govers scored the winner from a penalty corner with just three minutes left in the game.

India bagged rich haul of 21 medals including six gold at Asian Airgun Shooting Championships

India bagged 21 medals including six gold, eight silver and seven bronze medals at the 10th Asian Airgun Shooting Championships which was concluded on Monday in Wako City, Japan

Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Baker booked quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) by winning a gold and a silver each.

Saurabh Chaudhary won both the individual & the Team gold in men's 10m Air Pistol Youth event, while Baker clinched a silver in women's 10m Air

Pistol Youth. India claimed another silver in junior women's 10m Air Pistol.

French Man Sails around the World in 42 Days, breaks World Record

Frenchman Francois Gabart smashed the world record for the fastest non-stop solo navigation of the globe, completing the mammoth feat in 42 days, 16 hours, 40 minutes and 35 seconds. The 34-year-old sailor crossed a virtual finish line drawn between the island of Ushant off France's northwest tip and Lizard Point in southwest England at 0145 GMT, comfortably beating the previous record set by compatriot Thomas Coville last year by six days and 10 hours.

Birmingham to host Commonwealth Games in 2022

The Birmingham city will host Commonwealth Games in 2022. The 2022 Commonwealth Games were originally given to Durban in 2015, but the South African city was stripped of the event this year because of financial difficulties

Viswanathan Anand wins World Rapid Chess Championship

India's ace chess player Viswanathan Anand won the World Rapid Chess tournament title in Saudi Arabia by beating Russia's Vladimir Fedoseev 2-0 in a two-game tiebreak. Saudi Arabia hosted the world chess tournament for the first time

BOOK RELEASES & AUTHORS

Book on Gauri Lankesh's Writings Launched

A book containing selected writings by late journalist Gauri Lankesh was launched at the Mumbai Press Club, three months after she was gunned down. The book, The Way I See It - a Gauri Lankesh Reader, has been edited by writer and sociologist Chandan Gowda

AWARDS & HONOR

Syrian Boy wins Children's Peace Prize

Sixteen-year-old Mohamad al Jounde from Syria was awarded the International Children's Peace Prize for his efforts to ensure the rights of Syrian refugee children. Al Jounde, a refugee of the Syrian civil war, set up a school

together with his family in a Lebanese refugee camp that currently provides 200 children with education.

Hindi writer Mamta Kalia chosen for Vyas Samman 2017

Renowned Hindi scholar and writer Mamta Kalia was chosen for Vyas Samman 2017 for her novel “Dukkham Suddham”. She was selected by selection committee headed by author Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari

ICAN receives 2017 Nobel Peace Prize

The Geneva-based International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize at ceremony held in Oslo, Norway. The award was received by Beatrice Fihn, leader of ICAN and Hiroshima nuclear bombing survivor Setsuko Thurlow

Priyanka gets Mother Teresa Memorial Award

Actor Priyanka Chopra, who has taken up the cause of fighting for the rights of displaced people as a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, has been feted with the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice from Harmony Foundation

PERSONALITIES

Dia Mirza appointed as UN Environment Goodwill Ambassador for India

Former Miss Asia Pacific Dia Mirza was appointed as UN Environment’s Goodwill Ambassador for India. A long-standing supporter of environmental conservation, Dia will take up the role to add more weight to her work on raising awareness of and seeking solutions to environmental issues

Infosys appoints Salil S Parekh as MD & CEO

Infosys announced the appointment of Salil S. Parekh as its new CEO and Managing Director. Salil was in Capegemini earlier. The Bengaluru-headquartered company was searching for a new CEO after former CEO Vishal Sikka resigned in August 2017. Cofounder Nandan Nilekani returned to the company as non-executive chairman to steady operations

Miss Korea Jenny Kim Crowned Miss Supranational 2017

The 24-year-old model and Miss Korea Jenny Kim has bagged the title of Miss Supranational 2017 at the gala event, which was held in Poland’s Spa Resort of Krynica- Zdroj. Miss Columbia Tica Martinez and Romania’s Bianca Tirsin were adjudged First Runner’s Up and the second runner-up in the event, respectively

Kenyatta Sworn in as President of Kenya

Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta has been sworn in for a second and final five-year term, a month after winning a bitterly disputed election rerun marked by delays and boycott. Kenyatta, 55, won 98 percent of the votes cast in October’s poll, which was boycotted by the main opposition leader, Raila Odinga

Rahul Gandhi elected Indian National Congress President

The Indian National Congress announced that Rahul Gandhi has been elected as its new President, taking over from his mother Sonia Gandhi. Rahul was declared the party President after no other candidate filed a nomination to contest the presidential elections

Vijay Rupani remains Gujarat Chief Minister and Nitin Patel his Deputy

Vijay Rupani will continue as chief minister of Gujarat and Nitin Patel as his deputy chief minister. Bhartiya Janata Party made the announcement after a meeting of the party’s newly-elected legislators in the state’s capital Gandhinagar, post assembly elections in the state.

Jai Ram Thakur Took Oath as 6th CM of Himachal Pradesh

Senior BJP leader Jai Ram Thakur took oath as the 6th Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. The swearing-in ceremony was held at the historic Ridge Ground of Shimla. He has replaced Virbhadra Singh of Congress, post assembly elections in the state