

CURRENTAFFAIRS SNIPPETS: December 2018

BUSINESS& TRADE

Bimal Jalan Panel on Economic Capital Framework

The RBI has set up an expert committee, headed by its former governor BimalJalan, to suggest how the central bank should handle its reserves and whether it can transfer its surplus to the government. The committee will submit its report within 90 days of its first meeting

Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18

The Survey mapped the performance of the various central public sector units (CPSE). The survey was undertaken by Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises.

The major highlights of the performance of CPSEs are:

IOC, ONGC and NTPC were the top three most profitable PSUs in 2017-18. They contributed 13.4%, 12.5% and 6.5%, respectively to the total profit earned by CPSEs. The fourth and fifth positions were occupied by Coal India and Power Grid Corporation.

NITI Aayog released Sustainable Development Goals Index

The NITI Aayog has released a first-of-its-kind Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) index in December 2018. According to this, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu stood at top 3 positions and are on track to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

GOVERNMENT

PM Modi inaugurated Bogibeel Bridge in Assam

PM Modi inaugurated Bogibeel Bridge on the birth anniversary of Late Mr. AtalBihari Vajpayee on 25th December, observed as “Good Governance Day”. This 4.9 km-long bridge is the nation’s only fully welded, longest rail-road bridge. For the first time, European codes & welding standards were adhered to during the construction. It has expected life of 120 years

DIPP announced States’ Startup Ranking 2018

As per Startup Ranking 2018, the state of Gujarat is the best-performing state in the country for the Startups. Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, and Rajasthan were judged as Top Performers.

Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana were ranked as Leaders. Total 27 States and 3 UTs took part in this exercise.

President’s rule came into effect in J&K

The President’s rule has been introduced in J&K from 20th December 2018, after completion of Governor’s rule for six months. The state faced a political crisis when 25-member BJP withdrew its support from Mehbooba Mufti-led coalition government, reducing it to a minority government in the state. Thereafter, the Governor’s rule was imposed in the state

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) extended to all poor households

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is the government’s flagship programme to provide free cooking gas (LPG) connections. The PMUY scheme targets to reach out to provide free LPG connections to 80 million families by 2020

Train 18: India’s first engine-less train became country’s fastest train

India’s first indigenously designed locomotive-less (engine less) train known as Train 18, breached the 180 kmph speed limit during test run in Kota-Sawai Madhopur section. The train became operational on 29th December 2018, is the India’s fastest train. It is touted as next generation Shatabdi Express and will connect metros with other important cities.

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa to be chief guest at Republic Day celebrations 2019

Mr Ramaphosa was invited to be chief guest by Prime Minister Narendra Modi when two leaders met on sidelines of G20 summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The announcement comes month after the US President Donald Trump declined India’s invitation to be chief guest, due to “scheduling constraints” as the stated reason

INTERNATIONAL

COP24 IN KATOWICE: Main Outcomes

The United Nations Climate Change Conference held in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland was the 24th Conference of the Parties (COP24). It is also referred to as the Katowice Climate Change Conference or Katowice Climate Talks. The most

important outcome of COP24 was that the countries have agreed on rules for the implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement

Ranil Wickremesinghe re-instated as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

In December 2018, Ranil Wickremesinghe was re-instated as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka after the end of weeks-long political crisis in the island nation. In October 2018, he was ousted as the PM & replaced by Mahinda Rajapaksa. Mr. Rajapaksa resigned on 15th October 2018 after he failed to prove majority in the Sri Lankan Parliament. Mr. Wickremesinghe has been sworn in as the PM for the fifth time, which is a record in Sri Lanka

India to receive total remittance of \$80 billion in 2018: World Bank

According to World Bank's Migration and Development Brief, India will retain its position as world's top recipient of remittances in 2018, receiving a total remittance of \$80 billion from its diaspora. India was followed by China (\$67 billion), Mexico and Philippines (\$34 billion each) and Egypt (\$26 billion).

Qatar to leave OPEC, effective January 2019

Qatar announced its withdrawal from Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) effective January 2019 in order to focus more on the production of natural gas. It makes Qatar first Gulf country to leave OPEC bloc of oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia

SCIENCE TECHNOLOGY, AEROSPACE & DEFENCE

Indra Navy-18 Joint Exercise concluded between India and Russia

INDRA NAVY or India – Russia Navy Exercise is being conducted since 2003. Indra Navy-18, a bilateral naval exercise, between India and Russia concluded on 16th December 2018. It was a 4-day maritime exercise that took place in the Bay of Bengal. Its primary objective was to increase interoperability amongst the navies of India and Russia and exchange best practices

Exercise AVIAINDRA between Indian and Russian air forces held at Jodhpur

AVIAINDRA is bi-annually conducted in both countries, with an aim to focus on anti-terrorist operations in bi-lateral scenario. It also seeks to further enhance co-operation and understanding between Air forces of both countries in each other's Concept of Operations

India, US Air Forces exercise Ex Cope India-2018 held in West Bengal

Air Forces of India and US conducted in 12-day joint exercise "Ex Cope India-2018" in West Bengal. It was fourth edition in series of bilateral joint exercise held by Air Forces of two nations. This year, for first time, exercise will be held at two Air Force bases in West Bengal's Kalaikunda and Panagarh

SHINYUU Maitri 18: First India, Japan air exercise begins in Agra

The first bilateral air exercise SHINYUU Maitri-18 between Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) and Indian Air Force (IAF) began at Air Force Station Agra. The theme of this exercise was joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft

'Hand-in-Hand' counter-terrorism military exercise held in China

7th edition of Indo-China 'Hand-in-Hand' military exercise was held in December 2018 in China's Chengdu city. It did not take place last year due to prevailing tensions between both sides after 73-day military standoff at Doklam

InSight lander placed its first instrument (SEIS) on Mars

InSight, NASA's new Mars lander set up its first instrument on planet Mars. The instrument that landed on Mars on 26th November is a quake monitor (seismometer) that will listen for quakes and wobbles. It is the first time that a scientific instrument has ever been placed on another planet's surface. InSight will also put a wind cover over the seismometer next month and initiate a new experiment

Military Communication Satellite GSAT-7A successfully launched by ISRO

ISRO successfully launched communication satellite GSAT-7A in December 2018 from the SatishDhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. GSAT-7A weighing 2250 kg was launched using Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F11)

GSAT-11: India's heaviest satellite launched from French Guyana

ISRO successfully launched India's heaviest and most-advanced communication satellite GSAT-11 into space. It was launched on board of Ariane 5 VA-246 rocket from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana

SpaceX successfully launches 64 small satellites using reusable Falcon 9 rocket

Elon Musk-led SpaceX successfully launched 64 small satellites into low Earth orbit onboard of its reusable and pre-flown Falcon 9 rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. This has set new record in the US, of launching satellites in single go. It was third voyage of Falcon 9 rocket, marking another milestone in SpaceX's cost-cutting reusable rocket technology

Agni-5 missile successfully test-fired

Nuclear capable surface to surface Agni-5 ballistic missile was successfully test-fired from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast. It was user associated trial of missile undertaken by strategic force command along with DRDO scientists

SPORTS

PV Sindhu wins maiden BWF World Tour Title

PV Sindhu, the 2016 Rio Olympic silver medalist, created history in December 2018 as she became the first Indian to win the BWF World Tour Finals. She defeated Japan's NozomiOkuhara, the 2017 world champion, by 21-19 21-17 in the final match that lasted for an hour and two minutes. Earlier, Sindhu defeated Ratchanok by 21-16, 25-23 in the semi-finals to enter the finals of the season-ending BWF World Tour tournament

Belgium wins Hockey World Cup 2018 Title

Belgium Hockey team won their first ever World cup title in December 2018 by defeating The Netherlands in sudden death. Belgium, which also

won a silver medal in Rio Olympics 2016, made history by beating opponents by 3-2 in the penalty shoot-out after finals ended without any goal

AWARDS & HONORS

Eminent Sitar player Manju Mehta conferred TansenSamman, 2018

The Madhya Pradesh Government has conferred the annual TansenSamman upon eminent Sitar Player Manju Mehta for her contribution in the field of Hindustani Classical Music. The award was presented by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on inaugural function of Tansen Music Festival in Gwalior.

Renowned English writer Amitav Ghosh selected for Jnanpith Award 2018

Renowned English fiction writer AmitavGhosh has been selected for Jnanpith award 2018. The Circle of Reason (1986) was Amitav's first novel. Other fiction works include The Shadow Lines (1988), The Calcutta Chromosome (1995) and The Glass Palace (2000)

Mamata Banerjee awarded the Skoch CM of the Year Award

The Chief Minister of West Bengal has been awarded the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award for the year 2017. The award was given to Mamta Banerjee recognizing her contribution in the overall development of West Bengal. The state emerged as the best-performing state in the field of Governance

Catriona Gray from Philippines won the Miss Universe 2018 Title

Catriona Elisa Gray from the Philippines was crowned as Miss Universe 2018, beating 93 contestants from other countries. She was crowned by Demi Leigh Nel-Peters from South Africa, the Miss Universe 2017 title winner. India was represented by NehalChudasama in the beauty pageant. She failed to stand among final 20

Croatia's Luka Modric wins Men's Ballon d'Or award 2018

Croatia's midfielder Luca Modric has been rewarded for his key role in Croatia's historic run to FIFA World Cup final (defeated by France) and his club Real Madrid's third straight Champions League trophy. With this, Luka ended almost a decade-long run of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo of winning these titles since 2008. Cristiano Ronaldo

remained second in run of Ballond'or. France's young footballer Celine Mbatpe was placed fourth followed by Messi at the fifth place

Forbes world's 100 most powerful women (2018)

1. Angela Merkel, The German Chancellor
2. Theresa May, PM of the UK
3. Melinda Gates, Co-founder of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
4. Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook
5. Mary Barra, CEO of General Motors

Few Indians appeared in the list...

- a. Roshni Nadar Malhotra
- b. Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw
- c. Shobhana Bhartia
- d. Priyanka Chopra

Sonam Kapoor named India's 'Person of the Year' by PETA in 2018

Sonam Kapoor's animal advocacy efforts include urging the Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change not to revoke the ban on classroom dissection for university life science and zoology students; calling for a Maharashtra-wide ban on glass-coated manja that can entangle and kill birds; and donating "kind kites" to children to help prevent injuries from manja.

Mr. Supranational 2018 & Miss Supranational 2018 titles

Prathamesh Maulingkar (India) won the Mr. Supranational 2018 title & Valeria Vazquez (Puerto Rico) won the Miss. Supranational 2018 title

GLOBAL RANKING

India ranked 108th in WEF's Gender Gap Index

India secured 108th position in the recently released Gender Gap Index 2018 by World Economic Forum. India retained its 2017 ranking. The Global Gender Gap Report is annually published by the World Economic Forum since 2006. The Global Gender Gap Index that measures gender equality across four key pillars, i.e. economic opportunity, political empowerment, educational attainment, and health and survival

PERSONALITIES

BP Singh Appointed as FTII New Chairman

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has appointed Brijendra Pal Singh as the new chairman and President of Film and Television Institute of India. He succeeded Anupam Kher, who had resigned from the post in October due to international commitments

Shaktikanta Das: 25th Governor of RBI

India's former economic affairs secretary and current member of the Finance Commission Shaktikanta Das was appointed as next RBI Governor

WV Raman appointed as the new coach of Women's Cricket Team of India

BCCI has appointed W V Raman as Indian women's cricket team coach on 20th December 2017. He was preferred over South African cricketer Gary Kirsten for this position. Woorkeri Venkat Raman is best remembered as the first Indian to score a century in South Africa. He played 11 Tests and 27 ODIs.

Chief Ministers in five states post elections

Rajasthan - Ashok Gehlot (Congress)
 Telangana - K. Chandrashekar Rao (TRS)
 Mizoram - Mr. Zoramthanga (Mizo National Front)
 Madhya Pradesh - Kamal Nath (Congress)
 Chhattisgarh - Bhupesh Baghel (Congress)

Gautam Gambhir announced retirement from all forms of cricket

In his cricketing career, Gautam Gambhir played 58 Test matches, 147 ODIs and 37 T20 matches for India. He had played his last ODI against England in Rajkot in 2016

Sunil Arora takes over as new Chief Election Commissioner of India

Sunil Arora assumed charge as 23rd Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India. He succeeded OP Rawat who retired in December 2018. He will have nearly two-and-a-half-year tenure as CEC and General Election 2019 to 17th Lok Sabha will be conducted under his stewardship. Prior to assuming this, he served as Election Commissioner since September 2017