

**December - 31**

## **TNPSC BITS**

- ❖ Dr Sudha Seshayyan has been appointed the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of the Tamil Nadu Dr MGR Medical University by the Governor. She will serve for next three years.
  - She succeeds Dr S Geethalakshmi as the tenth VC and the third woman holding the post.
- ❖ The book launch ceremony of Writer Su.Venkatesan, Sahitya Akademi Award Winner's book "Veerayuga Nayagan Velpari", was held at Raja Annamalaipuram in Chennai. The DMK president MK Stalin was a special guest, who published this book.
- ❖ The Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is set to return to power for an unprecedented third consecutive time after the ruling alliance emerged victorious in the parliamentary elections.
  - Hasina's Awami League won 287 of the 298 seats, while the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) managed just seven seats.
- ❖ The 26th International Camel Festival will be held on January 12 and 13 at Bikaner, Rajasthan.
- ❖ The number of internet connections in India has grown by 65% from March 2016 to cross the 50-crore mark in 2018, in line with the target set by NDA government three years ago.
  - As per the latest information from the TRAI, by the end of September 2018, there were 56 crore narrowband and broadband connections in India.
- ❖ The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved the construction of another 3,10,597 more affordable houses for the benefit of urban poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).
  - The approval was given in the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee.
- ❖ The Government increased the export incentives granted for Onions under the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) from existing 5% to 10% in the interest of farmers. This will result in better price for Onion in domestic markets.
- ❖ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued revised guidelines. Which allows food products offered by online food and grocery operators can now be sampled at any point in the supply chain.

- ❖ According to data furnished by the Reserve Bank of India, between 2015 and 2017, the ICICI Bank penalized the highest number of employees for defrauding bank assets in the last three year out of 60 scheduled commercial banks operating in India.
- ❖ The Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) has ruled that the application filed by The Embassy of Peru for geographical indication (GI) tag for alcoholic beverage Pisco is eligible for registration.
- ❖ Award-winning musician and composer Nitin Sawhney lead over 30 Indian-origin high achievers across different fields named on the UK's annual New Year's Honours List.

## **NATIONAL**

### **Three islands in Andaman & Nicobar renamed**

- ❖ The Indian Prime Minister renamed three islands of Andaman and Nicobar as a tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.
- ❖ The renamed islands are,
  - Ross Island (old name) - Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island
  - Neil Island (old name) - Shaheed Dweep
  - Havelock Island (old name) - Swaraj Dweep
- ❖ The Prime Minister also hoisted a 150-metre-high national flag at Port Blair to mark the 75th anniversary of freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose's declaration of the formation of the Azad Hind government in 1943.
- ❖ The PM also released a commemorative stamp, its first-day cover and a Rs 75 coin on this special day.

### **Background**

- ❖ Subhas Chandra Bose had hoisted the flag after the Japanese captured the area during the Second World War on December 30 1943.
- ❖ He had also suggested that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands be renamed as Shahid and Swaraj Dweep.



### **International Rice Research Institute's South Asia Regional Centre**

- ❖ The Prime Minister inaugurated the International Rice Research Institute's South Asia Regional Centre (ISARC) campus in Varanasi.
- ❖ The centre will serve as a hub for rice research and training in South Asia.
- ❖ This institute will help farmers of the region to develop varieties of paddy which grow in minimum water and have low sugar content and high nutritional value.



### **National Commission for Homoeopathy**

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the draft National Commission for Homoeopathy, Bill, 2018.
- ❖ It seeks to replace the existing regulator Central Council for Homoeopathy (CCH) with a new body to ensure transparency.

- ❖ The draft bill provides for the constitution of a National Commission with three autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Homoeopathy by Homoeopathy Education Board.

### Delta Ranking of Aspirational districts

- ❖ The government think tank, Niti Ayog has released the second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts Programme.
- ❖ This second delta ranking measures the incremental progress made by 111 Aspirational Districts between June 1, 2018, and October 31, 2018.
- ❖ The surveys were carried out in six developmental areas of health and nutrition, education, agriculture, water resources, financial inclusion, skill development, and basic infrastructure.
- ❖ Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu has topped the chart of aspirational districts and Naupada (Odisha), Siddharthnagar (Uttar Pradesh), Aurangabad (Bihar) and Koraput (Odisha) have been termed as the most improved districts.

#### REPORT CARD

Most improved district			Least improved district			Fast movers		Ranking	
Rank	District	State	Rank	District	State		Jun	Oct	
1	Virudhunagar	Tamil Nadu	107	Kiphire	Nagaland	Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir	108	7	
2	Nuapada	Odisha	108	Giridih	Jharkhand	Ranchi, Jharkhand	106	10	
3	Siddharthnagar	Uttar Pradesh	109	Chatra	Jharkhand	Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh	101	3	
4	Aurangabad	Bihar	110	Hailakandi	Assam	Jamui, Bihar	99	9	
5	Koraput	Odisha	111	Pakur	Jharkhand	Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh	82	25	

Number of aspirational districts ranked: 111  
Time period: 1 June 2018 to 31 October 2018

	Most improved district	Least improved district
<b>Education</b>	Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu	Pakur, Jharkhand
<b>Health and nutrition</b>	Chitrakoot, Uttar Pradesh	Chatra, Jharkhand
<b>Financial inclusion</b>	Kupwara, Jammu & Kashmir	Chandel, Manipur
<b>Agriculture and water resources</b>	Sitamarhi, Bihar	Giridih, Jharkhand
<b>Basic infrastructure</b>	Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu	Pakur, Jharkhand
<b>Skill development</b>	Raichur, Karnataka	Khammam, Telangana



## ENVIRONMENT

### Bans on Noisy fireworks

- ❖ Fireworks have been banned on the Galapagos Islands to protect the archipelago's unique fauna.
- ❖ The Local council unanimously passed a resolution that prohibits the importation, sale, distribution and use of fireworks or pyrotechnics in the Galapagos province.
- ❖ Those fireworks that produce the light but no noise have been excluded from the ban.

## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

### Champion of Change award

- ❖ Monika Bhutunguru, Chamba superintendent of police was conferred the 'Champion of Change' award by Vice President at New Delhi.



- ❖ She conferred one of the most prestigious award for her immense contribution, exemplary work and bringing a significant change in the district.



### **Asian of the Year**

- ❖ The President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev has been selected as “Asian of the Year” for 2018 by the Asia Journalist Association (AJA).
- ❖ The President of Uzbekistan, was named for the politics category, as he tried to settle peace and continue interaction between countries in Central Asia.
- ❖ Since he became president in Dec 2016, he has reformed policies to open the economy and improve human rights, releasing political prisoners.
- ❖ Other winners are
  - Koo Bon-moo - The late former chairman of LG Group
  - Park Hang-seo - Korean coach of Vietnam national football team
  - Magdi Habib Yacoub - an Egyptian thoracic surgeon.

## **SPORTS**

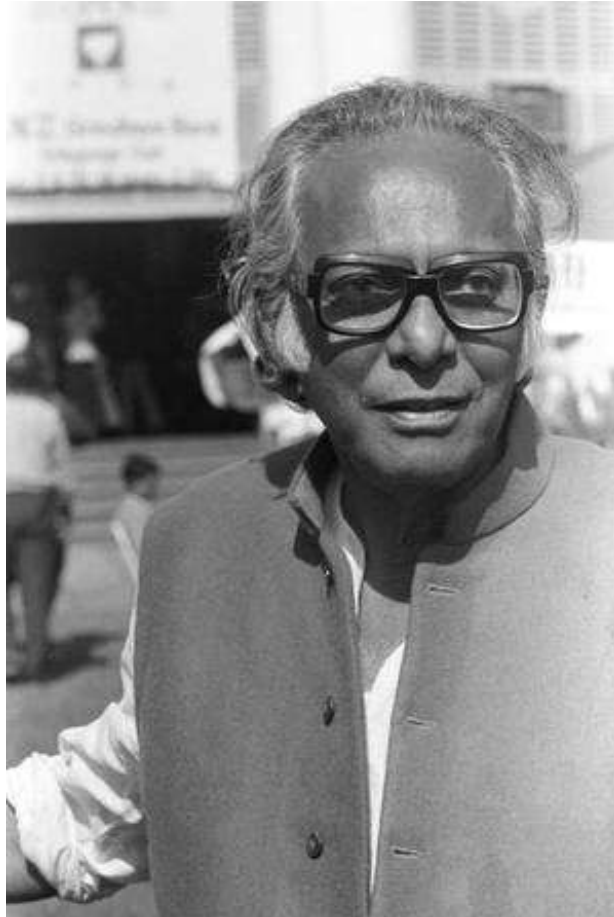
### **3rd Edition of Women's national boxing championships**

- ❖ The Third edition of women's national boxing championships begins in Vijayanagara, Karnataka.
- ❖ The tournament will be held at the JSW Sports' Inspire Institute of Sports, which was recently inaugurated by Olympic gold-medallist shooter Abhinav Bindra.
- ❖ This will be the first time that a national federation will be hosting a national championship at the privately-run institute.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Mrinal Sen passed away**

- ❖ The Noted filmmaker Mrinal Sen passed away in Kolkata on December 30, 2018 after a prolonged battle with age-related illnesses.
- ❖ In 2005, Mrinal received the country's highest honour in film, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.
- ❖ In 1983, he became a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, India's third highest civilian award.



- ❖ He was conferred the Lifetime Achievement Award at the Fifth Global Film Festival in Noida in 2012 and was inducted as a member of the Oscar Academy in 2017.

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