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### **Current Affairs:- November 29 – December 11, 2018**

- IT czar and philanthropist Azim Premji was bestowed with the highest French civilian distinction Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour).
  - Donbass directed by Sergei Loznitsa has won the coveted Golden Peacock Award at the 49th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), which concluded in Goa on November 28, 2018.
  - The government has launched a unique initiative called Bhasha Sangam to introduce school students to 22 Indian languages. Bhasha Sangam is a programme for schools and educational institutions to provide multilingual exposure to students in Indian languages.
  - Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced a pan-India single-number emergency mobile app '112 India' and stated that it will have a special women safety feature 'SHOUT' to get immediate assistance from police and volunteers. It is connected to the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS).
  - Himachal Pradesh has become first Indian state to launch a single emergency number "112". This will connect to police, fire, health and other helplines through an Emergency Response Centre in the state.
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- Arvind Saxena has been appointed as the new Chairman of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
  - Nagaland became the first state in the Northeast and second in the country, after Himachal Pradesh, to launch a pan-India single-number (112) emergency mobile application.
  - The European Commission is the first major economy to set its sight on achieving climate neutrality by 2050. The European Union's executive branch proposed that the bloc should cut its emissions of greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050, a measure scientists say needs to be adopted worldwide in order to avoid catastrophic global warming.
  - The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) Plenary 2018, was held in Brussels, Belgium, in November 2018. EU handed over the Chairmanship of KPCS to India from 1st January 2019. The next Intersessional session is slated to be held in India as Chair.
  - Asia Pacific Screen Award (APSA) 2018 for Best Performance by an Actor (Male) went to Nawazuddin Siddiqui for Manto.
  - India's 13-year-old shooter Esha Singh won the Women's, Youth Women's and Junior Women's 10m Air Pistol competitions at the National Shooting Championship at Thiruvananthapuram.
  - Air forces of the United States and India participated in a 12-day joint exercise 'Cope India 2019' at two air force stations in West Bengal.
  - The militaries of China and India, set to hold a joint 14-day drill 'Hand in Hand' in southwest China's Chengdu city to improve their capabilities in fighting terrorism and promote mutual understanding.
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- Naval exercise between India and the United Kingdom, KONKAN held in Goa this year.
  - Australia has become the first country in the world to recognise 'orphanage trafficking' as a form of modern slavery. Children from smaller countries are recruited in orphanages in the West for the purpose of profit through foreign aid.
  - US President Donald Trump, Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, and Canadian PM Justin Trudeau signed the new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) which will replace the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
  - The city of Paris will strip Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi of her honorary freedom of the Paris award over her failure to speak out against a crackdown on Rohingya Muslims. She has already been stripped of her honorary Canadian citizenship and her Amnesty International's "Ambassador of Conscience Award". She would be the first person to lose the freedom of Paris award.
  - India's Olympic and world champion shooter Abhinav Bindra has been conferred the sport's highest honour for his outstanding services as the chairman of the International Shooting Sport Federation's Athletes Committee. The 36-year-old Bindra, who remains India's lone individual Olympic gold medallist, has been bestowed with the Blue Cross, the ISSF's highest award.
  - South African President Cyril Ramaphosa will be the Chief Guest at the 2019 Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi. Note: South Africa Capitals: Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), Bloemfontein (judicial), Currency: South African rand.
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- Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated 19th Hornbill Festival in Nagaland on 55<sup>th</sup> Nagaland Statehood Day.
  - World AIDS Day was observed on 1 December. The theme for the World AIDS Day 2018 is “Know Your Status”.
  - India’s first locomotive-less (Engine-Less) train, known as Train 18, has breached the 180 kilometers per hour speed limit during a test run at Kota-Sawai Madhopur section in Rajasthan. When this indigenously designed train is made operational, it will become the country’s fastest train. ‘Train 18’ will commence its commercial run from January 2019.
  - The Asia Pacific Summit-2018 began in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. The theme of two-day Summit is “Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values”.
  - The G-20 Summit 2018 was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina. G-20 is a grouping of the world's 20 major economies. This year, the theme of the summit was 'Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development'.
  - State-owned Bank of Maharashtra announced that AS Rajeev has joined the lender as its managing director and chief executive officer.
  - Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been sworn in as the new Mexican President.
  - Raninder Singh has become the first Indian to be elected one of the four vice-presidents of the International Shooting Sport Federation.
  - International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) was observed on 3rd December. The theme for this year’s IDPD is “Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality”.
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- FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL) announced that its board has approved the merger with GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSKCH India) through an-all equity deal.
  - “PAiSA – Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access”, a centralized electronic platform for processing interest subvention on bank loans to beneficiaries under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) was launched by Sh. Durga Shankar Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The web platform has been designed and developed by Allahabad Bank which is the Nodal bank. All 35 states / UTs & all scheduled commercial banks, RRBs, and Cooperative Banks are expected to be on board the PAiSA portal soon.
  - Qatar has announced its decision to leave the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January 2019 and focus more on the production of natural gas. Note: The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference on September 10–14, 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
  - Real Madrid and Croatia midfielder Luka Modric won Ballon d’Or 2018 in Paris. In the process, he broke the decade-long duopoly over the award held by Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. The 33-year old Croatian was awarded the FIFA’s World Cup 2018 MVP, UEFA’s Player of the Year 2018, Best FIFA Footballer of the Year and the number one player by International Federation of Football History and Statistics.
  - Navy Day was celebrated in India on 4th December. Note: Admiral Sunil Lanba is the present Chief of Naval Staff.
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- Delhi Minister of Food Supplies, Environment and Forest and Elections Imran Hussain was awarded 'Hero to Animals' award by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)-India for banning the Chinese Manjha, or the glass-coated kite strings, across Delhi.
  - Indian star wrestlers Vinesh Phogat and Sakshi Malik successfully emerged champions in the 57 kg and 62 kg title respectively in the Tata Motors Senior Women's National Championship.
  - Ullas Narayan became the first ever Indian individual medal winner in an international ultra running event by clinching a bronze in the 2018 International Association of Ultra Running (IAU) 24 Hour Asia & Oceania Championships in Taipei.
  - The Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) held a bilateral air exercise SHINYUU Maitri-18 with Indian Air Force at A F Station Agra. The theme of the exercise is joint Mobility/ Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft.
  - Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Bogibeel Bridge, on December 25. It is India's longest rail-road bridge, connecting the north and south banks of the Brahmaputra, falling in the eastern part of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The bridge is 4.94 km long.
  - India's heaviest, largest and most powerful satellite GSAT-11 was successfully launched by an Arianespace rocket from the French Guiana.
  - Bollywood superstar Salman Khan is the richest Indian celebrity, according to the 2018 Forbes India Celebrity 100 list, which he has topped for the third consecutive year. Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli jumped one spot to the second rank. Actor Akshay Kumar completed the top three.
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- State Bank of India has roped in Asian Games gold medalist Swapna Barman as brand ambassador for its digital app YONO.
  - The Reserve Bank of India has kept the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 6.5%. Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF remains at 6.25%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate at 6.75%.
  - The Centre included Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttarakhand, Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh and Parasnath in Jharkhand under a central scheme to develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country. With the new additions, the number of sites under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) launched by the ministry in 2014-15 has now become 41 in 25 states.
  - Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal launched the '*Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana*' which offers free travel packages for senior citizens from Delhi to five religious circuits. Note: Anil Baijal is the present Lt. Governor of Delhi.
  - The UAE now has the world's most powerful passport. The index, compiled by Arton Capital, ranks national passports based on the number of countries a holder can enter without a visa or by obtaining one on arrival. India was ranked 140th in the list. Top 3 countries on Individual Passport Power Rank are: 1)The UAE, 2)Singapore, 3)Germany.
  - Odisha Government launched another initiative, *Peoples Empowerment - Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives (PEETHA)*. The PEETHA is a sub-scheme of the Odisha government's flagship Ama Gaon Ama Bikas Yojana.
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- World Soil Day was celebrated on the 5th of December. *#StopSoilPollution* is the objective of this World Soil Day.
  - Kenyan distance runner Eliud Kipchoge and Colombian long and triple jumper Caterine Ibarguen have been named male and female world athletes of the year.
  - Luxembourg is set to become the first country in the world to make all public transport free, implementing the move in 2020.
  - Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has extended a credit facility of USD 500 million to Tanzania for water supply projects in the country.
  - Team Italy won the Admiral's Cup 2018. Team Singapore was the Runners-Up and Team USA came third. The host country team (Indian Naval Academy) finished fourth in the overall position of Admiral's Cup 2018.
  - 7 December was observed as Armed Forces Flag Day.
  - Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India has been conferred the Skoch Award for National Significance at an event held recently in New Delhi.
  - Kolkata-Patna becomes India's second Inland Water Transport (IWT) origin-destination pair for containerised cargo movement on the National Waterway-1. The Ministry of Shipping is developing NW-1 (River Ganga) under Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) from Haldia to Varanasi (1390 Km).
  - The second-largest Ebola outbreak in history has spread to a major city in eastern Congo (Butembo). The outbreak declared in August is now second only to the devastating West Africa outbreak that killed more than 11,300 people a few years ago. The Ebola virus spreads via bodily fluids of those infected, including the dead.
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- The government appointed Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian as the new Chief Economic Advisor.
  - The Maharashtra state government launched an ambitious project “State of Maharashtra Agribusiness and Rural Transformation (SMART)” in 10,000 villages with an objective to achieve sustainable farming within the next three years.
  - The Vice President of India Shri M.Venkaiiah Naidu released Compilation of Selected speeches of the President, Ram Nath Kovind titled, “The Republican Ethic” in English and “Loktantra ke Swar” in Hindi.
  - According to the Global Wage Report 2018-19 published by International Labour Organization (ILO), women are paid the most unequally in India, compared to men, when it comes to hourly wages for labor. On average, women are paid 34% less than men. This gap in wages, known as the gender wage gap, is the highest among 73 countries.
  - Food and Agriculture organisation, FAO Council has approved India’s proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023.
  - Reserve Bank of India governor Urjit Patel stepped down from his post.
  - Flipkart-owned Myntra's CEO Ananth Narayanan has resigned from his role with his position set to be abolished. Flipkart's Amar Nagaram has been given the responsibility to head Myntra.
  - Atul Sahai has been appointed as the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of the country’s largest general insurance company New India Assurance.
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- Mexico's Vanessa Ponce de Leon won the coveted Miss World 2018 crown at a grand event held in the Chinese city, Sanya.
  - India will retain its position as the world's top recipient of remittances in 2018 with its diaspora sending a whopping USD 80 billion back home, according to the World Bank report.
  - Human Rights Day was observed on 10 December. #StandUp4HumanRights is the global campaign launched for the year 2018. Note: Antonio Guterres is the Secretary-General of the United Nations.
  - Khelo India Youth Games-2019 will be held in Pune of Maharashtra in January. Under Khelo India programme, the government is providing scholarships to 1500 students from across the country.
  - Goa's Prathamesh Maulingkar has created history by becoming the first Asian/ Indian to win Mister Supranational title in a competition held at Krynica-Zdroj, Poland.
  - International Mountain Day was held on 11 December. The theme for 2018 IMD is "*Mountains Matter*".
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