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CURRENT AFFAIRS
Monthly Capsule PDF
February 2021

CUSTOMIZED STUDY MATERIAL

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*...parts...
You would think that would be enough to draw his...
or the pointlessness of soliciting a bribe. NO, it was not...
as the "MMDA enforcer" instructed the driver to call his...
boss and tell him to do a "SMART Padala" in cellphone...
8 (9)***** Corruption at the level of mobility!
Now the MMDA wants to implement the no-contact...
form of "arrest" for traffic violators. Is it convenience...
or lack of conviction to make the traffic violator carry...
them stick? Do we wait and let a traffic violator carry...
on with their wrong driving habits for months if not a...
year before we let them know they've been tagged? I...
say arrest them on the spot, spoil their day and make...
them learn as soon as possible.*

*Round and Round the Rotunda...? What Rotunda?
In case you don't know or have not heard about it the...
Shaw Boulevard Rotunda that used to be a major land-...
mark between the old provincial capital, Pang's motel...
and Barrio Kapitolyo has been sneakily removed...
piece by piece in order to avoid a fineform from pos-...
sible oppositionists. They did it so well and so slowly...
that many motorists and pedestrians are now asking...
how much longer is this hide and seek going to take...
For starters, locals and motorists are wondering...
what the national or local authorities have decided on...
in terms of traffic management. Will there be a traffic...
light/intersection between Shaw Boulevard, Capitol...
Common and Barrio Kapitolyo? Or will it be one of...
those organic intersections maintained by humans and...
organic personnel of the Pang TPMO?
People are also asking about the huge diggings around...
unfurnished concrete posts at various points. But is...
... Vendors for pedestrians. But is...
... for the project for...*

*...a speed...
was only on half the...
These half-humps may seem...
ideas but in truth they are an engineer's...
accidents. A year or two ago three kids...
in a car accident inside Alabang Villa...
one of the residents, the kids were do...
the half-hump accidents were down...
kids drive one side of tires by the c...
side over the humps. Whatever the...
St Paul road half humps are too m...
and a risk and should be comple...
road! The same should be done...
... in Metro Manila...*



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Current Affairs Capsule: February 2021

IMPORTANT DAYS

Indian Coast Guard celebrates its 45th Raising Day on 01 February 2021

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is celebrating its 45th Raising Day on 01 February 2021. The ICG was formally established on February 1, 1977, by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 of the Parliament of India. It operates under the Ministry of Defence.

World Wetlands Day is observed on 02 February

The World Wetlands Day is observed every year on February 2 globally. The day is celebrated to mark the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. World Wetlands Day was first celebrated in 1997. 2021 marks 50 years of the Convention on Wetlands. The international theme for World Wetlands Day 2021 is 'Wetlands and Water'.

World Cancer Day is observed on February 4

World Cancer Day is observed every year on 4 February by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC). Purpose of the day is to raise awareness and education about cancer, and pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the disease. Theme for World Cancer Day 2021 is 'I Am And I Will'.

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation is observed on February 6

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that takes place on February 6 as part of the UN's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003. It was first held in 2003. Theme for 2021 is- No time for global inaction: unite, fund and act to end FGM/C.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed on 11 February

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is celebrated on 11 February every year. The 2021 theme of the Day is "Women Scientists at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19".

World Unani Day is observed on 11 February

World Unani Day is observed globally on February 11 every year to mark the birthday of "Hakim Ajmal Khan", an eminent Indian Unani physician. The first Unani Day was celebrated in 2017 at Central Research Institute of Unani Medicine (CRIUM), Hyderabad. Objective of the day is to spread awareness in masses and action about healthcare delivery through the Unani system of medicine worldwide through its preventive and curative philosophy.



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World Radio Day is celebrated on February 13

World Radio Day (WRD) is being celebrated across the Globe on February 13. The day was proclaimed by the member states of UNESCO in 2011 and subsequently adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as an International Day. According to UNESCO, radio is a powerful medium for celebrating humanity and constitutes a platform for democratic discourse. The theme of World Radio Day 2021 is "New World, New Radio". The theme is further divided into three sub-themes: a) Evolution, b) Innovation, and c) Connection.

National Women's Day in India is observed on February 13

India celebrates Sarojini Naidu's birthday as National Women's Day every year on February 13. She was born on February 13, 1879. She was famous for her nickname 'Nightingale of India' or 'Bharat Kokila' because of her poems. She has written several poems on themes like romance, patriotism, and tragedy.

World Pangolin Day 2021 is celebrated on the Third Saturday of February (20 February)

The World Pangolin Day is celebrated on the "Third Saturday of February" every year. In 2021, the annual World Pangolin Day is being celebrated on 20 February 2020. It marks the 10th edition of the event. The day aims to raise awareness about these unique mammals and speed up conservation efforts. Pangolin numbers are rapidly declining in Asia and Africa.

World Day of Social Justice is observed on February 20

The United Nations' (UN) World Day of Social Justice is observed on February 20 every year since 2009. The aim of the day is to recognize the need to promote and tackle issues of social justice such as poverty, exclusion, gender equality, unemployment, human rights, and social protections, Focus on the goal of achieving full employment and support for social integration and Encourage people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication. The theme for World Day of Social Justice 2021 is "A Call for Social Justice in the Digital Economy."

World Thinking Day is celebrated on February 22

World Thinking Day, originally known as Thinking Day, is celebrated annually on 22 February by all Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and other girl groups worldwide. The day is observed to think about fellow brothers and sisters around the world, address their concerns and understand the true meaning of guiding. 2021 Theme of World Thinking Day is: "Peacebuilding".

Central Excise Day is observed on February 24

Central Excise Day is observed every year on February 24 in India. Objective of the day is to encourage the employees of the excise department in carrying out the central excise duty in a better way. The Central Excise Day is also celebrated to commemorate the Central Excise and Salt Act, which was enacted on February 24, 1944.



National Science Day is being observed on February 28

National Science Day is celebrated every year on 28th of February to commemorate the discovery of the 'Raman Effect'. On this day, Physicist CV Raman announced the discovery of the 'Raman Effect' for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930. The day is aimed at spreading the message of the importance of science and its application in human life. The theme for National Science Day 2021 is 'Future of Science and Technology and Innovation: Impact on Education Skills and Work'.

STATE NEWS

Biggest Aero show of Asia to begin in Bengaluru

Asia's biggest Aero show will kickstart in Bengaluru. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the three-days mega Aero India show i.e. taking place for the first time in a hybrid mode due to COVID Pandemic. For the first time Defence Ministers of Indian Ocean region from 27 countries will participate in person or through virtual mode in a conclave organised on the sidelines to discuss shared threats and cooperation in disaster management.

Varanasi receives second cruise boat under PRASAD scheme

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency, Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, received the second cruise boat under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme of the Central Government. This two-tier cruise boat will run in waters of Ganga river and show the tourists the spectacular view of 84 ghats of Kashi. State tourism Minister Neelkanth Tiwari received the cruise at Ravidas Ghat. He said that it will help in promoting the tourism sector of the city.

Uttarakhand sets up Botanical Garden to conserve 210 species of trees of Shivalik range

In Nainital district of Uttarakhand, a first of its kind botanical garden named 'Shivalik Arboretum' has been inaugurated, for conserving over 210 species of trees found in the Shivalik range of Himalayas. Shivalik Arboretum aims to spread nature education among people so that they are able to feel an emotional connection with the trees, and make them more active towards conservation.

Maharashtra tops 2nd India Justice Report for delivering justice to people

Maharashtra has retained its top rank in the second edition of the India Justice Report – 2020, which judges states in terms of delivery of justice to people. Maharashtra retained its number one position among 18 large and mid-sized states (where population is over one crore each). Tamil Nadu and Telangana were second and third respectively in the same category. Among the 7 small states (where the population is less than one crore each), Tripura has topped the list followed by Sikkim and Goa.



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Maharashtra government decides to provide financial assistance to start-up

Maharashtra government has decided to provide financial assistance to start-up for registration of Intellectual property rights and Quality testing certificate. It will help for employment generation and promote Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands becomes first Union Territory to be corona free

Andaman and Nicobar Islands has become the first state or Union territory in the country to become Covid-19 free with active cases falling to zero in the islands. Health ministry's website reported that the last four infected persons in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have been declared cured. The UT had reported a total of 4,932 cases and 62 deaths from the virus.

Arvind Kejriwal launches 'Delhi Switch' campaign to make people aware of clean vehicles

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal today launched 'Delhi Switch' campaign to make people aware of clean vehicles. He appealed to people to buy such vehicles to combat pollution in the city. Speaking at the event, he said that his government's vision is that 25% of new vehicles must be electric by 2024. He said this at the 'Delhi Switch' campaign.

India's First Amputee Clinic Launched In Chandigarh

The first of its kind 'amputee clinic' in India, has been launched by the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), a premier medical and research institution in Chandigarh.

CM Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurates first heliport of Assam in Majuli district

Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated the first heliport of the state in Majuli district. The heliport having facility for simultaneous landing of three helicopters was constructed at an expenditure of Rs 50 lakh.

Odisha's Balasore to get country's first thunderstorm research testbed

Odisha's Balasore will get the country's first thunderstorm research testbed, the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The objective of setting up the thunderstorm testbed is to minimize human fatalities and loss of property due to lightning strikes. Balasore's Chandipur has the Integrated Test Range for launching missiles.

Himachal Pradesh becomes first State to implement e-cabinet

Himachal Pradesh has become the first State in the country to make the end to end processing of the cabinet paperless by implementing e-cabinet application. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur inaugurated the first e-cabinet at Shimla. The e-cabinet application is also available as a Mobile App on android devices.



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MSME wing of Gol to cooperate in setting up industries up to 20 crore rupees in Dhanbad

In Jharkhand, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME wing of the Government of India will cooperate in setting up industries up to 20 crore rupees in Dhanbad. Addressing a meeting with the industrialists and members of Dhanbad Chamber and Industrial Organizations, MSME Director Dr. SK Sahu said that the central government will give 70 percent amount, while the remaining 30 percent is to be borne by the state government and industrialists.

Union Finance Minister attends third phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar mela in Guwahati

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attended the third phase of Chah Bagicha Dhan Puraskar mela in Guwahati . In the event, the Assam government is to distribute financial assistance of 3 thousand rupees each to nearly 7.5 lakh people belonging to tea garden areas. Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister of State for Food Processing Industries, Rameshwar Teli and state Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma also attended the event.

Karnataka govt sign Memorandum of Understanding with 34 Aerospace and Defence firms

Karnataka has benefitted from the Aero India show that concluded in Bengaluru. The State Government signed Memorandum of Understanding with 34 Aerospace and Defence firms with an investment prospect of 2464 crore rupees that can generate 6462 direct employment opportunities. The minister for Large and Medium Industries Jagadish Shetter informed that the agreements signed during the Aero India Show will encourage aerospace and defence equipment manufacturers to set up bases in the state.

Madhya Pradesh launches 'SAANS' campaign to reduce infant mortality

The health department in Madhya Pradesh has launched the Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully ('SAANS') campaign with the aim of reducing infant mortality due to pneumonia. To reduce the death rate due to pneumonia among infants a strategy is being chalked out under the Social awareness campaign in which medical staff is being trained. Training will be imparted at the community and primary health centres. Around 4,000 Health and Wellness Centres have been set up in Madhya Pradesh for this purpose.

PM Modi launches Asom Mala in Assam's Sonitpur district

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Asom Mala' programme in Dhekiajuli of Sonitpur district. As per the PMO, this initiative will boost the state's road infrastructure and contribute to Assam's economic progress and improve connectivity.

India's first geothermal power project to be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh

India's first geothermal power project will be established at Puga village of eastern Ladakh. Puga has been identified as the hotspot of geothermal energy in the country by the scientists. India's first ever geothermal power project, known as Geothermal Field Development Project is planned to commission by the end of 2022. The tripartite MOU was signed between ONGC Energy, LAHDC, Leh and the Power Department of UT Ladakh.



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Kerala to gets its first human milk bank

The State's first human milk bank was inaugurated at the Ernakulam General Hospital by Health Minister K.K. Shylaja. The facility will ensure breast milk for newborns who cannot be breastfed by their own mothers, who might be deceased, unwell or unable to produce sufficient milk.

NCW in collaboration with Social Welfare Department of J&K holds first ever Mahila Jan Sunwai Programme in Jammu

In Jammu and Kashmir, the National Commission for Women (NCW) in collaboration with the Social Welfare Department of the Union Territory held the first ever Mahila Jan Sunwai Programme in Jammu.

Uttar Pradesh Government announces unique 16-digit Unicode to identify landholdings

The Uttar Pradesh government has introduced a system of issuing a unique 16-digit Unicode to mark all kinds of landholdings in the state. Purpose of the unicode is to check cases of land disputes, put an end to fake registries of disputed land and save people from falling into the trap of fraudsters.

Odisha launches citizen-centric on-line services of State Transport department

The Odisha govt. launched various citizen-centric on-line services of the State Transport department. On the occasion, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said that the digital initiative will allow freedom to the vehicle owners to choose any transport office of the state for vehicle related services. AIR correspondent reports that with the state road transport offices going paperless and contactless, long queues in front of the transport offices across the state will soon be a thing of the past-said the chief minister while rolling out the services.

Maharashtra govt signs MoU with Flipkart to promote wooden toys, local artifacts, handicrafts

In order to promote wooden toys, local artifacts, handicrafts Maharashtra Small Industries Development Corporation and Maharashtra State Khadi & Village Industries Board have signed a MoU with Flipkart. This MoU will enable artisans, weavers, craftsmen & MSMEs from Maharashtra to showcase their products to millions of customers in India. Flipkart will provide free training for packaging and branding to all these manufacturers.

Robotic Spa' facility inaugurated at Visakhapatnam railway station

Waltair Division, in its efforts to enhance the passenger amenities at Railway stations, has commissioned another innovative facility called Robotic Spa under Non-fare revenue at Visakhapatnam railway station. The Robotic Spa comprising Relaxing Chair, Foot massager and Fish pedicure spa gives a pleasant experience to the Rail Customers waiting at Visakhapatnam railway station. The motto behind such an innovative model is to facilitate the esteemed rail customers to spend quality time while waiting for trains.



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₹220-crore solar power plant to be set up in Andhra Pradesh

Amara Raja Batteries Ltd (ARBL) said that it would set up a 50 megawatt solar power plant in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh at a total outlay of ₹220 crore. "This will further reduce the cost of power and simultaneously bring down the company's carbon footprint," the company said in a statement.

Mandu festival starts at Mandu in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, the three-day Mandu Festival began at Mandu in the historic town of Dhar district yesterday. State culture and tourism minister Usha Thakur inaugurated the mandu festival. Handicrafts related to handmade art are also being displayed in the Mandu Utsav to encourage vocals for locals.

Dino Adventure Park & Fossils Museum inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh

Dino Adventure Park & Fossils Museum also inaugurated by the Madhya Pradesh culture and tourism minister. The State Minister informed that the Dinosaur Park is the country's first modern fossil park which has 24 eggs and other fossils of dinosaurs on display. The park also provides information related to the life of dinosaurs.

'Covid Warrior Memorial' to be established at Biju Patnaik Park in Bhubaneswar

The state government of Odisha has planned to construct a 'Covid Warrior Memorial' in Bhubaneswar to recognise the self-less services of Covid warriors, who sacrificed their lives fighting the deadly virus. The 'COVID Warrior Memorial' would be set up at the Biju Patnaik Park in Bhubaneswar.

PM Modi unveils several development projects worth Rs 6100 cr in Kerala

Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled several key development projects worth 6,100 crore rupees at INS Garuda Naval Air Station at Kochi in Kerala. Among the projects unveiled by the Prime Minister include the Propylene Derivative Petrochemical Project of Bharat Petroleum Corporation. The Prime Minister is also dedicated to the nation the Ro-Ro Vessels at Willingdon Islands in Kochi. Ro-Ro service will benefit trade as a result of reduced transportation cost and transit time, and will also lead to reduced congestion on the roads of Kochi. Apart from this, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the reconstruction of South Coal Berth at Cochin Port.

3 days Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2021 organised in West Bengal

To promote India's diverse cultural Heritage , the Ministry of culture, Government of India has organised 3 days of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2021 in Cooch behar palace, in district Cooch behar of West Bengal. It is a 3 day programme which will showcase Indian culture and Heritage, Classical dance, folk dance, songs and local handicrafts in an exhibition . On the first day, eminent tabla player Bikram Ghosh performed on the occasion.



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West Bengal Chief Minister launched the 'Maa' scheme to provide meal at ₹5 to poor people

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee virtually launched the 'Maa' scheme under which her government would provide a meal at a nominal cost of ₹5 to poor people. Self-help groups will operate the kitchens from 1 pm to 3 pm every day and such kitchens will be set up everywhere in the state gradually. They will get a platter of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry for ₹5, she said adding that the state government will bear a subsidy of ₹15 per plate.

UP govt starts training programme for aspirants of various competitive exams under 'Abhyudaya Yojana'

In Uttar Pradesh, the State Government has started a free of cost training programme for aspirants of various competitive examinations under 'Abhyudaya Yojana'. Under the Abhyudaya Coaching Scheme candidates will get high-level guidance regarding examination and interview by skilled mentors including IAS, IPS, IFS, PCS, PPS and other state-level officers. Retired officers would also be called for the training of aspirants for better management. Under this scheme, candidates preparing for UPSC, UPPCS, Subordinate Services, Banking Services, NEET, NDA, CDS TET exam including others will be benefited.

PM Modi inaugurates first full fledged international cruise terminal at Cochin Port in Kerala

PM Modi inaugurated India's first full-fledged international cruise terminal at Cochin Port in Kerala. The ₹25.72-crore cruise terminal with facilities to handle 5,000 tourists will be spread over 12,200 sft. It will bring under one roof personnel of Customs, Bureau of Immigration and CISF, speeding up paperwork.

PM Modi inaugurates Ennore Thiruvallur Madurai Tuticorin Ramanathapuram pipeline project

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Ennore Thiruvallur Madurai Tuticorin Ramanathapuram pipeline project as part of the one Nation one gas grid concept. The 143 kilometer of the Ennore Thiruvallur Bengaluru Puducherry Nagapattinam Madurai Tuticorin Natural gas pipeline has been laid at a cost of Rs 700 crore. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of the Cauvery Basin Refinery at Nagapattinam. The project will help utilise gas from ONGC fields and deliver natural gas as feedstock to industries and other commercial customers.

Manoj Kumar from Ranchi selected for showcasing his toys during Toy Fair

Manoj Kumar from Ranchi, Jharkhand has been selected for showcasing his toys during the Toy Fair scheduled to be organised between February 27 - March 2 this year. An elated Manoj who is quite happy to be part of this Toy fair to represent Jharkhand on the national platform.

39th Agartala International Book Fair begins in Tripura

The 39th Agartala International Book Fair with the theme "Ek Tripura, Shrestha Tripura" has begun at Agartala. State Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated the fair in presence of Bangladesh Assistant High Commissioner Md. Jobayed Hossain and other state cabinet ministers and MLAs.



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PM Modi inaugurates key projects in power, urban sectors in Kerala

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of key projects of power and urban sector in Kerala through video conferencing. PM dedicated the Pugalur - Thrissur Power Transmission Project to the nation. The project that was completed at a cost of 5070 crore rupees will infact enable Thrissur district to be the major power hub of Kerala. The Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation the 50 MW Kasaragod Solar Power Project, developed under the National Solar Energy Mission. He also laid the foundation stone for the Integrated Command and Control Centre at Thiruvananthapuram.

'Snakepedia' mobile app launched in Kerala to help treat snake bites

A team of scientists, doctors and photographers in Kerala have launched a mobile application named "Snakepedia", that will present all relevant information on snakes, to help the public as well as doctors in treating snake bites. The android mobile application documents information on snakes with the help of pictures, infographics and podcasts and analyses its first aid, treatment, myths and superstitions. The main aim of the app is to help the public identify snakes, avail proper treatment on time for snakebites, bust myths about snakes, and protect snakes as well as snakebite victims.

Arunachal Pradesh celebrates its 35th Statehood day on February 20

Arunachal Pradesh is celebrating its 35th Statehood day. The state became a full-fledged State on February 20, 1987. Wide range of programmes was organized across the state to celebrate the day. The main state celebration was held at IG Park in Itanagar.

Assam CM inaugurates Centre for Perishable Cargo at LGBI Airport

Centre for Perishable Cargo at International Cargo Terminal, LGBI Airport Guwahati was inaugurated by Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbanand Sonowal in presence of Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, AAI's regional executive director M Suresh and airport cargo officials. The perishable cargo terminal has been developed by AIDC, Assam Industrial Development Corporation Ltd acting as a nodal agency for export of perishable cargo through air transport.

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio announces two new grants

Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio announced two new grants, namely, the Chief Minister's Grant for Journalism and the Chief Minister's Research Grant. Mr Rio said, the journalism grant will support the strengthening of democracy and thereby positively impact good governance as it is an endeavour to empower a vibrant fourth estate. He said, the research grant will support advancement of science and extend funding to research and research scholars.

India's first Digital Varsity comes up in Kerala

Kerala took a major step forward in its progress towards a knowledge society with the inauguration of the country's first Digital University, based in Technocity at Mangalapuram. Kerala CM said the launch of the first Digital University in the country would open tremendous opportunities for youngsters.



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Govt approves new schemes for industrial development worth Rs 28,000 crore for J&K

Government has announced a new Central Sector Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu and Kashmir. The scheme is approved with a total outlay of 28 thousand 400 crore rupees. It will be effective from 1st April this year and will remain in force up to 31st March 2037. The main purpose of the scheme is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

47th Khajuraho Dance Festival begins in Madhya Pradesh

The week-long 47th Khajuraho Dance Festival began in Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh which is based on the Indian classical dance tradition. The first day event is dedicated to Bharatanatyam performance by Geeta Chandran and her troupe and Kathak performance by Deepak Maharaj. The festival is being organized by the Culture Department through Ustad Alauddin Khan Music and Arts Academy Bhopal.

Gujarat govt launches Budget mobile app

Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel launched the 'Gujarat Budget' mobile application at Gandhinagar. Mr Patel said the mobile app will have five different sections, comprising budgetary allocations for 27 departments, budget highlights, finance minister's speech, important aspects of the budget and news coverage of it.

Second phase of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav begins in Darjeeling

Union Minister of State for Culture & Tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel will inaugurate the second phase of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav today at Raj Bhawan in Darjeeling. The closing ceremony of the three-day event will be attended by West Bengal Governor, Jagdeep Dhankar.

7-day long exhibition of NSSH scheme concluded in J&K

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, a seven day long exhibition of National Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH) scheme concluded today at ITI, Ground in Rajouri. During the week-long exhibition, different stalls were erected by the entrepreneurs displaying various products like readymade garments, cooking implements, honey, carry bags, chakki Atta, furniture works etc. Different departments like Animal and Sheep husbandry, Sericulture, Agriculture, Handicrafts & Handloom also displayed their instruments, products and print material during the exhibition.

Assam CM Lays Foundation of Eastern India's First Skill University in Darrang district

The Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal laid the foundation of the first skill university of eastern India in Darrang district in Assam. The state-of-the art skill university would be built with a financial outlay of Rs 1,000 crore. It will impart training to over 10,000 students in 12 disciplines. The university is expected to be completed by 2026.



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Bengaluru airport installs disabled aircraft recovery kit

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) announced the installation of disabled aircraft recovery kit, which will help the airport operator remove a disabled aircraft at the runway, and thereby restore the operations at the earliest. The kit, with multiple components, and customised for the Bengaluru airport's requirement, includes ground preparation tools, aircraft lifting, de-bogging, tethering, towing, and all other associated aspects of both narrow- and wide-body aircraft.

Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy Resigns

V Narayanasamy, the Chief Minister of the Union Territory of Puducherry, has submitted the letter of his resignation and his council of ministers to the Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

PM Modi to inaugurate 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 2nd edition of the Maritime India Summit 2021. The summit will be organised virtually between 2nd to 4th March 2021. First summit was organised in 2016 in Mumbai. Mumbai Port Trust informed that the MIS 2021 will provide a unique platform where various stakeholders in the maritime sectors such as Senior Government Officials, Domestic and International Investors, Shipping Line Owners, Representatives of Major Ports from across the world as well as the Governments of Maritime States in India will participate.

Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur launches 'e-Parivahan Vyavstha'

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched 'e-Parivahan Vyavstha' of the State Transport Department to provide faceless services to the people of the State regarding Driving Licence/Registration Certificates/Permits etc.

Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh Gets International Airport Licence from DGCA

The under-construction Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh has received the necessary clearances from aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to operate international flights. Once operational, Kushinagar airport will become the third functional international facility in the state.

Jammu and Kashmir begins health check-ups of students issued 'Student Health Card'

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the UT administration has started health check-ups of students issued 'Student Health Card' in all the government schools under Mid Day Meal (MDM) scheme across the Union Territory. Student Health Card has been issued from the age group of 5-12 years after filling a form with complete health related details to ascertain any deficiencies among the kids.



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NATIONAL NEWS

Prime Minister to inaugurate Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Chauri Chaura Centenary Celebrations at Chauri Chaura, Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh on Thursday through video conferencing. The day marks 100 years of the Chauri Chaura incident, a landmark event in the country's fight for independence. The Prime Minister will also release a postal stamp dedicated to the Chauri Chaura centenary during the event. Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath will also be present on the occasion. The centenary celebrations and various events planned by the State government will begin in all 75 districts of the State from Thursday and will continue till 4th February 2022.

Textile Minister Smriti Irani inaugurates 8th India International Silk Fair

The Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 8th India International Silk Fair on Virtual Portal on 31st January 2021. The five days event is being held on Indian Silk Export Promotion Council's virtual platform due to COVID-19 pandemic. The fair is considered to be India's biggest silk fair.

Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addresses inaugural ceremony of ASEAN India Hackathon

Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' addressed the inaugural ceremony of the ASEAN India Hackathon. He said this Hackathon will provide a unique opportunity to India and ASEAN broad themes of "Blue Economy" and "Education". ASEAN-INDIA Hackathon is an initiative taken by the Ministry of Education. The ASEAN India Hackathon is being organized online from 1st -3rd February 2021 and prize distribution will take place on 4th February 2021. This unique hackathon offers opportunities for all the 10 ASEAN countries and India to forward their economic and cultural ties through collaboration in education, science and technology.

Union Ministers jointly launch unified web portal for monitoring progress of GOBARDHAN activities

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Animal Husbandry Minister Giriraj Singh, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria jointly launched a unified web portal for monitoring the progress of GOBARDHAN activities across the nation. Gobardhan is an important component of Swachh Bharat Mission Phase-2 for organic solid waste management.

India to host Indian Ocean Region Defence Ministers' Conclave

India will host Indian Ocean Region (IOR) Defence Ministers' Conclave on the sidelines of Aero India 2021. The broad theme of the conclave is 'Enhanced Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Indian Ocean'. The event will commence with a welcome address by the Defence Secretary and addresses by Defence Ministers of different Indian Ocean Region Countries.



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India gets its first Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management in Chennai

A dedicated Centre for Wetland Conservation and Management (CWCM) has been established at the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM), Chennai, an institution under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

'Atmanirbharta' named Oxford Hindi word of 2020

Oxford Languages, the world's leading dictionary publisher, has named 'Aatmanirbharta' as the Hindi word of the year 2020. 'Aatmanirbharta' means self-reliance.

BHEL commissions 800 MW thermal power plant in Madhya Pradesh

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has successfully commissioned the second unit (800 MW) of the 2x800 MW Gadarwara Super Thermal Power Project Stage-I. BHEL has commissioned 24 sets of supercritical boilers and 20 sets of supercritical turbine generators.

Ayesha Aziz becomes India's Youngest Female Pilot at 25

Ayesha Aziz, a 25-year-old from Kashmir has become the youngest female pilot in the country. In 2011, Ayesha Aziz had become the youngest Student pilot to get a license at the age of 15. She underwent training to fly a MIG-29 jet at Russia's Sokol airbase the following year.

Government to launch PLI scheme for air-conditioner, LED lights on 1 April

The commerce and industry ministry will formally launch the production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for air conditioner and LED lights, worth ₹6,238 crore, on 1 April after the finance ministry's nod to the proposal.

Centre grants permission to raise additional five thousand 34 crore rupees through Open Market Borrowings to four states

Government said that four more states Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab have been granted permission to raise additional five thousand 34 crore rupees through Open Market Borrowings. The Finance Ministry said, these states have undertaken Ease of Doing Business reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure and have become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources.

PM to inaugurate World Sustainable Development Summit 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the World Sustainable Development Summit 2021 on 10th of February at 6.30 P.M. via video conferencing. The theme of the summit is 'Redefining Our Common Future: Safe and Secure Environment for All'. The 20th edition of The Energy and Resources Institute's (TERI) flagship event- the World Sustainable Development Summit, will be held online from 10th to 12th February. The summit will bring together a wide number of governments, business leaders, academicians, climate scientists, youth and the civil society in the fight against climate change.



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Rajya Sabha passes Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

Rajya Sabha passed The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, 2021. It will replace Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Ordinance of 2021 which merged the Jammu and Kashmir cadre of the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Police Service, and Indian Forest Service with the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram, and Union Territory cadre, also known as AGMUT cadre. The President had promulgated the ordinance last month to amend the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019.

Centre proposes to provide 1000 crore rupees for welfare of tea workers of Assam

The Centre in its Union Budget for the next fiscal has proposed to provide one thousand crore rupees for the welfare of tea workers of Assam and West Bengal. The amount will be spent especially for the welfare of women and children associated with the tea gardens in these states.

Hardeep Singh Puri introduces National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in Rajya Sabha

Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri introduced the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Rajya Sabha. The Bill will replace the The National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 which was promulgated by President Ram Nath Kovind on 30th December 2020. It amends the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act, 2011.

Centre allocates Rs 16,000 cr for PM Fasal Bima Yojana

Government has allocated 16,000 crore rupees for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana for 2021-22 to boost the safety of farmers' crops. The Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry said this will ensure maximum benefit of crop insurance reaches to farmers. The Ministry said, this is a budgetary increase of around 305 crore rupees as against the previous fiscal year 2020-21, which reiterates the government's commitment towards growth of the agriculture sector in the country.

Govt launches new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 FPOs

The Ministry of Agriculture has said that the government has launched a new Central Sector Scheme titled 'Formation and Promotion of 10,000 Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)' and it has committed resources in this regard with a budgetary provision of Rs 6,865 crore. The Ministry in a statement said that FPOs are to be developed to produce clusters, wherein agricultural and horticultural products are grown for leveraging economies of scale and improving market access for members.

Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani rolls out commercial Jute seed distribution scheme

Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani rolled out the commercial Jute seed distribution scheme. Jute Corporation of India had last year signed an MoU with National Seeds Corporation for commercial distribution of 1 thousand Metric Tonne certified jute seeds for the year 2021-22.



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National Horticulture Fair 2021 begins in Bengaluru

The Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmer Welfare, Kailash Choudhry, inaugurated the National Horticulture Fair (NHF) 2021 on February 08, 2021 in Bengaluru via virtual mode. The five-day long event has been organised by the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research (IIHR), from February 8 to February 12 at its IIHR campus situated in Hesaraghatta, Bengaluru. The theme of NHF 2021 is 'Horticulture for Start-Up and Stand-Up India'.

DDA approves draft 'Green Development Area' policy for sustainable development

The DDA approved a draft policy that provides a comprehensive framework for defining minimum land area required for green development and ensuring seamless development of infrastructure with sustainability. The policy will now be put in the public domain for inviting objections or suggestions. The objection and suggestions shall be placed before the Board of Enquiry and Hearing (BOEH).

Cabinet approves ₹100 crore grant-in-aid for Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizer

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved a ₹100 crore grant-in-aid to Brahmaputra Valley Fertilizers Corporation Limited (BVFCL), Assam, to help sustain operations of its urea manufacturing units. The company is the first gas-based urea manufacturing unit in India and has all infrastructure and feedstock availability, but it has been difficult to maintain reasonable production levels in a cost-effective manner because of old and obsolete technology.

PM Modi to inaugurate Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Maritime India Summit-2021 on 2nd March. Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya said, around 20 thousand delegates will participate, 24 partner countries will join and more than 400 Projects are set to be showcased in the 2nd edition of Maritime India Summit 2021 to be held virtually from 2nd March to 4th March. The event is being organised by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways jointly with FICCI as Industrial Partner and EY as Knowledge Partner.

First ever India Toy Fair to be organised from 27th February to 2nd March

The Government is organising the first ever India Toy Fair from 27th February to 2nd March. Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal jointly inaugurated the website of The India Toy Fair-2021 in New Delhi.

Upper ceiling for family pension raised from Rs 45,000 to Rs 1,25,000 per month

Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that in a far reaching reform regarding family pensions the upper ceiling has been raised from Rs 45,000 to Rs 1,25,000 per month. He said, the move will bring 'Ease of Living' for the family members of the deceased employees and would provide adequate financial security to them.



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India's first ever CNG Tractor to be launched

India's first ever CNG Tractor will be launched. This will help farmers increase their income, by lowering costs and help to create job opportunities in rural India. The Road Transport and Highways Ministry said the most important benefit for the farmer will be to save more than one lakh rupees annually on fuel costs, which will help them to improve their livelihood. It will also help farmers to save up to 50 per cent on the fuel cost as the current Diesel prices are around 77 rupees per litre whereas CNG is only 42 rupees per kilogram.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates more than 57,000 water structures in MP under 'Jalabhishekam' campaign

Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurated more than 57,000 water structures constructed in Madhya Pradesh under the 'Jalabhishekam' campaign from New Delhi. Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar also attended the program virtually organised in the presence of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan at Bhopal.

Amit Shah approves over ₹3000 cr assistance for 5 states hit by natural disasters

Four states that were hit by natural disasters in 2020 -Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry - will get about ₹3,000 crore central assistance under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). Madhya Pradesh, meanwhile, will receive ₹1,280.18 crore for pest attack during Kharif season. AP will get ₹280.78 crore and Bihar ₹1,255.27 crore for floods during the SW monsoon. Tamil Nadu will get ₹63.14 crore for cyclone Nivar and ₹223.77 crore for cyclone Burevi. Puducherry will get ₹9.91 crore Nivar.

World Bank, Govt. of India and Govt. of Chhattisgarh signed an agreement worth USD 100 million for project CHIRAAG

The Government of India, jointly with the Government of Chhattisgarh has signed an agreement worth USD 100 million with the World Bank for project CHIRAAG (Chhattisgarh Inclusive Rural and Accelerated Agriculture Growth). CHIRAAG Project aims to develop sustainable production systems in the state of Chhattisgarh, that will allow tribal households in remote areas of the state to produce diversified and nutritious food, round-the-year.

Lok Sabha gives nod to Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021

Lok Sabha gave its nod to Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2021. The Bill contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration. It defines law for conducting conciliation proceedings. The Bill replaces an Ordinance with the same provisions promulgated on 4th November last year.

Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurates Atal Paryavaran Bhavan

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the Atal Paryavaran Bhavan at Lakshadweep. He said that Lakshadweep will undergo a comprehensive development, without compromising its commitment to nature.



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IIT Bombay launches fundraising campaign 'Cherish IIT Bombay 2021'

IIT Bombay launched its first-ever annual fundraising campaign in India, Cherish IIT Bombay 2021. As per information shared by the IIT, the funds will be used for the creation of world-class laboratory complexes, modernization of lecture halls and continuation of awards to attract and retain faculty. It says, donations made to IIT Bombay by corporate bodies and individuals are 100% tax-deductible under section 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launches Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a Pilot Pey Jal Survekshan under Jal Jeevan Mission- Urban, JJM-U. Secretary Housing and Urban Affairs Durga Shanker Mishra informed that it will be conducted in cities to ascertain equitable distribution of water, reuse of wastewater and mapping of water bodies with respect to quantity and quality of water through a challenge process. The total outlay proposed for JJM (U) is 2 lakh 87 thousand crore rupees which includes 10 thousand crore rupees for continuing financial support to AMRUT Mission.

Union Cabinet approves production-linked incentive scheme for telecom sector

The Union Cabinet today approved a production-linked incentive scheme for the telecom sector. Electronic and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said, the production-linked incentive worth Rs 12,195 Crore has been cleared for the telecom sector. He said, this will create 40 thousand direct and indirect employment. Support under the Scheme will be provided to companies and entities engaged in manufacturing of specified telecom and networking products in India.

Govt approves over ₹12,000-cr PLI scheme for telecom equipment

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved Production Linked Incentive (PLI) norms for the telecom and network equipment manufacturing in order to boost local manufacturing of the components, said Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad. The PLI scheme for the telecom sector is worth ₹12,195 crore over 5 years. The scheme will be implemented from April 1.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launches e-Chhawani portal

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh launched e-Chhawani portal. Launching the portal, Mr Singh said, residents of Cantonment areas can register their complaints regarding civic issues and resolve them while sitting at home. e-Chhawani project aims to provide online municipal services to more than 20 lakh citizens across 62 Cantonment Boards through a multi-tenancy central platform. Through this portal, online application for renewal of leases, online registration of births and deaths and online application for water and sewerage connection will be very simple.

Union Health Minister addresses third India Tourism Mart

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan has said that advancements in the country's vast and vibrant health care industry has made it comparable with the best in the world. He said this while



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addressing the third India Tourism Mart, organized by the Federation of Associations in India Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH), through video conferencing.

Government makes FASTag mandatory on all National Highways

Government has made FASTag mandatory on the National Highways. All lanes in the fee plazas on National Highways were declared as FASTag lane midnight last night. As per NH Fee Rules 2008, any vehicle not fitted with FASTag or vehicle without valid, functional FASTag, entering into the FASTag lane of the fee plaza will have to pay a fee equivalent to two times of the fee applicable to that category. FASTag is a RFID tag which is linked with a payment instrument and can be easily affixed on the windscreen of any vehicle.

Cabinet approves Juvenile Justice law amendments, magistrates to get more power

The Union Cabinet approved amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, increasing the role of district magistrates and additional district magistrates. Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said in every district, the district magistrate and the additional district magistrate will get the power to monitor functions of agencies responsible for the implementation of the Act.

Santosh Kumar Gangwar launches Apps and instruction manuals for 5 All India Surveys on Labour

Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar launched Software Applications and instruction manuals with questionnaires for five All India Surveys on Labour. The five All India surveys on migrant workers, domestic workers, employment generated by professionals and the transport sector have a tremendous role to play at national level by providing data on the most affected labour market participants. The surveys are also significant as a path-breaking initiative being taken by the Bureau in terms of use of Information Technology in the entire chain of data collection to report generation.

Go Electric campaign launched to boost adoption of electric mobility vehicles, electric cooking appliances to ensure energy security

The Central Government launched the Go Electric campaign to boost the adoption of electric mobility vehicles and electric cooking appliances to ensure energy security in the country. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadakari said, Go Electric is a future of India which will promote cost effective, environment friendly and indigenous electric products. Expressing concern over the huge imported cost of fossil fuel.

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar launches BRICS-2021 website

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar launched the BRICS-2021 website. The website will provide a comprehensive snapshot of the strong BRICS engagement and the exhaustive calendar of events during BRICS under the Chairship of India. He also soft launched the upgraded facilities at Sushma Swaraj Bhavan that will serve as the Secretariat for BRICS Summit.



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India becomes 1st country in world to identify need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease

Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said that India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease. He said this while launching the operational guidelines for integration of Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease with the National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs, CBIC sign MoU for exchange of data to enhance Ease of Doing Business in India

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs have signed an MoU for exchange of data for enhancing ease of doing business in India and improving overall regulatory enforcement. Both the organisations will benefit from access to each other's databases which include details of import-export transactions and consolidated financial statements of companies registered in the country. The MoU was signed by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs Manoj Pandey and Additional Director General, CBIC B. B. Gupta.

2nd edition of Global Bio-India to be organised from 1st to 3rd March

To showcase the strength and opportunities of the India's biotechnology sector at national level and to the global community, the second edition of Global Bio-India will be organised from 1st to 3rd March. The theme for this year is **Transforming lives and tag line Biosciences to Bioeconomy**. Global Bio-India is one of the largest biotechnology stakeholders' conglomerates that is being co-organised by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology along with its Public Sector Undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, BIRAC in partnership with industry association CII, Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises and Invest India.

IWAI inks pact with MOL for transportation of LPG through inland waterways

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Inland Waterways Authority of India and the MOL (Asia Oceania) Limited for transportation of Liquefied Natural Gas through barges on National Waterways-1 and National Waterways-2. The MoU was inked in the presence of Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya. MOL Group is the world's largest gas carrier company and will invest for construction and operation of dedicated LPG barges under Make-in-India initiative.

Common Service Centres to be integrated with e-daakhil portal to facilitate rural consumers

E-Daakhil portal for Consumer grievance redressal is now operational in 15 States and Union Territories. The portal was launched by National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission on 7th September, 2020 for online redressal of consumer grievances. The e-daakhil portal empowers the consumer and their advocates to file the consumer complaints along with payment of requisite fees online from anywhere for the redressal of their complaints.



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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

World Bank to provide USD 500 million to Bangladesh for improving Road and Digital Connectivity

The government of Bangladesh signed an agreement with the World Bank for the upgradation of rural roads and connectivity in the western region on Monday. The project is expected to benefit over 20 million people in the western region of Bangladesh. The project will help upgrade the 48 kilometre two-lane Jashore-Jhenaidah road to a modern 4-lane highway. It will also help improve 600 kilometre of connecting rural roads and build or develop new rural markets. The project will finance installation of fiber-optic cables along the highway to ensure fast and reliable internet service, said the World Bank Press release.

Nguyen Phu Trong re-elected as Chief of ruling Communist Party of Vietnam for 3rd term

The ruling Community Party of Vietnam has re-elected its 76-year-old General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong for a third five-year term. He has been serving the post since 2011. Trong was granted an exemption to contest in the election, though he was above the age limit of 65.

US extends New START Nuclear Arms Control Treaty with Russia for five years

The United States has extended the New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) nuclear arms control treaty with Russia for five years. Announcing the move, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said it made the world safer. The treaty, which first went into effect in 2011, limits the United States and Russia to deploying no more than 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads each and imposes restrictions on the land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers to deliver them.

India & Bahrain join hands for Renewable Energy

India and Bahrain have agreed to forge deeper engagement in the field of renewable energy. The Joint Working Group in the field of Renewable Energy which held its first meeting in virtual format, underscored the importance of renewable energy to meet climate change goals. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in July 2018 between India and Bahrain for promoting bilateral cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy.

14th International Children's Film festival concludes in Bangladesh

The 14th International Children's Film Festival of Bangladesh (ICFFB) came to an end in Dhaka. 179 films from 37 countries were shown at various venues during the 7-day long festival organised by the Children's Film Society (CFS) of Bangladesh. Apart from Bangladesh, films from India, Armenia, US, UK, Ireland, Japan and China among others were shown in the course of the festival.



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World's First 'Energy Island' to be built by Denmark in North Sea

The Government of Denmark has approved a project to build the world's first energy island, in the North Sea that will produce and store enough green energy to meet the electricity needs of three million households in European countries. The first-of-its-kind giant island will be as big as 18 football pitches (120,000sq m).

Myanmar military announces new State Administrative Council

The regime in Myanmar headed by the Army has announced a new State Administrative Council. The council headed by the Army Chief General Min Aung Hlaing has eleven members out of which eight are from the military.

South Korea to Build World's Largest Offshore Wind Farm

President Moon Jae-in-led South Korea Government has approved a plan to build the world's largest wind power plant in the country by 2030. The project will help to foster an environmentally-friendly recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and fasten the step to achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2050. The estimated cost of the project is 48.5 trillion won (\$43.2 billion). The Wind power Plant will be located in the southwestern coastal town of Sinan. It will have a maximum capacity of 8.2 gigawatts.

India, Afghanistan ink pact to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul

India and Afghanistan ink pact to build Shahtoot Dam in Kabul. The Shahtoot dam is to be built on the Maidan river tributary of Kabul river. The project has been in the works for several years even as Pakistan has expressed concern that it would reduce water flow into the country. It is part of new development initiatives unveiled by India last November. India has also taken up community projects worth \$80 million in Afghanistan as part of a programme to take development to the farthest corners of Afghanistan through schemes directly impacting the lives of Afghans.

Suzanne Clark to become first woman to lead US Chamber of Commerce

The US Chamber of Commerce will soon see Suzanne Clark as its next CEO, the first woman to helm the group. Clark, who's currently president of the US Chamber, will succeed Thomas J. Donohue. Her appointment comes at a time when the business community faces challenges including economic fallout.

US President Joe Biden signs order for sanctions on leaders of military coup in Myanmar

US President Joe Biden has signed an executive order imposing sanctions on the leaders of the military coup in Myanmar. The US President said he has approved a new executive order allowing the United States to immediately sanction the military leaders who directed the coup, their business interests as well as close family members. He said they would identify targets of those sanctions this week.



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Bangladesh receives USD 200 mn from World Bank for safe water and sanitation services in Rural areas

Bangladesh has received USD 200 million for Water Sanitation, Hygiene (WASH) project for rural areas from the World Bank. The agreement was signed between the government of Bangladesh and the World Bank. The project is planned to help 3.6 million to access hygienic sanitation facilities and about 6 lakh people to access clean water in rural areas. The WB funding will provide microcredits to both households and entrepreneurs for water and sanitation facilities. More than 3 lakh poorest households will receive fully subsidised toilets. Apart from household water connections, the project will construct 3000 community piped water schemes.

China celebrates Lunar New Year on February 12

China is celebrating Lunar New Year on 12th February as it ushered into the Year of the Ox. It is one of the most important Chinese festivals, also known as the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival. In China, the festival lasts 15 days, starting with a feast the night of New Year's Eve and ending this year with the Spring Lantern Festival on 26th Feb. People wear special clothes, write Spring Festival couplets, make dumplings, hang up lanterns and the characters for luck. Festivities started in the last lunar month of the Laba Festival.

Mario Draghi sworn in as PM of Italy

The ex-head of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, sworn in as Italian Prime Minister. He has secured the support of almost all the main political parties, following the collapse of the previous administration last month.

UK PM Boris Johnson to host virtual meeting of G7 leaders

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is to host fellow G7 leaders for a virtual meeting on February 19 ahead of its presidency of a summit in June of the Group of Seven countries including the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to attend the G7 Summit in Cornwall in June after India was invited as a guest country by the UK, alongside South Korea and Australia.

UAE's 'Hope' probe sends home 1st image of Mars

The UAE's "Hope" probe sent back its first image of Mars, days after the spacecraft successfully entered the Red Planet's orbit. The picture captured the largest volcano in the solar system, Olympus Mons, emerging into the early morning sunlight.

'Pahela Phagun' spring festival celebrated in Bangladesh

The first day of the spring called 'Pahela Phagun' was celebrated in Dhaka despite the continued shadow of Corona pandemic in the country. Cultural organisations held programmes at different venues in the city to herald the beginning of the spring. Programmes were held at the Suhrawardy Udyan, Nandan Manch of Shilpakala Academy and several other locations.



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India and Russia hold bilateral consultations on UNSC issues in Moscow at DG level

India and Russia held bilateral consultations on UNSC issues in Moscow at the DG level. The Russian delegation was led by Director of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation Peter Ilichev. Joint Secretary UNP and Summits in MEA Prakash Gupta led the Indian delegation along with officials from Embassy of India in Moscow.

Ethiopian Deputy PM arrives in New Delhi on 4-day visit to India

Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Demeke Mekonnen Hassen arrived in New Delhi yesterday on a four-day official visit to India. Mr Hassen inaugurated the new Chancery and Residence at Ethiopian Embassy in New Delhi along with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar.

Cabinet approves trade pact between India and Mauritius

The Union Cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved signing of a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius to liberalize norms and improve trade between the two nations. The CECPA, which is kind of a free trade pact, would cover 310 export items for India, including foodstuff and beverages, agricultural products, base metals, electricals and electronic items.

Foreign Ministers of India, Australia, Japan and US to meet today to discuss free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region

The Third India-Australia-Japan-USA QUAD Foreign Ministers Meeting will be held today with participation of the respective Foreign Ministers. The QUAD meeting will provide an opportunity to continue the useful exchange of views from their last meeting in Tokyo in October last year. The Ministers will exchange views on regional and global issues especially practical areas of cooperation towards maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. They will also discuss ongoing efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing global climate change and other issues of mutual interest.

Facebook blocks Australian users from sharing or viewing news content

Facebook has blocked Australian users from sharing or viewing news content on the platform, causing alarm over public access to key information. Australians woke up this morning to find the Facebook pages of all local and global news sites were unavailable. Several government health, emergency and other pages were also blocked. Those outside of Australia are also unable to read or access any Australian news publications on the platform. Facebook's move is in response to a proposed law in Australia which would make tech giants pay for news content.

India and Nepal sign MoU for reconstruction of six secondary schools in Himalayan Nation

India and Nepal signed a MoU for the reconstruction of six secondary schools in the Himalayan nation. The MoU was for the construction of six secondary schools at a total cost of Nepali Rupees 518 million, according to a statement by the Indian Embassy.



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Bangladesh Supreme Court launches AI based translation software 'Amar Vasha'

The Bangladesh Supreme Court launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI) based translation software 'Amar Vasha' through a virtual event. The software will translate orders and judgements of the Supreme Court from English to Bangla. The Software has been developed with 'EkStep' foundation of India. It is based on their 'Anuvaad' translation software used in India to translate from English to Indian languages including Bangla. Anuvaad was deployed by the Supreme Court of India as SUVAS (Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software) from November 2019. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh is Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain.

Russia reports first cases of H5N8 bird flu in humans

Russia said it found the world's first cases of H5N8 avian influenza in humans though the virus isn't yet spreading between people. Authorities have sent information on the seven cases detected in workers at a poultry farm in southern Russia to WHO, Anna Popova, the country's public-health chief

11th India-EU Macroeconomic dialogue held through video conferencing

The 11th India-EU Macroeconomic dialogue was held through video conferencing. Secretary Economic Affairs Tarun Bajaj led the Indian delegation. The delegation from European Union was led by Director General of Economic and Financial Affairs ECFIN in European Commission Maarten Verwey. The Indian delegation included representatives from Department of Economic Affairs, Department of Revenue and Ministry of External Affairs.

Govt. and AIIB sign loan agreement for USD 304 million Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project

Union Government and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a loan agreement for a 304 million dollar Assam Intra-State Transmission System Enhancement Project to improve reliability, capacity and security of the power transmission network in the State of Assam. The project aims to strengthen Assam's electricity transmission system by constructing 10 transmission substations and laying transmission lines, upgrading 15 existing substations and providing technical assistance to support project implementation.

ADB discussing USD 940 million assistance for Bangladesh COVID vaccination programme

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is working with the government of Bangladesh for providing a USD 940 million assistance to purchase COVID-19 vaccine. According to the official news agency BSS, this was discussed during the courtesy call of the ADB Country Director for Bangladesh Manmohan Parkash with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.

India hosts 1st meeting of BRICS Financial Cooperation under its chairship

India hosted the first meeting of BRICS Finance and the central bank deputies under its chairship. The meeting, which was held virtually, was co-chaired by Tarun Bajaj, secretary, department of economic affairs, ministry of finance and Dr. Michael Patra, deputy governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



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India and Mauritius sign Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement

India and Mauritius have signed Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA). This is the first trade Agreement signed by India with a country in Africa. The Agreement is a limited agreement, which will cover Trade in Goods, Rules of Origin, Trade in Services, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, Dispute Settlement, Movement of Natural Persons, Telecom, Financial Services, Customs Procedures and Cooperation in other areas.

Pune International Centre to co-chair this year's Asia Economic Dialogue

The Pune International Centre will co-chair this year's Asia Economic Dialogue that will be addressed by External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and his counterparts from Japan, Australia, Maldives, Mauritius and Bhutan, veteran diplomat Gautam Bambawale said at a virtual press conference.

India and World Bank inks \$68 Million Project to Improve Quality of India's Education in Nagaland

The Government of India, the Government of Nagaland and the World Bank signed a \$68 million agreement for "Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project", to enhance the governance of schools across Nagaland. The \$68 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a final maturity of 14.5 years including a grace period of 5 (five) years.

India and Uzbekistan agree to strengthen multilateral cooperation

India and Uzbekistan agreed to strengthen multilateral cooperation. Uzbekistan Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov and Dr S. Jaishankar discussed the bilateral relations concerning both the nation.

Ghana becomes 1st country to receive Coronavirus vaccines through Covax vaccine-sharing initiative

The western African country Ghana has become the first country to receive Coronavirus vaccines through the Covax vaccine-sharing initiative. Vaccinations are expected to start next week. The World Health Organization (WHO) led COVAX programme aims to deliver tools to fight the coronavirus pandemic to 92 low and medium-income nations.

China celebrates traditional 'Lantern Festival'

China is celebrating its traditional Lantern festival today. Celebrated on the 15th day of the first Chinese lunar month, the Lantern Festival traditionally marks the end of the Chinese New Year also known as the 'Spring Festival' period. In 2021, China ushered into Lunar New Year - the 'Year of the Ox' on 12th February. The Lantern Festival is also the first full moon night in the Chinese calendar, marking the return of spring and symbolizing the reunion of family.



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Indian company to set up electric vehicle plant in Bangladesh

An Indian company Omega Seiki will set up an electric vehicle plant in Bangladesh. The manufacturing unit will be set up near Dhaka with an investment of Rs. 100 crore. It is the first project of any Indian company producing Electrical vehicles in the international market. The project will be a modern greenfield facility and will focus on manufacturing two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and electric bicycles.

Indian economist Ligia Noronha appointed as Assistant Secretary-General of UN

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has announced the appointment of Ligia Noronha of India as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme. Ms. Noronha is an economist with over 30 years of international experience in the field of sustainable development.

BANKING & FINANCE

2.3 billion transactions worth Rs 4.2 trillion recorded through UPI in January 2021

The Unified Payment Interface recorded 2.3 billion transactions worth Rs 4.3 trillion rupees in January 2021. On a Year-on-year basis, The Unified Payment Interface's transaction value jumped 76.5 percent; while transaction value jumped nearly 100 per cent. First one billion UPI transactions per month took 3 years to cross but the next billion had come in less than a year.

RBI projects GDP at 10.5 percent in 2021-22

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said that the monetary policy review has decided to continue with an accommodative stance of monetary policy to maintain status quo on key policy rates. This will continue as long as necessary at least through the current financial year and into next year to revive growth and mitigate the impact of Covid 19. The repo rate is kept unchanged at 4 percent and the reverse repo rate at 3.35 percent. RBI governor Shaktikant Das said that the GDP growth is projected at 10.5 percent in the Financial Year 2021-22. He said projection of CPI inflation has been revised to 5.2 percent for the fourth quarter of the current financial year.

RBI to set up a 24x7 helpline for digital payment services

RBI has announced certain measures of protection of common bank account holders in today's Monetary policy statement. It includes setting up of 24*7 helpline for digital payment services, integrated ombudsman scheme, CTS across all bank branches and allowing retail investors to open Gilt accounts with RBI. RBI is also considering the facility of registering and resolving the customer complaints through the helpline.



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RBI announces integrated ombudsman scheme for bank customers

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced an integrated ombudsman scheme to improve grievance redressal mechanism for bank customers. The scheme will be rolled out in June. Currently, there are three separate ombudsman for banks, non-banking finance companies and non-bank prepaid payment issuers that are wallets. RBI plans to integrate these under one centralised scheme.

ICICI Bank signs MoU with Japan's MUFG Bank

ICICI Bank today announced the signing of a MoU with MUFG Bank, Japan's premier bank, for collaboration towards catering to the banking requirements of Japanese corporations present in India. The MoU was signed at a virtual event by Vishakha Mulye, Executive Director, ICICI Bank and Junsuke Koike, Executive Officer and Regional Executive for India and Sri Lanka, MUFG Bank, in the presence of senior officials of both banks.

Federal Bank launches 'FedFirst' savings account scheme for children

Federal Bank has launched a special savings account scheme for children below the age of 18 years, called FedFirst. The account will develop among children healthy saving and spending habits, and give them the freedom to save, spend and earn. The account comes with FedFirst contactless Debit Card with a daily cash withdrawal limit of Rs. 2,500.

PNB inks deal with Indian Oil to provide up to ₹2 crore loan to dealers

Punjab National Bank (PNB) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with India Oil Corporation Ltd to cater to the financing needs of the IndianOil dealers. The MoU would benefit dealers with credit facilities at lower interest rates, nil margin, and with minimum or zero collateral requirements through the PNB e-Dealer scheme.

RBI announces ₹20,000 crore worth of government bond purchase

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it will purchase government securities worth ₹20,000 crore through open market operations (OMOs) to keep the yields in check so that the government borrowing programme goes through. The central bank will purchase long-term securities maturing in 2024, 2028, 2030 and 2034, according to an RBI notification. The bond market had been waiting for the OMO announcement ever since the government had announced, in the Union Budget, its intent to raise Rs12 trillion through a borrowing programme for the next fiscal and an additional Rs80,000 crore for this year.

SBI achieves ₹5 lakh trillion mark in home loan segment

State Bank of India (SBI) has reached another landmark by crossing the ₹5 trillion (5 Lakh crore) mark in its home loan segment. The bank has set its sight on achieving a home loan AUM of ₹7 trillion by FY 2024.



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Reserve Bank of India (RBI) brings State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has brought State Bank of Sikkim under its regulatory purview. Till now, RBI had the right and obligation to function as banker to all the state governments except for the state government of Sikkim. The State Bank of Sikkim, was established as an autonomous body wholly owned by the Government of Sikkim, in the year 1968, five years before Sikkim became part of India in 1973. It was established under the State Bank of Sikkim Proclamation, 1968.

ICICI Bank launches Namma Chennai Smart Card

ICICI Bank announced the launch of a Common Payment Card System (CPCS) in partnership with the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) and Chennai Smart City Limited (CSCL) to provide citizens with a one-stop solution for making various kinds of payments within the city and beyond. Called 'Namma Chennai Smart Card', the Rupay powered co-branded, contactless prepaid card, will facilitate various digital payments like tax and utility bill payments at the GCC centres.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Fiscal deficit pegged at 6.8 percent of GDP

The Fiscal deficit for the financial year 2021-22 pegged at 6.8 percent. The Total resources being transferred to the states including the devolution of states share, grants, loans and releases under centrally sponsored scheme in budget estimate for the fiscal is 13 lakh 88 thousand 502 crore rupees which shows an increase of 74 thousand 565 crores over revised estimate of 2020-21.

NBCFDC signs MoU with Apollo Medskills Pvt Ltd for providing COVID Vaccine Administration training

The National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) has signed an MoU with Apollo Medskills Private Ltd for providing COVID Vaccination Administration training to Nurses, Medical and Nursing students and Pharmacists belonging to its target group on a co-funding basis.

Reliance Industries gets world's first 'carbon-neutral' oil from US

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of 'carbon-neutral oil' from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035.

SEBI bars Future Group CEO Kishore Biyani from accessing securities market for 1 year

Markets regulator Sebi has barred Future Group CEO Kishore Biyani and his brother Anil from accessing securities market for a period of 1 year in a case pertaining to alleged insider trading between March and April 2017.



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India's Forex reserves jump by 4.85 billion dollars to record high of 590.18 billion dollars

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by 4.85 billion US Dollars to touch a record high of 590.18 billion dollars in the week ended January 29. Forex reserves rose on account of an increase in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA increased by 5.03 billion dollars to 547.22 billion dollars.

Finance Minister holds bilateral meeting with UK's Secretary of State for International Trade

UK Secretary of State for International Trade Mary Elizabeth Truss met Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi. Ms Truss congratulated India for a forward-looking modern budget with its focus on investments and recovery in the post COVID-19 world. She acknowledged India as an influential player in FinTech, Digital Economy, Start-ups, Innovation and Data. The close collaboration in the sphere of COVID vaccine, demonstrated the close and trusted partnership between the two countries.

State Bank of India revises FY21 GDP estimates to -7.0 %

State Bank of India's Economic Research Department revised FY21 GDP estimates to -7.0%. Previously it had estimated GDP at -7.4%. SBI is expecting FY 22 GDP to be 11%. But it has cautioned that all projections are conditional on the absence of any rise in infections. The report says the 9.5% fiscal deficit of the Centre might be on the higher side. SBI has already estimated that excluding off-balance sheet liabilities, fiscal deficit of the Centre is at 8.7% of GDP.

ICICI Pru launches goal-based savings product GIFT

ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has recently launched Guaranteed Income for Tomorrow or GIFT that helps policyholders to achieve their long-term financial goals. GIFT is a great way to save for your mid to long term goals like children education, retirement.

IRDAI advises all insurance companies for issuance of Digital Insurance Policies via DigiLocker

Insurance Regulatory Authority of India, IRDAI has advised all insurance companies for issuance of Digital Insurance Policies via DigiLocker. In a circular, the Authority advised all insurers to enable their IT systems to interact with DigiLocker facility to enable policyholders to use digilocker for preserving all their policy documents. The circular also mentioned that the insurers should inform their retail policy holders about DigiLocker and how to use it. DigiLocker is an initiative under the Digital India programme by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology where citizens can get authentic documents and certificates in digital format from original issuers of these certificates.

Wipro signs 5-year partnership with Telefónica Germany / O2

Information technology firm Wipro Ltd has signed a five-year strategic partnership with O2, the commercial brand of Telefónica Germany, a provider of mobile telecommunications, broadband and landline in Germany. This program brings Wipro and Telefónica Germany / O2 together to allow for risk-mitigated self-funded transformation that will benefit both companies.



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New Development Bank commits \$100 mn to NIIF Fund of Funds

The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) said the New Development Bank, formerly known as the BRICS Development Bank, has committed to invest \$100 million into NIIF Fund of Funds (FoF), which pumps capital into Indian private capital funds. Through this investment in the FoF, NDB aims to support private capital investments in India when Indian companies are seeking much-needed equity to achieve their long-term growth.

Volkswagen, Microsoft extend collaboration to self-driving car software

Volkswagen AG and Microsoft Corp. are expanding their cooperation involving the U.S. software giant's cloud technology to include speeding up development of automated driving. VW's new software division will build a cloud-based platform with Microsoft that will help simplify development processes and allow faster integration into its vehicle fleet.

Medanta to get ₹100 crore loan from ADB to combat Covid-19

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide ₹100 crore loan to hospital chain Medanta for healthcare services and medical equipment to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The project will support the purchase of personal protective equipment, basic hygiene products, and patient care equipment such as ventilators and beds. It will also support staff training programmes on infection prevention and control.

ICICI Lombard partners with Flipkart to offer 'Hospicash' insurance

The e-commerce company Flipkart has partnered with ICICI Lombard to offer its customers the 'Group SafeGuard' insurance, a group health insurance policy. The 'Group SafeGuard' comes with daily cash benefits starting from Rs 500, and 'Hospicash' benefit for Flipkart consumers. The product will allow consumers to avail a payout for each day of hospitalisation.

SC directs RBI to lay down regulations in six months for locker facility management in banks

The Supreme Court Friday directed the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to lay down regulations within six months mandating the steps to be taken by banks with respect to locker facility management. The apex court said that a customer is completely at the mercy of the bank, which is the more resourceful party, for the protection of their assets.

S&P Global Ratings forecasts, India will be one of fastest growing emerging market economies with a 10 per cent growth in next fiscal

S&P Global Ratings has said that India will be one of the fastest growing emerging market economies with a 10 per cent growth in the next fiscal. S&P Director, Sovereign & International Public Finance Ratings, Andrew Wood said this while speaking in a webinar on India outlook for 2021.



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India's economy grows 0.4 % in Oct-Nov

India's economy grew 0.4 percent in October-December period of the current fiscal. According to official data released, the Gross Domestic Product, GDP, in third quarter, Q3, of 2020-21 is estimated at 36.22 lakh rupees crore showing a growth of 0.4 percent at constant prices of 2011-12 fiscal. According to the National Statistical Office, NSO, data GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at minus 8.0 percent as compared to 4.0 percent in 2019-20 at the constant prices. According to the data, the Per Capita Income in real terms at 2011-12 Prices during 2020-21 is estimated to attain a level of 85,929 rupees with negative growth of 9.1 percent as it was 94,566 rupees in the year 2019-20.

SBI Mutual Fund launches its first international fund investing in US stocks

SBI Mutual Fund has launched a new scheme investing in US stocks, its first ever international feeder fund. Some of its domestic schemes such as SBI Focused Equity already invest a part of their portfolio in international stocks. The new scheme will feed into the Amundi Funds - US Pioneer Fund which is domiciled in Luxembourg.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs and CBIC sign MoU for data exchange

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs signed a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi for data exchange between the two organisations. It is in line with the vision of both organisations to harness data capabilities to ensure effective enforcement. Both are going to benefit from access to each other's databases which include details of import-export transactions and consolidated financial statements of companies registered in the country.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Australia's Robert Irwin wins Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2021

Robert Irwin, an Australian wildlife photographer, has won the first prize in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice Award Contest. Robert won the award for the image titled 'bushfire', which is the picture of the devastating Australian Bushfire in 2020, he captured using a drone, near the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve in Cape York, Queensland. The Wildlife Photographer of the Year is the largest wildlife photography competition in the world, organised by the Natural History Museum.

Tamil Movie "Koozhangal" Wins Tiger Award at Rotterdam International Film Festival 2021

The Tamil film "Koozhangal" has won "Tiger" award, at the 50th edition of the International Film Festival Rotterdam 2021. The Tiger award is the top honour of the festival, given for best film. Koozhangal (meaning Pebbles) has been Produced by Nayanthara and directed by Vinod Raj PS.



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Andhra Pradesh CM Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy conferred Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been conferred the Skoch Chief Minister of the Year Award. The Award has been presented to the CM by Chairman, Skoch group, Sameer Kochhar personally at Tadepalli in Andhra Pradesh.

WCCB receives Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020

The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has received the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award-2020 awarded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said that WCCB getting the award twice in three years is a testimony of India's commitment towards ending wildlife crime. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) has been awarded this year under the Innovation category. Earlier, the Bureau had received the award in 2018 under the same category.

Hyderabad gets recognition as 2020 Tree City of the World

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Arbor Day Foundation have recognized Hyderabad as a 2020 Tree City of World, for its commitment to growing and maintaining urban forests. The recognition was a testament to the city's sustained and institutional efforts to plant, nurture and celebrate trees, development of urban and peri-urban forestry actions, projects and strategic planning and commitment to building a healthy city.

Uttar Pradesh receives award for fastest implementation of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana

Uttar Pradesh received award for fastest implementation of Pradhan mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has congratulated the people of state for this achievement. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar today awarded the top-performing States and Districts for their exemplary work with respect to the implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme. Uttar Pradesh has been awarded in the category of fastest take off in year 2020-21.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Lt General Chandi Prasad Mohanty takes charge as Vice Chief of Army Staff

Lieutenant General Chandi Prasad Mohanty today took over as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff . An alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla and Indian Military Academy, Dehradun, Lt Gen CP Mohanty was commissioned into the Rajput Regiment in 1982. In a career spanning four decades, the General officer served across a wide spectrum of conflicts and terrain profiles and tenanted a host of Command, Staff and Instructional appointments.



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NASA appoints Indian-American scientist Bhavya Lal as acting chief of staff

Indian-American Bhavya Lal was appointed by NASA as the acting chief of staff of the US space agency yesterday. In a statement, NASA said Lal brings extensive experience in engineering and space technology, serving as a member of the research staff at the Institute for Defence Analyses Science and Technology Policy Institute (STPI) from 2005 to 2020.

Facebook Hires Henry Moniz as its First Chief Compliance Officer

Facebook Inc. has appointed Henry Moniz as its first-ever Chief Compliance Officer. Mr Moniz will join Facebook on February 8 to lead the company's global compliance team, to enhance its global compliance and risk management and promote the highest standards of legal and ethical conduct at the company.

Google Cloud appoints Bikram Singh Bedi as Managing Director for India business

Google Cloud has announced the appointment of Bikram Singh Bedi as the Managing Director for its India business. At Google, Bikram Bedi will be responsible for leading Google Cloud's sales and operations teams in this dynamic market.

Ajay Singh re-elected as President of Boxing Federation of India

Ajay Singh has been re-elected as President of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) after defeating former Maharashtra sports minister Ashish Shelar in the polls. Singh received 37 votes while Shelar, who has held many top positions in sport, including the role of President of Maharashtra Cricket Association and Mumbai District Football Association, got 27 votes in the BFI elections.

S.N. Subrahmanyam appointed as Chairman of the National Safety Council

The Ministry of Labour & Employment has appointed Shri S.N. Subrahmanyam as the Chairman of the National Safety Council (NSC) of India for a period of three years. S.N. Subrahmanyam is the CEO and Managing Director of L&T Ltd., India's largest construction company.

Praveen Sinha appointed as interim Director of CBI

The Department of Personnel and Training, under the Personnel Ministry has appointed Praveen Sinha, as the interim director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), with immediate effect on 03 February 2021. Praveen Sinha, a 1988-batch Gujarat cadre Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, is currently an additional director at CBI, the premier investigating agency of India.

Nigeria's Okonjo-Iweala set to become first female Chief of WTO

Nigerian economist Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, has been chosen as the next Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). She would be the first woman as well as the first African national to lead the organization. Okonjo-Iweala, the former finance minister of Nigeria, will succeed Roberto Azevedo, who stepped down in August 2020.



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Rajnish Kumar appointed as exclusive advisor of Kotak's Special Situation Fund

Kotak Investment Advisors Limited (KIAL) announced that Rajnish Kumar, former Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI), would be exclusive advisor for its US\$ 1 billion Special Situation Fund.

Mallikarjun Kharge to be Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge will be the leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha, succeeding Ghulam Nabi Azad whose tenure comes to an end.

Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar appointed as chief justice of Manipur High Court

President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar as the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court. A notification in this regard has been issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice. Justice Puligoru Venkata Sanjay Kumar is presently Judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

Tata Motors appoints Marc Llistosella as new CEO & MD

Tata Motors Ltd, India's largest vehicle maker, named Marc Llistosella as the managing director and chief executive officer (MD and CEO) of its India business which comprises the commercial and passenger vehicle businesses. Marc Llistosella is an experienced automotive executive with a long track record in greenfield projects, turnaround management and leading organizations.

Volvo Cars appoints Jyoti Malhotra as MD in India

Volvo Cars India has appointed Jyoti Malhotra as the new Managing Director of the company. The new appointment will come into effect from 1 March. With the appointment of Jyoti Malhotra, Volvo Cars India has chosen the first Indian to lead the company in India.

India's Ajay Mathur is set to become the next ISA chief

Ajay Mathur, who heads the New Delhi-based The Energy and Research Institute, is set to become the next director general of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). ISA, co-founded by India and France, is the first treaty-based international government organization to be based in India. The alliance has become a significant public policy tool for India and is considered a counter to China's ambitious One Belt One Road initiative. His appointment is set to be finalized after Mauritius withdrew from the race.

Kiran Bedi removed as Puducherry LG; Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan given additional charge

Dr. Kiran Bedi has been removed from the post of Puducherry Lieutenant Governor. Telangana Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan has been given additional charge as Lieutenant Governor of Puducherry.



OneWeb appoints Srikanth Balachandran as CFO

OneWeb, a broadband satellite communications company acquired by a consortium of investors comprising the UK government and Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Global, has appointed Srikanth Balachandran as chief financial officer (CFO). In January, Japan's SoftBank Group and Hughes Network Systems LLC invested \$400 million in OneWeb, taking the total funding in the company to \$1.4 billion. The UK government and Bharti Global had invested \$500 million each to acquire OneWeb under a bankruptcy resolution process.

Ajai Malhotra elected as the first Indian Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Council

Ajai Malhotra has been elected as the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Malhotra first joined the Indian Foreign Services in 1977 and has previously served as ambassador to Russia, Kuwait, Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York and Romania. Headquarters of the United Nations Human Rights Council is in Geneva, Switzerland.

Piramal Group appoints Kalpesh Kikani as CEO of Piramal Alternatives

Diversified group Piramal Enterprises Ltd has appointed Kalpesh Kikani as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of its ₹11,000 plus crore AUM Alternatives business managed through its subsidiaries and joint ventures.

Nothing appoints Manu Sharma as vice president, general manager for India operations

Nothing, a new London based consumer technology company appointed Manu Sharma, as its Vice President and General Manager, Nothing India. Manu will be driving the growth, business development & operations for Nothing in India. Manu has spent over two decades working with Samsung Mobile and Hewlett-Packard in India.

DEFENCE

India-US Joint Military Exercise 'Yudh Abhyas' begins in Rajasthan

The India-US Joint Military Exercise 'YUDH ABHYAS' commenced at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan with unfurling of the National Flags of both the countries. 14-day exercise is focused upon joint training on Counter Insurgency and terrorism under the United Nation's mandate. A number of aerial platforms including newly inducted indigenous Advanced Light Helicopter WSI 'RUDRA', MI - 17, Chinooks, Stryker Vehicles of US Army and BMP-2 Mechanised Infantry Combat Vehicles of Indian Army, will be utilised in the exercise.



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India Participates in Naval Exercise 'Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021'

India joined Iran and Russia in the naval exercise dubbed as "Iran-Russia Maritime Security Belt 2021", which kicked-off in the northern part of the Indian Ocean on February 16, 2021. The Chinese navy will also join the exercise. The drill will cover an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,500 square miles).

Anti-tank missiles Helina, Dhruvastra successfully tested, ready for induction

Joint User Trials for Helina (Army Version) and Dhruvastra (Air Force Version) Missile Systems designed and developed by DRDO were carried out from Advanced Light Helicopter platform in desert ranges. Five missions were carried out for evaluating the missile capabilities in minimum and maximum range. HELINA is a third generation, lock on before launch fire and forget Anti-Tank Guided Missile that can engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode. The system has all weather day and night capability and can defeat battle tanks with conventional armour as well as with explosive reactive armour.

BOOKS & AUTHOR

Mohammad Hamid Ansari has written a book titled 'BY MANY A HAPPY ACCIDENT: Recollections of a Life'

The former vice president of India, Mohammad Hamid Ansari has written a book titled 'BY MANY A HAPPY ACCIDENT: Recollections of a Life'. The book narrates about the life and work of Mr. Ansari, from academia to professional diplomacy and then be co-opted in public life followed by acquiring the second highest office for two consecutive terms. The book has been published by the Rupa Publications India and has a foreword by Pranab Mukherjee. M. Hamid Ansari was the vice president of India and chairman of the Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms from 2007 to 2017.

Book titled 'Platform Scale: For a Post-Pandemic World' written by Sangeet Paul Choudary

Entrepreneur-author Sangeet Paul Choudary, has come out with his new book titled "Platform Scale: For a Post-Pandemic World". The book explains the importance of platform business models, their ability to scale rapidly and the factors that will cement their dominance in a post-pandemic world. The book is published by Penguin Random House India.

Home Minister releases book 'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha'

Home Minister Amit Shah today released a book 'Rashtra Pratham - 82 varshon ki Swarnim Gatha' in New Delhi. The book chronicles the glorious history of CRPF since its raising in 1939 and it has detailed and thoroughly researched accounts of CRPF's journey, challenges, successes, and sacrifices.



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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Amazon starts road testing Rivian electric vans

Amazon.com Inc. began testing the first lot of its Rivian Automotive Inc. electric delivery vans in Los Angeles as it works to fulfill a pledge to meet the goals of the Paris climate accord 10 years early.

ISRO to launch iBrazilian, Indian startup satellite in first mission of 2021

India's space agency Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch Brazilian satellite Amazonia-1 and three Indian payloads on 28 February in its first mission of 2021. The satellites, including one built by a home-grown start-up, are slated to be launched on board the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) C-51 at 10.24 am from the Sriharikota spaceport, said K Sivan, the secretary in the Department of Space and Chairman of Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO.

Xech designs India's first stethoscope sterilizer

XECH, India's emerging innovator brand, has launched XECH STEROSTET – one-of-its-kind and India's first Stethoscope Sterilizer which uses a special UV-C GI Technology to effectively sterilize stethoscopes diaphragms of all sizes up to 99.9999%.

Centre Launches new Instant Messaging platform 'Sandes'

The National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, has launched an instant messaging platform called "Sandes". Similar to WhatsApp, the new government instant messaging systems (GIMS) platform can be used for all kinds of communications by anyone using a mobile number or email id.

NASA lands its fifth rover 'Perseverance' on Mars successfully

The American space agency NASA successfully landed its fifth rover 'Perseverance' on Mars in a deep crater near the planet's equator called Jezero. It touched down the surface of Mars after successfully overcoming a risky landing phase known as the seven minutes of terror. The six-wheeled vehicle will now spend at least the next two years drilling into the local rocks, looking for evidence of past life.

DRDO conducts two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile

DRDO has conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM). The launches were carried out from a static vertical launcher from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha. VL-SRSAM is meant for neutralizing various aerial threats at close ranges including sea-skimming targets. The missiles were tested for minimum and maximum range. VL-SRSAM with Weapon Control System were deployed during the trials.



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ISRO to launch 19 satellites including Amazonia-1 of Brazil

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch the Amazonia-1 satellite of Brazil and 18 Co-passenger satellites through PSLVC51 rocket from the Sathish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota at 10.25 this morning. Amazonia-1 is the optical earth observation satellite of the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

SPORTS

Tamil Nadu beat Baroda by 7 wickets to lift second Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy

Tamil Nadu lifted the coveted Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy after defeating Baroda by seven wickets in the final at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad. This was Tamil Nadu's second Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (SMAT) triumph, after winning their first title way back in 2006-07. Baroda, who had won the title twice in the past (in 2011-12 and 2013-14), ended runners-up this time. It was a clinical campaign for Tamil Nadu who remained unbeaten throughout the league. Chasing 121 to win, they overhauled the target in 18 overs with 7 wickets to spare.

Former pacer Merv Hughes inducted into Australian Cricket Hall of Fame

Former right-arm fast bowler Merv Hughes has been inducted into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame. The 59-year-old played 53 Tests and 33 ODIs for Australia in a career spanning from 1985 to 1994, during which he captured 212 Test wickets and 38 ODI wickets.

Centre grants permission to BCCI to use drones for live aerial cinematography of India Cricket Season in 2021

Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have granted conditional exemption to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for the deployment of drones for live aerial cinematography of the India Cricket Season in 2021. The conditional exemption is valid till 31st of December 2021 from the date of issue of the letter or until the full operationalization of Digital Sky Platform-Phase-1.

Ravichandran Ashwin becomes first bowler to dismiss left-handers 200 times in Tests

Ravichandran Ashwin has become the first player in the 143-year history of Test cricket to take 200 wickets against left-handed batsmen. He achieved the feat during the second day of India's second Test against England at the MA Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai, his home ground. Stuart Broad was the 200th left-hander to be dismissed by Ashwin.



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Elise Mertens, Aryna Sabalenka win women's doubles title of Australian Open

In Tennis, the Belgian and Belarus pair of Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka has won the WOMEN'S doubles final of the Australian Open 2021. They defeated Barbora Krejckikova and Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic in straight sets of 6-2, 6-3.

Kings XI Punjab renamed as Punjab Kings ahead of IPL auction

The IPL Franchise, Kings XI Punjab has formally been renamed as Punjab Kings ahead of the Indian Premier League auction, which was held on February 18, 2021, in Chennai. The new brand name and logo of the team was officially released by the management on February 17, 2021.

Vivo is back as title sponsor for Indian Premier League 2021 Season

The Chinese mobile and technology company brand Vivo has returned as the title sponsors of IPL for the 2021 edition. This was informed by the Indian Premier League Governing Council chairman Brijesh Patel at the IPL 2021 Auction in Chennai on february 18, 2021. In 2018, Vivo acquired the IPL title sponsorship for Rs 2,199 crore in a five-year deal.

Chris Morris becomes costliest ever player at IPL auction for Rajasthan Royal

Chris Morris became the costliest ever player at an IPL auction for Rajastyhan Royal while Krishnappa Gowtham became the costliest Indian uncapped player for Chennai Super Kings at the IPL 2021 auction.

Naomi Osaka lifts Australian Open Women's title defeating Jennifer Brady

Japan's Naomi Osaka cemented her place as the outstanding star of the women's singles game by beating American Jennifer Brady in the Australian Open final to win her fourth Grand Slam title. Osaka remained unbeaten in major finals after a 6-4, 6-3 win in Melbourne.

Barbora Krejckikova of Czech Republic and Rajeev Ram of US won Australian Open Mixed Doubles title

Barbora Krejckikova of Czech Republic and Rajeev Ram of US clinched the Australian Open Mixed Doubles title. They defeated the Australian pair of Samantha Stosur and Matthew Ebden 6-1, 6-4 in the final match.

Karnataka to host second Khelo India University Games this year

Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju has announced that the second Khelo India University Games will be hosted by Karnataka. Addressing the media in Bengaluru along with Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, Mr Rijiju said that the largest University games in the country scheduled later this year will be held in Bengaluru in partnership with Association of Indian Universities.



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President inaugurates world's largest Cricket stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad; Renamed as 'Narendra Modi Stadium'

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly constructed world's largest Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium at Motera in Ahmedabad. President Kovind has also laid the foundation stone of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Sports Enclave at newly-built Cricket Stadium.

IOC names Australia as preferred bidder to host 2032 Olympic Games

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has named Brisbane, Australia as the preferred bidder to host the 2032 Olympic Games. The IOC's future host commission recommended that the body enter "targeted dialogue" with Brisbane bid organisers and the Australian Olympic Committee.

Indian men's skeet team wins bronze in ISSF World Cup

The Indian trio of Mairaj Ahmed Khan, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Gurjoat Khangura won the bronze medal in men's skeet team event at the International Shooting Sport Federation tournament (ISSF) Shotgun World Cup in Cairo.

INDEX / RANKINGS

India ranked 53rd in EIU's Democracy Index, Norway Tops

India's position has slipped by two places to be placed at 53rd spot in the 2020 Democracy Index, from among 167 countries. Democracy Index is the global ranking released by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide. The overall score of India is 6.61 in the Index, on a scale of 0-10. Norway has topped the Index.



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OBITUARY

Christopher Plummer, oldest Oscar winner in his 80s, Passed Away

Christopher Plummer, the Canadian actor who won awards for performances on stage and screen during a career that spanned six decades, has died. He was 91. Christopher Plummer acted in more than 125 films.

Former US Secretary of State George Shultz passed away

Former US Secretary of State, George Shultz who significantly shaped foreign policy in the late 20th Century, has died at the age of 100. He passed away at his home in California. He served three former Presidents - Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan - in various roles.

India Tennis Legend and Davis Cup Coach Akhtar Ali passed away

A former Davis Cup coach and legendary Indian tennis player, Akhtar Ali, has passed away, as he was suffering from Parkinson's disease and other health issues. He was 81. Akhtar Ali, was a father figure in Indian tennis. He represented India continuously in eight Davis Cups between 1958 and 1964 and was captain of Indian Davis Cup in 2008.

Indo-Pak War Veteran Retired Major General BK Mahapatra passes away

War veteran Major General (retired) Basant Kumar Mahapatra, who had participated in major battles including the 1962 Indo-China war, and 1965 and 1971 India-Pakistan war, has passed away. He was 87. He was popularly known as 'Tank Man'.

Former Governor of Bihar and Jharkhand M Rama Jois passes away

Former Governor of Bihar and Jharkhand M Rama Jois who had served as the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court has passed away. He was 89 years old. Retired Justice Rama Jois had also served as a Rajya Sabha member. During the Emergency he was imprisoned at Bengaluru along with Atal Bihari Vajpayee. A noted jurist, he wrote several books on ancient Indian law, Habeas Corpus law, Raja Dharma and Bharathiya way to lead purposeful life.

Former Union Minister and Veteran Congress Leader Captain Satish Sharma passes away

Veteran Congress leader and former Union Minister Captain Satish Sharma passed away in Goa after a brief illness, and suffering from cancer. He was 73. He served as the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas from 1993 to 1996 in the Narasimha Rao government.

Poet Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri passes away

Vishnu Narayanan Namboothiri, the award-winning poet and academic whose verses reflected a serene blend of tradition and modernity, passed away in Thiruvananthapuram. He was 81. The nation honoured him with the Padma Shri in 2014.



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