

## National

### Government launches new geospatial planning portal, 'Yuktdhara'

The government on Monday launched a new geospatial planning portal, "Yuktdhara", which Union Minister Jitendra Singh said will help in facilitating new MGNREGA assets using remote sensing and geographic information system-based data. He also said that the portal will serve as a repository of geotags created under various national rural development programmes.

The "Yuktdhara" portal was launched by Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Giriraj Singh. The name given is very apt as the word "Yukt" is derived from "Yojanam" (planning) and "Dhara" indicates flow, said Jitendra Singh, who is the minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office. He is also in charge of the Department of Space.

"This platform will serve as a repository of assets (geotags) created under various national rural development programmes i.e. MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, Per Drop More Crop programme and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, along with field photographs," he said. The new portal under Bhuvan "Yuktdhara", which has been released today, will facilitate planning of new MGNREGA assets using remote sensing and GIS (geographic information system)-based information.

### Govt launches major initiatives of National Education Policy 2020 to make education more inclusive

The Government today launched various initiatives of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to make education more inclusive and prepare students for 21st century. Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan along with Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Dr Virender Kumar launched these initiatives in New Delhi.

A booklet on one-year achievements of the National Education Policy Implementation was unveiled. The Ministers also launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy Bharat FLN tools. Along with, 'Priya'- Accessibility booklet, resources on DIKSHA platform, virtual school on National Institute of Open Schooling, Alternate Academic Calendar 2021-22 of NCERT, were also launched to mark the occasion.

### Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launches Vaccinate India Programme in Bengaluru

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has launched the Vaccinate India Programme in Bengaluru. The programme is organised by the Planning, Programme Implementation and Statistics department along with Sustainable Goals centre and Give India Foundation. It aims at educating the masses about the necessity to vaccinate and clear misconceptions. Speaking on the occasion, the Vice President said that vaccine is the most effective shield against Covid 19.

The event was held in Raj Bhavan today in the presence of Governor Thawarchand Gehlot, Chief Minister Basavaraj S Bommai, Health Minister Dr. K Sudhakar and Member of Parliament P C Mohan. The Vaccinate India programme aims at educating masses on the importance of vaccination, removing misconception and laying emphasis on following Covid protocol to mitigate the pandemic.

The Vice President launched the programme by symbolically inoculating two women. Speaking during the launch event today, the Chief Minister said that the deprived sections of the society must be given the vaccine first. He called upon the private sector and philanthropists to come forward to organise vaccination camps for such persons.

# **1st edition of NERDSD Goal Index Report & Dashboard 2021-22 launched on 26th Aug**

First edition of the North Eastern Region District Sustainable Development Goal Index Report and Dashboard 2021-22 will be launched on the 26th of this month by NITI Aayog and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. This is the first of its kind region-wide district SDG index in the country.

It is also a milestone in the efforts towards localising the Sustainable Development Goals in the 120 Districts of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

The index will facilitate in identifying crucial gaps and inform interventions to fast track progress towards achieving the SDGs. The North Eastern Region District SDG Index Report and Dashboard is a collaborative effort by NITI Aayog and DoNER Ministry. United Nation Development Programme is providing technical support.

## **India to host second UNWGIC next year**

India will host the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC) in October 2022, at Hyderabad, and the theme decided for the next year is- "Towards Geo-enabling the Global Village."

At a curtain-raiser on August 16, 2021, the global geospatial information community was informed that the second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress (UNWGIC), will be hosted by India in October next year, and their input was used for designing the content of the event.

The curtain raiser was held on the sidelines of the UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM), eleventh session, which will take place at the end of this month.

## **'Operation Devi Shakti': India evacuates more than 800 people from Afghanistan**

Thousands of Afghans have been crowding around the Kabul airport for nearly a week in a desperate attempt to flee the country fearing the Taliban's brutality. India is carrying out the evacuation missions in coordination with the US and several other countries. India on Tuesday gave a name to its operation to evacuate its citizens from war-torn Afghanistan. External affairs minister S Jaishankar called it 'Operation Devi Shakti' and saluted the efforts of Indian Air Force and Air India.

India has so far evacuated more than 800 people since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan. Nearly 200 more Afghan Sikhs and Hindus are still stranded in Afghanistan. These people have taken shelter at the Karte Parwan gurdwara in Kabul, which is close to the airport, according to Puneet Singh Chandhok, president of the Indian World Forum which has been coordinating the evacuation efforts with the Ministry of External Affairs and the IAF.

## **Four-day Naval Exercise Malabar-2021 begins on 26 Aug**

Indian Navy is participating in the sea phase of Exercise Malabar-2021 along with the US Navy (USN), Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) and the Royal Australian Navy (RAN). The four-day exercise beginning today includes participation of INS Shivalik and INS Kadmat and P8I patrol aircraft.

The US Navy will be represented by USS Barry, USNS Rappahannock, USNS Big Horn and P8A patrol aircraft. The Japanese Maritime Self-Defence Force will be represented by J.S. Kaga, Murasame and Shiranui, in addition to a submarine and P1 patrol aircraft. The Royal Australian Navy will be represented by HMAS Warramunga.

MALABAR-21 would witness complex exercises including anti-surface, anti-air and anti-submarine warfare drill and other manoeuvres and tactical exercises. The exercise will provide an opportunity for participating navies to derive benefit from each other's expertise and experiences.

The conduct of the exercise while observing health protocols during the COVID-19 global pandemic is a testimony to the synergy between the participating navies and shared vision for a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.

## **Nityanand Rai attends UNESCAP Regional Conversation Series 2021: Ministerial Panel on Disaster, Climate and Health Resilience**

Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai on Wednesday attended the UNESCAP Regional Conversation Series 2021: Ministerial Panel on Disaster, Climate and Health Resilience, through video conferencing. The conference was also attended by ministers from Australia, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Maldives, Papua New Guinea and Thailand.

In his address, the Minister said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi always believes in working in cooperation with the world. Mr Rai said that natural disasters in the midst of the pandemic have multiplied the hardships and sufferings of people, particularly the poor and vulnerable segment. He also said there is much to be satisfied from India's achievements in the area of Disaster Risk Management over the last two decades. He stressed that there is a need to direct more efforts towards reducing the risk of losses from known disasters. Sharing India's experiences in handling challenge of COVID-19, the Minister said that India is actively engaged in addressing this global challenge with the global community and will continue to stand with the global community.

## **India's First Solar Fishing Boats Will Be Ready In Kerala Soon**

India will get its first sea-going solar fishing boats by Dec 2021 at Vypeen and Munambam in Kerala. It is funded by Shell Foundation which is the charity arm of British-Dutch petroleum company. A total of five boats are in various stages of development and the works are done by a startup named NavAlt Solar and Electric Boats. Shell Foundation is supporting the project with Rs 5 crore, which includes the cost of developing the boats as well as financing the buyers to cover the extra cost compared to a traditional boat.

CEO of NavAlt, Sandith Thandasherry said there are over 2.5 lakh small fishing boats in India and 1.13 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> are released/tonne of live weight of marine fish netted. He also mentioned that as per estimates, a conventional small boat will consume 2,500 litres of fuel/year, which results in 5-6 tonnes of carbon emissions/year. Multiplied by 2.5 lakh boats in India, it gives the size of carbon emission, which is massive in terms of environmental impact.

NavAlt had launched a solar water taxi and the country's first solar ferry in Kerala.

## **PM Modi inaugurates renovated Jallianwala Bagh memorial complex, says country's duty to protect its history**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that it is every country's duty to protect its history as events of the past "teach us and give us direction to move forward".

While virtually inaugurating the Jallianwala Bagh memorial complex and paying homage to the martyrs, PM Modi said, "The global developments remind us of the importance of self-reliance and self-confidence. At a time when we are celebrating Amrit Mahotsav, we should strengthen our nation's foundation and take pride in it."

A wreath-laying ceremony was held and a two-minute silence was observed in the memory of martyrs of the 1919 Jallianwala massacre. "Today, if any Indian is in trouble anywhere in the world, then India stands up to help him with all its might." PM Modi said while dedicating the memorial to the nation.

## **e-GOPALA web version launched to aid daily farmers**

E-GOPALA, the web version developed by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) has been launched to aid dairy farmers. With it, the i-MAP web portal was also launched that provides real-time information to dairy farmers for better productivity of dairy animals.

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala, while launching the portal said that NDDB is promoting technology-driven activities for milk producers to help realize the dream of a digital India.

### **E-GOPALA & the benefits**

E-GOPALA App is a comprehensive breed improvement marketplace and information portal for the direct use of farmers. While launching the app in 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said that the e-Gopala app will be a digital medium that would help livestock owners to choose advanced livestock. This app will give all information related to productivity, health, and diet to the cattle owners.

The e-Gopala digital platform let farmers manage livestock including buying and selling of disease-free germplasm in all forms; check the availability of quality breeding services (artificial insemination, veterinary first aid, vaccination, treatment, etc) and guiding farmers for animal nutrition, treatment of animals using appropriate ayurvedic medicine/ethnoveterinary medicine.

## **Dr. B K Misra, first Indian to receive the AANS International Lifetime Achievement Award in Neurosurgery**

Dr. B K Misra, Head of the Department of Surgery, Head, Division of Neurosurgery & Gamma Knife Radiosurgery, P D Hinduja Hospital & Medical Research Centre, received the International Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) at its Annual Scientific Meeting 2021, Orlando. He is the first Indian ever to be bestowed with this award. The felicitation ceremony was conducted through an online event amidst the pandemic.

AANS, the world's most prestigious apex body of neurosurgeons, has bestowed its highest international distinction honoring Dr. Misra's lifetime of achievements in neurosurgery in India and globally. Dr. Misra is Honorary President of Asian Australasian Society of Neurological Surgeons (AASNS), is the 1st Vice President of World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS), and President of the World Federation of Skull Base Societies, all leading international neurosurgical societies.

Dr. Misra has a long list of "firsts" to his name. He was the first to execute Image-Guided Aneurysm Microsurgery globally and the first in South Asia to perform Gamma Knife Radiosurgery. Acoustic Neuroma Surgery, Vascular Neurosurgery (Aneurysm, AVM), Skull Base Surgery, Pituitary Surgery, Gamma Knife Radiosurgery, Awake Craniotomy, Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery, and Surgery of Complex Brain and Spine Disorder are among Dr. B. K. Misra's areas of expertise in neurosurgical patient care. He was the first neurosurgeon to do Awake Craniotomy for brain tumors in India. He's also the recipient of the prestigious Dr. B C Roy National Award as Eminent Medical Person of the Year, 2018 (the Highest Medical Award in India).

## **Uttar Pradesh govt decides to name two medical institutes after Kalyan Singh**

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath took the decision keeping in view Kalyan Singh's focus on works of public welfare, state government officials said.

"Chief minister Yogi Adityanath has decided to name Bulandshahr's medical college and Lucknow super speciality cancer institute after Kalyan Singh. After the decision, the two institutes would now be known as Kalyan Singh Rajkiya Medical College, Bulandshahr and Kalyan Singh super speciality cancer institute, Chak Ganjaria, Lucknow," officers at the chief minister's office confirmed. Former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh died in Lucknow on August 21.

## **Three cities in State certified 'Water Plus' tag**

Three cities from the State were awarded 'Water Plus' certification out of a total of nine cities across the country, by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation and Tirupati Municipal Corporation, the three big urban local bodies in the State, were among them, according to a release. Andhra Pradesh is the only State in the country to have more than one Water Plus city.

The certification was awarded under the Swachh Bharat Mission and Swachh Survekshan assessment. The certification is awarded to cities with best practices in the safe discharge of sewage and faecal sludge, safe cleaning of sewer and septic tanks using mechanised equipment, availability of desludging vehicles, jetting machines, treatment of sewage, and installation of grate screens among other parameters.

## **'Without Ram, Ayodhya is not Ayodhya': President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates Ramayan conclave**

President Ram Nath Kovind visited the temple town of Ayodhya on Sunday and inaugurated a Ramayan conclave in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and others.

President Kovind said that this event is very important to promote cultural and religious tourism. Emphasising the importance of Lord Ram in the context of the city, President Ram Nath Kovind took to Twitter and wrote, "The popularity of Ram Katha is not only in India but worldwide. There are many readable forms of Ramkatha, including Ramcharit-Manas of Goswami Tulsidas in north India, Kritis Ramayana in the eastern part of India, Kamban Ramayana in the south." He added that there was neither discrimination in 'Ramraj', nor was there a law of punishment. "The lines of Ramcharitmanas give hope."

## **Ladakh gets its first highest mobile digital movie theatre in world**

Ladakh had its first mobile digital movie theatre at an altitude of 11,562 feet which makes it the highest theatre in the world. To bring cinema watching experience to most remote areas, a mobile theatre situated at an altitude of 11,562 feet was introduced in the Paldan area of Leh in Ladakh.

At the screening ceremony, Mepham Otsal, a theatre artist from the National School of Drama, while speaking to ANI, said, "It offers affordable tickets and has several facilities. The seating arrangement is also good. Being a theatre artist, it's very good for the people here as it will open a gate to the world of art and cinema."

Sushil, an organizer, said, "There would be four such theatres established in Leh. The initiative was taken to bring the movie experience to the remotest areas of India and can be expanded to the rest of the country. Theatres are arranged in a way so that it can operate in -28 degree Celcius."

## **Guwahati: Sarbananda Sonowal announces Skill Institute on Marine Studies**

Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Sarbananda Sonowal announced the setting up of a Skill Institute on Marine Studies at Guwahati in Assam under Indian Maritime University, Chennai. Sonowal unveiled his strategies to boost inland waterways in Assam for a rejuvenated economy and trade resurgence for the Northeast India. The union minister also announced the setting up of a Skill Institute on Marine Studies at Guwahati in Assam under Indian Maritime University, Chennai. This Government declared 20 waterways as National Waterways in 2016.

## **India elected to Council of Administration at 27th UPU Congress in Abidjan**

India has been elected to the Council of Administration(CA) at 27th Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress in Abidjan. India with 134 votes got highest votes in CA elections from South Asia and Oceania region. India was also elected with 106 votes out of 156 countries to the Postal Operations Council (POC) at the 27th UPU Congress in Abidjan.

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar has said India's election to the Council of Administration and the Postal Operations Council of Universal Postal Union yesterday is noteworthy. In a tweet, the Minister congratulated External Affairs Ministry team and said they will work with all to strengthen cooperation in the Universal Postal Union.

## **Foreign Secy Harsh Vardhan Shringla chairs UNSC meeting on situation in Middle East**

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla is now chairing United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting on the situation in the Middle East. India currently holds the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council for the month of August. Mr Shringla reached New York yesterday evening.

The Foreign Secretary will attend events relating to the wrap up session of India's UNSC Presidency. After his engagements in New York, Mr Shringla will visit Washington DC for India-US bilateral consultations.

The UN Security Council is likely to adopt a resolution on Afghanistan later today. India is the President of the UN Security Council for the month of August. The discussion on the situation in Somalia and the Middle east is underway. If adopted, it would be the first resolution on Afghanistan at the UN Security Council this month. Earlier this month, External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar presided over an emergency session at the UN Security Council in the wake of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

## **India to host conference on International Climate Summit 2020-21 on Sept 3**

India is going to host a very important conference on International Climate Summit 2020-21 on September 3, 2021. Director of CSIR, National Chemical Laboratory, Dr. Ashish Lele has underlined the importance of the conference for the future mitigation strategies of climate change.

While speaking to AIR he stressed on the need to adopt these strategies and the problems arose due to dependence on conventional fuels.

## **Defence minister Rajnath Singh to commission Vigraha, indigenous patrol vessel**

Union defence minister Rajnath Singh is set to commission the Indian Coast Guard (ICG)'s offshore patrol vessel (OPV) Vigraha, seventh in the series, on Saturday, his office has said. According to the defence ministry, the 98-meter vessel will be based in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam (Vizag) and will be operated by a company of 11 officers and 110 sailors. The ship was designed and built indigenously by the Larsen & Toubro Ship Building Limited, the defence ministry statement had informed.

The Vigraha is equipped with advanced radars, the latest in navigation and communication technology, the ministry said. The sensors and machinery present in the ship make it capable of operating in tropical sea conditions. Vigraha, the Indian Coast Guard's indigenously-built offshore patrol vessel, will be commissioned by Union defence minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday.

## **Govt to launch special incentive scheme to support 75 start-ups**

Government will soon launch a Special Incentives scheme to support 75 Start-Ups in areas of Telemedicine, Digital Health and Artificial Intelligence to coincide with the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. The scheme will be launched by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, BIRAC, a Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Biotechnology. This was disclosed by Science and Technology Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, while interacting with the Board of Directors of BIRAC in New Delhi today.

BIRAC has been promoting and supporting new ventures under the Startup India and Make in India programmes in the areas of Biotechnology ecosystem growth. The BIRAC has lent funding support of over two thousand 128 crore rupees to more than one thousand 500 Startups, and Small and Medium-sized enterprises.

## **24x7 Mental Health Helpline 'SUKOON' inaugurated at SDRF Headquarters, Jammu**

In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Commandant General, Home Guards and SDRF, V.K Singh and Principal Government Medical College, Jammu, Dr. Shashi Sudan today inaugurated SUKOON, a 24x7 Mental Health Helpline at SDRF Headquarters, Jammu.

Mr. V. K Singh emphasized that the helpline shall offer guidance to persons or their well-wishers who are experiencing mental problems or mental health emergency and pandemic induced psychologists stress.

## **MFI, Assam govt sign MoU for microfinance incentive and relief scheme**

Microfinance Institutions Network (MFIN) on Tuesday said 37 microlenders and the Assam government have signed an MoU for joint implementation of the Assam Microfinance Incentive and Relief Scheme (AMFIRS), 2021.

AMFIRS is aimed at providing financial relief from the government to the microfinance borrowers in Assam to help them continue maintaining good credit discipline in COVID times.

The MOU lays down duties and responsibilities of the two parties Assam government and lenders including six universal banks, 25 NBFC MFI, two NBFCs, and four small finance banks for ensuring successful implementation of the scheme, a release said. The scheme will provide incentives to clients who are regular in repayments and help overdue clients become regular. It is expected to benefit more than 20 lakh women borrowers in the state, it said.

## **Sonu Sood meets Arvind Kejriwal, made brand ambassador of Delhi's mentorship programme**

Actor Sonu Sood, who met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at his official residence on Friday, was announced the brand ambassador of the state government's mentorship programme for school students.

After the meeting, Sood told reporters that "as of now, we have not discussed anything political". The actor, who received widespread acclaim for his charitable interventions during the Covid-19 lockdowns, belongs to Punjab which is headed to the polls. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, AAP's Punjab co-incharge Raghav Chadha and Chandigarh-based entrepreneur Karan Gilhotra were also present during the meeting.

Under the mentorship programme — Desh ke mentors — the Delhi government will rope in prominent names from various walks of life to guide students coming from underprivileged backgrounds.

# **International**

## **Bangladesh ranks first in the world for breastfeeding**

India stands at 79, Nepal at 39 and Maldives at 19. In a silver lining in the pandemic era, Bangladesh has ranked first in the world in supporting lactating women. The World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi) has congratulated Bangladesh for having achieved the status of “green” nation, along with Sri Lanka. Only two countries out of 98 have achieved this status so far. Bangladesh got rank number one by scoring 91.5 out of 100.

This is based on its performance on 10 indicators of policies and programs the WBTi uses to colour-code and rank countries. In an ascending order of performance, the colour codes are red, yellow, blue and green.

## **Kathy Hochul, New York's first female governor of New York**

Kathy Hochul became the first female governor of New York on Tuesday, inheriting immense challenges as she takes over an administration facing criticism for inaction during Andrew Cuomo's distracted final months in office.

Hochul, a Democrat and former member of Congress from Western New York, took the oath of office just after midnight in a brief, private event overseen by the state's chief judge, Janet DiFiore.

Cuomo left office at 12:00 a.m., two weeks after he announced he would resign rather than face an impeachment battle that seemed inevitable after a report by independent investigators, overseen by Attorney General Letitia James, concluded he had sexually harassed 11 women.

## **Indian Navy with INS Ranvijay & INS Kora carries out Maritime Partnership Exercise with Philippine Navy**

Two ships of the Indian Navy, namely INS Ranvijay and INS Kora who are on deployment to the Western Pacific carried out a Maritime Partnership Exercise with Frigate BRP Antonio Luna of the Philippine Navy today in the West Philippine Sea. The joint evolutions conducted during the exercise included several operational manoeuvres and the participating ships of both navies were satisfied with the consolidation of interoperability achieved through this operational interaction at sea.

The Indian naval ships are currently deployed to the Western Pacific with an aim to strengthen maritime security collaboration with partner nations. The interaction with BRP Antonio Luna was, therefore, an enriching opportunity for the Indian Navy to consolidate its bilateral relations with the Philippine Navy. In compliance with the prevailing pandemic guidelines, the exercise was conducted in contactless manner and all necessary health and safety protocols were strictly observed. After the exercise, the Indian naval ships are scheduled to call at Manila Port for replenishment.

## **Marion Cotillard to be honoured with lifetime achievement award at San Sebastian film festival**

Oscar-winning French actress Marion Cotillard will receive a lifetime achievement award at Spain's San Sebastian film festival next month, organisers said Tuesday. After the triumph of Cannes with the premiere of *Annette*, Marion Cotillard will receive the Donostia Award at the 69th San Sebastian Film Festival. The French actress will be awarded together with Johnny Depp, in this Zinemaldia that will be held from September 17 to 25. She will be presented with the honorary award at the opening ceremony, which will include a screening of the short *Rosa Rosae*. The Civil War, by Carlos Saura, and the feature film *Yi miao zhong / One Second*, by Zhang Yimou.

Cotillard was born in Paris, surrounded by a family of artists, and made her way to the international scene that has catapulted her into large film projects in the Hollywood industry. Winner of the Oscar, Golden Globe and BAFTA Award for her portrayal of Édith Piaf in *La Vie en Rose*, she has collaborated with great filmmakers: from Christopher Nolan to Leos Carax.

She made her debut with *Love me if you dare*, the French film that catapulted her to fame. Although it was her award-winning interpretation of Piaf that opened the doors to most projects in the US market, with films such as *Public Enemies*, *Origen* or *Midnight in Paris*.

## **Gissar Military Aerodrome — India's first overseas base that came to the rescue in Afghan crisis**

Gissar Military Aerodrome (GMA), India's first overseas base operated along with Tajikistan and aimed at giving a strategic heft to their military operations and training, has come in handy in India's effort to evacuate hundreds of its citizens and Afghans from Kabul, overrun by the Taliban since last Sunday. The GMA, popularly known as the Ayni airbase named after the village Ayni, is just west of the Tajik capital Dushanbe. It has been administered by India along with Tajikistan for nearly two decades.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and former Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa had a key role in setting up the base, which was funded by the Ministry of External Affairs, sources said.

Though outside the public eye, the base has come under the spotlight because of the ongoing evacuation process from Afghanistan during which C-17 and C-130 J transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force besides an Air India aircraft have used the Tajikistan airbase. A C-130 J aircraft, for instance, airlifted 87 Indians from Kabul and landed in Tajikistan. The evacuees were eventually picked up by an Air India flight that took off from the Ayni airbase and brought back to India.

## **China, Pakistan, Thailand, Mongolia to hold military exercise “Shared Destiny-2021”**

The armed force of the country China, Pakistan, Mongolia and Thailand will take part in a multinational peacekeeping exercise named “Shared Destiny-2021”. The exercise will be held in China in the month of September 2021. The four countries will take part in the first multinational peacekeeping live exercise “Shared Destiny-2021” at the combined-arms tactical training base of the PLA in Henan’s Queshan County.

All the four countries will dispatch more than 1,000 troops to participate in the drills, involving units of infantry, fast response, security, helicopter, engineering, transportation and medical services. The scenario of the exercise is joint operations of multinational peacekeeping forces and the exercise will be held in a close-to-real battlefield environment set in accordance with the international, professional and realistic combat standards.

## **World's first crewless, zero emissions cargo ship will set sail in Norway**

If all goes to plan, the ship will make its first journey between two Norwegian towns before the end of the year, with no crew onboard. Instead, its movements will be monitored from three onshore data control centers.

It's not the first autonomous ship -- an autonomous ferry launched in Finland in 2018 -- but it is the first fully electric container ship, say its makers. Developed by chemical company Yara International, the Yara Birkeland was designed to reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides, which are toxic pollutants and greenhouse gases, and carbon dioxide, as well as moving freight away from roads to the sea.

The shipping industry currently accounts for between 2.5% and 3% of global greenhouse gases emissions, according to the International Maritime Organization.

Nearly all of Norway's electricity is generated by hydroelectric power, which is generally considered to have much lower carbon emissions than burning fossil fuels, although it still produces greenhouse gases.

First conceptualized in 2017, the ship was created in partnership with technology firm Kongsberg Maritime and shipbuilder Vard. Capable of carrying 103 containers and with a top speed of 13 knots, it will use a 7 MWh battery, with "about a thousand times the capacity of one electrical car," according to Jon Sletten, plant manager for Yara's factory in Porsgrunn, Norway.

## **FM Nirmala Sitharaman launches EASE 4.0, reviews performance of public sector banks**

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday undertook the annual performance review of the public sector banks (PSBs) and launched the EASE 4.0 or Enhanced Access and Service Excellence – a common reform agenda for PSBs aimed at institutionalising clean and smart banking.

Sitharaman, who is currently on a two-day visit to Mumbai met the chiefs of PSBs and undertook the annual performance review of the public sector lenders, said that she requested PSU banks to address the needs of the exporters.

This was the finance minister's first visit since the onset of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

## **RBI appoints Ajay Kumar as Executive Director**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Ajay Kumar as its Executive Director (ED) with effect from August 20, 2021.

Mr. Kumar will look after the Department of Currency Management, the Foreign Exchange Department and the Premises Department, the RBI said in a release. Before being promoted as ED, he was heading the New Delhi Regional Office of the RBI as its Regional Director.

In his approximately three-decade-long career at the RBI, Mr. Kumar has served in various departments, including foreign exchange, banking supervision, financial inclusion, currency management.

## **NITI Aayog releases North Eastern Region District SDG Index and Dashboard**

Index measures performance of districts on sustainable development goals and their corresponding targets, and then ranks them. NITI Aayog, on Thursday, released the first edition of the North-Eastern Region District Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Index and Dashboard 2021–22. "East Sikkim tops the chart."

It is designed and developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) with technical inputs from the United Nations Development Programme and consultations with all the north-eastern States – who are the primary stakeholders of this tool. The Index measures the performance of the districts of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura on the SDG and their corresponding targets, and ranks the districts based on the same.

The index is based on NITI Aayog's SDG India Index – the principal and official tool for monitoring progress on SDGs at the national, State, and Union Territory level.

## **HDFC Bank's \$1-billion global AT-1 bond issue priced at 3.7%**

HDFC Bank's maiden Additional Tier-1 (AT-1) capital bonds issue worth \$1 billion has been tightly priced at 3.7 per cent compared to initial indicative yield of 4.12 per cent. Market sources said the response was strong with demand in the region of \$4 billion-\$4.5 billion. Prominent investors in the offering include GIC, Fidelity.

Bankers who managed the issue were international players like Bank of America, Barclays and Standard Chartered. The road shows for bonds opened on Monday & covered 125 investors. Rating agency Moody's has assigned "Ba3" rating to HDFC Bank's AT-1 capital bonds.

The Ba3 rating is three notches below the bank's baa3 Baseline Credit Assessment (BCA), reflecting the probability of impairment associated with non-cumulative coupon suspension. The rating also factors in the likelihood of high loss severity when the bank reaches the point of non-viability. This was the bank's maiden AT-1 bond offering in the international market to raise debt capital. This opens the US market for Indian lenders to tap the market with such an offering, merchant bankers said.

## **India, Maldives to sign pact on Greater Male Connectivity Project**

India and Maldives on Thursday will sign a contract on the mega Greater Male Connectivity project (GMCP), the largest infrastructure project in the country.

The project, funded by an Indian grant of \$100 m and a Line of Credit of \$400 m is also the biggest new development project by India in its neighbourhood in recent years. The project, the largest in the Indian Ocean atoll nation, will begin with the signing of the contract between the Maldives government and Indian infrastructure company AFCONS in Male.

Called the Greater Male Connectivity Project, it will involve the construction of a 6.74 km long bridge and causeway link connecting the capital Male with the adjoining islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.

## **Navies of India and Germany conducted a joint exercise in Gulf of Aden on August 26, 2021**

### **Key Facts**

- The joint exercise included helicopter landings as well as search & seizure operations.
- Frigate 'Trikand' from Indian Navy exercised with German frigate called 'Bayern'.
- INS Trikand is deployed for anti-piracy patrol in Gulf of Aden region.

Significance of the exercise: The exercise between both the navies in the Indian Ocean leg of Indo-Pacific Deployment 2021 enhanced the interoperability and facilitated exchange of best practices between them in the maritime domain.

### **India-Germany Defence ties**

Navies of India and Germany conducted the first ever joint exercises in 2008 after both the nations signed an 'anti-piracy co-operation agreement' in 2006. Both the countries currently maintain an ongoing dialogue in the arena of commercial maritime security and cooperation in the area of anti-terrorism.

## **Expedition discovers island believed world's northernmost**

A team of Arctic researchers from Denmark say they accidentally discovered what they believe is the world's northernmost island located off Greenland's coast.

The scientists from the University of Copenhagen initially thought they had arrived at Oodaaq, an island discovered by a Danish survey team in 1978, to collect samples during an expedition that was conducted in July.

They instead wound up on an undiscovered island further north. The yet-to-be-named island is 780 meters north of Oodaaq, an island off Cape Morris Jesup, the northernmost point of Greenland and one of the most northerly points of land on Earth.

## **Water World Becomes First Colorado Theme Park Designated As Certified Autism Center**

Water World is a beloved place for many Coloradans with a long and rich history of serving the community. The park is full of fun summer sounds, tastes and smells and it has plenty of things to touch and see.

When COVID-19 closed Water World during the summer of 2020 the staff kept busy with several new projects. One of those included making the park more inclusive for people with autism. Kymberly Botelho and her daughter Sloan love to visit Water World. Sloan was just diagnosed with autism in February.

To better serve guests with autism Water World has implemented a number of new features this year, including a low sensory room, located on a hill just above the Thunder Bay Wave Pool. It provides a quiet space for a family to go if they have an autistic family member that needs a break from the stimulation of the park.

## **Hakainde Hichilema: Zambia's new president inspires African opposition leaders**

Zambia's veteran opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema has been sworn in as president in front of a packed stadium in the capital, Lusaka. His election has raised the hopes of his counterparts in other African states that they too can overcome state repression and one day rise to power.

During a long political career that saw him fail in five previous bids to become president, Mr Hichilema was brutalised, tear-gassed and even detained for a traffic offence in 2017 that was deemed treasonous after his convoy failed to give way to the motorcade of outgoing President Edgar Lungu. But in an extraordinary reversal of his fortunes, the man once declared an enemy of the state was sworn in as Zambia's seventh president after defeating Mr Lungu in their latest election duel on 12 Aug.

## **Business & Economy**

### **Infosys becomes 4th Indian company to touch \$100 bn market capitalisation**

Infosys on Tuesday became the fourth Indian company to touch a market valuation of \$100 billion. The IT services major has joined the league of TCS, Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank for crossing the \$100 billion-mark in terms of market capitalisation (m-cap).

The milestone was achieved during the morning trade when the scrip was trading at its 52-week high value of Rs 1,755.6 on the BSE, which took the m-cap to Rs 7.47 trillion or \$100.78 billion. However, during the close of the trading session, it pared the earlier gains and settled 1.06 per cent lower at Rs 1,720.75.

According to the latest m-cap data, RIL is the most-valued firm at Rs 13.7 trillion, followed by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) at Rs 13.4 trillion and HDFC Bank at Rs 8.42 trillion.

## **RBI to put in place a “PRISM” to strengthen compliance by lenders**

The platform is a web-based end-to-end workflow automation system

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is putting in place a Platform for Regulated Entities for Integrated Supervision and Monitoring (PRISM), a web-based end-to-end workflow automation system, to strengthen compliance by supervised entities (SEs).

This comes in the backdrop of continuous engagement and more frequent reviews of risk profiles and supervisory assessments being envisaged for supervised entities, including banks and non-banking financial companies. This is aimed at helping supervised entities to strengthen their internal defences and resilience and bringing focus on root cause analysis (RCA).

PRISM will have various functionalities (inspection; compliance; incident functionality for cyber security; complaints; and returns functionalities), with built-in remediation workflows, time tracking, notifications and alerts, management information system (MIS) reports and dashboards.

## **Colgate launches the first recyclable toothpaste tube**

Since the beginning of March, the toothpaste “Smile for Good” has been available in German stores – in the first tube made of 100 percent recyclable plastic. Colgate engineers spent five years tinkering with the material, which both protects the product and is comfortable to use.

Toothpaste tubes pose a problem for recycling. They typically consist of several layers of different plastics with aluminum foil embedded in them. Since the different layers cannot be separated again, it is practically impossible to recycle them in the conventional way. Colgate’s new tube is made of high-density polyethylene (HDPE), which is also used in the U.S. food industry to make plastic milk bottles. Up to now, it has been considered too stiff and brittle to produce, say, a squeezable tube. This is precisely the major challenge in the switch to monomaterials, which many manufacturers are currently supporting.

Colgate-Palmolive is the first oral care brand in India to launch such an initiative nationally. The innovation is enabled by EPL's Association of Plastic Recyclers, USA (APR) approved 100% recyclable and fully recyclable Platina Tubes for packing Colgate Active Salt and Colgate Vedshakti.

## **India's ReNew Power to list on Nasdaq, aims to raise \$1 billion**

ReNew Power, India's leading renewable energy independent power producer (IPP), will raise about \$1 billion from its public listing on the Nasdaq tomorrow. It will be the **first Indian top renewable company** to go global and get listed in the US market.

ReNew will combine its business with RMG Acquisition Corporation II, a blank cheque company, which raised \$345 million in its December 14, 2020 initial public offer (IPO) in the US. The combined new entity - ReNew Energy Global PLC - will have a market capitalisation of over \$4 billion.

## **Centre approves IBA's proposal to increase family pension to 30% of last salary drawn**

The Central Government has approved to increase the family pension of bank employees to 30 per cent of last salary drawn. This move would make family pension go up to as much as 30,000 rupees to 35,000 rupees per family of bank employees. This proposal was given by the Indian Banks' Association's proposal in order to provide relief to families of Bank Employees.

This was announced by the Secretary, Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, at a press meet addressed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Mumbai yesterday.

Secretary Debashish Panda informed that in continuation of the 11th bi-partite settlement on wage revision of public sector bank employees, which was signed by the IBA with the unions on 11th November last year, there was a proposal for enhancement of family pension and also the employers' contribution under the National Pension Scheme.

## **UCBs: RBI panel for four-tier structure**

The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) expert committee on urban co-operative banks (UCBs) has suggested a four-tiered structure to regulate them, based on size of deposits.

The committee, headed by former RBI Deputy Governor NS Vishwanathan, has proposed setting up an umbrella organisation (UO) to oversee co-operative banks and suggested that they should be allowed to open more branches if they meet all regulatory requirements.

In its report, the panel said the RBI should not hesitate to use the route of mandatory merger to resolve UCBs that do not meet the prudential requirements. Beginning 2004-05 till March 2020, UCBs have undergone 136 mergers, with Maharashtra accounting for over half of them, closely followed by Gujarat.

## **Labour Ministry launches National Database for Unorganised Workers on 26 August**

Labour Ministry on August 26 launched the National Database for Unorganised Workers or the E-Shram portal. It is a platform for registering an estimated 38 crore informal and unorganised workers including construction workers, gig and platform workers, street vendors, domestic, agriculture and migrant workers, and other similar sub-groups of unorganised workers.

"For the first time in the History of India, a system is being made to register 38 crore Unorganised Workers. It will not only register them but would also be helpful in delivering of various social security schemes being implemented by the central and state governments," Labour Minister Bhupendra Yadav said.

All informal workers will be allotted an E-Shram card containing a 12-digit UAN for availing the benefits of various social security schemes announced by the government. The 12-digit UAN will be valid throughout the country. An estimated four lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) across the country will facilitate in the registration of unorganised workers.

## **RBI announces issue price for Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2021-22 - Series VI**

Reserve Bank of India has announced issue price for Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2021-22 - Series VI. RBI has fixed price of 4,732 Rupee per gram for bonds which will be available for subscription from Monday and will remain open till 3rd September 2021.

A discount of Rupees 50 will be given to investors applying in online mode. The nominal value of the bond is based on the simple average closing price published by India Bullion and Jewellers Association for gold of 999 purity of the last three business days.

## **Agriculture minister Tomar launches national food and nutrition campaign**

Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Thursday launched a national food and nutrition campaign for farmers. "Efforts are also being made to make agriculture and farmers connected with new technology. We have expertise in production, but it is also important to manage this abundance. It is the responsibility of the farmers along with the government to ensure that our products should be of better quality, meet global standards. Farmers should be attracted towards costly crops," Tomar said at the launch.

Narendra Singh Tomar said ICAR has been working successfully on which crops should be cultivated and which seeds should be invented for rain fed and other areas.

## **India pips US to rank second in list of most attractive manufacturing hub globally; China first**

India has overtaken the United States (US) to become the second-most sought-after manufacturing destination globally, driven mainly by cost competitiveness, according to real estate consultant Cushman & Wakefield.

China remains at number one position, the consultant said in its 2021 Global Manufacturing Risk Index, which assessed the most advantageous locations for global manufacturing among 47 countries in Europe, the Americas and Asia-Pacific (APAC).

"India takes the second spot after China as the most sought-after manufacturing destination globally," Cushman and Wakefield said in a statement.

## **76 companies land at UP's first handicraft park near Noida Airport**

In line with the Uttar Pradesh government's "One District One Product" initiative, the state's first handicraft park is planned near the next Noida International Airport, with 76 companies setting up factories and outlets, officials said. You have been assigned land to do so. According to officials, 50 acres of land under the Yamuna Highway Industrial Development Bureau (YEIDA) area in Sector 29 have been allocated for an investment of Rs 403.

UP's Maiden Handicrafts Park has workshops, factories and shops that manufacture, display and sell a wide variety of handicrafts to domestic and foreign visitors. They said it was aimed at preserving traditional crafts and providing employment to state artisans. It will also boost the contribution of the handicraft sector to the state's economy, officials said.

## **IndianOil to build India's first green hydrogen plant at Mathura Refinery**

IndianOil plans to expand more into hydrogen technologies and develop India's first green hydrogen plant. This will be in addition to expanding existing crude oil refining capacity by 25 million tonnes per annum and more biofuel production plants.

Addressing shareholders at the company's 62nd Annual General Meeting, IndianOil Chairman, Shrikant Madhav Vaidya said, "IndianOil will build the nation's first 'Green Hydrogen' plant at Mathura Refinery. While your Company has been working on various hydrogen production pathways, the current project at Mathura Refinery will be pioneering the introduction of green Hydrogen in India."

## **India launches 'BharatCaller', an equivalent of TrueCaller**

India has come up with its own version of the caller ID and blocking application TrueCaller, called BharatCaller. The creators have said the application will provide a better experience to users and is ahead of TrueCaller in some aspects, according to a report by 'Live Hindustan' on Friday. "Bharat Caller ID has more than 50 million user databases and over 1 billion numbers data from the global community. It is the only app you need to make your communication safe and smart," the application's description on the Playstore read.

BharatCaller was built by Prajwal Sinha, an alumnus of the prestigious Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore. Its co-founder is Kunal Pasricha. Both Sinha and Pasricha were winners of the National Startup Awards 2020.

## **Seven Years of 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna', Central Govt's flagship financial inclusion programme**

Recently, the government has asked the banks to improve access of account holders in the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna (PMJDY) scheme to micro-credit and micro investment products, like flexi-recurring schemes.

PMJDY - National Mission has completed seven years of successful implementation. The objective of PMJDY is to ensure access to various financial services to the excluded sections i.e. weaker sections & low income groups at an affordable cost and using the technology for the same.

## **Science & Technology**

### **NCL becomes first PSU to vaccinate Entire workforce for Covid-19**

Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL), a Coal India Ltd subsidiary has become the first Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) in the country, which has got all its employees and their family members vaccinated against Covid-19. The company has a strength of around fifty thousand people comprising of over thirteen thousand full time employees, sixteen thousand contract workers and their twenty thousand family members residing in and around its operation areas.

"During the unprecedented crisis of Covid, our coal warriors worked 24X7 and ensured uninterrupted coal supply to the nation. They are our real assets and the health and safety of them and their families are our prime concern. We left no stone unturned to get them vaccinated." NCL CMD Shri Prabhat Kumar Sinha said.

The company has strength of around 50,000 people comprising over 13,000 full time employees, 16,000 contract workers and their 20,000 family members residing in and around its operation areas.

The company started its covid-vaccination drive with full support of local administration and later on also mobilized its own resources to get its entire workforce and their families vaccinated. Various target groups were identified and special drives along with door to door campaigns were conducted to achieve this goal.

### **Blue Origin successfully launches New Shepard cargo mission with research for NASA**

Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin launched its New Shepard rocket for the fourth time this year but, despite carrying the billionaire founder in a crew on the last flight, Thursday's mission did not carry people inside the capsule. Known as NS-17, this New Shepard mission is dedicated to carrying cargo. Blue Origin flew a NASA lunar lander technology demonstration and 18 customer research payloads inside the capsule — as well as an art installation on the top of the capsule.

The rocket launched from Blue Origin's private facility in West Texas. It reached a maximum altitude of 347,430 feet (or 105.6 kilometers) before returning to Earth safely. The NS-17 mission lasted 10 minutes and 38 seconds from launch to capsule landing.

### **Fossil of previously unknown four-legged whale found in Egypt**

Scientists said on Wednesday they had discovered the 43 million-year-old fossil of a previously unknown amphibious four-legged whale species in Egypt that helps trace the transition of whales from land to sea. The newly discovered whale belongs to the Protocetidae, a group of extinct whales that falls in the middle of that transition, the Egyptian-led team of researchers said in a statement.

Its fossil was unearthed from middle Eocene rocks in the Fayum Depression in Egypt's Western Desert -- an area once covered by sea that has provided a rich seam of discoveries showing the evolution of whales -- before being studied at Mansoura University Vertebrate Palaeontology Centre (MUV).

The new whale, named *Phiomicetus anubis*, had an estimated body length of some three meters (10 feet) and a body mass of about 600 kg (1,300 lb), and was likely a top predator, the researchers said. Its partial skeleton revealed it as the most primitive protocetid whale known from Africa.

## **IIM Ahmedabad And Bank Of America Partner To Set Up Centre For Digital Transformation**

Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, the premier global management institution, has partnered with Bank of America to launch a Centre for Digital Transformation.

The Centre aspires to become a vibrant knowledge hub for academia, policymaking, and the private sector by facilitating cutting-edge research on digital transformation and innovation.

The council will play a critical role in enhancing the core competencies of the Centre and help guide the projects. It will enable greater collaboration and alignment with external industry partners for long term value creation.

## **Mahindra defence to manufacture integrated ASW defence suite for Indian Navy**

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) said that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has awarded a major contract to Mahindra Defence Systems (MDS) worth Rs 1349.95 crore. The contract is for the manufacturing integrated anti-submarine warfare defence suite (IADS) for modern warships of Indian Navy.

Competitive bids from Indian companies were invited by MoD through open tender wherein the systems fielded were put through detailed trials at sea to prove their capability. IADS is a high-end underwater equipment that uses latest technology. It is designed to detect and protect warships from underwater threats. It is a versatile system capable of operations from all sizes of warships - small, medium, and large.

The complex array of sensors in water undertakes surveillance and provides inputs for signal processing and analysis. The warship then employs methods to neutralize the underwater threats.

## **Assam's Deepar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary breathes easy after eco-sensitive zone notification**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change notified the eco-sensitive zone of the Deepar Beel Wildlife Sanctuary on the south-western edge of Guwahati.

Deepar Beel is one of the largest freshwater lakes in Assam and the State's only Ramsar site besides being an Important Bird Area. The wetland has for decades been threatened by a railway track — set to be doubled and electrified — on its southern rim, a garbage dump, and encroachment from human habitation and commercial units.

The notification specified an area "to an extent varying from 294 metres to 16.32 km" as the eco-sensitive zone, with the total area being 148.9767 sq. km. But being adjacent to "fast-developing Guwahati", the sanctuary is "facing immense biotic pressure by way of human settlements and ever-increasing development activities", the notification said.

The wetland expands up to 30 sq. km in summer and reduces to about 10 sq. km in the winter. The wildlife sanctuary measures 4.1 sq. km within this wetland.

## **Indian researchers spotted 3 Supermassive Black Holes merging in a nearby Galaxy**

Black holes are the most powerful and extreme things in the universe and are wildly weird and complicated. Understanding them takes a lot of research and effort but they reveal numerous pieces of information that transform human understanding about the unknown cosmos.

In a recent feat, Indian researchers have discovered three supermassive black holes from three galaxies merging to form a triple AGN (Active Galactic Nucleus). A supermassive black hole at the center of a galaxy is called an AGN. This region of the galaxy is compact and is usually more luminous than the other parts of the galaxy.

The interesting part of the research is that the team has detected a triple AGN as several active AGNs have been identified in the past, but triple AGN are extremely rare in space. To date, a handful of the triple AGNs have been detected using X-ray observations. The discovery of the merging black holes in the nearby galaxy indicates that rare occurrences in Space like that are ideal situations to detect multiple accreting supermassive black holes.

## **Spices Park to come up in Chikkamagaluru : Karnataka Govt.**

The Karnataka government has decided to establish a Spices Park at Ambale in Chikkamagaluru district, and with this, a long-pending demand of Malnad region is set to be fulfilled.

The decision was taken during a meeting on Friday between Large and Medium Industries Minister Murugesh Nirani and Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shobha Karandlaje here.

Giving priority to promoting agricultural exports, Ms. Karandlaje requested Mr. Nirani to set up a Spices Park on 10 acres of government land at Ambale. Ms. Karandlaje represents Udupi-Chikkamagaluru Lok Sabha constituency. She urged Mr. Nirani to set up a special cell in the Industries Department for promotion of farm exports and the latter agreed.

## **AYUSH Ministry launches national campaign to promote cultivation of medicinal plants in country**

The National Medicinal Plants Board of AYUSH Ministry has launched a national campaign to promote cultivation of medicinal plants in the country as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

This will help in increasing the income of farmers and realize the dream of green India. Under this campaign, cultivation of medicinal plants will be done on 75 thousand-hectares of land in the next one year across the country. The programme has been started from Saharanpur in UP and Pune in Maharashtra.

Union AYUSH Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has said that the country has immense potential in the field of medicinal plants and their cultivation of on 75 thousand-hectares of land will ensure availability of medicines in the country. This will make the country self-reliant in the field of medicines.

## **New Delhi Statement adopted at 7th BRICS Environment Ministerial Meet 2021**

The 7th BRICS Environment Ministerial Meet 2021 was held virtually at the Sushma Swaraj Bhawan, New Delhi, under India's chairmanship on Friday (27/08/2021). The key takeaway of this year's BRICS Ministerial Meet is the adoption of the Delhi Statement on Environment. In addition, discussions and deliberations were held on key environmental issues.

Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change Bhupender Yadav chaired the 7th BRICS Environment meet.

The New Delhi statement on the environment aims to further the spirit of Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, & Consensus in Environment among the BRICS Nations. Further, detailed deliberations were held on pressing environmental challenges like Resource Efficiency & Circular Economy, Air Pollution & Marine Plastic Litter, Conservation & sustainable use of Biodiversity, Forest Cover Assessment & Management of Forest Fire, among others as part of the New Delhi statement.

# **Sports**

## **G Sathiyan wins Czech International Open crown, third ITTF title in career**

India's top paddler G Sathiyan beat Yevhen Ryshchepa of Ukraine comprehensively and in straight sets 11-9, 11-6, 11-6, 14-12 in the final of the Czech International table tennis tournament at Olomouc in Czech Republic on Wednesday night.

The Indian stormed into the final after his semifinal rival Truls Moregard of Sweden conceded in the third game due to back pain 11-4, 11-8, 8-2. Last week, the Swedish sensation had won the WTT Contender Budapest.

In the quarterfinal, Sathiyan accounted for Saudi Arabia's Ali Alkhadrabi while in pre-quarters Sadi Ismailov of Russia was his victim and in the round of 32, the top seed overcame Tomas Koldas of Czech Republic. During the entire tournament, the Chennai-born player did not concede a single set to the rivals.

This is only his third ITTF Challenger title following triumphs in Belgium Open 2016 and Spanish Open 2017.

## **Rajnath Singh inaugurates Army Sports Institute's stadium in Pune named after Neeraj Chopra**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today inaugurated the Army Sports Institute's stadium in Pune named after Olympic gold medal winner Neeraj Chopra. Highlighting the Indian Army's legacy, he proudly said that Subedar Neeraj Chopra has added his name to the list of great sportspersons like Major Dhyan Chand, Capt. Milkha Singh, Col Rajyavardhan S Rathore and Captain Vijay Kumar. He further added that, Olympians who missed the medal by a close margin, are no less than a medallist.

The Government of India is trying to enhance the quality of sports competition and time has come for us to start giving equal importance to all sports, Women of our country are performing brilliantly, said Mr. Rajnath Singh.

## **Bhavina Patel becomes first Indian TT player to secure medal in Paralympics**

Bhavina Patel on Friday scripted history by becoming the first Indian table tennis player to secure a medal in the Paralympics after she entered the semifinals with a stunning straight-game win over world number 5 Borislava Peric Rankovic of Serbia in the women's singles Class 4 event here.

The 34-year-old Indian beat her Serbian opponent 11-5 11-6 11-7 in a quarterfinal match that lasted 18 minutes.

She takes on Zhang Miao of China in the semifinals on Saturday but she is guaranteed of at least a bronze. There is no bronze-medal play-off in Tokyo Paralympics table tennis, and both losing semi-finalists are guaranteed of a bronze medal.

## **Javelin thrower Sumit Antil clinches India's 2nd gold in Paralympics with stunning world record show**

Javelin thrower Sumit Antil clinched India's second gold at the ongoing Paralympics, shattering the men's F64 category world record multiple times in a stunning Games debut performance here on Monday. The 23-year-old from Sonipat in Haryana, who lost his left leg below the knee after he was involved in a motorbike accident in 2015, sent the spear to 68.55m in his fifth attempt, which was the best of the day by quite a distance and a new world record.

In fact, he bettered the previous world record of 62.88m, also set by him, five times on the day. His last throw was a foul. His series read 66.95, 68.08, 65.27, 66.71, 68.55 and foul. Australian Michal Burian (66.29m) and Sri Lanka's Dulan Kodithuwakku (65.61m) took the silver and bronze respectively.

## **MP govt announces state level sports awards**

Madhya Pradesh government announced state level sports awards. 28 sportspersons given Sports Awards in different categories. Tokyo Olympic bronze medal winner India hockey team's Vivek Sagar is among 10 sportspersons, who have been selected for Vikram award.

The Life Time Achievement Award for the year 2020 is being given to Padmashri Mr Abhay Chhajlani. Director Sports and Youth Welfare Pawan Jain informed that for the year 2020, 13 Eklavya, 10 Vikram, 3 Vishwamitra, 1 Prabhas Joshi award and 1 Life Time Achievement Award have been announced.

## **Indian Grandmaster GM Sethuraman wins Barcelona Open**

Indian Grandmaster S.P. Sethuraman won the Barcelona Open chess tournament title here while compatriot Karthikeyan Murali finished third. Sethuraman (Elo 2644) collected 7.5 points from nine rounds to emerge winner on the basis of a better tie-break score after Daniil Yuffa of Russia also finished level with the Indian player.

In the ninth and final round played late on Thursday, Sethuraman beat Hakobyan in a Catalan Closed variation game. Sethuraman, who was the top seed, remained unbeaten through the nine rounds, winning six matches and drawing three. He finished strongly, scoring wins in his last three rounds, including over fellow Indian N.R. Visakh and Armenia's Aram Hakobyan.

## **National Sports Day 2021: A Tribute to Major Dhyan Chand**

Sports are important for the physical and mental well being of humans. Individuals who play sports remain healthy. India has produced many sporting legends like PT Usha, also known as Udanpari, Sachin Tendulkar, also known as Master Blaster, and Major Dhyan Chand, also known as 'Hockey Wizard'. National Sports Day is celebrated on 29 August every year to commemorate the birthday of Indian hockey legend **Major Dhyan Chand**.

National Sports Day is celebrated extensively at the national level. It is **organized every year in the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the President of India** presents National Sports Awards to the outstanding players of the country. In 2020, the awards were presented virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the National Sports Award, players and former players are honoured with **awards such as Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, Arjuna Award, and Dronacharya Award**.

Along with all these honours, the "Dhyan Chand Award" is also given on this day.

## **Sports Minister Anurag Thakur launches Fit India Mobile App on National Sports Day**

Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday launched the Fit India mobile app, a personal trainer-cum-fitness guide, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the Fit India Movement here.

Thakur said the app was a gift from the government to the people of India on the National Sports Day, which is celebrated to mark the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.

"The Fit India app is a tribute to Major Dhyan Chand who is an icon to country's sportspersons," Thakur said at a function at the Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium here. The event was also virtually attended by bronze medal-winning Tokyo Olympics hockey team captain Manpreet Singh.

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