

Weekly Current Affairs 16th to 21st October 2023 - English

National News

Government Launches Tradable Green Credit Program to Promote Eco-Friendly Actions

The government has initiated a novel program that allows individuals and entities to earn and trade green credits, which are units of incentives for environmentally beneficial actions. This program aims to encourage positive environmental contributions through market-based incentives. The program is introduced at the national level, promoting a competitive market-based approach for green credits to incentivize environmental actions. It is a voluntary initiative stemming from the 'LiFE' (Lifestyle for Environment) campaign. To earn green credits, individuals or entities need to register their environmental activities electronically through a dedicated website. These activities will be verified by a designated agency, and upon verification, the Administrator will grant a certificate of green credit. The calculation of green credits is based on resource requirements, scale, scope, size, and other relevant parameters required to achieve the desired environmental outcome.

Dharmendra Pradhan Launched IndiaSkills 2023-24 In New Delhi

The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship unveiled the IndiaSkills 2023-24 program and celebrated the remarkable achievements of the WorldSkills 2022 winners. India, securing the 11th position in the global competition last year, is now poised to make giant strides in skill development. This event witnessed the announcement of ambitious goals by Union Minister for Skill Development, Dharmendra Pradhan, emphasizing the need for a quantum leap in skill acquisition. In his address, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan outlined the need to increase the number of participants from 0.25 million to 2.5 million. This visionary step aims to provide impetus to the ecosystem of skill development and underscores the significance of competencies over traditional degrees. The minister emphasized the importance of introducing employable skills, which would enhance the market acceptance of the workforce.

Supreme Court Dismisses Appeal To Legalise Same-Sex Marriage

India's Supreme Court recently made a significant decision, declining an appeal to legalize same-sex marriages in the country, dealing a blow to LGBTQ rights in one of the world's most populous nations. The ruling, announced on Tuesday, followed arguments presented in April and May and involved a panel of five justices, with three of them concluding that the matter should be addressed by the parliament rather than the

judiciary. In a noteworthy move, Chief Justice Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud emphasized that issues like same-sex marriage should be within the domain of the parliament, highlighting the court's commitment to steering clear of policy matters. Chandrachud acknowledged the importance of providing legal protections to same-sex unions, stating that denying them benefits and services granted to heterosexual couples infringes on their fundamental rights. He argued that the right to choose a life partner is a core element of one's right to life and liberty under Article 21 of India's constitution.

India to Invest ₹143 Lakh Crore in Infrastructure by 2030

India is gearing up for a substantial infrastructure spending spree, with a plan to invest nearly ₹143 lakh crore between fiscal years 2024 and 2030. This represents more than double the ₹67 lakh crore spent on infrastructure over the past seven financial years starting from 2017. The rating agency CRISIL shared this information in its Infrastructure Yearbook 2023, underlining the significance of this ambitious undertaking. A notable aspect of this investment is that ₹36.6 lakh crore will be allocated to green projects. This marks a fivefold increase compared to the amount spent on sustainability-focused initiatives between fiscal years 2017 and 2023. The emphasis on green investments reflects India's commitment to environmental sustainability.

India's First Semi-High-Speed Regional Rail Service 'Namoo Bharat'

India's expanding transportation infrastructure is set to reach new heights with the country's first semi-high-speed regional rail service, Namoo Bharat. Previously known as RapidX, this innovative project is on the cusp of revolutionizing regional connectivity. This also marks the introduction of the Regional Rapid Train Service (RRTS) in India. The RRTS (Revolutionizing Regional Transit) is a cutting-edge regional transportation system that can compete with the world's best. RRTS is a new kind of train system that's faster than regular ones and runs frequently. It is a big plan to make intercity travel faster and more convenient. Trains will run every 15 minutes, and they can even run more often, every 5 minutes, if needed. The Namoo Bharat trains are designed with the utmost passenger convenience and safety in mind. Each coach is equipped with six CCTVs, an emergency door-opening mechanism, and a communication button to connect with the train operator. Moreover, these trains offer features such as overhead luggage racks, Wi-Fi connectivity, and mobile and laptop charging outlets at every seat. A dedicated train attendant is present in the premium coach, ensuring a comfortable and secure journey.

International News

Jaishankar unveils Rabindranath Tagore's bust in Vietnam

India and Vietnam, two countries with deep-rooted historical connections dating back almost two millennia, have been forging an enduring bond rooted in Buddhism. This relationship has been further solidified by literary exchanges and cultural influences. In a recent diplomatic gesture, India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, inaugurated a bust of Nobel Laureate writer and poet Rabindranath Tagore in Bac Ninh city, symbolizing the historical and cultural ties between the two nations. The historical and cultural connections between India and Vietnam, enriched by the introduction of Buddhism, literary exchange, and the influence of Rabindranath Tagore, continue to strengthen the bond between these two nations. The inauguration of Tagore's bust in Bac Ninh city stands as a testament to the enduring relationship and mutual respect that both countries share, fostering a brighter future for their diplomatic and cultural ties.

Sri Lanka's Strategic Trade Revisions: A Roadmap for Economic Transformation

Sri Lanka's State Minister of Finance, Shehan Semasinghe, has announced the country's intentions to renegotiate its free trade agreements (FTAs) with key bilateral partners. This move is part of Sri Lanka's strategy to boost its economic growth and reduce external debt by promoting market access, foreign direct investment, and export-oriented initiatives. Sri Lanka's initial focus in this trade renegotiation effort will be on engaging in discussions with three pivotal partners: India, China, and Thailand. The objective is to successfully conclude the ongoing negotiations with these countries before advancing to a broader regional trade agreement. Sri Lanka's ultimate goal in the renegotiation process is to become a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). This agreement involves 16 Asian countries and seeks to enhance trade and economic cooperation within the region.

Tallest BR Ambedkar Statue Outside India Unveiled In Washington

In a historic event, a 19-foot tall statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of India's Constitution, was formally inaugurated in a suburb of Maryland, Washington. This statue is being considered as the tallest of its kind outside of India and holds significant importance for both Indian-Americans and the Indian diaspora around the world. During the inauguration ceremony, the air was filled with enthusiastic chants of 'Jai Bhim.' More than 500 Indian-Americans, including attendees from various parts of the United States, India and other countries, came together to witness this historic moment. The event was an evident to the global reverence for Dr. Ambedkar's contributions. The statue was

crafted by the renowned artist and sculptor Ram Sutar, who is known for creating the 'Statue of Unity' of Sardar Patel, located on an island in Gujarat's Narmada River. This new masterpiece, named the "Statue of Equality," seeks to address the issue of inequality not just in India but globally, as Ram Kumar, President of the Ambedkar International Center (AIC), emphasized.

Poland pro-EU Opposition tipped to win Parliament polls

Poland's recent parliamentary elections marked a significant turning point, ending eight years of populist rule by the Law and Justice (PiS) party. The liberal opposition, led by former EU chief Donald Tusk, emerged victorious, promising a fresh era for the nation. Tusk's Civic Coalition, along with potential allies Third Way and Left, is set to secure a majority in the 460-seat parliament. This outcome signifies a potential shift towards more liberal policies, including improved relations with the European Union and a promise to unblock frozen EU funds. While many celebrated the opposition's victory, some voters remained cautious. Questions linger about how the new government will act, especially considering potential challenges from President Andrzej Duda, a PiS ally. Despite the opposition's win, the political landscape remains uncertain.

Biden's Visit to Israel Amid Ongoing Conflict

United States President Joe Biden is set to visit Israel amid an ongoing conflict with Hamas fighters. The trip was confirmed by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, and the White House released an official statement emphasizing strong support for Israel. Washington aims to prevent the current conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza from spreading to a larger conflict in the Middle East. Biden's visit comes after Hamas fighters breached Israel's heavily fortified Gaza border, initiating a surprise attack. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared war on Hamas, resulting in significant casualties and destruction. The United States has dispatched two aircraft carrier strike groups to the eastern Mediterranean to deter hostile actions against Israel. The Pentagon has also put 2,000 troops on deployment alert for security purposes in the Middle East.

S Jaishankar Unveils Mahatma Gandhi's Bust In Vietnam

Recently, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar embarked on a significant official visit to Vietnam. This visit marked not only the strengthening of bilateral relations but also a celebration of the enduring principles and values adopted by Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. The visit underscored the deep-rooted connections between India and Vietnam and the shared commitment to addressing global issues. One of the prominent events during Jaishankar's visit to Vietnam was the unveiling ceremony of a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Ho Chi Minh City. In his address, Jaishankar emphasized the symbolic importance of this event, highlighting Gandhi's global recognition for his principles of truth, non-violence, and freedom.

Japan Becomes First Nation To Launch An Electromagnetic Railgun From An Offshore Vessel

Japan has recently achieved a significant milestone in the realm of defense technology. On October 17, the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) in collaboration with the Acquisition Technology & Logistics Agency (ATLA), a division of the Japanese Ministry of Defense, successfully test-fired a medium-caliber maritime electromagnetic railgun from an offshore platform. ATLA made an official announcement on October 17, announcing the successful testing of the maritime electromagnetic railgun. This remarkable feat marks the first time any nation has managed to launch a railgun from an offshore platform. Typically, railguns are mounted on ships, but Japan aspires to employ this technology both on land and at sea, making this test an unprecedented advancement in the field.

State News

BRS Promises Monthly Honorarium Of ₹3,000 For Women And Life Insurance In Its Manifesto

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) recently unveiled its manifesto, promising a host of transformative initiatives aimed at improving the lives of underprivileged citizens. In a press conference on October 15th, party president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao outlined these pledges, highlighting their commitment to uplift the marginalized sections of society. One of the standout promises in the BRS manifesto is the provision of life insurance coverage of ₹5 lakh to over 93 lakh Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. This initiative takes inspiration from the successful Rythu Bima program, which extends insurance to farmers. By extending similar coverage to BPL families, the BRS aims to provide a much-needed safety net to those who are economically vulnerable. The BRS manifesto emphasizes the importance of food security by pledging to supply superfine rice through the public distribution system to all ration card holders. This commitment falls under the Telangana Annapurna scheme, with the goal of ensuring that no family goes to bed hungry. This move can significantly alleviate the burdens of low-income households and contribute to improving their overall quality of life.

Uttar Pradesh Government's 'Swachh Tyohar, Swasth Tyohar' Campaign

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has launched a special cleanliness campaign, 'Swachh Tyohar, Swasth Tyohar' (Clean Festival, Healthy Festival), with a focus on maintaining cleanliness in and around temples during Navratri, Dussehra, and Diwali festivals. This initiative aims to promote the idea that 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness' and calls for active participation from municipal bodies and citizens. The 'Swachh Tyohar, Swasth Tyohar' campaign

initiated by the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh emphasizes the importance of cleanliness during the festive season. By ensuring clean and hygienic surroundings at religious places and actively addressing infrastructure concerns, the government aims to provide a spiritually enriching and enjoyable festival experience for all. This initiative aligns with the age-old adage that 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness,' promoting a harmonious blend of spirituality and hygiene during the upcoming Navratri, Dussehra, and Diwali celebrations.

Jharkhand first state to take steps to ensure minimum wages for workers

Jharkhand is making history by becoming the first state in India to take steps towards including gig workers, such as Swiggy, Zomato, Ola, Uber, and Rapido employees, under the ambit of minimum wages. This initiative is a significant move towards ensuring fair compensation for those in the gig economy. Jharkhand's groundbreaking move to consider minimum wages for gig workers and review minimum wage standards for other laborers is a significant step toward ensuring fair compensation for workers in various sectors. It also highlights the state's commitment to both local employment and social justice.

PM Inaugurates Rs 4200 Crore Worth Of Development Projects In Uttarakhand

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi recently marked a historic day in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, as he laid the foundation stone and dedicated several development projects worth approximately Rs 4200 crore. These initiatives spanned various sectors, including rural development, road infrastructure, power generation, irrigation, drinking water supply, horticulture, education, healthcare, and disaster management, among others. Before addressing the audience, Prime Minister Modi performed pooja and darshan at Parvati Kund, seeking blessings for the good health of all Indians and the realization of the aspirations of the people of Uttarakhand. He emphasized the importance of strengthening the resolve for a developed India.

Assam CM Inaugurated 'Shraddhanjali,' Second Longest Flyover In The State

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma inaugurated the newly constructed 'Shraddhanjali' flyover in Guwahati on October 19, 2023, marking a significant milestone in the state's infrastructure development as it was completed in just 60 days. This achievement stands out, considering that it was completed 300 days ahead of the original schedule. The 2.28-kilometer-long Shraddhanjali flyover, linking Commerce Point with Sundrapur on RG Baruah Road is considered to be the second longest flyover in the state. It was unveiled alongside a range of initiatives, including the deployment of 2,000 CCTV cameras throughout the city by August next year.

Arunachal Cabinet approves formation of Special Tiger Protection Force For 3 Tiger Reserves

The Arunachal Pradesh State Cabinet gave the green light to a host of transformative measures aimed at safeguarding the state's biodiversity and promoting the preservation of indigenous languages. Among the notable decisions were the establishment of a Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF) for three tiger reserves, the allocation of honorariums to third language teachers, the amendment of the state's industrial and investment policy, and the formulation of the Arunachal Pradesh Home Guard Rules for 2023.

Economy News

India's Economy To Grow At 6.3% In FY24 As Per FICCI Survey

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) recently unveiled its latest Economic Outlook Survey, providing insights into the anticipated growth of India's economy in the upcoming fiscal year, FY24. The survey, conducted in September 2023, brings together eminent economists from the banking, financial services, and industry sectors to provide a comprehensive analysis of the economic landscape.

The expected economic growth of India in 2023-24

India has shown remarkable resilience amidst global challenges, as per the latest India Development Update (IDU) by the World Bank. Despite a tough global environment, India's economy grew at 7.2% in FY22/23, making it one of the fastest-growing major economies.

Robust Domestic Demand: India's strong internal demand played a vital role in its economic growth.

Infrastructure Investments: Significant investments in public infrastructure boosted economic activity.

Financial Sector Strength: The financial sector grew stronger, contributing to the overall economic resilience.

Increased Bank Credit: Bank credit grew by 15.8% in the first quarter of FY23/24, indicating a healthy financial environment

Centre approves 4% hike in DA for central govt employees

The Union Government recently took a significant step to benefit Central government employees and pensioners by increasing the Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) by 4%. This increase will be effective from July 1, 2023. Union Minister Anurag Thakur announced a 4% increase in Dearness Allowance and Dearness Relief. The DA will go up from 42% to 46%. This decision benefits a large number of people, including 48.67 lakh central government employees and 67.95 lakh pensioners. The dearness allowance for employees and pensioners is calculated based on the

Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW), published monthly by the Labour Bureau. The release of the additional installment of DA and DR will be applicable from July 1, 2023.

Increase in Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi Crops in 2024-25

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved an increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for Rabi Crops for the Marketing Season 2024-25. This decision aims to ensure fair prices for farmers and encourage crop diversification.

Minimum Support Prices are the guaranteed prices that the government offers to farmers for their crops.

These prices act as a safety net, ensuring that farmers receive a reasonable income for their produce.

Wheat: The MSP for wheat has increased by Rs. 150 per quintal, reaching Rs. 2275 per quintal for the 2024-25 season. This provides a 102% margin over the cost of production.

Barley: Barley's MSP has risen by Rs. 115 per quintal, reaching Rs. 1850 per quintal, with a 60% margin over the cost of production.

Gram: The MSP for gram has gone up by Rs. 105 per quintal, now at Rs. 5440 per quintal, with a 60% margin over the cost of production.

Lentil (Masur): Lentil sees the highest increase, with the MSP going up by Rs. 425 per quintal, reaching Rs. 6425 per quintal. This offers an impressive 89% margin over the cost of production.

Rankings & Reports News

Kempegowda International Airport tops global on-time performance rankings

In a recent report published by aviation analytics firm Cirium, the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in Bengaluru, also known as the Bengaluru International Airport, has earned a remarkable distinction. It has been recognized as the "world's most punctual airport" for the past three consecutive months. This accolade underscores the airport's exceptional commitment to on-time departures and an impressive travel experience for passengers. Cirium's report, titled 'The On-Time Performance Monthly Report,' specifically commended KIA for its consistently outstanding on-time departure performance. The airport, managed by Bangalore International Airport Limited, achieved punctuality rates of 87.51% in July, 89.66% in August, and 88.51% in September. Cirium evaluates on-time performance (OTP) by assessing whether an aircraft arrives at the gate within 15 minutes of the scheduled departure time. The report covered approximately 89.03% of the total flights operated from KIA, amounting to 18,913 flights.

Global Remote Work Index, India among world's worst countries

In a significant shift in the global remote work landscape, India has been ranked 64th out of 108 countries in the Global Remote Work Index (GRWI). This marks a substantial decline of 15 places from the previous year, raising concerns about the country's readiness for remote work.

The GRWI, developed and published by cybersecurity firm NordLayer, evaluates countries based on four fundamental criteria crucial for remote work success:

- Cyber Safety
- Economic Safety
- Digital and Physical Infrastructure
- Social Safety

India's remote work challenges are largely rooted in subpar digital and physical infrastructure. The nation ranked 77th in this category, indicating that its e-infrastructure is among the least developed globally (95th position). India's internet services, although widely available, are plagued by issues of cost (78th) and quality (70th), hampering remote work efficiency.

Business News

IDFC gets CCI nod for merger with IDFC First Bank

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has given its approval for the merger of the Infrastructure Development Finance Company (IDFC) and IDFC First Bank. This approval was communicated through a regulatory filing on October 17, 2023. The merger had previously received the green light from the board of directors of both IDFC and IDFC First Bank on July 3. However, for the merger to be finalized, it still needs approval from various statutory and regulatory bodies. These include the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), and the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). The merger also needs the consent of stock exchanges, as well as the agreement of shareholders and creditors of both IDFC and IDFC First Bank. As of June 30, 2023, IDFC held a 30.93 percent stake in IDFC First Bank through its non-financial holding company.

CCEA Approves ₹20,000 Crore Worth 13 GW Green Energy Corridor Project In Ladakh

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has given the green light to the Green Energy Corridor (GEC) Phase-II – Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) for a massive 13-gigawatt (GW) Renewable Energy (RE) project in Ladakh. This ambitious project is poised to reshape the renewable energy landscape in India. The project's primary objective is to establish a colossal 13 GW renewable energy project in Ladakh, a region known for its complex terrain, harsh climatic conditions, and defense sensitivities. The Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) revealed that the project has an

estimated total cost of ₹20,773.70 crore. Central Financial Assistance (CFA) will cover 40 percent of the project cost, amounting to ₹8,309.48 crore.

Tata Motors To Invest ₹150 Crore To Acquire 27% Stake In 'Freight Tiger'

Tata Motors, a prominent name in the Indian automotive sector, announced a significant move that would reshape the country's logistics landscape. The company revealed its plan to acquire a 27% stake in Freight Tiger, a software-as-a-service (SaaS) platform specializing in end-to-end logistics solutions. This strategic partnership represents a crucial step in advancing efficiency within the truck and freight ecosystem in India. Tata Motors committed to a substantial investment of ₹150 crore in Freight Tiger, securing a 27% stake in the (Software as a service) SaaS platform. However, Tata Motors also holds the option to further invest ₹100 crore over the next two years, depending on the prevailing market value.

RBI Approves Kotak Mahindra Bank To Acquire MFI Sonata Finance

In a significant development in the financial sector, Kotak Mahindra Bank has received the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approval to acquire 100% stake in micro-lender Sonata Finance. This acquisition marks a crucial step for Kotak Mahindra Bank in expanding its footprint in the microfinance sector. Kotak Mahindra Bank, one of India's leading private-sector lenders, has taken a strategic step by acquiring Sonata Finance, a non-banking financial company – microfinance institution (NBFC-MFI). The acquisition, valued at approximately Rs 537 crore, was announced in February and has now received the crucial approval from the RBI.

Agreement News

IRCTC Partners With Zomato For Delivery Of Pre-Booked Meals

In a significant development for train travelers in India, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC) has joined forces with the popular food delivery platform, Zomato. This strategic alliance aims to enhance the dining experience of railway passengers by offering a wider array of food options through IRCTC's E-Catering segment. The collaboration aims to cater to the diverse culinary preferences of railway passengers, ensuring they have access to a variety of meals that suit their tastes and dietary requirements. The partnership is set to provide travelers with increased choices, convenience, and, ultimately, a more enjoyable and comfortable journey. As part of this groundbreaking partnership, IRCTC has launched a Proof of Concept (PoC) at five prominent railway stations: New Delhi, Prayagraj, Kanpur, Lucknow, and Varanasi. This PoC allows passengers to order and receive pre-ordered meals through the IRCTC E-Catering portal, with the assistance of Zomato.

Appointment News**B K Mohanty Assumes Charge As Director Of Finance At IREDA**

Dr. Bijay Kumar Mohanty officially assumed the role of Director (Finance) at the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA). Dr. Mohanty, a highly respected senior finance professional with an impressive career spanning over 25 years in the Indian power sector, brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience that promises to enrich IREDA's leadership. The appointment of Dr. Mohanty as Director (Finance) of IREDA was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC). In an order issued by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy, Dr. Bijay Kumar Mohanty was appointed to the post for a period of five years from the date he assumed charge or until further orders, whichever is earlier. This long-term commitment is expected to provide stability and continuity in the financial leadership of IREDA.

Sanjay Kulshreshtha named as new Chairman and Managing Director of HUDCO

Sanjay Kulshreshtha has joined as the Chairman & Managing Director of the HUDCO from 16th October 2023. He is an electrical engineer with over 32 years of expertise in Infrastructure Financing, Hedging, Risk Management, ALM, thermal power plant management, Power Sector Project Financing etc. For the first 15 years, he has worked in the areas of power project execution, high voltage substations and transmission lines at both State as well as Private sectors. In 2006, he joined REC, initially in Mumbai and later moved to the Delhi Headquarters where he has been a Power Sector Financing expert for the last 17 years where he managed the techno-commercial appraisal of power sector projects and pioneered implementation of multiple government schemes.

Presidential Appointments: New Governors for Odisha and Tripura

President Droupadi Murmu has recently appointed new governors for Odisha and Tripura, bringing experienced leaders to these important roles.

Odisha's New Governor: Raghubar Das

Background: Raghubar Das served as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand from 2014 to 2019.

Remarkable Feat: He is the only leader who completed a full five-year term as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand.

Political Career: Das was elected as an MLA in 1995 when Bihar and Jharkhand were one state.

Current Role: Presently, he is a national vice president of the BJP.

Tripura's New Governor: Indra Sena Reddy Nallu

Background: Nallu Indrasena Reddy is a three-time MLA and a prominent BJP leader from Telangana.

Leadership Role: He previously held the position of national secretary of the BJP.

New Responsibility: President Murmu appointed him as the Governor of Tripura, recognizing his political experience and dedication.

Dr Meenesh Shah elected to Board of International Dairy Federation

Dr. Meenesh Shah, the Chairman and Managing Director of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), has been elected to the Board of the International Dairy Federation (IDF) during the General Assembly of IDF on October 15. With a long history of involvement with IDF, Dr. Shah's contributions have been instrumental in promoting India's unique smallholder-based dairying system on the global stage. He had spearheaded the successful organisation of the World's largest Dairy Conference – IDF WDS 2022 in India in September 2022, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Puma Ropes in Mohammed Shami as its Brand Ambassador

In an exciting development for sports enthusiasts and fans, Puma, the renowned sports brand, has announced the inclusion of Mohammed Shami, a prominent Indian fast bowler, as its brand ambassador. This strategic partnership adds another star to Puma's impressive roster of brand ambassadors. This article delves into the details of this collaboration and Shami's significant role in the world of cricket. Puma boasts a star-studded lineup of brand ambassadors who have made a mark in their respective sports. The list includes cricket icon Virat Kohli, sprinting legend Usain Bolt, football sensations Neymar Jr and Sunil Chhetri, boxing champion MC Mary Kom, cricketers Harmanpreet Kaur and Harleen Deol, and para-shooter Avani Lekhara.

HP Appoints Ipsita Dasgupta as Senior Vice President & MD for India

Hewlett-Packard (HP) has announced a significant leadership change with the appointment of Ipsita Dasgupta as the Senior Vice President & Managing Director for its India market. Ms. Dasgupta's role will encompass overseeing all facets of HP's strategy and profitability in the India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka regions. In her new role, Ms. Dasgupta will bear the responsibility of leading and steering HP's operations, strategy, and profit and loss (P&L) for these vital South Asian markets.

Banking News**RBI Imposes ₹1 Crore Penalty On Union Bank**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has taken a stern stance on non-compliance with its regulatory directives by imposing penalties on Union Bank of India, RBL Bank, and Bajaj Finance, all of which have faced penalties for various breaches of RBI's regulatory guidelines. The RBI has imposed a penalty of ₹1 crore on Union Bank of India for its failure to adhere to the regulatory guidelines on 'Loans and Advances – Statutory and Other Restrictions.' An examination of the bank's financials for the fiscal year 2020-21 revealed significant non-compliance issues. The bank sanctioned a term loan to a corporation in lieu of budgetary resources designated for specific projects, without conducting due diligence on the viability of these projects. Furthermore, the repayment and servicing of the loan were made using budgetary resources, a direct violation of the central bank's directives.

Federal Bank Launched 'Mookkanoor Mission' Initiative At Its Founder's Village

On the occasion of the 106th birth anniversary of its visionary founder, K.P Hormis yesterday, the Federal Bank recently inaugurated the 'Mookkanoor Mission,' a groundbreaking initiative designed to drive change and progress in the village of Mookkanoor, located in the Ernakulam district of Kerala. This initiative is a testament to the bank's commitment to community development, environmental sustainability, and digital transformation, aligning perfectly with the ideals of its illustrious founder. Mookkanoor, a serene village nestled in the beautiful Ernakulam district, is a place of profound cultural heritage and natural beauty. However, like many parts of the country, it faces various challenges related to cleanliness, waste management, and access to essential services. The Federal Bank is committed to executing a comprehensive plan that covers digitization of the entire village, a rigorous cleanliness drive, waste management, tree plantation, community development, and the implementation of renewable energy projects.

RBI Revises KYC Rules, Offering Improved Guidance To Prevent Money Laundering

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently made significant revisions to its master direction on Know Your Customer (KYC) for regulated entities. These changes incorporate amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering rules and, importantly, deal with the requirement of beneficial owner (BO) identification for partnership firms. Under the revised norms, the definition of "Principal Officer" has been clarified. A Principal Officer is now defined as an officer at the management level nominated by the regulated entity (RE).

This change aims to provide greater clarity regarding the individuals responsible for furnishing information. It ensures that senior management is held accountable for compliance with KYC regulations.

RBI initiates Pilot Run to Test E-Rupee for Inter-Bank Borrowing

The Reserve Bank of India has taken a significant step in the digital transformation of the nation's financial landscape by initiating a pilot run to test the E-Rupee, a Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC), for inter-bank borrowing. The E-Rupee pilot project is a remarkable endeavor that seeks to harness the potential of blockchain technology and digital currency to revolutionize the way inter-bank transactions are conducted in India.

Science & Technology News**PM Modi directs ISRO to land on the moon by 2040**

India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has announced ambitious plans to expand the country's space activities, including sending its first astronaut to the moon by 2040 and establishing a native space station by 2035. Following the success of the Chandrayaan-3 lunar probe, India is gearing up for lunar exploration. Originally, India aimed to have its own space station by 2022, but technical issues and the COVID-19 pandemic caused delays. India is developing a roadmap for moon exploration, which includes building a next-generation launch vehicle, constructing a new launch pad, and creating human-centric laboratories and associated technologies. The Gaganyaan mission, expected in 2025, plans to launch three crew members into orbit for three days.

Schemes and Committees News**PMJDY continues to grow, adding ₹30,000 crore to total balance in H1**

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has achieved remarkable success, with over 50 crore beneficiaries and a significant increase in total balance. The scheme's growth, especially post-Covid-19, reflects its effectiveness in promoting financial inclusion. In the first half of the current financial year, the total balance in PMJDY accounts increased by ₹30,000 crore, reaching ₹2.05 lakh crore as of October 4, 2023. The number of beneficiaries rose by over 3.5 crore in the last year, from 47 crore to 50.63 crore, showcasing a steady growth trend in new enrollments. Public sector banks operate 40 crore accounts with a balance of ₹1.60-lakh crore, while the rest is contributed by regional rural banks, co-operative banks, and private sector banks.

Summits & Conference News

India and UK Explore Collaboration in Trade, Defense, and More During Inaugural 2+2 Dialogue

India and the UK recently held their first-ever 2+2 foreign affairs and defence dialogue in New Delhi. This dialogue signifies a significant step in strengthening the comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries. The officials from both nations discussed ways to enhance collaboration in trade and investment, aiming to boost economic ties between India and the UK. India and the UK explored avenues for cooperation in defense, including maritime security. Both sides discussed strategies to counter terrorism and assist in humanitarian and disaster relief efforts. Focus was placed on critical and emerging technologies, emphasizing the need for joint efforts in areas like cybersecurity and advanced technologies. The dialogue included talks on civil aviation, aiming to improve connectivity between the two countries. Discussions also centered around collaborative efforts in infrastructure development.

Awards & Honors News

69th National Film Awards 2023 Conferred by President Droupadi Murmu

On 17 October, President Droupadi Murmu will confer the 69th National Film Awards 2023 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. These awards, initially delayed due to the pandemic, are finally set to honor outstanding achievements in Indian cinema. In August of this year, the names of the award winners were officially revealed, building excitement within the film industry and among movie enthusiasts.

Best Actor: Allu Arjun

Best Actresses: Alia Bhatt and Kriti Sanon

Best Feature Film: "Rocketry: The Nambi Effect"

Best Film on National Integration: "The Kashmir Files"

Shreya Ghoshal 5th National Awards 2023

Renowned playback singer Shreya Ghoshal has added another feather to her cap, receiving the prestigious Best Female Playback Singer award at the 69th National Film Awards. The award was presented to her by the Hon'ble President of India, Droupadi Murmu, in a grand ceremony held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Shreya Ghoshal's remarkable journey in the Indian film industry has been adorned with accolades, and this recent win marks her fifth National Film Award. Her first National Award was in 2003 for the soul-stirring rendition of "Bairi Piya" in the iconic movie 'Devdas.' Subsequently, she achieved further acclaim for her melodious contributions to films like 'Paheli' with "Dheere Jalna" and 'Jab We Met' with "Yeh Ishq Haaye." In 2010, Shreya's talent shone once more as

she clinched the National Award for not one but two songs – "Jiv Dangla" from the Marathi film 'Jogva' and "Pherari Mon" from the Bengali movie 'Antaheen.'

ICAI receives UN Award for its contribution to sustainability reporting

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) received a prestigious UN award for its top-ranked sustainability initiatives, including the Sustainability Reporting Standards Board. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) honored ICAI during the 8th World Investment Forum for its contributions to sustainability reporting. ICAI's efforts aim to promote sustainable practices in India and align with international standards. ICAI's sustainability initiatives received the highest score among 70 initiatives worldwide. They were recognized for their work through the Sustainability Reporting Standards Board (SRSB). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) presented ICAI with the ISAR Honours 2023 for their outstanding contributions. UNCTAD announced the winners during the 8th World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi on October 17 2023.

Jina Mahsa Amini wins EU's Sakharov Prize 2023

The European Parliament President, Roberta Metsola, announced the laureate of the 2023 Sakharov Prize in the Strasbourg plenary chamber. Jina Mahsa Amini and the Iranian "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement were awarded this prestigious prize, joining the ranks of remarkable past recipients like Malala Yousafzai and Nelson Mandela. Mahsa Amini, a young woman of only 22, passed away on September 16, 2022, while in the custody of Iran's religious police. Her alleged offense was a breach of the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women. Her untimely death galvanized global attention and support for the "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement.

Important Dates News

World Anaesthesia Day 2023: Theme, History and Significance

World Anaesthesia Day, celebrated on October 16 each year, is a significant occasion that highlights the critical role of anaesthesia in modern medical treatments. This day not only recognizes the birth of anaesthesia but also serves as a platform to raise awareness about the importance of this field in healthcare. World Anaesthesia Day stands as a tribute to the birth of anaesthesia, a groundbreaking development in the history of medicine. It serves to raise awareness about the importance of this field in healthcare and recognizes the ongoing need to ensure safe anaesthesia practices worldwide.

Central Electricity Authority Celebrates Its 50th Foundation Day

The Central Electricity Authority, the organization under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, which provides technical and policy support to the government and to all other stakeholders in the power sector, celebrated its 50th Foundation Day on October 15, 2023. Working towards the vision of ensuring reliable 24x7 power supply of adequate quality to all consumers in the country, the CEA has been at the forefront of the evolution of the power sector in India, with its pivotal role in planning and managing the country's electricity needs. Over the last five decades of its history, the Authority has consistently demonstrated its commitment to ensuring reliable and sustainable power supply to the nation.

Kati Bihu 2023: Date, History, Significance and Celebrations

Kati Bihu, also known as Kongali Bihu, is a significant festival celebrated by the Assamese people in the northeastern state of Assam. It falls on the first day of the 'Kati' month, which typically occurs in the middle of October. Kati Bihu 2023 is celebrated on 18th October and it marks the beginning of the rice crop's growth and the start of the new harvest season. This article explores the history, traditions and significance of Kati Bihu. The festival begins with the washing and placement of a sacred plant, usually Tulsi, on an earthen platform known as "Tulsi Bheti." Families offer prayers and make offerings to Goddess Tulsi for the well-being of their family and a successful harvest. This practice continues throughout the month of Kati. Lamps and candles illuminate various parts of the home, particularly near the revered Tulsi plant, creating a spiritual ambiance.

World Trauma Day 2023, Date, Theme, Significance and History

World Trauma Day, observed every year on 17 October, is dedicated to raising awareness about trauma, its causes, symptoms, and prevention. Trauma encompasses emotional responses to accidents, injuries, physical violence, rape, natural disasters, or any incident affecting an individual both physically and mentally. The primary goal of this day is to educate people about the causes and consequences of trauma and to promote strategies for trauma care and prevention. While the theme for World Trauma Day 2023 has not been announced yet, it typically revolves around the central idea of preventing trauma and providing support to victims.

National Police Commemoration Day 2023 Celebrates on 21 October

On October 21, 1959, ten courageous Policemen laid down their lives in a fierce ambush by heavily armed Chinese troops at Hot Springs in Ladakh. In their memory and that of all Police personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifice while on duty, October 21 is observed as Police Commemoration Day.

This day serves as a poignant reminder of the brave men and women who dedicated their lives to preserving national security and integrity. In 2018, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji dedicated the National Police Memorial (NPM) in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, to the nation on Police Commemoration Day.

Sports News

Most Sixes in International Cricket Matches

After completing 100 runs in World Cups, Rohit Sharma rewrote another record, edging past West Indies legend Chris Gayle hitting most sixes in International Cricket Matches. The Indian skipper hit six off Naveen-ul-Haq's bowling in the 8th over to go past Gayle's tally of 553 sixes in international cricket. India's Rohit Sharma surpassed West Indies' Chris Gayle for the record of most sixes across formats (Tests, ODIs and T20Is) in international cricket. With the six which came just after Rohit had reached his fifty, he now has 554 sixes across the format. In the list follow big cricketing names like Gayle, Shahid Afridi, Brendon McCullum, Martin Guptil and MS Dhoni.

PM confirms India's bid to host 2036 Olympics

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the 141st International Olympic Committee (IOC) Session at the Jio World Centre in Mumbai. The event marked a significant moment in India's sporting history, with PM Modi expressing India's eagerness to host the Olympics and Youth Olympics in the coming years. Upon his arrival, PM Modi was warmly welcomed by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, Deputy CMs Ajit Pawar and Devendra Fadnavis, showcasing the unity and enthusiasm of the Indian state governments for the event. PM Modi articulated India's ambitious dream of hosting the Olympics in 2036, emphasizing the commitment of 1.4 billion Indians towards making this dream a reality. He vowed that no effort would be spared in ensuring the successful organization of the event. In a proactive move, PM Modi extended an invitation to host the 2029 Youth Olympics, showcasing India's readiness to contribute significantly to the global sports arena. He expressed confidence in India receiving constant support from the IOC for this endeavor.

India's represent his Contingent for the Asian Para Games

India is set to be well-represented at the fourth Asian Para Games scheduled to take place in Hangzhou, China, from October 22 to 28. The nation is sending a robust contingent of 446 members, including 303 athletes, demonstrating a commitment to para sports. The Sports Ministry of India has played a pivotal role in this endeavor by sanctioning the participation of 303 sportspersons, comprising 191 male and 112 female athletes. This support underscores India's dedication to promoting para sports and creating

opportunities for athletes with disabilities. India's contingent spans across 17 different sporting disciplines. This diverse representation reflects the nation's intention to excel in various sports and showcases the talent and dedication of para athletes.

Ashutosh Sharma Breaks Yuvraj Singh's Fastest Fifty Record

In a remarkable display of power hitting, Ashutosh Sharma, a middle-order batter for the Railways cricket team, broke Yuvraj Singh's record for the fastest fifty by an Indian. Ashutosh achieved this milestone during a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy Group C clash in Ranchi against Arunachal Pradesh. Yuvraj Singh, a cricketing legend, had held the record for the fastest fifty by an Indian for 16 years, with his fifty coming off 12 balls during the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007 against England. However, Ashutosh Sharma changed the narrative with an astonishing performance.

Karthikeyan Murali's Remarkable Victory Over Magnus Carlsen

In a remarkable turn of events at the ongoing Qatar Masters, 24-year-old Indian chess grandmaster Karthikeyan Murali achieved a stunning feat by defeating the world's number one player, Magnus Carlsen. This historic victory marked only the third instance where an Indian player emerged triumphant against the chess legend. Karthikeyan Murali's triumph over Magnus Carlsen in the Qatar Masters is a momentous occasion in the world of chess. It highlights the immense talent and potential of Indian chess players on the international stage. As Karthikeyan continues to hone his skills and make history, he serves as an inspiration to aspiring chess enthusiasts worldwide.

Hyderabad To Host Second Edition Of E-Prix In 2024

After a period of uncertainty, the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and Formula E have officially confirmed the return of the Hyderabad EPrix for a second edition. This highly anticipated event is scheduled to take place on February 10, 2024. Despite concerns about the future of the Hyderabad EPrix, fans and motorsport enthusiasts can now breathe a sigh of relief as the FIA and Formula E have included Hyderabad in the final calendar for the tenth season of the Formula E championship. This season will consist of 16 rounds, promising a thrilling competition for fans worldwide. One of the most exciting aspects of the 2024 Hyderabad EPrix is the debut of an Indian driver, Jehan Daruvala. Daruvala will be making his mark in the all-electric single-seater championship, driving for Maserati MSG Racing and representing the Indian team Mahindra Racing. This is a significant moment for Indian motorsport as a homegrown talent joins the global stage.

Obituaries News

Former Chief Election Commissioner MS Gill Passed Away

Former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Manohar Singh Gill passed away at a South Delhi hospital on Sunday, leaving behind a legacy of public service and dedication. He served as a significant figure in both the Indian bureaucracy and politics. Manohar Singh Gill, who recently passed away at the age of 86, began his career as a young bureaucrat. During this time, he served under Parkash Singh Badal when the latter was the Punjab Chief Minister. Gill's early years in public service laid the foundation for a long and distinguished career dedicated to the betterment of the nation. One of the most significant chapters in Manohar Singh Gill's career was his appointment as the Chief Election Commissioner. He assumed this prestigious role in December 1996 and held it until June 2001. During his tenure, Gill played a crucial role in shaping the electoral processes of the country. It was also during his time as CEC that the Election Commission evolved into a multi-member body with the inclusion of GVG Krishnamurthy, a pivotal change that expanded the commission's expertise and capabilities.

Noted Malayalam film producer PV Gangadharan passes away at 80

Noted Malayalam film producer and director of Mathrubhumi group of publications P.V. Gangadharan passed away in Kozhikode on October 13 morning. He was 80. Mr. Gangadharan had made his mark in the realm of cinema and politics. An active member of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC), he had contested in the Kerala Legislative Assembly elections from the Kozhikode North constituency in 2011. He was born in 1943 to P.V. Sami, founder of the KTC group of companies, and Madhavi Sami. P.V. Chandran, managing editor of Mathrubhumi is his elder brother. He is survived by wife, Sherin, and daughters Shenuga, Shegna and Sherga. The funeral will be held on October 14 evening.

Defence News

Indian Army Clinched Gold Medal In 2023 Cambrian Patrol Military Exercise Held In UK

The Indian Army showcased its exceptional military prowess on the international stage by securing a gold medal at the prestigious Cambrian Patrol Competition in 2023. The event, held in Wales, UK, witnessed the participation of an elite team from the 3/5 Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force), marking a significant achievement for the Indian Army. The Cambrian Patrol Competition 2023 is renowned as a grueling test of endurance and teamwork, often referred to as the "Olympics of Military Patrolling." The Indian Army team competed against a total of 111 teams, including 38 international teams representing special forces and esteemed regiments from across the globe.

Indian Navy gets Third Guided Missile Destroyer Imphal

In a significant development for the Indian Navy, the state-of-the-art stealth guided missile destroyer, Yard 12706 (Imphal), has been officially transferred to Indian Navy on October 20, 2023. This momentous occasion marks a major milestone in India's indigenous shipbuilding capabilities, enhancing its maritime strength in the Indian Ocean region. Imphal is the third vessel of Project 15B that was built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL). The Project is a follow-on of the Kolkata class (Project 15A) destroyers commissioned in the last decade. Imphal follows in the wake of her predecessors Indian Naval Ships Visakhapatnam and Mormugao commissioned in the past two years.

Janata Party (BJP) and a driving force in India's infrastructure development.

Air India Express Reveals New Logo, Airplane Designs, To Add 50 Planes In 15 Months

In an exciting development, Tata Group-owned Air India Express has unveiled a dynamic new brand identity, characterized by a striking color scheme dominated by shades of orange and turquoise. The unveiling of this fresh visual identity took place at the Mumbai airport, marking a significant milestone in the airline's evolution. The airline's new visual identity features an energetic and premium color palette of Express Orange and Express Turquoise with Express Tangerine and Express Ice Blue as secondary colors. The prominent use of Express Orange signifies the airline's core values of enthusiasm and agility, embodying the quintessential warmth of India. Meanwhile, Express Turquoise represents the brand's style, contemporary sensibility, and a digital-first approach.

India Is Set To Become 4th largest Spender In Global Travel By 2030

India's tourism industry is experiencing an unprecedented boom, especially in the wake of the global pandemic and the country is poised to become the fourth-largest global spender in the travel sector by 2030, with total expenditures estimated to soar to a staggering \$410 billion. This represents a massive 173 percent increase compared to pre-Covid times in 2019 when Indian travellers spent a total of \$150 billion, ranking India as the sixth-largest global spender. The incredible recovery of India's tourism expenditure is showcased in Booking.com and McKinsey & Company's latest report titled 'How India Travels.' This report highlights several key factors that are propelling this resurgence.

Miscellaneous News

'Gadkari': The Biopic of 'Expressway Man of India'

A biographical film about Nitin Gadkari, who serves as the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, is scheduled for release on October 27th. Titled 'Gadkari,' the movie will explore different facets of his life. Actor Rahul Chopda has been cast to portray the role of Nitin Gadkari in this biopic. The film celebrates his inspiring journey, from a common political worker to becoming a distinguished Cabinet Minister, who has left an indelible mark on the Indian infrastructure landscape. The Marathi movie, presented by Abhijit Majumdar, is produced by Akshay Anant Deshmukh and directed by Anurag Ranjan Bhusari. Nitin Jairam Gadkari, hailing from Nagpur, has come a long way in the Indian political landscape. He has a deep passion for infrastructure. From his humble beginnings as an ordinary Jan Sangh activist, he has risen to become a prominent leader in the Bharatiya

Bengali

WBPSC

Miscellaneous Batch

Prelims + Mains + Interview
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