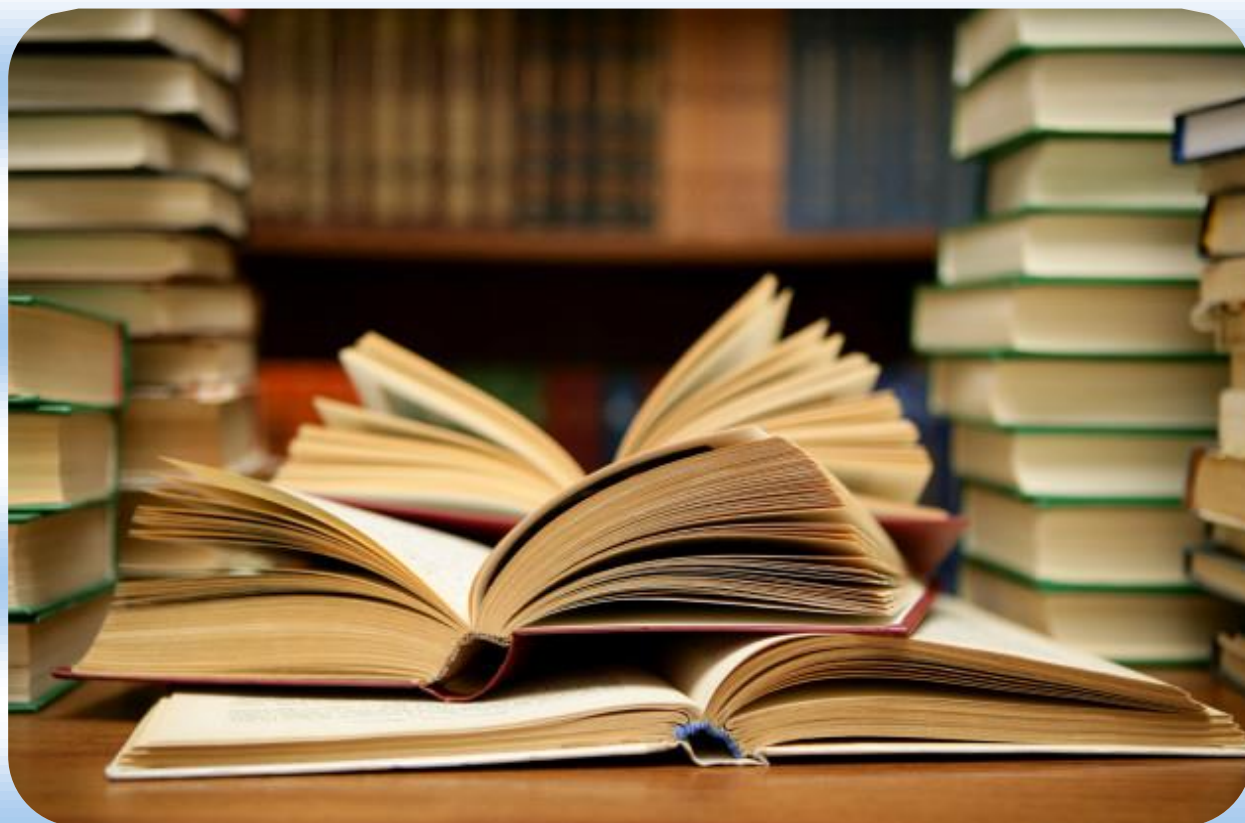


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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



JUNE-2019

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Facebook launched its first interactive Game Show in India

Mumbai: Social networking giant Facebook on Tuesday announced its first interactive game show, titled "Confetti" in India. Starting June 12, the interactive show will air from Wednesday to Sunday on Facebook's dedicated video platform - Facebook Watch, the company said in a statement. First launched in the US, the interactive game will challenge participants to answer pop culture trivia questions for a chance to win ₹3 lakh as cash prize every day. "This is our first official show in India and we are excited to see how it will enable users to engage.

Asian Snooker Championship: Pankaj Advani

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani on Friday clinched the 35th men's Asian snooker championship to complete a career grand slam in cue sports. Advani has now claimed the ACBS Asian snooker events — 6-red (short format) and 15-red (long format) — along with the IBSF World Championships in both formats. Having already accomplished it in billiards, Advani was missing the 15-red Asian snooker trophy in his bulging trophy cabinet. Advani defeated Thanawat Tirapongpaiboon 6-3 in the final to become the only one to win.

Indian Women's Hockey Team Wins FIH Series Finals

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur, who has been on a song, struck twice after skipper Rani Rampal provided the lead as India outplayed Japan 3-1 to clinch the FIH Women's Series Finals, in Hiroshima on Sunday. Leading from the front, captain Rani found the net as early as third minute but Japan's Kanon Mori equalised in the 11th minute. Gurjit scored in the 45th and 60th minutes to lead India to an emphatic victory. The world number nine Indian team had already qualified for the FIH Olympic Qualifiers 2019.

Coca-Cola and Chinese Dairy firm sign Olympic Sponsorship

Beijing will host the 2022 Olympics, while the Summer Games of 2024 will be staged in Paris. Los Angeles has been awarded the 2028 Olympics. China Mengniu Dairy and Coca-Cola have signed a multi-year global Olympic deal as joint beverages and dairy sponsors starting from 2021 until 2032, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Monday. While some reports put a \$3 billion price tag on the agreement, there were no financial details available and both Coca-Cola CEO James Quincey and Mengniu Chief Executive Jeffrey Lu refused to comment on the size of the deal. Coca-Cola's previous deal ran to 2020.

India proposes to host 2023 IOC session

India on Tuesday proposed to host the 2023 IOC session in Mumbai, which is expected to choose the host city for the 2030 Winter Olympics. IOA President Narinder Batra and member Nita Ambani submitted the formal bid to the IOC chief Thomas Bach here. Batra is set to be elected as a new IOC member during the Session on Wednesday. India had wanted to host the ongoing session but it lost to the Italian city of Milan.

Virat Kohli: Fastest batsman to reach 20,000 international runs

Virat Kohli today became the fastest cricketer to score 20,000 international runs. The India captain reached the milestone when he reached the score of 37 against West Indies at Old Trafford. Earlier Virat Kohli had won the toss and elected to bat against West Indies in an all important tie against West Indies. Virat Kohli took just 417 innings to reach the milestone and bettered the time taken by legends such as Sachin Tendulkar and Brian Lara.

IOA President Narinder Batra elected to IOC

Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra on Wednesday was elected as a member of the International Olympic Committee. Batra was elected to the prestigious seat during the IOC Session here as one of the 10 new members. He was elected with 58 votes and four against. The IOA chief was one of the three officials whose election is linked to their roles with their respective organisations, meaning they will relinquish their membership of the IOC if they are replaced in their National Olympic Committee.

Former US President Jimmy Carter receives Statesmanship Award

Former President Jimmy Carter is being recognized for his contributions to relations between the U.S. and China. The George H. W. Bush Foundation for U.S. China Relations says Carter will receive the inaugural George H. W. Bush Award for Statesmanship in U.S.-China Relations. The foundation said in a statement Thursday that the award goes to people who have made "profound contributions to the development of constructive and mutually beneficial relations" between the U.S and the People's Republic of China.

Indian girl honoured in UAE for Green efforts

DUBAI: An eight-year-old Indian-origin student here has collected nearly 15,000 kg of paper waste in the gulf emirate as part of the Emirates Environmental Group's nationwide recycling campaign. Nia Tony has been honoured for her efforts in keeping the environment clean by collecting the paper waste, the Khaleej Times reported. "I was campaigning around my area to collect paper, so that it can be recycled. Every week, I would go out to collect newspapers, magazines, and other paper that people were throwing away or didn't want to keep," she said.

Priyanka Chopra selected for Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award by UNICEF

MUMBAI: Unicef will honour Indian actress Priyanka Chopra with the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award at the Unicef Snowflake Ball in December. Priyanka, a global Unicef Goodwill Ambassador for Child Rights, took to Twitter and wrote: "So humbled. Thank you Unicef for honouring me with the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award at the Unicef Snowflake Ball in December." The event will be held on December 3 in New York. The 36-year-old says her work for Unicef means everything to her.

Chinese President conferred Kyrgyzstan's Highest National Award

Chinese President Xi Jinping was on Thursday conferred with the highest national award of Kyrgyzstan, which is hosting the 19th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. President of Kyrgyzstan Sooronbay Jeenbekov awarded his Chinese counterpart (Xi Jinping) the Manas Order of the First Degree, the country's highest national prize, China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

NGO Akshay Patra wins BBC Award

Akshaya Patra, a non-profit organisation running one of the world's largest school meals project in India, has been awarded the BBC World Service Global Champion Award for the programme. The award, presented at the BBC Food and Farming Awards in Bristol this week, recognises a person or project that is changing the way the world produces, processes, consumes or thinks about food for the better. The Bengaluru-based NGO was selected by an international panel of judges from nominations sent in by the World Service.

Miss India World 2019: Rajasthan's Suman Rao crowned

MUMBAI: Suman Rao, a CA student from Rajasthan, emerged the winner of Miss India World 2019. The ceremony was held at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Indoor Stadium on Saturday here. Chhattisgarh's Shivani Jadhav, an engineer by qualification, was crowned Miss Grand India 2019, while management student Shreya Shanker from Bihar won Miss India United Continents 2019 title. Telangana's Sanjana Vij was adjudged as Miss India Runner Up 2019.

UK-India Awards 2019: Mark Tully gets Lifetime Achievement Award

LONDON: Veteran British journalist Sir Mark Tully was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award in London for his contributions to the UK-India relationship. Mr Tully, the former Bureau Chief of the BBC, New Delhi, received a standing ovation on Friday from the gathering as he said that being in India was his karma. "I owe a great debt to India and I have been rewarded way beyond my expectations," said 83-year-old Tully, who has been previously knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in the UK and conferred with the Padma Bhushan in India.

NALCO to get President's award for excellent CSR in social development

Navratna PSU National Aluminium Company Ltd has been honoured with the prestigious Kalinga CSR Award-2017 in recognition of its CSR activities for sustainable development. The award was given away during the third National Seminar on "Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives-2018 (Evaluating Sustainable Development)" held here yesterday, a company statement said. The award was given by Odisha's MSME Minister Prafulla Samal in the presence of Tapan Kumar Chand, CMD, NALCO.

Bihar Government bans Tree-Felling

The Government of Bihar recently banned felling of trees, citing increasing pollution as well as a fatal heatwave. Trees on private land, however, can be felled in the absence of a tree-protection Act in Bihar. The current order was passed under the Forest Conservation Act, DK Shukla, principal chief conservator of forests, told Down To Earth (DTE). "All permissions granted to cut trees for development works, have become null and void," he said.

Vaishno Devi Shrine to have its own Disaster Response Force by 2020

Jammu: The Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, a religious pilgrimage atop a hilltop that attracts lakhs of devotees from across the world every year, will get a dedicated in-house disaster response force by September next year, a senior official said Sunday. Simrandeep Singh, the Chief Executive Officer of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVDSB), said training of the board staff who will be the first respondents.

Government forms new 'Jal Shakti' Ministry

A new 'Jal Shakti' Ministry, in which the erstwhile ministries of Water Resources and Drinking Water and Sanitation will be merged, has been formed with Gajendra Singh Shekhawat at its helm. Shekhawat took charge of the ministry on Friday, a day after he was sworn in as minister. During the election campaign, Modi had promised to form an integrated ministry dealing with water issues. "All the water related works will be merged under one ministry," Shekhawat said after taking the charge.

Google Maps launches new public transport features in India

Google Maps announced three India-first features on Tuesday. Starting today, Google Maps users will be able to see bus travel times from live traffic across 10 of the largest cities in India, get Live train status for Indian Railways trains, and get mixed-mode commute suggestions that now combine auto-rickshaw and public transport. Announcing the new India-first features, Taylah Hasaballah, Product Manager, Google Maps said; "Google Maps is being used by over a billion travellers to navigate and explore their world, wherever they are.

What is Facebook's Cryptocurrency 'Libra'?

Facebook and some of its corporate allies have decided that what the world really needs is another cryptocurrency, and that launching one is the best way to use the vast talents at their disposal. The fact that Facebook thinks so reveals much about what is wrong with 21st-century American capitalism. In some ways, it's a curious time to be launching an alternative currency. In the past, the main complaint about traditional currencies was their instability, with rapid and uncertain inflation making them a poor store of value.

Ravana-1: Sri Lanka's 1st satellite successfully launched

Sri Lanka's first satellite 'Ravana-1', designed and developed by two local engineers, was successfully launched into orbit this week from the International Space Station (ISS) along with two other BIRDS 3 satellites from Japan and Nepal. Ravana 1, the cube satellite measuring 11.3 cm x 10 cm x 10 cm, and weighing around 1.05 kg, was launched into orbit at 3:45 pm (Sri Lanka time) on Monday, the Colombo Page reported.

Indian Railways conducting trials of Tri-Netra technology

New Delhi: Railways is conducting extensive trials of Tri-Netra technology but it cannot be introduced till it is found to be perfect in detecting any obstruction on tracks during fog, the Rajya Sabha was informed Friday. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal told members during the Question Hour that the Tri-Netra system is another attempt by the Railways to develop modern technology. "This is also under extensive trials. This Tri-netra device is making an attempt during fog through ultrasonic waves where it will be able to detect any obstruction on tracks. It is under testing.

World's Highest Weather Stations installed on Mt Everest

KATHMANDU: The National Geographic Society has announced the successful installation of the world's highest operating weather stations on Mount Everest to provide researchers, climbers, and the public with near real-time information about mountain conditions, the media reported. The multi-disciplinary team installed the world's two highest operating automated weather stations at Balcony area (8,430 m).

Himachal Pradesh makes GPS device mandatory for trekkers

The Himachal Pradesh government on Tuesday make it mandatory for trekkers to carry a GPS device to tackle any exigency. A decision in this regard was taken at a review meeting chaired by Additional Chief Secretary Shrikant Baldi here on preparedness for the monsoon. He said it was important that trekking and other 'yatras' were restricted during adverse weather. "It would be made mandatory for trekkers to have a GPS device so that they can be provided all.

ONGC overtakes India Oil Corp as Most Profitable PSU

ONGC, India's top oil and gas producer, has toppled Indian Oil Corp (IOC) to regain crown of being the country's most profitable public sector company. According to earnings statements of the listed companies, Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) reported a 34 per cent jump in its 2018-19 fiscal net profit to Rs 26,716 crore. In comparison, IOC registered a net profit of Rs 17,274 crore for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2019. ONGC, in the previous two financial years, had lost the most profitable PSU tag to IOC.

Nilekani Panel suggests measures to encourage Digital Payments

To encourage digital payments, the Nandan Nilekani committee has suggested a host of measures, including elimination of charges, round the clock RTGS and NEFT facility and duty-free import of point-of-sales machines. The committee, which was appointed by the RBI, had submitted its suggestions on promoting digital payments to Governor Shaktikanta Das last month. Among other things, the panel has suggested that there should be no convenience fee on payments made to government agencies by customers.

Sahara Evols: electric vehicles by Sahara Group

Sahara Group has recently announced its plan to foray into the electric vehicle business under a new brand name 'Sahara Evols'. This is the first time the the company is entering the automobile sector, and under the new Sahara Evols brand, the company will offer a range of electric vehicles (EVs) along with advanced allied services. Sahara Evols electric vehicle portfolio will include everything from electric scooters and motorcycles to electric three-wheelers and cargo vehicles.

AAI signs pact with Boeing to modernise India's Air Traffic Management

New Delhi: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) and aerospace major Boeing on Tuesday announced the signing of a technical assistance agreement to develop an air traffic management roadmap which will improve airspace utilisation and help maintain efficient aircraft operations. The comprehensive 10-year communication, navigation and surveillance/air traffic management (CNS/ATM).

DMRC becomes India's 1st project to receive Power from Waste-to-Energy

NEW DELHI: Continuing its efforts to establish an environment-friendly network, the Delhi Metro has become the first ever project in the country to receive power generated from a waste-to-energy plant. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said it has started receiving 2 MW power from a 12 MW capacity waste-to-energy plant set up in Ghazipur. "DMRC is receiving the power since the beginning of this month from this facility.

G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors 2019

When big changes in economic policy are set by presidential tweet in response to issues, real or concocted, Finance Ministers can say what they want and it won't amount to much. Finance chiefs from the biggest economies rang the alarm over global growth and said they are prepared to do something about it. Too bad they have never been less relevant. Gone are the days when investors used to quake over ministers moving a comma or adding a period in key sentences.

CEA Krishnamurthy Subramanian appointed part-time member in IBBI

Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian and former MD and CEO of IDBI Bank B Sriram were on Tuesday appointed part-time members of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), an official order said. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved their appointment, the order issued by Personnel Ministry said. While Subramanian, an ISB Hyderabad professor, was in December appointed the chief economic adviser for a period of three years, Sriram worked as the managing director and CEO.

IRSDC enters into tripartite Agreement with French Railways & agency

French development agency, AFD, will give €700,000 to French Railways, SNCF, to provide technical know-how to the Indian Railway Station Development Corporation (IRSDC) — the station development arm of Indian Railways. This was explained to BusinessLine by SK Lohia, MD and CEO, IRSDC. The technical knowhow will be provided by SNCF-Hubs and Connexions, said a release. French agency to give grant AFD.

Bimal Jalan led panel defers report on RBI surplus funds

A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) committee considering guidelines for transfer of the central bank's surplus funds to the government delayed submitting its report Wednesday, after lack of consensus, officials said. The six-member committee led by former RBI governor Bimal Jalan will meet once more before submitting its report by the month-end. The committee was appointed in December 2018 to review the Economic Capital Framework (ECF).

RBI asks banks to grout ATMs to a structure for Security

The Reserve Bank on Friday asked banks to ensure their ATMs are grouted to a wall, pillar, or floor by September-end, except those installed in high secured premises such as airports, to enhance security of the cash vending machines. In 2016, the RBI had set up a Committee on Currency Movement (CCM) to review the entire gamut of security of treasure in transit. Based on the recommendations of the panel, the central bank has now issued instructions aimed at mitigating risks in ATM operations and enhancing security.

Tariff War: India levies retaliatory tariffs on 28 US products

NEW DELHI: India will impose higher tariffs on 28 American products including almonds, apples and walnut effective June 16, the government said in a notification on Saturday. The retaliatory tariffs, triggered by the US announcing higher duties on Indian steel and aluminium last year, were deferred multiple times in view of the trade dialogue between the two countries.

DCC approves levy of penalty on Airtel, Vodafone Idea

The Digital Communications Commission, the highest decision-making body of the Department of Telecom, has given its approval for imposing penalty on Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea for denial of interconnection to Reliance Jio when the latter had entered the market. However, the inter-ministerial panel has asked the Telecom Regulatory authority of India (TRAI) to review the penalty amount of ₹3,050 crore, given the financial stress in the sector, an official source said.

IndusInd Bank- BFIL merger to be effective from July

IndusInd Bank on Wednesday said 4 July, 2019 will be the effective date of the merger with Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd (BFIL). M R Rao, current CEO of BFIL, will become the CEO of IndusInd Financial Inclusion Ltd (IFIL). The boards of IndusInd and BFIL decided that on 4 July the NCLT Order will be filed by the lender, BFIL and IFIL with the Registrar of Companies. on 10 June, 2019, NCLT sanctioned the scheme of arrangement about BFIL, IndusInd and IFIL and their respective shareholders and creditors.

SEBI sets up panel for reviewing Margins on Derivatives

Based on the feedback that the existing margin requirements in the derivatives segment is pushing up cost of trading while not managing risk in the most efficient manner, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has decided to review the current framework of margins in the futures and options segment. The capital markets regulator has set up a working group, headed by NSE Clearing Ltd., to look into the issue and submit its recommendations to the Secondary Market Advisory Committee.

RBI Deputy Governor Viral Acharya quits before his term ends

Viral Acharya who had made a fervent pitch for autonomy for the regulator, has reportedly quit six months before the scheduled end of his term. Acharya, who joined the central bank on January 23, 2017, was RBI's youngest deputy governor post economic liberalisation. ET has independently confirmed that Acharya has quit and would be heading to the New York University to teach.

What is RBI's Complaint Management System?

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday launched "Complaint Management System (CMS)", a software application to facilitate RBI's grievance redressal processes. Members of public can access the CMS portal at the central bank's website to lodge their complaints against any of the entities regulated by RBI. "Keeping the convenience of the customers in mind, CMS has been designed to enable on-line filing of complaints.

India's Forex reserves rise to a record high of \$426.42 billion

Mumbai: India's foreign exchange reserve touched a life-time high of \$426.42 billion after it surged by \$4.215 billion in the week to June 21, RBI data showed. Forex reserves had scaled a record high of \$426.028 billion in the week to April 13, 2018. In the previous reporting week, the reserves had declined by \$1.358 billion to \$422.2 billion. The rise in reserves was on account of increase in foreign currency asset, which is a major component of the overall foreign exchange reserves.

RBI permits ARC to buy financial assets from Peers

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has allowed asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) to buy financial assets from other such entities. However, all such transactions have to be settled in cash, the banking regulator said. "In view of amendment to the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securities Interest Act, 2002, it has been decided to permit ARCs to acquire financial assets from other ARCs," the RBI said. "Price discovery for such transaction shall not be prejudicial to the interest of security receipt holders," the RBI further said, adding the selling ARC must utilise the proceeds so received for the redemption of underlying security receipts.

RBI: Payments related Data to be stored only in India

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said all data related to payment transactions must be stored in the country and that such information, if processed abroad, will have to be brought back within 24 hours. "The entire payment data shall be stored in systems located only in India," the RBI said in its frequently asked question (FAQ) section on Wednesday, responding to certain issues raised by payment system operators. "The data should be deleted from the systems abroad and brought back to India not later than one business day or 24 hours from the payment processing, whichever is earlier," it added. The clarification has come a week after the government said the RBI would examine concerns around its strict data-localisation guidelines.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

UN extends sanctions against South Sudan

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council approved a resolution Thursday extending an arms embargo and other sanctions against South Sudan over objections from African nations, Russia and China that the measure won't help promote peace. The U.S.-sponsored resolution received 10 "yes" votes — one more than the minimum required for adoption — and five abstentions from South Africa, Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, Russia and China. A fragile peace deal to end a five-year civil war that killed nearly 400,000 people was signed in September. But the committee overseeing its implementation says key elements have yet to be put in place.

US withdraws India's GSP benefits

Reacting to the US decision of withdrawing the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) scheme for India that allowed duty free export of over 3,000 products from the country, the Commerce & Industry Ministry has said that it was "unfortunate" that the resolution offered by New Delhi on the matter was not acceptable to Washington. "We have significant development imperatives and concerns and our people also aspire for better standards of living.

Italy's Volcano Mount Etna erupts on Island of Sicily

ROME, ITALY: Mount Etna in southern Italy has burst into life, spitting molten lava high into the sky, though cloud cover Saturday ruined the view for those brave enough to venture up the flanks of Europe's highest volcano. The National Institute of Geophysics and Vulcanology (INGV) said there was "lively spattering" as fire and hot ash spewed high into the sky in an eruption which began Thursday and had slowed slightly by Saturday but still posed a risk to climbers. The lava came from two eruptive fissures on the northeastern and south-southeastern sides of the New Southeast Crater.

Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) meets in Bangkok

India just had yet another round of consultation with United States, Japan and Australia on Indo-Pacific, but refrained from joining them in not-so-subtly criticizing China — once again signalling its keenness to avert irking the communist country. The diplomats of India, United States, Australia and Japan met in Bangkok on Friday, indicating a continuation of the 'quad' — as the consultation mechanism launched by the four nations in 2017 to counter China in Indo-Pacific is popularly known.

OIC appoints Yousef Aldobeay as its special envoy for J&K

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has appointed Yousef Aldobeay of Saudi Arabia as its special envoy for Jammu and Kashmir. The appointment was made during the 14th OIC summit held in Saudi Arabia's holy city of Makkah on Friday, which was attended by several leaders of Muslim countries, including Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan's foreign ministry said on Saturday.

U.S. Visa process now needs Social Media Profiles

In a significant move to increase surveillance of those seeking to enter the United States, Washington will require most individuals applying for visas to provide details of their social media handles going back five years. The rule is expected to affect close to 15 million people annually. Online visa forms that require social media account history became operational at the end of last week and will cover all applicants except those applying for certain official and diplomatic visas.

Prayuth Chan-ocha elected as new Prime Minister of Thailand

Thailand's new parliament has elected military government chief Prayuth Chan-ocha as the country's prime minister, completing a transition from coup leader to head of a civilian government in a system seen tilted in his favour. He comfortably exceeded the 375-vote threshold in the two houses of parliament to give him the majority needed to fend off his sole challenger, a charismatic billionaire heading up the anti-military government coalition.

Russia launches 1st Arctic train service

The first tourist train travelling through Russia's Arctic region and on to Norway set off from Saint Petersburg station on Wednesday with 91 passengers aboard for the inaugural trial journey. "The Arctic fascinates everybody," said Nurlan Mukash executive director of the German Lernidee Erlebnisreisen tour group behind the project. "This destination has been covered by Canadian and Norwegian tourist agencies but, this has not been the case for Russia," he added.

SriLankan Airlines: World's Most Punctual Airline

COLOMBO: SriLankan Airlines, the flag carrier of the island nation, has been named the 'World's Most Punctual Airline' for the second consecutive time with over 90 per cent of its flights in May being "on time", authorities said here Friday. SriLankan Airlines said in a statement that it had achieved this status for the second time in less than 12 months as in September 2018, it had achieved a punctuality rating of 91.37 per cent, reports Xinhua news agency. In May, it achieved a punctuality rating of 90.75 per cent.

African Union suspends Sudan, demanding end to Military Rule

Sudan has been suspended from the African Union (AU) amid growing fears that splits among the ruling military regime could lead to civil war and anarchy. The decision by the union – which has 54 other member states – will significantly increase pressure on the country's new military rulers, raising the prospect of diplomatic isolation on the continent and sanctions if they do not hand over power to a civilian-led authority to allow an "exit from the current crisis".

China launches Space Rocket from Yellow Sea for 1st time

China has launched a rocket from a mobile platform at sea for the first time, sending five commercial satellites and two others containing experimental technology into space. The Long March 11 rocket blasted off from a launch pad onboard a commercial ship in the Yellow Sea off the coast of Shandong province – the 306th Long March rocket launch, but the first one at sea. China is the third country after the US and Russia to master sea launch technology.

UAE Cabinet adopts 'National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031'

Dubai: The National Wellbeing Strategy 2031, which was adopted by the Council of Ministers in its last meeting chaired by His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai, will include 90 initiatives to be implemented by various government entities over the next 10 years. Uhood Khalfan Al Roumi, Minister of State for Happiness and Quality of Life and Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office, said the Strategy 2031.

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev elected Kazakhstan president

Kazakhstan has arrested protesters and been accused of voting misconduct amid a rubber-stamp election of the country's new president, a longtime ally of the country's veteran leader who will retain sweeping powers over the oil-rich nation. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, a loyal lieutenant of predecessor Nursultan Nazarbayev who has run the country since 1990, won 70.8 per cent of the vote, results released on Monday showed..

Mauritania holds election for 1st time in 60yrs

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz seized power in a coup in 2008, but has agreed to step down and abide by a two-term limit of office. Votes are now being counted and the result should be known next week. Six candidates are competing for the presidency. The frontrunner is Mohamed Ahmed Ould Ghazouani, the country's defence minister and a close ally of the current president, BBC West Africa correspondent Louise Dewast reports. Opposition candidates also took part in a move seen as a positive step forward.

Saudi Arabia becomes 1st Arab country to get full FATF membership

Saudi Arabia has become the first Arab country to be granted full membership of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) following the group's annual general meeting in the US. The kingdom's accession came as the global money laundering watchdog celebrated the 30th anniversary of its first meeting held in Paris in 1989, the Saudi Press Agency reported. Saudi Arabia which had received an invitation from the FATF at the beginning of 2015 to join.

Jaipur Foot Korea: launched by Korean Ambassador to India

Korean Ambassador to India Bong-kil Shin on Monday launched 'Jaipur Foot Korea', a collaborative initiative between Korea and Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), a prosthetic limb organisation. Under this agreement, Korea will provide financial and technical assistance to further research and development collaboration in the med-tech sector specifically in the area of prosthetic limbs, bionic arms, 3-D printing-based Flat foot solution and mobility solutions, according to a release issued here.

Russia extends ban on EU Food Imports until end of 2020

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on Monday extending a Russian ban on food imports from the European Union until the end of 2020, according to a government database. Russia imposed an embargo on a wide range of imports from the EU and other countries in 2014 in retaliation for international sanctions over Moscow's role in the Ukraine crisis.

Pakistan secures \$3 billion bailout from Qatar

Cash-strapped Pakistan on Monday secured a bailout package of USD 3 billion from oil-rich Qatar, a day after Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad concluded his visit to Islamabad and agreed to cooperate in the fields of trade, anti-money laundering and curbing terror financing. Earlier, China gave USD 4.6 billion in shape of deposits and commercial loans and Saudi Arabia provided USD 3 billion cash deposit and USD 3.2 billion oil facility on deferred payments.

What is 'goAML' launched by UAE?

Abu Dhabi: All financial institutions in the country have to now report any suspicious transactions through "goAML" (Anti-Money Laundering), a newly UN-developed platform, the Central Bank of the UAE announced on Sunday. The launch of the platform at the Central Bank's headquarters in Abu Dhabi makes the UAE the first country in the Gulf region to go live with the system developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. It aims to step up intelligence, identify complex, organised criminal activities and curb them.

Council of Europe restores Voting Rights of Russia

Five years after Russia had its voting rights removed because of the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly has voted to restore them. The assembly backed the proposal in the face of angry opposition from Ukraine, whose delegation later walked out. Moscow described the vote as a "victory for common sense". Russia had threatened to abandon the 47-member human rights body, which is not linked to the EU..

Sister City Partnership: Lol shared between Ahmedabad and Kobe

Authorities from the Japanese city of Kobe on Thursday exchanged a Letter of Intent (LoI) with their counterparts in Ahmedabad for a sister city partnership, which will pave the way for an enhanced economic relationship between the two vibrant cities as well as the two countries. The LoI was exchanged in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who visited Kobe to address a large Indian diaspora event. "Strengthening people-to-people ties.

India-assisted IT- Biotechnology Park inaugurated in Cote d'Ivoire

The Mahatma Gandhi IT and Biotechnology Park in Cote d'Ivoire, a dedicated free trade zone built with India's assistance to build development capacities, has been inaugurated. The Mahatma Gandhi IT and Biotechnology Park (MGIT-BP) was jointly inaugurated by Ambassador of India and Cote d'Ivoire Vice President Daniel Kablan Duccan at a ceremony in Grand-Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire on Thursday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in statement.

India abstains from voting on Torture Goods

India has abstained from voting on a General Assembly resolution aimed at examining options to end trade in goods used for capital punishment and torture, saying it is unacceptable to place death penalty on par with torture. The 193-member UN General Assembly Friday adopted the resolution 'Towards torture-free trade: examining the feasibility, scope and parameters for possible common international standards' by a recorded vote of 81 in favour to 20 against, with 44 abstentions.

India extends financial aid to Nepal for rebuilding earthquake-hit houses

India on Monday extended a financial aid of 1.6 billion Nepalese rupees to Nepal to help 50,000 people in Nuwakot and Gorkha districts rebuild their houses damaged in the devastating earthquake in 2015. India's ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri handed over the cheque to Finance Secretary of Nepal Rajan Khanal for the reconstruction work, the Indian embassy here said in a statement. The ambassador thanked the Nepal government for the partnership and reiterated that India remained

India extends \$15 Million assistance to Niger for holding AU summit

India has extended USD 15 million assistance to Niger for organising the African Union (AU) summit scheduled to be held in Niamey early next month. The summit is scheduled to be held in Niamey from July 7-8. It will also be the first time that Niger is scheduled to host an AU summit. The assistance in the form of grant was symbolically handed over to Niger's Deputy Foreign Minister Lamido Ousseini Bala Goga Salamatou in the presence of Minister and Special Advisor to the Niger President Mohammed Saidil Moctar.

WHO launches AWaRe tool to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a global campaign that urges countries to adopt its new online tool aimed at guiding policy-makers and health workers to use antibiotics safely and more effectively. Its another objective is to limit drugs that are at risk of resistance. With the emergence of infections that are untreatable by all classes of antibiotics, antimicrobial resistance has become "an invisible pandemic", says Mariângela Simão, assistant-director general for Access to Medicines at WHO.

Peter Gilchrist wins Pacific International Billiards Championship

Peter Gilchrist, a former multiple world billiards champion from Singapore, brought Sourav Kothari's run to a halt at the Pacific International snooker billiards championship played at the Yarraville Club here on Friday. Kothari had been on a roll from day one in Melbourne, winning the Pacific International snooker championship, a triple crown event in Australia and thereafter went on to display some outstanding billiards en-route the final of the billiards event.

