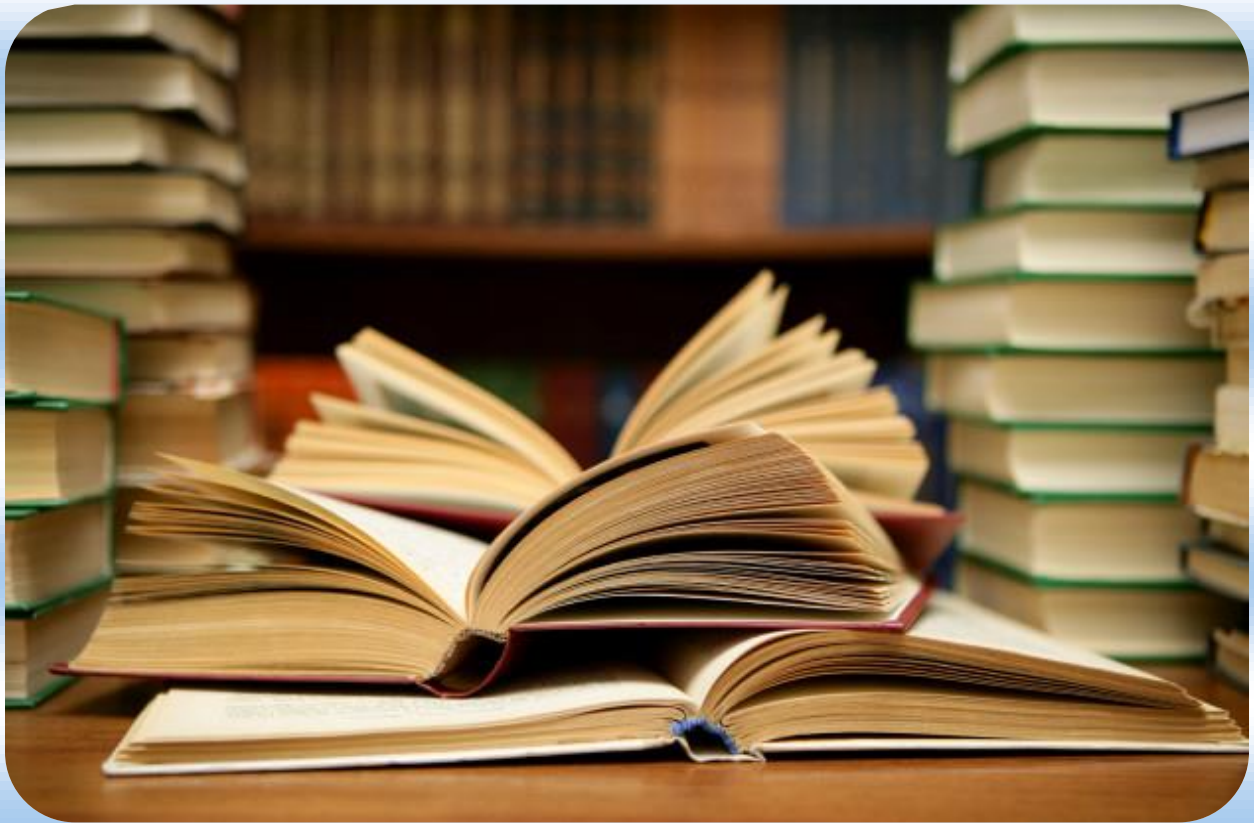


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY

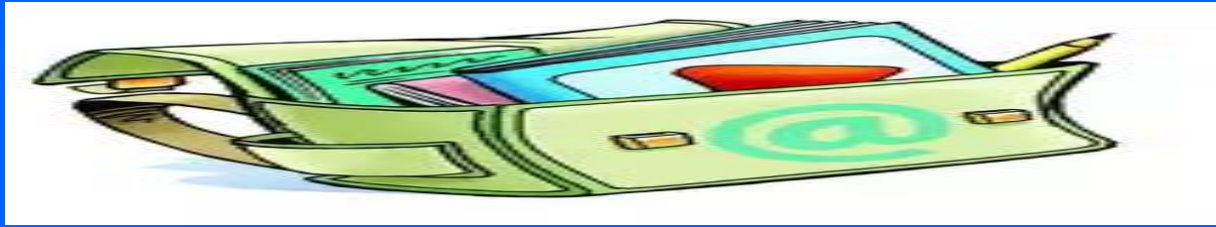


JUNE-2024

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Kerala Introduces Artificial Intelligence Learning in School Textbooks

Thiruvananthapuram: With the introduction of Artificial Intelligence (AI) learning in the Information & Communication Technology (ICT) textbook of Class VII, over 4 lakh students in Kerala are set to get familiar with AI in the ensuing academic year.



Canara Bank to Dilute 14.50% Stake in Canara HSBC Life Insurance Via IPO

Public sector lender Canara Bank approved a proposal to dilute 14.50 percent stake in insurance arm Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company via initial public offering (IPO), the lender informed on the exchanges on May 31. "Canara Bank has accorded approval for initiating the process of diluting 14.50 percent stake of the Bank in its subsidiary M/s Canara HSBC Life Insurance Company Ltd by listing the Company in Stock Exchanges (BSE/NSE) through Initial Public Offer (IPO)," the bank said.

RBI Penalizes SBM Bank (India) With Rs 88.70 Lakh Fine

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 88.70 lakh on SBM Bank (India) for non-compliance with certain regulatory norms. In a statement, the central banks said the penalty has been imposed for non-compliance with licensing conditions imposed by the RBI, and specific directions to stop undertaking Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) transactions with immediate effect.

India's FY24 Fiscal Deficit Improves to 5.63% of GDP

The government's fiscal deficit for 2023-24 stood at 5.63 per cent of the GDP, marginally better than the 5.8 per cent estimated in the Union Budget, according to data released by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) on Friday, May 31. In actual terms, the fiscal deficit--the gap between expenditure and revenue, was at ₹16.53 lakh crore. In the revised estimate for 2023-24, the government projected a fiscal deficit of ₹17.34 lakh crore, which is 5.8 per cent of the GDP, as announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the interim Budget.

Adani Ports Expands Global Reach: Secures 30-Year Deal for Tanzania Port Terminal

Shares of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (ASPEZ) gained 10 percent on June 3 as the company's wholly owned subsidiary Adani International Ports Holdings Pte Ltd (AIPH) signed a 30-year concession agreement with the Tanzania Ports Authority to operate and manage Container Terminal 2 at the Dar es Salaam Port in Tanzania.



ISRO and Wipro 3D Collaborate on 3D-Printed Rocket Engine

Bangalore (Karnataka) [India], May 31: Wipro 3D, in collaboration with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), celebrates a pathbreaking achievement in space technology with the successful manufacturing of the PS4 3D-printed rocket engine powering the 4th stage of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).



Reserve Bank of India Cancels 10-Year Green Bond Auction for the First Time

In a first, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday cancelled the auction of 10-year green bonds as traders refused to pay greenium, said dealers. Greenium signifies the premium investors are willing to pay for green bonds because of their sustainability impact. Diverging from the pattern of issuing green bonds in the latter half, the government plans to issue green bonds worth Rs 12,000 crore in the first half of the current financial year.

Gross GST Revenue Collection in May 2024: ₹1.73 Lakh Crore, Records 10% YoY Growth

The gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue for the month of May 2024 stood at ₹1.73 lakh crore. This represents a 10% year-on-year growth, driven by a strong increase in domestic transactions (up 15.3%) and slowing of imports (down 4.3%). After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue for May 2024 stands at ₹1.44 lakh crore, reflecting a growth of 6.9% compared to the same period last year.

Gautam Adani Reclaims the Title of Asia's Richest Person

Gautam Adani, chairman of multinational conglomerate the Adani Group, has reclaimed the title of the richest person in Asia with a net worth of \$111 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. This came after the group's shares rallied up to 14 per cent on Friday.



BJP and SKM Triumph in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim Assembly Elections

As results of Assembly Elections in two northeastern states start trickling in, both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) look set to retain their hold over Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, respectively. The ruling Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) is poised to reclaim power in the state, having secured 28 out of 32 assembly seats. Chief Minister and Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) chief Prem Singh Tamang has emerged victorious in the Rhenock constituency.

PV Sindhu Invests in and Becomes Brand Ambassador for Greenday's 'Better Nutrition'

New Delhi: Two-time Olympic medallist and world champion shuttler P V Sindhu on Monday announced her investment and brand ambassadorship with Greenday's 'Better Nutrition' brand, which aims to combat micronutrient deficiencies in India through biofortified foods.



ISRO Extends Support to Boost India's Space Startup Ecosystem

BENGALURU: Isro Saturday said it has demonstrated its commitment to nurturing a vibrant space ecosystem in India by providing extensive technical support and expertise to Agnikul Cosmos, the IIT-incubated start-up, for its recent suborbital mission, Agnibaan SORTeD. "...This collaboration showcases Isri's willingness to support and foster the growth of private start-ups in the country's rapidly expanding space sector," the space agency said.

OpenAI Unveils ChatGPT Edu for Universities

Even as GPT-4o continues to stun the world with its revolutionary capabilities, OpenAI has come out with yet another model – ChatGPT Edu. This has been introduced as an affordable offering for universities to bring AI to campus responsibly. “We’re announcing ChatGPT Edu, a version of ChatGPT built for universities to responsibly deploy AI to students, faculty, researchers, and campus operations,” OpenAI said in its website announcing the new model.



IIT Dharwad Unveils Innovative Fire Rescue Drone

Dharwad: A team of teachers and students of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)Dharwad has developed a fire rescue assistant drone. Prof Sudheer Siddapureddy and Prof Ameer Mulla, with funding from the TiHAN Foundation, IIT Hyderabad (NMICPS, govt of India), led the team. The unveiling and demonstration of what is claimed to be the first fire rescue assistant drone was held during the two-day workshop on ‘Drone design and autonomous navigation in fire rescue’ (DDANFR 2024).



Preston Curve Links Income and Life Expectancy

The Preston curve refers to a certain empirical relationship that is witnessed between life expectancy and per capita income in a country. It was first proposed by American sociologist Samuel H. Preston in his 1975 paper “The changing relation between mortality and level of economic development”. Preston found that people living in richer countries generally had longer life spans when compared with people living in poorer countries. This is likely because people in wealthier countries have better access to healthcare, are better educated.



India's Supreme Court Reconstitutes Gender Sensitisation Committee

NEW DELHI: In a significant development, the Supreme Court has re-constituted gender sensitisation and internal complaints committee with Justice Hima Kohli to lead as the Chairperson of the Committee. The committee comprises of a total of 12 members from various fields: including that of legal, Professors of Law Universities and others. Senior Supreme Court judge Justice BV Nagarathna would also be a member of the committee.

Nokia and Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya Collaborate on 5G/6G Research

Finnish telecom gearmaker Nokia on Monday said it has signed an agreement with the Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV) for carrying out joint research related to 5G/6G communications in the transportation and logistics sector. Nokia and Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, a university under the Ministry of Railways, will collaborate on research opportunities in 5G/6G communications targeting air, land and sea transportation use cases, as well as standards development, smart factory/ automation, and AI/GenAI labs, a company statement said.

Haryana Government's Rs 10,000-Crore Project to Combat Air Pollution

Haryana Chief Secretary T V S N Prasad on Monday said the state government will soon roll out a Rs 10,000-crore project funded by the World Bank to address air pollution. The Haryana Clean Air Project for Sustainable Development will be implemented in the state in a phased manner with the first phase being implemented in the districts falling in the National Capital Region (NCR) and replication in entire state later, he said.

Adani One Launches Two Variants of Co-Branded Credit Cards with ICICI Bank

Adani One, the digital platform of the Adani Group, and ICICI Bank on Monday announced the launch of two variants of co-branded credit cards in collaboration with card network Visa. The co-branded credit card partnership marks the Adani Group's foray into the retail financial sector. Available in two variants – Adani One ICICI Bank Signature Credit Card and Adani One ICICI Bank Platinum Credit Card – the credit cards will offer a reward programme to its customers.

Former Indian All-Rounder Kedar Jadhav Announces Retirement

India international Kedar Jadhav on Monday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket. "Thank you all For your love and support throughout my Career from 1500 hrs. Consider me as retired from all forms of cricket," Jadhav announced in a social media post. Jadhav made his One Day International (ODI) debut for India on November 16, 2014, against Sri Lanka, and his T20I debut against Zimbabwe on July 17, 2015.

NOTA Creates Record in MP's Indore Lok Sabha Seat

BJP's sitting MP from Indore Shankar Lalwani won on Tuesday by a record margin of 11,75,092 votes in a contest where NOTA created a record with 2.18 lakh voters opting for the 'none of the above' option in the Lok Sabha elections. His victory margin is probably the highest in the country's electoral history, a BJP leader claimed. In Tikamgarh (SC) seat, Union minister Virendra Kumar emerged victorious as he defeated his Congress rival Pankaj Ahirwar by 4,03,312 votes.

Arka Fincap Expands Financial Solutions with IRDAI License

Kirloskar Oil Engines Limited's shares were up by 7.10 per cent after its subsidiary Arka Fincap Limited received a corporate agency licence (composite) from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), enabling the non-banking financial company (NBFC) to enter the insurance distribution market. Vimal Bhandari, Executive Vice Chairman and CEO of Arka Fincap, said, "We are excited about this significant milestone in our journey that embodies our commitment to innovation, growth."

SBI Mutual Fund Becomes First to Top Rs 10 Trillion in Assets Under Management

SBI Mutual Fund (SBI MF) made history on Monday by becoming the first fund house in the country to achieve the Rs 10 trillion milestone in assets under management (AUM). The industry leader has adeptly navigated the post-pandemic equity boom and capitalised on the increasing awareness of MF investing. The sharp growth in SBI MF's AUM, alongside the overall industry, has been driven by the equity market rally and expanding MF investor base.

Muthoot Microfin and SBI Join Forces to Empower Rural Women Entrepreneurs

Muthoot Microfin on Thursday announced a strategic co-lending partnership with the State Bank of India to extend its financial services to women in the economically weaker segment in rural and semi-urban regions across India. Muthoot Microfin and SBI will co-lend to members of joint liability groups who are engaged in agricultural and allied activities as well as other income-generating enterprises.

RIL to Build Global Economic Hub in Navi Mumbai

Reliance Industries is all set to build a global economic hub in Navi Mumbai, where it has secured sub-leases on about 3,750 acres of land for ₹13,400 crore. The lease is for a period of 43 years, and it follows a memorandum of understanding that the company had signed with the Maharashtra government back in 2018. The company said in an exchange filing that its subsidiaries have completed the registration of the sub-lease deeds for the land along with the development rights from Navi Mumbai IIA Pvt Ltd (formerly called Navi Mumbai SEZ).

Bisleri Limonata Appoints Aditya Roy Kapur as Brand Ambassador

Mumbai: Bisleri International has announced Aditya Roy Kapur as the new brand ambassador for Bisleri Limonata. Bisleri Limonata blends lime with mint. The launch of the #DoubleTheChill campaign aims to highlight this product experience. Limonata's combination of lime and mint sets it apart in the category explains Bisleri International. Kapur, the company said embodies the essence of the brand with his cool and refreshing persona, has a strong fan following, especially among Gen Z.

IIT Kanpur, Centre of Excellence for UAVs, and DFI Launch UDAAN

The Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC) at IIT Kanpur has joined forces with the Centre of Excellence for Capacity Building, Training, and Design of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles at IIT Kanpur (Drone CoE Kanpur), an initiative by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, and the Drone Federation of India (DFI) to launch the UAV/UAS/Drone Acceleration and Networking (UDAAN) Program.



Priyanka Jarkiholi Youngest Tribal Woman to Win in Lok Sabha

Congress nominee and Minister Satish Jarkiholi's daughter Priyanka Jarkiholi has won from Chikkodi, defeating incumbent MP and BJP leader Annasaheb Jolle. Priyanka Jarkiholi from Chikkodi became the youngest tribal woman to enter Parliament from an unreserved seat in Karnataka since Independence. In fact, the BJP has won all the seats in Mumbai Karnataka, except Chikkodi.

Bank of India Acquires 6.1% Stake in CCIL IFSC

State-owned Bank of India on Monday said it has acquired a 6.125 per cent stake in the recently incorporated CCIL IFSC, listed in GIFT SEZ, reflecting its commitment to the growth of IFSC. The announcement was made by Bank of India's Executive Director (International Operations) Subrat Kumar in GIFT City while speaking at an event to mark the first anniversary of the bank's IFSC Banking Unit in GIFT City. "The acquisition of 6.125 per cent stake in CCIL IFSC for Rs 6.125 crore showcases our strategic commitment towards the growth of GIFT City IFSC and its emergence as a global financial services provider," Kumar said.

Abhijit Kishore and Rahul Vatts Appointed as New Leadership of COAI

New Delhi: Telecom industry association COAI on Tuesday named Vodafone Idea's COO Abhijit Kishore as its chairperson and Bharti Airtel's Chief Regulatory Officer Rahul Vatts as the vice chairperson of the association, effective June 2024. The announcement comes after COAI (Cellular Operators Association of India) concluded its annual general body meeting for 2023-24. Kishore brings to the board a wide-ranging experience of over three decades with the Indian telecom industry across functions, organisations and geographies.

GAIL to Set Up India's Largest Ethane Cracker Project with Rs 60,000 Crore Investment in MP

GAIL (India) intends to set up a 1500 KTA Ethane Cracker Project at Ashta, Distt. Sehore in Madhya Pradesh, having product slate of various ethylene derivatives. The company has submitted its request to the Madhya Pradesh State Government for providing suitable enablers for the project. Around 800 hectares of land shall be provided by the MP Industrial Development Corporation, for which state government has already initiated the process.

SBI Revolutionizes SME Lending with 'SME Digital Business Loans'

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), has floated 'SME Digital Business Loans' with the aim of sanctioning loans in 45 minutes. SBI identified the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) line of business as the focal point for the bank's growth and profitability over the next five years. "This innovative product marks a significant leap forward in digitalisation by offering SMEs a digital loan journey with an end-to-end sanction turnaround time of up to 45 minutes," SBI said in a statement.

Universities will be Allowed to Offer Admission Twice a Year

Indian universities and higher education institutions will now be permitted to offer admissions twice a year, similar to foreign universities, following approval from the University Grants Commission, UGC chief Jagadish Kumar said. From the 2024-25 academic session, the two admission cycles will be in July-August and January-February. "If Indian universities can offer admission twice a year, it will benefit many students such as those who missed admission to a university in the July-August session due to a delay in the announcement of board results.

Wipro Launches Lab45 AI Platform to Boost Efficiency Across Business Functions

Wipro on Tuesday announced the launch of its Lab45 artificial intelligence (AI) platform, which leverages generative AI (GenAI), machine learning (ML), and deep learning technologies to help companies increase efficiencies, transform business functions, and enable industry-specific solutions. Lab45 is Wipro's innovation lab, and the Lab45 AI platform is available to all Wipro employees and clients.

Tata Communications Secures Five-Year Broadcasting Deal with World Athletics

Tata Communications has signed a five-year contract with global sports organization World Athletics as the latter's technology broadcast partner across the globe. Known for hosting track and field running events, World Athletics' partnership is expected to add over 20 international events to Tata Communications' media business which has grown 20-25% over the last few years and enabled the company to acquire 25% market share in global sports.

Woman Entrepreneur Successfully Develops AI Tool 'Divya Drishti'

A woman-led start-up has successfully developed an AI-based tool that creates a "robust and multi-faceted authentication system" by combining facial recognition with gait analysis, the defence ministry said on Friday. This innovative solution marks a "significant advancement" in biometric authentication technology, offering "enhanced accuracy and reliability" in identifying individuals, it said in a statement.

ATM Operators Push for Rs 2 Interchange Fee Hike Amid Viability Concerns

Mumbai: India's ATM operators have approached the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for an increase in the interchange fee paid by customers on cash withdrawals. The Confederation of ATM Industry, or CATMI, wants this fee to be raised to a maximum of Rs 23 per transaction to ensure more funding commitment for the business.

Vice President Inaugurates 'Prerna Sthal' at Parliament House Complex

Rajya Sabha chairperson and Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday inaugurated the 'Prerna Sthal' in the Parliament complex which now houses statues of national icons and freedom fighters that were earlier at different places on the premises. The 'Prerna Sthal' will inspire and motivate people, Dhankhar said, amid criticism by the Congress over the removal of the statues from their original places.



India Set to be the 6th Country to have its own Deep Sea Mission

Union Earth Sciences Minister Jitendra Singh on Sunday said India is set to become the sixth country to have its own deep-sea mission. Chairing a meeting to discuss the ministry's 100-day action plan, Singh expressed pride and happiness on the progress of the deep-sea mission and India being among the very few nations to achieve this feat. He asked institutes to focus on achieving a resilient blue economy to empower people dependent on the ocean and its energy for livelihood.

Punjab Police Launch 'Mission Nishchay'

Punjab Police in association with the Border Security Force (BSF) and Village Defence Committees (VDCs) will carry out a one-week drive against drugs in Fazilka district during which they will reach out to residents of as many as 42 villages along the India-Pakistan border to gather actionable intelligence about the demand and supply of drugs. During the drive, named as 'Mission Nishchay'.

India Advances in Drone Warfare with Nagastra-1 Deployment

Indian Army has inducted indigenous Loiter Munition, Nagastra-1, developed by Nagpur-baser Solar Industries. The Indian Army has placed an order with Economics Explosives Ltd (EEL), a subsidiary of Solar Industries, for the supply of 480 Loiter Munitions under an emergency purchase agreement, signaling the readiness of Indigenous defence capabilities, Defence Industry officials said.

MEA and SBI Sign MoU to Enhance Digital Payments for Migrant Workers via EMigrate Portal

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the State Bank of India (SBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Saturday to enhance digital payment services for users of the eMigrate portal. The agreement was signed by Joint Secretary OE and PGE (Overseas Employment and Protector General of Emigrants) Bramha Kumar, on behalf of the Ministry, and Neelesh Dwivedi, General Manager (NW-I) from SBI, at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan in Delhi.

RBI Cancels Purvanchal Cooperative Bank's Licence

The Reserve Bank has cancelled the licence of Purvanchal Co-operative Bank, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh as it does not have adequate capital and earning prospects. The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Uttar Pradesh has also been asked to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator, the RBI said in a statement. On liquidation, every depositor would be entitled to receive deposit insurance claim amount of his/her deposits up to Rs 5 lakh only from DICGC.

Mumbai Retains Top Spot as India's Most Expensive City for Expats: Mercer Report

Mumbai, India's financial hub and the heart of Bollywood, retains its title as the country's most expensive city for expats, according to a survey. Mumbai is expensive for personal care, energy, utilities, transportation and house rent, said the 2024 Mercer's Cost of Living survey. Hong Kong continues being the world's most expensive city for expats.



Chenab Bridge: Indian Railways Conducts Trial Run on World's Highest Steel Arch Rail Bridge

The Indian Railways completed a successful trial of an electric engine from Sangaldan to Reasi, crossing the world's highest steel arch rail bridge, the Chenab Bridge. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw shared this milestone on X (formerly Twitter), on Sunday (June 17) and shared a video with the caption, "The first trial train has successfully completed its journey from Sangaldan to Reasi."



PM Modi Inaugurates New Campus of Nalanda University in Bihar

The Prime Minister on June 19 inaugurated the new campus of Nalanda University, an international University, close to the site of the ancient ruins of Nalanda in Rajgir, Bihar. Asserting that Nalanda is a symbol of India's academic heritage and vibrant cultural exchange.



IFC Investment in Brookfield's Bikaner Solar Power Project

New Delhi: International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector lending arm of the World Bank, has pledged \$105 million to part-finance a 550 MWp solar power project in Bikaner, Rajasthan, being developed by Brookfield Asset Management. IFC will make the investment through long-term non-convertible debentures allocated to the project's special purpose vehicles, which are implementing the project.



Virat Kohli Reclaims Top Spot as India's Most Valued Celebrity Brand

Cricketer Virat Kohli has reclaimed the top position in brand value, now reaching \$227.9 million, surpassing Bollywood star Ranveer Singh, who holds the second spot with \$203.1 million, according to Kroll's 'Celebrity Brand Valuation Report 2023: Brands, Business, Bollywood'. The report ranks India's most influential celebrity brands by assessing their brand values derived from endorsements and social media presence.



Axis Bank Acquires Additional Stake in Max Life Insurance Subsidiary for ₹336 Crore

India's Axis Bank acquired additional equity shares of Max Life Insurance Company, a unit of Max Financial Services, for Rs 3.36 crore, the private lender said on Wednesday. The bank's board of directors approved the proposal to acquire Max Life shares, raising Axis entities' total holding in the insurance firm to 19.99% from 19.02%. Axis entities include the bank as well as investment solutions provider Axis Securities and financial services provider Axis Capital.

Delhi Airport Launches India's First Self-Service Mechanism for Check-in Luggage

Aiming to enable passengers to drop in their luggage, collect tags and print boarding passes to complete check-in in less time, the Delhi International Airport Ltd launched a self-service mechanism on 17 June, reported news agency PTI. According to DIAL, the new one-step quick baggage drop solution would reduce check-in to 30 seconds from one minute. With this new step, the Indira Gandhi International Airport has become the first such facility in the country to offer such a solution after Canada's Toronto Airport.



Wildlife Filmmaker Subbiah Nallamuthu Honored with V. Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award

Renowned wildlife filmmaker Subbiah Nallamuthu received the esteemed V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award at the 18th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) this Saturday. Subbiah Nallamuthu, a highly respected figure in the wildlife filmmaking community, has previously garnered numerous national and international accolades, including five National Film Awards.



Kozhikode, India's First UNESCO City of Literature

Kozhikode in north Kerala, known for its rich cultural heritage, was on Sunday officially declared as India's first UNESCO 'City of Literature'. In October 2023, Kozhikode had earned a place in the 'Literature' category of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN). State Local Self Government Department (LSGD) Minister, M B Rajesh, on Sunday in an official event here announced the achievement of Kozhikode which earned the place in the 'Literature' category of the UCCN. Rajesh described Kozhikode as a city with a soul, characterised by humanity, harmony, a strong sense of justice and freedom of expression.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Historic Election in Mexico: Claudia Sheinbaum Becomes First Woman President

Claudia Sheinbaum has been elected as Mexico's first woman president in an historic landslide win. Mexico's official electoral authority said preliminary results showed the 61-year-old former mayor of Mexico City winning between 58% and 60% of the vote in Sunday's election.



Record Prize Money for 2024 ICC Men's T20 World Cup

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday announced a record-breaking prize money of \$11.25 million for the Men's T20 World Cup 2024, setting a new record for the tournament. In this ninth edition, 20 teams will vie for glory over 28 days, spread across nine venues in the West Indies and USA, making it the most expansive event of its kind. "The winners of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 is set to receive at least \$2.45 million - the highest prize amount in the history of the event," the ICC stated in a media release.

Russian Cosmonaut Becomes 1st Person to Spend 1,000 Days in Space

A 59-year-old Russian cosmonaut has become the first person to spend 1,000 days in space, Russian space agency Roscosmos said Wednesday. Oleg Kononenko achieved the milestone on Tuesday, having made five journeys to the International Space Station dating back to 2008.



World Bank Retains India's FY25 Growth Forecast at 6.6%

India will remain the fastest-growing of the world's largest economies although its pace of expansion is expected to moderate with a steady average annual growth of 6.7% between FY25 and FY27, the World Bank said in its June Global Economic Prospects report. It raised India's growth projection by 0.2 percentage points each to 6.6% for FY25 and 6.7% in FY26 compared with its projection in January this year.

Puja Tomar Becomes First Indian to Win In UFC

Puja Tomar became the first-ever Indian to win a bout at the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in UFC Louisville 2024 on Saturday. She defeated Rayanne Dos Santos of Brazil by a split decision of 30-27, 27-30, 29-28 in the women's strawweight division. "I want to show the world that Indian fighters are not losers. We are going all the way up! We are not going to stop! We'll become a UFC champion soon! This win is not my win, it's for all Indian fans and all Indian fighters.

Oxford University Agrees to Return Stolen 500-Year-Old Bronze Idol to India

Oxford University has made a landmark decision to return a 500-year-old bronze idol to India, marking a significant moment in the ongoing efforts to repatriate cultural artifacts. The idol, depicting Saint Tirumankai Alvar, is believed to have been stolen from a temple in Tamil Nadu and was acquired by the Ashmolean Museum at the University of Oxford from Sotheby's auction house in 1967.



Moody's Maintains Stable Outlook on Three Indian PSU Banks' Ratings

Moody's Ratings (Moody's) on Friday affirmed the Baa3 ratings on three Indian public sector banks -- Bank of Baroda (BOB), Canara Bank, and Punjab National Bank (PNB). The rating agency maintained stable outlooks on the long-term ratings of all three banks. Explaining the rationale in a press release, the rating agency said today's rating action reflected the three banks' improved credit metrics. Moody's also believes that India's strong operating environment will continue to support their credit fundamentals over the next 12-18 months.

Vellayan Subbiah Named EY World Entrepreneur of the Year 2024

Vellayan Subbiah, Executive Vice-Chairman of Tube Investments of India (TII) and Chairman of Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Co Ltd., has been named the EY World Entrepreneur Of The Year 2024. Subbiah is the fourth Indian to receive this coveted award. Earlier it was given to NR Narayana Murthy, Uday Kotak and Kiran Majumdar Shaw.



Nvidia Surpasses Apple to Become Second Most Valuable Company

Nvidia has overtaken Apple to become the world's second-most valuable company, with furious demand for the chipmaker's shares taking its valuation to over \$3 trillion. Shares of Nvidia gained 5.2 percent on Wednesday to close at \$1,224.40, lifting the company's market capitalisation to \$3.012 trillion. Microsoft, the world's most valuable company, rose 1.91 percent, while Apple gained 0.78 percent.



Neeraj Chopra Shines at Paavo Nurmi Games 2024

India's Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra made a triumphant return to the Paavo Nurmi Games in Finland, clinching the Gold medal with a spectacular throw of 85.97m. This victory marks a significant upgrade from his Silver medal performance in the same event back in 2022. Chopra, competing in his third event of the season after missing the Ostrava Golden Spike due to injury precautions, showcased his prowess ahead of the upcoming Paris Olympics.

Siddhesh Sakore, Farmer from Maharashtra, Named Land Hero by UN Agency

Bonn: Siddhesh Sakore, a farmer and the founder of AGRO RANGERS, from Maharashtra, has been named Land Hero by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). On the occasion of World Desertification and Drought Day, the UNCCD announced the names of 10 Land Heroes in a programme in Bonn, Germany, on Sunday. Apart from Siddhesh Sakore, other Land Heroes are from Brazil, Costa Rica, Germany, Mali, Moldova, Morocco, the Philippines, the US, and Zimbabwe.



Shruti Vora First Indian to Win 3 Star GP in Dressage, Closes in on Paris Dream

Shruti Vora has created history by becoming the first Indian to win a three-star Grand Prix equestrian event, achieving the feat when she won at the FEI Dressage World Cup held in Lipica, Slovenia. Astride Magnanimous, Vora, 53, scored 67.761% in the highly technical discipline to earn her first Minimum Eligibility Requirement (MER) point for this year's Paris Olympics. So far, her compatriot Anush Agarwalla has been in line for a maiden Olympics berth in dressage. As per the qualification criterion, a rider-horse combination must have a minimum of two MERs to make it to the Games.

Verstappen Triumphs at Spanish Grand Prix 2024

Red Bull's three-time world champion Max Verstappen has won the Spanish Grand Prix from McLaren's pole-sitter Lando Norris to extend his lead in motor racing's world championship. Lewis Hamilton completed the podium at the Barcelona-Catalunya circuit for the Mercedes seven-time former champion's first podium of the season on Sunday.



Indian Deposits in Swiss Banks Drop by 70% to Reach Four-Year Low of ₹9,771 Crore

Funds parked by Indian individuals and firms in Swiss banks, including through local branches and other financial institutions, fell sharply by 70% in 2023 to a four-year low of 1.04 billion Swiss Francs (₹9,771 crore), annual data from Switzerland's central bank showed on Thursday.



Tajikistan Government Bans Hijab and Other 'Alien Garments'

The Central Asian nation of Tajikistan, bordering Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, is set to impose a hijab ban after the upper chamber of the country's parliament approved a bill on June 19. The bill was passed during the 18th session of the upper house of Parliament, Majlisi Milli, presided over by its head, Rustam Emomali, Asia-Plus reported. In its bill, the Majlisi Milli banned "alien garments" and children's celebrations for two most important Islamic holidays - Eid al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. These Muslim festivals are known as idgardak, during which children visit houses in their streets to greet people.

India Surpasses Hong Kong to Reclaim Fourth Spot in Global Equity Market

The domestic equity markets have once again overtaken Hong Kong to reclaim the fourth-largest global market tag. Following the sharp rebound in the market from election result day lows, India's market capitalisation has soared 10 per cent to \$5.2 trillion, or Rs 435 trillion (BSE-listed companies). By comparison, Hong Kong's mcap is \$5.17 trillion, down 5.4 per cent from this year's high of \$5.47 trillion.



