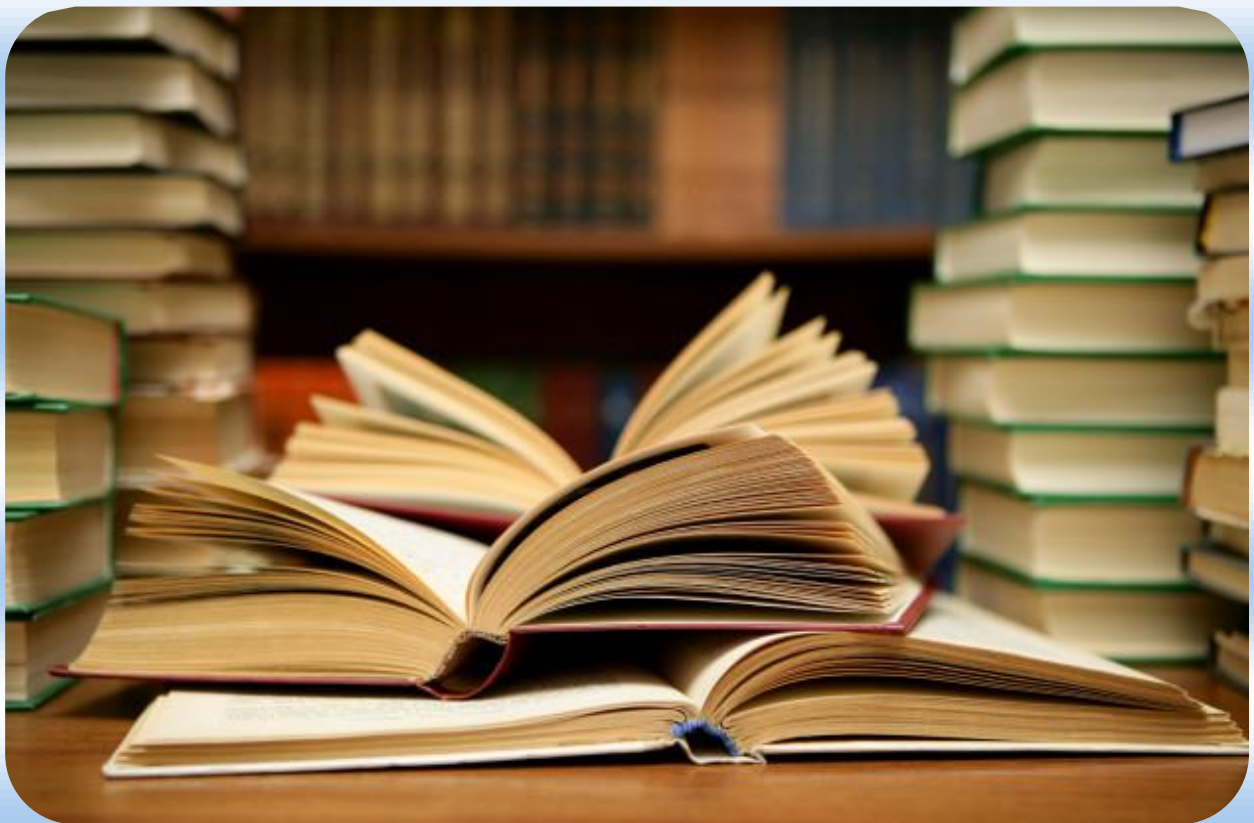


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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



NOVEMBER-2020

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Indian Oil and IISc join hands for Hydrogen Generation Technology

New Delhi: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the country's largest fuel retailer, today announced it has signed a pact with Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore to develop hydrogen generation technology based on biomass gasification. "The process will help produce fuel cell grade hydrogen at an affordable price and accelerate IndianOil's journey towards a sustainable hydrogen economy," the company said in a statement. IOC Chairman S M Vaidya said Hydrogen will emerge as the ultimate solution for a sustainable energy future.

Industrial Relations Code, 2020 to be implemented by April 2021

NEW DELHI: The labour ministry has notified draft rules for the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, paving way for greater flexibility to employers to retrench workers while making it mandatory for unions to give prior notice before a strike. The government aims to implement the four labour codes from April 1, 2021. The ministry has sought comments from stakeholders within 30 days after which the rules will be finalised. Parliament had recently approved three labour codes.

Tamil Nadu: 100% Motor Vehicle Tax Exemption to EVs

Tamil Nadu Government has notified 100 per cent motor vehicle tax exemption for battery-operated vehicles (Electric Vehicles). The State Government's order says after careful examination it has decided to grant 100 per cent tax exemption for all battery-operated transport and non-transport vehicles. The State has been taking various initiatives to boost the EV system in the state. Tamil Nadu is planning to set up the country's first park exclusively for the electric vehicle production eco-system. The state is targeting investments of about Rs 50,000 crore in the EV segment and has announced a series of incentives to attract investments in this space.

Gol forms Committee to review Television Rating System

New Delhi: Days after an alleged TRP scam came to the fore, the Centre on Wednesday constituted a committee to review the guidelines on television rating agencies in India and asked the panel to submit its report to the Information and Broadcasting minister within two months. The four-member committee will be headed by Prasar Bharati CEO Shashi S Vempati. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said the present guidelines issued by it in 2014 on Television Rating agencies in India.

WhatsApp Pay: NPCI approves WhatsApp to join UPI Payment

BENGALURU : Retail payments organisation National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which operates Unified Payments Interface (UPI) in the country has given the much-awaited approval to WhatsApp to go live on through the multi-bank model. According to NPCI, WhatsApp can expand its UPI user base in a graded manner starting with a maximum registered user base of 20 million in UPI. Facebook-owned WhatsApp has been running its UPI-based payment system, WhatsApp Pay in Beta since 2018, with 1 million users.

FASTags made mandatory to all four wheelers from January 1, 2021

To ensure payment of user fee via electronic means and seamless movement of vehicles through toll plazas, FASTag has been made mandatory for four-wheelers from January 1, 2021. With this decision of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), those owning four-wheelers purchased before December 1, 2017 will have to compulsorily procure FASTag.

First Tranche of Coal Mine Auction to Generate Rs 7,000 crores of revenue

The auction of coal mines for commercial mining witnessed “fierce competition” and the 19 blocks that went under the hammer can generate total revenues of around Rs 7,000 crore per annum and create more than 69,000 jobs once they are operationalised, Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi said on Monday. The auction of blocks for commercial mining has opened the coal sector to the private players.

Finance Minister announces Economic Stimulus Package 4.0

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said that a few indicators were showing a distinct recovery in the economy. She went on to announce a new set of stimulus packages under ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0’ a few days ahead of Diwali. To boost employment, the government launched the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana to incentivise the creation of new employment opportunities. The new announcements aim to benefit companies and individuals who lost their jobs due to Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Atma Nirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana launched to boost employment

In a major boost to employment generation in the country in the formal sector post the pandemic, the government has rolled out Atma Nirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana to incentivise jobs creation in the country. Under the scheme, every registered establishment under the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation that brings in new employees into its fold or employees who have lost jobs between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020 rejoin work, will be eligible to subsidy.

IFSCA approves draft banking regulations at IFSC

This will pave way for putting in place the rules for the various aspects of banking operations. The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) —regulator of IFSCs including Gift City— on Wednesday approved draft Banking regulations that will be applicable in international financial services centres (IFSCs) such as Gujarat's Gift City. The formulation of draft regulation paves the way for putting in place the rules for the various aspects of banking operations that would be permissible at the IFSC.

IRCTC to start 'Bharat Darshan Yatra' on the theme 'Show India to Indians'

The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) will organise 'Bharat Darshan–Dakshin Bharat Yatra' from Hyderabad and Secunderabad from December 12 to 18. The theme of the yatra, which will cover Sri Ranganam (Ranganathaswamy temple), Brihadeswara temple at Thanjavur, Rameswaram, Madurai Meenakshi and Kanyakumari, is to 'Show India to Indians', said IRCTC Deputy General Manager (DGM) D.S.G.P. Kishore. Giving the details of the 'Bharat Darshan Yatra' to the media here on Wednesday, the DGM said facility to board and de-board the special tourist train will be provided at Secunderabad, Warangal, Khammam, Vijayawada, Ongole, Nellore and Renigunta.

Moody's revises India 2020 GDP forecast to 8.9% contraction

Moody's on Thursday raised India's GDP forecast for the calendar year 2020 upwards to -8.9 per cent contraction from -9.6 per cent contraction forecast earlier. Similarly, India's GDP forecast for the calendar year 2021 has been revised upwards to 8.6 per cent from 8.1 per cent projected earlier. The report released by Moody's Investors Service attributed the reason behind better growth to the falling of coronavirus cases in the country. "The test positivity rate has fallen below 5 per cent in India and below 10 per cent in South Africa. Fatality rates have also steadily declined in most emerging market countries, similar to the trends in advanced economies. If these trends are sustained, greater mobility and social interactions will be likely over time.

India contributes 1 million USD to Covid-19 ASEAN Response Fund

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced a contribution of USD 1 million to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund at the 17th ASEAN-India Summit, which was held virtually. In his address to leaders from the 10 ASEAN countries, PM Modi also highlighted India's response and broader support to the international community and welcomed the association's initiatives to fight the pandemic. According to an official statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), "On COVID-19, the Prime Minister highlighted India's response and broader support to the international community and welcomed ASEAN's initiatives to fight the pandemic. Prime Minister announced a contribution of US\$ 1 million to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund.

WPI inflation at 1.48% in October 2020; Increased for third consecutive month

Wholesale prices in India rose 1.48 per cent in October, after rising 1.32 per cent in the previous month. It is the third annual increase in a row, taking the WPI growth to an 8-month high level. As the economy started to unlock, the wholesale prices also started to rise. While the prices of the manufacturing items significantly rose in the month, the rise in food prices has moderated.



Why did India not sign the world largest RCEP trade deal?

According to a report by Reuters, fifteen Asia-Pacific economies signed what could become the world's largest free trade agreement on Sunday, covering nearly a third of the global population and about 30% of its global gross domestic product. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will progressively lower tariffs and aims to counter protectionism, boost investment and allow freer movement of goods within the region.



First Solar Powered Textile mill in Asia to come up in Parbhani district, Maharashtra

The first solar powered Textile Mill in Asia will come up in Parbhani district, Maharashtra. The Jai Bhawani women's cooperative textile mill will become the first Solar Powered textile mill in Asia. The Chairman of Jai Bhawani Women cooperative textile mill announced on November 17, 2020 that the mill will soon operate on solar power.



Kris Gopalakrishnan appointed the first Chairperson of Reserve Bank Innovation Hub

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan, co-founder and former co-Chairman, Infosys, as the first Chairperson of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH). The central bank, in its Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies issued on August 6, 2020, had announced that it would set up an Innovation Hub to promote innovation across the financial sector by leveraging on technology and creating an environment which would facilitate and foster innovation.

Four Indian Cities selected by World Economic Forum to pioneer roadmap for Smart Cities

New Delhi: Four Indian cities — Indore, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Faridabad — feature in a list of 36 cities across 22 countries and six continents selected by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to pioneer a new roadmap for smart cities as part of the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance. The list also includes Dubai, Belfast, Barcelona, London, Manila, Moscow, San Jose, Toronto, Melbourne, Lisbon, Istanbul and others.

Why did RBI impose moratorium on Lakshmi Vilas Bank?

The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday said the merger of Lakshmi Vilas Bank with DBS Bank India will come into force from 27 November. The moratorium imposed on the cash-starved lender will be removed from the same day, the banking regulator mentioned. The banking regulator earlier imposed a one-month moratorium on the private lender and capped deposit withdrawals at ₹25,000. "The amalgamation will come into force on the Appointed date i.e. November 27, 2020. All the branches of the Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd. will function as branches of DBS Bank India Ltd. with effect from this date," the RBI said.

RBI Mohanty Panel for Bank License to Large Corporate Houses

MUMBAI: A Reserve Bank of India committee on Friday recommended raising the cap on promoter stake in private sector banks to 26% of the paid up equity after 15 years of operation. Currently, banking regulations make it mandatory for promoters of private sector banks to reduce their ownership to 40% within three years and to 15% in 15 years. The committee also recommended giving banking licences to large corporates or industrial houses after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates.

India-New Development Bank sign 500 million USD agreement

A loan agreement for USD 500 million (about Rs 3,700 crore) was signed on Thursday between the government and the New Development Bank (NDB) for funding the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS Corridor.



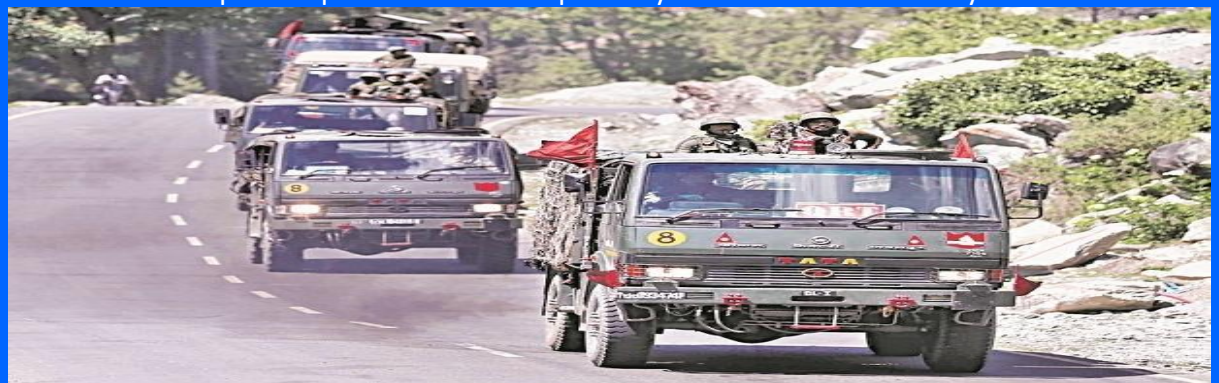
RuPay Card Phase II jointly launched by India and Bhutan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering on Friday launched RuPay card Phase-II that will allow Bhutanese card holders to access the RuPay network in India. The prime ministers of the two countries had jointly launched Phase-I of the project during Mr. Modi's state visit to Bhutan in August last year.



India-China agree on Three Step Disengagement in Pangong Tso

New Delhi [India], November 11 (ANI): In a major development, the ongoing India-China border conflict may be resolved soon as the armies of the two countries have agreed for disengagement from parts of the Eastern Ladakh sector under which they would be moving back to their respective positions before April-May timeframe earlier this year.



Mumbai Indians win IPL for the fifth time

When a player takes a bullet for his captain, you know the team will settle for nothing but a win. In the final of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020 against Delhi Capitals, Mumbai Indians batsman Suryakumar Yadav strolled out of his crease to protect Rohit Sharma's wicket, even though it was his skipper's mistake in going for a run. Yadav looked at the larger picture — Sharma was well-set in a high-pressure game.

Khelo India: GoI to incentivize 500 private academies

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry has introduced an incentivisation structure to extend monetary support to 500 private academies, through the Khelo India Scheme over the next four years starting 2020-21. In this model, private academies shall be graded into different categories based on quality and achievement of players trained by the academy, level of coaches available at the academy, quality of field of play and allied infrastructure, availability of sports science facilities and staff.

What are "Tarballs" fastening Himalayan Glacial melting?

Nearly 28 per cent of particles collected from the air samples from a research station in the Himalaya-Tibetan Plateau were tarballs, a recent study has found. Tarballs are small light-absorbing, carbonaceous particles formed due to burning of biomass or fossil fuels that deposit on snow and ice.



Last White Giraffe of the world fitted with GPS tracking device

The only known white giraffe in the world has been fitted with a GPS tracking device to help protect it from poachers as it grazes in Kenya. But despite its singular status, the lonely male doesn't have a name.



First Anniversary of Kartarpur Corridor celebrated

Sikhs in Pakistan on Monday held rituals at Gurdwara Darbar Sahib to mark the first anniversary of the inauguration of the historic Kartarpur Corridor.



Kris Gopalakrishnan appointed the first Chairperson of Reserve Bank Innovation Hub

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has appointed Senapathy (Kris) Gopalakrishnan, co-founder and former co-Chairman, Infosys, as the first Chairperson of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH). The central bank, in its Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies issued on August 6, 2020, had announced that it would set up an Innovation Hub to promote innovation across the financial sector by leveraging on technology and creating an environment which would facilitate and foster innovation.

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve receives first TX2 International Award for doubling its population

Pilibhit: The Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR) has bagged international award TX2 for doubling the number of tigers in the past four years. The number of tigers in the reserve area has gone up to 65 from 25 in the period of just four years.



Tarun Gogoi, Ex-Chief Minister of Assam passed away

Tarun Gogoi, former chief minister of Assam, passed away on Monday after his health condition deteriorated. He was 84. Gogoi was admitted to Gauhati Medical College Hospital in Guwahati. He had tested positive for the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) on August 25 and had spent two months in hospital. Assam's longest serving chief minister was again rushed to hospital due to post-Covid complications. Gogoi was admitted on November 2 after he complained of breathlessness.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

What are the Governance Reforms approved by Russia?

MOSCOW, Nov. 16 (Xinhua) -- Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin approved Monday an order to start a governance reform from Jan. 1, 2021. The reform had previously been postponed due to a number of reasons, including the COVID-19 pandemic, but could no longer be delayed, Mishustin said during a meeting with his deputy prime ministers. He said the structural reform will help build optimization and ensure that every government official commits to clearly defined responsibilities as 20 percent of positions within ministries are currently vacant.

What is Golden Card Visa issued by UAE?

Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum on Sunday announced that UAE has approved a 'golden' visa grant allowing 10-year residency for certain professions including specialised degree-holders and others. Taking on Twitter, the Dubai leader said that the visa grant will be for "all holders of doctorate degrees, all doctors, engineers in the fields of computer engineering, electronics, programming, electricity and biotechnology, outperforming accredited universities in the country at a rate of 3.8 and more," as roughly translated.

United Nations launches "Team Halo" to counter misinformation around COVID-19 vaccines

Under an UN initiative, over 100 scientists have joined hands to tackle the issue of misinformation around Covid-19 vaccines and build confidence by busting myths and sharing information on the safety and effectiveness of vaccines via the social media. The UN has collaborated with The Vaccine Confidence Project at the University of London to undertake Team Halo, an initiative which aims to counter the misinformation around Covid-19 vaccines.

China's proposed Hydropower project in Brahmaputra, Tibet

China's media reported on Sunday that authorities have given the go-ahead for a Chinese hydropower company to construct the first downstream dam on the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra river, or Yarlung Zangbo as it is known in Tibet, marking a new phase in China's hydropower exploitation of the river with potential ramifications for India. A report in the Chinese media said the State-owned hydropower company POWERCHINA had last month signed "a strategic cooperation agreement" with the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) government to "implement hydropower exploitation in the downstream.

Iran's Strategic Measures for the Removal of Sanctions

The Iranian Parliament on Sunday passed a double-urgency motion for the bill on “strategic measures for the removal of sanctions”. The single urgency had earlier been passed in early November but the bill’s status was advanced in the wake of the assassination of Iranian scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh near Tehran on Friday.



Hualong One: China's entry in Nuclear Power Sector

China's first nuclear facility using Hualong One technology – a domestically developed third-generation reactor design – was successfully connected to the grid in southeast China's Fujian Province early Friday morning. On connection, the No. 5 unit of the Fuqing Nuclear Power Plant of the China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) started to generate electricity at 00:41 BJT. All its technical indicators have met the designed standards and the power unit is running well, laying a solid foundation for its subsequent commercial operation.

UAE: First Arab Country to generate electricity from coal

The United Arab Emirates is set to become the first Arab Gulf country to generate electricity from coal. As governments increasingly turn to cleaner fuels and the price of renewable energy falls, it may also be the last. Dubai is starting up the \$3.4 billion Hassyan coal plant, with capacity being increased from an initial 600 mega watts to 2,400 by 2023. Japan's Jera Co. will supply coal under a long-term agreement with Acwa Power of Saudi Arabia, which is developing the plant.

India to build Shahtoot dam in Afghanistan

India on Tuesday unveiled new development initiatives for Afghanistan, including a dam to supply water to Kabul and 150 community projects worth \$80 million, even as it called for an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire in the war-torn country. Against the backdrop of mounting global concern over increased attacks by the Taliban even as it engages the Afghan government in talks, external affairs minister S Jaishankar told a virtual international pledging conference that India is committed to a long-term role for the development of Afghanistan.

US troops in Afghanistan and Iraq withdrawn partially

WASHINGTON — President Trump is expected to order the U.S. military to withdraw thousands of troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia by the time he leaves office in January, using the end of his time in power to significantly pull back American forces from far-flung conflicts around the world.



Four Indian Cities selected by World Economic Forum to pioneer roadmap for Smart Cities

New Delhi: Four Indian cities — Indore, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Faridabad — feature in a list of 36 cities across 22 countries and six continents selected by the World Economic Forum (WEF) to pioneer a new roadmap for smart cities as part of the G20 Global Smart Cities Alliance.



BRICS countries adopt Counter Terrorism Strategy

NEW DELHI: The counter-terror strategy adopted at Tuesday's BRICS summit puts the onus on China, the all-weather ally of Pakistan, to effectively fight cross-border terror instead of shielding Islamabad, in what would strengthen India's long-standing demand for a united front against the menace. The strategy -- to which China is also a party -- calls for 'rejection of double standards on countering terrorism and extremism conducive to terrorism.

Japan and Australia sign Defence Pact to counter China

China has used a jingoistic state media outlet to slam an historic defence deal between Australia and Japan, saying it is "inevitable" it will take some sort of countermeasures. The defence pact, called the Reciprocal Access Agreement, was agreed to "in principle" during Prime Minister Scott Morrison's state visit to Japan, but still has not been formally signed. The agreement would pave the way for the Australian and Japanese militaries to have access to each other's bases, and would deepen cooperation between the two countries.

Chapare Virus: Human to Human Transmission discovered in Bolivia

As the world is still coping from the coronavirus pandemic, due to which over 13 lakh people succumbed to the virus and infected millions, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently found a rare deadly virus. This deadly 'Chapare virus' causes haemorrhagic fever like Ebola has been identified in Bolivia. The Chapare virus in question is capable of human-to-human transmission. The rare virus was discovered due to ongoing efforts of scientists around the globe to avert future pandemics like COVID-19.

APEC Ministerial Meeting: Economies commit to free open trade and investment

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov. 16 (Xinhua) -- Members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have reiterated their commitment on Monday to pursuing free and open trade and investment as well as reinvigorating the efforts towards regional economic recovery and growth from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In his opening remarks at the virtually-held APEC Ministerial Meeting (AMM).

Vaccine Derived Polio Virus: nCOP2 Vaccine added by WHO to Emergency Use Listing

WHO today listed the nOPV2 vaccine (Bio Farma, Indonesia) for emergency use to address the rising cases of a vaccine-derived polio strain in a number of African and East Mediterranean countries. Countries in WHO's Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions are also affected by these outbreaks. The emergency use listing, or EUL, is the first of its kind for a vaccine and paves the way for potential listing of COVID-19 vaccines.

DIPAM and World Bank sign Agreement

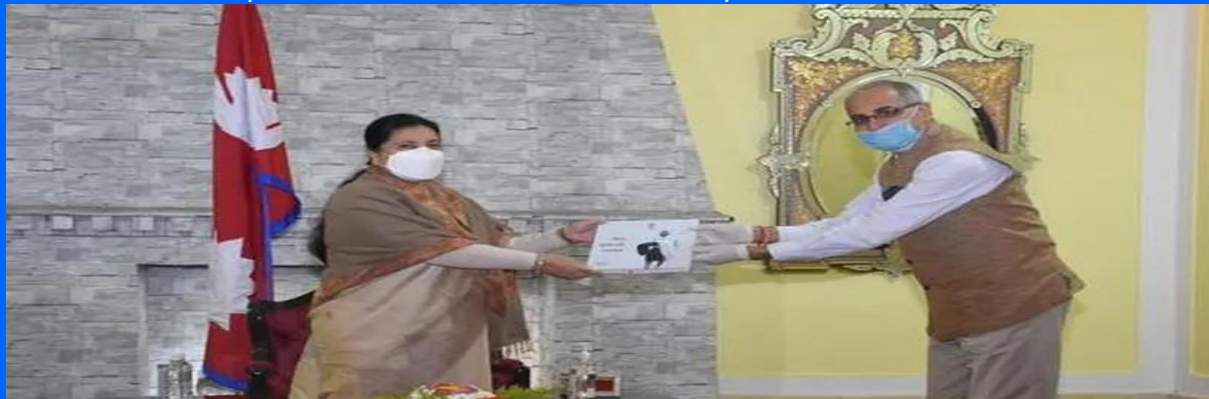
NEW DELHI: DIPAM, which mainly handles government's disinvestment programme, on Monday signed an agreement with the World Bank for providing advisory services for asset monetization. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) is mandated with facilitating monetization of non-core assets of government CPSEs (central public sector enterprises) under strategic disinvestment. "The World Bank advisory project, approved by the Finance Minister.

Why did the Peruvian President Manuel Merino resign?

Peru's interim president has resigned, a day after two people died during protests against his government. Manuel Merino, former speaker of Congress, had been in the post less than a week. He replaced President Martín Vizcarra, who last Monday was removed in an impeachment procedure over bribery allegations, which he denies. Politicians had called for Mr Merino's resignation after a violent crackdown on demonstrations against him.

Nepal President releases Special Anthology on Mahatma Gandhi

Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari released a special pictorial anthology on Mahatma Gandhi in Nepali on Monday, November 9. The anthology named 'Maile Bujheko Gandhi', which translates to 'My understanding about Gandhi', was unveiled at Shital Niwas, Kathmandu in the presence of Indian Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra.



What is the new peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan?

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan called the deal "incredibly painful both for me and both for our people". It follows six weeks of fighting between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians. The region is internationally recognised as Azerbaijani but has been run by ethnic Armenians since 1994. A Russian-brokered truce was signed at the end of the war in the early 1990s but there was no peace deal. Although both sides took steps to reduce tensions last year, fighting erupted at the end of September and several attempts to end the conflict failed.

Aung San Sui Kyi Party claims to win Myanmar Elections

Myanmar's ruling party claimed a resounding victory on Monday in the country's second parliamentary election since the end of strict military rule, based on its own unofficial tally of votes. Sunday's election was viewed as a referendum on the fledgling democratic government led by Aung San Suu Kyi and her ruling National League for Democracy (NLD), which remains very popular at home but has seen its overseas reputation battered by accusations of genocide against the Rohingya Muslim minority.

China launches world's first 6G experimental satellite

China has successfully launched what has been described as "the world's first 6G satellite" into space to test the technology. It went into orbit along with 12 other satellites from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in the Shanxi Province. The telecoms industry is still several years away from agreeing on 6G's specifications, so it is not yet certain the tech being trialled will make it into the final standard. It involves use of high-frequency terahertz waves to achieve data-transmission speeds many times faster than 5G is likely to be capable of.

Historic Debt Pact of G20 to help poor countries hit by COVID-19

PARIS/TOKYO/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States, China and other G20 countries on Friday agreed for the first time on a common approach for restructuring government debt as the coronavirus crisis leaves some poorer nations at risk of default. The agreement came as Zambia said it would not pay an overdue Eurobond coupon by Friday's deadline, putting it on track to become Africa's first pandemic-era sovereign default. Citing the scale of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tristan da Cunha becomes the largest Marine Protection Zone of Atlantic Ocean

Tristan da Cunha, an island with 245 permanent residents, is creating a marine protection zone to safeguard endangered rockhopper penguins, yellow-nosed albatross and other wildlife in an area of the South Atlantic three times the size of the United Kingdom. The government of the British overseas territory, which calls itself the most remote inhabited island on Earth, said Friday that fishing and other "extractive activities".

US Election 2020: Joe Biden wins Presidency defeating Donald Trump

AFTER AN EXCRUCIATING, nasty, high-drama presidential campaign that left much of America emotionally and mentally exhausted, Joe Biden was elected as the nation's 46th president Tuesday by offering the opposite: normalcy, competence and calm. The race appeared uncertain as recently as Thursday, as elections officials across the country opened and processed millions of mail-in and absentee ballots



Joe Biden announces 12-member COVID-19 Task Force under Vivek Murthy

President-elect Joe Biden will announce a 12-member coronavirus task force on Monday, his first step toward fulfilling one of his biggest campaign promises, to mount an effective response to the pandemic that has infected millions and damaged the US economy. The task force will be co-chaired by former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner David Kessler and Dr. Marcella Nunez-Smith, a professor of public health at Yale University.

World's Strongest Super Typhoon Goni in Philippines

At least 10 people have died amid reports of storm surges, flash floods, power outages and blown-off roofs. Goni made landfall as a super typhoon at Catanduanes island on Sunday at 04:50 local time (19:50 GMT Saturday) packing winds of 225km/h (140mph). It has since weakened, but is still wreaking damage across the main Luzon island, home to the capital Manila. President Rodrigo Duterte is monitoring the disaster response from his home in Davao city, a presidential spokesman said.

Mission Sagar-II: INS AIRAVAT enters Port Sudan

Indian Naval Ship (INS) Airavat reached Sudan on November 2 with 100 tonnes of food aid as a part of Mission Sagar-II, the Indian Navy said. Under Mission Sagar-II, INS Airavat will deliver food aid to Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Mission Sagar-II follows the first Mission Sagar undertaken in May-June 2020, wherein India provided food and medicines to Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros.

UAE allows cohabitation of unmarried couples, relaxes Islamic laws

The United Arab Emirates announced on Saturday a major overhaul of the country's Islamic personal laws, allowing unmarried couples to cohabit, loosening alcohol restrictions and criminalising so-called honour killings. The broadening of personal freedoms reflects the changing profile of a country that has sought to bill itself as a skyscraper-studded destination for Western tourists, fortune-seekers and businesses despite its legal system based on a hard-line interpretation of Islamic law.

Duarte Pacheco elected as new President of Inter Parliamentary Union

Mr. Duarte Pacheco has been elected as the 30th President of the IPU after an unprecedented online election during an extraordinary virtual session of the IPU's Governing Council, its main decision-making body made up of parliamentarians from around the world. Mr. Pacheco takes over from Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, a Mexican parliamentarian, who has just concluded her three-year mandate. Mr. Duarte Pacheco has been a Member of Parliament in Portugal since 1991.

US approves 600 million USD armed drones sale to Taiwan

The Trump administration has notified Congress that it has approved the sale of USD 600 million in armed drones to Taiwan, the latest in a series of arms transfers for the island. The State Department said on Tuesday it had Ok'd Taiwan's purchase of four "weapons ready" remotely piloted aircraft and related equipment. The move is likely to infuriate China, which regards Taiwan as a renegade province and has reacted angrily to previous weapons sales' announcements to the island.

CARAT: Joint Naval Exercise by Bangladesh and US

According to a press release issued by the US embassy in Dhaka on Wednesday, the exercise demonstrates U.S.'s continuing commitment to work with the Bangladesh military to address shared maritime security concerns in the region and strengthen partnership to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Speaking during the online inaugural programme, Rear Admiral Fred Kacher, Commander Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 7 of US said that they will continue to operate with and learn from the Bangladesh Navy.

India-Mexico holds 8th Joint Commission Meeting

India and Mexico on October 29, 2020, held their 8th Joint Commission Meeting virtually and reviewed the bilateral cooperation in several areas including agriculture, trade, investment, education, and health. The meeting between the two nations was co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar, and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, H.E. Marcelo Ebrard. Dr. S Jaishankar also tweeted about the virtual meet and added that India looks forward to working closely with its privileged partner on their respective priorities in UNSC-United Nations Security Council.

China's Chen Meng wins ITTF Women's World Cup title

World number one Chen Meng beat Chinese compatriot Sun Yingsha 11-13 11-6 11-9 11-6 11-8 to win her maiden ITTF Women's World Cup title in Weihai on Tuesday as international table tennis returned from an eight-month hiatus due to COVID-19. Chen's victory at the bio-secure Weihai Nanhai Olympic Center made her the first winner of the ITTF's #RESTART series and also took her tally of senior singles titles to 19.

FIFA cancels U-17 Women World Cup in India

The Women's Under-17 World Cup in India, which was postponed to 2021 due to Covid-19 pandemic, was on Tuesday cancelled by the world governing body Fifa and the country was handed the hosting rights of the 2022 edition. The decision was taken by the Bureau of the Fifa Council which took stock of the current global Covid-19 pandemic and its continuing impact on football. The Fifa cancelled both the women's U-17 World Cup and U-20 World Cup.

Daniil Medvedev wins ATP Finals

Daniil Medvedev had just won the biggest title of his career, "the best victory" of his life at the ATP Finals, but did not celebrate. Instead, he just looked to his box, shrugged, emptied a ball from his pocket, shrugged again before walking expressionless to meet his beaten opponent Dominic Thiem at the net. And if he wins many more titles, even one of tennis' Grand Slams, he says he will do the same again. "That is going to be my thing," the 24-year-old Russian said after Sunday's 4-6 7-6 (7-2) 6-4 win in London.

