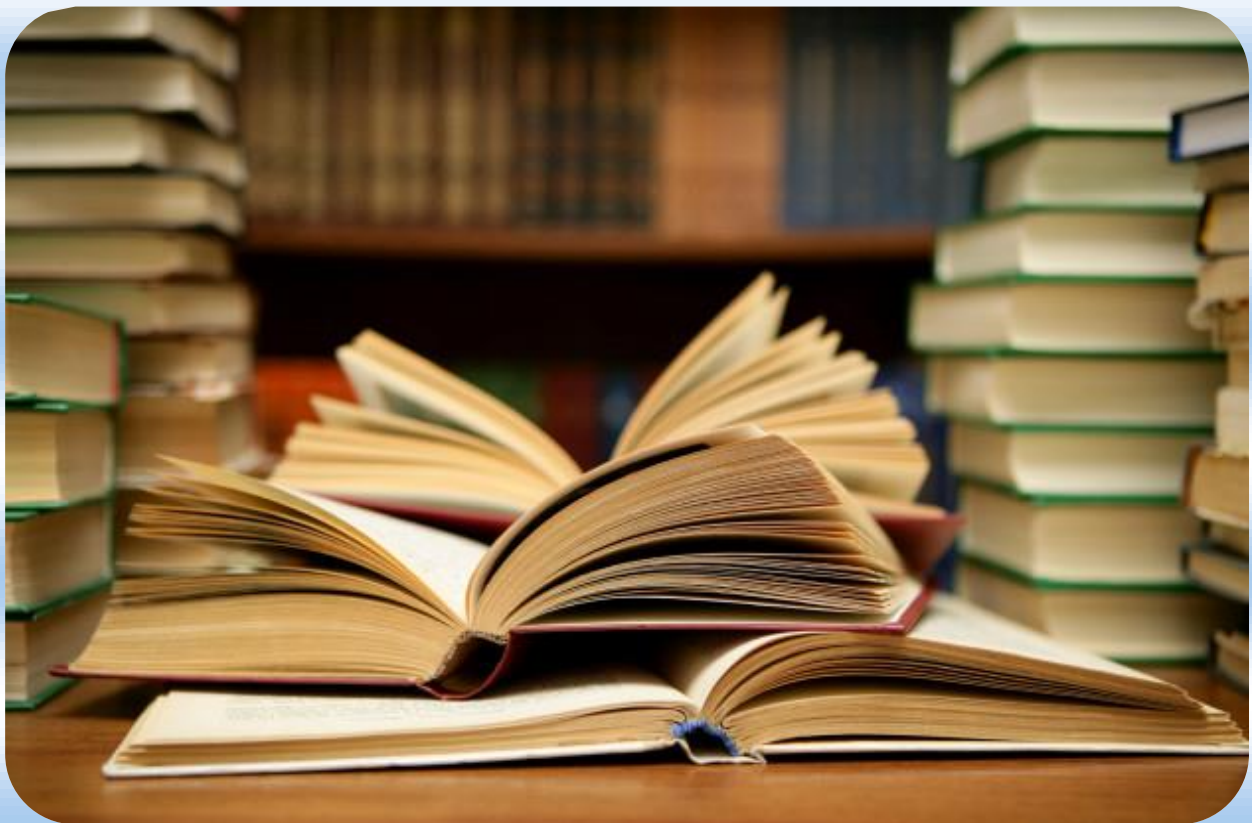


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GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



JULY-2018

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Income Tax department launches instant e-PAN card service

The Income Tax Department has launched an 'instant' Aadhaar-based PAN allotment service for individuals seeking the unique identity for the first time. "This facility is free of cost and instant allotment of e-PAN is available for a limited period on a first-come, first-served basis for valid Aadhaar holders," the Department said in an advisory. A senior official said the facility was introduced because of the increasing number of people applying for the PAN. A fresh PAN will be allotted on the basis of a one-time password sent on the mobile number linked to the Aadhaar number of a person.

SC extends deadline for publication of final draft of Assam's National Register of Citizens

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday extended the deadline for publication of the final draft of Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC) till July 30. The NRC is being prepared to identify illegal migrants in Assam. A Bench of Justices Ranjan Gogoi and R F Nariman considered the report of state NRC coordinator Prateek Hajela and extended the deadline. Hajela had approached the Supreme Court last week stating that it would not be possible to release the final draft of the NRC as scheduled on June 30 due to the floods in Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts in the Barak Valley as well as in parts of Karbi Anglong and Hojai.

KIMIS: KVIC launches e-marketing system

New Delhi: In As a fusion of 'Digital India' and 'Made in India', the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), launched its first in-house single-umbrella e-marketing system – Khadi Institution Management and Information System (KIMIS), recently. The system can be accessed from anywhere in pan-India for the sale and purchase of Khadi and Village Industries products. The system was inaugurated by Vinai Kumar Saxena, Chairman, KVIC. He said that since KVIC firmly believes in transparency in all of its aspects.

cVigil: Election Commission launches app to report model code violations

The Election Commission today launched an Android-based app, using which a person can secretly send to it geo-tagged videos and photos of illegal money being distributed or a hate speech being made during polls. The unique Internet-based beta version of the application is called 'cVIGIL', which stands for "citizens' vigil". It will be operationalised for the first time when assembly polls in states such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh are held later this year. It will be operationalised for the first time when assembly polls in states.

CBIC develops GST Verify mobile app to protect interest of consumers

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has developed a mobile app 'GST Verify' to protect interest of consumers. It is an android app to verify if the person collecting GST from the consumer is eligible to collect it or not, an official statement said today. It also provides the details of the person/ company collecting GST, it said. "Every time you shop/eat/buy check the bill if there is any GST amount mentioned.

Government launches Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System and Khan Prahari mobile app

The Ministry of Coal has launched the Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) and 'Khan Prahari' mobile application. Speaking at the event, Minister for Coal and Railways, Piyush Goyal, said, "Illegal mining is a serious problem in the country today, particularly in areas where coal mining is carried out." An official statement said, "The basic objective of CMSMS is reporting, monitoring and taking suitable action on unauthorised coal mining activities.

AAI to set up Civil Aviation Research Organisation in Hyderabad

NEW DELHI: State-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) will set up a state-of-the-art Civil Aviation Research Organization (CARO) at Hyderabad's Begumpet Airport to find "indigenous solutions to meet the challenges posed by the growing air traffic and for enhancing safety, capacity and efficiency of aircraft operations in the country." AAI has earmarked Rs 1,200 crore for this project that will be spent over 12 years for research and development. CARO is expected to be built in three years.

Supreme Court once again upholds Chief Justice of India as Master of Roster

The 'Chief Justice of India' (CJI) is an individual judge and not the powerful collective of five senior-most judges of the Supreme Court called the 'Collegium', the Supreme Court held on Friday. And it is this exclusive authority of this individual judge, who is the "spokesperson of the court", to allocate cases to fellow judges as the 'Master of Roster', a Bench of Justices A.K. Sikri and Ashok Bhushan declared in their separate but concurring opinions.

JEE (Main), NEET to be held twice a year, over multiple days: HRD Ministry

The Joint Entrance Examination (Mains) [JEE-Mains] and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) will now be conducted twice a year instead of just once, Union Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar said on Saturday. The former determines admission to the National Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Information Technology, etc., and also eligibility to appear for JEE (Advanced) for admission to the Indian Institutes of Technology, while the latter decides admissions to all medical colleges except AIIMS and JIPMER, Puducherry.

MHA to upgrade National Information Security Policy and Guidelines to secure government data

Worried about sensitive information making its way into the Internet, the Home Ministry is upgrading policy to secure government data and control access to it. A senior Ministry official said that earlier the files were locked in a cupboard and accountability could be fixed, but with the advent of Digital India, a number of issues were in a grey area. Home Minister Rajnath Singh, who recently presided over a meeting to review the evolving cyberthreats, directed that the National Information Security Policy and Guidelines (NISPG) be upgraded and updated for the government sector.

Saathi: CRPF launches mobile help centre for Amarnath Yatra pilgrims

JAMMU: The CRPF on Monday launched a mobile help centre to reach out to people undertaking the annual pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre high holy cave shrine of Amarnath. The initiative 'Saathi' was launched by the Inspector General of the CRPF, Jammu Sector. "A need was felt to provide help and information to yatrīs staying in camps outside the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu. "To achieve this objective, Mobile Help Center 'Saathi' was flagged off by Inspector General of CRPF, Jammu Sector, Abhay Vir Chauhan,".

1st India Tourism Mart to be held in New Delhi in September 2018

The Ministry of Tourism in partnership with the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH) and with the help of State/UT Governments is organizing the India Tourism Mart (ITM) 2018 from 16th to 18th September, 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. FAITH is the apex organization of important trade and hospitality associations of the country. The tourism industry through FAITH will drive the event whereas support will be extended by the Ministry.

HRD Ministry grants Institutions of Eminence status to 3 public and 3 private institutes

The HRD Ministry today granted "Institutions of Eminence" status to three public and three private institutes, enabling them to get full autonomy and special incentives to project them as "world class universities". While the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry will grant Rs 1,000 crore funds to the three public institutions in the next five years, the private institutes will not be eligible for government funding.

Government launches technology challenge to eliminate human entry into septic tanks

With an aim of eliminating human entry into septic tanks and drains for cleaning, the ministry of housing and urban affairs has launched a 'technology challenge' seeking suitable solutions from individuals and NGOs. According to the ministry, the initiative is in line with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who recently expressed desire for a challenge to promote latest technologies to avoid human intervention in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in the country.

India's genetically modified crop area fifth largest in world: Report

India has the world's fifth largest cultivated area under genetically modified (GM) crops, at 11.4 million hectares (mh) in 2017. But unlike other big growers, its entire GM crop area is under a single crop — cotton — incorporating genes from the *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt soil bacterium coding for resistance against heliothis bollworm insect pests. The country with the highest area under transgenic crops, at 75 mh, is the United States.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: India formally announced as 69th shareholder

India was today formally announced as the 69th shareholder of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), paving the way for more joint investment with Indian companies across the bank's regions of operation. The Indian government had applied for EBRD membership in December 2017. The EBRD board of governors, which represents all the existing shareholders, voted unanimously in favour of the country's application in March 2018, with the entire membership process completed this week.

IR-BMS: Indian Railways launches consolidated Bridge Management System

Days after a bridge in Mumbai collapsed on a railway track, the railways on Thursday launched its first consolidated Bridge Management System (IR-BMS), a web-enabled IT application to store data on its 1.5 lakh bridges. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Thursday launched BMS for "meaningful assimilation, analysis and dissemination of information related to various activities" about its bridges, a statement from the national transporter said.

Dharohar Bhawan: PM Narendra Modi inaugurates new HQ building of Archaeological Survey of India

Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, recently inaugurated 'Dharohar Bhawan', the new headquarters building of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at Tilak Marg in New Delhi. Dr Mahesh Sharma, minister of state for culture (I/C); Raghavendra Singh, secretary culture and Usha Sharma, director general, ASI were present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Modi said that the ASI has performed significant work over the course of last 150 years since its inception.

Government sets up task force on ways to reduce import

The government has set up a high-level task force under the chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha to identify various items and policy interventions to reduce dependence on import, an official said. The task force includes secretaries from departments of commerce, industrial policy and promotion, skill development, revenue, defence production, steel, petroleum, electronics and telecommunications. It would suggest ways to cut import of those items which can be manufactured or explored in the country, the official added.

India invites US President Donald Trump to be Republic Day chief guest in 2019

The Narendra Modi government is believed to have invited US President Donald Trump to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations next year when the country honours the Constitution that came into effect on January 26, 1950. According to a Times of India report, the invite to Trump was sent earlier in April. The report said that an official response from Washington is awaited, adding that the Trump administration has indicated.

UN Secretary General sets up panel on digital cooperation to tackle cybersecurity threats

UN chief Antonio Guterres has established a first-of-its-kind panel on digital cooperation aimed at addressing concerns of cybersecurity threats and rise in hate speech and named senior Indian diplomat Amandeep Singh Gill as the executive director of the panel's secretariat. The high-level panel on digital cooperation will be co-chaired by US philanthropist Melinda Gates and China-based Alibaba founder Jack Ma.

NCPCR drafts fee regulations to check arbitrary increases in school fees

Bringing relief to parents beset by frequent and arbitrary increases in school fees, a government commission is likely to suggest a 10% yearly cap on the fee hike permissible by private, unaided schools, with provisions for penalties in case of violations, two officials familiar with the development said. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), a statutory body, is in the process of making a recommendation to that effect to the human resource development (HRD) ministry, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

ISRO successfully conducts ground test of high thrust version of Vikas Engine

After conducting a ground test of 195 seconds, a high thrust version of the Vikas Engine was successfully qualified at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) in Tirunelveli district's Mahendragiri, of Tamil Nadu. This engine would improve the payload capability of PSLV, GSLV and GSLV Mk-III launch vehicles. The test was conducted on Sunday, and validated the performance adequacy of Vikas Engine to be used in the upcoming second developmental flight of GSLV Mk-III.

Western Railway renames Elphinstone Road Station as Prabhadevi

MUMBAI: Western Railway's Elphinstone Road station will be called as Prabhadevi from July 19, almost a year after the nod was given by the central government. The station, with two platforms, caters to slow line services on the WR's suburban section. It was named in honour of Lord Elphinstone who was the governor of Bombay from 1853 to 1860. Prabhadevi is the name of the area in the vicinity of the station. It also derives its name from the temple of the deity which is 300 years old.

Cabinet approves proposal to make DMs approving authority for adoptions

The Union Cabinet today gave its nod to a proposal to make district magistrates, instead of courts, the final authority for approving adoptions. Since courts are overburdened and take a long time to approve adoptions, the district magistrates would now be the approving authority, Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, briefing reporters after the Cabinet meet, said. District magistrates are in-charge of the child custody authority.

NABARD launches South East Asia's first ever Centre for Climate Change in Lucknow

Agri-lender Nabard today said it has launched a centre for accelerating concerted action on climate change by various stakeholders including government, private and financial sectors. It said the Centre for Climate Change, set up in Lucknow, would help Nabard in enhancing its capacity building efforts manifold. The National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development said in a statement that it will extend professional support to stakeholders for designing climate related projects.

Government launches Student Police Cadet Programme

Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh, yesterday launched the nationwide Student Police Cadet (SPC) programme, which aims to build a bridge between the police and school students by inculcating values and ethics in them through classes. The Ministry of Home Affairs-sponsored programme focuses on students of classes VIII and IX. In the initial phase, it will be implemented in all government schools in urban and rural areas across the country, an official statement had said.

Regional Rail Training Institute inaugurated at Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh

In a bid to strengthen the expertise and capabilities of the employees of North-Eastern Railways, Minister of State for Railways Manoj Sinha on Sunday inaugurated Regional Rail Training Institute (RRTI) at Uttar Pradesh's Ghazipur. He also inaugurated the newly constructed washing pit at Ghazipur City station, according to a official statement. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Sinha said the RRTI was constructed within the stipulated time.

PM Narendra Modi launches India-assisted emergency ambulance service in Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on Saturday flagged off an expanded emergency ambulance service, supported by the Indian government, at a cost of about \$23 million. The event, held in Jaffna in the Northern Province, marked the island-wide expansion of the service that was initially launched in Sri Lanka's Western and Southern Provinces in 2016, with 88 ambulances. Now, nearly 300 ambulances will ply across Sri Lanka, offering emergency medical services through doctors and paramedics trained in India and Sri Lanka.

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana: Government cuts minimum annual deposit requirement to Rs 250

Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) is a small deposit scheme for the girl child launched as a part of the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign. It is currently 8.1 per cent and provides income-tax benefit under section 80 C of the Income Tax Act, 1961. Even the returns are tax free in the scheme. A Sukanya Samridhi Account can be opened any time after the birth of a girl till she turns 10, with a minimum deposit of Rs 250 (Earlier it was Rs 1,000). In subsequent years, a minimum of Rs 250 an

DTAB sub-committee recommends banning 343 fixed drug combinations

An expert panel formed by an apex advisory board on drugs to review the "safety, efficacy and therapeutic justification" of 349 fixed dose combination (FDC) medicines, which were banned in 2016, have backed the Health Ministry's decision to ban the drugs, barring six of them. The panel set up by the ministry has submitted its recommendations to the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB), which will forward the same to the health ministry soon, a government official said.

West Bengal Assembly passes resolution to rename state as Bangla

The West Bengal Assembly on Thursday passed a resolution to change the name of the State as 'Bangla' in three languages — Bengali, English and Hindi. The proposal has been pending since August 2016, when the Assembly passed a resolution to change the name to 'Bengal' in English, 'Bangla' in Bengali and 'Bangal' in Hindi. The Centre, however, turned it down in 2017, objecting to having three names in three languages.

Government notifies ethanol-making directly from sugarcane juice, B-molasses

The government has notified a decision to allow sugar mills to manufacture ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or intermediate product called B-molasses. The sugarcane control order of 1966 has been amended in this regard and the same has been notified by the Union Food Ministry. The move would help mills divert cane juice for ethanol manufacturing during surplus years. "When a sugar factory produces ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or B-molasses, the recovery rate in case of such factory shall be determined by considering every 600 litres so produced as equivalent to one tonne of production of sugar," the notification said.

Blood Moon 2018: Century's longest lunar eclipse of 1 hour 43 minutes seen

Skywatchers around the world have witnessed the longest "blood moon" eclipse of the 21st Century. As it rose, during this total eclipse, Earth's natural satellite turned a striking shade of red or ruddy brown. The "totality" period, where light from the Moon was totally obscured, lasted for one hour, 43 minutes. At least part of the eclipse was visible from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Australia, most of Asia and South America.

Meghalaya Milk Mission launched in Shillong

Shillong: The state government launched Meghalaya Milk Mission and First Meghalaya Bull Fair on Saturday to bridge the gap between demand and supply of milk. The programme, organised by the state animal husbandry and veterinary department was graced by governor Ganga Prasad, Union minister of agriculture and farmers welfare Radha Mohan Singh and deputy chief minister Prestone Tynsong, among others.

Cabinet approves renaming of Agartala Airport as Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore Airport, Agartala

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday decided to name the Agartala airport in Tripura after Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore, the erstwhile ruler of the state. The airport was constructed in 1942 on the land donated by the maharaja. "As a visionary ruler, who had travelled across the globe, he took several steps for the all-round development of Tripura," an official statement said. There was a long-pending demand of the people of Tripura as well as the Tripura government for paying tribute to the maharaja, it said.

UNESCO to set up Design University for Gaming in Visakhapatnam

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will be setting up a 'Design University for Gaming' in Visakhapatnam. UNESCO delegation on Wednesday entered into an agreement with Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) for the establishment of 'Gaming Digital Learning Hub', following which they met with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. The UNESCO delegation asked the Chief Minister.

Gujarat signs MoU with Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency to strengthen trade, industrial relations

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Industries and Mines Department under the Gujarat government and Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) on Tuesday in Delhi. The priority sectors in focus under this signed MoU were Chemical, Petrochemical and Pharmaceuticals; New and Renewable Energy; Start-up Ecosystem; Textiles and Apparels; Urban Infrastructure; Food Processing and Agro related industries; Skill Training and Development; Automobile, etc.

Andhra Pradesh Government launches 60 Anna Canteens

The Andhra Pradesh government today launched the much-awaited 'Anna Canteens' in various parts of the state. Chief Minister, N Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated a canteen in Vijayawada to mark the launch of the programme while, in all, 60 'Anna Canteens' were opened in the first phase across the state. The Akshaya Patra Foundation will run these canteens. Setting up 'Anna Canteens', where breakfast, lunch and dinner would be offered at Rs 5 each, was one of the promises the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) made ahead of the 2014 polls.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates the Bansagar Canal Project in Mirzapur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a number of projects including the much awaited Bansagar canal which is expected to provide a big boost to irrigation. The Prime Minister arrived in Mirzapur on Sunday, on the second day of his visit to Uttar Pradesh. The Bansagar canal project would help at least 1.70 lakh farmers of both Mirzapur and Allahabad with the irrigation sector receiving a huge boost.

Haryana Government launches Paudhagiri Campaign for planting of saplings

The Haryana government on Sunday launched a campaign under which students of Classes 6-12 who click a selfie with a sapling planted by them and upload it on an app will get Rs 50 as incentive every six months. Aimed at increasing green cover in the state, the Paudhagiri campaign was launched by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar by planting a sapling at Tau Devi Lal Sports complex in Gurgaon. The students will soon be made aware about the mobile app, using which they can upload the selfies.

Public Affairs Index 2018: Kerala tops list of best governed States for third time

Karnataka retained its fourth spot in the Public Affairs Index 2018, while Kerala topped the index, for the third time, for being the best governed large State in the country. Tamil Nadu and Telangana stood second and third respectively. The index on the quality of governance, released by Bengaluru-based think tank Public Affairs Centre on Saturday, was based on 10 themes, 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators. Karnataka was ranked third in 2016.

First-ever tribal atlas of Odisha released

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today released the first tribal atlas of Odisha -- a set of maps and statistics highlighting the tribal demography of the state. The atlas has been prepared by the SC & ST Research and Training Institute in collaboration with Academy of Tribal Language and Culture. The atlas has been edited by Prof A B Ota, director of SC & ST Research Institute, and reviewed by development commissioner R Balakrishnan. It will be available at the SC & ST Research and Training Institute located at Nayapalli in Bhubaneswar.

Bihar Assembly passes Bihar Prohibition and Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2018

The Bihar Assembly passed a bill today to amend some of the stringent provisions of the prohibition law in order to prevent its misuse and make the quantum of punishment proportionate to the nature of offence. The Opposition, which was seeking the declaration of Bihar as "drought-hit" since morning, continued to press their demand in the post-lunch session and staged a walkout, while the House took up the Bihar Prohibition and Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2018 for consideration.

Odisha Government launches Green Mahanadi Mission

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Tuesday launched the 'Green Mahanadi Mission', a plantation drive under which 2 crore saplings will be planted along the Mahanadi river and its tributaries. The Chief Minister launched the campaign during his visit to Boudh and Subarnapur districts where he planted a sapling on the bank of the Mahanadi. A massive plantation drive will be undertaken along the Mahanadi, Ib and Tel rivers.

Scutoid: Scientists discover new shape after studying human cells

Scientists have discovered a new shape called scutoid while studying nature's way of moulding tissue to form the skin, cavity linings and the building blocks of organs. The shape has five sides on one end and six on the other and a triangular surface on one of its longer edges. Scientists have referred to it as a twisted prism kind of shape that allows the tissue to mould around organs. Epithelial tissue, one of the four kinds of tissue that forms the human body, is composed of epithelial cells packed together in a particular formation.

Vishwas Patel appointed as Chairman of Payments Council of India

Payments Council of India (PCI), an apex body representing companies in payments and settlement system, has a new Chairman in Vishwas Patel. Patel, who is Director at Infibeam Avenues, has been associated with PCI since its inception in 2013 and was serving as the co-Chairman of PCI. He takes over from Naveen Surya, who has been elevated to the post of Chairman Emeritus.

NASSCOM opens Center of Excellence (CoE) for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence in Bengaluru

Bengaluru, Indian IT industry apex body Nasscom on Thursday opened a Centre of Excellence for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (AI) here. The centre was set up in collaboration with the Karnataka government with an aim to nurture innovation in emerging disruptive technologies such as AI and to leverage the power of data science, Nasscom said in a statement here. Karnataka has led the Information Technology (IT) revolution in India and the state has also been fostering entrepreneurial spirit.

Samsung inaugurates world's largest mobile phone factory in Noida

NEW DELHI: Samsung India on Monday inaugurated its new mobile phone manufacturing facility in Noida which is the world's largest mobile factory. With this, the company will double its current capacity for mobile phones in Noida from 68 million units a year to 120 million units a year, in a phase-wise expansion that will be completed by 2020, the company said in a release Monday. The company has taken the 'Make in India' initiative to another level by launching 'Make for the World'.

Global Innovation Index (GII): India ranks 57th

BENGALURU: The Global Innovation Index (GII) has ranked India as the 57th most innovative nation in the world. The country has improved its ranking from 60th position last year. India has been improving steadily since it was ranked 81st in 2015. Meanwhile, China improved its ranking from 22 in 2017 to 17 this year. The GII is being developed jointly by Cornell University, the Paris-based business school Insead and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in Geneva. GII ranks.

India becomes world's 6th largest economy in 2017: World Bank

Updated World Bank figures for 2017 show that India is now the world's sixth-biggest economy, having muscled past France, which was pushed to the seventh spot, news agency AFP reported on Wednesday. India's gross domestic product (GDP) stood at \$2.597 trillion at the end of 2017, compared to \$2.582 trillion for France. The US continued to be the world's biggest economy, followed by China, Japan and Germany. Britain remained the world's fifth-biggest economy with a GDP of \$2.622 trillion at the end of 2017

IFFCO iMandi: IFFCO rolls out e-commerce platform for farmers

Fertiliser major IFFCO has partnered with Singapore-based technology firm iMandi to start an e-commerce platform for farmers with an investment of about Rs 80 crore. An e-commerce app, 'IFFCO iMandi', has been launched that would cater to 5.5 crore farmers already associated with the cooperative. A web portal has also been developed. IFFCO's subsidiary IFFCO eBazar Ltd has taken 26 per cent stake in iMandi Pte Ltd.

IMF cuts India's growth forecast for 2018 to 7.3%

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Monday projected a growth rate of 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5% in 2019 for India as against 6.7% in 2017, making it the fastest growing country among major economies. However, the latest growth rate projection for India is slightly less — 0.1 percentage point in 2018 and 0.3 percentage points in 2019 — than its April projections. GST impact subsidies. India's growth rate is expected to rise from 6.7% in 2017.

RBI to issue new 100 rupee notes in lavender colour

NEW DELHI, JULY 19: The Reserve Bank today said it will soon issue new Rs 100 notes in lavender colour having motif of 'Rani ki vav' — a stepwell located on the banks of Saraswati river in Gujarat's Patan. "All Rs 100 banknotes issued earlier will also continue to be legal tender," the central bank said while announcing the issue of the new Rs 100 notes. The base colour of the note is Lavender. The note has other designs, geometric patterns aligning with the overall colour scheme, both at the obverse and reverse. Dimension of the banknote will be 66 mm x 142 mm.

India's first Mobile Open Exchange zone inaugurated at Noida

LUCKNOW: PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of country's first Mobile Open Exchange (MOX) zone in Noida at the ground breaking ceremony on Sunday. The UP government had signed an MoU with World Trade Centre, Noida at UP Investors' Summit to develop a Tech Zone which would act as a catalyst for growth of mobile and allied sectors in the state. A Chinese company has already set up its manufacturing facility in WTC Noida complex and directly and indirectly employs over 15,000 people.

India Post Payments Bank to start operations with 650 branches in August 2018

NEW DELHI: India Post Payments Bank is expected to go live with 650 branches and around 17 crore accounts in August, following clearance from Reserve Bank of India to start operations. "We are looking at launch date. From an operational, technology and market perspective, we are ready to go live," India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) MD and CEO Suresh Sethi told PTI. He confirmed that RBI has given approval to IPPB after testing its entire system.

Government imposes 25% safeguard duty on import of solar cells

The Centre on Monday issued a notification putting into effect a safeguard duty of 25% on import of solar cells from China and Malaysia between July 30, 2018, and July 29, 2019. The duty reduces to 20% for six months from July 30, 2019, and further to 15% in the subsequent half year. The decision by the government follows a long deliberation by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies, which recommended the safeguard duty structure after considering an application by Indian solar cell manufacturers.

Mumbai's Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Buildings declared World Heritage site by UNESCO

In a double cheer for India, two building clusters of Victorian Gothic and Art Deco architectural styles in Mumbai were today jointly inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List, pushing the country's financial capital high on global cultural map. This is the third such honour for the metropolis after the Elephanta Caves and the majestic Victoria Terminus -rechristened Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station railway.

SatMt Ojos del Salado: Satyarup Siddhanta becomes second Indian to climb world's highest volcano

Satyarup Siddhanta has become the second Indian mountaineer after Malli Mastan Babu to climb Mt Ojos del Salado, the highest volcano in the world. Ojos del Salado is a stratovolcano (a volcano built up of alternate layers of lava and ash) in the Andes on the Argentina-Chile border and the highest active volcano in the world at 6,893 metres (22,615 ft). Satyarup is also set to be the first Indian to climb Mt Sidley, the highest volcano of Antarctica, which will help him realise the dream of scaling seven summits and seven volcanic summits.

Dipa Karmakar: First Indian to win gold in Gymnastics World Challenge Cup

Returning to action after a long lay-off of nearly two years due to injury, India's premier gymnast Dipa Karmakar clinched the gold medal in the vault event of FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup at Mersin, Turkey today. The 24-year-old from Tripura, who had finished fourth in vault event in the 2016 Rio Olympics, scored 14.150 to win gold today. She had topped the qualification also with a score of 13.400. This is Dipa's first medal in a World Challenge Cup.

Anjolie Ela Menon awarded Kalidas Samman for visual arts from

Noted artist Anjolie Ela Menon, 78 on Saturday received the National Kalidas Samman in Delhi for visual arts from the Madhya Pradesh government. The award was conferred in recognition of her insightful and sensitive portrayal of the identity and spirit of women through her meaningful paintings in a variety of media. With her first solo exhibition being held in Delhi in 1958, Menon is counted among India's most accomplished artists.

Carnatic vocalist Aruna Sairam selected for 2018 Sangita Kalanidhi award

Carnatic vocalist Aruna Sairam has been selected for this year's Sangita Kalanidhi award of the Music Academy. The executive committee of the Academy that met on Sunday, unanimously selected her for the award, said N. Murali, the president of the Academy. "An illustrious career spanning decades, she can be credited with taking the art to a very wide audience both in India and abroad. She is also known for her collaborative exercise in music with artistes of other countries and genres," said Mr. Murali.

2018 Ramon Magsaysay Award: Two Indians Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk awarded

Two Indians — one a psychiatrist who works for the mentally-ill street persons and another whose initiative to harness science and culture creatively for economic progress improved the lives of the Ladakhi youth — were today declared the winners of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award. Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk are among six individuals who were declared winners of the award, regarded as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize. Vatwani was recognised for "his tremendous courage and healing compassion in embracing India's mentally-afflicted destitute, and his steadfast and magnanimous.

Golden Globe Race: Indian Navy's Commander Abhilash Tomy to circumnavigate globe solo, non-stop

Indian Naval officer Lt. Commander Abhilash Tomy will sail around the world, solo and non-stop, as part of the prestigious Golden Globe Race (GGR) that commenced from Les Sables d'Olonne harbour in France. "The uniqueness of the race is that boat designs and technology newer than 1968 are not permitted. Hence, the use of Global Positioning System (GPS), satellite communication, navigational aids, etc are forbidden," the Navy said in an official statement.

Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel appointed Chairperson of National Green Tribunal

Supreme Court judge Adarsh Kumar Goel, who retired on Friday, was appointed as the chairperson of National Green Tribunal. He is best remembered for passing the controversial judgment on diluting provisions of the SC/ST Act. The post of the chairperson of the green tribunal, which disposes cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources, had been vacant for the past eight months after Justice Swatanter Kumar retired on December 19 after completing his five-year tenure.

President nominates four members to Rajya Sabha

President Ram Nath Kovind nominated former MP Ram Shakal, RSS ideologue Rakesh Sinha, classical dancer Sonal Mansingh and stone artist Raghunath Mohapatra to the Rajya Sabha on Saturday. The nominations were made by President Kovind on the advice of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said. Article 80(1)(a) of the Constitution provides that the president can nominate to the Rajya Sabha 12 persons.

Government reappoints Anil D Sahasrabudhe as AICTE Chairman

NEW DELHI: The central government has renewed the appointment of Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe as the chairman of the All India Council for technical education (AICTE) The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the renewal of appointment of Sahasrabudhe till he attains the age of 65 years, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said. He was appointed to the top post of the country's technical education regulator in July 2015. Sahasrabudhe has in his illustrious career of over 30 years held several important academic.

Arman Ali takes charge of national disabled people's organisation NCPEDP

The National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) today announced the appointment of Arman Ali as its executive director. He would assume charge from October 1. Disability rights activist Javed Abidi, who was the director of the NCPEDP, passed away on March 4 after succumbing to chest infection. He was 53. Ali's appointment was announced during a National Disability Consultation.

Tejas: Indigenous fighter aircraft commences operations from Sulur Air Force Station

Indigenous fighter aircraft Tejas of No 45 Squadron 'The Flying Daggers' formally commenced operations from the Air Force Station at Sulur near Coimbatore under Group Captain S Dhankhar today. The Southern Air Command base at Tiruvananthapuram, Kerala has been entrusted with the responsibility of integrating the fighter in Air Force's Concept of Operations. Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (Southern Air Command) RKS Bhadauria formally took part in the inaugural ceremony, an official release said.

NCERT to introduce QR code in textbooks

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has initiated the process of introducing QR code in their textbooks, a move aimed at helping students understand chapters better by watching a film or reading additional content on laptops and digital boards. Quick Response (QR) Code is a machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares, typically used for storing web-links or other information for reading by the camera on a smart-phone.

Wings: BSNL launches India's first internet telephony service

New Delhi: State-run telecom firm BSNL on Wednesday unveiled first internet telephony service in the country that will allow users to dial any telephone number in India through its mobile app Wings'. Now BSNL customers will be able to make calls using the company's mobile app Wings to any phone number in the country. Before this, phone calls on mobile apps was possible within users of a particular app and not on telephone numbers. "In present competitive environment, increase in market share by BSNL is laudable.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Uruguay's Major General Jos Eladio Alcain appointed Head of UNMOGIP

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed a veteran Uruguayan Army official as head of the United Nations mission tasked with monitoring the ceasefire line between India and Pakistan. Major General Jos Eladio Alcain of Uruguay will be Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer for the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). He will succeed Major General Per Gustaf Lodin of Sweden, who will complete his two-year assignment this month.

France wins 2018 FIFA World Cup Football title

France are the champions of the world once again. Twenty years after Didier Deschamps lifted the trophy with the likes of Zinedine Zidane, Patrick Viera and Thierry Henry by his side, he did so again, this time with the rest of his coaching staff beside him. He was not wearing the French blue but a three-piece suit that got drenched in the rain in Moscow. He was the first French captain to lead his team to a World Cup title in 1998 and on Sunday he became the third man to win the title as captain and manager with the same team.

Tennis: Winners of 2018 Wimbledon Championships

WIMBLEDON -- The "whap" of the ball striking the net tape and falling back was painful enough, seeming to echo in the silence of Centre Court before the umpire called, "Game, Djokovic." But the really unnerving thing was the murmur from within the crowd that gradually grew louder, posing an uncomfortable question that couldn't be ignored. If Kevin Anderson, whose greatest weapon is his serve, couldn't hold his very first service game.

UNEP partners with Google for monitoring impact of human activity on global ecosystem

The UN has entered into a partnership with Google to monitor the impacts of human activity on global ecosystems by using sophisticated online tools. The aim of the partnership is to develop a platform to enable governments, NGO's and the public to track specific environment-related development targets with a user-friendly Google front-end, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) said in a statement on Monday.

International Tiger Day: 29 July

Thimpu-based SAARC Development Fund will soon be launching a social enterprise development programme (SEDP) to fund 80 entities annually across the 8-member states including India, said SDF CEO Sunil Motiwal. SDF was established by the Heads of the eight SAARC member states in April 2010 and its Governing Council comprises finance ministers of these eight countries. SDF is in the process of launching the SEDP as part of its social window, Motiwal said in an interview to PTI.

Financial Action Task Force places Pakistan in Grey List for failing to curb terror financing

Every year, July 29 is celebrated as the Global Tiger Day to raise awareness about the endangered big cats. It was created when 13 countries came together in 2009 and pledged to double the world's Tiger population by 2022 -- the next "Year of the Tiger" on the Asian lunar calendar. As per the assessment of the Status of Tigers, Co-predators and Prey (2014), the number of tigers in India is estimated at 2,226 as compared to the 2010 estimate of 1,706. Poaching, prey depletion and loss of habitat continue to be major threats to their survival.

China launches two remote sensing satellites for Pakistan

China on Monday successfully launched two remote sensing satellites for Pakistan, marking the first international commercial launch for the Long March-2C rocket in about 19 years. The satellites -- PRSS-1 and PakTES-1A --- were launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China at 11:56 am, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. The PRSS-1 is China's first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan. It is the 17th satellite developed by the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) for an overseas buyer, it said.

Scientists perform world's first 3D, colour X-ray on human body

New Zealand scientists have performed the first-ever 3-D, colour X-ray on a human, using a technique that promises to improve the field of medical diagnostics, said Europe's CERN physics lab which contributed imaging technology. The new device, based on the traditional black-and-white X-ray, incorporates particle-tracking technology developed for CERN's Large Hadron Collider, which in 2012 discovered the elusive Higgs Boson particle.

IIT-Madras unveils world's first remotely operable LEAP microscope

CHENNAI: The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras today launched a Rs 40 crore remotely operable microscope, claimed to be the world's first of its kind, that would enable precise view of atoms of a material. The Local Electrode Atom Probe (LEAP) had been developed in a collaborative exercise involving eight top research institutions in the country, spearheaded by IIT-M, a statement from the institute said. Though there were several such devices available across world.

Sutherland: UK selects Scottish site for first spaceport

The UK has selected the site for its first spaceport. The chosen location is Sutherland, on the A'Mhoine peninsula on the north coast of Scotland. Local business development agency the Highlands and Islands Enterprise will receive £2.5 million in funding (\$3.3 million) from the UK government, and the first rocket launches are planned for the early 2020s. The spaceport is being built with the hope that the UK can grab a slice of the growing market for small satellite launches. The country is already home to many component and satellite makers.

Scientists develop world's fastest man-made spinning object

Scientists have developed the fastest man-made rotor in the world, which they believe will help them study quantum mechanics. At more than 60 billion revolutions per minute, this machine is more than 100,000 times faster than a high-speed dental drill. "This study has many applications, including material science. We can study the extreme conditions different materials can survive in," said Tongcang Li, an assistant professor at Purdue University.

Google unveils two new AI chip

Google is going beyond building artificial intelligence (AI) chips for its data centres. At the Google Cloud Next '18 conference in San Francisco, the Internet giant announced two new products aimed at helping customers develop and deploy intelligent connected devices at scale. The first one was 'Edge TPU,' a new hardware chip, so small that four of them can fit on a U.S penny, Injong Rhee, VP, IoT, Google Cloud, demonstrated on the stage. 'Brain to devices' "Edge TPU would bring the brain to your devices.

Bombali: New strain of Ebola virus discovered in Sierra Leone

A NEW strain of the deadly Ebola virus has been found in northern Sierra Leone and there are fears the virus could potentially spread to humans. It has been provisionally referred to as the Bombali virus and is the sixth known species of Ebola. The virus was discovered in bats and environmental nonprofit group EcoHealth Alliance has warned it has the potential to infect human cells. They said: "The newly discovered Bombali Ebola virus was found in a bat species of the genus Mops.

5th RCEP intersessional ministerial meeting held in Tokyo, Japan

The Ministers from the 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs) attended the 5th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting held on 1 July 2018 in Tokyo, Japan. The Ministers discussed the developments since the 4th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting on 3 March 2018 in Singapore, including the outcomes of the 22nd round of negotiations held on 28 April-8 May 2018 also in Singapore; the intersessional meetings of selected working groups.

6th edition of biennial World Cities Summit held in Singapore

The 6th edition of the biennial World Cities Summit, the leading global platform to drive and connect innovators in sustainable integrated urban solutions, kicked off in Singapore on Sunday. The summit will be held together with the Singapore International Water Week and the CleanEnviro Summit Singapore at the same venue from Sunday to Thursday, reports Xinhua news agency.

UN Security Council adopts Resolution 2427 to protect children in armed conflict

The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution aimed at a framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle. Resolution 2427, which won unanimous approval of the 15 members of the council on Monday, strongly condemns the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict as well as their re-recruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abductions, Xinhua reported.

UNSC adopts Resolution 2428 to impose arms embargo on South Sudan

UNITED NATIONS, July 13 (Xinhua) -- The UN Security Council on Friday adopted a resolution to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan in addition to current sanctions, till May 31, 2019. Resolution 2428 won nine votes in favor, the minimum requirement for adoption. The remaining six members of the Security Council -- Bolivia, China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Russia -- abstained. To be adopted, a Security Council resolution needs nine votes in favor and no veto from any of the five permanent members.

India becomes Vice Chair of the Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation

India has become the vice-chair (regional head) of the Asia Pacific region of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) for a period of two years to June, 2020, the finance ministry said today. The organisation has divided its membership into six regions. Each of the regions is represented by an elected vice-chairperson to the WCO council. "India is a wealth of experience in promoting security and facilitation of cross border trade," it said. To mark the assumption.

4th BIMSTEC Summit to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal in August 2018

The 4th BIMSTEC Summit will be held here on August 30 and 31, Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Monday. "We have started preparations to ensue the success of the summit," Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali told reporters here. Nepal is the current Chair of the BIMSTEC. "It is an important regional gathering in Kathmandu after the promulgation of the new Nepalese Constitution and formation of the new government in the Himalayan nation. The government attaches high importance to the summit, for which we have formed several committees," he said.

Myanmar joins International Solar Alliance

Myanmar on Thursday joined the India-initiated International Solar Alliance (ISA), becoming the 68th member of the grouping that is aiming at optimum utilisation of solar energy. Myanmar Minister for International Cooperation Kyaw Tin handed over the ISA Framework Agreement to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj during a bilateral meeting here on the margins of this year's Delhi Dialogue, the premier annual track 1.5 event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) bloc.

