



CURRENT AFFAIRS

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TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER ANNOUNCED TO CELEBRATE APRIL 14 AS 'EQUALITY DAY'

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin announced in the Legislative Assembly that the birth anniversary of Dr Ambedkar on April 14 would be celebrated as 'Equality Day' in the state from this year onwards.
- Making a statement under Rule 110 in the House, CM Stalin said that a pledge would also be taken across the state on that day.
- According to a government order, the crux of the pledge to be taken in all government offices, would be upholding and following equality and the oath would be against caste discrimination.
- It is to be noted that the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government had already declared social reformist and Dravidian icon Periyar's birth anniversary on September 17 as 'Social Justice Day'.

PM NARENDRA MODI INAUGURATES 108 FT TALL STATUE OF LORD HANUMAN JI IN GUJARAT

- PM Modi unveiled the 108-feet tall statue of Lord Hanuman in Morbi of Gujarat on 16 April 2022.
- PM Modi attended the inauguration program via video conferencing. The 108-feet high statue of Lord Hanuman is built in the Ashram of Param Pujya Bapu Keshvanand Ji in Morbi and it was unveiled by PM Modi on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti.
- This statue is the second of the four statues of Lord Hanuman being built at four places in the country, one in each direction.
- In the north, one such statue was built at Shimla in 2010.
- The statue in Morbi unveiled by PM Modi is in the western part while the other two statues are being built; one in Rameshwaram and the other in West Bengal.

MANIPUR TO HOST THE HIGHEST INDIAN NATIONAL FLAG AT INA COMPLEX

- Manipur chief minister, N Biren Singh announced that a 165-foot-high Indian national flag, the tallest in the Northeast, would be hoisted at the Indian National Army (INA) headquarters complex in Moirang in Manipur's Bishnupur district, for which a pole had already been erected.
- According to Singh, as part of the 100-day action plan, union Home Minister Amit Shah will visit the state and unfurl the Indian national flag.
- He was speaking at the INA Martyr's Memorial Complex in Moirang, 45 kilometres south of Imphal, where the 78th Anniversary of Flag Hoisting Day was observed.
- The state government had already purchased land for the construction of the new INA memorial hall and construction work had begun.
- Various performers presented cultural programmes such as Dhol-Dholok Cholom and Thang Ta during the observation.

ABOUT FLAG HOISTING DAY INA

- It was on 14 April 1944 that the flag of the Indian National Army (INA) was for the second time hoisted on the Indian Soil of Moirang, about 45 km away from Imphal, the capital of Manipur.
- Moirang, which is about 45 km from the state capital Imphal, was chosen as the headquarters of the INA led by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, after they liberated a part of Manipur from the British rule and established the provincial independent government.
- Subsequently, on April 14 1944, Colonel Shaukat Ali Malik hoisted the flag of the provincial government in Moirang.
- The INA flag comprises yellow, white and green. The image of a springing tiger was in the middle of the flag.
- INA Museum at Moirang

- The INA Museum at Moirang is a treasure of relics connected with Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's struggle against British imperialism to emancipate the Indian motherland.
- A museum dedicated to the soldiers was inaugurated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on September 23, 1969. The museum houses memorabilia and important documents related to the INA during World War II in the Burma theatre.

INDIA'S FIRST PORTABLE SOLAR ROOFTOP SYSTEM UNVEILED IN GANDHINAGAR

- The country's first portable solar rooftop system was inaugurated at Swaminarayan Akshardham temple complex in Gandhinagar
- The installation of 10 PV Port systems in the temple complex has been supported by the German development agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
- The systems have been installed under the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's initiative to develop renewable energy cities across India.
- The PV Port system is highly cost-effective, requires low maintenance, has a long shelf life of 25-30 years, can be easily installed by a single person and is ideal for the Indian climate. It is designed for 100 per cent self-consumption, and no power is fed into the grid.
- Unlike other conventional solar PV systems, the design of the PV Port system allows the space below the panels to be utilised. Each system leads to an average annual savings of Rs 24,000 on electricity bills.

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MUMBAI TO HOST INDIA'S FIRST INTERNATIONAL CRUISE CONFERENCE

Sarbananda Sonowal, Union Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, and AYUSH, said that the 1st Incredible India International Cruise Conference-2022 will be hosted in Mumbai.

KEY POINTS

- 1st Incredible India International Cruise Conference 2022 from 14th to 15th May 2022. Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India, the Mumbai Port Authority, and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) are organizing the two-day event at the Hotel Trident in Mumbai.
- Cruise tourism is recognized as the fastest-growing segment in the leisure industry. In addition, the government categorizes cruise tourism as a niche tourism product.
- The conference on international cruise tourism aims to showcase India as a desired destination for cruise passengers, highlight the regional connectivity, and disseminate information about India's preparedness for developing the cruise tourism sector.
- Sarbananda Sonowal also revealed the Conference's brochure, logo, and mascot, Captain Cruzo. During the press conference, he also launched the event website, www.iiicc2022.in. The focus of the conference will be on Developing India as a Cruise Hub.

WORLD'S LARGEST ELECTRIC 3-WHEELER MAKING PLANT WILL SET UP IN TELANGANA

California-based Biliti Electric Inc (Biliti) has announced that it would be establishing the world's largest electric three-wheeler factory, with a production capacity of 240,000 EVs per year, in Telangana. The new plant is estimated to bring an investment of US\$ 150 million and generate over 3,000 jobs while

aligning with the State's policy to become a global hub for EV and energy storage manufacturing.

The facilities will be built in two phases over an area of 200 acres. Phase I will be developed over 13.5 acres with the capability to produce 18,000 vehicles per year and is expected to be operational by early 2023. The larger facility spread across 200 acres will be operational in 2024 and have the capability to produce 240,000 vehicles per year.

MAHARASHTRA IS FIRST STATE IN INDIA TO LAUNCH A BUS SERVICE WITH A TOTALLY DIGITAL TICKETING SYSTEM

In a bid to make commuting easier across Mumbai, Maharashtra State Environment Minister Aditya Thackeray inaugurated the tap-in tap-out service on the Gateway of India to Churchgate route.

Brihanmumbai Electricity Supply and Transport (BEST) is India's 1st bus service to go completely digital.

It provides ease and convenience to the travellers as they can tap-in using their smart card or via the 'Chalo' app installed in their smartphones.

After completing the journey, the traveller gets a receipt on their mobile phone if they Tap-out using the app and can also collect their ticket if they used the smart card

VILLAGE PALLI: INDIA'S 1ST CARBON-NEUTRAL PANCHAYAT IN J&K

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated a 500 KV solar plant to the nation in the unassuming hamlet of Palli in Jammu and Kashmir's border region of Samba making it the country's first 'carbon neutral panchayat.'

In all 1,500 solar panels put up in a total area of 6,408 square metres will provide clean electricity to 340 houses in the model panchayat under the central government's 'Gram Urja Swaraj' programme.

WHAT IS CARBON NEUTRALITY?

Everything you do that produces carbon dioxide -- from driving to powering your home and more -- makes up your carbon footprint. Being "carbon neutral" means that you, or the operations of your business or your national economy, emit the same amount of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere that you offset by some other means. Adding solar panels to your home, or switching to an electric vehicle are examples of things you can do to reduce your carbon dioxide output.

INDIA MADE GUINNESS RECORD FOR SYNCHRONIC WAVING OF MORE THAN 78,000 NATIONAL FLAGS

- Fresherslive Current Affairs Guinness Record Made by India for Synchronic Waving of More Than 78,000 National Flags
- Guinness Record Made by India for Synchronic Waving of More Than 78,000 National Flags
- According to the Ministry of Culture, India entered the Guinness Book of World Records by simultaneously flying 78,220 flags at the Veer Kunwar Singh Vijayotsav.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- According to the Ministry of Culture, India entered the Guinness Book of World Records by simultaneously waving 78,220 flags at the 'Veer Kunwar Singh Vijayotsav' program in Bhojpur, Bihar.
- By simultaneously flying the maximum number of national flags, India created history and joined the Guinness Book of World Records. The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, was present at the historic event.
- "The most people waving flags was done by Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Culture, Government of India (India), to commemorate Azaadi ka Amrit Mahotsav' at Jagdishpur, Bhojpur, Bihar, India on April 23, 2022," according to the Guinness World Records certificate.

- Seventy-eight thousand two hundred twenty persons raised the national flag simultaneously at Dalaur ground in Bihar's Bhojpur district in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, setting a new record and making history.

UP'S AGRA BECOMES FIRST CITY TO HAVE VACUUM-BASED SEWER SYSTEMS

The city of Taj Mahal, Agra, has become the first city in the country to have vacuum-based sewers. These vacuums will be used in public places.

- the corporation has connected 240 such houses near the Taj Mahal with vacuum-based sewer where conventional sewer systems cannot be used.
- Being in a 'low-lying' area, these homes are connected to a vacuum-based sewer. About 112 chambers have been made in this area, in which the sensor is also installed. The system of the vacuum sewer will automatically issue an alert if there is a choke or any other problem.
- If the trial in Agra becomes successful, then the vacuum sewer will be used in Kochi Municipal Corporation as well.
- The work of sewer connection is estimated at Rs 100 crore.
- Sixty thousand houses have been connected with a 53 km long sewer line.

NITI AAYOG TO LAUNCH NATIONAL DATA AND ANALYTICS PLATFORM

The NITI Aayog is planning to launch a National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) in May to provide government data in a user-friendly format, to promote data-driven decision making and research.

ABOUT:

- Conceived in 2020, the platform aims to standardise data across government sources and provide flexible analytics that make it easy for users to analyse information using multiple datasets.

- The portal will help policymakers, academics and researchers to easily analyse data without having to process it. The portal will have 200 datasets from more than 46 ministries at the time of the launch.
- New datasets will be added up to the village level in the future.
- Presently, many government departments have public dashboards with options to download data, some are available as image files while others are in PDF format, making it difficult to compile information. Experts say this will be addressed in NDAP.

SVANIDHI SE SAMRIDDHI' PHASE II LAUNCHED TO SHIELD 28 LAKH STREET VENDORS

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has expanded the 'SVANidhi se Samriddhi' programme to 126 cities in 14 states and union territories. The program's implementing partner is the Quality Council of India (QCI).

ABOUT THE 'SVANIDHI SE SAMRIDDHI':

It is an additional program of

Launched under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Implementing Partner: Quality Council of India (QCI).

During Phase 1 of the program, it covered 125 cities, covering approximately 35 Lakh Street vendors and their families.

Aim: To provide social security benefits to street vendors for their holistic development and socio-economic upliftment.

Under the program, socio-economic profiling of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries and their families is conducted to assess their eligibility for Eight Government of India's welfare schemes and facilitate sanctions of eligible schemes.

THESE EIGHT SCHEMES INCLUDE:

1. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana.
2. PM Suraksha Bima Yojana.

3. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana.
4. Building and other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act (BOCW).
5. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana.
6. National Food Security Act (NFSA)-portability benefit – One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC).
7. Janani Suraksha Yojana
8. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana.

FEATURES OF PM SVANIDHI SCHEME

- To begin with, it is a Central Sector Scheme, meaning, they are funded directly by the central ministries.
- Any urban vendors as well as the ones working in the surrounding rural and semi-urban areas on or before March 24, 2020 will be eligible to apply for the loans.
- Initially a working capital of Rs. 10,000 will be provided.
- On timely or early repayment of which, the vendor shall be provided with an Interest Subsidy of 7%. Along with it, those vendors will also be granted higher loan amounts in the preceding transactions.
- To promote Make in India and Digital Transactions, the vendors shall be provided with monthly cash back incentives. These cashback ranges from Rs. 50 to Rs 100.
- The loans are completely collateral-free.

CIVIL AVIATION MINISTRY'S UDAN BAGS PRIME MINISTER'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN (UdeDeshkaAamNagrik), the flagship scheme of the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has been selected for Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration 2020 under the category "Innovation (General) – Central".

Government of India has initiated this award to acknowledge, recognize and reward extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts and Organizations of State/Government. This scheme emphasises on Good Governance, Qualitative achievements, and last mile connectivity rather than only on achievement of quantitative targets. The award consists of a trophy, scroll and an incentive of Rs 10 lakhs.

ABOUT UDAN

- Launched in 2016, UDAN scheme aims to fulfil the aspirations of the common man by following the vision of UdeDeshkaAamNagrik, with an enhanced aviation infrastructure and air connectivity in tier II and III cities.
- In a short span of 5 years, today 419 UDAN routes connect 67 underserved/unserved airports, including heliports and water aerodromes, and over 92 lakh people have benefited from it.
- More than 1 lakh 79 thousand flights have flown under this scheme. UDAN scheme has immensely benefitted several sectors pan-India including Hilly States, North-Eastern region, and Islands.
- The scheme also led to development of new Greenfield Airports such as Pakyong near Gangtok in Sikkim, Tezu in Arunachal Pradesh, and Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. The scheme also led to 5% incremental growth in domestic passenger share of non-metro airports.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation plans and commits to construct 100 new airports by 2024 in India with 1,000 new routes under UDAN RCS scheme by the year 2026.

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TAMIL NADU TO OBSERVE MINORITIES RIGHTS DAY ANNUALLY ON DECEMBER 18

The Tamil Nadu government will observe December 18, every year, as Minorities Rights Day at the state level.

The government, being the saviour of minorities, is striving tirelessly to promote the upliftment and economic advancement of the minorities through effective implementation of various development schemes and welfare measures. This day is being observed at the district level of Tamil Nadu under the concerned collectors concerned. Henceforth, it will also be observed at the state level.

OVERVIEW:

Education aid to minority girl students

The minority girl students in rural areas to pursue their studies would provide education aid of Rs 500 to the students of Classes 3 to 5 and Rs 1,000 to the wards of Class 6.

ESTABLISHMENT OF E-LIBRARIES

In the state, e-libraries will also be established in 275 department-run college hostels at a cost of Rs 2.20 crore. This will be benefiting a large number of students who resides in these hostels.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO HOSTELLERS

An amount of Rs 1000 towards medical assistance for the hostellers is being provided for three medical check-ups in a year and it will be increased to Rs 3,000.

SETTING-UP OF READY-MADE GARMENT UNITS

In an initiative that has been aimed to improve the economic conditions of the Most Backward Classes, Backward Classes, and Denotified Tribes, the government of the state will be forming 25 groups comprising 10 members

(women and men) each and they will be encouraged set up ready-made garment units. For this purpose, they will be provided with an assistance of Rs 75 lakh.

WORLD BANK REPORT STATES EXTREME POVERTY IN INDIA DECLINE BY 12.3%

- Extreme poverty in India declined by 12.3 percentage points between 2011 and 2019, with rural areas doing better than urban centres, according to a working paper of the World Bank.
- India has not released a new household consumption survey since the NSS from 2011. By extension, the country has not released any official estimates of poverty and inequality for over a decade now, added the paper co-authored by economists Sutirtha Sinha Roy and Roy van der Weide.
- Earlier, a working paper of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had said the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKAY), which provides free food grains to the poor, played a key role in keeping extreme poverty in India at the lowest level of 0.8 per cent during the pandemic-hit 2020.
- "We find that extreme poverty in India has declined by 12.3 percentage points between 2011 and 2019 but at a rate that is significantly lower than observed over the 2004-2011 period.
- "Poverty reduction rates in rural areas are higher than in urban areas.

CYRUS S. POONAWALLA TOPS HURUN GLOBAL HEALTHCARE RICH LIST 2022

Chairman and Managing Director of Serum Institute of India (SII), Dr Cyrus S. Poonawalla has topped the Hurun Global Healthcare Rich List 2022 and became the richest billionaire in the healthcare sector 2022. He has topped the list with a new value of USD 26 billion (up 41%). Cyrus Poonawalla is followed by Thomas Frist Jr & Family of HCA Healthcare, Li Xiting and Xu Hang of Mindray at the 2nd position with a net value of USD 19 billion. Dilip Shanghvi & Family, of the Sun Pharmaceuticals, is at the 5th position with a net worth of USD 18 billion.

NITI AAYOG AND UNICEF INDIA COLLABORATED TO DEVELOP INDIA'S FIRST REPORT ON STATE OF INDIA'S CHILDREN

The latest report on the State of India's Children: Status and Trends in Multidimensional Child Development will be jointly developed and launched by NITI Aayog and UNICEF India. This was determined, when the two organisations signed a Statement of Intent (SoI), reiterating their joint commitment to achieving children's rights in India.

KEY POINTS:

- The report will create frameworks for understanding health and nutrition, education, water and sanitation, household living standards, and a child-friendly environment across states.
- This endeavour will contribute to India's commitments to the 2030 Agenda by providing a set of policy suggestions for concerted action in terms of speeding progress toward the SDGs and ensuring holistic development for all children.
- One in every third person in India is a juvenile under the age of 18, while one in every fifth person is an adolescent between the ages of 10 and 19.
- The NITI Aayog and UNICEF India collaboration will develop the methods, technical analysis, reporting, and action planning for the first report on the 'State of India's Children,' focusing on multidimensional aspects of child development such as health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, protection, and other relevant issues.
- This project will take a whole-of-society approach, incorporating all stakeholders, including Union Ministries, State Governments, Academia, Civil Society Organisations, child rights and civil rights groups.

ONLY 40% INDIANS ARE EMPLOYED OR SEEKING WORK

Only 40% of Indians of legal working age were employed or were looking for jobs in 2021-22. In comparison, the labour force participation rate was above 46% in 2016-17, according to data from The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. In absolute terms, India's labour force has shrunk from about 445 million to 435 million in the six years. Currently, about 1,085 million Indians are aged 15 or above and can be legally employed.

Labour force participation among women, who were already a small part of the workforce, has declined further. In 2016-17, about 15% women were employed or looking for jobs. This metric dipped to 9.2% in 2021-22. Among men, the participation rate declined from more than 74% to 67%.

The reduction in the participation rate was higher in the urban areas than in the rural parts of the country. The rate slid from 44.7% to 37.5% in urban areas — a more than seven percentage point drop. Rural areas saw the figure dropped from 46.9% to 41.4%.

States-related analysis show that in 23 of the 24 States with data, the participation rate declined in March 2022 compared with March 2016. The rate dropped in all the States, except in Rajasthan. The drop was more pronounced among two southern States, which had a high participation rate, to start with.

Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, whose participation rates were 54% and 56% respectively in March 2016 — occupying the top two slots at the time — also witnessed the sharpest declines. Between 2016 and 2022, the participation rate fell by 20 percentage points and 17 percentage points for Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively — the sharpest declines among all States.

WHERE IS THE FALL?

- The decline in labour force participation is broad-based.
- In urban areas, it has declined to 37.5% in May-August 2021, compared to 40.8% in the same period in 2019.

- In rural areas as well, it declined to 41.6%, compared to 43.9% in the same duration.
- In case of men, the labour force participation rate declined to 67.1% between May-August 2021, from 71.3% between May-August 2019
- Female labour participation declined to 9.4% from 11% in the same duration

INDIA'S FIRST PURE GREEN HYDROGEN PLANT COMMISSIONED IN ASSAM

H2e Power Systems, a Pune-based fuel cell and electrolyser start-up, has commissioned the country's first commercial-grade green hydrogen production plant for Oil India at Jorhat, Assam.

The Adar Poonawalla-backed start-up will use renewable energy from the 500kWe solar plant at Oil India's pump station to produce hydrogen, which would be blended with natural gas to run hydrogen buses in Assam. This pilot project has a production capacity of 10kg per day which would increase to 30 kg per day.

MICROPLASTICS FOUND IN HUMAN BLOOD FOR FIRST TIME

- Tiny particles of plastic, called microplastic - a major source of pollution - have been detected in the human blood for the first time.
- It was detected in nearly 80 per cent of samples tested by a group of researchers from the Netherlands. The discovery is extremely significant as it shows that microplastic can travel around the body and may lodge in organs.
- Though the scientists are not yet aware of the long-term impact of these particles on health, but are concerned due to already rising pollution levels across the globe.
- Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic less than 0.2 of an inch (5mm) in diameter.

- Half of these samples had PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate), which is used to make drinks bottles. Polystyrene, widely used in food packaging, was found in 36 per cent and polyethylene, used in packaging films and bags, was found in 23 per cent of samples, according to the research.
- The levels are low - 1.6 micrograms (1.6 millionths of a gram) in every millilitre of blood - but are enough to raise an alarm.
- According to the researchers, plastic particles can enter human body from air as well as through food and drink.
- Good ventilation of the house is important because microplastic concentrations appear to be higher indoors than outdoors. I also cover my food and drinks to reduce the deposition of plastic particles.
- Plastic is one of the leading pollutants on the planet. Huge amounts of plastic waste are dumped from mountains to oceans. In January last year, microplastics were found in fish and other seafood samples from the Sal Estuary in Goa.

WHAT IS FORTIFIED RICE?

The Union Cabinet on Friday (April 8) approved a scheme to distribute fortified rice under government programmes. Food Corporation of India and state agencies have already procured 88.65 LMT (lakh tonnes) of fortified rice for supply and distribution.

In last year's Independence Day speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the fortification of rice distributed under various government schemes, including the public distribution system (PDS) and midday meals in schools, by 2024.

WHAT IS RICE FORTIFICATION?

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) defines fortification as “deliberately increasing the content of essential micronutrients in a food so as

to improve the nutritional quality of food and to provide public health benefit with minimal risk to health”

BUT WHY DOES RICE HAVE TO BE FORTIFIED IN THE FIRST PLACE?

India has very high levels of malnutrition among women and children. According to the Food Ministry, every second woman in the country is anaemic and every third child is stunted.

Fortification of food is considered to be one of the most suitable methods to combat malnutrition. Rice is one of India’s staple foods, consumed by about two-thirds of the population. Per capita rice consumption in India is 6.8 kg per month. Therefore, fortifying rice with micronutrients is an option to supplement the diet of the poor.

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS FOR FORTIFICATION?

Under the Ministry’s guidelines, 10 g of FRK must be blended with 1 kg of regular rice.

According to FSSAI norms, 1 kg of fortified rice will contain the following: iron (28 mg-42.5 mg), folic acid (75-125 microgram), and vitamin B-12 (0.75-1.25 microgram). Rice may also be fortified with zinc (10 mg-15 mg), vitamin A (500-750 microgram RE), vitamin B-1 (1 mg-1.5 mg), vitamin B-2 (1.25 mg-1.75 mg), vitamin B-3 (12.5 mg-20 mg) and vitamin B-6 (1.5 mg-2.5 mg) per kg.

HOW CAN A BENEFICIARY DISTINGUISH BETWEEN FORTIFIED RICE AND REGULAR RICE?

Fortified rice will be packed in jute bags with the logo (+F) and the line “Fortified with Iron, Folic Acid, and Vitamin B12”.

ISRAEL SUCCESSFULLY TESTS ‘IRON BEAM’ NEW LASER-BASED AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

Israel successfully tested a new laser missile-defence system ‘Iron Beam’ which can destroy any airborne object including drones. Iron Beam is the world’s first

energy-based weapons system that uses a laser beam to shoot down incoming UAVs, rockets, mortars, long-range missiles, anti-tank missiles etc. The Iron Beam which is developed by the Rafael Advanced Defense Systems is using a directed-energy weapon system and can go a long way in providing aerial defence.

IRON BEAM: HOW IT WORKS

Iron Beam works on a fibre laser system to destroy any airborne object.

Iron Dome Défense system has been a great success, with a 90% interception rate against incoming rocket fire.

SCORPENE-CLASS SUBMARINE 'VAGSHEER' INAUGURATED AT MAZAGON DOCK LIMITED

The Indian Navy launched The sixth Scorpene class submarine,INS Vagsheer under Project 75 from Yard 11880, , on April 20, 2022, at the Kanhoji Angre Wet Basin of Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL).

Named after sandfish, a deadly deep water sea predator of the Indian Ocean, the first submarine 'Vagsheer' was commissioned in December 1974. It was decommissioned in April 1997. The new submarine is the latest incarnation of its earlier version, as according to naval parlance a ship never ceases to exist.

LIST OF OTHER SUBMARINES UNDER SCORPENE-CLASS SUBMARINES:

First submarine: INS Kalvari- commissioned on 14 December 2017.

Second : INS Khanderi – September 2019

Third: INS Karanj – March 2021

Fourth: INS Vela – November 2021

Fifth: INS Vagir- launched in November 2020 and is undergoing sea trials.

ODISHA CM UNVEILS LOGO OF 2023 MEN'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has unveiled the logo of the 2023 FIH Men's Hockey World Cup at the Kalinga stadium in the capital Bhubaneswar. To be held in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, the prestigious quadrennial tournament is scheduled from January 13 to 29.

Hockey India and its official partner Odisha will host the marquee event for the second consecutive time in the country after 2018. The 15th edition of the showpiece will be staged in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, where the country's largest hockey stadium is being constructed.

WEST INDIES ALL-ROUNDER KIERON POLLARD ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

West Indies all-rounder Kieron Pollard has announced his retirement from international cricket. Pollard, who was the captain of West Indies limited-overs teams, played a total of 123 ODIs and 101 T20Is. He has been an integral part of the Mumbai Indians team in the Indian Premier League for several years now and was retained by the franchise ahead of the mega auction in February this year. He was part of the West Indies team that won the 2012 ICC WT20 and missed out on his second T20 World Cup title in 2016 as he missed the tournament due to injury.

THE AKHIL BHARTIYA MARATHI SAHITYA SAMMELAN

- The 95th Marathi literary meet will be held at Udgir in Latur district of Maharashtra from April 22 to 24.
- The Akhil Bhartiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan will be inaugurated by NCP chief Sharad Pawar.
- It is unique in many ways as it is held at Udgir which is located on the borders of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana states. People from

the border districts will attend this literary meet. A special children's sammelan will also be held.

- The venue of the literary meet will be named after the late Lata Mangeshkar and a procession of books will be taken out from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj chowk to the venue of the literary meet.
- President: - Bharat Sasane

VIDROHI MARATHI LITERARY MEET ON APRIL 23, 24 IN LATUR

- The 16th Vidrohi Marathi literary meet will be held on April 23 and 24 here with the aim of creating awareness about democracy, equality and fraternity, and to oppose the increasing "cultural terror" in the society.
- The meet will be held at the Zilla Parishad Ground here, named Vidrohi Mahatma Basawanna Vachan Sahitya Nagari for the event
- President: - Dr Anjum Quadri
- During the meet, various cultural programmes like ghazal recitation, street plays, sculpture, elocution and essay writing competitions will be held.

LT GEN MANOJ PANDE NAMED AS INDIA'S NEXT CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF

Lieutenant General Manoj Pande has been appointed as the next Chief of Army Staff. Lt Gen Pande is the incumbent Vice-Chief of the Army. He will take over from General MM Naravane, who is set to retire on April 30, 2022. Lt Gen Manoj Pande is the first-ever officer from the Corps of Engineers to be appointed as Army Chief.

He has served as chief engineer in the UN mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea. He was the Commander-in-Chief Andaman and Nicobar Command (CINCAN) from June 2020 to May 2021. Outgoing army chief Gen MM Naravane is seen as the frontrunner for the Chief of Defence Staff's (CDS) post, that has been vacant

since the death of India's first CDS Gen Bipin Rawat in an air crash last December.

SHANTI SETHI APPOINTED AS KAMALA HARRIS'S DEFENCE ADVISOR

Indian-American Navyveteran Shanti Sethi has been appointed as USA Vice President Kamala Harris's Defence Adviser. Shanti Sethi is the first Indian-American commander of a major US Navy combat ship. Shanti Sethi commanded the guided-missile destroyer, USS Decatur, from December 2010 to May 2012. She joined the Navy in 1993. When she joined the Navy in 1993, the combat exclusion law was still in effect so she was limited in what she could do. However, when she was an officer, the Exclusion Act was lifted. Recently, US Senate has confirmed the appointment of Ketanji Brown Jackson (the first Black woman) to Supreme Court Judge.

EMMANUEL MACRON IS ELECTED AS FRENCH PRESIDENT FOR ANOTHER TERM

Emmanuel Macron hopes to go right back to work on domestic and foreign policy after gaining another five years in the French presidential palace — but he will soon face vital parliamentary elections in which he may struggle to maintain his majority. The official results of the presidential election will be released by the Constitutional Council, and Macron will hold a Cabinet meeting.

KEY POINTS:

- Macron must then choose a date for his inauguration event at the Elysee Palace, which must take place by May 13. He will be honoured by the National Guard and give a speech.
- Presidents Francois Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac both eschewed the practise of firing 21 cannon shots to mark their reelections in 1988 and 2002, respectively.

- Macron is the only other modern French president to gain re-election to a second term.
- Macron announced his plans to travel to Berlin five years ago, following the custom of newly elected French presidents making their first trip abroad to neighbouring Germany to mark the countries' alliance following many wars.
- He'll meet with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, with the goal of ending the conflict in Ukraine at the top of the agenda.

LATA DEENANATH MANGESHKAR AWARD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the first Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award. He got the award for his selfless service to the country and society at the 80th annual Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Awards ceremony held in Mumbai. The Lata Deenanath Mangeshkar Award was instituted in the memory and honour of legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who had passed away at the age of 92 in February 2022.

The award will be given every year to only one individual who has made path-breaking, spectacular and exemplary contributions to the nation, its people, and the society, as per the statement by the Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Smruti Pratishthan Charitable Trust.

Among the other awardees will be singer Rahul Despande, who will receive the Master Deenanath Award besides three other special awardees including veteran actress Asha Parekh, actor Jackie Shroff and the Mumbai Dabbawalas, represented by Nutan Tiffin Suppliers.

MAHA AVAS ABHIYAN-21 'STATE RESULTS 2020

Under Maha Awas Abhiyan 2020-21, Gondia district has been ranked first in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen, Dhule district has been ranked second and Thane district has been ranked third. In the state sponsored housing scheme, Ahmednagar district is ranked first, Ratnagiri district is ranked second and

Wardha district is ranked third. Gondia district has the honour of winning the award in the highest number of initiatives. The names of the state level award winners of Maha Awas Abhiyan 2020-21 have been announced by Rural Development Minister Hasan Mushrif.

Best Department: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Rural: - Konkan - First, Nagpur - Second, Nashik - Third. State Sponsored Housing Scheme: - Konkan - First, Nashik - Second, Pune - Third.

Best District: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Rural: - Gondia - First, Dhule - Second, Thane - Third. State sponsored housing scheme: - Ahmednagar - 1st, Ratnagiri - 2nd, Wardha - 3rd.

Best Talukas: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Rural: - Goregaon (Dist. Gondia) - First, Gaganbawda (Dist. Kolhapur) - Second, Akole (Dist. Ahmednagar) - Third. State Sponsored Housing Scheme: - Road Arjuni (Dist. Gondia) - First, Muktainagar (Dist. Jalgaon) - Second, Kagal (Dist. Kolhapur) – Third.

Best Gram Panchayat: Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Rural: - Name (Dist. Satara) - First, Vados (Dist. Sindhudurg) - Second, Tadegaon (Dist. Gondia) - Third. State Sponsored Housing Scheme: - Ambawade (Dist. Pune) - First, Anav (Dist. Sindhudurg) - Second, Borgaon (Dist. Chandrapur) - Third.

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