

CURRENT AFFAIRS SNIPPETS : JULY 2017**NATIONAL****Sagar Vani: An Integrated Information Dissemination System launched**

The Union Ministry of Earth Science has launched Sagar Vani, an integrated information dissemination system on the occasion of its foundation Day.

Sagar Vani is an integrated information dissemination system that will serve the coastal community, especially the fishermen community with the advisories and alerts towards their livelihood as well as their safety at Sea.

It has been developed by ESSO-Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) through the Industry M/s. Gaian Solutions Pvt. Ltd. It is a software platform where various dissemination modes will be integrated on a single central server.

Former Minister Ashwani Kumar named for Japanese honour

Former Union minister Ashwani Kumar has been selected by Japan for this year's Spring Imperial Decorations, for his contribution to strengthening of bilateral ties and promotion of friendship between the two countries.

The Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, the highest category of decorations among the Orders of the Rising Sun, is conferred in recognition of distinguished accomplishments of individuals.

NITI Aayog clears six proposals for high-tech public transport

The NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog has approved 6 transport proposals of the transport ministry exploring options to improve public transport. It includes high-tech mass rapid transportation technologies such as metrino, hyperloop, pod taxis, stadler buses, hybrid buses and freight rail road.

The proposals of the transport ministry were approved with a condition that the transport ministry conducts trial run of all these technologies and puts in place safety measures before starting operations commercially.

Following the go-ahead from NITI Aayog, the transport ministry has formed a six member committee,

headed by former top official of Railways, to study safety parameters associated with these technologies and their best global practices.

Ram Nath Kovind sworn in as 14th President of India

Ram Nath Kovind (71) sworn in as the 14th President of India. He was administered oath to the office by Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar in Parliament's Central Hall.

With this, he became the second Dalit President of India after late President K.R. Narayanan. He is also the first person from Uttar Pradesh to hold the office of President since Independence.

He was President of the BJP Dalit Morcha between 1998 and 2002. He also served as Member of Rajya Sabha from 1994 to 2006. Prior to getting elected as President, Mr. Kovind had served as the 35th Governor of Bihar.

FSSAI bans stapler pins in tea bags from January 2018

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has banned the use of stapler pins in tea bags from January 2018. FSSAI ban order issued under Section (15) FSS Act, 2006 has deemed that any loose staple pin consumed inadvertently with tea may cause a serious health hazard.

The FSSAI order directs the concerned food business operators to discontinue the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import of stapled tea bags by 1 January 2018. It also directs all food safety commissioners to take action to prevent the use of unsafe packaging materials by companies and take up measures for enforcement of its order.

Government to launch Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana

The Union Ministry of Rural Development will launch Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY), a sub-scheme under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).

AGEY aims to provide an alternative source of livelihood to members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) by facilitating them to operate public transport services in backward rural areas.

Government launches Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana for senior citizens

The Union Finance Ministry has launched Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY), a pension scheme exclusively for senior citizens aged 60 years and above.

Under this scheme, senior citizens will get a guaranteed interest of 8% for 10 years depending upon the investment made by them.

This scheme provides an assured return of 8% per annum payable monthly for 10 years on single lumpsum premium ranging from Rs. 150000 (minimum) to Rs.750000 (maximum). Pension (minimum: Rs.1000/month; maximum: Rs.5000) will be payable at the end of each period, during the policy term of 10 years

Union Government clears three export infrastructure plans under TIES

The Union Government for the first time has approved three infrastructure proposals to address the infrastructure problem under the Trade Infrastructure for Export Scheme (TIES).

Decision in this regard was taken at the Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee (EC) meeting on TIES, chaired by Commerce Secretary. These three proposals include Integrated Cargo Terminal (ICT) at the Imphal International Airport, Modernisation of infrastructure facility for marine exports in Karnataka and construction of a new 'Standard Design Factory' building at Cochin Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

UIDAI launches mAadhaar app for Aadhaar data on phone

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched 'mAadhaar', a new mobile application for syncing Aadhaar data on mobile phones.

The app allows users to carry their unique Aadhaar information including name, date of birth, gender, address, and the linked photograph, on their smartphones. The app also allows users to lock or unlock biometrics data.

The application allows users to have their Aadhaar profile on their mobile as a quick and convenient identification proof. It also lets users lock/unlock their biometric data that's linked to Aadhaar via the app to secure their personal data. It also allows viewing

and sharing updated Aadhaar profile via QR (Quick Response) code and sharing eKYC (electronic Know Your Customer) details with service providers such as telecommunications companies. It also has a "Time-based One-Time Password (TOTP)" feature that can be used instead of SMS (short messaging service)-based OTP (one-time password).

TR Zeliang sworn in as 19th Chief Minister of Nagaland

Senior Naga People's Front (NPF) legislator TR Zeliang (65) was sworn in as the 19th chief minister of Nagaland. He was administered oath to office and secrecy by Governor P.B. Acharya.

Earlier Governor had dismissed the Shurhozelie Liezietsu government under Clause (I) of Article 164 of the Constitution after he failed to prove majority on the floor of the Assembly. Prior to it, Zeliang had staked claim to form government in Nagaland with a majority support of 47 members in the 60 member Legislative Assembly. TR Zeliang will now have to prove his majority on the floor of the House. This is his second stint as chief minister in a little more than three years.

Raipur Airport ranked first in Customer Satisfaction Index Survey

Raipur's Swami Vivekananda Airport was ranked first in Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) Survey among 49 airports in the country. It has achieved 4.84 score on a five point scale index.

It was followed by Udaipur (2nd), Amritsar (3rd) and Dehradun (4th) airports which have scored 4.75, 4.74 and 4.73 respectively. This is third consecutive time in the past two years, Raipur airport has received this recognition.

India's first solar powered DEMU train launched

Indian Railways has launched India's first solar powered diesel multiple unit (DEMU) broad gauge train. It is 1600 Horse Power (HP) train with all solar powered coaches.

The train will run from Sarai Rohilla in Delhi to Farukh Nagar in Haryana. It will replace an existing non-solar powered rake on the same route.

The solar powered DEMU train has six trailer coaches, with 16 solar panels of 300 watts fitted in each of them. These solar panels have been manufactured

under 'Make in India' initiative. The energy generated by these solar panels will be stored in batteries and will be used during the night.

Indian Railways launches RailCloud to optimise server management, resources

The Indian Railways has launched RailCloud, a virtual server with an inbuilt security system that will enable faster connectivity at a reduced cost. Rail Cloud works on popular Cloud Computing system. Cloud computing is an emerging technology for faster and on demand commensurate deployment of server resources which results in reduced cost.

RailCloud has been developed by rail PSU RailTel as part of Railways strategic IT initiative, IR-OneICT. It is aimed at optimising server the resources and its management. Its technology enables maximising the usage of available server and storage. It can accommodate bigger data and more applications within same server space.

INTERNATIONAL

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif resigns

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has resigned from his post after the Supreme Court disqualified him in the Panama Papers case. This is the third time Nawaz Sharif has been unable to complete his term in the chief executive's office.

In a landmark judgment, a five Judge bench of Pakistan Supreme Court unanimously ruled to register a case against Nawaz Sharif and his family guilty of money laundering.

IMF retains India 2017 GDP growth forecast at 7.2%

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its July World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update has retained India's projected GDP growth rate at 7.2% for 2017-18, slightly up from 7.1% in the previous year.

However, update projects that India's growth would accelerate to 7.7% in 2018-19. India's economic growth slowed down to 7.1% in 2016-17, sharply lower than 8% in 2015-16 due to the effect of demonetisation.

Scientists edit genes of human embryos for the first time

Scientists from Oregon Health and Science Univer-

sity, US for first time have successfully edited genes of human embryos to correct defective DNA that cause inherited diseases.

They had used the CRISPR-Cas9 genome editing technology to alter human DNA in single-cell embryos, which allows specific sections of DNA to be altered or replaced.

BRICS nations sign Taxation Cooperation Memorandum

Tax authorities of the BRICS- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have signed BRICS Taxation Cooperation Memorandum to establish a mechanism for taxation cooperation.

The landmark document is the bloc's first document that elevates taxation cooperation to the institutional level. It was signed at the fifth meeting of BRICS Heads of Tax Authorities.

Scientists develop new software that can create 3D models from 2D photographs

Scientists including one of Indian origin have developed new artificial intelligence (AI) software called SurfNet that can create three dimensional (3D) models from 2D photographs.

When fully developed SurfNet could have significant applications in the fields of 3D searches on the internet researchers. In an advance version it can allow future robots to navigate in the real world.

NASA jets for first time will chase solar eclipse

Scientists from NASA for first time are planning to chase the shadow of the moon using two of NASA's WB-57F research jets during the upcoming total solar eclipse in US. The purpose of the chase is to capture the clearest ever images of the Sun's outer atmosphere.

The research jets (planes) will have twin telescopes mounted on the noses of the planes to capture clearest images of Sun's corona to date. They will also undertake first-ever thermal images of Mercury to reveal how temperature varies across the planet's surface.

World's first floating wind farm being built off Scotland coast

The world's first full-scale floating wind farm is being built off the coast of Scotland in the North Sea. The wind farm, known as Hywind is a trial project which aims to bring power to 20,000 homes

The floating wind farm technology will allow wind power to be harvested in waters that are too deep for the existing bottom-standing turbines particularly installed in shallow waters. The park will be around four square kilometers in size in deep sea. Each turbine in the park will be floating at a depth of between 95 and 120 metres. Each turbine tower, including the blades in the floating wind park is 175m high and weighs 11,500 tonnes.

USS Gerald R Ford: World's largest aircraft carrier inducted by US

The US Navy officially inducted USS Gerald R Ford (CVN 78), the world's largest nuclear-powered aircraft carrier at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. It is the most advanced aircraft carrier in the world.

USS Gerald Ford is first in the series of three of the futuristic ships of the Ford-class carriers ordered by US Navy. Its operational deployment will be in 2021 after undergoing final outfitting and testing.

The ship is named after the 38th President of the US Gerald Ford to pay tribute to his lifetime of service to the nation in the US Navy and the US government

India to host 2017 Global Conference on Cyber Space

India will host Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS) 2017, the world's largest conference on cyber space and related issues in New Delhi in November 2017.

This is for the first time GCCS is taking place outside Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations. It will be the fifth edition of the conference. The theme for the GCCS 2017 is 'Cyber4All: An Inclusive, Sustainable, Developmental, Safe and Secure Cyberspace'. The cyber security will be one of the major focus areas in GCCS 2017.

India ranks third in global index of countries with most confidence in their government: OCED Report

India ranked third in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Government at a Glance 2017 report. It states that Narendra Modi led NDA coalition has secured 73% trust of people, third highest in the world after Indonesia and Switzerland.

OECD's Government at a Glance report presents an index of countries that trust their governments the most. It determines government's trust levels by

whether or not people consider their government stable and reliable, if it's able to protect its citizens from risk and whether it can effectively deliver public services. The report cites data collected by Gallup World Poll (GWP), which collects evidence from perception surveys to measure the level of trust on an annual basis for OECD countries

US Navy tests world's first Laser Weapons System

United States Navy successfully tested the world's first-ever active Laser Weapons System (LaWS). In the test, the LaWS deployed aboard the USS Ponce amphibious transport ship was able to destroy a drone in flight and moving targets on the Persian Gulf. USS Ponce is first ship in the world to be deployed with such advanced weapons system.

LaWS operates within an invisible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is absolutely silent and incredibly effective. It strikes are extremely accurate, silent and invisible. It is primarily intended to take on drones, aircraft, and small vessels that could be used in an attack.

Walled City of Ahmedabad designated as India's first World Heritage City

The 600-year-old Walled City of Ahmedabad was declared World Heritage City by the World Heritage Committee (WHC) of UNESCO after it met in Karlow, Poland. It is first Indian city get the honour.

The Walled City of Ahmedabad is located on the eastern banks of Sabarmati river. It presents a rich architectural heritage from the sultanate period, notably the Bhadra citadel, walls and gates of the Fort city and numerous mosques and tombs, as well as important Hindu and Jain temples of later periods. It will be third city from the Indian subcontinent to enjoy this status along with Bhaktapur in Nepal and Galle in Sri Lanka.

BUSINESS

Reliance Jio launches world's longest 100Gbps submarine cable system

Reliance Jio Infocomm has launched the Asia-Africa-Europe (AAE-1) submarine cable system. It is claimed to be world's longest 100Gbps technology-based submarine system. It stretches for over 25,000km from Marseille, France to Hong Kong. It will have 21 cable

landings across Asia and Europe. Using it, Jio will continue to offer its customers the most exceptional high speed internet and digital service experience.

The AAE-1 project is a combination of leading telecom service providers from Europe, the Middle East and Asia. It will seamlessly link with other cable systems and fibre networks to deliver direct access to all global markets. It will feature diversified Points of Presence (PoP) in Asia (Hong Kong and Singapore), with three onward connectivity options in Europe (France, Italy and Greece). The cable system will pass through critical hubs, serving the demand for video centric data bandwidth that supports all types of communications, applications and content within India and beyond.

CCEA approves selling 51% stake in HPCL to ONGC

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved sale of government's 51.11% stake along with management control in HPCL (Hindustan Petroleum) to ONGC. HPCL will continue as PSU after the acquisition.

HPCL will add 23.8 million tonnes of annual oil refining capacity to ONGC's portfolio, making it the third-largest refiner in the country after Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Reliance Industries.

Prior to the merger, HPCL will take over Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) to bring all the refining assets of ONGC under one unit. ONGC currently owns 71.63% of MRPL while HPCL has 16.96% stake in it. MRPL will be the third refinery of HPCL, which already has units at Mumbai and Visakhapatnam

SBI launches 'SBI Realty' portal for home buyers

India's largest commercial bank State Bank of India (SBI) launched SBI Realty, a dedicated portal that will help home buyers to choose flats from its 3,000 approved projects across the country.

SBI Realty will be a one stop integrated website for home buyers. It will help customers to choose their dream home from 3,000 SBI approved projects, which are spread across 13 states/UTs covering 30 cities.

Tata Motors unveils India's first Bio-CNG bus

India's largest Commercial Vehicles manufacturer Tata Motors has unveiled country's first Bio-CNG (bio-methane) bus.

The bus was rolled out at the Urja Utsav, bio-energy programme, organised by the Union Ministry of

Petroleum and Natural Gas. The first of its kind bio-methane bus will provide an alternate fuel technology to cater the need for a greener country. Its use will also contribute in a positive manner to the Smart Cities Mission. It will also serve as a good option for wet garbage management.

Reliance Industries market capitalisation hits Rs 5 lakh crore mark

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) for the first time in its trading history has crossed Rs 5 lakh crore in market capitalisation. The market cap of RIL stood at Rs 5,04,458.09 on BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange).

RIL is second firm to cross Rs 5 lakh crore in market capitalisation. It is also RIL's highest market cap in its lifetime and also currently it is the most valued company on the bourses. Tata Consultancy Service (TCS) was first company to hit Rs 5 lakh crore in market capitalisation milestone in July 2014.

NMCE, ICEX to merge to create India's third biggest commodity exchange

National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE), India's first demutualised online national multi-commodities exchange will merge with Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX).

The merged entity will create India's third biggest commodity exchange. The largest commodity exchange by volume is the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) followed by National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX).

This is the first merger deal in the commodity exchange space in India. It has been approved by the boards of both exchanges and is expected to be completed by December 2017, subject to regulatory approvals. In the merged entity, the ICEX will hold a 62.8% stake, while NMCE shareholders will own the rest. The new exchange will offer a wide range of contracts, including bullion, oil, rubber, and other agri-commodities. It will also offer the world's first diamond futures contract, which has already received in-principle approval from the market regulator SEBI.

NPCI gets RBI nod to operate Bharat Bill Payment System

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has received final nod from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to function as the Bharat Bill Payment Central

Unit (BBPCU) and operate the Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS).

The final clearance from RBI comes almost a year after NPCI launched the BBPS pilot project to make payment of utility bills easier. The pilot started in August 2016 with eight BBPS operating units that had received in-principle approval from RBI.

SPORTS

H S Prannoy wins US Open Grand Prix Gold badminton title

Ace Indian Shuttler H S Prannoy won the 2017 Yonex US Open Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament title. It was his third grand prix gold title of badminton.

In the final match held at Anaheim, California, Prannoy defeated his compatriot Parupalli Kashyap by 21-15, 20-22, 21-12. In the women's singles category of the tournament, Aya Ohori of Japan won the final by defeating Michelle Li of Canada.

India's Harinder Pal Sandhu wins Victorian Open squash tournament

India's Harinder Pal Sandhu (28) won the Victorian Open squash tournament held in Melbourne, Australia. In the final he defeated Rex Hedrick of Australia by 12-14, 11-3, 11-4 score. It was Sandhu's ninth title at the PSA level and the fourth of this season after winning two in Malaysia. It was his second title in two weeks after he had won South Australian Open by defeating Rhys Dowling of Australia by 11-8 12-10 11-4 score.

Roger Federer wins record 8th Wimbledon title

Switzerland's Roger Federer won 2017 Wimbledon title in the men's single category. In the final match he defeated Marin Cilic of Croatia by 6-3, 6-1, 6-4 score.

It was Federer's record eighth Wimbledon title and overall 19th Grand Slam. With this victory, 36-year old Federer also became Wimbledon's oldest champion, succeeding Arthur Ashe, who was 32 when he won in 1976.

Federer claimed his 19th Grand Slam title beating Cilic 6-3, 6-1, 6-4. The 36-year old Federer is also Wimbledon's oldest men's winner of the modern era, succeeding Arthur Ashe, who was almost 32 when he won in 1976. He also became the first player since

Bjorn Borg in 1976 to win Wimbledon without dropping a set in the entire tournament.

India's Sundar Singh Gurjar wins gold medal at World Para Athletics

India's Sundar Singh Gurjar (21) won gold medal in the men's javelin throw event at World Para Athletics Championships held in London, United Kingdom. In the F46 category, Sundar recorded his personal best effort of 60.36m ahead of Dinesh Priyantha Herath (Sri Lanka) who emerged second with 57.93m, followed by defending champion Guo Chunliang (China) with 56.14m.

England wins 2017 ICC Women's World Cup

England's women's cricket team won 2017 ICC World Cup title by defeating India by 9 runs at Lord's Cricket Ground in London. It was England's fourth Women's World Cup title. Besides the inaugural edition in 1973, England had won the World Cup in 1993 and 2009 as well

In this edition of World Cup, Tammy Beaumont of England was awarded Player of the Series title. She had made most runs (410) in the tournament. Dane van Niekerk of South Africa took most wickets (15) in the tournament.

India's Mithali Raj becomes first to score 6000 runs in women's ODI cricket

Indian captain Mithali Raj (34) scripted history by becoming first player in the history of women's ODI cricket to score more than 6000 career runs. She also became all-time leading run-getter in women's ODI. She achieved the record feat against Australia in the ICC Women's World Cup 2017 match at Bristol. She broke previous record of Charlotte Edwards (5992) in 164 innings - 16 less than Charlotte

BCCI appoints Ravi Shastri as new head coach of Indian cricket team

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has named former Indian all-rounder and captain Ravi Shastri as the new chief coach of the Indian cricket team till ICC World Cup 2019. He will succeed Anil Kumble who had resigned from the post after the ICC Champions Trophy 2017.

The decision was announced after the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) zeroed in on his name ahead

of other strong contenders, including Virender Sehwal and Tom Moody

PERSON-IN-NEWS

UK's first woman Sikh MP Preet Kaur Gill elected to Home Affairs Select Committee

Britain's first woman Sikh MP Preet Kaur Gill was elected to Home Affairs Select Committee in the UK Parliament. She will be one of 11 MPs on the cross-party home affairs committee.

The Home Affairs Select Committee is an influential cross-party panel in the UK Parliament that examines the workings of the Home Office. It investigates the spending, policy and administration of the ministerial department. The committee chooses its own subjects of inquiry within the remit of the home office. Previous inquiries have looked at extremism, immigration, hate crime, asylum, drugs, human trafficking, prostitution, extradition, counter-terrorism and the police. It publishes reports and the Government must respond to its recommendations.

AEROSPACE, DEFENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India, US and Japan navies kick off 2017 Malabar Exercise

India, Japan and United States (US) navies have kicked off 2017 MALABAR trilateral naval Exercise near Chennai in Bay of Bengal. This year it is the 21st edition of the naval exercise. In this edition of the exercise, total of around 15 warships, two submarines and scores of fighter jets, surveillance aircraft and helicopters from three navies will take part.

The 8 day long Malabar 2017 exercise consists of both ashore and at-sea activities. This year operations of the exercise include anti-submarine warfare, familiarization with inter-operability between maritime forces, search and rescue and seizure missions and many other drills.

Indian Navy's second LCU Mark IV L52 ship launched by GRSE

Indian Navy's second LCU (landing craft utility) Mark IV L52 ship built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata, was formally launched in Kolkata, West Bengal.

The LCU Mark-IV vessels are designed for multipur-

pose amphibious operations jointly carried out Indian Navy and Indian Army to ensure maritime security of Andamans and Lakshadweep islands. LCU L52 ship is the second in series of the eight Mark IV LCU vessels built by GRSE for Navy. The first ship of the series was commissioned in 2016.

Reliance Defence launches first two Navy ships Shachi and Shruti

Reliance Defence and Engineering Limited (RDEL) launched the first two Naval Offshore Patrol Vessels (NOPVs) - Shachi and Shruti at their shipyard in Pipavav, Gujarat.

These two NOPVs are the first warships to be launched by a private sector shipyard in India. These ships are part of a five-ships being constructed for the Indian Navy under the P-21 project.

DEATHS

Renowned academic Professor Yash Pal passes away

Globally renowned physicist, academic and higher education reformer Professor Yash Pal passed away in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. He was 90.

He was known for his contributions to the study of cosmic rays, as well as for being an institution-builder. He was also one of the leading science communicators in India.

He had graduated with a master's degree in physics from Panjab University in 1949 and earned PhD degree in Physics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1958.

Former ISRO Chairman U R Rao passes away

Internationally-renowned space scientist and former chairman of ISRO (Indian Space Research Organization), Udipi Ramachandra Rao passed away in Bengaluru. He was 85.

Prof Rao is credited with having played an instrumental role in building up Indian satellite programmes right from nation's first satellite Aryabhata. He had served as Chairman of ISRO from 1984 to 1994.

He was also responsible for successful launch of INSAT satellites during his stint at ISRO. He had played pivotal role in promoting the use of space technology for broadcasting, education, meteorology, disaster warning and remote sensing. He also had

served as the first Chairman of Antrix Corporation, the commercial arm of the ISRO

China's Nobel laureate Liu Xiaobo passes away

China's most famous political prisoner, the Nobel laureate and democracy icon Liu Xiaobo passed away in custody following a battle with cancer. He was 61.

Liu was awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China.

Liu was a Chinese literary critic, writer, human rights activist who called for political reforms and end of communist single-party rule. He is also known for his role in 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing

