

US President elect Joe Biden to be sworn as 46th President under thick security cover



US President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris will be sworn in as the 46th President and 49th Vice-President of the United States. Ms Harris will make history as America's first woman, first Black and first person with south Asian roots to take the office of the Vice President. Meanwhile, the security has been beefed up at the US Capitol building in view of recent clashes between Trump supporters and Police.

India begins massive push for neighbourhood vaccine, lakhs to be shipped out on Wednesday



India will begin to ship out lakhs of doses of the novel coronavirus vaccine to neighbouring countries beginning Wednesday, with the first batches expected to reach Bhutan and the Maldives among several countries by special planes as a grant or gift. The MEA said shipments to Bhutan, the Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles would commence this week, while those to Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Mauritius are awaiting “necessary regulatory clearances”.

Military specialists to get S-400 training in Moscow



As India prepares to receive the first batch of S-400 long-range air defence system by year-end, the first group of Indian military specialists are scheduled to depart for Moscow soon to undergo training courses on the S-400. In October 2018, India signed a \$5.43 bn deal with Russia for five S-400 Triumph regiments despite objections from the U.S. and the threat of sanctions under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

Bangladesh urges Myanmar to expedite verification process for Rohingya repatriation



Bangladesh has urged Myanmar to expedite the verification of Rohingyas to facilitate their repatriation to the Rakhine province. Bangladesh has handed over a list of 8 lakh 40 thousand Rohingya refugees to Myanmar but it has verified only about 42,000 biometric data of the Rohingyas.

Indian Air Force, French Air and Space Force to conduct bilateral air exercise at Jodhpur



Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force will conduct a bilateral Air exercise, Ex Desert Knight-21 at Air Force Station Jodhpur. French side will participate with Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT), A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and approximately 175 personnel. The Indian Air Force aircraft participating in the exercise will include Mirage 2000, Su-30 MKI, Rafale, IL-78 Flight Refuelling Aircraft, AWACS and AEW&C aircraft. The four-day exercise marks an important milestone in the series of engagements between the two Air forces.

As part of Indo-French defence cooperation, Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force have held six editions of Air Exercises.

World renowned oncologist Dr V Shanta passes away



Dr. V. Shanta, the world renowned oncologist passed away due to brief illness in Chennai. She was 94. Dr. Shanta is the Chairperson of Adyar Cancer Centre. She joined the hospital in 1955 as a trainee and went on to become the Head of the Institution which expanded far and wide to deal with the deadly disease in a more precise manner. Heading the institute, she was also instrumental in opting for international joint ventures to improve the quality of affordable treatment for patients.

Dr. Shanta's contribution to the field of oncology, had earned her the Magsaysay, Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan awards.

NITI Aayog to launch second edition of India Innovation Index 2020



NITI Aayog will release the second edition of the India Innovation Index 2020 on 20 January in a virtual event. The index will be released by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Dr Rajiv Kumar in the presence of NITI Aayog Member Dr VK Saraswat and CEO Amitabh Kant. The India Innovation Index 2020 seeks to rank the states and union territories based on their relative performance of supporting innovation, and to empower them to improve their innovation policies by highlighting their strengths and weaknesses.

The states and union territories have been divided into 17 'Major States', 10 'North-East and Hill States', and 9 'City States and Union Territories', for effectively comparing their performance.

Govt asks Whatsapp to withdraw recent changes in privacy policy, saying unilateral changes are unfair and unacceptable



The Union government has asked WhatsApp to withdraw the recent changes in its privacy policy saying the unilateral changes are unfair and unacceptable. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has written a strongly worded letter to WhatsApp CEO Will Cathcart saying the proposed changes to the WhatsApp Terms of Service and Privacy Policy without giving users an option to opt-out, raise grave concerns regarding the implications for the choice and autonomy of Indian citizens.

MoRTH notifies Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules 2021



Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021 which would facilitate and regulate the movement of passenger and goods vehicles between India and neighbouring countries. As per the rules, the State Transport Authority has been given the power to grant the Inter Country Transport Permit after thoroughly examining the application. The permit will remain valid for a period of one year from the date of its issue and it will be renewable for a period of five years on yearly basis.

The State Transport Department will take care of formalities like provisioning of tickets, debugging of bus, frisking or checking of passengers, handling of luggage before departure from the designated place.

Govt. decides to celebrate birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as 'Parakram Diwas' on 23rd of January every year



The Union Government has decided to celebrate the birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as 'Parakram Diwas' on 23rd of January every year. A High Level Committee, headed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been constituted to commemorate the birth anniversary of Netaji. The Committee will decide on the activities for a one year long commemoration starting from 23rd January.

KVIC and Ministry of Tribal Affairs sign 2 MoUs



The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed two Memorandum of Understanding- MoUs for purchase of Khadi fabric for tribal students, and on partnering as an implementing agency for Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMEGP).

The MoUs are aligned with Prime Minister's call for "Atma Nirbhar Bharat" as they aim at creating local employment by strengthening the Khadi artisans and a large chunk of tribal population across the country.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju assigned additional charge of Ministry of AYUSH



Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has been assigned the additional charge of the Ministry of AYUSH. Due to the hospitalization and treatment of AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik following a road accident, his portfolio related to the Ministry of AYUSH has been temporarily assigned to Mr Rijiju in addition to his existing portfolios.

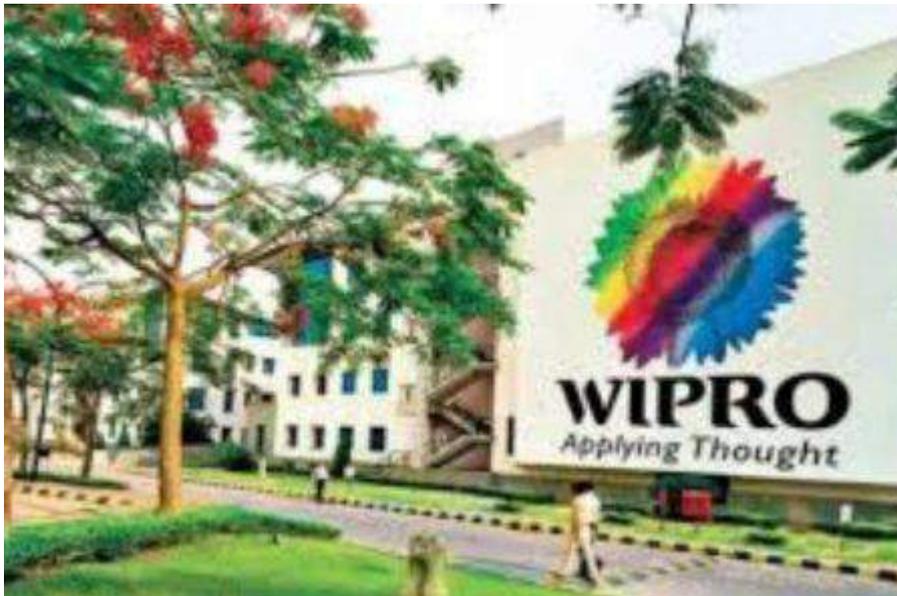
The President has directed that this arrangement may continue till Mr Naik resumes his work related to the Ministry of AYUSH.

Govt. says, Avian Influenza is confirmed in 5 States for poultry birds and in 10 States for Crow, Migratory and Wild birds



The Union government said that Avian Influenza has been confirmed in five States for poultry birds and in ten States for Crow, Migratory and Wild birds. The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying said, Avian Influenza has been confirmed in poultry samples from Allapuzha district, Kerala and in the districts of Nanded, Satara, Latur, Nagpur, Gadchiroli, Mumbai and Beed in Maharashtra. Avian Influenza has been confirmed in Crow, Migratory and Wild birds in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. The central team formed for monitoring the situation in the affected areas of the country is visiting the affected sites and has visited Raigad and Pune district of Maharashtra to monitor the epicenters of Avian Influenza outbreak and conducting epidemiological studies.

Wipro completes Rs 9,500-crore buyback programme



IT services major Wipro has completed its Rs 9,500-crore share buyback programme. The buyback saw Azim Premji-affiliated entities tendering 22.89 crore shares worth about Rs 9,156 crore during the process. While Azim Premji Trust tendered 19.87 crore shares, Mr Azim Hasham Premji Partner Representing Hasham Traders tendered 1 crore shares and Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives tendered 51.82 lakh shares.

Post completion of buyback, the promoters hold 73.04 per cent stake in the company, while the remaining 26.96 per cent stake is held by foreign investors, financial institutions and others.

Online gaming sector bats for one regulator



The online gaming industry has asked the government think tank NITI Aayog to set up a single, self-regulatory body to standardise regulations governing the entire online skill gaming industry, instead of just fantasy sports. Niti Aayog has recently pitched for the setting up a single self-regulatory organisation for the online fantasy sports industry to be governed by the independent oversight board and also had suggested restricting online fantasy games to users of 18 years and above.

India registers historic win over Australia in Brisbane test to seal 4-match series 2-1; Retains Border-Gavaskar Trophy



India made history by defeating Australia by three wickets in the fourth and final Test at the Gabba in Brisbane and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. India successfully chased the 328-run target to seal the four-match series 2-1. This was the first defeat for Australia at their fortress Gabba in 32 years as Rishabh Pant's brilliant unbeaten 89, Shubman Gill's 91, and Cheteshwar Pujara's 56 run knock in the second innings guided India to the memorable Test series win. Earlier, India had posted 336 in reply to Australia's first inning score of 369, conceding a 33-run lead.

BCCI announces 18 member squad for home tests series against England



India's regular skipper Virat Kohli will return to the team for next month's four-test series against England after Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced the official squad for the first two Tests for the home series against England. In view of COVID-19, BCCI has named a 18-member squad instead of the regular 16-member squad.

The first test is scheduled for February 5th to 9th followed by the second from February 13th to 17th, with both games to be played in Chennai.