

Putin, Xi cement partnership in face of Western pressure



Russia and China should stand firm in rejecting Western interference and defending each other's security interests, Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping agreed in a video call. Their conversation, eight days after Mr. Putin spoke to U.S. President Joe Biden in a similar format, underscored how shared hostility to the West is bringing Moscow and Beijing closer together.

U.S. tests laser weapon in West Asia



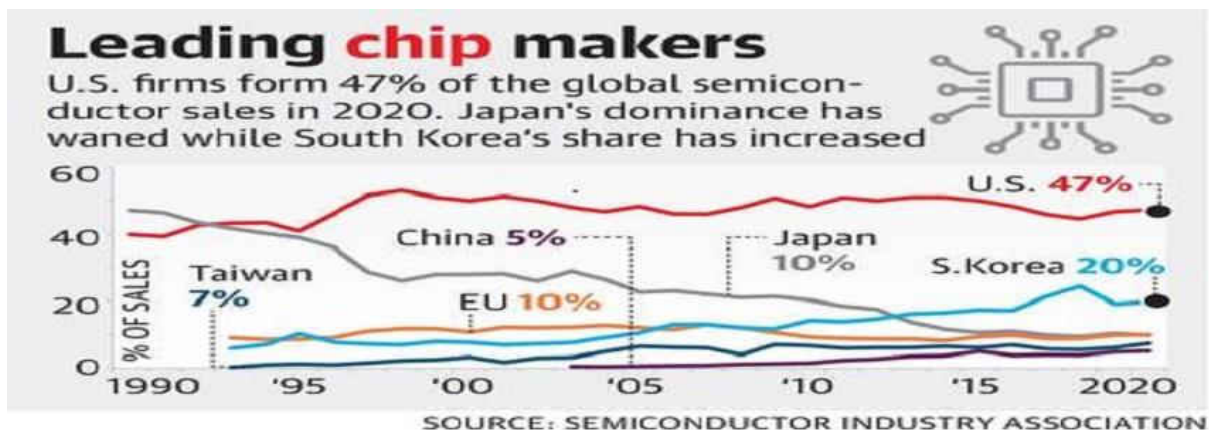
The U.S. Navy announced that it tested a laser weapon and destroyed a floating target in West Asia, a system that could be used to counter bomb-laden drone boats deployed by Yemen's Houthi rebels in the Red Sea. The test saw the USS Portland test-fire its Laser Weapon System Demonstrator at the target in the Gulf of Aden, the body of water separating East Africa from the Arabian Peninsula.

Ram Nath Kovind to inaugurate renovated Hindu shrine in Bangladesh



In a symbolic gesture, Indian president President Ram Nath Kovind will inaugurate a famous Hindu shrine named Ramna Kali temple that was destroyed by the Pakistani forces during the war of 1971. At that time, the barbaric Pakistani Army had slaughtered hundreds of Hindus inside the temple before eventually razing it down. The killings were a part of Operation Searchlight launched by the Pakistani Army to quell the demand for a separate Bangladesh by eliminating its proponents.

Union Cabinet approves ₹76,000-crore push for semiconductor makers



The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹76,000 crore scheme to boost semiconductor and display manufacturing in the country, taking the total amount of incentives announced for the electronics sector to ₹2.30 lakh crore. The comprehensive programme for the “development of sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in the country” was aimed at making India a global hub of electronic system design and manufacturing. The scheme would provide fiscal support of up to 50% of the project cost for setting up semiconductor and display fabrication units. In addition, the Centre would work with the States to set up high-tech clusters with the necessary infrastructure such as land and semiconductor-grade water.

OBC quota: SC ruling a blow to Uddhav



In a blow to the Uddhav Thackeray Government in Maharashtra, the Supreme Court of India directed the State Election Commission (SEC) to revert 27% seats reserved for Other Backward Classes (OBC) in local body elections to “general category”. The court ordered the Commission to denotify the 27% seats as OBC and issue fresh notification declaring them as belonging to the general category within a week.

Cabinet nod likely for electoral reforms Bill



The Union Cabinet learnt to have cleared a Bill on electoral reforms, including the one to link electoral roll with Aadhaar on a voluntary basis to root out multiple enrolments. The Bill is likely to be introduced in the ongoing winter session. According to the Bill, the electoral law will also be made “gender neutral” for service voters. An Army man’s wife is entitled to be enrolled as a service voter, but a woman Army officer’s husband is not, according to provisions in the electoral law. But this may change once the Bill gets Parliament’s nod.

NTPC awards India's first green hydrogen-based microgrid project



National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) has awarded a standalone fuel-cell based Green Hydrogen Microgrid Project at Simhadri in Andhra Pradesh, informed the Ministry of Power. According to the Power Ministry, this will be India's first green hydrogen-based energy storage project and one of the worlds largest.

Meta, CBSE expand partnership to train 10 million students in virtual, augmented reality



Meta founder and Chief Executive Officer Mark Zuckerberg announced the expansion of his company's collaboration with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in India, under which it will train 10 lakh teachers and more than a crore students in virtual and augmented reality over the next three years.

Meta will provide a curriculum on digital safety and online well-being, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) as part of this partnership. These courses will be available online on CBSE's website.

Makes sense to keep industry, banking separate: RBI's Rao



Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor Rajeshwar Rao said while the RBI would examine the pros and cons of giving banking licences to large industrial houses, the fact that banking was a highly leveraged business dealing with public money meant it 'made sense' to keep industry and banking separate. This separation is expected to avoid spillover risks, where trouble anywhere in the group entity may result in transferring risks on to the depositors, leading in turn to claims on deposit insurance with subsequent ripple effects cascading across the largely interconnected financial systems, creating concerns around financial stability, he said.

TVS, BMW Motorrad extend pact



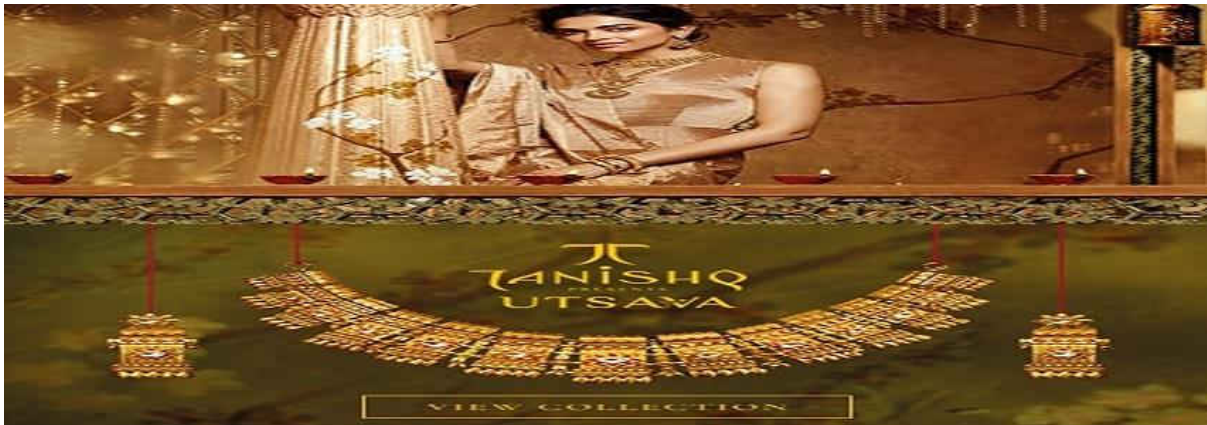
TVS Motor Company and BMW Motorrad announced that both firms were extending and expanding their long-term pact for joint development of new platforms and future technologies, including electric vehicles. The first product through this cooperation would be showcased in the next 24 months, said Sudarshan Venu, JMD, TVS Motor Company.

FSS and CSB Bank Launch Smart Cash to Boost Financial Inclusion



FSS, a globally leading provider of integrated payment products and a payments processor, and CSB Bank, one of the oldest private sector banks in India, have joined forces to deliver hyperlocal banking services to financially underserved segments. Under the aegis of this partnership, CSB Bank and FSS plan to open 1,000 Smart Cash franchisees in semi-urban and rural areas across India to expand financial services adoption among underserved segments.

Tanishq to enter North American, GCC markets



Tata group company Tanishq is all set to enter North America, Canada and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in 2022 to increase its share of revenue from international markets, said Titan Company MD C.K. Venkataraman. Tanishq's first jewellery showroom in Dubai is company-owned and the rest will be on franchise. The cost per showroom would be about ₹25-30 crore. Tanishq also forayed into non-watches business such as perfumes, saris and women's bags.

Red Bull ventures into sailing



Red Bull announced that it was entering a team in the America's Cup yacht race, in a move that will take its bitter Formula One rivalry with Mercedes onto the water. Red Bull Racing principal Christian Horner said the team will partner with two-time America's Cup winner Alinghi to challenge for yachting's most prestigious trophy.

Punam wins silver



India's Punam Yadav won the women's 76kg silver in the Commonwealth weightlifting championships. Punam lifted 220kg (98+122) and was seventh in the World championships, being held concurrently. R. Arockiya Alish clinched the bronze with an effort of 214kg (91+123). Canada's Maya Laylor won the Commonwealth gold with a total lift of 229kg (99+130).

Indian bridge team wins



The Indian team of Sumit Mukherjee, Jaggy Shivdasani, Keyzad Ankelsaria, Sundeep Thakral, Rajeswar Tewari and Debabrata Majumder defeated UAE to win the Asia and Middle East bridge championship. India scored 99 IMPs while UAE had 42 IMPs.

India set to host U-18 SAFF, U-19 C'ships in 2022



After hosting the AFC Women's Asian Cup football tournament in January-February, India is all set to host two more international football tournaments — the SAFF Under-18 Women's Championship 2022 (March 3-14), and the SAFF Under-19 Championship 2022 (July 25-August 3).