

Pfizer announces deal to make its oral antiviral Covid-19 medication available more cheaply in poorer countries



US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer announced a deal to make its oral antiviral Covid-19 medication available more cheaply in poorer countries.

Pfizer said if the promising pill passes trials and regulatory approval then around 53 percent of the world's population in low and middle-income countries would be immensely benefitted. Pfizer, which also produces a Covid vaccine with German lab BioNTech, said it had signed an agreement to sub-licence production of its Paxlovid pill with the global Medicines Patent Pool (MPP), without receiving royalties.

The Geneva-based MPP is a United Nations-backed international organisation that works to facilitate the development of medicines for low- and middle-income nations.

US technology giant commits to invest 740 dollars in Australia



Google has announced that it will invest 740 million dollars in Australia over the next five years. It is the US technology giant's largest investment in the country till date.

Google said the money will be used to build a research hub, increase its cloud computing capacity, and fund partnerships with local organizations. The move named the Digital Future Initiative is expected to directly create 6,000 jobs and support 28,000 overall.

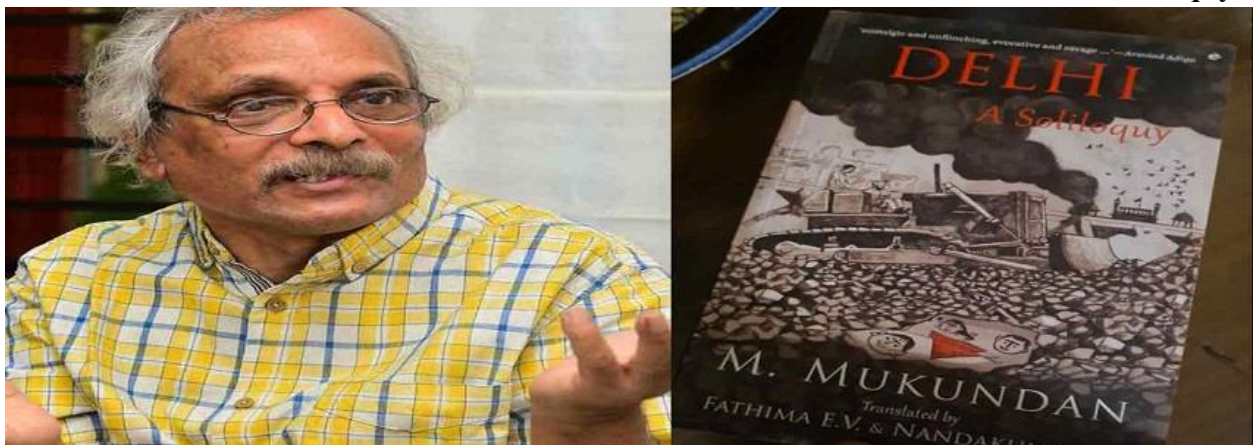
Bangladesh writer Hasan Azizul Haque passes away at 82



Acclaimed short-story writer and literary figure of Bangladesh Hasan Azizul Haque passed away. He was born in Burdwan district of West Bengal on 2nd February 1939.

One of the most prominent literary figures of Bangladesh, Hasan Azizul Haque received the Ekushey Padak in 1999 and the country's top civilian honour Independence award in 2019. He also received literary awards like the Bangla Academy award, Adamjee Sahitya Puraskar, and Ananda Sahitya Puraskar in 2018 in Kolkata for his novel Agunpakhi.

Author M Mukundan wins JCB Prize for Literature 2021 for his novel 'Delhi: A Soliloquy'



Author M Mukundan won the 2021 JCB prize for Literature, for his book 'Delhi: A Soliloquy'. The book, which has originally been written in Malayalam has been translated into English by Fathima EV and Nandakumar K. The novel, published by Westland, is a story about Delhi through the eyes of its Malayali youth protagonists.

Mukundan received the Prize trophy, which is a sculpture by Delhi artist duo Thukral and Tagra entitled 'Mirror Melting', and he will receive a prize amount of Rs 25 lakh. This is the third translation to have won the JCB award in the last four years.

Ministry of Power issues revised guidelines providing for thermal generation companies to set up renewable energy generation capacity



Ministry of Power has issued revised guidelines providing for thermal generation companies to set up renewable energy generation capacity. It can be developed either by these companies through developers by open bids and supplying it to the consumers under the existing Power Purchasing Agreements, PPAs.

This will enable the replacement of fossil fuel based energy by renewable energy under the existing PPAs. As the cost of renewable energy is less than the cost of Thermal energy, the gains from the bundling of renewable energy with thermal will be shared between the generator and Distribution companies or other procurers on a 50:50 basis. The distribution companies will be able to count the renewable energy supplied under the scheme towards their renewable purchase obligation.

Guinness World Records recognises achievement of BRO for constructing world's highest motorable road



Director General of Border Roads Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry received the Guinness World Records certificate for the achievement of Border Roads Organisation of constructing and black topping the world's highest motorable road.

It has been constructed at 19,024 feet at Umlingla Pass in Ladakh. Official adjudicator of the Guinness World Records Rishi Nath acknowledged this remarkable achievement in a virtual ceremony.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh inaugurates 'Bhumi Samvaad' - National Workshop on DILRMP



Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh inaugurated 'Bhumi Samvaad' - National Workshop on Digital India Land Record Modernisation Programme (DILRMP) in New Delhi. On this occasion, the Minister also launched National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) portal and Dashboard, which is advanced software application for the registration system.

During the day-long workshop, the discussion was held primarily on the progress of different components of the Digital Land Record Modernization Programme and best practices undertaken by different States to share with other States. So far substantial progress has been achieved in different components of the programme wherein computerization of land records is completed in over six lakh villages against a total of around 6 lakh 56 thousand villages.

Union minister Piyush Goyal launches India's first Food Museum in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur



Union Minister for Commerce, Industry, Food and Public Distribution Piyush Goyal virtually launched India's first Food Museum in Thanjavur.

The museum has been established by Food Corporation of India (FCI) in association with Visvesvaraya Industrial and Technological Museum (VITM), Bengaluru, at an investment of about ₹1.1 crore. Thanjavur is the birthplace of FCI as its first office was opened in the town 56 years ago on January 14, 1965 and hence the museum has been established here.

RBI directs NBFCs to appoint Internal Ombudsman within 6 months



Reserve Bank of India has directed Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) to appoint an Internal Ombudsman within 6 months.

Deposit-taking NBFCs with more than 10 branches and non-deposit-taking NBFCs with an asset size of a minimum of 5 thousand Crore rupees have been asked to appoint an internal ombudsman within 6 months. It will be an apex of their internal grievance redress mechanism. All complaints that are partly or wholly rejected by the NBFC will be reviewed by the Internal Ombudsman before the final decision of the NBFC is conveyed to the complainant. The Internal Ombudsman will not entertain any complaints directly from members of public. NBFCs not having a public customer interface have been excluded from the requirement for appointment of an Internal Ombudsman.

SIDBI launches second window of Swavalamban Challenge Fund



Small Industries Development Bank of India (Sidbi) has launched the second window of Swavalamban Challenge Fund (SCF) with Green Bharat as prioritised theme.

The focus of the fund is on innovative projects addressing the green, clean or efficient climate change, Sidbi said in a statement. Other themes are sustainable livelihood, financial inclusion, and access to financial services and promoting the culture of entrepreneurship, it said.

SCF is a part of Swavalamban Resource Facility being implemented by Sidbi in partnership with Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO UK). The first window of SCF was launched in August this year.

Paytm Money launches AI powered 'Voice Trading'

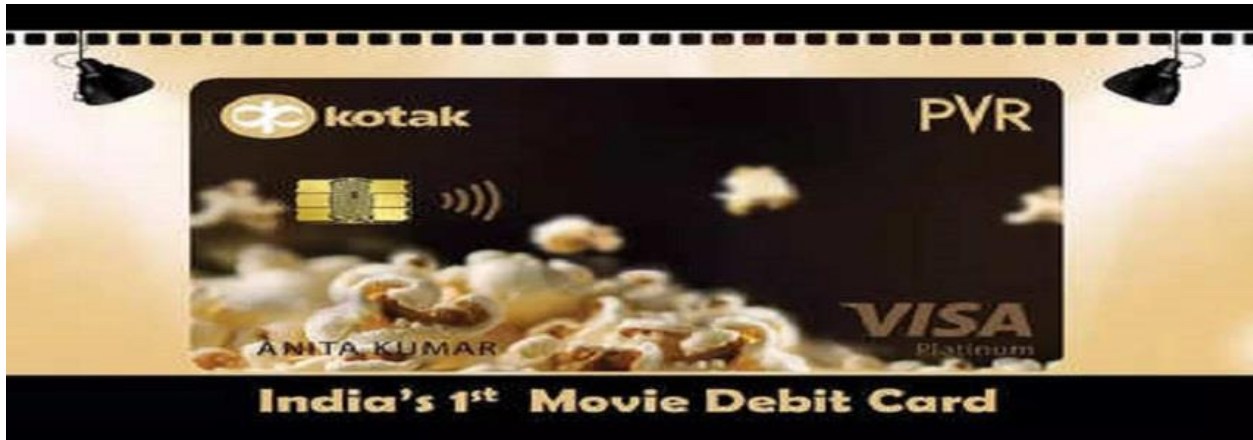


Paytm Money, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Paytm, launched Voice Trading that lets users to set a trade or get information regarding stocks via single voice command.

The assistance has been introduced in line with Paytm Money's attempts to extend next-gen and AI driven tech to improve user experience.

The voice trading feature enables a single voice command, with the use of Neural Networks and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to permit immediate processing. The feature is presently being rolled out in beta version to selected users and will be accessible to all users over the next weeks.

Kotak Mahindra Bank, PVR Cinemas Launch Co-Branded Movie Debit Card



Private lender Kotak Mahindra Bank and PVR Cinemas on Tuesday launched the country's first co-branded movie debit card. Kotak PVR debit cardholders will receive joining vouchers and earn points on every transaction on the debit card (at PVR and outside PVR as well), with no upper limit on the points earned.

The Bank and PVR launched co-branded credit cards 10 years ago and now again joined hands to increase the usage of debit cards and reopen cinemas across India.

Guanyu Zhou becomes F1's first Chinese driver with Alfa Romeo



Guanyu Zhou will become China's first ever Formula One driver for Alfa Romeo. The 22-year-old would drive for the team. Zhou has been making waves in Formula Two this season and will team up with Valtteri Bottas, who will be moving from Mercedes.

Zhou's promotion came as Alfa Romeo announced that Italian driver Antonio Giovinazzi would leave at the end of the 2021 championship in December.

Indian recurve men's and women's teams enter finals of Asian Archery Championships in Dhaka



Indian recurve men's and women's teams entered the finals of their respective events at the Asian Archery Championships 2021 in Dhaka.

The Indian men's recurve team, composed of Pravin Jadhav, Parth Salunkhe, and Kapil, got a bye in the first round. The team then thrashed Saudi Arabia 6-0 in the quarter-finals. In the semis, the Indian trio were given a run for their money by hosts Bangladesh but eventually persevered, winning the match 5-4 via shoot-off. The Indian men will now clash with top seeds South Korea for the gold medal.

In the women's recurve field, India's Ankita Bhakat, Ridhi Phor, and Madhu Vedwan got a bye in the quarter-finals before blanking Vietnam 6-0 in the semi-finals to qualify for the gold medal match. The women's team will also face off South Korea for the top honour