

UN extends Afghan mission mandate for six months



The UN Security Council voted to extend the UN mission in Afghanistan for six months, and called on the Taliban to create an inclusive government. The 15-member Council acted in a resolution passed unanimously on the UNAMA political mission, which deals with development issues, among others, not peacekeeping. The document stressed the importance of the establishment of an inclusive and representative government, although Afghanistan's new Islamist rulers have formed a government made up only of Taliban members and no women.

Race for Japan's new PM kicks off



The campaign to become Japan's next Prime Minister kicked off, with four candidates vying for leadership of the ruling party in an unusually close race. The candidates include two women hoping to lead a country that has never had a woman Prime Minister, though both are considered long shots. The race follows Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's shock announcement last month that would not run for head of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. Outspoken vaccine chief Taro Kono leads public opinion polls for the top post.

Chinese astronauts back after 90 days in space



Three Chinese astronauts, the first to be sent to orbit for space station-construction, returned to Earth on Friday, after completing their three-month mission including two spacewalks and setting the Chinese record for the longest crewed spaceflight mission. The return capsule of the Shenzhou-12 manned spaceship, carrying astronauts Nie Haisheng, Liu Boming and Tang Hongbo, touched down at the Dongfeng landing site in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

Biden announces global goal to reduce planet-warming methane emissions



President Joe Biden announced the United States and European Union have launched a global pledge to reduce emissions of methane -- a potent greenhouse gas -- by nearly 30% by the end of the decade. Biden described the August report from the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a code red for humanity, reiterating his belief that the world is at an inflection point for climate action.

World Economic Forum to host next annual meeting in Davos in Jan 2022



The World Economic Forum said its next annual meeting will be held in the Swiss ski resort town of Davos in January 2022, making it the first major in-person congregation of the world leaders in almost two years since the deadliest pandemic hit the world. In a statement, the WEF said its next annual meeting will take place from January 17-21, 2022 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, under the theme 'Working Together, Restoring Trust'.

Ahead of the Annual Meeting 2022, the Forum will host the fifth Sustainable Development Impact Summit taking place virtually from September 20-23, 2021 in the context of the United Nations General Assembly.

SpaceX makes history, launches 4 amateurs on private Earth-circling trip



SpaceX, the American aerospace company founded by businessman Elon Musk, made history by launching the Inspiration4 mission with the world's first all-civilian crew into space. The four amateur astronauts are travelling to an altitude of 357 miles (575 kilometres) above the surface of the Earth, which is much further and deeper into space than the International Space Station (ISS), in the private flight that will encircle the Earth for three days.

World Bank to discontinue 'Doing Business' report after China-linked probe



The World Bank Group has decided to discontinue publication of its Doing Business report on country investment climates following allegations of irregularities. The decision was taken after a probe of data irregularities allegedly due to pressure by some top bank officials to boost China's ranking in 2017 came to light. After data irregularities on Doing Business 2018 and 2020 were reported internally in June 2020, it said, World Bank management paused the next Doing Business report and initiated a series of reviews and audits of the report and its methodology.

India sets record with 2 crore jabs in one day



India crossed 2.5 crore Covid vaccinations in a day for the first time on Friday as the government raced to deliver a record on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. The government's tracker showed around 800 vaccinations per second, or around 48,000 in a minute. The numbers went up steadily through the day with the cumulative number of doses administered in the country crossing 79.33 crore at midnight (12 am), according to data on the Co-WIN portal. China inoculated the most number of people in a day - 2.47 crore - in June.

Star astrophysicist Thanu Padmanabhan passes away



Thanu Padmanabhan, eminent theoretical physicist and cosmologist, passed away in Pune . He was 64. A Padma Shri recipient in 2007, Padmanabhan has authored over 300 research papers and several books on gravitation, quantum gravity, and structure and formation of the universe. He was ranked 24th amongst top scientists in the world by the Stanford University for his research in Theoretical Physics.

50,000 youth to get training over 3 years



The Railways launched 'Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana' programme under which it will train 50,000 youth in the age-group of 18 to 35 over three years. The aim is to impart training skills to the youth in various trades to bring qualitative improvement. The training will be provided in four trades — electrician, welder, machinist and fitter — and will comprise initial basic training of 100 hours. The training would be provided free of cost and participants would be selected based on their matriculation marks.

Deadline to link PAN with Aadhaar extended to March 31, 2022



The Union government had extended the deadline to link PAN with Aadhaar to March 31, 2022. The due date for completion of penalty proceedings under the Income Tax Act has also been extended from September 30, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

IIFL Home Finance signs co-lending pact with PNB



IIFL HOME LOAN

Financial Services firm IIFL Home Finance Ltd entered into a co-lending arrangement with public sector lender Punjab National Bank (PNB). The company claims the partnership would help it to enter the affordable Home Loan and Secured MSME Loan markets, and strengthen Home Finance Limited's portfolio.

It has earlier inked co-lending pacts with ICICI Bank, Central Bank of India and Standard Chartered Bank.

GST Council not for inclusion of petroleum products: Finance Minister



The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has decided to keep petroleum products out of the GST regime, while consumers will have to keep paying the Compensation Cess levied on products like automobiles till March 2026 instead of July 2022 as originally envisaged at the time of rolling out the indirect tax regime. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that a majority of state governments opposed the inclusion of petroleum products under the GST.

Council raises GST on low-cost footwear, garments to 12%



In its first physical meeting in two years, the GST Council effected several long-pending tweaks in tax rates including an increase in the GST levied on footwear costing less than ₹1,000 as well as readymade garments and fabrics to 12% from 5%. The new rates on these products, a decision on which had been deferred by the Council over the past year owing to the pandemic's impact on households, will come into effect from January 1.

Ola e-scooters log Rs. 1,100-cr. sales in 2 days



Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal said sales of S1 electric scooters crossed Rs. 1,100 crore in two days. Ola Electric had commenced the sale process of its electric scooter, which comes in two trims - Ola S1 and S1 Pro. On day one, the company sold scooters worth Rs 600 crore. The executive noted that while the company has stopped the buying process now, the purchase window will re-open on November 1, just in time for Diwali.

Gukesh wins in Norway



GM D. Gukesh of India won the Norway Chess Open 2021, bagging 8.5 points out of 10 rounds with seven wins and three draws. Valentin Dragnev of Austria (7 points) came second while Russia's Evgeny Romanov (6.5) emerged third.

Kiwis withdraw from Pakistan series



The New Zealand cricket team are abandoning their tour of Pakistan following a New Zealand government security alert. The side was to play Pakistan in the first of three ODIs in Rawalpindi, before moving to Lahore for a five match T20 series. However, following an escalation in the New Zealand Government threat levels for Pakistan, and advice from NZC security advisors on the ground, it has been decided the Black Caps will not continue with the tour.