

Leftist millennial elected Chile's President



Leftist millennial Gabriel Boric became Chile's youngest-ever President-elect with an unexpectedly large victory over his far-right rival in a polarising race. Mr. Boric, 35, garnered nearly 56% of the vote compared to 44% for ultra-conservative Jose Antonio Kast, who conceded even before the final result was known. Mr. Boric won by a margin of nearly a million ballots out of 8.3 million cast by 15 million eligible voters.

WEF defers Davos Annual Meeting 2022 due to Omicron outbreak



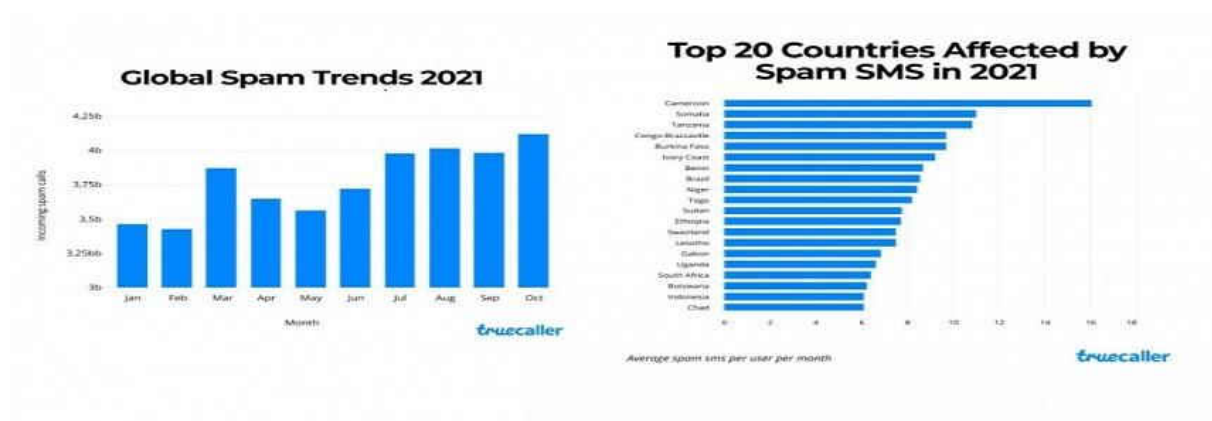
The World Economic Forum (WEF) had decided to defer its Annual Meeting 2022 in the Swiss Alpine ski resort town of Davos in the light of continued uncertainty over the Omicron outbreak. The Annual Meeting, which was scheduled to take place in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, from January 17-21, 2022, is now planned for early summer.

Uzra Zeya appointed U.S. Special Coordinator for Tibet



U.S. official Uzra Zeya has been appointed the country's new Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues. She will hold the position concurrently with her current role as Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights. The coordinator's role involves promoting substantive dialogue between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama. The coordinator is also supposed to promote the unique identity of Tibet, safeguards human rights of Tibetans and coordinates U.S. policy on Tibet.

India ranks 4th on list of most spammed countries of 2021, says Truecaller's Global Spam Report



India has jumped from ninth to the fourth position on a list of countries, that received the highest number of spam calls, according to a new report by Stockholm-based caller-identification app Truecaller. The sharp rise is due to a huge increase in sales and telemarketing calls, which accounted for 93.5 percent of all spam calls in India. Brazil is by far the most spammed country in the world, Peru came in second place on the list, Ukraine ranked third, ahead of India.

Beijing defends Hong Kong polls amid record low turnout



Pro-Beijing candidates have swept Hong Kong's "patriots only" polls, the first elections held after electoral reforms that essentially ruled out the participation of most of the pro-democracy opposition candidates in the Special Administrative Region. The central government in Beijing hailed Sunday's polls and released a detailed white paper on Monday defending its political governance of Hong Kong.

Philippines typhoon casualties rise to 375



The death toll from the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines this year surged to 375 on Monday, as desperate survivors pleaded for urgent supplies of drinking water and food. At least 375 people were killed and 56 are missing in the latest disaster to hit the archipelago, with 500 more injured. More than 3,80,000 people fled their homes and beachfront resorts as Rai slammed into the country on Thursday.

The storm tore off roofs, uprooted trees, toppled concrete power poles, smashed wooden houses to pieces, wiped out crops and flooded villages — sparking comparisons to the damage caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013.

A top Chinese live-streaming influencer known as Viya was fined roughly \$210 million for tax evasion



A leading Chinese influencer – known as the “queen of livestreaming” has been hit with a record fine for “major tax evasion”. Huang Wei, known as Viya by her fans was fined 1.34 billion yuan (\$A295 million). Viya avoided taxes in 2019 and 2020 via a range of tax evasion methods such as hiding commission fees, declaring personal wages as corporate income and omitting reports of taxable income. Viya, who boasts an online following in the tens of millions, uses her platform to sell a range of products, including goods worth a total of 8.5 billion yuan in one evening this Singles’ Day alone.

Pradeep Rawat to take over as next Ambassador to China



The Ministry of External Affairs said Pradeep Kumar Rawat, a Mandarin-speaking career diplomat, will take over as envoy in Beijing. Mr. Rawat, Ambassador to the Netherlands, will replace Vikram Misri, who completed a close to three-year term earlier this month. Mr. Rawat is no stranger to the border tensions, having dealt with China in various capacities including as one of the senior-most officials in New Delhi handling China policy as the Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the MEA from 2014 to 2017.

Rs. 13,109 cr. recovered from fugitives, says FM



Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed the Lok Sabha that banks have recovered Rs. 13,109.17 crore by selling the assets of fugitives like Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi. The Minister's comments came during her reply to a discussion on the second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants which was passed by the Lok Sabha by a voice vote.

Bill to link electoral rolls with Aadhaar passed



The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 that seeks to link electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem was passed by Lok Sabha on Monday amid protests by Opposition members who raised strong objection to the Bill, saying it violates the fundamental right to privacy. The Bill was passed via voice vote while several Opposition members stood in the Well of the House, raising slogans.

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijju, who introduced the Bill, said, "There is also a provision to link Aadhaar with the voter ID card and stated that it is voluntary.

DRDO Conducts Flight Demonstration of CADS



The Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment (ADRDE), Agra conducted a flight demonstration of Controlled Aerial Delivery System of 500 kilogram capacity (CADS-500). The CADS-500 is used for precise delivery of payloads up to 500 kilograms at a predetermined location by making use of manoeuvrable capabilities of the Ram Air Parachute (RAP). It uses Global Positioning System for the coordinates, altitude and heading sensors for the heading information during its flight.

ADRDE, Agra is an R&D laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the flight demonstration is part of a series of activities organised towards celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', commemorating 75 years of Independence.

Competition Commission approves Tata-Air India deal



The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved the Tata Group's proposed acquisition of debt-laden Air India and two of its units. The CCI's nod for the Rs. 18,000 crore-deal that entails Talace taking over Rs. 15,300 crore of debt, paves the way for completion of the transaction and the revival of the ailing carrier.

Talace Pvt. Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of Tata Sons, emerged as the winning bidder in October. It will buy 100% stakes in Air India and Air India Express and 50% holding in Air India SATS (AISATS). AISATS provides ground handling services at Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mangalore and Thiruvananthapuram airports. It also provides cargo handling services at Bengaluru airport. State-owned Air India has been incurring a monthly loss of over Rs. 600 crore.

MSMEs strike, protest high raw material prices



Micro, Small and Medium-scale Enterprises (MSMEs) across major industrial hubs in about 10 States pulled down shutters for a day on Monday protesting spiralling prices of raw materials. Several input materials used by MSMEs, including steel, aluminium, copper, kraft paper and plastic, have on average seen a 70% jump in prices in the last one year. In November and December, MSMEs were impacted by a slump in orders and piling up of stocks.

Traders can import refined palm oil without licence till end of December 22



The Union government said traders will be allowed to import refined palm oil without licence for one more year till December 2022, a move aimed at increasing domestic supplies and bringing down the high prices of edible oils. In June, the government removed import restrictions on refined palm oil till December 31 this year as prices of edible oils had risen sharply.

Wipro to acquire Edgile for USD 230 mn



Wipro said it will acquire Texas-headquartered Edgile for \$230 million, a move that will strengthen the IT major's play in the cybersecurity services space. Edgile's experienced cybersecurity and risk management professionals will allow Wipro to further enhance its cybersecurity and risk consulting capabilities for the benefit of customers

Oil firms notify mills for 366 cr. litres of ethanol



Oil marketing companies (OMCs) have notified sugar mills for the supply of 366 crore litres of ethanol following two cycles of Expressions of Interest (EoI) for the current ethanol supply year that began on December 1. The Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) said in a press release that in the 2020-21 ethanol supply year, distilleries supplied 302.3 crore litres, achieving an average blending of 8.1%. For 2021-22, the government has set a target of 10% blending, and the total requirement for this year was 459 crore litres of ethanol, ISMA said.

PSBs recover Rs. 5.49 lakh cr. in seven years



The Union government has taken comprehensive steps to reduce NPAs and to effect recovery, enabling public sector banks to recover more than Rs. 5.49 lakh crore over the last seven fiscal years, the Lok Sabha was informed. In a written reply, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said that with regard to the details of the recovery rate of non-performing assets (NPAs), the RBI had informed that it had not formally defined 'recovery rate' in the context of NPAs in the banking industry.

SAIL receives prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award 2021



Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has been awarded with the prestigious Golden Peacock Environment Management Award for the year 2021 in the Steel Sector by the Institute of Directors. SAIL has been the winner of this award for successive three years.

Ashes 2021: Australia beats England by 275 runs in Adelaide test



Jos Buttler's dogged resistance ended in a bizarre fashion as Australia thrashed England by 275 runs in the day-night second test to go 2-0 up in the five-match Ashes series. Earlier, Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne scored half-centuries before the hosts declared with a lead of 467 runs.

Rishabh Pant appointed as Uttarakhand's brand ambassador



Swashbuckling India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant has been appointed the brand ambassador of Uttarakhand to promote sports and create mental health awareness among the state's youth. Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami made the announcement about the same on Sunday. Pant, 24, was born in the state's Roorkee town in Haridwar district.

Team TVS Racing crowned champion



Team TVS Racing finished the season on a high winning all the four categories it had participated in the sixth and final round of the MRF MOGRIP FMSCI 2W National Rally Championship (INRC) for two wheelers at Nashik, Maharashtra.