

## Covaxin gets WHO approval for emergency use listing



Hyderabad-based vaccine maker Bharat Biotech received a shot in the arm as the World Health Organisation (WHO) granted approval to India's first indigenous Covid vaccine— Covaxin— for emergency use listing (EUL). The WHO clearance is a significant step in Covaxin being accepted by foreign governments. It will remove uncertainty around overseas travel by Indians inoculated with this vaccine. Moreover, EUL is also a prerequisite for a vaccine to be supplied through COVAX, the global Covid vaccine equity scheme.

## Covid: WHO warns Europe once again at epicentre of pandemic



Europe is once again "at the epicentre" of the Covid pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned, as cases soar across the continent. WHO Europe head Hans Kluge said the continent could see half a million more deaths by February. He blamed insufficient vaccine take-up for the rise. The rate of vaccination has slowed across the continent in recent months.

While some 80% of people in Spain are double jabbed, that number is lower in France and Germany - at 68% and 66% respectively - and lower still in some central and eastern European countries. Only 32% of Russians were fully vaccinated by October 2021.

## **USTR Tai, Commerce Minister Goyal to take comprehensive look at bilateral trade relationship**



US Trade Representative Katherine Tai and Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal have agreed to take a "comprehensive look" at ways to expand the bilateral trade ties and also shared perspectives on how to reach "meaningful outcomes" at the upcoming WTO Ministerial Conference. The World Trade Organisation ministerial conference will be held from November 30 to December 3 in Geneva, Switzerland.

They noted that ongoing negotiations on an Investment Incentive Agreement that facilitates investment in development projects and committed to an early conclusion. They further discussed how the US and India will work together to set sustainable and transparent rules of the road that will lift economies throughout the Indo-Pacific.

## **TN sets up first ever SPV to professionally manage three critical natural conservation missions**



The Tamil Nadu government has taken a big leap in climate action by setting up the first ever Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) – Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company – to professionally manage three critical natural conservation missions – Tamil Nadu Climate Change, Tamil Nadu Green and Tamil Nadu Wetlands. Interestingly, the development comes three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi committed to India achieving net-zero carbon emission by 2070.

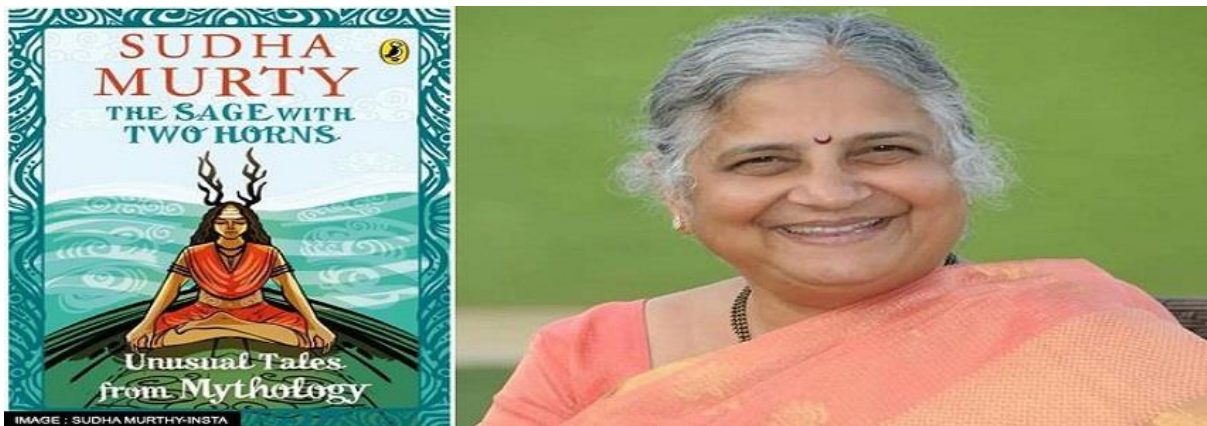
The SPV's mission includes planning, execution and monitoring of the State-wide programme for the climate change adaptation and mitigation, wetlands mapping and restoration, enhancing the forest and tree cover of the State to 33 per cent front the present 23.27 per cent over the next ten years.

## Air Forces of India and Egypt Conduct Two-day Joint Exercise



The Air forces of India and Egypt have conducted a two-day exercise at the latter's El Berigat airbase to enhance mutual understanding and share operational experience. The exercise, called 'Desert Warrior', was conducted on October 30 and October 31. In December 2019, former Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria had visited Egypt and met Air Marshal Mohamed Abbas Helmy, the Commander-in-Chief of Egypt Air Force, to boost cooperation between the two services.

## Sudha Murty's new book is a Diwali gift for kids



Author Sudha Murty has a Diwali gift for children with her latest book "The Sage with Two Horns" in which she tells numerous lesser-known and fascinating stories that have been lost in the pages of Indian mythology. This is the fifth and last book of her 'Unusual Tales from mythology' series featuring kings and queens, gods and goddesses, sages and extraordinary men and women of wisdom. It is the follow up to "The Man from the Egg", "Serpent's Revenge", "The Upside-Down King" and "The Daughter from the Wishing Tree".

## US trade deficit hits record \$80.9 billion in September



The US trade deficit hit an all-time high of \$80.9 billion in September as American exports fell sharply while imports, even with supply chain problems at American ports, kept climbing. The Commerce Department reported that the September deficit topped the previous record of \$73.2 billion set in June. In September, exports plunged 3 per cent to \$207.6 billion while imports rose 0.6 per cent to \$288.5 billion. The politically sensitive goods deficit with China shot up 15 per cent in September to \$36.5 billion.

## Federal Reserve announces cut in bond-buying programme



The US Federal Reserve announced that it soon will begin reducing the pace of its monthly bond purchases, the first step toward pulling back on the massive amount of help it had been providing markets and the economy. Tapering of bond purchases will start “later this month,” the policymaking Federal Open Market Committee said in its post-meeting statement. The process will see reductions of \$15 billion each month -- \$10 billion in Treasuries and \$5 billion in mortgage-backed securities – from the current \$120 billion a month that the Fed is buying.

## Visa invites startups in Asia Pacific to build next generation digital payment capabilities



Payments major Visa is looking for startups from across the Asia Pacific to join the second cohort of their accelerator program. The Visa Accelerator Program focuses on helping startups in Asia Pacific expand their business into new markets with a strong emphasis on identifying commercial opportunities for the startups to collaborate with Visa and its extensive network of bank, merchant and government partners in the region.

## BSE joins hand with HDFC Bank to promote startup, SME listing



BSE, India's premier exchange has signed an MoU with one of India's largest private sector bank, HDFC Bank to further encourage and promote listing of Start-ups and SMEs across India. Through this MoU, HDFC Bank and BSE shall evaluate banking & lending solutions for Start-ups undergoing listing process on Start-ups and SME platform. HDFC Bank will identify potential Start-ups and SMEs and help them to partner with intermediaries like Merchant Bankers, Chartered Accountants and Lawyers to list on BSE. Both the parties have agreed to conduct and participate in joint outreach activities and contribute to each other's publications on the Start-up ecosystem in India.

### Infibeam's CCAvenue brings TokenPay for RBI-compliant 'saved card transactions'



Infibeam Avenues Ltd's digital payments platform, CCAvenue has launched an interoperable solution 'TokenPay' for businesses/merchants to comply with Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) data security norms. As the "saved cards transactions" are taking a hit, due to RBI directive prohibiting merchants, businesses, payment aggregators, and acquiring banks from storing customers' credit/ debit /prepaid card information, IAL's CCAvenue has developed a multi-network tokenisation solution to work across all major card networks.

### Govt pegs jute bags demand at 46 lakh bales for next crop season



The Union government estimates that jute bags of 46 lakh bales would be required to pack foodgrains in the next crop season of 2022-23 but the jute industry will fall short in meeting the demand due to inadequate supply of raw jute. In a recent meeting by the Union Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ministry with the stakeholders to ascertain jute bag demand, an overview of the requirement of jute bags to the tune of around 46 lakh bales in the year 2022-23 but the low commitment of new jute bags by jute mills is creating a severe shortage situation, they said.

## WI vs SL: Sri Lanka knocks West Indies out of T20 World Cup 2021



Defending champion West Indies was eliminated from the semifinal race in the T20 World Cup after a 20-run loss to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka out-batted the side by amassing 189 for three on a good batting surface. The West Indies could only reach 169 for eight despite Shimron Hetmyer's unbeaten 81 off 54 balls.

## Dravid appointed India head coach, will take charge for New Zealand home series



The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced that Rahul Dravid will take over from Ravi Shastri as the new team India head coach. The Cricket Advisory Committee comprising Sulakshana Naik and RP Singh unanimously appointed former India captain Dravid as the head coach and he will take charge from the upcoming home series against New Zealand.

The BCCI had invited applications for the said position on October 26 to appoint Shastri's successor, whose term gets over after the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup.

### Dwayne Bravo announces retirement from international cricket after West Indies' exit from T20 World Cup



Allrounder Dwayne Bravo announced that he will retire from internationals after West Indies plays its last T20 World Cup game against Australia this weekend. Bravo played in 90 T20s for the West Indies since making his debut against New Zealand at Auckland in 2006. He scored 1,245 runs at an average of 22.23 and a strike rate of 115.38. Bravo was part of the West Indies teams that won the T20 World Cup in 2012 and 2016.