

IACE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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DESCRIPTIVE

❖ Government imposes curb on import of laptops, computers, and tablets

- The Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) announced that its decision to restrict the import of certain laptops and computers under HSN 8471 will come into effect from November 1, 2023.
- These electronics can be imported only against a valid license meant for restricted imports.
- Liberal transitional arrangements will be notified for the import of laptops, tablets, all-in-one personal computers till October 31st.
- The decision to restrict imports came with the aim to push Indian manufacturers to fill the gap, since electronics imports, including laptops, tablets, and personal computers, accounted for \$19.7 billion between April and June 2023, expanding at a rate of roughly 6% each year.

❖ Over 9 lakh trees likely to be axed for Great Nicobar Project

- The Centre is undertaking the ambitious ₹72,000-crore Great Nicobar Project on the Great Nicobar Island.
- The project aims to build a transshipment port, an international airport, a township, and a 450 MVA gas and solar-based power plant.
- The Minister of State (Environment) revealed in the Rajya Sabha that around 9.64 lakh trees may be felled for the project, not the previously estimated 8.5 lakh trees.
- However, concerns have been raised about the potential impact on the island's evergreen tropical forests and diverse flora and fauna.

- The Great Nicobar Project, spanning over 130 square km of pristine forest, received environmental clearance from an expert committee.
- Approximately 15% of the development area will be preserved as green and open spaces, potentially reducing the number of trees to be cut.

❖ Pakistan approves signing of security pact with U.S

- Pakistan's federal cabinet has approved the signing of a new security pact with the United States, known as the Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CIS-MOA).
- It will pave the way for enhanced defense ties between the two nations and may allow Pakistan to procure military hardware from Washington DC.
- It grants legal cover to the US Department of Defense for selling military equipment and hardware to other countries.
- By signing this pact, both Pakistan and the US are expressing their commitment to maintaining strong institutional mechanisms for defense collaboration.

❖ Indian physio Rajakamal ready to assist Pakistan's hockey team

- The Pakistan hockey team has recruited the services of Chennai-based sports physiotherapist Rajakamal for its Asian Champions Trophy campaign.
- He was a last-minute replacement for their regular physio Shahnaz Sheikh, who couldn't travel because of visa issues.
- Rajakamal had been working with the Tamil Nadu state hockey team this year.
- He also worked for the past three seasons with the Tamil Nadu Premier League cricket team Nellore Royal Kings.

❖ Gukesh D becomes India's No.1 Chess Player

- Gukesh D overtook Viswanathan Anand in live world (FIDE) rankings, who was India's top-ranked player in all published lists since January 1987.

➤ The 17-year old Gukesh outclassed Iskandarov of Azerbaijan in 44 moves in a second round match of the World Cup.

➤ The latest gain of 2.5 rating points took Gukesh's live rating to 2755.9, while Anand's is 2754.0.

❖ Dharmendra Pradhan and S. Jaishankar launched Study in India Portal

➤ Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar jointly launched Study in India (SII) Portal in New Delhi, in line with the vision of re-establishing India as a global hub of education.

➤ Study in India Portal is a dedicated website that will provide comprehensive information about the Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

➤ This portal is to simplify international students academic journey in India.

➤ The website-portal will present information about the academic facilities, research support, and related information.

➤ The new portal will provide an integrated one-stop solution for student registration and visa application process.

❖ NHAI Launched 'Rajmargyatra' Unified Mobile App for National Highway Users

➤ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has taken a significant step toward enhancing the highway user experience by introducing the 'Rajmargyatra' mobile application.

➤ This user-centric app marks a substantial advancement in providing travelers with comprehensive information about Indian National Highways and an effective mechanism for addressing complaints.

➤ The application is currently available in only Hindi and English languages and available for download on Google Play Store and iOS App Store.

➤ The 'Rajmargyatra' app encompasses several key features to facilitate a smoother highway experience.

➤ It provides real-time weather updates, timely broadcast notifications, and details about nearby toll plazas, petrol stations, hospitals, hotels, and other vital services, ensuring a secure and seamless journey on Indian National Highways.

❖ **Sarbananda Sonowal launched Port Health Organisation under Sagar Setu**

➤ The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (MoPSW) and Ayush, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal launched Port Health Organisation (PHO) module under Sagar Setu - National Logistics Portal (Marine).

➤ It is an attempt to enable faster and simpler ecosystem to promote Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in the maritime sector.

➤ This digital initiative aims to facilitate seamless operations for citizens, port workers, and various stakeholders in the maritime industry.

➤ The PHO module plays a pivotal role in ensuring public health and safety by conducting disease surveillance, health inspection, and quarantine measures.

❖ **Russian exercise 'Ocean Shield 2023' has started in the Baltic Sea**

➤ Russia commenced its live-fire naval exercises in the Baltic Sea recently, triggering concerns among neighboring European nations.

➤ The maneuvers come amid the already heightened tensions over NATO and Ukraine, adding to the complex geopolitical landscape in the region.

➤ NATO was conducting its own Baltic Sea exercises at the same time as Russia's last round of military drills.

➤ The scale of the Ocean Shield-2023 exercises is substantial. Over 6,000 personnel will take part in more than 200 combat exercises, demonstrating Russia's determination to showcase its military capabilities.

➤ The participating forces will practice techniques to safeguard sea lanes, transport troops, and defend coastlines.

❖ Indian Railways and IIT-Madras jointly signed MoU for 5G testbed

- The Indian Railways Institute of Signal Engineering and Telecommunications (IRISET) under the Ministry of Railways and the IIT Madras have signed an MoU to establish the India 5G testbed.
- This testbed will be located at IRISET in Secunderabad to test 5G use of the Indian Railways.
- The 5G Solution and testbed have been developed jointly by IIT Kanpur, Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) under MeitY, IIT Bombay, Center of Excellence in Wireless Technology (CEWiT), a society of IIT Madras.
- The India 5G testbed will serve as a cutting-edge facility to conduct comprehensive trials of 5G-enabled applications tailored specifically for Railway operations.
- The MoU also aims at accelerating the indigenisation efforts of Indian Railways for achieving 'Atmanirbar bharta' in the field of communications and providing a testing facility for Indian Railways.

❖ Microsoft appoints Puneet Chandok to lead India operations

- Microsoft Corp has appointed Puneet Chandok as the Corporate Vice President of Microsoft India and South Asia.
- His appointment will be effective September 1, 2023. He will assume the operational responsibilities from Anant Maheshwari.
- He will oversee the integration of Microsoft's businesses across South Asian countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.
- His focus will be on key industries, employing a customer-centric approach empowered by generative AI technology.

❖ Marathi poet Namdeo Dhondo Mahanor passes away at 80

➤ Marathi poet Namdeo Dhondo Mahanor, popular as Na Dho Mahanor passed away at the age of 80 years.

➤ He was a poet, lyricist and Padma Shri recipient in 1991.

➤ He was best known for his poems and lyrics for Marathi movies.

❖ India to grow at average 6.7% per year from FY24 to FY31

➤ As per S&P Global, a research and analytics firm, India's growth will be 6.7% per year in next eight years from FY24 to FY31.

➤ It takes the size of GDP to \$6.7 trillion from \$3.4 trillion in FY23.

➤ The per capita GDP will rise to about \$4,500.

➤ Capital accumulation will be the dominant driver of Indian growth.

➤ Investment as a proportion of GDP reached a 10-year high of 34% in fiscal 2023.

❖ SEBI cancels license of MMTC Ltd

➤ Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has cancelled the registration of MMTC Ltd, also known as Metals and Minerals Trading Corp of India.

➤ Reason: Its involvement in illegal paired contracts in a case pertaining to now defunct National Spot Exchange Ltd (NSEL) in Aug 2023.

➤ While cancelling the licence, Sebi directed MMTC to allow its existing clients to withdraw or transfer their securities or funds held by it within 15 days.

❖ SC appoints former Delhi HC judge as DERC interim chief

- The Supreme Court appointed former Delhi High Court judge, Justice Jayant Nath as the interim chairperson of the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC).
- The bench comprising of Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, noted the counsel representing the Delhi government and the office of LG have jointly requested it to nominate a former judge to discharge the duty of the chairperson of the DERC.
- A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud said that the Lieutenant Governor (LG) and the Chief Minister of Delhi shall notify the honorarium payable to Justice (ret'd) Nath after due consultation with the appointee.

❖ Nampally railway station to get Rs.309 crore under amrit bharat station scheme

- Hyderabad station will receive a ₹309 crore complete makeover in the next couple of years with plans underway to triple the passenger capacity.
- Parking facilities and other amenities as part of the 50 railway stations of South Central Railway (SCR) being redeveloped under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme (ABSS).
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be virtually laying the foundation for a total of 508 stations across the country on August 6 in the first phase.
- Within SCR limits, there are 21 stations in Telangana, 15 in Andhra Pradesh, 13 in Maharashtra, and one in Karnataka - with a combined cost of nearly ₹2,079.29 crore.