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NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL NEWS

ISRAEL TO HAVE A WATER ATTACHÉ IN INDIA



Image Source: AFPA YouTube

Israel has decided to appoint a special water attaché under its embassy in India from 2021. The task of this department would be to share Israel's best practices, technologies and water management in agriculture sectors. This project is a part of the long-standing deal of cooperation on agriculture under the Indo-Israeli Agriculture Project launched in 2008. The objective of Indo-Israeli Agriculture Project is to share best practices and technical knowledge from Israel to Indian Farmers. Under the cooperation, centres of Excellence are to be established. The centres will adopt advanced agriculture farm Technology of Israel. The COE's main objective is to benefit farmers on selected key crops. The COE will focus on Nursery Management, irrigation and cultivation techniques. The COE will be the meeting point for Government, Academia and farmers to cooperate towards the beneficial achievements. The project achievements of Indo-Israel Agriculture project include rejuvenation of mango orchards in Maharashtra, cherry tomatoes cultivation in Haryana and demonstrating to Indian farmers the effectiveness of irrigation technologies.

GOVERNMENT TO MAKE NEW BODY TO TACKLE POLLUTION DUE TO STUBBLE BURNING

The central government has decided to create a permanent body through legislation to tackle the air pollution and the stubble burning problem in Delhi and NCR states. The new body will replace the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) led by Bhure Lal that has been set up by the Delhi Government to deal with this matter. Following this decision, the one-member committee of retired Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur set up by the Supreme Court after its decision on stubble burning, also stands suspended. This year the pollution is a major concern because of Covid-19 situation. The experts say that increasing pollution could lead to a spike in the COVID-19 infections. A report by National Centre for Disease Control held recently that the COVID-19 infection in the New Delhi may rise up to 12,000 to 15,000 daily in winter. A study by Harvard University also shows that an increase of only one microgram per cubic metre in Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) can lead to an increase of COVID-19 death rate by 8%.

IIT GUWAHATI DEVELOPS LOW COST TECHNOLOGY FOR ANTI-AGEING COMPOUNDS

The researchers from IIT Guwahati have developed a low-cost technology that will produce anti-ageing compounds. It has been developed from agricultural resources including pulses, tea, orange peels, onion, berries, sea buckthorn and parsley. This product does not use any organic solvents as are included in other products by the commercial industry. The product was made using the size-based pressure driven membrane separation process. Under the process, the extracts of the plants or fruits are first passed through fabricated membranes that are capable of separating selected flavonoids. After that the moisture holding part is freeze dried in order to get a powdered product.

NISAR SATELLITE TO BE LAUNCHED BY 2022

The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite is scheduled to be launched by 2022. This was scheduled after India and the US decided to share Space Situational Awareness

Information with each other. This would catalyse efforts in order to create the conditions for a safe and sustainable space environment. The NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) mission is a joint project of NASA and ISRO. It has been started to co-develop and launch a dual-frequency synthetic aperture radar on the Earth observation satellite. It will be the first radar imaging satellite that uses the dual frequencies. The satellite will be launched from India on a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle on a Sun-synchronous orbit. The satellite will



Image Source: LiveMint

primarily be used for remote sensing, to observe and understand natural processes on Earth. It will use advanced radar imaging for mapping the elevation of Earth's land and ice masses 4 to 6 times a month. It has been designed to observe and measure complex natural processes including ecosystem disturbances, ice-sheet collapse and natural hazards like earthquakes, Landslides, tsunamis and volcanoes on the Earth.

HIGHLIGHTS OF “ELECTRICITY ACCESS IN INDIA AND BENCHMARKING DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES” REPORT

According to the report released by NITI Aayog based on the survey conducted across 10 states representing 65% of Indian rural population:

1. 92% of customers received electricity infrastructure within 50 metres of their premises.
2. It highlights that, 87% of the customers had access to grid-based electricity.
3. 13% population are those who either used non grid sources or did not use electricity.
4. Majority of the customers that uses non grid sources are from the agricultural sector.
5. Around 4% of households in India lag behind in the grid-based electricity sources.
6. The performance of the Uttar Pradesh was far below the other states.

7. The number of hours for which electricity is supplied has also improved over time. On an average, India is getting 17 hours of electricity per day.
8. Out of total surveyed populations, around 66% were satisfied.

The report lauds the improvement in electricity access in the country due to the result of the schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana and Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gram Jyoti Yojana.

INDIAN ARMY DEVELOPS MESSAGING APPLICATION



Image Source: World Affairs

Indian Army launched a secured messaging application platform called ‘Secure Application for the Internet’ (SAI). The mobile application for Android is similar to WhatsApp and Telegram. This will support end-to-end secure voice, text and video calling services. SAI has been developed by Colonel Shankar of the Indian Army and Army Cyber Group. SAI will be used by pan Army and it will ensure secure communication among the Indian Army personnel. SAI application was developed primarily to communication links and will also help in infrastructure management. It will monitor land encroachment and manage cantonment roads. Presently, the monitoring of Army land and infrastructure development and planning works are carried out manually which was time consuming and inefficient. The security application for internet was examined by the army cyber group and Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT). The Army decided to have its own messaging application as it was facing data leaks from the commercial applications like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram.

DELHI GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES APP TO REDRESS POLLUTION COMPLAINTS

The Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal, launched the Green Delhi mobile application. This app will be used by citizens to bring into government's notice the pollution causing activities. The application can be downloaded from the google play store. The primary aim of the launch of the app is to keep a check on rising air pollution in Delhi. It also seeks to bring pollution-causing activities to the state government's notice. The app can be used by people to inform the government on the complaints related to burning waste, industrial pollution and dust in Delhi. The app comprises the photo and video complaint. Citizens can click photos or make videos of pollution causing activities and upload them on the application. The application will then identify the location depending upon the pictures and videos. After that, the app will automatically transfer the complaint to the concerned department for time-bound redressal. Strict timelines has been made by the Delhi government for each type of complaint received on the application. The concerned departments would also be connected with the app thus all the complaints would directly be received by them. After the complaint has been resolved by the department, they are required to post a picture of it.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

PAKISTAN STILL ON FATF GREY LIST

The financial Action Task Force voted for Pakistan to be on the 'grey list' of the organisation until 2021. According to the report submitted by the organisation Pakistan failed to comply with the 27 parameters set by the organisation. It also stated that the progress of Pakistan on recommendations on the effectiveness of combating Financing terror system and anti-money laundering made by the Financial Action Task Force largely remained unchanged as compared to that of 2019. A country which is listed under the 'grey list', it becomes difficult to obtain financial aid from any international organisations. Pakistan was put under grey list earlier as it failed to check the flow of money to the terror groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba.

TREATY OF BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS ENTERS INTO FORCE



Image Source: The Globe and Mail

The UN treaty on banning of nuclear weapons was ratified by 50 nations and the United Nations announced that the treaty has entered into force. The Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the first multilateral binding instrument of nuclear disarmament. The treaty strictly urges the countries to prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. It condemns the use of nuclear weapon as well. The treaty was opposed by the major nuclear powers and the NATO allies of the United States of America also stood in unity. The nuclear powers stated that the treaty is dangerous to the old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Also, they claimed that it will remain divisive international communities and it will entrench the existing disarmament and non-proliferation.

ANTI-FRANCE PROTESTS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES

The Muslim countries are on protest against France. Thousands of Muslims from Pakistan to Lebanon to the Palestinian territories have joined the anti-France protest. The demonstrations during the protest in Pakistan turned violent as the French embassy was attacked by the public. In Jerusalem and Afghanistan people protested against the French President Macron and cried “Death to France”. The protest started as the French President vowed to protect the right to caricature Prophet Muhammad continued to roil the Muslims. The French President took the vow as a professor was beheaded by a Muslim in France reasoned that the professor showed the

caricature of Prophet Muhammad during one of the lectures. The incident caused great hue and cry in France.

WAVEL RAMKALAWAN TO BE THE NEW PRESIDENT OF SEYCHELLES



The Indian-origin Wavel Ramkalawan got elected as the new president of Seychelles. Since, 1977 it is for the first time that opposition candidate has won the election. Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean which is famed for its natural beauty. Ramkalawan considers India as a major partner. India and Seychelles

have the same security concerns of piracy threats, drugs and poaching in the Indian Ocean. Ramkalawan has also reaffirmed a pledge to hike the minimum wage after COVID-19 stifled the tourism dependent economy of Seychelles.

CHILEANS VOTE FOR NEW CONSTITUTION

The people of Chile voted to replace their dictatorship-era constitution. The results of the poll has set off wild celebrations on the streets of Santiago. People believed that the Constitution left behind by the regime of the dictator Augusto Pinochet, 1973-1990, has been a cause of pervasive inequality. In 2018, the OECD reported that the income inequality gap is more than 65% wider than the organization's average between the average income of the wealthy and the poor. President Sebastian Pinera acknowledged the result and expressed that the new constitution is the great framework of unity, stability and the future. Conservatives said that the current constitution has been key to Chile's decades of economic growth and that the removal would add pressure on the economy that is currently struggling to emerge from the pandemic.

LEGAL NEWS

KRISHI UPAD MANDI (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2020

In order to invalidate the centres recently- notified legislation by a one-day session, the Chhattisgarh Assembly passed an amendment to the Krishi Upad Mandi Bill which gives strength to control all agricultural produce markets to the government. The concept of Deemed market have been introduced by the government through this bill which are markets comprising of electronic trading, silos, warehouse, cold-storage and transactional platforms with an intention to limit the entry of any private or corporate entity into agreement with farmers as it would have to submit its accounts and stocks to state scrutiny. The necessity of electronic payment systems has also been highlighted by the bill. The three farm bills passed by the centre are The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill. These markets permit the farmers to sell directly to private buyers and split the monopoly of the government-managed mandis.

DELHI HIGH COURT STATED THAT FEE HIKE IS NOT AN OPPRESSIVE OR ARBITRARY ACT

The plea of an NIFT college student against the 10% fee-hike for NRI quota students and 5% for non-NRI quota students was dismissed by the Single Judge Bench of Justice Jayant Nath on the grounds that the plea was vague and the fee hike cannot be termed as oppressive or arbitrary. The petition was filed under the writ of mandamus to set aside the decision of the college to hike the fee of the students. The contention was made relying on clause 5(1) of the National Institute of Fashion Technology Academic Programmes Ordinances 2012 to state that there was no clarity whether the procedure was complied with by the respondent thereby seeking for better clarity and higher reliance on the balance sheet for the year ending 31.03.2019. Upon communication, it was found that the college increase the fee every year to mitigate expenses. Considering the current slowdown in the industry due to the pandemic, the college is also granting a reduction of 5% in the tuition fee for the semester July- December 2020 except for NRI students along with

the provision of payment being made in three instalments. On the grounds of lack of merit in the case, the petition was dismissed by the Court.

LAWYERS' STIPEND SCHEME FOR YOUNG GRADUATES BY THE GOVERNMENT OF KERALA



Image Source: Lawstreet

Edappadi K. Palaniswami, the Chief Minister of Kerala on Wednesday launched the lawyers' stipend scheme for young graduates wherein three students were provided with a stipend of Rs. 3000 per month for two years. The scheme aims to aid the young lawyers facing financial problems due to poor economic background during the initial years of their careers. The scheme shall also help the lawyers who are fresh graduates and are required to clear the All India Bar Examination to get themselves permanent registration in the Bar Council. "The timely help to the young Advocates will go to long way in ensuring that the standards of Advocates stay high and as a directive result, Tamilnadu will be able to produce great Advocates and eminent jurists in future," the Bar Council Chairman PS Amalraj had said.

“ELECTRICITY ACCESS IN INDIA AND BENCHMARKING DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES” REPORT

NITI Aayog has released the “Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities” report on October 29 2020. According to the report, 92 % of the customers receive electricity infrastructure within 50 meters of their premises. 13% were those who either used non

grid sources or did not use electricity at all and around 87% of the customers had access to grid-based electricity. Good connectivity, access and customer satisfaction along with access and utilities capacity were the focus areas of these surveys. Deen Dayal Upadhyay gram Jyoti Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana have been the major contributors towards the improvement in electricity access in the country.

RELIGIOUS CONVERSION ONLY FOR MARRIAGE IS UNJUSTIFIED:

ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT



Image Source: Interview Times

A writ petition filed for protection from police was rejected by the Allahabad High Court after the court noted that the girl in the case was a Muslim and had converted her religion to Hindu a month before her marriage indicating that the sole purpose of the conversion was the marriage. As observed in the precedent of Noor Jahan Begum @ Anjali Mishra & Anr. v. State of U.P. & Ors., religious conversion just for the purpose of marriage is unacceptable. The Court rejected that writ petition and was not interested in entertaining it further under Article 226 of the Indian Constitution. As observed in Lily Thomas v. Union of India, the Court observed, "A conversion of religion by an individual to Islam can be said to be bonafide if he/she is major and of sound mind and embraces Islam by his/her own freewill and because of his/her faith and belief in the oneness of God (Allah) and prophetic character of Mohamed. If a conversion is not inspired by religion feeling and under gone for its own sake, but is resorted merely with object of creating a ground for some claim of right or as a device adopted for the purpose to avoid marriage or to achieve an object without faith and belief in the unity of God (Allah) and Mohamed to be his prophet, the conversion shall not be bona fide. In case of a religion conversion there should be a

change of heart and honest conviction in the tenets of new religion in lieu of tenets of the original religion."

PG SEATS FOR MEDICAL COLLEGE BEING PURCHASED

Madras High Court expressed great concern over the current admission process for post graduate seats for medical studies in the country especially in self-finance colleges. In light of the same, the court has ordered an enquiry into the conspiracy if any, between the self- finance colleges and the Directorate of Medical College. The case is being transferred to CB-CID, which shall consist of a team headed by an officer not below the rank of an Assistant Commissioner. The situation has arisen after cases of private colleges granting admission to underserving candidates who otherwise as per the correct merit lists and eligibility criteria would not have secured a seat in the college. The Court rejected the contention of the current situation of Covid-19 as an excuse by stating that, "there is an attempt to put every blame on the Corona Virus even where it did not have a direct nexus to the action performed by an institution or any instrumentality of the State. There cannot be a greater sin than to make use of the present situation and gain advantage for one's own self-aggrandize". Noting that such methods of admission pose a grave threat to the society since they hold the responsibility of practicing on innocent lives, such candidates are only fruits of a poisonous tree. (Dr. M. Keethanjali v. Director of General Health Services & Ors)

IMPORTANT DATES

24TH OCTOBER: WORLD POLIO DAY

The day is celebrated to highlight the global efforts towards polio-free world. Also, the day encourages the use of polio vaccines. According to WHO, the polio cases have decreased by 99% since 1988. In 2020, three countries reported transmission of polio in the world. They were Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria. This year's theme is, "A win against Polio is a win for Global Health".

27TH OCTOBER: WORLD DAY FOR AUDIO VISUAL HERITAGE 2020

The initiatives such as World Day for Audio Visual Heritage, UNESCO project Digitizing our Shared UNESCO history and the Memory of World Programme, UNESCO tries to safeguard the audiovisual heritage. Every year the World Day for Audio Visual Heritage is celebrated on October 27 by UNESCO to increase the awareness of significance of the audio visual documents. This year's theme is, "Your Window to the World".

31ST OCTOBER: EKTA DIWAS

31st October is the Birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and hence is celebrated as the National Unity Day or Ekta Diwas. This year the celebrations were held in Kevadia, Guajrat and PM Modi took part in it. This year, it marks the 145th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

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