

National

Two days BRICS Women's Parliamentarian Forum held

- A total of 42 delegates from the BRICS countries are **attending the meeting which will have different plenary sessions on August 20 and 21.**
 - There will be five women parliamentarians from **Brazil, three from Russia, 28 from India, two from China and four from South Africa.**
 - This forum helped to have one voice as women **Parliamentarians to organise, mobilise, motivate and advance women.**
 - BRICS nations' women parliamentarian forum adopted the Jaipur declaration calling upon international financial institutions to "**support and facilitate financing for development on favorable terms**" to developing and least developed countries.
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various projects under Namami Gange launched

- various Projects on the Bank of Ganga worth **Rs. 560 crore under Namami Gange program have been launched.**
 - The projects include:
 1. Interception and diversion plan of Sisamau drain—worth Rs. 63 crore.
 2. Networking schemes at Bithoor—Worth Rs. 397 crore
 3. River front development scheme at Bithoor—worth Rs. 100 crore.
 4. Ghats and five crematoria will be constructed at Bithoor.
 - Also plans to develop a market for treated water based on hybrid annuity mode through PPP Model.
 - in July this year 231 projects were launched at various places in the states of Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West-Bengal, Delhi and Haryana and construction of 11 Ghats and two crematoria launched in Kanpur under Namami Gange program.
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DTC passengers will be able to pay bus fares using metro smart card

- Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) is set launch a service in which commuters will be able to pay bus **fares using their metro smart card** from October.
 - commuters will be required to swipe their metro smart card at the time of boarding buses through E-Ticketing Machines (ETM) to be **installed inside the DTC buses.**
 - Corporation also mulling to come up with a common mobility card with that passengers can use to travel on both the Metro and DTC buses.
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Andhra Pradesh police launches pilot project on DNA profiling

- Andhra Pradesh Police launched DNA Index System (DIS) that allows generation of DNA profiles from live samples like saliva and blood stains **to establish a proactive policing model** in the country.
- The model was launched on pilot basis to test the efficacy **of the DIS, to generate DNA profiles** of a batch of convicts and suspects involved in various crimes.
- DIS system works with the help of DNA technology tool called **RapidHIT** developed by **IntegenX** of USA.

- allows generation of DNA profiles using buccal swabs, blood stains, saliva and other live samples in less than two hours.

Guruvayur to be covered under the PRASAD scheme

- **The famous Sree Krishna temple in Guruvayur has been included in the Union Tourism Ministry's Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spirituality Augmentation Drive**
- Under this PRASAD scheme Development of roads, new streetlights and improvement of drinking water supply will also be taken up.
- Protection of the monument, **toilet facilities, rest rooms, watchtower, open-air theatres, rain shelters and primary health centers are other priorities.**
- Modern communication facilities, **including Wi-Fi**, will be set up at Guruvayur and this scheme would also result in increase in tourists to State.
- The ultimate objective of this scheme is overall development of the **temple town, new job creation, world-class infrastructure facilities**, promotion of local arts, cuisine and handicrafts form part of the approved project.
- Guruvayur is one of the **eight centers** shortlisted by the Centre for inclusion in the PRASAD scheme this year and the only city from south India to be presented in this scheme.

India to provide financial aid to a Nepali Sanskrit School Development

- India has pledged financial aid worth **Nepali Rs 39.97 million for the construction of a new building and a hostel facility at a Sanskrit school in eastern Nepal.**
- **Shree Saptamai Gurukul Sanskrit Vidhyashram**, established in 2009 as a primary school, was subsequently upgraded as a secondary-level school in 2014.
- The school has been providing quality education and **is the only school in Ilam where Sanskrit, Vedic rituals, English language are part of the curriculum.**
- project is being implemented through the Indian government's grant assistance under the small development program scheme as part of **India-Nepal Economic Cooperation Program.**

International

National Award winning film Sankhachil selected for Montreal Film Festival

- Director **Goutam Ghosh's National award-winning film "Sankhachil"**, an Indo-Bangla joint production, has been selected for the renowned 40th Montreal World Film Festival.
- movie narrates the pain and anguish of people living on both sides of the border following the partition of Bengal and this starring **Prosenjit Chatterjee.**
- Other movies to be presented in this film festival are:
 - Dani Kouyate's "While We Live" (Sweden),
 - Alberto Morais "The Mother" (Spain- France- Romania),
 - Mohammad Rahmanian's "Bench Cinema" (Iran),
 - Marco Segato's – 'The Bear Skin' (Italy)
 - Dai Ssijie's "The Night Peacock" (Chine – France).
 - Rajko Grlic's "The Constitution" (Croatia – Czech Republic)

Business and Economy

Forex reserve at record high of USD 365.82 billion

- India's foreign exchange reserves surged by **USD 73.2 million** to touch a life-time high of USD 365.82 billion in the week ended.
- It was surged by USD 253.6 million to touch **USD 365.75 billion last week**.
- The Gold reserves remained unchanged at USD 21.58 billion in the week. While special drawing rights held by India with the IMF gone down by **USD 3.2 million to USD 1.49 billion**, while the country's reserve position plunged by USD 5.2 million to USD 2.39 billion.
- Forex-Reserves are generally maintained for meeting their international payment obligations be it short or long terms, including sovereign and commercial debts, financing of imports, for intervention in the foreign currency markets during periods of volatility.

India world's third biggest tech startup hub: ASSOCHAM Study

- **India is home to the third largest number of technology-driven start-ups in the world, following the US and the UK** occupying the top two positions.
- report made by Assocham in association with **Thought Arbitrage Research Institute** revealed that **Bengaluru is host to the largest share of technology start-ups in the country**, followed by Delhi NCR and Mumbai, while Hyderabad and Chennai are also quite popular among budding tech entrepreneurs.
- India again figured among the five largest hosts in the world, along with **China (10,000 each)**.
- The US occupies the top slot with 83,000 start-ups. **IT hub Bengaluru is host to 26% of domestic tech start-ups, followed by Delhi NCR (23%) and Mumbai (17%)**.

CRRC joint venture plant with Pioneer Electric has started its operations

- **China's largest high speed train maker has its first \$63.4 million joint venture plant** in India to repair and manufacture railway locomotive engines has started operations.
- **CRRC (China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation) Pioneer (India) Electric Co Ltd**, is housed in Bavo Industrial District of Haryana between New Delhi and Bombay.
- China Railway Rolling Stock Corporation (CRRC) is the first foreign company to set up assembly line of rail transportation equipment in India
- India plant will repair and manufacture railway locomotive engines and also provide technology support to India's rail system and supply electric transmission systems tool **drilling, wind power generation and mining equipment making in India**.
- China is also conducting feasibility study to build a high speed railway line between **Chennai and New Delhi**.
- Besides the high speed train, India and China have agreed to cooperate to identify the technical inputs required to increase speed on the existing railway line from Chennai to Mysore via Bangalore.
- out of the total investment is **USD 63.4 million and the Chinese side holds 51 per cent of the share**.

E-Commerce Site AskMe shuts down

- Gurugram-based company's e-commerce **website AskMe has shut down** and is in the process of which resulted its 4000 odd staff in jobless.
 - reason behind closure of the Internet giant is as **severe cash crunch**.
 - **Askme's** exit also comes after the unplanned exit of **one of its principal investor** Astro Entertainment Networks, which held a 97 percent stake in AskMe exited after making its last cash investment **of Rs 150 crore**.
 - **Askme** Groups was established in 2010 and it launched its online shopping site **called AskMe Bazaar in 2012** with small and medium enterprises.
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People in News

Deepika Padukone – Vistara's New Brand Ambassador

- **Vistara**, whose 51 per cent stake in owned by Tata Sons and the rest 49 per cent by Singapore Airlines, announced the appointment of **Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone** as its brand ambassador.
 - **Tata SIA Airlines Limited**, operating as **Vistara**, is an Indian domestic airline based in Gurgaon with its hub at Delhi-Indira Gandhi International Airport.
 - The carrier, a joint venture between **Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines**, commenced operations on 9 January 2015 with its inaugural flight from Delhi to Mumbai.
 - The airline had carried more than two million passengers by June 2016 and as of April 2016, has a 2.3% share of the domestic carrier market.
 - The airline operates to seventeen destinations with a fleet of Airbus A320-200 aircraft.
 - **Vistara was the first airline to introduce premium economy seats on domestic routes in India.**
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Amul MD, RS Sodhi appointed on board of India Post Payment Banks

- **Board of India Post Payment Banks (IPPB)** has appointed **RS Sodhi, MD, Amul** as its new independent director.
 - IPPB came into existence after it received certificate of incorporation from the **Registrar of Companies on August 17**. Payments bank allows mobile firms, supermarket chains, and others to cater to banking requirements of individuals and small businesses.
 - Mr. R. S. Sodhi has been the Managing Director at **Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation since January 4, 2011. He also served as its Chief General Manager.**
 - He serves as a Director of Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation.
 - He has been a **Non-Executive Director at Kaira Can Company Limited since February 2011 to December 20, 2014**
 - Sodhi becomes the fifth independent member to join the **team of IPPB which is gearing up start its operations by March 2017.**
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Indo-Canadian Sikh MP Bardish Chagger Becomes Canada's 1st Woman House Leader

- **Indo-Canadian Sikh MP Bardish Chagger** has been named as the new leader of the government in Canada's House of Commons.
 - Ms. Chagger, the 36-year-old **Waterloo MP and Minister of Small Business and Tourism**, was among 19 Indian-origin candidates who won in last year's general election.
 - Chagger, who was born and raised in the Waterloo region, attended the **University of Waterloo where she was the president of the Young Liberals**.
 - she is one of the four Sikh Canadians inducted into Trudeau's Cabinet besides Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan — a combat veteran who did three tours in Afghanistan as a member of the **Canadian Armed Forces, Infrastructure Minister Amarjeet Sohi and Innovation Minister Navdeep Singh Bains**.
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Mexican writer Ignacio Padilla killed in car accident

- Eminent Mexican writer **Ignacio Padilla** has died in a car accident in the central state of Queretaro.
 - Padilla is a leading member of the **crack movement** that sought to help the country's at hors find a voice beyond magical realism.
 - He worked as an editorial director for Playboy magazine's Latin American publication while also writing his column, in Mexican literary magazine Sábado the early 1990s.
 - Padilla received the Alfonso Reyes literary award for his work Subterráneos in 1989, later he also won the Juan Rulfo award for a first novel for "The Cathedral of the Drowned in 1994.
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Prize Winning Poet Joyce Carol Thomas passes away

- Joyce Carol Thomas, a prize-winning **children's author and champion** of multiculturalism, has died at the age of 78.
 - **Joyce Carol Thomas** was an African-American poet, playwright, motivational speaker, and author of more than 30 children's books.
 - For her 1982 novel Marked by Fire, Thomas won a National Book Award in category Children's Fiction (paperback) and an American Book Award. Thomas has been **one of three to five finalists for the Coretta Scott King Award thrice, in 1984 for Bright Shadow, in 1994 for Brown Honey** in Broomwheat Tea, and in 2009 for The Blacker the Berry in 2009.
 - She also received a New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year Award and an Outstanding Woman of the 20th Century Award
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Science and Technology

Scientists predict brain activity patterns

- researchers were able to decode and predict the **brain activity patterns of word meanings** within sentences which will help **brain injury and stroke patients communicate better**.
- The study used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to measure human brain instigation where researchers predicted the brain patterns.

- FMRI data helps researchers to predict brain activity patterns on average 70 per cent close to the actual meaning.
 - research study pave the way for key improvements in understanding how information is represented throughout the brain. The study was published in **the journal Cerebral Cortex**.
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Chinese scientists discover molecule to repair organs

- **Chinese scientists** have discovered a small molecule, **XMU-MP-1** that can regenerate tissue.
 - It can promote repair and regeneration in the liver, intestines and skin.
 - it could potentially **eliminate transplants of some organs**.
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Environment and Ecology

Tyrannosaurus rex fossil with complete skull discovered

- In a major finding, scientists have discovered a **Tyrannosaurus rex fossil, including a very complete skull, vertebrae, ribs, hips and jaw bones, which they estimate to be about 20 per cent** of the dinosaur.
 - According to a previous report from Nature World News, the discovery, which includes a complete skull, vertebrae, ribs, hips and lower jaw bones, was made after the researchers discovered pieces of **fossilized bone protruding from a rocky hillside**.
 - **Researchers estimated the size of Tuft-Love Rex to be 85 percent of the largest T-Rex fossil** ever discovered.
 - Named after its discoverer, Jason Love and Luke Tufts, Love-Tuft Rex is believed to be 15 years old when it died and lived at the very end of the Cretaceous Period right before the **Cretaceous-Paleogene mass extinction about 66 million years ago**.
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New species of eel found in Bay of Bengal

- Scientists from have discovered **Gymnothorax indicus, a new species of eel** in the northern Bay of Bengal region along the West Bengal coast.
 - It was discovered after it was collected in a trawl net by fishermen in northern Bay of Bengal, about 70 km off the coast.
 - Eels are found mostly at the **bottom of rivers and seas**. This species was found at a depth of 35 metres in the sea.
 - Globally, about **1,000 species of eels have been identified and, in India**, the number is around 125.
 - The coastal region of West Bengal adjoining areas of Bay of Bengal are the rich marine biodiversity. Over the past few years, it has yielded two new species of fish. In 2015, **Gymnothorax mishrai, a short brown unpatented moray eel was discovered. Scientists also had discovered another new species of Haplogenyis bengalensis**, an edible marine fish from the same area.
 - the eel species Gymnothorax indicus is slender-bodied. It was **found at a depth of 35 metres in the sea. It is about one feet-long and edible. It has 194 vertebrae**. Its dorsal fin has a black margin.
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