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Kochi - Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline



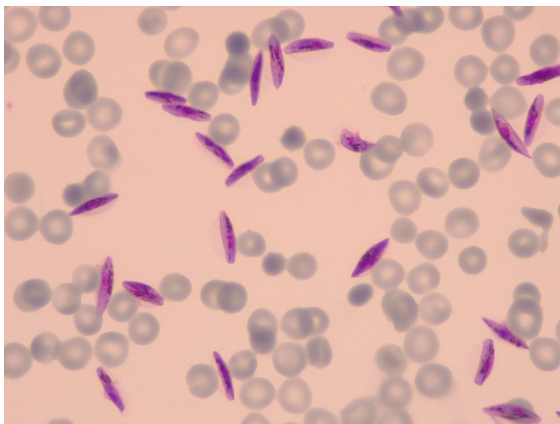
- PM Will will dedicate the Kochi - Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline to the nation on 5th January 2021
- The event marks an important milestone towards the creation of 'One Nation One Gas Grid'.
- The 450 km long pipeline has been built by GAIL (India) Ltd.
- It has transportation capacity of 12 Million Metric Standard Cubic Metres per day, and will carry natural gas from the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Regasification Terminal at Kochi (Kerala) to Mangaluru (Dakshina Kannada district, Karnataka), while passing through Ernakulam, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts.
- The total cost of the project was about Rs. 3000 crore and its construction created over 12 lakh man-days of employment.
- Laying of the pipeline was an engineering challenge as the route of the pipeline necessitated it to cross water bodies at more than 100 locations.
- This was done through a special technique called Horizontal Directional Drilling method.
- The pipeline will supply environment friendly and affordable fuel in the form of Piped Natural Gas (PNG) to households and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) to the transportation sector.

Govt to start 1000 Khelo India small centres to encourage sports culture in country



- 1000 Khelo India small centres across the country that will help retired sports persons get employment or some role in shaping the sports culture of the country
- India has huge potential where sports is concerned but potential alone has no meaning unless utilized and channelized in the right way.

IIT-B researchers create AI model to identify malaria parasites



- Researchers from IIT-Bombay have created an AI-based model using proteomics technology that can help differentiate between two major species of malaria parasites, P falciparum and P vivax.
- These species are not differentiable using the rapid diagnostic tests (RDT), Shalini Aggarwal, who was part of the study, said.
- The researchers are currently working on developing a diagnostic kit prototype.

Beluga Whales



- Belugas are also called white whales, and their unusual color makes them one of the most familiar and easily distinguishable of all the whales.
- Calves are born gray or even brown and only fade to white as they become sexually mature around five years of age.
- White whales are smallish, ranging from 13 to 20 feet in length. They have rounded foreheads and no dorsal fin.
- Belugas generally live together in small groups known as pods. They are social animals and very vocal communicators that employ a diversified language of clicks, whistles, and clangs. Belugas can also mimic a variety of other sounds.
- These whales are common in the Arctic Ocean's coastal waters, though they are found in subarctic waters as well. Arctic belugas migrate southward in large herds when the sea freezes over

Which countries have approved Oxford coronavirus vaccine?



- India has become the fourth country to approve Oxford-AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine, Covishield, for emergency use. Apart from India, Britain, Argentina and El Salvador have also given a nod to the vaccine.
- AstraZeneca is also in discussions with the European Union's European Medicines Agency, which is conducting a rolling review of the vaccine.

“Plug and Key” garbage processing units



- Pune civic body introduces 'plug and key' garbage processing units
- The new units installed on vehicles with different types of mesh attached with a conveyor belt will segregate dry garbage.
- The project will save time, money and minimum manpower. There will be no civil work to set up the plant. It will start just to plug and key and the processing will be done on machines.

Dzuko Wildfire



- Indian Air Force (IAF) on Sunday resumed the Bambi Bucket operation to douse the wildfire in Dzukou Valley that lies on the Nagaland-Manipur border
 - Dzukou Valley, about 30 km from Nagaland's capital Kohima, is a popular trekking destination known for its lilies and biodiversity.
- It is also home to the endangered Blyth's tragopan
 - The Dzukou Valley ranges between Nagaland and Manipur.
 - It is situated at an altitude of 2452 m above sea level.
 - The valley is famous for its wide range of flowers in every season but the most famous one is the Dzuko Lily and it is found only in this valley

RailTel proposes smart classes for rural schools run by Govt



- Rail Tel, the telecom PSU of Indian Railways, has pitched this ambitious proposal to the Ministry of Education to impact around 3.5 lakh students who are enrolled in these schools, which are run by the Central government predominantly for meritorious students in rural India
- RailTel, a "Mini Ratna (Category-I)" Central Public Sector Enterprise is an ICT provider and one of the largest neutral telecom infrastructure providers in the country owning a Pan-India optic fiber network on exclusive Right of Way (ROW) along Railway track

- RailTel was incorporated on September 26, 2000 with the aim of modernizing the existing telecom system for train control, operation and safety and to generate additional revenues by creating nationwide broadband and multimedia network, laying optical fiber cable using the right of way along railway tracks.

Banana grit for that good gut feeling



- Scientists at the CSIR-National Institute for Inter disciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) at Pappanamcode here in Kerala have come up with a new product, banana grit or granules, developed from raw Nendran bananas.
- Billed as an ideal ingredient for a healthy diet, banana grit can be used for making a wide range of dishes, according to the NIIST.
- The product resembles to 'rava' and broken wheat.
- Generally consumed ripe, Nendran banana also finds use in typical Kerala dishes such as avial and thoran.
- The granules can be used for making upma, or it can be mixed with banana powder for porridge, with milk or coconut milk for use as a health drink.
- Banana powder can be used for making cakes and breads, along with refined wheat flour.
- Developing new uses for Nendran also comes as a boon to farmers who have often been struggling against falling prices, according to the scientists.
- The technology had been transferred to Kochi-based Moza Organic and the product is expected to be in the market soon.

An anti-disclosure amendment that hits public health (Written by Pankhuri Agarwal)

- A patent is a form of intellectual property that gives its owner the legal right to exclude others from making, using, or selling an invention for a limited period of years in exchange for publishing an enabling public disclosure of the invention.
- The central government recently published the Patent (Amendment) Rules, 2020 amending the format of a statement that patentees and licensees are required to annually submit to the Patent Office disclosing the extent to which they have commercially worked or made the patented inventions available to the public in the country.
- The amendment has significantly watered down the disclosure format, and this could hamper the effectiveness of India's compulsory licensing regime which depends on full disclosure of patent working information.
- This in turn could hinder access to vital inventions including life-saving medicines, thereby impacting public health.

- In exchange of a 20-year patent monopoly granted to an inventor, India's patent law imposes a duty on the patentee to commercially work the invention in India to ensure that its benefits reach the public.
- A failure of this duty could trigger compulsory licensing or even subsequent revocation of the patent under the Patents Act, 1970.
- The disclosure is to be made in the Form 27 format as prescribed under the Patent Rules, 2003.
- This statement is meant to help the Patent Office, potential competitors, etc. to determine whether the patentee has worked the invention in India and made it sufficiently available to the public at reasonable prices.

Don't ignore the women farmers (Written by Thamizhachi Thangapandian)



- Eminent agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan once said, "Some historians believe that it was women who first domesticated crop plants and thereby initiated the art and science of farming."
- While men went out hunting in search of food, women started gathering seeds from the native flora and began cultivating those of interest from the point of view of food, feed, fodder, fibre and fuel."
- According to the agricultural census, 73.2% of rural women are engaged in farming activities but only 12.8% own landholdings. Due to cultural, social and religious forces, women have been denied ownership of land.
- The India Human Development Survey reports that 83% of agricultural land in the country is inherited by male members of the family and less than 2% by their female counterparts.
- 81% of women agricultural labourers belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, so they also contribute to the largest share of casual and landless labourers.
- Without any recognition, women are systematically excluded from all the benefits of government schemes.
- Moreover, they are not guaranteed the rights which they would otherwise be given if they were recognised as farmers, such as loans for cultivation, loan waivers, crop insurance, subsidies or even compensation to their families in cases where they commit suicide.
- As the Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch (MAKAAM) notes, they have unequal access to rights over land, water and forests.

- There is gendered access to support systems such as storage facilities, transportation costs, and cash for new investments or for paying off old dues or for other services related to agricultural credit.
- MAKAAM, in its statement, has highlighted several issues with the laws.
- The first is the lack of any mention of MSP (minimum support price) that protects farmers from exploitation.
- It also highlights how women are barely in a position as empowered agents who can either understand or negotiate (written) agreements with traders and corporate entities who are seeking to enter into agreements with the farmers to purchase their produce or for other services.
- It is clear that farmers will have no bargaining power in the corporatisation of agriculture, where corporates will decide the price with no safety net or adequate redressal mechanism for the farmers.
- Consequently, the small marginal and medium farmers will be forced to sell their land to big agro-businesses and become wage labourers.