

Daily News Decode

09.01.21

NIXI offers free Domain in local Indian languages



- The National Internet Exchange of India, NIXI has announced that it will offer a free Internationalized Domain Name, IDN in any of the preferred 22 official Indian language along with every IN domain booked by the registrant.
- Applicant will also get a free email in local language.
- This offer has been created to stimulate the adoption of भारत IDN domain name and proliferation of local language content.
- This offer is valid for new .in users who register up to 31st of January.
- This offer is also extended to those existing in users who renew their domain in the month of January 2021.
- National Internet Exchange of India, NIXI is a not for profit organization working since 2003 for spreading the internet technology to the citizens of India through the activities like Internet Exchanges through which the internet data is exchanged amongst ISPs and between ISPs and CDNs, IN Registry managing and operation of IN country code domain and भारत IDN domain for India and Indian Registry for Internet Names and Numbers (IRINN), managing and operating Internet protocol IPv4 or IPv6.

IREDA signs MoU with NHPC for providing its technical expertise in developing renewable energy projects



IS/ISO 9001:2015, ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Certified

(A Mini Ratna Category – I PSU)

- Under the MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and conservation projects for NHPC
- IREDA will assist NHPC in developing an action plan to create and acquire Renewable Energy projects for the next five years.

Air India's all-women pilot team to fly over North Pole on longest air route



- An all-women pilot team of Air India will fly over North Pole on the world's longest air route and the flight from San Francisco will reach Bengaluru on January 9 covering about 16,000 kilometres.
- Captain Zoya Agarwal, who'll be commanding the flight, said, "Most people in the world won't see the North Pole...in their lifetime. I feel truly privileged."

Air India introduces UV robots to disinfect aircrafts



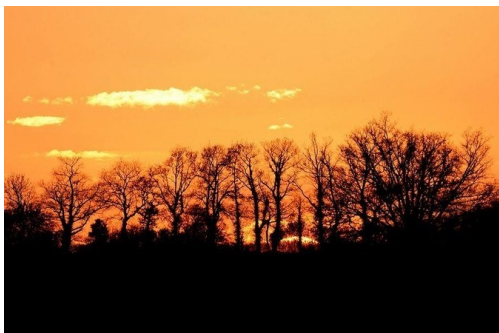
- Air India introduces UV robots to disinfect aircrafts short by Rishabh Bhatnagar / 07:13 pm on 08 Jan 2021, Friday
- Air India Express, a subsidiary of India's national carrier Air India, said it has become the first airline to use ultraviolet robots to clean and disinfect its aircrafts.
- The device comes with a UV disinfection lamping system and collapsible arms to reach difficult-to-access areas, the airline said.
- It was used at Delhi airport on Thursday for its Boeing 737-800 aircraft.

CO2 levels to be 50% higher than pre-industrial era in 2021: Report



- Human activity will push concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to levels 50% higher than before the Industrial Revolution, in 2021, the UK's Met Office reported.
- CO2 concentration is expected to exceed 417 ppm for several weeks from April to June for the first time.
- However, CO2 accumulation is expected to be slightly slower than usual in 2021.

2020 ties with 2016 as warmest year on record: EU



- According to data published by the EU climate monitoring service, 2020 tied with 2016 for the warmest year worldwide.
- The year was also the warmest year in Europe since records began. It topped the previous temperature record of 2019 in Europe by 0.4°C.
- The data showed 2020 was 1.25°C warmer than during the pre-industrial period from 1850-1900.

Black Bucks



- Four blackbucks (two females and two males) died of shock and one was left injured after stray dogs attacked them in Pune's Rajiv Gandhi Zoological Park and Wildlife Research Centre.
- The blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*), also known as the Indian antelope, is an antelope native to India and Nepal.
- It inhabits grassy plains and lightly forested areas with perennial water sources. It stands up to 74 to 84 cm high at the shoulder.
- In India, hunting of blackbuck is prohibited under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- The blackbuck has significance in Hinduism; Indian and Nepali villagers do not harm the antelope.
- The blackbuck is listed under Appendix III of CITES.

It inhabits several protected areas of India, including

- ⇒ in **Gujarat**: Velavadar Wildlife Sanctuary, Gir Forest National Park;
- ⇒ in **Bihar**: Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary;
- ⇒ in **Maharashtra**: Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary;
- ⇒ in **Madhya Pradesh**: Kanha National Park
- ⇒ in **Rajasthan**: Tal Chhapar Sanctuary, National Chambal Sanctuary, Ranthambhore National Park
- ⇒ in **Karnataka** Ranibennur Blackbuck Sanctuary;
- ⇒ in **Tamil Nadu**: Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary, Vallanadu Wildlife Sanctuary, Guindy National Park.

The Ganges river dolphin



- The Ganges river dolphin was officially discovered in 1801.
- Ganges river dolphins once lived in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu river systems of Nepal, India, and Bangladesh.
- But the species is extinct from most of its early distribution ranges.
- The Ganges river dolphin can only live in freshwater and is essentially blind.
- They hunt by emitting ultrasonic sounds, which bounces off of fish and other prey, enabling them to “see” an image in their mind.
- They are frequently found alone or in small groups, and generally a mother and calf travel together.
- The Ganges River Dolphin or also called ‘Susu,’ is the National Aquatic Animal of India.
- There is a Ganges Dolphin Sanctuary called Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary in Bihar. Locals of Bihar called Gangetic Dolphin as ‘Soons’
- IUCN Red List of Threatened Species has given the status of ‘Endangered’ to the Ganges River Dolphin
- The species is included in the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 – Schedule I.
- It makes it prohibited to be hunted throughout India, except under threat to human life. Trade of Ganges Dolphin is prohibited

GDP estimates point to sustained V-shaped economic recovery: Govt



- The Ministry of Finance on Thursday said the fresh GDP estimates suggest continued resurgence in economic activity and point at sustained V-shaped recovery post-lockdown.
- The ministry's comments came after a 7.7% contraction in GDP was projected by the National Statistical Office.
- The ministry added that a "relatively more manageable pandemic situation" has added momentum to recovery.
- V-shaped recovery in which the economy quickly recoups lost ground and gets back to the normal growth trend-line.
- A V-shaped recovery is characterized by a quick and sustained recovery in measures of economic performance after a sharp economic decline.
- Because of the speed of economic adjustment and recovery in macroeconomic performance, a V-shaped recovery is a best case scenario given the recession.

GOBAR-Dhan Scheme



- Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources-Dhan (GOBAR-Dhan) scheme Cattle dung, kitchen waste and agricultural waste can be tapped to create biogas-based energy. The objectives of this initiative is to make villages clean and to generate wealth and energy from cattle and other waste.

- Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation has launched the GOBAR DHAN scheme.
- The scheme is being implemented as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).
- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) comprises two main components for creating clean villages – creating open defecation free (ODF) villages and managing solid and liquid waste in villages.

Swayam and Swayam Prabha

Swayam



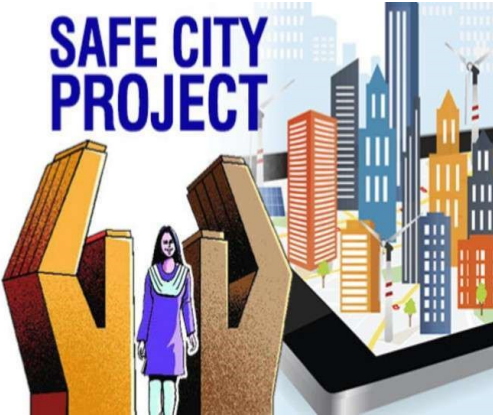
- Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), was launched on July 9, 2017 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses.

- This covers all higher education subjects and skill sector courses.
- The objective is to ensure that every student in the country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.
- Academics from hundreds of institutions throughout the country are involved in developing & delivering Massive open online courses (MOOCs) through SWAYAM in almost all disciplines from senior schooling to Post Graduation.
- Professors of centrally funded institutions like IITs, IIMs, central universities will offer online courses to citizens of India through this platform.

Swayam Prabha

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resources Development to provide 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH across the length and breadth of the country on 24X7 basis.
- It has curriculum-based course content covering diverse disciplines.
- This is primarily aimed at making quality learning resources accessible to remote areas where internet availability is still a challenge.
- The DTH channels are using the GSAT-15 satellite for programme telecasts.

Safe city project



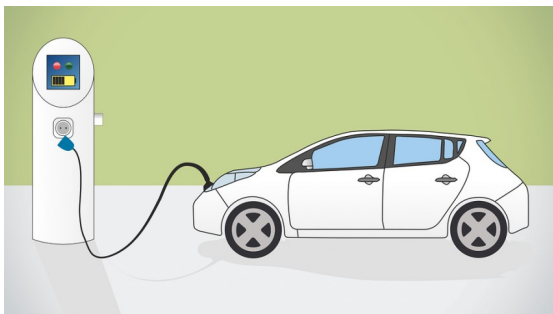
- It is a mission mode initiative of MHA under the Nirbhaya Funds scheme for safety of women. The proposal for the Safe City Project, which has been in the thick of a controversy of late, was made by the police in 2013. But it was approved by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs only in 2018.
- The Safe City project aims to create a safe, secure and empowering environment for women in public places, to enable them to pursue all opportunities without the threat of gender-based violence and/or harassment.
- It also aims to prevent and curb all forms of crimes against women and girl children in public places by providing safer urban infrastructure and efficient access to law enforcement agencies.
- It includes installation of CCTV cameras, surveillance systems, panic buttons and GIS mapping of crimes in the city.
- The cost of the projects is shared between the Central Government and the concerned States in 60:40 ratio.
- The Safe City Project in Delhi is fully funded by the Central Government.
- Eight cities have been identified for implementation of this project in the first phase, under the Nirbhaya Fund, at an estimated cost of Rs.2919.55 crore.
- These are Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow.

Economists call for accelerated privatisation and simpler GST



- To reduce tax compliance burden on small entrepreneurs, both cost of compliance and the time they spend on worrying about these issues should be reduced by simplifying and rationalizing direct and indirect tax systems

FAME II Scheme



- Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME II), is a scheme launched by Government of India to give a boost to development of Electric Vehicles.
- This is important considering the efforts to combat climate change across the globe.
- The Government of India has allocated a budget of Rs 10,000 crores for the second phase of this scheme.
- This scheme was launched by the Department of Heavy Industries in 2015.
- This scheme was launched to achieve the goals of National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020. Phase II of FAME was launched in 2019.

The key features of the FAME II scheme are given below.

- Allocation of Rs 10,000 crores for a period of 3 years from 2019 to 2022.
- Rs 1,000 crores has been set aside for setting up charging stations for electric vehicles.
- It has given a proposal of providing 1 slow charging unit for every electric bus and 1 fast charging station for 10 electric buses.
- The Central Government will incentivize the purchase of approximately 5 lakh three wheelers, 7000 electric buses and 35,000 four wheelers.

The following steps are taken by the Central Government to make Electric vehicles more affordable.

- Incentives will be given to manufacturers involved in development of electric vehicles.
- Incentives will be given to manufacturers involved in development of lithium ion batteries and electric motors.
- The Centre has directed states to frame policies and provide incentives to manufacturers and buyers.

Beyond the Central Vista verdict, key questions

(Written by A. Srivathsan)

- The majority judgment concluded that the government had followed all processes as stipulated by the regulations and could go ahead with the construction
- The critical questions on ensuring public commitment in civic projects, improving participatory processes in city-building, and effective procurement of professional services remain unanswered.
- As judicial reviews are hesitant to direct changes to the mandated regulations, enduring solutions have to be found by improving them through political persuasion and public pressure.

- 'Horizontal accountability' is about creating interrelated state organisations such as heritage committees and environmental regulators to keep a check.
- 'Vertical accountability' concerns citizen oversight, which currently is limited to elections.
- The government often argues that horizontal accountability is in place and works well, while citizens, who are unconvinced given the poor track record, have argued for better and expanded vertical accountability such as an improved participatory process.
- In select areas such as master planning, regulations mandate stakeholder consultations.
- However, the processes are vague. They do not stipulate clear objective measures to determine whether stakeholder discussions meet the test of public consultation.

Grading India's counter-coercive strategy

(Written by Arjun Subramaniam)

- Interestingly, as India's defensive posture was strengthened militarily, so did the coercive content in its diplomacy and economic posturing vis-à-vis China.
- Having failed to coerce the People's Liberation Army to withdraw by mid-July, India had two options as per the escalatory ladder laid out by Alexander George.
- It could issue an indirect or tacit ultimatum that would involve an implicit and tightly controlled tactical action, thereby demonstrating resolve and intent.
- It could issue a full-fledged ultimatum followed by multi-dimensional military action that could lead to a limited conflict.

Optimism unbounded

- The National Statistical Office on Thursday projected that GDP in the 12 months ending March would total almost ₹134.4-lakh crore in constant prices, reflecting a 7.7% contraction from the preceding year's figure.
- To reach that level, the NSO has assumed that output will recover vigorously in the third and fourth quarters.
- After contracting by almost 16% in the April-September period, it sees GDP being just a mere ₹10,400 crore short of the year-earlier second half's figure.
- Both the expenditure side and gross value added (GVA) across various industries point to the high degree of optimism implicit in the NSO's assumptions.
- Private consumption expenditure — the single biggest component propelling GDP, at well over 50% — is estimated to shrink 9.5% in the full year, after contracting nearly 19% in the first half.
- The NSO sees government final consumption expenditure (GFCE) jumping 17% in the second half, erasing the first-half's contraction and buoying the annual figure to a growth of 5.8%.

India Draws Up Nations' List For Akash, BrahMos Export



- India Draws Up Nations' List For Akash, BrahMos Export In its quest to emerge as a major arms exporter and bolster strategic ties with “friendly” countries, India has drawn up a list of nations to whom the Akash surface-to-air missile systems, BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and other weapons can be sold in the years ahead.
- The case for exporting BrahMos missiles, developed jointly with Russia, to the Philippines is already with the Cabinet Committee for Security for final approval, say defence sources.
- The second country on the list is Indonesia, while Vietnam, UAE, Saudi Arabia and South Africa have also shown an interest in acquiring the 290-km BrahMos, which has emerged as the “precision-strike weapon of choice” for Indian armed forces.
- There are nine countries, in turn, which have shown interest in the indigenously-developed Akash missile systems, which can intercept hostile aircraft, helicopters, drones and subsonic cruise missiles at a range of 25-km.
- They are Kenya, Philippines, Indonesia, UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Vietnam and Algeria. “Being over 96% indigenous, there is no need to seek any third country’s concurrence to export Akash. For BrahMos, Russia has to be on board,” said a source.
- Though the range of BrahMos is now being extended to over 400-km, with India and Russia even planning to test an 800-km variant this year, the export version will be the 290-km on

India Pursues Independent Foreign Policy: MEA



- Against the backdrop of possible US sanctions on the \$5.4-billion deal with Russia for S-400 air defence systems, India on Friday said it has an independent foreign policy that guides defence acquisitions in line with national security interests.
- Recent reports have suggested the US could impose secondary sanctions under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).
- The Russian side has said the deal for five S-400 systems is progressing according to schedule despite the threat of possible sanction
- “India has always pursued an independent foreign policy. This also applies to our defence acquisitions and supplies which are guided by our national security interests,” he said in response to a question on the S-400 deal.