

## Daily News Decode

25.05.21

### Happy Buddha Purnima



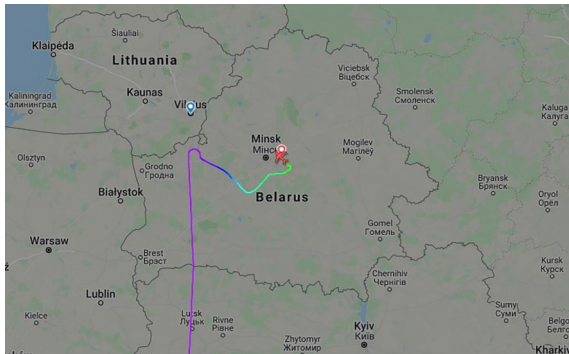
- Buddha Purnima, in the month of Vaishakha, is an extremely auspicious and happy day.
- It is believed that Gautam Buddha was born on this day.
- Buddha Purnima is also known as Buddha Jayanti, Vesak Day and Vaishaka.
- Buddha Purnima is on May 26
- This is the 2583rd birth anniversary of Gautam Buddha.
- According to Buddhist traditions, Prince Siddhartha Gautama, later known as Gautam Buddha, was born in 623 B.C. at Lumbini in the Terai region of Nepal.
- Lumbini is now a popular place of pilgrimage and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

### LAKSHADWEEP DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (LDA)



- Discontent is simmering in the Lakshadweep group of islands over the creation of a Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA) by the new administrator Praful Khoda Patel.
- Mr Patel, a BJP leader and former Home Minister of Gujarat, is the first political appointee as Administrator, a post mostly held by retired civil servants.
- Islanders have pointed out that the legislation are out of sync with the social and environmental realities of the archipelago.
- The creation of the Lakshadweep Development Authority (LDA), with extensive powers, including eviction of land owners, is widely read as having been pushed by the real estate lobby and against the interest of the islanders.
- Hundreds of islanders have written to the administrator demanding the withdrawal of the proposed regulation, which makes provision for the orderly and progressive development of land in both urban and rural areas and to preserve and improve the amenities thereof;
- grant of permission to develop land and for other powers of control over the use of land;
- conferring additional powers in respect of the acquisition and development of land for planning.

## BELARUS



- The authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko of Belarus sparked international outrage after his regime forced a commercial airline flying from Greece to Lithuania to land in its territory allegedly on the pretext of a bomb scare, so it could arrest a dissident journalist on board.
- Belarus is a landlocked country in Eastern Europe. It is bordered by Russia to the east and northeast, Ukraine to the south, Poland to the west, and Lithuania and Latvia to the northwest.
- Minsk is the capital and largest city.
- In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in 1917, Byelorussian SSR, became a founding constituent republic of the Soviet Union in 1922.
- During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Belarus declared independence in 1991. In 2000, Belarus and Russia signed a treaty for greater cooperation, forming the Union State.
- It has shown no aspirations for joining the European Union.
- Alexander Lukashenko was elected Belarus's first president in the country's first and only free election post-independence, serving as president ever since.

## MCA21 VERSION 3.0



- Minister of Corporate Affairs launched the first phase of Ministry of Corporate Affairs' (MCA) MCA21 Version 3.0 (V3.0) comprising of revamped website, new email services for MCA Officers and two new modules, namely, e-Book and e-Consultation.
- The MCA V3.0 is going to be implemented in two phases.
- The second and final phase shall be launched from October 2021 onwards.
- The entire project is proposed to be launched within this Financial Year and will be data analytics and machine learning driven.
- The MCA21 V3.0 in its entirety will not only improve the existing services and modules, but will also create new functionalities like e-adjudication, compliance management system, advanced helpdesk, feedback services, user dashboards , self-reporting tools and revamped master data services.
- MCA21 has been part of Mission Mode projects of the Government of India. Bagging several accolades in past, the project has now reached its 3rd version.
- MCA21 V3.0 is part of this year's Budget announcement and will leverage the use of latest technologies to further streamline the Corporate Compliance and stakeholders experience.

## HALLMARKING OF GOLD JEWELLERY AND ARTEFACTS



- The Centre further extended the deadline for mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts by a fortnight till June 15 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In November 2019, the government had announced that hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts would be made mandatory across the country from January 15, 2021.
- However, the deadline was extended for four months till June 1 after jewellers sought more time in view of the pandemic.
- Gold hallmarking is a purity certification of the precious metal and is voluntary in nature at present.
- The hallmarking of jewellery/artefacts is required to enhance the credibility of gold jewellery and customer satisfaction through third party assurance for the marked purity/fineness of gold.
- According to BIS, the mandatory hallmarking will protect the public against lower caratage and ensure consumers do not get cheated while buying gold ornaments and get the purity as marked on the ornaments.
- A committee, headed by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Director General Pramod Tewari, has been formed to ensure proper coordination and resolve the implementation issues.
- From June 15, jewellers will be allowed to sell only 14, 18 and 22 carats of gold jewellery.
- The BIS has been running a hallmarking scheme for gold jewellery since April 2000. Around 40 per cent of gold jewellery is being hallmarked currently.

## SHAHI LITCHI



- In a major boost to export of GI certified products, season's first consignment of Shahi Litchi from Bihar was exported to United Kingdom by air route.
- Shahi litchi was the fourth agricultural products to get GI certification from Bihar in 2018, after Jardalu mango, Katarni rice and Magahi paan.
- India is the second largest producer of litchi (Litchi chin) in the world, after China.
- The translucent, flavoured aril or edible flesh of the litchi is popular as a table fruit in India, while in China and Japan it is preferred in dried or canned form.
- Bihar tops in terms of production of litchi. Muzaffarpur, Vaishali, Samastipur, Champaran, Begusarai districts and adjoining areas of Bihar have favorable climate for growing Shahi Litchi.



## INDIA – ISRAEL COOPERATION IN AGRICULTURE



- India and Israel signed a three-year work program for cooperation in Agriculture, while recognizing the centrality of agriculture and water sectors in the bilateral relationship.
- India and Israel are implementing the “INDO-ISRAEL Agricultural Project Centres of Excellence” and “INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence”.
- The minister said that India and Israel have had bilateral relations since 1993 in the agricultural sector. This is the 5th Indo-Israel Agriculture Action Plan (IIAP).
- The three-year work program (2021-2023) will aim to grow existing Centres of Excellence, establish new centers, increase CoE’s value chain, bring the Centres of Excellence into the self-sufficient mode, and encourage private sector companies and collaboration.
- As for the “INDO-ISRAEL Villages of Excellence”, this is a new concept aimed at creating a model ecosystem in agriculture across eight states, alongside 13 Centers of Excellence within 75 villages.
- The IIVOE program will focus on: (1) Modern Agriculture infrastructure, (2) Capacity Building, (3) Market linkage.

## VINEYARD WIND PROJECT



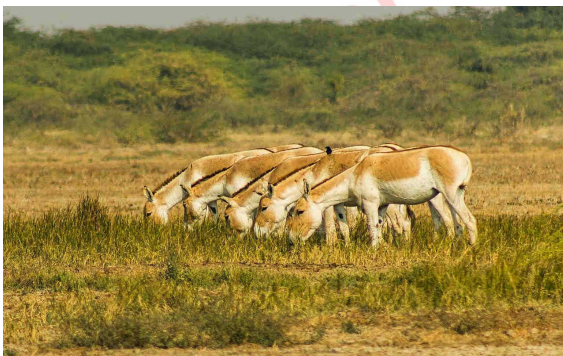
- In the US, the Biden administration has approved the nation's first major offshore wind farm, billing it as the launch of a new domestic energy industry that will help eliminate emissions from the power sector.
- Approval of the Vineyard Wind project, which will be located 23 km off the coast of Massachusetts, is a significant milestone in the more than decade-long effort to permit a commercial-scale offshore wind project in the U.S. waters.
- The Vineyard Wind project is intended to create enough electricity to power 400,000 homes.
- The project will begin delivering electricity to the grid in the second half of 2023.
- The project is meant to create 3,600 jobs, delivering on Biden's campaign promise that fighting climate change by expanding clean energy sources will boost employment.

## 1.2 metric tonne (MT) of fresh jackfruit was exported from Tripura to London.



- Jackfruit is a species of tree in the fig, mulberry, and breadfruit family (Moraceae).
- It is a multiple fruit, composed of hundreds to thousands of individual flowers, and the fleshy petals are eaten.
- Scientific Name: *Artocarpus heterophyllus*.
- Local Names in India: Katahal (Hindi), Phanas (Marathi), Phannasa (Gujarati), Panasa (Telugu), Palaa/ Varukkai (Tamil), Halasu (Kannada), Chakka (Malayalam), Panasa (Oriya).
- Major producers in world: India, Thailand, Indonesia and Nepal.
- Major Production States: Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Assam. Kerala is the largest producer of jackfruit in the world. It is the state fruit of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- In a major step towards harnessing exports potential of agricultural and processed food products from north-eastern region, a shipment of 1.2 metric tonne (MT) of fresh jackfruit was exported from Tripura to London.
- Recently, the first consignment of 'red rice' was sent to the USA from Assam. Iron rich 'red rice' is grown in Brahmaputra valley of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer.
- The rice variety is referred as 'Bao-dhaan', which is an integral part of the Assamese food.

## Banni grassland



- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) recently ordered all encroachments to be removed from Gujarat's Banni grasslands within six months and directed a joint committee to prepare an action plan in a month.
- The region's nomadic pastoralist community, the Maldharis, united under Banni Pashu Uchherak Maldhari Sangthan (BPUMS), had filed a case against the rampant encroachment in the ecologically-sensitive grassland in May, 2018.
- The court said that the Maldharis will continue to hold the right to conserve the community forests in the area, granted to them as per the provisions in Section 3 of Forest Rights Act, 2006.
- It forms a belt of arid grassland ecosystem on the outer southern edge of the desert of the marshy salt flats of Rann of Kutch in Kutch District and accounts for almost 45 per cent of the pastures in Gujarat.

- Two ecosystems, wetlands and grasslands, are juxtaposed in Banni.
- The word 'Banni' comes from the Hindi word 'banai', meaning made.
- The land here was formed from the sediments that were deposited by the Indus and other rivers over thousands of years.
- On July 3, 2019, the NGT ordered to demarcate the boundaries of the Banni grassland and restricted non-forest activities.
- The grasslands are home to mammals such as the nilgai, chinkara, blackbuck, wild boar, golden jackal, Indian hare, Indian wolf, caracal, Asiatic wildcat, desert fox, Indian wild ass.

## Maldharis-



- Maldharis are descendants of nomads who periodically came from Pakistan, Rajasthan and other parts of Gujarat, and finally settled in the Banni grasslands.
- Their major communities include Sindhi Sunni Muslims and Vadhas.
- The literal meaning of Maldhari is keeper (dhari) of the animal stock (mal).
- They are notable as the traditional dairymen of the region, and once supplied milk and cheese to the palaces of rajas.
- The majority of the Maldharis in Gir belong to (Charan) minority castes which include Koli, Kathi, Bawa, Meghwal and Makranis.
- The Maldharis of Gir, Alech and Barda have been included among the Scheduled Tribes since 1956, although these castes are not classified as Scheduled Tribes outside the forest areas.
- In some areas, weddings are traditionally held just one day each year, on Krishna
- Janmashtami, which falls in the midst of the monsoon.
- They have developed a local breed of buffalo called Banni Buffaloes which have strong resilience to the harsh conditions of the Banni.
- The Banni Buffalo was recognized as the 11th breed of buffalo in the country in 2010, the first one to be registered post independence.
- The breed registration process was carried out through the Maldharis themselves.
- The buffaloes yield 12-18 litres of milk a day and survives by feeding on the grassland.



## Digital border by UK



- The UK Home Office has launched a scheme to create a digital border as part of its plans for immigration reform.
- The UK's 'New plan for immigration: legal migration and border control' sets out how it aims to achieve a "fully digital end-to-end experience" in all aspects of immigration and border crossings.
- It includes the way people apply online, how they prove their identity, how they provide evidence that they meet the relevant criteria, to how they receive and use proof of their status to cross the border and demonstrate any entitlements in the UK.
- Hence it includes delivering a digital system allowing for online evidence of immigration status.
- This system has already been put in place for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals to apply for the right to remain in the UK post-Brexit.
- The Home Office originally launched an e-Borders programme in 2003, aiming to improve the use of information to track people across borders but failed to deliver.
- It then launched a replacement programme, Digital Services at the Border (DSAB), in 2014. original aim was for DSAB to be completed by March 2019, delivering three main systems:
  - ⇒ Advance Border Control, Border Crossing, and Advanced Freight Targeting Capability.
  - ⇒ By March 2019, only one of the three systems was in live operation, Border Crossing.
  - ⇒ By 2021 end, the border crossing capability will be extended to the e-gates.
- The government will also put in place an electronic travel authorisation system, similar to the US's ESTA system, which means everyone wishing to travel to the UK (except British and Irish citizens) will need to seek permission in advance of travel.
- The fully digital border will provide the ability to count people in and count people out of the country which helps to tackle the broken asylum system.

### European Economic Area(EEA)-

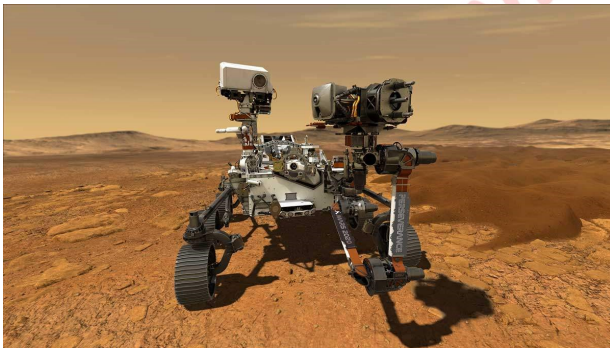
- It consists of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway; excluding Switzerland) (in total 30 members).
- The Agreement on the EEA entered into force on 1 January 1994.
- It seeks to strengthen trade and economic relations and is principally concerned with the four fundamental pillars of the internal market- free movement of goods, people, services and capital.

## China's 17+1 initiative



- Lithuania recently announced that it is quitting the China-led “17+1” grouping by blaming the platform ‘divisive’ from the European Union’s perspective.
- It is an initiative by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs founded in 2012 in Budapest.
- Its aim is to expand cooperation between Beijing and the 16 Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries, with investments and trade for the development of European countries that are less developed as compared to the Western European states.
- The framework focuses on infrastructure projects such as bridges, motorways, railway lines and modernisation of ports in the member states.
- The initiative includes China, 12 EU member states and 5 Balkan states – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- Its secretariat is in Beijing, with 17 “national coordinators” in each of the partner CEE countries.
- The 17+1 meets annually with the recent summit held in Dubrovnik (2019).

## NASA to send its first mobile robot to search for water on the moon



- The United States National Aeronautics and Space Administration is planning to search for water and other resources on the moon in 2023.
- The US agency, as part of its Artemis program, is planning to send its first mobile robot to the Moon in late 2023 in search of ice and other resources on and below the lunar surface.
- The Volatiles Investigating Polar Exploration Rover, or VIPER will collect data that would help NASA map resources at the lunar South Pole that could one day be harvested for long-term human exploration at the Moon.
- The data received from VIPER has the potential to aid our scientists in determining precise locations and concentrations of ice on the Moon and will help us evaluate the environment and potential resources at the lunar south pole in preparation for Artemis astronauts.
- VIPER runs on solar power. It will be required to quickly manoeuvre around the extreme swings in light and dark at the lunar South Pole.
- NASA has awarded a task order to Astrobotic for VIPER’s launch, transit and delivery to the lunar surface as part of the agency’s Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) initiative.

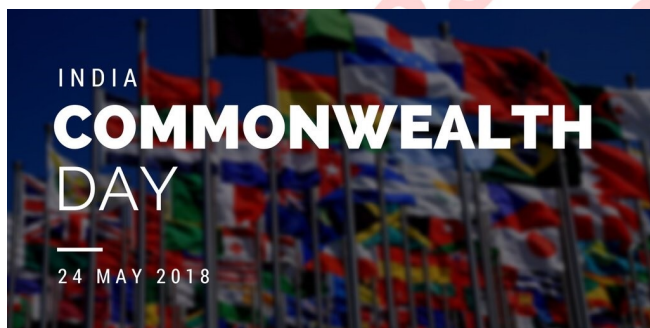


## Vatsalya Yojana



- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat has announced Chief Minister Vatsalya Yojana for orphaned children who have lost their parents due to Covid-19.
- Under the scheme, the State Government will make arrangements for their maintenance, education and training for employment up to the age of 21 years.
- The Chief Minister said that such orphaned children of the state will be given a maintenance allowance of 3000 rupees per month.
- The state government will make laws for the paternal property of these orphans in which no one will have the right to sell their paternal property until they are adults.
- This responsibility will be with the District Magistrate of the concerned district.
- The Chief Minister also said that the children whose parents have died due to Covid-19 will be given 5 per cent horizontal reservation in government jobs of the state government.

## Indian Commonwealth Day: 24th May



- Commonwealth Day is celebrated on the second Monday in the month of March every year.
- However, in India, another Commonwealth Day is also celebrated on May 24.
- Also known as Empire Day, Commonwealth Day commemorates the formation of the British Empire in India and other colonies of Britain.
- This year the theme for Commonwealth Day is: Delivering a Common Future.
- The aim of this theme is to highlight how the 54 Commonwealth countries are innovating, connecting and transforming to help achieve essential goals like tackling climate change, promoting good governance, achieving gender equality.
- It was not until after the death of Queen Victoria, who passed away on January 22, 1901, that Empire Day was first celebrated.
- The first Empire Day was celebrated on May 24, 1902, which was the Queen's birthday.
- Many schools across the British Empire were celebrating it even before it was officially recognised as an annual event.

## “Mission Oxygen Self-Reliance”



- Maharashtra government has launched the “Mission Oxygen Self-Reliance” scheme to meet the state’s oxygen needs.
- Special incentives will be given to oxygen-producing industries under this scheme. At present, the state’s oxygen generation capacity is 1300 MT per day.
- Units set up in Vidarbha, Marathwada, Dhule, Nandurbar, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg regions will be eligible for incentives up to 150 per cent of their eligible fixed capital investments and units set up in the rest of Maharashtra will be eligible for up to 100 per cent general incentives
- The government will also give a refund on gross SGST, stamp duty, electricity duty and unit subsidy of power cost for five years and interest subsidy for MSME units with a fixed capital investment of up to Rs 50 crore.
- Only those applying before June 30 will get the benefits of this policy. With these incentives, Maharashtra’s healthcare system is expected to be strengthened by increasing manufacturing and storage for becoming an oxygen self-reliant state soon.

## Italy hosts the Global G20 Summit



- The Global G20 Health Summit was co-hosted by European Commission along with Italy as part of its G20 presidency amid the surge and spread of coronavirus cases.
- The summit adopted the agenda to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. It also decided to develop and endorse a Rome Declaration of principles.
- Summit noted the risk of more transmissible variants has increased with nine people losing their lives to Covid-19 per minute.
- As per WHO officials, the future of the pandemic is in hands of G20 leaders. G20 has also contributed to the launch of ACT-Accelerator as it was launched after G20 called for a global mechanism to accelerate the development of tests, treatments and vaccines.

### What is ACT-Accelerator?

- ACT-Accelerator is used for “Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator”.
- It is also called Global Collaboration to Accelerate Development, Production and Equitable Access to COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.
- This initiative was announced and started by the G20 grouping in April 2020. ACT Accelerator acts as a cross-discipline support structure that enables the partners to share resources and knowledge.

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