

An aerial photograph of a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, lush green forest. Several cars are visible on the road, including a white car, a blue car, and a dark car. The road has white dashed lines marking the lanes. The overall scene is vibrant and scenic.

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DAILY NEWS DECODE

14.10.21

DRASS



- **President of India will Celebrate Dussehra with Jawans in Drass.**
- **Drass is a hill station in the Kargil district of the union territory of Ladakh in India.**
- **It is on the NH 1 between Zoji La pass and Kargil town.**
- **Drass is the coldest place in India.**
- **There is a popular claim as well various signs/boards showing Drass being the “second coldest inhabited place in the world”. However, there is no reliable weather data to substantiate the claim.**

Which Indian companies are among world's 100 best employers as per Forbes?



- Four Indian companies have featured in the top 100 rankings of Forbes' annual list of World's Best Employers.
- Reliance Industries topped among Indian corporates, according to Forbes.
- The Mukesh Ambani-led oil-to-telecom conglomerate was placed at 52 in the overall rankings.
- ICICI Bank was ranked 65th, HDFC Bank was at the 77th position and HCL Technologies was ranked 90th.

Centre accords “Maharatna” status to state-owned PFC Ltd



- The Government of India has accorded ‘Maharatna’ status to the state-owned Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC). The new status will give PFC greater operational and financial autonomy.
- PFC was incorporated in 1986, as an Indian financial institution under the ownership of the Ministry of Power.
- It is the largest Infrastructure Finance Company in India, exclusively dedicated to Power Sector.
- The grant of ‘Maharatna’ status to PFC will impart enhanced powers to the PFC Board while taking financial decisions.
- The Board of a ‘Maharatna’ CPSE can make equity investments to undertake financial joint ventures and wholly-owned subsidiaries and undertake mergers and acquisitions in India and abroad, subject to a ceiling of 15% of the Net Worth of the concerned CPSE, limited to Rs.5,000 crore in one project.

- **The Board can also structure and implement schemes relating to personnel and Human Resource Management and Training.**
- **They can also enter into technology Joint Ventures or other strategic alliances among others.**

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India Ranks Third in 2021 EY Index



- India has retained the third position in the 58th Renewable Energy Country Attractiveness Index (RECAI) released by the consultancy firm Ernst & Young (EY).
- According to the report, the US, mainland China and India continue to retain the top three rankings and Indonesia is a new entrant to the RECAI.
- The 2021 RECAI ranks the world's top 40 global markets (nations) on the attractiveness of their renewable energy investment and deployment opportunities.
- With the environment, social and governance (ESG) measures soaring to the top of the agenda for companies and investors, RECAI also highlights that corporate power purchase agreements (PPAs) are emerging as a key driver of clean energy growth.

- **A new PPA Index – introduced in this edition of RECAI – focuses on the attractiveness of renewable power procurement and ranks the growth potential of a nation’s corporate PPA market.**
- **India is ranked sixth among the top 30 PPA markets.**

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Study of ancient poop suggests humans had blue cheese, beer 2,700 yrs ago in Austria



- A study of ancient faeces from the salt mines of Austria's Hallstatt-Dachstein UNESCO World Heritage area suggests that workers consumed blue cheese and beer 2,700 years ago.
- Researchers found that the faeces had presence of two fungal species used in the production of blue cheese and beer.
- Researchers said it's the first evidence of cheese ripening in Iron Age Europe.

Tarballs



- Several beaches in Mumbai and Goa witnessed black oil-emanating balls/ Tarballs(sticky tarballs with foul fuel smell) lying on the shore.
- They are dark-coloured, sticky balls of oil that form when crude oil floats on the ocean surface.
- A tarball is a blob of petroleum which has been weathered after floating in the ocean.
- Tarballs are formed by weathering of crude oil in marine environments.
- They are transported from the open sea to the shores by sea currents and waves.

- **Tarballs are usually coin-sized and are found strewn on the beaches.**
- **However, over the years, they have become as big as basketballs and can weigh as much as 6-7 kgs.**
- **Most of the time, the presence of several tarballs indicate an oil spill.**
- **In India, Tarballs reach the western coast during the monsoon.**
- **According to the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), wind and waves tear the oil slick into smaller patches that are scattered over a much wider area and various physical, chemical and biological processes (weathering) change the appearance of the oil.**
- **It is suspected that the oil comes from the large cargo ships in the deep sea and gets pushed to the shore as tarballs during monsoon due to wind speed and direction.**
- **The tarballs that travel towards the coast can get stuck to the fishing nets installed in the sea, making it difficult for fishermen to clean.**
- **In addition, it could affect marine life, especially filter feeders like clams and oysters.**
- **Microbes such as bacteria and fungi presumably play an important role in tarball degradation.**

'Pillar of Shame' Tiananmen Square sculpture



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- The University of Hong Kong has ordered the removal of the 8-metre high Tiananmen Square massacre statue placed within Haking Wong Building inside the University since 1997.
- Danish Sculptor Jens Galschiøt had gifted the statue to the now-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China in 1997.
- It was made in remembrance of the June 4, 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre.

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Other Pillars of Shame-

- **Ostiense Air Terminal, Rome, Italy, 1996, during the FAO Summit, depicting the deaths caused worldwide by hunger due to the uneven distribution of the world's resources.**
 - **Acteal, Chiapas, Mexico in 1999, to mark the site of the December 1997 massacre of 45 members of the civil society group Las Abejas.**
 - **Brasilia, Brazil in 2000 in homage to the victims of the Eldorado dos Carajás massacre which occurred in 1996.**
 - **A fourth Pillar of Shame was planned in Berlin, Germany, in homage to the victims of the Nazi regime but due to various problems, the artist had to cancel the project**
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