

April 21, 2017

ISRO to test launch GSLV-Mk III-D1 in May 2017



ISRO is all set to undertake the first developmental flight of a 'game-changer' rocket (launching vehicle) that will have the capacity to launch four-tonne class of satellites, from Sriharikota spaceport. ISRO looks forward to conduct the second developmental flight within this year. Significance With the successful test launch, ISRO can carry out all the launches within the country instead of depending on international agencies for the launch of heavier satellites. Hence, the successful test launch will help in reducing ISRO's dependency on international launching vehicles. ISRO's launch vehicles as of now have the capability to launch satellites only up to 2.2 tonne. For the launch of heavier satellites, it had to depend upon the international agencies. So, the ISRO rightly views operationalisation of this rocket as a "game-changer" mission.

RGIA gets carbon neutrality status



The Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) at Shamshabad has been given the carbon neutrality status by Airports Council International (ACI) under its Airport Carbon Accreditation programme. The airport's operator GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL), a GMR Group-led consortium, has stated that it was conferred with the carbon neutrality (level 3: neutrality) by the ACI at a ceremony held in Doha, Qatar. The ACI

Airport Carbon Accreditation programme was initiated in June 2009 and consists of four levels: 'mapping' (level 1), 'reduction' (level 2), 'optimisation' (level 3) and 'neutrality' (level 3+). RGIA achieved levels one and two in 2012. It achieved level 3 status in 2013. The level 3+ status which it has achieved now is the fourth and highest accreditation under ACI's Carbon Accreditation programme. RGIA adopted many sustainable measures like proactive energy conservation, generation of renewable energy, carbon sinking through extensive greenbelt and various other environment protection initiatives to achieve this status. ACI Airports Council International (ACI) is the only global trade representative representing the world's airport authorities. It is a member of Air Transport Action Group (ATAG). It was established in 1991 and develops standards, policies and recommended practices for airports. The global body represents the interests of airports with governments and international organisations.

Haryana extends accidental insurance cover to All citizens



The Pradhan Mantri Bhima Suraksha Yojna has been implemented by the Haryana Government. The scheme is available for one year and subject to renewal thereafter. The scheme covers both accidental death and disability. The cover for accidental death will be Rs 2 lacs and for disability, it will be Rs 1 lac. The scheme is available to all the citizens in the state between the ages of 18 and 70, provided they have an Aadhar linked Bank account. An annual premium of Rs 12 will be deducted from the citizen's Savings Bank account for this purpose.

Government sells stake in NALCO



The government today raised 1,200 crore rupees through the sale of 9.2 per cent stake in National Aluminum Company Ltd, NALCO. In the disinvestment, the offer for sale was pegged at 5 per cent of paid-up capital, but seeing the overwhelming response from the market, the government exercised the option to retain over-subscription and raised the offer to 9.2 per cent yesterday. With this transaction, the Government's shareholding in NALCO has come down to 65.37 per cent.

Supreme Courts allows auction of Taj Mansingh Hotel in Delhi



The Supreme Court has allowed e-auction of five-star hotel Taj Mansingh in Delhi. The hotel is presently being run by a Tata Group firm. The court allowed the plea of New Delhi Municipal Council, NDMC, that the Tata Group firm cannot have the right to refusal in the auctioning of the hotel. The bench, however, asked NDMC to grant six months breathing time to the company in vacating the hotel in case they lose out in the e-auction

EPF Interest Rate Approved at 8.65 %



Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya has said that the Finance Ministry has approved 8.65 per cent interest rate on EPF for 2016-17. He said, the government will immediately issue a notification in this regard. The ratification will enable the retirement fund body EPFO to credit this rate of return into the accounts of over four crore subscribers. The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation trustees had approved 8.65 per cent rate on EPF in December last year.

India develops National Action Plan to combat Antimicrobial Resistance



Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare announced the finalization of India's comprehensive and multi-sectoral National Action Plan at the 'Inter-Ministerial Consultation on AMR containment' held at New Delhi. The consultation was attended by various ministers including Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan, and Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Anil Madhav Dave. The Ministers signed a 'Delhi Declaration' to contain Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). The Delhi Declaration calls for the support of all stakeholders including UN, WHO, FAO and other UN agencies, civil society organizations etc., in developing and implementing the national and state action plans on AMR. The National action plan has objectives of enhancing awareness, strengthening surveillance, improving rational use of antibiotics, reducing infections and promoting research

LHS 1140b: Another planet in habitable zone discovered



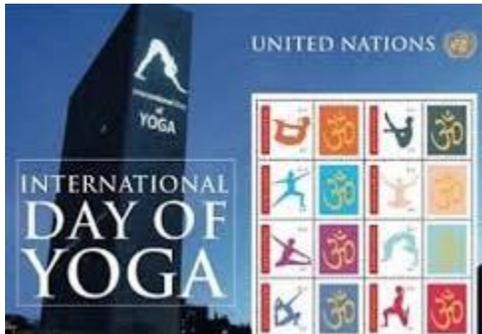
Astronomers have discovered yet another planet, called LHS1140b, which is expected to be present in the Goldilocks Zone. It's not so far away, either. It is found orbiting around the star LHS 1140 some 39 light-years away. Goldilocks Zone refers to a habitable zone where the temperature is neither too high nor too low. The planet is found to be rocky, like the Earth but is over six-times as massive as Earth and about 1.5-times larger and falls under the category of 'Super Earth'. Its gravitational pull will be three times stronger than that of the Earth. Rocky planets within the habitable zone are the best candidates to find evidence of some form of life.

Australia makes sweeping changes to Citizenship laws



Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has made sweeping changes to Citizenship laws unveiling tighter requirements for new applicants. This announcement follows the recent scrapping of the 457 visa program for foreign workers, which was used majorly by the Indians. The 457 programme was scrapped to tackle the growing unemployment in the country.

India contributes USD 2,50,000 to Election Assistance Division of UN



India has contributed USD 2,50,000 to the UN Election Assistance Division to help other countries to hold elections and develop their electoral systems. This is the second time that India has contributed USD 2,50,000 towards electoral assistance and capacity building. The first assistance was made in 2012

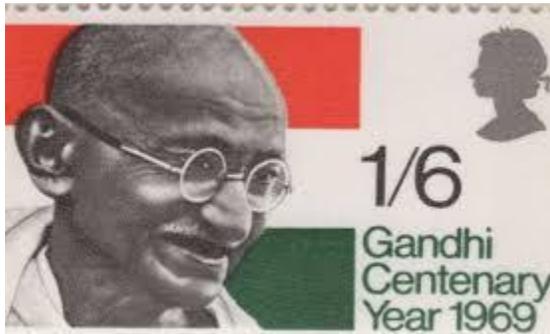
UNESCO's Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize 2017 winners



UNESCO has named Giuseppeina Nicolini, Mayor of Lampedusa (Italy) and the non-governmental organisation SOS Méditerranée (France) as the winners of Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize 2017 “for their work to save the lives of refugees and migrants and welcome them with dignity”. In the past, Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize has been granted to internationally renowned personalities like Nelson Mandela, Yasser Arafat, King Juan Carlos of Spain, former US president Jimmy Carter and Shimon Peres. For the first time, the award goes to a mayor.

Auction of Gandhi Stamps Fetches 500,000 Pounds

A set of four rare Postal Stamps featuring Mahatma Gandhi , has fetched an astonishing sum of



500,000 Pounds at an auction held in England. The stamps were bought by an Australian collector. As per authoritative records, only 13 of these 1948 Gandhi Rs10 Purple Brown and Lake ‘Service ‘ Stamps are in circulation now. Besides this set of four , the other set of four is in the Royal Philatelic

Collection, owned by Queen Elizabeth II.

Video gaming to be featured as a full sport at the 2022 Asian Games



The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) will feature Video gaming as a full sport at the 2022 Asian Games. According to OCA, the decision to include e-sports was taken to reflect “the rapid development and popularity of this new form of sports participation among the

youth.” Hence, e-sports would be introduced as a medal sport to the official program of the Asian Games at Hangzhou, China. It will be included as a demonstration sport at the 2018 Asian Games in Palembang, Indonesia. OCA has entered into a collaboration with Alisports, a unit of China’s Alibaba Group, to bring e-sports to the games. However, no details have come out on the details of the video games that would be included. The Asian Games features a wide range of traditional Olympic. It includes some of the more obscure sports like sepak takraw (a game that has features of soccer and volleyball), kabaddi, etc. It also includes a variety of martial arts, contract bridge, jet-ski racing and sport climbing etc