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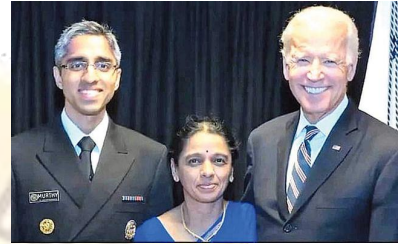


INTERNATIONAL

Indians who are American personalities

Synopsis:

- ❖ Biden has appointed at least 55 Indian-Americans to key leadership positions in his administration
- ❖ Indian-Americans are taking over the country, US President Joe Biden said on Thursday, referring to the high number of people from the community getting a place in his administration.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ In less than 50 days of his presidency, Biden has appointed at least 55 Indian-Americans to key leadership positions in his administration ranging from his speech writer to the NASA, to almost every wing of the government.
- ❖ “Indian-of-descent Americans (sic) are taking over the country. You (Swati Mohan), my Vice President (Kamala Harris), my speech writer (Vinay Reddy),” Biden said in a virtual interaction with NASA scientists who were involved in the historic landing of Perseverance landing at Mars.
- ❖ Biden, who was sworn in as the 46th president of the United States on January 20, has created history by appointing at least 55 Indian-Americans to key positions in his administration.
- ❖ This does not include Vice President Kamala Harris, which is an elected position, and Neera Tanden, who a day earlier withdrew her nomination from the position of Director of White House Office of Management and Budget.
- ❖ Nearly half of them are women and a sizable number of them are working in the White House.
- ❖ So far, the Obama-Biden administration (2009-2017) has the distinction of appointing the largest number of Indian-Americans in any administration, the previous Donald Trump administration was not lagging far behind as it appointed the first ever Indian-American with a cabinet rank and inside the National Security Council.
- ❖ The Biden administration has for the first time appointed such a large number of Indian-Americans in the first 50 days of his administration.



India sends 40k MT diesel to Sri Lanka

Synopsis:

- ❖ The Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) also announced the resumption of power berating operations at Kerawalapitiya Thermal Power Plant after the receipt of supplies from LIOC, the Lankan subsidiary of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)



Key Highlights:

- ❖ A consignment of 40,000 metric tonnes of diesel from India reached Sri Lanka
- ❖ while traders have started loading 40,000 tonnes of rice for prompt shipment as the island national faces an unprecedented economic and energy crisis caused due to shortage of foreign exchange, officials.
- ❖ Power cuts lasting over 13 hours were imposed on Thursday, the longest cut since 1996 when a strike by the state power entity employees caused a 72-hour black out.
- ❖ Officials of the state fuel entity, Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB), the Indian diesel supplies would ease the ongoing power cuts. The power cuts effective Saturday are over 8.5 hours.
- ❖ “More fuel supplies delivered by #India to #SriLanka! A consignment of 40,000 MT of diesel under #Indian assistance through Line of Credit of \$500 mn was handed over by (the) High Commissioner to Hon’ble Energy Minister Gamini Lokuge in #Colombo today,”
- ❖ Sri Lanka is currently experiencing its worst economic crisis in history. Long lines for fuel, cooking gas, short supply of essentials and long hours of power cuts have triggered public unrest in the island nation.
- ❖ The CEB also announced the resumption of power berating operations at Kerawalapitiya Thermal Power Plant after the receipt of supplies from LIOC, the Lankan subsidiary of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). The LIOC is to supply 6,000 MT diesel to the thermal plant.

India- Nepal railway service

Synopsis:

- ❖ First-of-its-kind passenger train services between India and Nepal were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi . The Hindu pilgrimage centre of Janakpur Dham, considered to be the birthplace of Sita, will be one of the main attractions of the rail link between India and Nepal that was resumed .
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Sher Bahadur Deuba inaugurated passenger rail services between Jaynagar in India and Kurtha in Nepal. This will be the first broad gauge passenger rail service in Nepal.





Key Highlights:

- ❖ "Prime Minister Deubaji and I also agreed to give priority to trade and cross-border connectivity initiatives in all respects.
- ❖ The beginning of the Jayanagar-Kurtha rail line is a part of this," Modi said at a joint press meet with the Nepalese prime minister here.
- ❖ "Such schemes will make a great contribution for a smooth, hassle-free exchange of people between the two countries,"
- ❖ Railway ministry officials said the rail link between the two neighbouring countries is part of an overall strategy for improved border management, planned and integrated development of border areas and infrastructure in a selective and phased manner.
- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is funding the network between Jaynagar in Bihar and Barbidas in Nepal at a cost of Rs 784 crore. The length of the Jaynagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas rail link is 68.72 km, of which a 2.975-km stretch is in India and a 65.745-km stretch is in Nepal.
- ❖ The route will pass through Bihar's Madhubani district and on the Nepal side, it will go through Danusha, Mahotari and Sirha districts. Jaynagar is an existing terminal station of the Samastipur-Jaynagar broad gauge section of the East Central Railway and is the last rail head located close to the Indo-Nepal border.
- ❖ A narrow-gauge train service run by the government of Nepal was operational from Jaynagar in India to Janakpur in Nepal till March 2014.
- ❖ The Jaynagar-Kurtha section (34.9 Km) of the project, which was flagged off on Saturday, has Janakpur, the famous pilgrimage centre located around 30 km from Jayanagar. The cost of track, signalling, station building and other infrastructure for the Jaynagar-Kurtha section is around Rs 383 crore.

India and Australia - trade deal

Synopsis:

- ❖ India and Australia inked a landmark economic pact . which will see duties being slashed on more than 85% of goods exported to the South Asian nation as both governments secure alternative supply chains and counter an assertive China.
- ❖ The trade pact truly is a watershed moment for our relations," PM Modi said after inking the interim agreement
- ❖ A closer engagement between the two Quad alliance partners comes even as Australia, along with Japan and the U.S., push India to take a stronger stand on Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The free trade deal is expected to help India forge deeper ties with the raw-material rich nation as it seeks to become a manufacturing hub to revive the pandemic-hit economy.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ Australia, the trade deal would open doors for a market of over 1.4 billion people, as it grapples with China's trade curbs on a range of commodities exports.



- ❖ "The trade pact signed with India will further deepen our close ties," Australian PM Scott Morrison.
- ❖ The signing of the pact comes ahead of a national election campaign in Australia, with Morrison's center-right government pushing a narrative of strong economic management as it struggles to make up ground in opinion polls.
- ❖ This is the second major trade agreement that the Modi government has signed so far after sealing a similar deal with the UAE early during the year.
- ❖ Australia is among India's top 15 trading partners with a total trade valued at around \$20 billion between the two nations in the year ending March 31, according to Indian government data.
- ❖ The pact, that's been almost a decade in the making, will give greater market access and slash duties on a range of goods including, sheep meat, wool, wine, coal, alumina and metallic ores, sold by Australia in India.
- ❖ India has also agreed to reduce duties on Australian wine. Tariffs on shipments with a minimum import price of \$5 per bottle will be reduced to 100% from 150% while duty on bottles costing \$15 is being slashed to 75%.

Forex reserves fall by \$2.03 bn to \$617.648 bn

Synopsis:

- ❖ India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves declined by \$9.646 billion to \$622.275 billion in the week ended March 11, the sharpest decline in nearly two years, as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) heavily sold dollars to prevent the slide in the value of rupee.
- ❖ RBI's weekly statistical supplement, the foreign currency assets, which is the biggest component of the forex reserves, slumped by \$11.108 billion to \$554.359 billion



Key Highlights:

- ❖ Expressed in US dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-dollar currencies like Euro, UK's Pound Sterling and Japanese Yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.
- ❖ This sharp decline in the country's foreign currency assets coincides with the week during which the rupee hit an all-time low.
- ❖ The Indian rupee plunged to a record low of 77.02 against a US dollar . market analysts, the RBI intervened in the currency markets by selling dollars.
- ❖ The central bank is estimated to have sold \$1 billion a day during the week to prevent further weakness in the Indian currency.
- ❖ The decline in the forex reserves during the week ended March 11 this year was the sharpest in nearly two years. The country's forex reserves had slipped by \$11.9 billion during the week ended March 20, 2020.



- ❖ The country's forex reserves had touched an all-time high of \$642.453 bi .. The value of India's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) declined by \$53 million to \$18.928 billion
- ❖ .India's reserve position in the IMF dropped by \$7 million to \$5.146 billion during the week ended March 11, the RBI data showed.
- ❖ The value of gold reserves rose sharply in line with the sharp appreciation in the gold price during the week. The value of gold reserves jumped by \$1.522 billion to \$43.842 billion during the week

Sri Lanka economic crisis

Synopsis:

- ❖ India will be sending Sri Lanka rice as part of the US\$ 1 billion credit facility that was extended by New Delhi in March.
- ❖ The facility was signed during the visit of Sri Lankan Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa to India last month. The facility is being used to supply essential commodities to the beleaguered country, starting with rice in next few days.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ Indian envoy to Colombo Gopal Baglay handed over 40,000 MT of diesel to Sri Lanka's energy minister Gamini Lokuge under Indian assistance through Line of Credit of \$500 million. India had offered \$500 million line of credit to Sri Lanka for purchase of petroleum products in January.
- ❖ The pact for credit agreement was later signed in February between India's Exim bank and Sri Lankan government. This is the fourth consignment under the fuel Line of Credit, with previous deliveries on March 16, March 20 and March 23. In last 50 days, India has sent 200,000 MT of diesel to the country.
- ❖ All in all, India has extended two key credit lines, the \$1 billion for essential commodities, and \$500 million to buy petroleum products.
- ❖ The Indian mission in Sri Lanka in a statement "In view of the urgent nature of Sri Lanka's requirement, India worked overtime to expeditiously finalise and start implementing both the lines of credit, within weeks."
- ❖ India has provided \$2.4 billion financial assistance to the island country as it faces economic crisis. This included, a credit swap of US\$ 400 million and deferment of an Asian Clearing Union payment of over US\$ 515 million. The country is witnessing economic crisis, prompting the government to impose an emergency.



NATIONAL

Excavation of Vijaya Karisal Pond

Synopsis:

- ❖ Ramanathapuram District Hall Union Alagankulam Village is a town located at the confluence of the Bay of Bengal and the Vaigai River. Excavations were carried out on the Government High School premises in 1986–87.
- ❖ Red pottery, Roman vases, c. Items such as 4th century Roman coins, bone combs, and rings have been found.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ Study has revealed that they are about 2 thousand 360 years ago. The excavations were carried out in different periods such as 1990–91, 1993–94, 1995–96, 1997.
- ❖ Ancient Tamil writings, dice from the Harappan civilization, copper coins engraved with the Pandyas of the Sangam period, precious stone jewels, conical bracelets, items engraved with Roman ships, iron swords, floor coverings, etc. were found.
- ❖ Alagankulam's trade relations with the Roman Empire were confirmed. It is unknown at this time what he will do after leaving the post.
- ❖ There are no traces of excavation work taking place. Thus tourists and students coming to Alakankulam return with disappointment.
- ❖ At this stage, after a long hiatus in 2016–17, excavations were carried out again at Alakankulam.
- ❖ More than 13 thousand antiques were found. Never before in Tamil Nadu have found crucifixes, ironworks, cones, well wells, and slate.

Discovery of coins of Sangakkala Pandya kings

Synopsis:

- ❖ Archaeological excavations are being carried out on behalf of the Archaeological Department at Adichanallur, Thoothukudi District. Coins of the Sangakkala Pandya kings were found for the first time in the 146 year history of excavations.
- ❖ In order to reconstruct the history of Tamil, historical studies are going on in Tamil Nadu in many other forms just as the excavations below are going on one side.
- ❖ Notable studies include inscription and coin studies. The coin is engraved with the image of sea turtles, trees, elephants and fish.





- ❖ In connection with the World Tamil Classical Conference in Coimbatore.

Key Highlights:

- ❖ In the field of numismatics, a human figure is now found for the first time on the Sangakkala Chola coin.
- ❖ BC Various kings who ruled Tamil Nadu from the 4th century up to 1867 AD have issued their coins.
- ❖ BC 4th century AD Coins circulating in Tamil Nadu during the Sangam period up to the 3rd century are called 'Sangam period Tamilnadu coins'.
- ❖ Coins are mostly made of copper and square in shape. Rarely are silver coins and circular coins available.
- ❖ Round Coins AD Late Sangam coins issued in the 1st-3rd century are c There are a total of 5 types of coins found in the Sangam period coins, coins issued by the Sangam period Cheras, coins issued by the Sangam period Pandyas, coins issued by the Sangam period Cholas, coins issued by the short-lived king Malayaman, and coins issued by a particular short-lived king named Adiran v. Chendan.onsidered.

'Solar' power generation project near wind farms

Synopsis:

- ❖ Kanyakumari - The Tamil Nadu Electricity Board has decided to set up solar power plants called 'solar' in places including wind farms where three windmills are installed.
- ❖ In Tamil Nadu, wind farms with a capacity of 8,606 MW have been installed. Of these, only 17 MW power plants are owned by the Electricity Board. Others are set up by private companies.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ Windy season from May to Sept. Only during that period, from the windmills, will more electricity be available.
- ❖ Kanyakumari District, Thirty.Madurai, Puliyankulam; Duathukkudi, Mullakkadu, Kayatharu; In Tirupur, Kedah; The wind farms board is located at Sultanpet, Coimbatore Set in the 1990s.
- ❖ Very little electricity is available from them. There are vacant plots of several acres in the premises where the power board wind farms are located.
- ❖ Private companies set up solar power plants in the vacant lots near their wind farms. Thus, solar power is available for more than 300 days a year.
- ❖ The Electricity Board has decided to set up solar power plants near wind farms at Mubbandal, Kayathar, Sultanpet and Kedah.
- ❖ There are already power line structures to carry the electricity generated in wind farms. Thus, when solar power plants are set up in those places, power lines do not cost much.



- ❖ The Electricity Board is planning to set up high capacity wind farms to replace the low capacity wind farms set up many years ago.
- ❖ Thus, solar power will be available in one place during the day and wind power at night. Both types of electricity do not affect the environment

Bill for rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits

Synopsis:

- ❖ The Bill, titled ‘Kashmiri Pandits (Recourse, Restitution, Rehabilitation and Resettlement) Act, 2022’, comes at a time when a controversy is raging over the exodus of Kashmir Pandits from the Valley over three decades ago in the wake of the release of the movie, The Kashmir Files, and its active promotion by the ruling BJP.



Key Highlights:

- ❖ “little effort” has been made “over the years” to undo the injustice that Kashmiri Pandits have suffered, Congress member in Rajya Sabha Vivek Tankha
- ❖ introduced a private member’s bill in the House seeking to provide for social, political
- ❖ economic rehabilitation of Pandits, protection of their property, restoration of their cultural heritage, ensuring their safety and security, and provision of rehabilitation and resettlement package to them.
- ❖ The Bill, titled ‘Kashmiri Pandits (Recourse, Restitution, Rehabilitation and Resettlement) Act, 2022’, comes at a time when a controversy is raging over the exodus of Kashmir Pandits from the Valley over three decades ago in the wake of the release of the movie, The Kashmir Files, and its active promotion by the ruling BJP.
- ❖ Several BJP-ruled states have announced that the movie will be tax-free in their respective states.

The tip-turning weapon developed by the DRDO

Synopsis:

- ❖ Such a crisis is faced from time to time by the security forces, paramilitary forces engaged in counter-terrorism operations, and the police.
- ❖ Has developed a weapons system to use in such an environment. Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO). The weapon can be mounted and used on this weapon system. Its front is designed to turn left and right with the gun. This allows the trooper to turn his shotgun on himself and shoot at the target inside the room.





Key Highlights:

- ❖ The front of the weapon system is equipped with a video camera and laser marking device. This allows you to aim and fire the gun on the color video screen. At night There is also an incandescent lamp and a night vision camera for use.
- ❖ It is also equipped with a battery to run electronic devices. This is called the Corner Shat Weapon System.
- ❖ It is called a weapon system because it is not a gun, but a tool used to attach a gun with various features.
- ❖ It was developed by the Warfare Research and Development Organization, an undercover RTO laboratory in Pune, Maharashtra
- ❖ This weapon is essential for the border guards and the police involved in counter-terrorism operations.
- ❖ This weapon is arguably the most important combat weapon for the security forces, as it enables them to launch precision strikes without exposing the security forces. Even more special is the fact that the weapon is made in domestic technology.

