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India's gifted vaccines arrive in T&T.



The High Commissioner of India H.E. Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu received the Government of India's donation of 40,000 AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccines on Tuesday 13th April, 2021 at the Piarco International Airport. On site were the Minister of Health, Hon. Mr. Terrance Deyalsingh and the Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, Hon. Dr. Amery Browne. The High Commissioner said, "Today, on behalf of India's people and government, I handed over 40,000 doses of AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccines to Trinidad and Tobago's people and government. India and Trinidad and Tobago share a long-friendly relationship, a similar history, culture and democratic value system. This donation is a reiteration of that long-standing relations. I thank PM Hon'ble Dr. Keith Rowley and Foreign Minister Hon'ble Dr. Amery Brown for conveying their appreciation to Prime Minister Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Hon'ble Dr S. Jaishankar." In his video message the High Commissioner also thanked the Opposition Leader Mrs. Kamla Persad- Bissessar, T&T Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs and the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. High Commissioner urged all Trinbagonians to believe in science and take the vaccine as it is their responsibility to be safe and keep others safe.

High Commission of India hosts virtual IT Seminar.



The High Commission of India hosted a virtual seminar on India's Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services sector on Friday 30th April, 2021 via zoom. The seminar stated featured remarks by prominent speakers and IT based companies in Trinidad and Tobago. The virtual IT event began with opening remarks by H.E. Mr. Arun Kumar Sahu, High Commissioner of India to T & T who discussed India's domestic scenario, its global presence, main sub sectors of India's IT industries, major IT companies of India, GoI IT policy, IT education in India and the significance of the IT industry in the Caribbean region. The seminar also featured a video message by Mr. Kallol Mukherjee, Head of International Business at APTECH (India) Ltd and remarks by Opposition Senator Ms. Jayanti Lutchmedial, Mr. Kurleigh Prescod, Country Manager for Cable and wireless/ FLOW Trinidad and Mr. Avinash Ramroop, IT Manager at the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme Limited (YTEPP).

India's processed food market to grow to US\$ 470 billion: KPMG.



According to a report released by KPMG, the Indian processed food market is projected to expand to US\$ 470 billion by 2025, up from US\$ 263 billion in 2019-20. According to the study, the pandemic has established a new standard marked by sustainable food chains, an increasing preference for organic foods, and localized food supply with higher trade barriers. The report stated that innovative wellness, fitness, and nutrition items are expected to see a lot of traction in the domestic market. The approach to catalysing market development is to embrace a collaborative approach. It added stating that the government partnerships with private players through adequate PPP models should be taken to ensure a rapid scale up of infrastructure facilities in line with industry demands. The post-COVID-19 environment plays an essential role for India's food processing industry, as it reshapes, allowing India to capitalize on new opportunities, optimize its strategy, and prepare for new markets. According to the report, the government's Production Linked Scheme (PLI) Scheme is likely to encourage players and improve their processing capacities in order to meet increasing demand. "Complimentary markets such as ingredients, food processing equipment, food logistics, and food packaging have a great potential. Players, especially MSMEs, would need greater testing and certification infrastructure and improve efficiency and meet hygiene needs on a massive scale." The report added that the market for processed foods is projected to continue to be driven by rural areas and tier 2/3 cities. As the industry recovers from the effects of COVID-19, the Hotel/Restaurant/Café (HoReCa) segment would be essential. Major economies are likely to use non-tariff measures such as rigorous sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPSs) and technical barriers to trade (TBT) to ensure food security against transmitted chemicals and diseases in the post- COVID-19 period.

Read more:

<https://www.ibef.org/news/indias/processed-food-market-to-grow-to-us-470-billion-kpmg>

Shri Piyush Goyal chairs the first meeting of National Start up Advisory Council.



Minister of Railways, Commerce & Industry, Consumer Affairs and Food & Public Distribution Shri Piyush Goyal chaired the first meeting of National Start-up Advisory Council (NSAC). Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) had constituted the National Start-up Advisory Council to advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the country to drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities. Besides the ex-officio members, the council has a number of non-official members, representing various stakeholders such as founders of successful start-ups, veterans who have grown and scaled companies in India, persons capable of representing interest of investors into start-ups, persons capable of representing interests of incubators and accelerators, representatives of associations of stakeholders of start-ups and representatives of industry associations. In his inaugural address, Shri Goyal said that this council shall act as the guiding light for many budding start-up entrepreneurs in India. He said that this is the first time in our nation's history where such a high-powered team of people from the private sector and the Government have come together, so that "You take your own policy decisions." Appreciating the work done by the start-ups in all sectors, for finding innovative solutions to various problems, Shri Goyal said that India is hub of innovation & out of-the-box thinking. He said that Start-up movement has stirred entrepreneurial spirit in last 5 years. "We have witnessed tremendous efforts by stakeholders right from national to block levels towards the realization of our Hon'ble PM's start-up India vision."

Read more:

<https://dipp.gov.in/sites/default/files/pressRelease-Startups-16April2021.pdf>

Modi, Johnson held virtual summit; UK PM announces 1 bn pound trade deal.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual summit with his British counterpart Boris Johnson with an aim to further bolster bilateral ties in a range of areas including healthcare and trade, as the UK Prime Minister announced GBP 1 billion worth of UK-India trade and investment. According to a statement from Johnson's office, "more than 6,500 new jobs will be created around the UK thanks to the one billion pounds of new UK-India trade and investment announced by the Prime Minister." The package contains over 533 million pounds of new Indian investment into the UK, which is expected to create more than 6,000 jobs in vital and growing sectors such as health and technology, Downing Street said. This includes a GBP 240 million investment by the Serum Institute of India (SII) in the UK into its vaccine business and a new sales office in the country, expected to generate new business worth over USD 1 billion, it added. The two sides are also expected to unveil an ambitious 10-year roadmap to further broaden ties at the end of the summit. Ahead of the summit, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the meet will be an important opportunity to elevate the multi-faceted strategic ties and enhance cooperation on regional and global issues of mutual interest. "A comprehensive roadmap 2030 will be launched during the summit, which will pave the way for further expanding and deepening India-UK cooperation over the next decade across five key areas," the MEA had said. Johnson was scheduled to visit India late last month. But days before the visit, he called it off in view of the coronavirus pandemic. In January too, Johnson's planned trip to India to participate in the Republic Day parade as the chief guest was cancelled following a surge in COVID-19 infections in the UK.

Read more:

<https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/modi-johnson-talk-in-virtual-summit-uk-pm-announces-1-bn-pound-trade-deal>

Media Industry leaders see huge headroom for growth.



Notwithstanding the pandemic-led disruptions, Indian media industry captains are optimistic and see huge headroom for growth in the sector. Though the industry witnessed a 25 per cent drop in TV advertising revenue in the pandemic-impacted 2020, the leaders, while participating at the recently organized Future of Video India conference by the Asia Video Industry Association's (AVIA), were confident of the growth potentials, a Statement said. President and Head of Disney+ Hot star Sunil Rayan said the platform is eyeing local expansion with their next stage for growth primed at developing their product for India, with pricing and content made for the local market. As India is a mobile-first market that drives individual viewing, over-the-top (OTT) content needs to be far more engaging for individual viewing. "Fundamentally, we do not believe in a one-size-fits-all approach for India because there are multiple India's within India," said Rayan. Megha Tata, MD of South Asia for Discovery Communications India said there is a sentiment of diversity and positive Co-existence between the platforms. "India lives in several centuries at the same time," commented Tata adding it is still a long way away before the demise of the TV and a differentiated content and product offering remains a Key focus. Advisory and consulting services provider Media Partners Asia (MPA) said pay TV subscriptions in India will grow both in - value and volume terms and continue to offer scale for the traditional media players, though there would be a structural decline in the traditional cable TV. With a current presence of over 60 online video services in India, the total addressable market will continue to expand, said MPA in a statement quoting its VP, India Mihir Shah.

Read more:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/media-industry-leaders-see-huge-headroom-f>

India sets up control room to ensure trade continuity.



Following the current surge of coronavirus cases across India, a control room has been set up to ensure the continuity and smooth conduct of international trade with India. The Control Room, which was developed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), has the role of monitoring and resolving problems. Exporters in the UAE and those importing from India or entities sending essential goods to India may reach the fully functional Control Room daily from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Indian Standard Time, according to an announcement by the DPIIT. "DPIIT is setting up the Control room to monitor issues of internal trade, manufacturing, delivery and logistics of commodities during the Covid-19 pandemic," according to the announcement. The announcement also said that: "In the event of any manufacturing, transportation, distribution, wholesale or e-commerce companies facing difficulties in transportation and distribution of goods or mobilization of resources, information can be given to this Control Room." Issue's stakeholders report to the Control Room will be taken up with the concerned state governments and union territory administrations. Trade between the UAE and India was valued at around \$60 billion, making the UAE India's third largest trading partner, as was reported in February by India's Ministry of External Affairs. Data released by the UAE Ministry of Economy last May showed that non-oil exports and re-exports between the two nations in 2019 reached over AED24 billion and nearly AED30 billion, respectively. According to the Embassy of India to the UAE, the UAE exports to India items such as petroleum and petroleum products, precious metals, minerals, chemicals and wood products. The UAE also exported \$10.9 billion of crude oil to the UAE in 2019-2020.

Read more:

<https://www.arabianbusiness.com/politics-economics/462578-control-room-set-up-to-ensure-indias-international-trade-continuity>

BRICS Business Council Launches 'BRICS Solutions for SDGs Awards 2021.'



BRICS Business Council India Chapter launched the BRICS Solutions for SDGs Awards 2021. India holds the chair ship of BRICS in 2021 and these awards are a new initiative to foster greater exchange and collaboration amongst the BRICS countries. One of the focus areas for BRICS cooperation during India's chair ship includes 'Technological and Digital Solutions for Sustainable Development Goals'. The BRICS Solutions for SDGs Awards 2021 are in alignment with the broader agenda of BRICS and is supported by all the five national chapters of the BRICS Business Council. The BRICS Solutions for SDGs Awards 2021 are aimed at recognizing the work being done across BRICS countries in achieving these SDGs, especially through innovative solutions. In meeting the world's development challenges, businesses in all five BRICS countries have produced innovative solutions. They are also undertaking an active part in ensuring access to affordable, quality products and services around health, education, water and sanitation, energy, and finance, to low-income and under-served communities. The BRICS Solutions for SDGs Awards 2021 will help in exchange of knowledge, best practices, and innovative solutions in SDGs. It will also foster greater collaboration amongst BRICS economies towards meeting the sustainable development agenda. The Awards will be given to innovative and impactful solutions across seven SDG categories outlined by the United Nations. These include Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Good Health and Well Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6), Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7), and Innovation in Industry and Infrastructure Development (SDG 9).

Read more:

fikki.in/pressrelease-page.asp?nid=4151

India's digital backbone for vaccination is remarkable: N. Nilekani.



India has a digital backbone around its Covid-19 vaccination that is "truly remarkable," said Infosys co-founder and non-executive chairman of its Board, Nandan Nilekani, at a virtual event. In conversation with Microsoft India president Anant Maheshwari, Nilekani discussed the role of technology amid the pandemic, how digital skilling is now more important than ever and how technology can be used to scale up ongoing vaccination efforts. The event was the first edition of Expert Speak, a curated dialogue series with industry experts, organized by Microsoft. "We are the only country in the world where everybody gets a digital vaccination certificate immediately. And this can be printed, it can be on the person's smartphone, it can be kept in the Digital Locker, (and) is encrypted, digitally signed, and it is QR coded so that we can authenticate that certificate anywhere- offline or online," said Nilekani. Appreciating the opening up of the vaccine as announced by the government, Nilekani said if there are 50,000 vaccination points, India can scale up to vaccinating 5-10 million people a day. "Before this, we were at two to three million a day, and a lot of credit goes to Ram Sewak Sharma, who was my colleague at UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India), he took over NHA (National Health Authority) just about a couple of months back, and brought in a lot of technological enhancements and just made the system scalable," he added. Nilekani also said that facial authentication is being used for vaccination and not face recognition. "What is being used will be face authentication by comparing your photograph when you give your Aadhaar number, so it's no different from a fingerprint authentication, iris or OTP authentication," he said. Digital skilling is a step towards bridging the existing digital divide in the country, said Maheshwari.

Read more:

<https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-s-digital>

Coal India signs first ever power purchase pact with GUVNL for sale of 100 mw solar power.



CIL, a state-owned company, announced that it had signed its first ever power purchase agreement with Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd. (GUVNL) for the sale of 100 megawatts of solar power. The power purchase agreement (PPA) has a 25-year term, according to Coal India Ltd. (CIL). The company said, "We are excited that we could win our first ever solar auction bidding. CIL said in a statement that it would strongly engage in more such auctions in the future." CIL earned a 100 MW solar power project in a reverse auction held by GUVNL in March. CIL was awarded the contract for the 100 MW bid with the agreement that it enter into a PPA for the development of a solar power project and supply the power produced to GUVNL within 18 months of signing the PPA. The 100 MW project will be carried out by CIL through a solar EPC (engineering, procurement, and construction) contractor. It has already released a tender for the finalization of a solar EPC contractor, which is nearing completion. The project will be completed within one year of the work order being placed. CIL is willing to undertake solar power generation as a renewable energy solution, and it ranks high in its diversification portfolio. By 2024, the company plans to generate 3,000 megawatts of solar energy. Solar power projects are expected to receive Rs. 13,500 crore (US\$ 1.80 billion) in funding from the company's internal capital, special purpose vehicles (SPVs), and bank loans. CIL is establishing the requisite in-house resources and has assembled a team of capable officers to support its solar initiatives, according to the company. It added, "Solar will eventually replace coal as a major source of energy, and we're laying the groundwork to ensure our position in the country's energy market.

Read more:

<https://www.ibef.org/news/coal-india-signs-first-ever-power-purchase-pact-with-guvnl>

DRDO to set up 500 Medical Oxygen Plants within three months under PM CARES Fund.



The Medical Oxygen Plant (MOP) technology, developed by DRDO for On Board Oxygen Generation for LCA, Tejas by DEBEL, DRDO will now help in fighting the current crisis of oxygen for COVID-19 patients. The oxygen plant is designed for a capacity of 1,000 litres per minute (LPM). The system can cater to 190 patients at a flow rate of 5 LPM and charge 195 cylinders per day. Transfer of Technology has been done to M/s Tata Advanced Systems Limited, Bengaluru and M/s Trident Pneumatics Pvt. Ltd., Coimbatore, who will be producing 380 plants for installation across various hospitals in the country. 120 plants of 500 LPM capacity will be produced by industries working with Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun, belonging to CSIR. Oxygen is a very important clinical gas in health care centres and hospitals for treatment of COVID19 Patients. Medical Oxygen Plant (MOP) technology is capable of generating oxygen with 93±3% concentration which can be directly supplied to hospital beds or can be used to fill medical oxygen cylinders. It utilizes Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) technique and Molecular Sieve (Zeolite) technology to generate oxygen directly from atmospheric air. The MOP technology will be useful to provide oxygen supply during Corona Pandemic in hospitals in urban and rural areas. Hospitals will be able to generate on site medical oxygen, in a cost-effective manner with this oxygen plant rather than depending upon sourcing it from other places. The installation of this plant helps in avoiding hospital dependency on scarce oxygen cylinders especially at high altitude and inaccessible remote areas. MOP has already been installed at some of the Army sites in North East and Leh-Ladakh region.

Read more:

<https://www.ibef.org/news/drdo-to-set-up-500-medical-oxygen-plants-within-three-months-under-pm-cares-fund>

India's 4G subscriber base may grow to 820 million in FY22, says Crisil.



Despite a COVID-19 increase, India's 4G user base is projected to increase to around 820 million in FY22, according to Crisil Research. The Big 3 telcos are expected to use their newly acquired airwaves to improve coverage and drive the country's remaining 250-300 million feature phone users to upgrade to 4G. The growth in the subscriber base is attributed to increased competitive intensity as a result of major spectrum purchases by the big telcos in the March 2021 auction, which resulted in Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio, and Vodafone Idea gaining spectrum parity in terms of Mhz/million subscriber. According to the report, there is a market of 250-300 million active non-4G subscribers who will be on telcos' target list for conversion to 4G users in order to boost revenues. Though demand to attract this user base existed previously, operators erred on the side of caution due to a lack of spectrum and 4G coverage, it said, noting that with the recent spectrum acquisition, telcos are well-positioned to manage any spike in data traffic, resulting in increased competitiveness by players to gain market share. According to the report, indirect competition is expected to emerge from partnerships with mobile manufacturers for low-cost phones, expanded bundling of over-the-top (OTT) content, and reduced entry points for upgrade customers. An example of such move includes, Jio's 'JioPhone 2021' plan, which include handsets and one and two years of unlimited calling for Rs. 1,499 (US\$ 20.04) and Rs. 1,999 (US\$ 26.73), respectively. Individual players are likely to raise tariffs on specific plans in order to boost ARPU.

Read more:

<https://www.ibef.org/news/indias-4g-subscriber-base-may-grow-to-820-million-in-fy22-says-crisil>

Sugar Production Reaches 29.91 million tonnes In Oct-Apr of 2020-21: ISMA.



According to ISMA, India's sugar output has reached 29.91 million tons in April 2021. Mills have signed contracts for shipments of 5.4 to 5.5 million tons of sugar so far. A total of 3.5 million tons has been exported, with another 1 million tons planned to be completed by the end of the month, according to the study. According to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA), mills have delivered 117.72 crore liters of ethanol to oil marketing companies so far this year. ISMA reported that mills across the country processed 29.91 million tons of sugar during the 2020-21 marketing season, which runs from October to April. Sugar production is estimated to reach 30.2 million tons in the 2020-21 marketing season, up from 27.42 million tons the previous season, according to ISMA. According to ISMA data, sugar production in Uttar Pradesh, the country's largest sugar-producing province, stood at 10.56 million tons in April 2021. Maharashtra, the country's second-largest sugar producer, registered an increase in production at 10.56 million tons in April 2021, up from 6.09 million tons last year. Similarly, production in Karnataka, the country's third-largest sugar-producing state, increased to 4.16 million tons in April 2021 from 3.38 million tons the previous year. The majority of mills in these main producing states are expected to close within the next two weeks. In Karnataka, only a few mills may be open during the special season, which begins in July 2021. ISMA stated that the government's decision to swap the sugar quota allocated for mandatory exports and domestic sales this year has received a positive response. According to the government, 1.05 million tons of sugar has already been reallocated, with an additional 1,00,000 tons being reallocated based on mill-by-mill export output.

Read more:

<https://www.ibef.org/news/sugar-production-reaches-2991-million-tonnes-in-octapr-of-202021-isma>

IAF working on AI-based formulation to come out with predictive maintenance and threat scenarios.



Artificial Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, PVSM, AVSM, VM, ADC, Chief of the Air Staff, Indian Air Force today said that Artificial Intelligence (AI) for air warriors encompasses the concepts of technology, area of application and the eminent need to do it. Addressing the FICCI e-Symposium on AI for Air Warriors, Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria, said that traditionally, Air Forces have been the lead consumers of all the advanced technologies before they get proliferated to other areas. "However, the past few years, we have seen an evolution of new technologies in the non-military domain that eventually got adapted by the fighting forces. AI being one of them has seen exponential growth and applicability in the commercial sector and having realized its great potential, militaries over the world are racing to embrace it. In the aerospace domain today, AI can bring enormous changes in the way air wars are fought." Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria added that currently AI has not matured to an extent where completely autonomous missions can be executed. There are multiple applications wherein AI can be used more extensively for optimizing air operations and compressing the OODA (observe-orient-decide-act) loop at the starting process in efficiency. The Air Chief Marshal elaborated that AI is being developed in multiple areas in the air domain to accrue diverse and asymmetrical operations benefits. "However, there is a need to address some questions to this effect- whether algorithms can be trained to effectively execute mission planning behaviours in unpredictable scenarios; can machines be taught combat strategies; could sufficiently generalized representations be built to capture the richness of the planning problem itself across the threat matrix.

Read more:

[ficci.in/pressrelease-page.asp?nid=4144](https://www.ficci.in/pressrelease-page.asp?nid=4144)

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