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Finance and Economy

Reliance Jio launches JioInteract – World's 1st AI-based brand engagement video platform

- Reliance Jio on Thursday announced the launch of the world's first Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based brand engagement platform-JioInteract. It is a 'Live Video Call' service that features India's big celebrities. To kick-start, Jio has on-boarded none other than Bollywood's biggest star, Amitabh Bachchan, who will promote his upcoming comedy-drama film '102 Not Out' in the most innovative way.
- Users can ask questions related to his upcoming comedy-drama film, 102 Not Out and even book their movie tickets in real-time through the ticketing-partner BookMyShow.
- With Jio's base of over 186 million subscribers and another 150 million smartphone users, JioInteract is poised to become the largest platform for movie-promotion and brand engagement. Over the next few weeks, Jio will introduce services such as video call centres, video catalogue, and virtual showrooms to the forefront redefining customer experience.
- Such use of artificial intelligence is a first across the world and will reposition the way brands and customers think of engagement.

Centre announces Rs 1 lakh crore investment to upgrade airports

- Air travellers will get a smoother and more comfortable flying experience in the coming days. The Centre on Wednesday announced that it was ready with a plan for upgradation and development of airports in the country involving investment of about Rs 1 lakh crore in the next five years.
- The government stated that it had approved investments in expansion and upgradation of integrated terminals at Chennai, Guwahati and Lucknow airports by Airports Authority of India at a cost of Rs 2,467 crore, Rs 1,232 crore and Rs 1,383 crore, respectively.
- Airports Authority of India (AAI) officials said that at Chennai airport, the total built-up area of the proposed terminal building, including the present proposal measuring 1,97,000 sq m will be 3,36,000 sq m with an annual capacity to handle 35 mppa (million passengers per annum).
- The new terminal building incorporates green building features with an aim to achieve GRIHA-4 Star rating and will cater to the requirement of passenger growth up to the year 2026-27.

Paytm Mall launches PoS solutions for retail stores, announces partnership with Asus

- Paytm Mall, owned by Paytm Ecommerce Pvt. Ltd recently announced the launch of its connected Point of Sale (PoS) solution for retail stores, empowering shopkeepers to manage their offline and online customers. The company has forayed into a strategic partnership with Asus India to implement this connected PoS solution at ASUS retail stores.

- The platform will subsequently expand its offering to other brands and retail stores.
- Paytm Mall has also unveiled the exclusive online launch of Vivobook X507 on its platform, available through Asus offline retail stores.
- Furthermore, the company would be enabling Asus offline stores with its innovative "Digital Experience Zone" and Paytm Mall QR, encouraging customers to order ASUS products from within the store.

NBCC secures 20 bn order to build convention centres in African nations

- State-owned NBCC (India) Ltd. has bagged an order worth Rs. 20 billion to build high-capacity convention centres in nine different African countries namely Niger, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Liberia, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Togo, Gabon and is an initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.
- As per the order, NBCC will build nine Mahatma Gandhi Convention Centres (MGCC) in African nations in line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to raise the level of support for the vision of a prosperous, integrated and United Africa.
- At the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) held in December 2015, India had offered Africa a concessional credit of 10 billion dollars over five years and a grant assistance of 600 million dollars to create 100 capacity-building institutions, and developing infrastructure, public transport, clean energy, irrigation, agriculture and manufacturing capacity across Africa.

EPFO Introduces 'View Pension Passbook' Service for pensioners

- The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), which is providing a host of e-services for its stakeholders, has now introduced a new service - 'View Pension Passbook' service through 'UMANG app'.
- On clicking 'View Passbook' option, the pensioners would be required to enter the PPO Number and date of birth information.
- After successful validation of the information, an OTP will be sent to the registered mobile number of the pensioner.
- On entering OTP, the 'Pensioner Passbook' will display the details of the pensioner like name, DOB along with last pension credited information.

India

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana approved beyond 12th Five Year Plan

- The Union Cabinet on May 2, 2018 approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) beyond the 12th Five Year Plan for a period of three year from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with the financial outlay of Rs 14832 crores.

- The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana was initially approved in March 2006 with an aim to correct the imbalances in the availability of affordable healthcare facilities across the country and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States, in particular.
- PMSSY has two components - setting up of AIIMS in various states and upgradation of existing Government Medical Colleges (GMC).
- PMSSY will lead to development of apex level medical education and nursing education and connected research facilities.
- It will also lead to creation of tertiary level health care infrastructure through establishment of new AIIMS and will enhance cross linkages between primary, secondary and tertiary level health care facilities.

India begins first organised census to estimate population of Indus dolphin

- The Punjab government along with WWF-India would be conducting the first organised census of Indus Dolphins, one of the world's rarest mammals.
- The move is aimed at conservation of the species. The dolphins are found only in India and Pakistan, confined to the 185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike Barrage in India's Beas River in Punjab.
- It is the first organised census and would be conducted over a period of five days. Previously, the researchers had merely spotted the dolphins.
- The officials from the Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation, Punjab and WWF-India would be working in two teams to estimate the population of the dolphins.

National Conference under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao to be held in Delhi

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development will hold National Conference of 244 Districts under BetiBachaoBetiPadhao (BBBP) in New Delhi on May 4, 2018.
- The day-long conference would be attended by the Nodal Officers of 244 Districts, State Nodal Officers and Senior officers.
- The Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi would be the Chief Guest, while the Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Dr. Virendra Kumar would be the Guest of Honour.
- The conference would see the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development share experiences from their sectoral interventions on improving the sex ratio at birth and initiatives to encourage girl child education.

Reports

World's most polluted cities list of WHO: Indian Government claims pollution dipped in 2017

- As per the data released by the World Health Organisation (WHO), 14 Indian cities figure in a list of world's 20 most polluted cities in terms of particulate matter PM2.5 levels in 2016. While, in terms of PM10 levels, 13 cities in India figured among the 20 most-polluted cities of the world in 2016.
- The particulate matter PM2.5 includes pollutants like sulfate, nitrate and black carbon, which pose the greatest risk to human health. However, PM2.5 is more dangerous than PM10.
- To the contrary, Indian Government, in its response to the air pollution data released by the WHO, claimed that various pollution-control measures have led to decline in the pollution levels in 2017.
- As per the data released by WHO, Delhi's PM2.5 level in 2016 was at 143 microgrammes/cubic metre, making it the sixth most polluted city in the world.
- However, as per India's Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, Delhi's PM2.5 level was 134 microgrammes/cubic metre in 2016 and 125 microgrammes/cubic metre in 2017, showing an improvement.

Appointments

Ashok Lahiri appointed full-time member of 15th Finance Commission

- Former chief economic adviser Ashok Lahiri has been appointed as full-time member of the 15th Finance Commission, according to an order issued by the Personnel Ministry.
- He is at present the part-time member of the commission, headed by N K Singh.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved Lahiri's appointment as the full-time member, the order said.

Radhakrishnan Nair appointed ICICI Bank independent director

- Former IRDAI member Radhakrishnan Nair has been appointed to ICICI Bank's board as an Additional (Independent) Director. His appointment will be for a period of five years and is subject to shareholders' approval.
- Nair has around 40 years of experience in the banking industry and in the field of securities and insurance regulation.
- He is already an independent director of three subsidiaries of ICICI Bank — ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company Ltd; ICICI Prudential Trust Ltd and ICICI Securities Primary Dealership Ltd.

Justin Langer named new head coach of Australia

- Former Australian opener, Justin Langer was on May 3, 2018 named as the new head coach of Australia in all three formats of the game, replacing Darren Lehmann, who resigned after the recent ball-tampering row.
- Langer has been signed on for a four-year term, which is effective from May 22, 2018. The term would oversee two Ashes series, a World Cup and a World Twenty20 tournament.
- The former cricketer takes over the top position at a time when Australian cricket is in midst of a crisis following the 12-month suspensions of former captain Steve Smith and former vice-captain David Warner over a ball-tampering scandal.

World

NASA's Kilopower Reactor could power missions to Mars

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) on May 2, 2018 jointly demonstrated that the Kilopower portable nuclear fission reactor could enable crewed missions to the Moon, Mars and destinations beyond.
- The Kilopower Reactor Using Stirling Technology (KRUSTY) experiment was conducted at the NNSA's Nevada National Security Site from November 2017 through March 2018. The team successfully established that the system can create electricity with fission power.

Sports

Shooter Shahzar Rizvi becomes world no.1 in 10m air pistol

- World record holder Shahzar Rizvi has risen to the top of the world rankings in men's 10m air pistol in the latest International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) charts.
- With 1654 rating points, Rizvi shot to the top spot ahead of Russia's Artem Chernousov (1046) and Japan's Tomoyuki Matsuda (803).
- The other Indian in the top 10 is Jitu Rai, who is placed sixth, while Om Prakash Mitharval is placed 12th.

Days

World Press Freedom Day 2018 observed across the world

- The World Press Freedom Day was observed across the world on May 3, 2018 with an aim to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, defend the media from attacks and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives while being on duty.
- The theme of 2018 World Press Freedom Day - 'Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and The Rule of Law', highlights the importance of an empowering legal environment for press freedom and focuses on the role of an independent judiciary in ensuring legal security for press freedom and the prosecution of crimes against journalists.