TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami announced that the rivers in Chennai will be restored at an estimated ₹2,371 crore between 2019 and 2023
- Eco-restoration of Adyar and Cooum rivers has been going on under the Chennai River Restoration Trust.
- Apart from creating new sewerage infrastructure, existing ones are also to be refurbished.
- The Government will prepare a detailed project report to increase the groundwater table and find long-term solutions to augment water sources.
- Besides, it also plans to reuse around 260 million litres of sewage after a thorough tertiary treatment.

STATES

Kerala Government decided to form a Non-Resident Keralites Investment company with 74% stake to be held by expatriates and the rest by the Government.
- It aims to channelize investments from overseas Keralites for major infrastructure development in the state.
- The main aim of this shareholding is to utilise NRI investments for implementing various projects.
- Kerala cabinet also decided to appoint a NORKA (Non-Resident Keralites Affairs) Chief Executive officer (CEO) as special officer of company.
- The creation of NRK Investment company was one of the major recommendations submitted by standing committees of Loka Kerala Sabha (World Kerala Assembly).
- The Loka Kerala Sabha is an event hosted by state government to bring Keralites living across the world under one platform to utilise their expertise.
The Supreme Court – had asked the Ayodhya mediation panel to submit a report by July 18 on the “progress of mediation till date and the stage at which the said process is presently at”

- A bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S Abdul Nazir said that if the panel’s search for a negotiated solution may not be fruitful, it will begin day-to-day hearing tentatively from July 25.
- The order came after Hindu parties joined hands to demand an end to the mediation process which has been favoured by the Muslim side.
- The SC appointed a mediation panel in March, headed by SC ex-judge FMI Kalifulla and comprising of renowned mediator and senior advocate Sriram Panchu, and spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravishankar, to settle ownership of the 2.77-acre Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi land in Ayodhya.
- The mediation committee had been granted time till August 15 to engage in talks.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi - has approved 3rd phase of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- The third phase aims to consolidate around 1,25,000 km of roads in the states connecting habitations to Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs), hospitals as well as Higher Secondary Schools.
- An estimated cost of PMGSY-III would be Rs 80,250 crore over next five years out of which Central Share-Rs 53800 crore and State Share- Rs 26450 crore.
- The project target period is from 2019-20 to 2024-25.
- PMGSY-III scheme was announced by Union Finance Minister in Budget Speech for year 2018-19.
- Under the PMGSY scheme, a total of 5,99,090 Km road length has been constructed since inception till April, 2019.
Railway Protection Force (RPF) - recently launched ‘Operation Thirst’ to stop selling of unauthorised Packaged Drinking Water (PDW) in Delhi

- The operation was carried out on July 8 and 9, leading to the arrest and fine of many persons
- Under it as many as 1,371 people were arrested and over 69,294 bottles were seized by RPF, under section 144 and section 153 of Indian Railway Act
- During the operation, a total fine amount of Rs. 6,80,855 has been realised from offenders

New Delhi’s Connaught Place - is 9th most expensive office location in the world with an annual rent of nearly $144 per sq. ft.

- It retained the same position last year, as per the property consultant CPRE’s annual Global Prime Office Occupancy Costs Survey
- 6 of world’s 10 most expensive office markets are found in Asia
- For 2nd year straight Hong Kong’s central district retained top spot with its occupancy cost was valued at $322 per sq.ft.

Ministry of Defence (MoD)- signs MoU with Intellectual Property Facilitation Cell (IPFC) and National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) to provide an headstart to Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti

- Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti was launched last year with the aim to inculcate IP culture in Indian defence manufacturing ecosystem
- Under this mission, an Intellectual Property Facilitation Cell (IPFC) was established under the aegis of Directorate General Quality Assurance (DGQA).
The Ministry of Women and Child Development - is implementing the Swadhar Greh Scheme for rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances.

The scheme covers women who are deserted and without any social and economic support, women victims of domestic violence, family tension and natural disaster.

The ministry is also implementing Universalisation of Women Helpline Scheme which is envisaged to provide 24 hours emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence.

INTERNATIONAL

France - gave final approval to a tax on big technology digital giants like Facebook, Google & Amazon on July 11

The 3% levy will apply to revenue from digital services earned in France by firms with more than €25 million in French revenue and €750 million ($845 million) worldwide.

The legislation — dubbed the GAFA tax (an acronym for Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon) — was passed by a simple show of hands in the Senate Upper House after previously being passed by the National Assembly Lower Chamber.

France became the first economy to levy the tax after EU countries failed to agree a levy valid across the bloc.

Other EU nations, including Austria, UK and Italy, have also announced plans for their own digital taxes.
CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

The 2nd India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue (IRSED) - was held in New Delhi

- It took place under chairmanship of Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice-Chairman of NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog.
- 1st IRSED was held in St. Petersburg in Russia from 25-26 November 2018.
- The dialogue was established following the signing of MoU during 19th edition of Annual India-Russia Bilateral Summit which was held on 5 October 2018, in New Delhi
- The MoU was signed between India’s NITI Aayog and Russia’s Ministry of Economic Development of Russian Federation

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

The final countdown for the ₹978-crore Chandrayaan-2 mission - to start at 6.51AM on Sunday — 20 hours ahead of the spacecraft’s liftoff on July 15

- It will be the country’s first attempt at a softlanding on the Moon
- Chandrayaan-2 will be launched with GSLV-MkIII, India’s heaviest rocket so far on its second operational launch
- The two big missions before this — Chandrayaan-1 and Mars Orbiter Mission — were launched with the PSLV class of launch vehicles.

Japan’s Hayabusa2 probe - has made a perfect touchdown on a distant asteroid named Ryugu, at a distance of around 300 million kilometres from Earth

- Hayabusa2 also made history with the creation of the crater on Ryugu’s surface in April 2019
- Hayabusa2’s first touchdown was in February, when it landed briefly on Ryugu and fired a bullet into the surface to puff up dust for collection, before blasting back to its holding position.
The mission intends to collect samples from beneath the surface of the asteroid, which could provide insight on the origin of the solar system, around 4.6 billion years ago.

It is the successor to JAXA’s (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) first asteroid explorer called Hayabusa which is Japanese word for ‘falcon’.

In 2010 Hayabusa returned with dust samples from a smaller, potato-shaped asteroid after spending seven years in space.

Then Hayabusa2 Mission was launched in December 2014, with project cost around $270 million.

It is scheduled to return to Earth with its samples in 2020.

Ryugu, which means “Dragon Palace” in Japanese, refers to a castle at the bottom of the ocean in an ancient Japanese tale.

**In a first, Virgin Galactic - has successfully ‘launched’ a rocket from a modified Boeing 747 airplane in mid-flight in the Mojave desert**

- Virgin Orbit dropped its LauncherOne vehicle from the modified airplane Cosmic Girl, while flying at an altitude of 35,000 feet.
- The test flight went without a hitch, and the rocket and aircraft separated cleanly.

**The Vega rocket - carrying an imaging observation satellite ‘FalconEye1’ for the United Arab Emirates failed about two minutes after liftoff from a base in French Guiana.**

- It was the first failure after 14 successful launches of Vega since operations began at the Guiana Space Centre in 2012.
- The satellite was developed by Airbus and the aerospace manufacturer Thales Alenia Space.
- European rocket-launch service provider Arianespace markets the satellite.
- The images to be captured by FalconEye 1 were meant to be used in a number of areas, including mapping, agricultural surveillance, urban planning or surveillance of borders and coasts.
A joint venture of a Kalyani group firm and Israel’s Rafael Advanced Systems - has secured a $100 million contract for manufacturing 1,000 Barak-8 MRSAM missile kits.

- Kalyani Rafael Advanced Systems (KRAS), the joint venture, in which the Indian partner’s holding is 51% and the rest is with Rafael, will manufacture the kits at its production facility near Hyderabad and supply them to Bharat Dynamics for further integration.
- Eventually, the product will be used by the Indian Army and the Air Force.
- The first set of the kits, under the nearly four-year delivery schedule, is expected to begin from the fourth quarter this fiscal.
- KRAS is expected to ramp up the headcount to 300 technical experts by 2023.
- The joint venture manufactured several products and its exports were worth $15 million.

Indian Army - has placed an order for procuring Israeli Anti-Tank Spike missiles from Israel under the provisions of 'emergency purchase'

- It is known for their precision targeting with an ability to pierce even bunkers.
- Having a range of 4 kilometres, it can be deployed both in plains and hills.
- It can be fired from different platforms such as vehicles, helicopters, ships and ground launchers.
- Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd. has manufactured Israeli Spike missiles.
- Australia, Netherland, England, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Singapore and South Korea are already using Spike missiles.
- In April after Balakot strike, Indian Army cleared procurement of the missile and orders were placed in July 2019.
SPORTS

Tamil Nadu’s Woman International Master (WIM) K Jennitha Anto - won her sixth IPCA (International Physically Disabled Chess Association) world title
✓ The 32-year old from Trichy had won the world title from 2013-17
✓ However, she managed only bronze last year during the event in Czech Republic
✓ Suffering from polio from the age of three, the wheelchair-bound Jennitha took to chess at the age of 9

✓ Her feat helped Jennitha overtake Anand — who has five world titles
✓ The 19th edition of the tournament was held from June 28 to July 6 in Ruzomberok, Slovakia

Five-time World chess champion and India’s first Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand - will be the mentor for the Indian edition of chesskid.com, a US-based chess platform.

✓ Chesskid is a safe and accessible platform, forming the world’s largest scholastic website for kids.
✓ It has one million kids enrolled in it, with live plays, puzzles and interaction with other players