



AGRASEN CIVIL SERVICES ACADEMY

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22nd to 31st May 2023

WEEKLY Current Affairs

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EXAMS

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- ◆ Maharana Pratap Lok
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- ◆ Prime Minister Modi Receives Highest Honours from Fiji and Papua New Guinea





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Current Affairs 22 may to 31 may 2023

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Chennai to Host Squash World Cup

The city of Chennai is abuzz with anticipation as it prepares to host the highly anticipated 2023 Squash World Cup. This prestigious event, organized by the Sports Development Authority of Tamil Nadu (SDAT) in partnership with the World Squash Federation (WSF), will showcase the world's top squash players competing for the coveted trophy.

From June 13 to 17, the squash enthusiasts of Chennai will witness intense matches at two prominent locations – the Express Avenue Mall and the Indian Squash and Triathlon Academy (ISTA). These state-of-the-art facilities are fully equipped to host this prestigious tournament and provide an immersive experience for both players and fans.

Ace Players Leading the Indian Contingent

The Indian team boasts two exceptional players who will spearhead their campaign in the tournament. Saurav Ghosal, currently ranked 19th in the world, brings his formidable skills and experience to the court. Joining him is the accomplished Joshna Chinappa, a 19-time National Champion, whose prowess has earned her international recognition. With these two stellar athletes at the helm, the Indian contingent is poised to make a mark on the world stage.

Sponsorship and History

The 2023 Squash World Cup receives support from the Tamilnadu Government, emphasizing their commitment to promoting sports in the region. This isn't the first time Chennai has hosted this prestigious event. In 2011, the city witnessed the previous edition of the World Cup, adding to its rich squash legacy.

Evolution of the Squash World Cup

The Squash World Cup has undergone significant changes since its last staging in 2011. The tournament now prioritizes gender parity within teams, reflecting the commitment to inclusivity and equality in squash. Additionally, matches will be played to a best of 5 games to seven points, introducing an exciting twist to the competition and raising the intensity levels for players and spectators alike.

International Competition

A total of eight countries will vie for the 2023 Squash World Cup trophy. Besides the host nation India, teams from Hong Kong, China; Japan; Malaysia; Egypt; South Africa; Australia; and Colombia will compete against each other. Egypt, known for its formidable squash players, is expected to be the top seed, setting the stage for thrilling encounters throughout the tournament.

Maharana Pratap Lok

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan recently announced the construction of Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap Lok in Bhopal.

Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap Lok: A Tribute to Valor

The upcoming Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap Lok in Bhopal will serve as a testament to Maharana Pratap's legacy. This memorial aims to depict the various aspects of his life, including his sacrifice, penance, struggle, and gallantry. By capturing the essence of his remarkable journey, future generations will be able to appreciate and learn from his endeavors to protect the culture and freedom of his people.





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Depiction of Maharana Pratap and Associates

Within Veer Shiromani Maharana Pratap Lok, the contributions of Maharana Pratap's seven associates, namely Bhamashah, Punjabhil, Chetak, and others, will be showcased through pictures. This portrayal will highlight the significant roles played by these individuals, shedding light on their involvement in Maharana Pratap's pursuit of justice and liberty.

Integration into the School Curriculum

To ensure that Maharana Pratap's bravery and valor are not forgotten, the state's school curriculum will incorporate his inspiring stories. Through these educational initiatives, students will have the opportunity to learn about his courageous acts and the indomitable spirit he displayed in the face of adversity. By instilling these values, the curriculum aims to nurture a sense of pride and admiration for Maharana Pratap among the youth.

Establishment of the Maharana Pratap Welfare Board

Recognizing the significance of Maharana Pratap's contributions, the Madhya Pradesh government plans to establish the Maharana Pratap Welfare Board. This board will work towards preserving and promoting the values Maharana Pratap stood for, ensuring his legacy remains alive in the hearts and minds of the people. Through various initiatives, the board will strive to celebrate and propagate his principles of courage, patriotism, and resilience.

The Legacy of Maharana Pratap

Maharana Pratap was a prominent figure in Indian history. He belonged to the esteemed Sisodia dynasty and is best known for his resistance against Akbar and the Mughal empire. The Battle of Haldighati, among other major battles, exemplified his unwavering commitment to protecting his people's rights and preserving their independence. Maharana Pratap's military resistance through guerrilla warfare served as an inspiration for later rebels, including notable figures like Malik Ambar and Shivaji.

ONDC Academy

The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) is set to make a significant stride in raising awareness and enhancing its ecosystem. With the launch of the ONDC Academy next month, the organization aims to develop a robust network of certified sellers, buyers, and logistics partners in the country.

The primary objective of the ONDC Academy is to foster a stronger and more efficient ecosystem for digital commerce. Through comprehensive training and certification processes, the academy seeks to equip network participants with in-depth knowledge and understanding of various processes, rules, regulations, and best practices. By nurturing a skilled and certified community, the academy aims to elevate the standards of the ONDC Network and provide a seamless experience for all stakeholders involved.

One of the distinguishing features of the ONDC Network is its decentralized nature and unbundled functions. Unlike traditional online commerce platforms, the ONDC Network operates without a centralized platform. This unique approach creates distinct legal relationships between participants, buyers, and sellers. Network participants, including buyer and seller apps, must align with specific processes and systems governing ONDC, such as payments, commercial relationships, settlements, and grievance redressal, among others.

Certification Process





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To ensure the quality and competence of network participants, the ONDC Academy will utilize the certification platform provided by the National Stock Exchange. This certification process will validate the knowledge, skills, and adherence to the set standards of ONDC. By certifying network participants, the academy aims to create a pool of certified professionals who can contribute to the growth and development of the ONDC ecosystem.

Current Network Participants and Retail Merchants

The ONDC Network has already attracted over 46 network participants, including renowned entities such as HUL, ITC, SleepyOwl, and Wow. Additionally, intercity logistics providers like ShipRocket, Delhivery, and Loadshare have become part of the live network. Currently, more than 35,000 retail merchants are ONDC-enabled, offering a wide range of products through the network. Integration with popular B2C seller apps like Paytm, Mystore, Craftsvilla, Spice Money, Magicpin, and Pincode has further strengthened the reach and accessibility of the ONDC Network.

What is Shavuot?

Shavuot, also known as the Feast of Weeks, is a significant Jewish festival that holds historical and theological importance. Celebrated exactly 50 days or seven weeks after the second day of Passover, Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai and the first-fruits harvest.

Shavuot centers around the significant occurrence of the presentation of the Torah. According to Jewish tradition, after the Israelites were liberated from slavery in Egypt, they journeyed through the desert and arrived at Mount Sinai. It was at this sacred site that Moses received the Torah directly from God, including the Ten Commandments and other teachings that form the foundation of Jewish law and ethics.

Tikkun Leil Shavuot: Night-Long Torah Study

An integral part of Shavuot is the tradition of Tikkun Leil Shavuot, a night-long Torah study. Participants engage in in-depth study and reflection on the teachings of the Torah, demonstrating their eagerness to receive and learn from its wisdom. This study session fosters a deep connection to Jewish heritage and facilitates personal and communal spiritual growth.

Dairy Products: Symbolizing Abundance

One unique aspect of Shavuot is the consumption of dairy products. This tradition symbolizes the abundance of the land of Israel and its flourishing agricultural produce. Cheesecakes, blintzes, and other dairy delicacies are enjoyed during the festival, reminding individuals of the richness and blessings bestowed upon them.

Harvest Season and Agricultural Significance

Shavuot coincides with the harvest season, signifying its agricultural significance. In ancient times, Jews would offer their first fruits at the Temple in Jerusalem as an expression of gratitude to God. This connection to the land and its bountiful produce continues to be commemorated during Shavuot, highlighting the importance of agricultural blessings.

Symbolism of Flowers and Greenery

On Shavuot, households and synagogues are embellished with blooms and verdant elements. This act symbolizes the blossoming of the land following the spring harvest. The vibrant colors and fragrances represent the beauty of nature and the rejuvenation of the earth. Some communities even organize processions where baskets of flowers and fruits are carried, celebrating the abundance of the season.





The Significance of the Torah in Jewish Life

Shavuot serves as a reminder of the central role the Torah plays in Jewish life. It commemorates the giving of divine wisdom and the ethical principles that guide individuals on their spiritual journeys. The festival provides an opportunity for reflection, study, and gratitude for the gift of knowledge and the teachings of the Torah.

Panch Karma Sankalp

In a significant development towards sustainable maritime practices, Sarbananda Sonowal, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping & Waterways and Ayush, made five major announcements focusing on green shipping and digitization of ports. These announcements were made during the ministry's second Chintan Shivir held in the serene setting of Munnar.

Major Announcements and the 'Panch Karma Sankalp'

During the Chintan Shivir, Sarbananda Sonowal unveiled the 'Panch Karma Sankalp,' which represents the five major announcements made by the ministry. These announcements aim to revolutionize the maritime industry and promote sustainable practices.

Procurement of Tugs under the Green Tug Transition Programme

Under the Green Tug Transition Programme, four major ports, namely Jawaharlal Nehru Port, VO Chidambaranar Port, Paradip Port, and Deendayal Port, Kandla, will procure two tugs each. This move will contribute to the promotion of green shipping practices and reduce environmental impact.

Development of Green Hydrogen Hubs

Deendayal Port and VO Chidambaranar Port, Tuticorin, have been designated as Green Hydrogen Hubs. This strategic initiative will focus on the development and utilization of green hydrogen as an environmentally friendly energy source within these ports, further advancing the sustainability agenda.

Facilitation and Monitoring of River and Sea Cruises

The ministry announced the establishment of a Single Window Portal, which will serve as a platform to facilitate and monitor river and sea cruises. This digital portal aims to streamline processes, enhance efficiency, and ensure a seamless experience for cruise operators and passengers.

Transformation into Smart Ports

Jawaharlal Nehru Port and VO Chidambaranar Port, Tuticorin, are set to become smart ports by the next year. Through the integration of advanced technologies, automation, and digitalization, these ports will enhance their operational efficiency, security, and environmental sustainability.

Cargo Movement and Growth in IWT

Coastal shipping has witnessed remarkable growth, with cargo movement reaching 151 MMTPA in 2022-23 compared to 74 MMTPA in 2014-15. Similarly, cargo handling via Inland Waterways Transport (IWT) has experienced significant progress, increasing from 30 MTPA in 2014 to 126 MTPA in 2022-23. These figures demonstrate the positive impact of various initiatives undertaken to promote coastal shipping and improve infrastructure.

GRSE's 'GAINS' Startup Challenge

In recent times, Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd has taken a significant step towards promoting innovation and technological advancements in shipbuilding. With the launch of their initiative called





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GAINS 2023, GRSE aims to harness the potential of startups and encourage the development of innovative solutions in the ship design and construction industry.

Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) was established as a Category 1 Mini Ratna Company and one of India's premier defence shipyards. It has a rich history dating back to its inception as a DPSU (Defence Public Sector Undertaking) in 1960. In 1961, GRSE achieved a remarkable milestone by delivering the first indigenous warship, INS Ajay, to the Indian Navy. This early success set the stage for GRSE to become a leading name in shipbuilding, both in India and the global market.

The GAINS 2023 Initiative

GRSE's latest endeavor, the GAINS 2023 (GRSE Accelerated Innovation Nurturing Scheme – 2023) initiative, is a significant leap towards fostering innovation and technological advancements in shipbuilding. It aims to leverage the ecosystem and address present and emerging challenges in the ship design and construction industry.

The Launch

Shri G Surya Prakash, Assistant Manager (Finance) and the youngest officer of GRSE, had the honor of launching the GAINS 2023 initiative. The launch took place in Kolkata and was graced by the presence of Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, the Minister of State for Electronics and IT & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Focus Areas of GAINS 2023 Challenge

The GAINS 2023 Challenge is designed to encourage innovation and fresh perspectives in the shipbuilding industry. The primary focus areas for this challenge are Artificial Intelligence, Renewable/Green Energy, Energy Efficiency, and Efficiency Enhancement. By emphasizing these thematic areas, GRSE aims to drive sustainable practices and technological advancements in shipbuilding.

Stages of the GAINS 2023 Challenge

The GAINS 2023 Challenge is a two-stage process that aims to generate a plethora of ideas and nurture the most promising ones. In the first stage, participants are required to submit short illustrated and written submissions, accompanied by a rough order of cost and justification of professional qualifications.

Rayyanah Barnawi

Rayyanah Barnawi made history as the first Arab woman to venture into space. The highly anticipated maiden space mission of Saudi Arabia took place on May 21. Barnawi, along with her co-astronaut Ali al-Qarni, embarked on their journey aboard the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

Renowned astronauts Peggy Whitson and John Shoffner joined Barnawi and al-Qarni on this significant mission. Together, they formed a team representing both Saudi Arabia and the United States.

The mission held great importance for Saudi Arabia as it strove to expand its space science education and reduce its reliance on oil, in alignment with the Vision 2030 reform program. This program aimed to create new opportunities and jobs for young Saudis while driving economic diversification.

The primary purpose of the mission to the ISS was to conduct a series of experiments. The team focused on human research, cell sciences, and cloud seeding experiments in the unique microgravity environment of the





space station. These experiments contributed to scientific advancements and paved the way for future space exploration.

Saudi Arabia's History in Space

Saudi Arabia's involvement in space exploration dated back to 1985 when Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, an esteemed air force pilot, participated in a space voyage organized by the United States. Since then, the nation had been making steady progress in the sector.

Building on the success of previous Arab astronauts, such as Hazzaa al-Mansoori from the UAE, who became the first Arab to reach the ISS, Saudi Arabia's mission signified another significant milestone in the region's space endeavors.

The Long-standing ISS Cooperation

The International Space Station, a remarkable example of international collaboration between Russia and the West, had been continuously orbiting Earth at an astounding speed of about 28,000 kilometers per hour (17,400 miles per hour) since 1998. This long-standing scientific outpost provided a unique platform for research, innovation, and fostering international cooperation.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Located in Hiroshima, Japan, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum stands as a solemn reminder of the devastating atomic bombing that occurred during World War II. Established in August 1955, the museum serves as a dedicated space for documenting the events and consequences of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Recently, Prime Minister Modi, along with other participating leaders of the G7 Summit, visited this museum.

The Peace Memorial Museum's collection is a poignant testament to the tragedy that unfolded in Hiroshima. Belongings left by the victims, photographs, and other materials offer a glimpse into the horror of the atomic bombing. Each item on display represents the grief, anger, and pain of real people, ensuring their stories are never forgotten.

Divided for Deeper Understanding

In 1994, the museum underwent renovations, leading to its division into two sections: the East Wing and the West Wing. The East Wing serves as a comprehensive resource, delving into the history of Hiroshima, the decision to drop the bomb, the lives of citizens during and after the bombing, and the ongoing efforts for international peace. The West Wing, part of the original museum, focuses on the physical and human toll of the bomb, highlighting the damage caused by the heat rays, blast, and radiation effects.

A Journey of Renewal

In 2014, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum embarked on a major renovation project. The East Wing reopened in April 2017, offering more interactive displays and a new model utilizing projection mapping to vividly demonstrate the effects of the bomb blast. The exhibits were also refreshed during this period, emphasizing the personal belongings of the victims and showcasing their enduring impact.

A Symbol of Global Commitment

The significance of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum extends beyond its walls. It became a beacon of hope when the Group of Seven (G-7) leaders made an unprecedented joint visit to the museum. Leaders from the United States, France, Britain, and other nuclear powers expressed their commitment to a world free of





nuclear weapons, acknowledging the museum's role in raising awareness about the consequences of such weaponry.

FIPIC Summit 2023

The Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit, hosted in Papua New Guinea, served as a significant platform for fostering cooperation in various areas such as trade, investment, climate change, and sustainable development. This multinational grouping, established in 2014, aimed to promote collaboration between India and 14 Pacific Islands nations, including Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

One of the key highlights of this year's FIPIC Summit was the full participation of leaders from all 14 countries. This was a rare occurrence due to connectivity and other challenges faced by these nations. The convergence of these countries underscored the importance and potential of strengthening ties between India and the Pacific region.

Strengthening Ties for a Brighter Future

The FIPIC Summit provided a unique opportunity for collaboration and dialogue between India and the Pacific Islands nations. It aimed to enhance mutual understanding, cooperation, and development in various sectors. Through discussions on trade, investment, climate change, and sustainable development, the leaders worked towards building stronger partnerships for a brighter future.

Prime Minister Modi Receives Highest Honours from Fiji and Papua New Guinea

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership and contributions have been recognized and honored with various prestigious international awards from different countries and organizations. In a recent development, he received the highest honors from Fiji and Papua New Guinea.
- Awarded by: Sitiveni Rabuka, Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji.
- Significance: Recognizes Prime Minister Modi's outstanding contributions and strong bilateral relations between India and Fiji.
- Companion of the Order of Logohu:
- Awarded by: Papua New Guinea.
- Former recipient: Bill Clinton, former President of the United States.
- Reason: PM Modi's efforts in promoting unity among Pacific Island countries and his role in spearheading the cause of the Global South.
- Prominent International Awards Received by Prime Minister Modi:
- Order of Abdulaziz Al Saud: Highest honor of Saudi Arabia awarded to non-Muslim dignitaries.
- State Order of Ghazi Amir Amanullah Khan: Afghanistan's highest civilian honor
- Grand Collar of the State of Palestine Award: Highest honor of Palestine awarded to foreign dignitaries.
- Order of Zayed Award: UAE's highest civilian honor.
- Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin: Highest honor of the Maldives awarded to foreign dignitaries.
- King Hamad Order of the Renaissance: Bahrain Order, First Class, a top honor by the Gulf country.





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- Legion of Merit by the US Government: Recognition of exceptional services and achievements by the United States Armed Forces.
- Order of the Druk Gyalpo: Highest civilian decoration of Bhutan.
- Seoul Peace Prize: Awarded for contributions to harmony, reconciliation, and world peace.
- Champions of The Earth Award: UN's highest environmental honor.
- Global Goalkeeper Award: Recognizes the commitment towards the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award: Acknowledges leadership in global energy and environment by the Cambridge Energy Research Associates.

What is Article 239AA?

Article 239AA of the Constitution holds significant importance in defining the special status and governance structure of Delhi. The recent SC ruling that interpreted Article 239AA was nullified with the passing of an ordinance that sought to establish the National Capital Civil Services Authority.

Article 239AA was inserted into the Constitution by the 69th Amendment Act in 1991. It conferred special status on Delhi, following the recommendations of the S Balakrishnan Committee. The provision grants Delhi an administrator and a Legislative Assembly, along with specific powers and limitations.

Powers of the Legislative Assembly

According to Article 239AA, the Legislative Assembly of Delhi has the power to make laws for the entire city or any part of it. The legislative authority extends to matters in the State List or Concurrent List, excluding police, public order, and land. This provision provides the Assembly with a certain degree of legislative autonomy within its jurisdiction.

Federalism and Delhi's Status

The Constitution Bench ruling in 2018 emphasized that although Delhi cannot be granted the status of a state, the concept of federalism applies to it. The ruling recognized the importance of cooperative federalism in the governance of Delhi, highlighting the unique nature of the city's administration.

Executive Power and the Role of the Centre

The executive power over police, land, and public order in Delhi rests with the Centre (Union of India). While the Legislative Assembly has legislative authority, the Centre retains exclusive executive control over these crucial areas. This division of power ensures a balance between the regional administration and central oversight.

The Proviso to Article 239AA

The proviso to Article 239AA states that in case of a difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor (LG) and the ministers, the matter shall be referred to the President for a decision. This provision ensures that disputes are resolved through a proper constitutional process, with the ultimate decision lying with the President.

Limitations on the Government of NCT of Delhi





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The Government of NCT (National Capital Territory) of Delhi operates within the limitations imposed by the Constitution. While it has a certain degree of independence and legislative power, its actions must conform to the laws made by Parliament. This ensures that the regional government operates within the framework of the constitutional scheme.

Emphasis on Participatory Governance

Justice Chandrachud's separate judgment highlighted that Article 239AA provides for institutional governance based on participatory, representative, and responsive government. This emphasis underscores the democratic principles underlying the governance structure of Delhi.

The Supreme Court's Unanimous Ruling

On May 11, a unanimous ruling by a five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court addressed the power tussle between the Delhi government and the Centre. The ruling reiterated the federal model established by Article 239AA, outlining the limited involvement of the Union of India in the administration of NCTD.

Bakhmut in Ukraine Conflict

The city of Bakhmut in Ukraine has become a focal point in the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Recent events have brought attention to the status and significance of Bakhmut, with conflicting claims and strategic considerations.

Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelensky, has firmly denied the claims made by the mercenary Wagner Group and Russia of capturing Bakhmut. According to President Zelensky, the city is not occupied by the Russian Federation. This statement contradicts the earlier announcement made by Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of the Wagner Group, who declared the capture of Bakhmut by Russian forces.

Symbolic Importance of Bakhmut

Although Bakhmut does not possess significant strategic value in terms of industry or location, its symbolic importance cannot be overlooked. Analysts suggest that Russia considered Bakhmut an important target primarily to achieve a much-needed victory after months of military operations. Additionally, a competitive dynamic within the Russian forces likely contributed to the decision to target Bakhmut.

Strategic Considerations and Proximity to Important Roads

Bakhmut's proximity to multiple important roads does offer some strategic value to the Russian advance. The control of these routes could potentially facilitate further Russian movements in the region. However, it is worth noting that this aspect applies to several towns in the area, emphasizing the symbolic nature of Bakhmut's significance.

Ukrainian Perspective: Wearing Down Moscow's Troops

For Ukrainians, the battle over Bakhmut has been seen as a means to wear down Moscow's troops and deplete their supplies. By making Russian forces fight for every block, Ukrainians aimed to weaken their opponent and hinder Moscow's offensive capabilities. The prolonged conflict over Bakhmut has been part of Ukraine's strategy to exhaust and hamper Russian military operations.

Potential Implications and Future Targets





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If Russian forces have indeed captured Bakhmut, it could serve as a stepping stone for further advances. Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, two larger cities in the Donetsk region, might be the next targets. Moscow aims to conclude what it refers to as the “liberation” of the “People’s Republic of Donetsk” by gaining control over these cities. Additionally, the control of Bakhmut could aid in advancing toward Chasiv Yar, a nearby town west of the city.

e-Appeals Scheme 2023

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has recently launched the “e appeal” scheme, aimed at addressing the issue of pending appeals related to Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) default and tax collection at source (TCS). This new initiative is expected to streamline the appeal process and expedite the resolution of such cases.

Under the “e appeal” scheme, the Joint Commissioner (Appeals) is entrusted with the responsibility of disposing of appeals filed before them or allocated/transferred to them. They hold the power to send show cause notices and initiate penalties in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Act. However, it’s important to note that they do not have the authority to issue summons.

Conducting Personal Hearings through Video Conference

In order to ensure a seamless appeal process, personal hearings for appeals will be conducted through video conferences. This approach not only saves time and resources but also enables effective communication between the parties involved. It promotes convenience and efficiency in the appeal proceedings.

Amendment to the Income Tax Act

To accommodate this scheme, the Income Tax Act has been amended to include the designation of “New Joint Commissioner (Appeals).” This amendment strengthens the framework and provides a dedicated authority to handle the appeals efficiently.

Deployment of Joint Commissioners

To effectively implement the “e appeal” scheme, the CBDT plans to deploy approximately 100 posts of joint commissioners from the income tax department. These officials will work closely with the Joint Commissioner (Appeals) to ensure the smooth functioning of the scheme and facilitate the timely resolution of appeals.

Focus on TDS Default and Processing of Return of Income

The “e appeal” scheme primarily focuses on resolving appeals related to TDS default, orders on TDS default, and orders on the processing of return of income. By targeting these specific areas, the scheme aims to address key issues and reduce the pendency of appeals in these categories.

Reducing Pendency and Enhancing Efficiency

The introduction of the “e appeal” scheme aligns with the government’s commitment to enhance the efficiency of the tax administration system. By streamlining the appeal process and reducing the backlog of pending cases, this scheme contributes to a more effective and timely resolution of tax-related matters.

Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana

The Maharashtra government has recently launched a new financial scheme aimed at providing support to farmers in the state. The scheme, known as Namu Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana, was approved at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.





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Under the Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana, farmers in Maharashtra will receive an annual payment of Rs 6,000. This financial aid is in addition to the amount of Rs 6,000 that farmers already receive in instalments per year from the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. The scheme aims to provide an extra boost to the income of farmers and enhance their financial stability.

Beneficiaries and Approval

More than one crore farmers in Maharashtra are expected to benefit from the state government's Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana. This initiative is part of the government's efforts to support the agricultural community and improve their overall well-being.

Initiative Announced in the Budget

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who also serves as the state's finance minister, had initially announced the Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana in the budget for the financial year 2023-24. The scheme's inclusion in the budget reflects the government's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by farmers and strengthening the agricultural sector in Maharashtra.

Supporting Farmers' Livelihoods

With the launch of the Namo Shetkari Mahasanman Yojana, the Maharashtra government aims to alleviate financial burdens faced by farmers and promote their economic well-being. By providing direct financial assistance, the scheme intends to empower farmers and enable them to overcome challenges and invest in their agricultural activities.

Iraq's Route of Development

Iraq is undertaking a bold initiative to position itself as a prominent regional transportation center through substantial improvements to its road and rail infrastructure. The project, known as the "Route of Development," aims to connect Iraq with neighboring countries, boosting economic integration and trade. Led by Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani, this initiative seeks to overcome existing challenges and position Iraq as a pivotal player in the movement of goods and people across the Middle East.

The Route of Development is a monumental project designed to span the entire length of Iraq, covering an impressive distance of 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) from the northern border with Turkey to the southern Gulf region. Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani unveiled this ambitious plan during a conference attended by representatives from Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

Timeframe and Collaboration

While the completion of the Route of Development will require extensive collaboration and further discussions, the estimated timeframe for this monumental endeavor is projected to be three to five years. The project aims to encourage participating countries to contribute to its development, allowing them to engage in specific sections as per their interest and capabilities.

Overcoming Infrastructure Challenges

One of the major challenges facing Iraq's transportation sector is its dilapidated infrastructure. The country's roads suffer from potholes and inadequate maintenance, impeding efficient connectivity. However, the Route





of Development presents an opportunity to address these issues comprehensively by investing in the reconstruction and upgrading of Iraq's transportation network.

Connecting to the Gulf and Beyond

Iraq's strategic geographical location presents a unique advantage for becoming a transportation hub. By linking the Gulf region with Turkey and Europe, the Route of Development aims to tap into the potential of Iraq's position as a gateway for the movement of goods and people. The project includes the expansion of capacity at the commercial port of Al-Faw, enabling efficient transfer of cargo between maritime and land-based transportation systems.

Train Stations and Regional Integration

As part of the Route of Development, approximately 15 train stations are planned along the route, strategically located in major cities such as Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul. These stations will serve as vital connectors, facilitating the seamless flow of transportation throughout the region. The project envisions strengthening interdependence and fostering economic integration among the participating countries.

Drawing Parallels: The Belt and Road Initiative

Iraq's transportation aspirations bear resemblance to China's transformative Belt and Road Initiative. Just as the Belt and Road Initiative aims to connect nations across Asia, Europe, and Africa through extensive infrastructure networks, Iraq's Route of Development seeks to establish vital connections between the Gulf, Turkey, and Europe. Both initiatives share a common goal of promoting economic growth, facilitating trade, and enhancing regional cooperation.

New Parliament Building

The new Parliament building in India is an architectural marvel that represents the ethos of the nation. Inaugurated on May 28, it is adorned with intricate statues and motifs inspired by ancient sculptures, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the country.

At the six doors of the new Parliament building, statues inspired by ancient sculptures take center stage. These majestic figures hold deep historical and cultural importance, capturing the imagination of the nation. Each door showcases unique inspirations that evoke a sense of awe and admiration.

The Majestic Gaj Dwar

The Gaj Dwar, one of the entrances, features imposing stone elephants that pay homage to the statues at the 9th-century Madhukeshwara temple in Banavasi, Karnataka. These remarkable sculptures stand tall, symbolizing strength and grace.

The Graceful Ashwa Dwar

Adorning the Ashwa Dwar entrance are statues of horses, reminiscent of the sculptures at the Sun temple in Odisha from the 13th century. These elegant depictions embody the power and beauty associated with horses.

Inspired Dwars

The Shardula, Hamsa, and Makara dwars showcase statues inspired by renowned sculptures from different regions of India. The Gujri Mahal in Gwalior, the Vijay Vithala temple in Hampi, and the Hoysaleswara temple in



Karnataka serve as the muse for these intricate creations. Each sculpture holds its own cultural significance and adds to the grandeur of the new Parliament building.

The Resplendent Garuda Dwar

The Garuda dwar, the final entrance, features statues of the mount (vahana) of Vishnu. These sculptures draw inspiration from an 18th-century CE Nayaka period sculpture of Tamil Nadu. The Garuda dwar exudes a sense of reverence and spirituality.

The Symbolism of Foucault's Pendulum

Within the triangular roof of the Constitution Hall, the Foucault's Pendulum gracefully hangs from a large skylight. This captivating installation symbolizes the rotation of the earth and represents the harmony between India and the universe. It serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of our world.

The Lotus and Peacock Interiors

The interior design of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house, takes inspiration from India's national flower, the lotus. This symbolic motif creates a serene and contemplative atmosphere within the chamber. On the other hand, the interior of the Lok Sabha, the lower house, draws inspiration from the peacock, India's national bird. The vibrant colors and intricate patterns evoke a sense of pride and vitality.

Ceremonial Foyers and Cultural Icons

The new Parliament building boasts three ceremonial foyers that showcase impressive brass images. These magnificent pieces depict iconic figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Chanakya, Gargi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, B.R. Ambedkar, and the Chariot Wheel from the Sun Temple at Konark. They serve as a testament to the rich cultural heritage and the contributions of these esteemed individuals to the nation.

Rs 75 Commemorative Coin

In a notification released on May 25, the Finance Ministry announced the launch of a new commemorative coin. This coin holds significant historical and cultural value, celebrating important events and personalities in the country's heritage.

The Composition of the Rs 75 Commemorative Coin

The newly introduced Rs 75 commemorative coin is composed of a unique quaternary alloy. It consists of 50% silver, 40% copper, 5% nickel, and 5% zinc. This blend of metals ensures durability and longevity, making the coin a cherished piece for collectors and enthusiasts alike.

The Design and Inscriptions

The face of the coin is adorned with the renowned Lion Capitol of Ashoka Pillar at its center. Below the emblem, the inscription "सत्यमेव जयते" (Satyameva Jayate) is elegantly engraved. On the left periphery, the word "भारत" (Bharat) is inscribed in Devnagri script, while the word "INDIA" appears on the right periphery in English.

Flipping the coin reveals a captivating image of the new parliament building, showcasing the nation's democratic spirit. The upper periphery carries the inscription "Sansad Sankul" in Devanagari script, while the lower periphery proudly displays the words "Parliament Complex" in English.

Acquiring Commemorative Coins



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For those interested in obtaining commemorative coins, the Securities of Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL) website serves as a reliable platform. However, it's important to note that the value of commemorative coins may not always align with their face value. These coins often contain precious metals such as silver or gold, making them collectibles with intrinsic worth beyond their monetary denomination.

Role of the Central Government and the RBI

Under the authority granted by the Coinage Act, 2011, the central government holds the power to design and mint coins across various denominations. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) plays a crucial role in the distribution of these coins, ensuring they reach the public as intended by the central government.

Mints Across India

All coins, including commemorative ones, are minted in the four mints owned by the Government of India. These mints are located in Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Noida. They are responsible for the precision and craftsmanship behind the production of the nation's coins, preserving the integrity of the currency.

ONE LINER

- Arignar Anna Zoological Park (AAZP), Vandalur in Chennai gets two new sloth bears.
- Indian Navy's submarine INS Sindhuratna underwent a major upgrade in Russia and reached Mumbai after sailing for 97 days.
- Cough syrups exporters will have to undertake testing of their products at specified government laboratories from June 1.
- Education Ministry holds meet on PARAKH aimed at unifying 60 school Boards.
- Union Health Ministry issues a public notice for stricter implementation of the Act which prohibits manufacture, sale and advertisements of e-cigarettes.
- Union Higher Education Ministry has discontinued the 'Shiksha Puraskar' and 'Hinditar Bhashi Hindi Lekhak Puraskar' awards.
- Banks across the country to start accepting 2,000-rupee notes for exchange.
- TCS-led consortium gets BSNL 4G order worth ₹15,000 crore.
- Centre to provide 30 per cent financial support for promotion of Green Shipping.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pushes for stronger governance at public sector banks.
- ONDC is set to launch an Academy to train network partners.
- EU imposes USD 1.3 billion fine on Meta, orders to stop sending data to U.S.
- U.S. signs security pact with Papua New Guinea amid competition with China
- First Arab female astronaut reaches the International Space Station (ISS).
- Bird flu: Brazil declares animal health emergency after several cases found.
- Chennai to host Squash World Cup in June.
- Virat Kohli crosses 600-run mark in a single IPL season for third time.

