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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 04-07-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

Air India to Establish South Asia's Largest Flight Training School

Air India has announced plans to establish South Asia's largest flight training school in Maharashtra's Amravati district, investing over ₹200 crore.

The initiative is aimed at meeting the airline's demand for 500-700 pilots annually following a substantial order of 470 Airbus and Boeing aircraft in 2023.

Air India, in partnership with Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC), has leased a 10-acre plot for thirty years.

The facility will feature 31 single-engine Piper aircraft and three twin-engine Diamond aircraft.

It will train 180 commercial pilots annually with a newly extended 1,850-metre runway, modern navigation aids, and night landing facilities.

Sunil Bhaskaran, Director of Air India's Aviation Academy, emphasized the airline's commitment to supporting the government's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

By expanding India's aviation infrastructure, Air India aims to cater to the rapidly growing domestic aviation market

BANKING

RBI and 4 ASEAN Countries Collaborate on Cross-Border Payments Platform

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has joined hands with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and central banks of 4 Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries to collaborate on Project Nexus - a multilateral international initiative to enable retail cross-border payments.

The platform, which is expected to go live by 2026, will interlink domestic fast payment systems (FPS) of countries namely Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and India.

The central banks of these countries are the founding members and first movers of the platform.

Project Nexus is conceptualised by the Innovation Hub of the BIS.

It seeks to enhance cross-border payments by connecting multiple domestic instant payment systems (IPS) globally.

It is the first BIS Innovation Hub project in the payments area to move towards live implementation.

The RBI has been collaborating bilaterally with various countries to link India's Fast Payments System (FPS) –Unified Payments Interface (UPI), with their respective FPSs for cross-border Person to Person (P2P) and Person to Merchant (P2M) payments.

HDFC Bank to Temporarily Limit Services on July 13, 2024 for System Upgrade

HDFC Bank has announced a scheduled system upgrade on July 13, 2024, to enhance its Core Banking System (CBS) and improve customer experience.

The upgrade will "migrate" the CBS to a new platform.

The system upgrade will start at 3 am on July 13, 2024 and conclude at 4:30 pm on the same day, spanning 13.5 hours.

During the upgrade period certain services will have temporary limitations and critical services will be available but with restrictions.

Net and mobile banking services will be inaccessible throughout the entire upgrade period.

All fund transfer modes (Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT), Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS), HDFC Bank account-to-account online transfers, and branch transfers) will also be unavailable.

CBS is the software infrastructure that banks use to manage core processes like customer accounts, transactions, and risk management.

UBI Launches "Union Premier" Branches for High-Value Customers

Union Bank of India launched "Union Premier" branches for high-value customers in rural and semi-urban (RUSU) markets.

Aim is to provide personalized banking services for high-value customers in RUSU markets.

Union Premier branches will offer a wide range of products and services under one roof.

Each Union Premier customer will have access to a personal Relationship Manager to address all their banking needs.

These exclusive branches are equipped with the latest digital technologies to ensure seamless and efficient banking.

ICICI Lombard Introduces Surety Insurance for Infrastructure Sector

ICICI Lombard has introduced Surety Insurance to offer risk mitigation solutions specifically for India's growing infrastructure sector.

Surety insurance serves as a guarantee to a beneficiary (typically a client or authority) that a principal debtor (usually a contractor) will fulfil their contractual obligations.

If the contractor fails to meet their contractual commitments, the surety insurance provider will compensate the beneficiary financially.

Surety is a unique type of insurance because it involves a three-party agreement.

The three parties in a surety agreement are:

Principal: The party that purchases the bond and undertakes an obligation to perform an act as promised.

Surety: The insurance company or surety company that guarantees the obligation will be performed.

If the principal fails to perform the act as promised, the surety is contractually liable for losses sustained.

Obligee: The party who requires, and often receives the benefit of the surety bond.

For most surety bonds, the obligee is a local, state or federal government organization.

DEFENCE

Bangladesh Navy Inks Deal with India’s GRSE

The Bangladesh Navy has finalized a significant contract with India’s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) for an 800-tonne ocean-going tug, under a $500-million line of credit extended by India for defence equipment purchases.

The deal, worth approximately $21 million, was signed in Dhaka, facilitated by GRSE and the Bangladesh Navy’s directorate general of defence purchases.

The tug is scheduled for delivery within 24 months and will measure 61 meters in length and 15.80 meters in width, capable of reaching speeds of at least 13 knots when fully loaded.

The deal assumes significance amidst growing Chinese involvement in Bangladesh’s defence sector, including the procurement of Chinese warships and submarines.

It marks an expansion of India-Bangladesh maritime engagement beyond joint exercises to include substantive defence equipment collaboration.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

New Executive Directors of RBI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced the appointment of Arnab Kumar Chowdhury and Charulatha S. Kar as executive directors (EDs).

Chowdhury's appointment is effective from June 3, 2024, while Ms. Kar's appointment is effective from July 1, 2024.

Chowdhury will oversee the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), foreign exchange department, and international department.

Kar will manage the Department of Communication, Human Resource Management Department, and Right to Information (First Appellate Authority).

Before becoming executive directors, Mr. Chowdhury was the Chief General Manager-in-Charge in the Department of Supervision.

Kar was serving as Chief General Manager-in-Charge in the Human Resource Management Department.

Chairman of SBI

The Financial Services Institutions Bureau (FSIB), has recommended Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, who is one of the managing directors of State Bank of India (SBI) as the next Chairman of State Bank of India (SBI).

Challa Sreenivasulu Setty will be the 27th Chairman of SBI.

SBI's current Chairman, Dinesh Kumar Khara, will retire on August 28, 2024

Setty joined the SBI board as Managing Director in 2020.

He currently oversees International Banking, Global Markets, and Technology wings of SBI.

SPORTS

Dinesh Karthik Named RCB Men’s Team Batting Coach and Mentor

Former India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik, who recently retired from all forms of cricket, has been appointed as the batting coach and mentor for Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Dinesh Karthik appeared in 257 IPL matches, amassing 4,842 runs across his career with an average of 26.32.

He represented various IPL teams including Kolkata Knight Riders, Mumbai Indians, Delhi Daredevils, Kings XI Punjab, and now Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

Karthik's new role as batting coach and mentor for RCB marks his transition into coaching after retiring from professional cricket.

His experience and insights are expected to benefit the team's batting lineup and player development.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Plastic Bag Free Day

International Plastic Bag Free Day 2024 is observed on July 3 every year to motivate people to avoid using single-use plastic to eliminate plastic pollution.

Bag Free World organization established the International Plastic Bag Free Day.

This organization introduced several campaigns promoting a plastic-free world that inspired other parts of the world to participate in Plastic Bag Free Day.

Rezero, a member of Zero Waste Europe (ZWE), initiated the first International Plastic Bag Free Day which was observed on July 3, 2008.

In 2015, the European Union also passed certain directives to reduce the usage of single-use plastic bags.

Bangladesh became the first country to ban the use of single-use, thin plastic bags officially in 2022.

Soon after, many more countries, including India, also banned single-use plastic.