

April 29th news:

International:

2562nd Buddha jayanti celebrations in Nepal

An International Buddhist Conference to commemorate 2562nd Buddha Jayanti has started in Lumbini, Nepal, the birth place of Gautama Buddha. Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal Rabindra Adhikari inaugurated the two-day conference on 28th April

The basic objective of the conference is to disseminate teachings of Buddha and spread the messages of nonviolence, brotherhood, co-existence, love and peace to the international community.

According to Lumbini Development Trust representatives from 16 countries including United States of America, Japan, India, China, Indonesia and Sri Lanka attending the conference. Buddhist scholars from various countries will present their papers for discussions during the conference

The conference will also help to propagate and enhance the importance and the glory of Lumbini in the international arena. A Lumbini Declaration will also be issued at the conclusion of conference.

Thousands flee fresh clashes in northern Myanmar: UN

According to the United Nations, thousands of people have fled renewed fighting between Myanmar's army and ethnic insurgents in the country's remote north. According to the Head of UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Mark Cutts.....

- More than 4,000 people have been displaced in Myanmar's northernmost state of Kachin near the border with China in the last three weeks
- There are still many civilians who remain trapped in conflict-affected areas and biggest concern is for the safety of pregnant women, the elderly, small children and people with disabilities
- About 15,000 people who have fled since the beginning of the year and upwards of 90,000 residing in the internally displaced persons(IDP) camps in both Kachin and Shan states since a ceasefire between the government and the powerful Kachin Independence Army broke down in 2011
- Earlier about 7 lakhs people fled to Bangladesh when the army has stepped up its campaign in remote areas of Myanmar amid the Rohingya crisis

The US and the UN have called the military crackdown ethnic cleansing, while Myanmar denies the claims and says it was defending itself against Rohingya insurgents

Bilateral:

Modi, Xi will issue strategic guidance to militaries to ease border tension

Wrapping up the two-day informal summit, the leaders of Asia's two most-populous countries agreed to strengthen communication between their militaries to avoid disputes along their contested Himalayan border.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have decided to issue "strategic guidance" to their militaries to strengthen communication in order to build trust and mutual understanding, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said on 28th April

He said the leaders will direct their militaries to earnestly implement various confidence building measures agreed upon between the two sides, including the principle of mutual and equal security, and strengthen existing institutional arrangements and information sharing mechanisms to prevent incidents in border regions.

They endorsed the work of special representatives to find a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement on the boundary issue.

The 'heart-to-heart' summit is being seen as an effort by India and China to rebuild trust and improve ties that were hit by the 73-day-long Doklam stand-off.

The two sides have held 20 rounds of talks to resolve the boundary dispute and worked out different mechanisms to keep peace along the 3,488-km long Line of Actual Control.

Modi mentioned the importance of balancing the trade, and the scope of the possibilities of agricultural and pharmaceutical exports to China.

His statement assumes significance amid moves by the west, particularly the US, to take protectionist measures that have hit countries like China and India.

On the issue of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China said there was no fundamental difference with India on the issue of "inter-connectivity" and Beijing will "not be too hard" with New Delhi. The BRI includes the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which India opposes as it goes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The two leaders also discussed climate change, food security and shared their experience in terms of the preservation of the Yangtze, China's longest river, and the Ganga, India's longest river. They discussed how to promote sports between the two countries and how to strengthen tourism on the Buddhist circuit.

They also underscored the importance of reform of multilateral financial and political institutions to make them representative and responsive to the needs of developing nations.

India, China to undertake joint economic project in Afghanistan

In a move that could upset Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have agreed to undertake a joint India-China economic project in Afghanistan at their first informal summit

The understanding was reached between the two leaders during the two-day informal summit which concluded on 28th April

As per the understanding, officials of both sides will identify the project in following up discussions and work out modalities

This will be a first such project in the war-torn country where China, while trying to expand its influence, has tacitly backed Pakistan, which has been accused by Afghanistan and the US of backing the Taliban and its most violent attacks in the country destabilising any attempts to restore peace.

China for the first time held a trilateral meeting with the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Afghanistan in December last in Beijing to narrow down the differences between the two countries

Economy:

Govt enters agreement with World Bank on biotech

The government has entered into a legal agreement with the World Bank for a flexible financing arrangement to accelerate research towards early development for biopharmaceuticals.

The mission has been approved at a cost of USD 250 million for five years with 50 per cent funding through the World Bank Loan

The aim is to make India a hub for design and development of novel, affordable and effective biopharmaceutical products.

The agreement was executed between the project implementing agency -- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council, a PSU of Department of Biotechnology, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development on behalf of World Bank)

This mission will mark the beginning of a new partnership between the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and the World Bank

Science and Technology:

Light Combat Aircraft Tejas Successfully Fires Beyond Visual Range Missile

In a major milestone, indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft Tejas has successfully fired an air-to-air beyond visual (BVR) range missile, demonstrating its overall capability as an effective combat jet, and inched closer to receiving final operational clearance.

Defence Ministry officials said the test firing of the missile from a Tejas jet was carried out on 28th April off the Goa coast and it met all operational requirements.

Earlier, Tejas was given clearance for deployment of armaments and other missiles.

The Indian Air Force had ordered 40 Tejas Mark-1 version and a request for proposal was issued to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited in December for procurement of another batch of 83 Tejas at a cost of around Rs. 50,000 crore.

The successful launch of the BVR missile will expedite issuance of the Final Operational Clearance to the aircraft developed by state-run aerospace behemoth HAL and Aeronautical Development Agency of Defence Research and Development Organisation.

The missile was launched from the LCA piloted by Wing Commander Siddharth Singh from the firing range off the Goa coast after exhaustive study of the missile separation characteristics.

The aircraft was tracked by two other Tejas aircraft in close formation to capture the firing event in the specially instrumented high speed cameras for detailed analysis of the test launch of the missile. The entire planning, practice sorties and final firing was carried out by ADA and its National Flight Test Centre.

Persons in news:

Pawan Chamling: Pawan Chamling on 29th April will create history by surpassing the record of former communist ruler of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu, as the longest serving chief minister in the country.

Chamling, 68, touched Basu's record on 28th April. Chamling became the chief minister of Sikkim on December 12, 1994, and has ruled the tiny Himalayan state ever since. He is also the president of Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF).

Basu was the chief minister of Bengal for five consecutive terms from June 21, 1977 to November 6, 2000. He did not complete his fifth term due to health reasons and handed the charge over to Buddhadeb Bhattacharya.