

July 12th news:

International:

Sri Lankan govt approves capital punishment for drug offences

The Sri Lankan Cabinet has unanimously approved a move to bring back capital punishment for drug-related crimes, paving way for the resumption of death penalty after nearly 40 years. Executions have not been carried out in Sri Lanka as successive Presidents in office since 1978 have refused to issue death warrants.

National:

Railways to introduce Shri Ramayana express from November

IRCTC, the tourism wing of Piyush Goyal led Ministry of Railways will run a special tourist train associated with the story of Lord Ram from the famous Indian epic Ramayana in the name of "Shri Ramayana Express".

Shri Ramayana Express will be flagged off on 14th November, 2018 from Delhi Safdarjung railway station. The train will cover all important destinations associated with the life of Lord Shri Ram in a 16 days all inclusive tour package which is spread both in the countries of India as well as Sri Lanka in which 4 destinations will be covered.

The all inclusive tour package will cover all meals, accommodation and wash and change facilities in dharmashalas, all transfers, sight-seeing arrangements and dedicated tour manager of IRCTC who will be travelling with the tourists during the entire tour.

Named as Shri Ramayana Yatra-Sri Lanka, the pilgrimage circuit will have two travel components - one each in India and Sri Lanka.

After leaving Delhi, the train will make its first stop in Ayodhya followed by Hanuman Garhi Ramkot and Kanak Bhawan temple.

The train will then cover the important destinations of Ramayana circuit such as Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi, Prayag, Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Hampi and Rameshwaram.

The Ramayana Express train will have an overall capacity for 800 passengers. Attractively priced at only Rs. 15,120/- per person, the tour package is going to be a favorite pick for the tourists aspiring for the same.

The Sri Lanka leg of the tour will be charged separately. The passengers opting for Sri Lanka leg of the Ramayana Yatra package can take a flight to Colombo from Chennai. IRCTC presently offers 5-night/6-day Sri Lanka tour package at a cost starting from Rs 47,600 per person. The tour package will cover destinations like Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Colombo and Negombo.

IRCTC is also operating an AC Tourist Train from 28th August to 9th September 2018 on the Ramayana Circuit from Trivandrum offering an all inclusive tour package starting from Rs. 39,800/- onwards covering Panchavati, Chitrakoot, Shringverpur, TulsiManas Mandir, Darbhanga, Sita Marhi, Ayodhya and Rameshwaram

Economy:

India surpasses France to become World's 6th largest economy

India surpasses France to become World's sixth-largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) according to World Bank.

According to World Bank figures for 2017, the report said: "India's gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to \$2.597 trillion at the end of last year, against \$2.582 trillion for France".

According to the report, manufacturing and consumer spending were the main drivers of the Indian economy. Further, the International Monetary Fund estimates that , India is projected to generate growth of 7.4 % this year and 7.8 % in 2019, boosted by household spending and a tax reform.

Net Neutrality Gets Telecom Commission's Nod, New Telecom Policy Cleared

The Telecom Commission (TC) has approved net neutrality rules which bar service providers from discriminating against Internet content and services by blocking, throttling or granting them higher speed access.

Some mission critical applications or services like remote surgery and autonomous cars will, however, be kept out of the purview of net neutrality framework.

The fight for net neutrality in India was a hot topic in 2016, when Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had floated a consultation paper on the topic.

The TRAI had recommended restrictions on service providers from entering into agreements which lead to discriminatory treatment of content on the Internet.

TC also approved the new telecom policy - National Digital Communications Policy 2018 - for seeking approval of the Union Cabinet

MoHUA launches technology challenge to eliminate human entry into septic tanks

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a technology challenge on identifying solutions and promoting suitable techniques for cleaning of sewerage systems. The objective is eliminating human entry into septic tanks and manholes.

An official release said, the challenge will be a part of the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention which will be held on 2nd of October this year.

Proposals have been invited by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs from interested innovators, companies, academic institutions, research and development centers, NGOs and Municipal bodies, to provide innovative technical solutions which eliminate the need for human entry into sewers.

Govt approves Idea Cellular and Vodafone India merger

Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha said that the Government has approved the Idea Cellular and Vodafone India merger but the companies need to complete some formalities for the final closure of the deal.

The combined operations of Idea and Vodafone will create the country's largest telecom operator worth over 1.5 lakh crore rupees, with a 35 % market share and a subscriber base of around 430 million.

Debt-ridden firms Idea and Vodafone India are in process of merging their businesses in India as it is expected to bring down cost of their operations and give them relief from cut-throat competition in the market where margins have hit rock bottom with free voice calls

With the new entity coming in force, Bharti Airtel will lose the tag of India's biggest telecom service provider to the new entity. The combined debt of both the companies is estimated to be around Rs 1.15 lakh crore

BSNL launches India's first internet telephony service 'Wings'

BSNL becomes the first mobile operator to launch internet telephony services called 'Wings'; it can be used in BSNL landline and also mobile phone with Internet Telephony.

The service will cost Rs.1099 which is One Time Fee and allows audio video calling for one year.

Internet telephony is a type of communications technology that allows voice calls and other telephony services like fax, SMS and other voice-messaging applications to be transmitted using the Internet as a connection medium.

Telangana

Telangana govt to digitize rare historic documents

The Telangana government would digitize, upgrade and preserve rare and historic documents. The State archives (institute) is one of the top ten archives in the world having 50 million documents. All documents of the Archives institute would be digitized which is a crucial step in safeguarding the history for future generations

Andhra Pradesh

Anna Canteens launched

The Andhra Pradesh government on 11th July launched the much-awaited 'Anna Canteens' in various parts of the state. Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated a canteen in Vijayawada to mark the launch of the programme. A total of 60 'Anna Canteens' were opened in the first phase across the

state. The Akshaya Patra Foundation will run these canteens. The canteens would serve breakfast, lunch and dinner at Rs. 5 each