

The “nine guest countries” to the G-20 summit and Ministerial meetings are expected to bring their own plans to the events but they will be ultimately guided by the “continuity” of G-20, a source familiar with the planning of the summit has informed. Under India’s Presidency, nine countries — Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain, and the United Arab Emirates — have been invited to be the “guest countries” in a year when the G-20 is struggling to strike a balance between the agenda of the western countries and Global South.

Over 60% of India’s 94.5 crore voters have linked their Aadhaar to their voter IDs, the Election Commission (EC) disclosed in a Right to Information response obtained by The Hindu. The total number of voters who have linked their Aadhaar is 56,90,83,090. Tripura, which went to the polls last week, had the highest rate of Aadhaar linking; over 92% of voters in the State have provided their Aadhaar details to the Election Commission.

India’s Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues grew 12.7% in January to hit almost ₹1.59 lakh crore, the second highest monthly collections on record, as per revised figures from the Finance Ministry. Earlier estimates of GST revenues for January had pegged collections at about ₹1.56 lakh crore till the evening of January 31 — 10.6% higher than the GST receipts in January 2022. Based on the updated GST collections, the Finance Ministry’s monthly economic review released on Thursday said the total GST revenues between April 2022 and January 2023 now stand at ₹14.9 lakh crore, 23.1% higher than the corresponding period of 2021-22.

Up to five lakh patients have benefited since October last year from QR code-enabled registration at hospital counters, which has helped reduce long queues, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said on Thursday. The Ministry’s National Health Authority (NHA) under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) introduced the “scan and share” service for faster Outpatient Department (OPD) registrations in October 2022. Since then, the service has been adopted in 365 government and private hospitals, Basant Garg, Additional CEO, NHA, explained.

31,591 number of refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh to have taken shelter in Mizoram, according to officials. While 31,050 asylum seekers from Myanmar sought refuge in the state as on January 27, 541 came from Bangladesh. The Myanmar nationals fled to Mizoram following a military coup in February 2021.

76 percentage, the number of respondents in India who claimed that there is a rise in pesky calls or SMS based on conversations with WhatsApp business accounts and their activity on Facebook, according to survey firm Local Circles. The survey conducted from February 1 to February 20 shows that 95% of WhatsApp users get one or more pesky messages every day.

REVISED GUIDELINES ON MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT LOCAL AREA DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (MPLADS)-2023 RELEASED

1. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released revised guidelines to broaden scope of Scheme so as to enable MPs to recommend developmental works as per changing needs of community. Also, a new Web-Portal was launched for implementation of Revised Fund Flow Procedure under MPLADS. It will facilitate real-time monitoring, greater transparency, and accountability in the system.
2. MPLADS, a Central Sector Scheme launched in 1993, enables MPs to suggest and get executed developmental works of a capital nature based on locally felt needs with an emphasis on creation of durable assets. Under it, MPs receive Rs.5 crore each year in two instalments of Rs. 2.5 crore each.
3. Every year, M.P. shall recommend at least 15% of MPLADS funds for areas inhabited by S.C. population and 7.5 percent for areas inhabited by S.T. population. Funds under MPLADS are non-lapsable. District Authority is responsible for overall coordination and supervision of works under scheme at district level.
4. MoSPI is responsible for policy formulation, release of funds and prescribing monitoring mechanism for implementation of Scheme.

MOU BETWEEN IFC-IOR AND REGIONAL COORDINATION OPERATIONS CENTRE (RCOC), SEYCHELLES TO FURTHER MARITIME COOPERATION

1. MoU aims to promote collaboration towards enhancing maritime domain awareness, information sharing and expertise development. Information Fusion Center - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), established in 2018, is hosted by India Navy at Gurugram to further Maritime Safety and Security in Indian Ocean Region.
2. To enable better correlation and timely inputs, IFC-IOR also hosts International Liaison Officers (ILOs) from partner nations including Australia, France, Italy, Japan, US, UK. IFC-IOR has established linkages with several multinational maritime security centres.
3. Need for Maritime Security for India-Economic Interest - Over 90% trade by volume and 70% trade by value of India passes through maritime transport. Energy Interest – Around 80% of crude oil requirements is imported in India through sea routes.
4. **Strategic Interest** - Aggressive inroads of China in Indian ocean through its string of pearls policy requires Indian to build its maritime security capabilities. Internal Security-Indian Ocean serves as a transit route for narcotics, fake currency and cross border terrorist into India.

CABINET APPROVED RATIFICATION OF THREE PROTOCOLS RELATING TO AMENDMENTS IN CHICAGO CONVENTION

1. Ratification would provide better opportunity for India to become more instrumental in matters pertaining to international civil aviation. Protocols ratified are: Protocol to insert Article 3 bis that refrain member States from use of weapons against civil aircraft in flight. Protocol to amend Article 50 (a) for raising strength of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Council from 36 to 40.
2. Protocol to amend Article 56 raising strength of Air Navigation Commission from 18 to 21. International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention), 1944 established core principles permitting international transport by air. Articles of Convention establish privileges and obligations of all contracting States and promote international ICAO Standards and Recommended Practices adoption that regulate international air transport.
3. It has 193 state parties including all UN members except Liechtenstein. Chicago Convention led to creation of ICAO. It is a specialized agency of United Nations linked to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). India is a founding member of ICAO. ICAO is not a global regulator; ICAO standards never supersede the primacy of national regulatory requirements.

COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL OF INDIA (CAG) URGES GOVERNMENT TO ADOPT

1. CAG stated that lack of standardisation in underlying data structures across government IT applications has been one of the major challenges for audit and adopting audit data standards will: Ensure that data/information maintained by various departments/agencies can be seamlessly organised for better analysis.
2. Help not only policymakers and executives, but also auditors in carrying out digital audits. An audit is the examination of financial report of an organisation by someone independent of that organisation. CAG submits three audit reports to President—audit

\$2 billion, the amount to be invested by India's top oil and gas producer, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), in drilling a record 103 wells on its main gas-bearing asset in the Arabian Sea, to enhance production by 100 million tonnes, according to company officials. The government has been pressing firms to raise domestic output to help cut the \$115 billion import bill.

₹10.9 lakh crore, the amount contributed by workers equipped with advanced digital skills to India's annual GDP, according to an Amazon Web Services (AWS) study by Gallup. It showed that workers with advanced digital skills earn 92% higher salaries in India compared to those with a similar education who do not use digital skills at work.

47,244 death toll from the earthquake that hit Turkey and Syria on February 6, with the number of fatalities rising as more bodies are retrieved from the rubble. A 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck the already battered Hatay this week, compounding the devastation.

The West has recently announced the supply of more advanced weapons to Ukraine, deepening its involvement in the conflict. In response, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the suspension of his country's participation in the New Start treaty, which could trigger a nuclear arms race. Russia's territorial gains in Ukraine peaked in March 2022, when it controlled some 22% of pre 2014 Ukraine. Since then, Ukraine recaptured some land in Kharkiv and Kherson. But still, Russia controls some 17% of Ukraine and Mr. Putin also managed to secure a land bridge between mainland Russia to Crimea, which Moscow annexed in 2014. Ukraine, given its dependence on the West, would require clearance from western capitals for any final settlement, which also means that for a lasting solution, Washington and Moscow should reach some kind of understanding.

Armed with guns and swords and other sharp weapons, scores of supporters of the self-styled Sikh preacher and pro-Khalistan propagator Amritpal Singh on Thursday clashed with Punjab police personnel, injuring a few, at Ajnala in Amritsar.

A possible early summer is not expected to affect the wheat crop this rabi season, A.K. Singh, Director and Principal Scientist, Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), said on Thursday. A day ahead of the 61st IARI's convocation, Dr. Singh told presspersons that there was less likelihood of terminal heat conditions till March 16, and by that time, the grain filling stage of the wheat crop would be over.

report on appropriation accounts, audit report on finance accounts, and audit report on public undertakings.

3. **Issues with Audit process**-No Powers to Enforce Audit Findings: While the audit notices a systematic violation of law, rules, and regulations by departmental officers it is unable to take effective action to prevent them. Issues with CAG's Act: Act is silent about what happens when a public official spends money, which is not legally available.
4. Accounts keeping of State government companies is in a chaotic state. Other issues: Post facto audit i.e., CAG audits expenditure only after it has incurred, lack of economic expertise within CAG etc.

INDIA, CHINA HOLD IN-PERSON BORDER TALKS AFTER 3 YEARS

1. Both sides discussed proposals for disengaging in remaining friction areas along Line of Actual Control (LAC) to create conditions to restore normalcy in relations. Border between India and China is not clearly demarcated throughout and there is no mutually agreed LAC. LAC is divided into three sectors: Western, Middle, and Eastern.
2. Boundary dispute in Western Sector (Ladakh) pertains to Johnson Line proposed British in 1860s. In Middle Sector (Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand), dispute is a minor one. Both have exchanged maps on which they broadly agree. Disputed boundary in Eastern Sector (Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim) is over McMahon Line (in Arunachal Pradesh) decided in 1914.
3. A series of agreements signed to address disputes arising over LAC: 1993 Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC. 1996 Agreement on Confidence-Building Measures in the Military Field Along the LAC. 2005 Protocol on Modalities for Implementation of Confidence-Building Measures in Military Field Along LAC.
4. 2012 Agreement on Establishment of a Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs. 2013 Border Defense Cooperation Agreement.

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (MEITY) SEEKS PROPOSALS TO MAP THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

1. Digital economy is the economic activity that results from billions of everyday online connections among people, businesses, devices, data, and processes. India is among top three global economies in number of digital consumers. Also, India has one of the fastest rate of growth of digital adoption.
2. Significance of digital economy for India-Digital transformation could empower un-served and underserved segments and create \$ 1 trillion of economic value in 2025, sustaining 60-65 million jobs. About \$390-500 billion of this \$1 trillion economic value would come from digital applications in sectors like agriculture, health, and education. Restricting cash-based transactions can efficiently expel the black economy.
3. E-governance will be the ultimate outcome of digital economy. Earlier, a report by MeitY recommended following measures that will help India to optimally harness digital technologies in the core economic and social sectors: Improve ease of operations and reduce operating costs for digital businesses.
4. Unlock flow of domestic capital into digital businesses. Support Indian digital innovators through government procurement. Unshackle centres of higher education and innovation.

MOHINIYATTAM

1. Famous Mohiniyattam exponent Kanak Rele passed away. Mohiniyattam is a classical dance form of Kerala. It is performed by women in honour of god Vishnu in his incarnation as enchantress Mohini. Conventionally a solo dance performed by female artists, it emotes a play through dancing and singing.
2. Instruments used: Maddalam, Mridangam, Veena, Kuzhitalam or Cymbals, Edakka etc. It has its roots in sage Bharata Muni's text called 'Natya Shastra'. 8 Classical dances are Bharatnatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Kuchipudi, Odissi, Sattriya, Mohiniyattam and Manipuri.



“When in hurry, take the longer route.”

Dr. Khan
(KSG)