

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Rahul Bajaj believed that women micro entrepreneurs could fuel job creation in rural areas when given the appropriate financial support and mentoring. With his support, the Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) has created hundreds of women “grampreneurs” across all regions. The Bajaj family is known as much for its extensive philanthropy as its legacy of successful businesses. Rahul brought the guiding principles of equality and non-discrimination that shaped his life to the BYST.

India will have one billion smartphone users by 2026, with rural areas driving the sale of Internet enabled phones, according to Deloitte’s 2022 Global TMT predictions. India had 1.2 billion mobile subscribers in 2021, of whom about 750 million were smartphone users. The country is set to be the second largest smartphone manufacturer in the next five years, Deloitte said. Growth is likely to be spurred by the rural sector at a compound annual growth rate of 6%.

The IT ministry has come out with a draft policy that proposes a framework for government to - government data sharing and moots that all data for every government department or organisation shall be open and shareable by default, with riders. The draft ‘India Data Accessibility and Use Policy’ circulated for public consultation will be applicable to all data and information created, generated and collected by the government directly or through ministries, departments and authorised agencies.

India said it was watching the latest developments along Ukraine’s eastern border and Russia’s recognition of separatist states in the Donbas region “with deep concern”, but stopped short of criticising Moscow’s actions, during a debate at the United Nations Security Council on Tuesday. Speaking at the start of the emergency session that was called immediately after Russian President Vladimir Putin’s declaration on Monday night, India’s Permanent Representative to the UN T.S. Tirumurti called for restraint and diplomatic dialogue.

A committee constituted by the Union Home Ministry in December to study the withdrawal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act,

REEF BALL BURIALS

1.A reef ball burial will have the cremated remains (human ashes) mixed into a pH-neutral perforated concrete dome, known as the reef ball. This burial is also known as Ocean Burial or Sea burial. The reef balls placed in the seabed can attract a host of marine life to largely barren seabed.

2.Reality - The concept of an ocean burial is becoming increasingly popular as people look for environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional burial and cremation. But still, this burial still needs cremation, which may release 400kg of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere for each body.

3.History - **A desire to return to the ocean goes back millennia, with evidence of sea burial in ancient Egypt and Rome.** In the South Pacific, bodies would be placed in canoes and pushed out to sea, while scattering ashes in the ocean has long been widely practised in Asia. There are tales of fallen Viking heroes’ boats set ablaze in some cultures.

BYANJANA DWADASHI

1.The Byanjana Dwadashi festival of Odisha is seen as a great step towards promoting food security. Byanjana Dwadashi festival is celebrated in Odisha’s temple town of Puri. This festival is a gastronomic and epicurean delight with at least 701 dishes being prepared.

2.It celebrates a variety of food (Byanjana) on the 12th day (Dwadashi) of the Sukla Paksha or waxing phase of the moon in the month of Margashira (mid-December to mid-January). This festival commemorates an episode of the Mahabharata where Yashoda observes that her son Krishna is pale and weak.

3.She realises that this is because of lack of proper nutrition at a time when Krishna has devoted all his energy in fighting demons. In order to fulfil his nutritional requirements, she prepares a lot of delicacies and feeds him and his friends.

4.This episode was re-enacted in the Vaishnava mutts of Puri by the medieval mystic, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu around 500 years ago.

MINSK AGREEMENTS

1.The US has urged both Russia and Ukraine to return to a set of agreements designed to end a separatist war by Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine.

2.**MINSK I (2014)** Ukraine and the Russian-backed separatists agreed a 12-point ceasefire deal in the Belarusian capital in 2014. Its provisions included Prisoner exchanges, Deliveries of humanitarian aid and The withdrawal of heavy weapons.The agreement quickly broke down, with violations by both sides.

3.**MINSK II (2015)** Representatives of Russia, Ukraine, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the leaders of two pro-Russian separatist regions signed a 13-point agreement in 2015. The leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine issued a declaration of support for the deal. It set out military and political steps that remain unimplemented. A major blockage has been Russia’s insistence that it is not a party to the conflict and therefore is not bound by its terms.

4.These agreements call for, an immediate and comprehensive ceasefire; withdrawal of all heavy weapons by both sides; monitoring and verification by the OSCE; and provision of humanitarian assistance. It calls for a dialogue on interim self-government for the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, in accordance with Ukrainian law, and acknowledge their special status by parliamentary resolution.

5.Other provisions include, An exchange of hostages and prisoners. Resumption of socio-economic ties, including pensions. Restoration of full control of the state border by the government of Ukraine, Constitutional reform in Ukraine including decentralisation, with specific mention of Donetsk and Luhansk, and Intensifying the work of a Trilateral Contact Group comprising representatives of Russia, Ukraine and the OSCE.

NATIONAL FINANCIAL SWITCH

1.The National Financial Switch (NFS) is India’s largest

or AFSPA, from Nagaland, slated to submit a report within 45 days as claimed by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, is yet to conclude its findings. The panel was formed in the wake of growing civilian anger against the botched ambush by an elite unit of the Army that led to the killing of 13 civilians at Oting in Nagaland's Mon district on December 4.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on Tuesday said it had blocked apps, website and social media accounts of Punjab Politics TV. The Ministry said the channel had close links with the banned outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), and it attempted to use the online media to disturb public order during the ongoing Punjab Assembly election.

The government and regulators are keeping close tabs on the evolving Russia-Ukraine situation, high crude oil prices and the extreme volatility in financial markets, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Tuesday, ruling out any extraordinary or special measures to cope with the implications of these headwinds.

Sri Lanka's inflation hit a record high for the fourth consecutive month, official data showed on Tuesday as an economic crisis driven by a crippling foreign exchange shortage worsens.

UN Security Council members China and Russia, as well as Serbia have continued supplying Myanmar's junta with weapons used to attack civilians, a UN rights expert said.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a phone call with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday neither endorsed nor criticised Russia's actions but called for Moscow's security concerns to be respected, underlining Beijing's tightrope walk on the Ukraine crisis.

The Supreme Court held that "extravagant freebies" given to doctors, obviously in exchange for prescribing expensive medicine, cannot be used by pharmaceutical companies to claim benefits under the Income Tax Act. Emoluments in the form of gifts, travel facilities, hospitality, cash or monetary grants are prohibited for doctors. If laws treat such gifts as illegal, how can a pharma company claim tax benefits for offering them to doctors, a Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and S. Ravindra Bhat asked in its judgment.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla

interconnected network of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs). NFS enabled the interconnectivity between the bank's switches such that the transactions made at any ATM could be routed to the connected banks. NFS system was developed by the Institute of development and research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), Hyderabad under the aegis of the RBI in 2004. It was taken over from IDRBT by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) in 2009.

2.NFS-ATM network is India's leading multilateral ATM network. It has 37 members connecting about 50,000 ATMs. Salient Features - NFS has introduced sub-membership model which enables smaller, regional banks including RRBs and local co-operative banks to participate in the ATM network. It extends service to non-banking entities with White Label ATMs. NPCI has also tied up with International card schemes which allows their cardholders to use ATMs connected to NFS network. [International card schemes like Discover Financial Service (DFS), Japan Credit Bureau (JCB) and China UnionPay International (CUIPI).]

3. The Dispute Management System has benefitted members with high operational efficiency & ease of online transaction life cycle management in the network apart from being compliant with local regulatory needs. Fraud Risk Management (FRM) solution is offered as a value added service to monitor transactions (in real time) and to generate alert or decline the transaction in the NFS network.

PRESIDENTIAL FLEET REVIEW 2022

1.The President of India took part in the 12th Presidential Fleet Review of the Indian Navy 2022. Currently, the India's Naval Fleet has 60 ships and submarines and 55 aircraft. Commemorating 75 years of independence, the theme of Presidential Fleet Review 2022 is 'Indian Navy - 75 years in Service of the Nation'.

2.The Presidential Fleet Review is the country's President taking stock of the Navy's capability. It showcases all types of ships and capabilities the Navy has. A fleet review is usually conducted once during the tenure of the President, who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. In terms of significance, the Navy's Presidential review is second only to the Republic Day Parade.

3.President's Yacht - The President is taken on one of the Naval ships, which is called the President's Yacht, to look at all the ships docked on one of the Naval ports. The President's Yacht this year is an indigenously built Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel, INS Sumitra, which will lead the Presidential Column.

4.The yacht will be distinguished by the Ashoka Emblem on her side and will fly the President's Standard on the Mast. Previous Reviews - So far, 11 Presidential Fleet Reviews have been conducted since Independence. The first one was conducted in 1953, under President Rajendra Prasad. The last one was conducted in 2016 under President Pranab Mukherjee.

5.The reviews in 2001 and 2016 were International Fleet Reviews, in which some vessels from other countries also participated. The earliest recorded Indian Fleet Review was in the 18th Century by the Maratha fleet, consisting of 'Ghurabs' and 'Gallivats', under the renowned Sarkhel (Grand Admiral) Kanhoji Angre at the coastal fortress of Ratnagiri.

NEPAL WILL BE THE FIRST FOREIGN COUNTRY TO ADOPT INDIA'S UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE(UPI) SYSTEM

1.The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has announced that the neighboring country of Nepal will be the first foreign country to adopt India's UPI system. What is UPI? Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an instant real-time payment system, allowing users to transfer money on a real-time basis, across multiple bank accounts without revealing details of one's bank account to the other party.

2.UPI is currently the biggest among the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) operated systems including National Automated Clearing House (NACH), Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS), Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS), RuPay etc.

3.The top UPI apps include PhonePe, Paytm, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and BHIM, the latter being the Government offering. NPCI launched UPI with 21 member banks in 2016.

4.Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) is India's digital payment application (app) that works through UPI, a system that powers

flagged off a convoy of 50 trucks carrying 2500 tonnes of wheat as humanitarian aid for Afghanistan at the India-Pakistan integrated checkpoint (ICP), the first of about 1,000 truckloads which will head for Jalalabad over the next few weeks.

multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application. Developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). Allows real time fund transfer. Launched in December, 2016.