

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari approved a Draft GSR (general statutory rules) Notification seeking comments on a proposal to introduce the Bharat New Car Assessment Program (Bharat-NCAP). New Car Assessment Programs (NCAP) provide reliable information about the crash safety of a vehicle based on certain common criteria and procedures. This then helps vehicles acquire a foothold in international markets. Bharat NCAP would assign vehicles between one and five stars on parameters such as Adult Occupant Protection (AOP), Child Occupant Protection (COP) and Safety Assist Technologies (SAT).

Metaverse projects are booming, and large tech firms have thrown plenty of money into a yet to be fully understood digital fantasy land. With hardware and software makers coming together, the race to the metaverse feels like the Gold Rush of 1849. But to make all of it work in sync, interoperability between various software and hardware is key. There has to be a set of commonly agreed upon protocols to make the metaverse work. Open-source platforms like Web3D Consortium, World Wide Web Consortium, XR Association (XRA), Cesium and several other industry players have come together as the Metaverse Standards Forum to build interoperability into the metaverse.

71 million the number of people around the world experiencing poverty as a result of soaring food and energy prices that climbed in the weeks following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, according to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP estimates that 51.6 million more people fell into poverty in the first three months after the war, living off \$1.90 a day or less. This pushed the total number globally to 9% of the world's population. An additional 20 million people slipped to the poverty line of \$3.20 a day.

₹80,000 crore, the amount earmarked by the Union Government as interest free loans for States undertaking capital works in FY23. In this year's Budget speech, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the 'Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment' scheme under which total financial assistance of

SIGUR PLATEAU

1. Following the Supreme Court verdict (2018), upholding the notification of the elephant corridor in the Sigur plateau, there has been a surge in resorts and commercial establishments mushrooming in the areas. Sigur Plateau is located in the Nilgiri Hills of Tamil Nadu.

2. It connects the Western and the Eastern Ghats. It has the Nilgiri Hills on its southwestern side and the Moyar River Valley on its northeastern side. It sustains elephant populations and their genetic diversity. The elephants cross the plateau in search of food and water.

3. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, which includes Sigur Plateau and the Nilgiri Hills, is part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

LARGE HADRON COLLIDER

1. Scientists working with the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at the CERN have discovered 3 subatomic particles (a 'pentaquark' and a pair of 'tetraquarks') never seen before as they work to unlock the building blocks of the universe. The LHC is located at the CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, on the Franco-Swiss border near Geneva, Switzerland.

2. It is the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator. It started operating in 2008. "Large" refers to its size, approximately 27 km in circumference. "Hadron" because it accelerates protons or ions, which belong to the group of particles called hadrons. "Collider" because the particles form 2 beams travelling in opposite directions, which are made to collide at four points around the machine.

3. **The LHC is a particle accelerator that pushes protons or ions to near the speed of light. It consists of a 27-km ring of superconducting magnets with a number of accelerating structures that boost the energy of the particles along the way.**

4. It lies in a more than 100-m deep tunnel. LHC was built to study minuscule sub-atomic particles, which are the smallest known units of matter and the building blocks of all things. Hotter than Sun - The collision of the two beams generates temperatures more than 100,000 times hotter than the hottest part of the sun, which is the core. But that heat will be concentrated in a very small space.

5. Even though such temperatures are being generated, the machine's accelerator ring will be kept at a cool minus 271.3 degrees celsius using superfluid helium. Earlier, this machine found the Higgs boson particle.

QUARKS

1. Quarks are elementary particles that usually combine in groups of twos and threes to form hadrons such as the protons and neutrons that make up atomic nuclei. More rarely, however, they can also combine into four-quark and five-quark particles, or tetraquarks and pentaquarks.

2. The more analyses we perform, the more kinds of exotic hadrons we find. A 'particle zoo' of hadrons were discovered in the 1950s.

3. This ultimately led to the quark model of conventional hadrons in the 1960s. Now, 'particle zoo 2.0' is being created.

BOOSTING FOREX INFLOWS

1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced a slew of temporary measures aimed at boosting foreign exchange inflows. These measures include Doubling in the overseas borrowing limit for corporate under the External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) route and Removal of interest rate ceilings for the foreign currency deposits of the NRIs.

2. **The move comes as persistent capital outflows and a widening trade deficit have led to a sharp depreciation in the Indian rupee to new lows against the dollar. This move will alleviate dollar tightness that will ensure orderly market functioning.** The banks have been exempted from maintaining

one lakh crore would be given to States in the form of 50 year interest free loans for capital investment projects.

The monsoon has usually meant respite from the heat, but temperatures during these months — June to September — are seeing a rise, says an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), an environment group, made public on Thursday. At an all India level, average temperatures during the season are 0.3 degrees Celsius higher than the average summer temperatures (March to May) when compared from 1951 to 1980. In the past decade, 2012-2021, this anomaly has risen to 0.4 degrees Celsius.

2.3 billion number of people facing moderate or severe difficulty in obtaining enough to eat in 2021, an estimate from before the Ukraine war which has further sparked increases in the cost of grain, fertilizer and energy, according to a UN report. Recent evidence suggests that the number of people unable to afford a healthy diet around the world rose by 112 million to almost 3.1 billion, reflecting the impacts of rising food prices during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the five UN agencies that published the report.

Following in the footsteps of the Gujarat and Haryana governments, the Centre has decided to promote the cultivation of dragon fruit, known as a “super fruit” for its health benefits. The Centre feels that considering the cost effectiveness and global demand for the fruit due to its nutritional values, its cultivation can be expanded in India. At present, this exotic fruit is cultivated in 3,000 hectares; the plan is to increase cultivation to 50,000 hectares in five years.

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday alleged that Vivo India remitted almost 50% of the sale proceeds overseas, mainly to China, to report huge losses in several domestically incorporated companies to avoid payment of taxes in India.

Nonperforming assets (NPA) accounted for “12-13%” of the loans disbursed to street vendors under the Prime Minister’s Street Vendors Atma Nirbhar Nidhi (PMSvanidhi) scheme, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri said on Thursday. The scheme, which was launched on July 2, 2020, has so far disbursed loans of ₹10,000 each to 30.23 lakh street vendors, of which 11.63 lakh loans have been repaid, according to the official PM Svanidhi website. Fifty six loans of ₹50,000

the stipulated Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) on incremental FCNR (B) and NRE term deposits mobilised up to November 4, 2022.

3. It also freed banks to temporarily raise fresh Foreign Currency Non-Resident Bank (FCNR(B)) and Non-Resident External (NRE) deposits without reference to extant regulations on interest rates. To encourage Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) into debt, the RBI said the choice of government bonds available for investment under the fully accessible route (FAR) would be widened.

4. This widening will be done by all new issuances of G-Secs of 7-year and 14-year tenors, including the current issuances of 7.10% GS 2029 and 7.54% GS 2036, designated as specified securities. The RBI also temporarily doubled the annual limit for External Commercial Borrowings (ECB) to \$1.5 billion or its equivalent.

PURCHASING MANAGERS INDEX

1. India’s services firms saw growth in new business and output accelerate to a 11-year high in June, as per the survey-based S&P Global India Services Purchasing Managers Index (PMI). The Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) is a measure of the prevailing direction of economic trends in manufacturing. It was started in 1948 by the US-based Institute of Supply Management.

2. It is an indicator of business activity -- both in the manufacturing and services sectors. The PMI is based on a monthly survey of supply chain managers across 19 industries, covering both upstream and downstream activity. It is calculated separately for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a composite index is constructed.

3. The PMI is derived from a series of qualitative questions. Reading - The value and movements in the PMI and its components can provide useful insight to business decision makers, market analysts, and investors.

4. A figure above 50 denotes expansion in business activity. Anything below 50 denotes contraction. If the figure is higher than the previous month’s then the economy is expanding at a faster rate. If it is lower than the previous month then it is growing at a lower rate. The PMI is usually released at the start of the month.

HOUSE COMMITTEES

1. A panel on the Parliamentary Standing Committees suggests increasing the tenure of House committees. The House Committees are one of the Parliamentary Standing Committees.

2. **The functions of the Committee which are of advisory nature are: To deal with all questions relating to residential accommodation for members of Lok Sabha; To exercise supervision over facilities for accommodation, food, medical aid and other amenities accorded to members in members' residences and hostels in Delhi; and To consider and provide such amenities to Members as may be deemed necessary from time to time.**

3. In Lok Sabha, the House Committee consists of not more than 12 members appointed by the Speaker. The Committee holds office for a term not exceeding one year. A member may be re-nominated by the Speaker to the new House Committee.

4. The Committee may appoint one or more Sub-Committees, each having the powers of the undivided Committee, if they are approved at a sitting of the whole Committee. In Rajya Sabha, the House Committee was first constituted on the 22nd May, 1952 and the Rules governing the Committee were framed in 1986.

IT ACT SEC 69A: WHEN SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT IS BLOCKED

1. Context: Twitter initiated legal action against some of the government missives ordering it to take down certain content Section 69 (A) of the Information Technology Act: Section 69 (A) of the IT Act, 2000 allows the Centre to issue blocking orders to social media intermediaries.

2. Blocking order can be issued only for: Interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order. For preventing incitement to the commission of any cognisable offence relating to the above.

3. Process: Any request made by the government is sent to a review committee, which then issues these directions. Blocking orders issued under Section 69 (A) of the IT Act are typically

have been disbursed, while none of them have been repaid yet.

Three months after they met in New Delhi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi held talks on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Bali on Thursday. While the talks that lasted an hour appeared to be cordial, New Delhi and Beijing crossed swords over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday greetings to the Dalai Lama, and Enforcement Directorate (ED) searches at the offices of the Chinese company Vivo in India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the National Education Policy (NEP) focused on imparting skills to students based on their aptitude and choices. Mr. Modi inaugurated a three day Akhil Bhartiya Shiksha Samagam on the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in Varanasi, which is being attended by over 300 academic, administrative and institutional leaders. He said the the policy would help develop all the human resource necessary for the country's progress.

confidential in nature.

4.Why has Twitter filed the lawsuit? Twitter has claimed that many of the blocking orders are procedurally and substantively deficient under Section 69 (A) of the Act: g., Not giving prior notice to users before taking down content posted by them. MeitY has failed to demonstrate how some of the content it wants taken down falls under the purview of Section 69 (A). Some of the content flagged by the ministry may pertain to official accounts of political parties, blocking which could be violative of the right to free speech.