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Important News: National

Santosh Jha Assumes Role As India's New Envoy To Sri Lanka

Why in News:

- India's new High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Santosh Jha has assumed charge and presented his credentials to President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Key Points:

- Santosh Jha replaces Gopal Baglay, who has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Australia.
- Santosh Jha, a senior diplomat, was India's Ambassador to the European Union, Belgium & Luxembourg before taking up his assignment in Colombo.
- He has earlier served as Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan from 2019-2020 and as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Indian Embassy in Washington DC from 2017-2019.
- He has held key positions in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, including as head of the Division for Human Resources and Management Affairs, the Division for Relations with Western Europe and the European Union, and the Policy Planning Division.
- He also served in Colombo from 2007-2010 as a Counsellor at the High Commission, handling work related to commercial and economic matters.

Source: Deccan Herald

Gwalior Achieves Guinness Record With 'Largest Tabla Ensemble'

Why in News:

- MP: 'Largest tabla ensemble' Guinness world record set in Gwalior during Tansen festival.

Key Points:

- Around 1,300 tabla players who performed at the 99th International Tansen Samaroh in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh on Dec 25 entered the Guinness World Records for achieving the "largest tabla ensemble".
- The Guinness World Records certificate was handed over to Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, who said his government would henceforth observe



December 25 as 'Tabla Day' to commemorate the feat and honour all musicians.

- Mian Tansen (born 1493 or 1506 as Ramtanu Misra – died 1586 or 1589 as Tansen) was a prominent Indian classical music composer, musician, and vocalist, known for a large number of compositions, and also an instrumentalist who popularised and improved the plucked rabab (of Central Asian origin).
- He was among the Navaratnas (nine jewels) at the court of the Mughal Emperor Jalal ud-din Akbar.
- Tansen Samaroh is celebrated every year in the month of December in Behat village of Gwalior district, Madhya Pradesh.

Source: The Print

Health Minister Launched 'MedTech Mitra'

Why in News:

- Health Minister Launches 'MedTech Mitra' Initiative for Indian Healthcare Innovation.

Key Points:

- Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya recently launched MedTech Mitra - a strategic initiative to empower MedTech innovators and advance healthcare solutions.
- MedTech Mitra will be a game-changer for the Indian MedTech industry and facilitate the indigenous development of affordable, quality MedTech devices and diagnostics.
- MedTech Mitra is an online portal that aims to assist medtech innovators in clinical evaluation, regulatory facilitation, and uptake of new products.
- The portal will be coordinated collaboratively by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), under the guidance of NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission.
- The launch of a separate portal for medtech startups comes months after the government launched the National Medical Device Policy and a scheme worth Rs 5,000 crore for the promotion of research in the pharma and medtech sectors.



Union Minister Anurag Singh Thakur Initiated 'MY Bharat' Campaign

Why in News:

- After the launch of My Bharat campaign, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur, while addressing the youth, expressed confidence in India's remarkable progress.

Key Points:

- Anurag Singh Thakur said that the achievement of the government has shown a quantum jump in development in all sectors. Whether it is infrastructure, economy, or any field, the country has been witnessing a defining change in all sectors.
- India has become the fifth largest economy by introducing digital payments and has recorded 48 percent share of such payments in the world.
- The country, which had just 500 startups in 2014, has today become the third largest country with an ecosystem for start-ups.
- According to Minister Anurag Singh Thakur, India has overtaken Britain and become the fifth largest country in the world. Shri Thakur called upon the youth to contribute to the development of the nation and lakhs of youth sacrificed their lives for independent India and now the time has come for the Indian youth to contribute and pledge to make it a developed country in 2047.
- According to Minister Anurag Singh, with the Make in India programme, the country has become the seventh largest manufacturer of mobile phones in the world. He said that whereas earlier India used to import 90 percent of its mobile handsets, now it is exporting more than 80 percent.
- Technology would play a significant role in empowering women's self-help groups (SHGs), according to Anurag Thakur. In order to support SHGs in effectively applying nanopesticides and fertilizers and to promote agricultural innovation and women's empowerment, he underlined the potential of building drones, or Garudas.

Source: News on AIR



Vita Dani Makes History As First Indian On ITTF Governing Board

Why in News:

- Vita Dani has become the first Indian to be inducted as ITTF governing board member.

Key Points:

- Sports entrepreneur Vita Dani has become the first Indian to be inducted as a governing board member of the International Table Tennis Federation's (ITTF) Foundation. The Foundation was established in 2018 by the ITTF to attract more people to the sport.
- Vita and her organisation (Dani Foundation) have played a big role in shaping the upward trajectory of Indian table tennis.
- She is also the co-owner of the Chennaiyin Football Club, which features in the Indian Super League.

Source: Hindustan Times

Sony Sports ropes in Kartik Aaryan as brand ambassador

Why in News:

- Sony Sports Network has appointed Bollywood's Gen Z superstar and youth icon Kartik Aaryan as their brand ambassador for football.

Key Points:

- Sony Sports Network (SSN) has appointed Bollywood star and Gen Z sensation Kartik Aaryan as their official brand ambassador for the beautiful game, ushering in a new era of football passion in India.
- During his partnership with Sony Sports Network, Kartik will be seen promoting LIVE football action on Sony Sports Network around the year with 900+ matches from marquee football tournaments and leagues, which include UEFA EURO 2024, UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League,



UEFA Conference League, UEFA Nations League, Bundesliga, Emirates FA Cup, Durand Cup, and Roshn Saudi League, amongst others.

- Kartik Aaryan, who has enthralled audiences with stellar performances on the silver screen, is also known for his enthusiasm and fandom for the game of football. His love for the game began at an early age, and he is a dedicated Real Madrid fan, the most successful club in the history of the UEFA Champions League.

Source: The Economic Times

Visva-Bharati Researchers Discover Bacteria Named After Rabindranath Tagore

Why in News:

- A group of researchers from Visva-Bharati University's botany department have discovered a bacteria capable of boosting plant growth and named it 'Pantoea Tagorei' after Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

Key Points:

- A team of microbiologists from Visva-Bharati University managed to isolate a plant growth-promoting bacteria and named it plant-growth promoting bacteria *Pantoea tagorei*, and named it after Rabindranath Tagore and his son, Rathindranath.
- The bacteria has immense potential to revolutionise agricultural practices, microbiologist Bomba Dam, assistant professor at the varsity's botany department who led the research.
- According to Dam , “This is a plant growth promoting bacteria which will prove to be a game-changer in agriculture. It has shown immense capability to boost the cultivation of paddy, pea and chilli.”
- Talking about the discovery, Dam referred to his team isolating the bacteria from the soil of Sonajhuri, an area in Santiniketan, then discovered the bacteria in the coal mining belt of Jharkhand's Jharia.
- Elaborating the characteristics of the bacteria, Dam said, ‘*Pantoea Tagorei*’ efficiently extracts potassium from soil which enhances plant growth. Those



found in the soil of Jharia coal mines solubilises potassium and phosphorus and fixes nitrogen which help promote plant growth.

- The bacteria will reduce the usage of commercial fertilisers and eventually help to cut costs for agriculture and boost crop yield, adding that the Association of Microbiologists of India (AMI) has officially recognised the discovery.

Source: The Print

