

Headlines at a Glance - 11th August 2020

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PM Modi launches 2,300-km undersea optical fibre cable for Andamans

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday launched a submarine optical fibre cable (OFC) connecting Andaman & Nicobar Islands to the mainland, which will allow access to cheap and better telecom connectivity in the Union Territory. The Prime Minister had laid the foundation for connecting Chennai-Andaman and Nicobar Islands (CANI) with optical fibre on December 30, 2018. As part of the project, a 2,300-km submarine cable was laid. Services began on Monday on a major chunk of the islands from Chennai to Port Blair, Port Blair to Little Andaman and Port Blair to Swaraj Island.

The Prime Minister said the Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) Islands felt the need for years but no steps were taken to fulfil it. "Providing better and cheap connectivity to the people of Andaman & Nicobar Islands is the responsibility of the country," Modi said. The PM said the government is committed to provide modern facilities to every citizen and every sector so that there can be a better ease of living.

SOURCE: *Financial Express*

'No Doubt Buddha Was Born in Nepal': MEA Clarifies

After Nepal formally objected to external affairs minister S. Jaishankar's statement at a webinar that Buddha was one of the greatest 'Indians', India was quick to damp down on a nascent controversy by

asserting that there is “no doubt” that the founder of Buddhism was born in Nepal. At Confederation of Indian Industry’s ‘India@75 Summit – Mission 2022’, Jaishankar mused during an interactive session on Saturday about the “greatest Indians ever that you can remember”. “I would say one is Gautam Buddha and the other is Mahatma Gandhi,” he offered. A day later, Nepal foreign ministry issued a statement that it was a “well-established and undeniable fact proven by historical and archaeological evidence that Gautam Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal”. The statement issued on behalf of Nepal foreign ministry’s official spokesperson was in the context of the “recent statement made by the External Affairs Minister of India on Gautam Buddha”. He reminded that Indian Prime Minister Modi had himself mentioned during his speech to Nepal parliament in 2014 that ‘Nepal is the country where the apostle of peace in the world, Buddha, was born’.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

India Inc hails defence ministry’s move to stop import of 101 defence items

The Indian industry on Sunday welcomed the defence ministry’s move to stop import of 101 defence items in a phased manner, beginning December 2020, with one representative describing it as a “new glide path” for “AtmaNirbhar Bharat”. In his remarks, Chandrajit Bannerjee, director general of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) lobby group welcomed the negative list and the announcement that 52,000 crore would be earmarked for procurement from domestic manufacturers. “The defence minister’s announcement for a negative import list of defence systems and platforms marks the launch of a ‘new glide path’ for ‘AtmaNirbhar Bharat’,” he said. “The announcement of 52,000 crore for domestic capital procurement coupled with the list of 101 items for import embargo gives a tremendous boost to AtmanirbharBharat and indigenous defence manufacturing...We can assure the Defence Minister that the Indian Defence and Aerospace industry will rise to the Challenge and opportunities,” Bannerjee added.

SOURCE: *Livemint*

Indian HC awards grants for 5 eco-tourism zones in Addu

The Indian High Commission in Maldives, on Monday, held a contract awarding ceremony for the development of five eco-tourism zones’ in Addu Atoll. During the ceremony held at the Addu City Council, the government of India facilitated the grant under its High-Impact Community Development project (HICDP) scheme, for the zones to be developed in the islands of Hithadoo, Maradhoo, Feydhoo, Hulhudhoo and Meedhoo. In his remarks, High Commissioner Sunjay Sudhir noted that developing high-impact assets for the benefit of the local island community, building capacities within local councils that are entrusted with executing the projects and supporting the local island economy, as the three main objectives of a HICDP. According to the Commission, a total of USD 5.5 million was awarded under the scheme. As the implementing agency, the Addu City Council is responsible for steering the entire project-cycle including tendering, tender-evaluation, awarding contracts, monitoring and execution of the projects. In addition to the five tourism zones, four more projects were implemented as a HICDP in the country, from which three were granted to set up fish processing plants in Addu.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*

Defence Minister launches various initiatives of DPSUs & OFB

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh today launched the initiatives of a number of modernisation and up-gradation of facilities as also new infrastructure creation by Defence Public Sector Undertakings, DPSUs and Ordnance Factory Board OFB through digital link in New Delhi. It was part of the Atmanirbhar Week celebration of the Ministry of Defence. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Singh recalled Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clarion call for Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan and his 5-I formula of 'Intent, Inclusion, Investment, Infrastructure and Innovation' will put the economy on a high growth trajectory. The Minister said, the Government has made timely and thoughtful interventions during Covid-19 times like issuing negative lists for import, increase in FDI limits, separate budget for domestic capital procurement and emphasis on indigenisation. He said, the ban on imports of 101 items by the Defence Ministry is a big step towards an Atmanirbhar Bharat.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

This list of negative items contains not only small items but weapon systems of high and critical technology. He said, more such items will be added to this list shortly which will save crores of rupees in imports.