

Headlines at a Glance - 2nd March 2021

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Principal Scientific Adviser to GOI launches Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship

The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India under its Waste to Wealth Mission has launched the Swachhta Saarthi Fellowship to recognize students, community workers or Self-Help Groups, SHGs and municipal or sanitary workers who are engaged in tackling the enormous challenge of waste management, scientifically and sustainably. The Waste to Wealth Mission is one of the nine national missions of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council, PM-STIAC.

Targeted to encourage community participation, the Swachhta Saarthi Fellowships invites applications from students and community workers who have done previous work or are currently engaged in waste management activities, including awareness campaigns, surveys and studies.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Nitin Gadkari launches Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari today launched the Real-Time Monitoring System of Toll Plazas at a function in New Delhi. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Gadkari said that implementation of FASTag at toll plazas has improved electronic toll collections and facilitated ease of doing business. He said, it also saves time and fuel. The government has made FASTag mandatory from the 15th February midnight and any vehicle not fitted with it will be

charged double the toll at electronic toll plazas across the country. Mr Gadkari said the government is also working on ways to reduce the number of road accidents in the country by half up to 2025. Speaking about construction of National Highways, Mr Gadkari said, over eleven thousand kilometres of National Highways were constructed in the 11 months of this financial year and the per day road construction has reached 33 kilometres. The Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways was also present on the occasion.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*

MoRTH releases ratings for 18,668 kms of completed four & six-lane NH

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has released the ratings for 18,668 kilometres of completed four and six-lane National Highway stretches covering 343 toll plazas. This has been done by NHAI, which has taken initiative to improve its accountability towards road users, who pay user fee for use of developed National Highways. The fundamental objective of highway rating is Minimum time with maximum safety in a stress free environment from highway users' perspective. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari informed that over 11 thousand kilometres of National Highways have been constructed during this year, which represents a rate of 35 kilometres per day. The Minister reiterated his resolve to achieve the rate of 40 kilometres per day within the balance months of this financial year.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Russia launches "Arktika-M" satellite to monitor Arctic's climate and environment

Russia, on February 27, launched its first satellite that is aimed at monitoring the Arctic region's climate and environment. As per a statement by the country's Space Agency Roscosmos, the satellite 'Arktika-M' was launched at 9:55 am (Russian time) from Baikonur Cosmodrome, a space port leased to Russia in Kazakhstan. The satellite was carried by Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket. Russia plans to send up a second satellite in 2023 and, combined, the two will offer round-the-clock, all-weather monitoring of the Arctic Ocean and the surface of the Earth. As per the Russian Space Agency, the satellite, at the right orbit, was equipped to monitor and take pictures of the arctic every 15-30 minutes. Additionally, it will also be able to retransmit distress signals from ships, aircraft or people in remote areas as part of the international Cospas-Sarsat satellite-based search-and-rescue program.

SOURCE: *BBC News*

Global Bio-India-2021 being held from March 1 to 3 on a digital platform

The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare & Science and Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan on March 1, 2021, virtually inaugurated the second edition of Global-Bio India 2021. The theme of the event is 'Transforming Lives' with the tagline 'Biosciences to Bio-economy'. The three-day event held from March 1 to 3 has been co-organized on a digital platform by the Department of Biotechnology, Science & Technology Ministry along with its public sector undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council in the partnership with industry association confederation of Indian industry, Invest India and Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises. The Biotechnology sector has emerged as a significant part of the country's economy and the government has also been

playing a major role in building a USD 150 billion bio-economy by 2025.

The sector has been recognized as one of the major drivers for India for achieving its USD 5 trillion targets.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*