

Current Affairs Today –29.10.2020

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CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL

Centre forms panel to bring in reforms in urban planning education system



- The Union government has constituted a **14-member advisory committee** for introducing reforms in **urban planning education system** in India. According to official sources, the panel is being formed considering the multiple challenges being faced in the cities and India's commitment towards global agenda.
- The Committee will review the current urban planning education system in India in terms of multi-disciplinary curriculum and related issues at graduate and post graduate levels in the context of rapid urbanisation and will suggest changes.
- The committee will also examine the present availability, demand and supply of qualified urban planners in India. It will also strengthen the mechanisms of empowering States and local bodies with skilled and qualified human resources for planning and managing the settlements.
- Vice chairman of Niti Aayog **Rajiv Kumar**, CEO of Niti Aayog **Amitabh Kant**, Union Housing secretary, Union education secretary, chairperson of Town and country Planning department, Union secretary of Ministry of Panchayati Raj, president of Institute of Town Planners, India, director of National Institute of Urban Affairs, chairman of University Grants Commission, director of school of planning and architecture among others

Centre notifies new laws allowing any Indian citizen to buy land in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh



- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notified new land laws for the **Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh** and omitted any precondition on **the purchase of land in Jammu and Kashmir**, as existed under **Article 370** for the outsiders.
- Before the repeal of Article 370 and Article 35-A in August last year, non-residents could not buy any immovable property in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the fresh changes have paved the way for non-residents to buy land in the union territory, sparking fears among locals that this will dilute Jammu and Kashmir's demography.

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- The MHA in its release stated that the order will be called the **Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of Central Laws) Third Order, 2020**. It added that it will come into effect immediately.
- The Centre also notified that the “**permanent resident of the state**” clause has been omitted now.
- Under this, 12 state laws have been repealed and 26 others have been adapted with changes or substitutes, according to news agency ANI. Those completely repealed include the Jammu and Kashmir Alienation of Land Act, 1995, the Jammu and Kashmir Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, the Jammu and Kashmir Common Lands (Regulation) Act, 1956, and the Jammu and Kashmir Consolidation of Holdings Act, 1962.
- The notification issued by MHA also says that the government can now, on the written request of an army officer not below the rank of Corp Commander, declare an area as Strategic Area within a local area, only for direct operational and training requirements of armed forces, which may be excluded from the operation of this Act and rules and regulations made there under in the manner and to the extent.
- The government also can allow the transfer of land in favour of a person or an institution for the purpose of promotion of healthcare or senior secondary or higher or specialised education after the new notification.

About Ministry of Home Affairs:

- Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs
- Constituency: Gujarat
- G. Kishan Reddy, Minister of State for Home Affairs
- Nityanand Rai, Minister of State for Home Affairs

Wealth of Indian adults rises marginally amid covid outbreak: Credit Suisse



- **Wealth per adult in India rose 0.6% to USD 17,420**, despite covid-19 bringing economic activities across the nation to a standstill with gross domestic product (GDP) contracting **23.9%** in the first quarter of the current fiscal, shows the **Global Wealth Report 2020 by Credit Suisse**. As per the report, wealth per adult in India stood higher at USD 17,299 as on 31 December 2019, from USD 14,569 in June 2019.
- The Credit Suisse Research Institute attributed the upgrade to a change in its entire data series based on estimates from Karvy Private Wealth, an arm of the Karvy Group.
- Comparing this to the World Bank’s estimate of per capita income at USD 2,104 for 2019, India’s wealth per adult translates to 8.27 times its annual per capita income. In rupee terms at today’s exchange rates, this implies wealth of Rs.12.86 lakh per adult. The Credit Suisse Wealth report measures wealth in current and not constant prices.
- The 2020 report has made similar changes to other parameters of India’s wealth. Personal debt per adult was reduced from **USD 1,345** (end June 2019) to **USD 1,080** (end December 2019). Population with wealth below USD 10,000 fell from 78% to 73% and the proportion of adults with wealth above USD 100,000 rose from 1.8% to 2.3%.
- Putting aside the divergence between the old and new series, a look at the new series alone also reveals relatively optimistic estimates. According to Credit Suisse, financial assets of Indians in calendar year 2019 grew by 8.6%, non-financial assets grew by 12.5% and debts grew by 14.4%. This placed a growth in wealth per adult at 9.4% in calendar year 2019. According to the report non financial assets are 78% of household wealth implying a buoyant growth in the

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real estate market. Official data however has presented a more muted picture, pegging nominal GDP growth in FY 2019-20 at **7.2%**.

About Credit Suisse:

- CEO: Thomas Gottstein
- Headquarters: Zürich, Switzerland

CURRENT AFFAIRS: INTERNATIONAL

The World's Longest Immersed Tunnel Will Connect Germany and Denmark — and Make Trips So Much Shorter



- After 10 years of planning, the construction of **the world's longest immersed tunnel** has officially begun. The **Fehmarnbelt Tunnel** that will connect **Denmark** and **Germany**, is scheduled to be officially opened by **2029**. It's one of Europe's largest ongoing infrastructure projects, with a budget of more than US\$8 billion.
- The tunnel will have an 18 kilometers extension and will be built across the Fehmarn Belt, a strait between the **German island of Fehmarn** and **the Danish island of Lolland**. It will be an alternative to the current ferry service, which takes 45 minutes. Traveling through the tunnel will take seven minutes by train and ten minutes by car.
- It will be the **longest combined road and rail tunnel in the world**, with two double-lane motorways, separated by a service passageway, and two electrified rail tracks. Besides the benefits to passenger trains and cars, it will have a positive impact on the flow of freight trucks and trains.
- The Fehmarnbelt Tunnel project started back in 2008 when Germany and Denmark signed a treaty to build the tunnel. But it took more than a decade for the necessary legislation to be passed by both countries and for geotechnical and environmental impact studies to be carried out. Still, many organizations have currently open appeals against the project.

India, UK to set up bilateral Sustainable Finance Forum



- **India** and **the United Kingdom** agreed to establish a **bilateral Sustainable Finance Forum** to drive forward deeper cooperation on sustainable finance.
- The decision was taken during the **10th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD)** between India and the UK that also saw participation of UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- “India and the United Kingdom enjoy close bilateral relations in diverse areas. India-UK economic ties are important as together they are two of the world's top seven economies with a combined GDP of over **\$5 trillion**.”
- “India-UK trade has more than doubled since the first EFD in 2007, with bilateral investment supporting over half a million jobs across both countries,” Union finance ministry stated.

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- It was also decided to establish bilateral India-UK Sustainable Finance Forum, the statement stated, adding that private sector initiatives under the **India-UK Financial Partnership (IUKFP)** and **India-UK Sustainable Finance Working Group** were welcomed.
- Sitharaman highlighted the work being done by India's **\$1.4 trillion National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP)** and the City of London to ensure flows of sustainable finance.
- This partnership is helping set up a **Project Preparation Support Facility cum Centre of Excellence for PPP (Public Private Partnership) projects**, as per the statement. The Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF) was launched in 2018 as a joint venture with 240 million pounds funding to catalyse financing into green infrastructure in India. British Petroleum became the first private investor contributing \$70 million, it added.

About United Kingdom:

- Capital: London
- Prime Minister: Boris Johnson

European Commission, ICSSR sign new implementing arrangement to enhance scientific cooperation



- **The European Commission** and the **Indian Council of Social Science Research** signed a new implementing arrangement to enhance **scientific cooperation**. In a statement, the EU stated it encourages top Indian social scientists to join temporary research teams in Europe funded by the **European Research Council (ERC)**. The joint initiative is the second of its kind for the ERC with an Indian funding body, it stated.
- The Ambassador of the European Union to India, Ugo Astuto, and the Member Secretary of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Virendra Kumar Malhotra, signed the Implementing Arrangement in a virtual mode. "This initiative will provide opportunities to Indian researchers (Principal Investigators of Research Projects, Senior Fellowship Awardees and Post-Doctoral Fellows) who are supported by the ICSSR and want to pursue research collaborations with European researchers, supported by the ERC. The role of the ERC and the ICSSR is to facilitate contacts between their respective scholars who are interested in international cooperation," the statement stated.

About European Commission:

- The European Commission (EC) is the executive branch of the European Union, responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and managing the day-to-day business of the EU.
- Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium

About Indian Council of Social Science Research:

- Location: New Delhi
- Chairman: Prof. Bhushan Patwardhan

CURRENT AFFAIRS: BANKING AND FINANCE

SBI raises USD 1 billion untied loan with JBIC, other lenders



- The **State Bank of India** signed a loan agreement amounting to up to **one billion US Dollars** with the **Japan Bank for International Cooperation**, a company statement stated. The loan is intended to promote the smooth flow of funds for the whole range of business operations of Japanese automobile manufacturers in India.
- As part of the agreement, **600 million US Dollars** will be financed by **JBIC** while the remaining amount will be financed by other participating banks. The facility will be co-financed by **SMBC, MUFG Bank, Mizuho Bank, Shizuoka Bank and Bank of Yokahama**.

About SBI:

- Chairperson: Rajnish Kumar
- Headquarters: Mumbai
- Founded: 1 July 1955

SBI ties up with global education platform edX



- **State Bank of India (SBI)** has entered into a strategic partnership with global **non-profit education platform edX**, where the bank will offer its **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)** on the platform from November onwards.
- Initially, SBI will be offering three courses – Unleashing Creativity at the Workplace, Relationship Marketing Strategy for Financial Services, and Conflict Resolution, stated SBI.
- “The duration of these courses would be for four to six weeks, with an expected spend of two to three hours per week on a course. Interested learners need no specific academic qualifications to apply for the same,” stated SBI.
- The bank’s collaboration with edX is aimed at facilitating learners with expanding perspectives and access to knowledge beyond the classrooms, it added.
- The bank underscored that these courses have been curated and designed by practising bankers who possess rich experience and excellent academic credentials.

About Edx:

- Founded: May 2012
- Headquarters: United States
- Created by: Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University

India extends \$1 bn credit line to Central Asian countries for priority projects



- India extended a **\$1-billion line of credit** to **Central Asian countries** for priority projects in connectivity, energy, IT and health care, with the move being perceived as part of New Delhi's efforts to boost its role as a transparent development partner
- The line of credit was welcomed by ministers of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan during the second meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue held via video conference under the chairmanship of external affairs minister S Jaishankar. Acting Afghan foreign minister Haneef Atmar joined the meeting as a special invitee.
- The meeting discussed cooperation in political and security matters, and all the countries called for settling the Afghan conflict on the principle of an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process", according to a joint statement. The countries also condemned terrorism and reaffirmed their determination to destroy terrorist safe havens, networks, and funding channels. Besides the \$1-billion line of credit, India offered grant assistance for high impact community development projects to boost socio-economic development in Central Asia.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

HAL, Tech Mahindra sign Rs 400 cr contract for 'Project Parivartan'



- **Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)** stated the company signed a contract worth **Rs 400 crore** with **Tech Mahindra** for implementation of **enterprise resource planning (ERP)** to support its **project Parivartan**. "Project Parivartan is a comprehensive business transformation exercise initiated by HAL through technology enhancement and centralised ERP. As a system integrator, Tech Mahindra will implement project Parivartan over a period of nine years at a cost of Rs 400 crore," HAL stated .
- HAL stated Tech Mahindra will be responsible for the transformation and modernisation of the ERP system as an implementation and support partner enabling HAL to streamline and standardise its business processes across the organisation. Tech Mahindra will transform the distributed application to a centralised application, for all the 20 divisions and research and development centers of HAL based on a business transformation engineering process.

About Hindustan Aeronautics Limited:

- Headquarters: Bangalore, Karnataka
- Chairman & MD: R Madhavan

About Tech Mahindra:

- CEO: C. P. Gurnani
- Headquarters: Pune



CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATES

J&K: LG R K Mathur flags off Ultimate Ladakh Cycling Challenge



- In Leh, Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R. K. Mathur flagged off **Ultimate Ladakh Cycling Challenge**. At an altitude of over **17 thousand feet** this is one of the toughest cycling challenges in the world.
- Ladakh Police, Ladakh Tourism Department in association with the Cycling Federation of India with the support of Ladakh Cycling Association have organized the four-day event. Union Territory administration is taking all measures to promote tourism and Ladakh as the centre for adventure sports. As part of the activities, Ladakh Police and Tourism Departments are organizing a four-day Ultimate Ladakh Cycling Challenge in Leh.
- On various routes, the cyclists peddle a total of **263 kilometres** in the **four-day event**. On 3rd and 4th Day the cyclists have to climb the **world's 3rd highest Taglang La** and the highest motorable road Khardung La that test the stamina, endurance and the will power of a cyclist. Top national and local cyclists are taking part in the challenge. Winners will be awarded 10 lakh rupees as prize.
- Cycling Federation of India General Secretary Maninder Singh appealed for a proposal from the UT Administration to tap the potential of conducting National and International events with the Union Cyclist International (UCI) recognition, to put Ladakh in the World event's map.

About Ladakh:

- Capital: Leh, Kargil
- Lieutenant Governor: Radha Krishna Mathur

Young Advocates Welfare Fund launched in Tamil Nadu



- In Tamil Nadu, **the Young Advocates Welfare Fund** has been launched. It provides a monthly financial assistance of **three thousand rupees** each for **two years** to the lawyers who just come out of law colleges.
- Normally a fresher from law colleges takes three to four years to begin practice as an advocate in the court as the registration in the Bar Council, and the mandatory practicing under a senior advocate takes time. Unable to sustain themselves during the initial period, many from poor and rural backgrounds shifted their profession.
- The Young Advocates Welfare Scheme is aimed at helping such fresh candidates to withstand the initial challenges.

About Tamil Nadu:

- Capital: Chennai
- Chief minister: Edappadi K. Palaniswami
- Governor: Banwarilal Purohit

CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPS AND PORTALS

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Delhi CM Kejriwal to launch 'Green Delhi' mobile app to check air pollution



- Amid deteriorating air quality in the national capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will launch "**Green Delhi**" mobile application, which will enable people to register complaints about violation of anti-pollution norms.
- The mobile app is a part of the Delhi government's "**Yudh Pradushan Ke Virudh**" campaign, announced by Kejriwal on October 6, to reduce pollution levels in the national capital.
- Through this photo-based complaint lodging app, people will be able to inform the government about the burning of waste, and industrial and dust pollution.
- There will be a time limit for redressal of the complaints received on the **Green Delhi app**, the Delhi government stated.
- The Delhi government stated that all the concerned departments will be connected with the app, and the complaints received will automatically reach them. If the complaint is not resolved in time, action will be taken against the concerned officials, it stated.

About Delhi:

- Chief minister: Arvind Kejriwal
- Governor: Anil Baijal

Army launches indigenous messaging application similar to WhatsApp, names it SAI



- **Indian Army** has developed and launched a secure messaging application named the "**Secure Application for the Internet (SAI)**" that supports an end-to-end secure voice, text and video calling services for Android platform over internet, the Ministry of Defence stated. "The model is similar to commercially available messaging applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, SAMVAD and GIMS and utilises end-to-end encryption messaging protocol. SAI scores over on security features with local in-house servers and coding, which can be tweaked as per requirements," the ministry stated.
- According to the statement, the application has been vetted by **CERT-in empaneled auditor and Army Cyber Group**, and the process for filing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) hosting the infrastructure on NIC and working on iOS platform is currently in progress. "SAI will be utilised pan Army to facilitate secure messaging within the service. The Defence Minister after reviewing the functionalities of the app complimented Col Sai Shankar for his skill and ingenuity for developing the application," it added.

About Indian Army:

- Chief of Defence Staff (CDS): General Bipin Rawat

- Chief of the Army Staff (COAS): General Manoj Mukund Naravane

CURRENT AFFAIRS: SUMMITS AND CONFERENCE

India hosts 19th Meeting of SCO Ministers of Foreign Economy & Foreign Trade



- **India** hosted the **19th Meeting** of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Ministers of Foreign Economy** and Foreign Trade.
- In his opening remarks, Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal stated the current crisis due to Covid-19 is a clarion call to the SCO countries to leverage the economic strength and explore partnerships that enhance trade and investment in the region. He stated cooperation should be continued to enhance intra-SCO trade and investment which would be critical in ensuring the speedy recovery from the aftermath of the pandemic. This statement highlights the importance of the rule-based multilateral negotiations.
- Besides, statement on SCO Cooperation on **Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)** was also adopted which relates to cooperation of intellectual property and include sharing information and experience on legislation and enforcement, cooperation in international organisations and other areas.
- The virtual meeting was attended by the Secretary General of SCO and Ministers from, **Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan**.

About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation:

- Headquarters: Beijing, China
- Secretary General: Vladimir Norov

CURRENT AFFAIRS: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Isro to launch earth observation, nine commercial satellites in November



- The **Indian Space Research Organisation** will launch an **Indian earth observation satellite** and **nine commercial satellites** in the afternoon of **November 7**. This will be the first launch of **2020** from India's only spaceport in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- "India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle in its 51st mission, will launch **EOS-01 as a primary satellite** along with nine international customer satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre. The launch is tentatively scheduled at 1502 hours IST on November 07, 2020, subject to weather conditions," a statement from the space agency stated.
- The only other Indian satellite launched this year was the heavy-communication satellite **GSAT 30**, which was launched from Kourou, French Guiana, by the commercial launcher Arianespace.
- A scheduled launch of an earth imaging satellite in March was postponed and did not take place because of the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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- The pandemic has hampered several big-ticket projects that were planned for 2020 and the next year. India was to launch its first solar mission in the first half of the year; a third lunar mission with just the lander and the rover was also to take place either in the end of 2020 or the first half of the next year.
- The human spaceflight programme, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his Independence day speech in 2018, was to attempt its first unmanned human-rated vehicle launch in December 2020.

About ISRO:

- Headquarters: Bangalore, Karnataka, India
- Chairman: Kailasavadivoo Sivan

MIT scientists design face mask that can inactivate coronavirus using heat



- Scientists at MIT have designed a **novel face mask** that can not only **filter out the SARS-CoV-2 virus**, which causes COVID-19, but also inactivate it using heat.
- The new mask incorporates a **heated copper mesh** and does not need to be decontaminated or thrown away after use, according to the researchers.
- As the person wearing the mask breathes in and out, air flows repeatedly across the mesh, and any viral particles in the air are slowed and inactivated by the mesh and high temperatures, the researchers stated.
- Such a mask could be useful for healthcare professionals, as well as members of the public in situations where social distancing would be difficult to achieve, such as a crowded bus, they stated.
- They decided to use copper mesh as the heating and capture element, and performed some mathematical modelling to determine the optimal temperature range needed to kill coronaviruses flowing inwards or outwards from natural breathing.
- They also showed that that temperature can be achieved by running an electrical current across a 0.1-millimetre thick copper mesh or thermoelectric heater, powered by a small battery.

CURRENT AFFAIRS: RANKING

DBS named Asia's Safest Bank for 12th consecutive year



- **DBS Bank** announced that it has been named the '**Safest Bank in Asia**' for the **12th consecutive year** by New York-based trade publication Global Finance.
- DBS' rankings as the **fourth-safest commercial bank** in the world and **14th safest bank** globally remain unchanged from 2019 and 2018.
- DBS Bank India also recently unveiled a new brand campaign around the importance of safety, featuring brand ambassador **Sachin Tendulkar**..

- Global Finance's annual ranking of the World's 50 Safest Banks has been the recognised and trusted standard of financial counterparty safety for a quarter-century. Winners were selected through an evaluation of long-term foreign currency ratings - from Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch - of the 500 largest banks worldwide.
- This year, DBS was also **Global Finance's pick for 'Best Bank in the World' 2020**. This follows a similar win in 2018. The bank was also named '**World's Best Bank**' by leading financial publication Euromoney in 2019, and '**Global Bank of the Year**' by Financial Times publication The Banker in 2018. The 2020 Global Finance title marks the third consecutive year that DBS has been honoured with a global Best Bank accolade.

About DBS bank:

- CEO: Piyush Gupta
- Headquarters: Singapore

CURRENT AFFAIRS: OBITUARY

Former Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel passes away at 92



- **Keshubhai Patel** died after prolonged illness, family sources stated. Patel (92) was the **state chief minister** in 1995 and again during 1998-2001. **Narendra Modi** had succeeded him as **Gujarat chief minister**.
- Patel was a member of the Gujarat Legislative Assembly six times. He quit the BJP in 2012 and floated the Gujarat Parivartan Party, which performed poorly in 2012 Assembly polls and merged with the BJP in 2014.

DAILY CA 28th OCT

- **Infantry Day** celebrated across J&K, Ladakh UTs to mark landing of Indian Army in Srinagar in 1947
- International Animation Day- 28th oct
- Disarmament Week: 24-30 October
- Centre sets up high-level committee to commemorate Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th birth anniversary
- Mandaviya inaugurates direct entry facility at VOC port
- Shri Arjun Munda launches two Centers of Excellence for tribal welfare in partnership with Art of Living
- V Prez Venkaiah Naidu launches virtual festival of 'Parampara Series 2020-National Festival of Music and Dance'
- India Post, US Postal Service sign agreement for electronic exchange of customs data
- Japan to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2050
- India, U.S sign five agreements including 'Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement'
- PPL tournament to be played in Indore to free city from single use plastic
- AP Govt to resume State formation day fete from Nov 1
- CSB Bank partners with IIFL Finance for gold loan origination
- SVC Bank launches rewards programme
- SBI raises Rs 5,000 crore by issuing Basel-III compliant bonds
- BharatPe launches digital gold on its platform
- Microsoft, NSDC collaborate to empower 1 lakh women with digital skills
- CSIR-CDRI Scientist Dr Saman Habib elected as fellow of Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi

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- Night of the Restless Spirits: Stories from 1984 by Sarbpreet Singh
- AIM Launches India–Australia Circular Economy Hackathon(I-ACE), with Australia’s Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
- Women Startup Summit 2020 gain key focus in KSUM initiative
- Piyush Goyal launches First-ever SCO Startup Forum ahead of SCO trade ministers meeting
- Young Bangladeshi boy wins special prize in Global Art Competition conducted by ICCR
- NASA's SOFIA Discovers Water On Sunlit Surface Of Moon
- IIT Kanpur and ASI sign MoU with Italian institutes for restoration of monuments
- Legendary Gujarati Actor Naresh Kanodia Passes Away Due to COVID-19 at 77
- Daniel Menaker, award-winning author and editor, Passes away

DAILY CA 29th OCT

- Centre forms panel to bring in reforms in urban planning education system
- Centre notifies new laws allowing any Indian citizen to buy land in Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh
- Wealth of Indian adults rises marginally amid covid outbreak: Credit Suisse
- The World’s Longest Immersed Tunnel Will Connect Germany and Denmark – and Make Trips So Much Shorter
- India, UK to set up bilateral Sustainable Finance Forum
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