



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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TODAY'S EDITION

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STUDENT EDITION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021



WEB EDITION

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BREAK OUT ECONOMY

WHAT: A rapidly-digitalising India has been ranked highly among the 'Break Out Economies' in the third edition of the Digital Evolution Scorecard developed by the Tufts University's Fletcher School, in partnership with the Mastercard. 'Break Out Economies' are defined as those economies that are digitalising very quickly, and yet have a lot of room to grow before matching those in the developed economies, such as those in Europe and in more-developed Asian countries like Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong.

X-PLAINED

WHO ARE THE SUCCESSFUL BREAK OUT ECONOMIES: Successful 'Break Out Economies' are those economies that have sophisticated mobile internet access, affordability and quality to foster more widespread adoption. The governments of these economies have also taken steps to strengthen their institutional environments and have stringent digital regulations. Moreover, in these economies, generating investments in digital enterprises, fund-

ing digital R&D, training digital talent and leveraging digital applications to create jobs are given priority. Besides, steps have also been taken to reduce inequities in access to the digital tools across gender, class, etc.

THE RANKINGS

1 China, which leads the countries in the 'Break Out Economies' group is more-evolved digitally mainly due to its combination of rapidly-growing demand and innovation

2 Indonesia, and India, which ranks third and fourth respectively, in momentum, have displayed increasing digital-momentum, suggesting the potential to rapidly digitalise in the post-Covid world, the report stated

3 South Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong are the leading 'Stand Out Economies', the top-performing group, thanks to a high-degree of digital evolution and a strong momentum in continuing to advance their digital capabilities

4 Other consistently top performers, include Estonia, Taiwan, and the United Arab Emirates. These economies have displayed both adaptability and institutional-led support for innovation. Interestingly, the US also shows remarkable momentum for an economy of its size and complexity, scoring second in digital evolution, after Singapore

Photo: Getty Images



COVID DISTURBS TRADITIONS

In a first, budget to go paperless

The upcoming budget scheduled for February 1 will go paperless, as the finance ministry has decided not to print the budget documents, amid the pandemic. This is a historic move, as it will be for the first time that the budget papers will not be printed.

The decision has been taken, as the printing process would require several people to stay at the press for around a fortnight, amid the coronavirus fears



➤ The budget for the financial year 2021-22 may also see several conventions being broken, as according to sources, the traditional 'Halwa' ceremony may not take place this year, or a subdued function may be held with a limited gathering
➤ This ceremony, which normally starts around January 20, is attended by all the people involved in the budget-making, and marks the beginning of printing
➤ Once printing starts, the printing staffers stay inside the press till the presentation of the budget. Only a few high-ranked officials are allowed access and that too on the basis of a special identity card. The entire facility, the loading-unloading and the transportation are manned by the special security forces

This is not the first time that there would be a change in tradition in the presentation of the budget under the finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. Last year, she did away with a colonial-era tradition of carrying the budget papers in a briefcase, and introduced the budget 'Bahi Khata' or a ledger, enclosed in a red cloth folder and tied with a string

Quote unquote

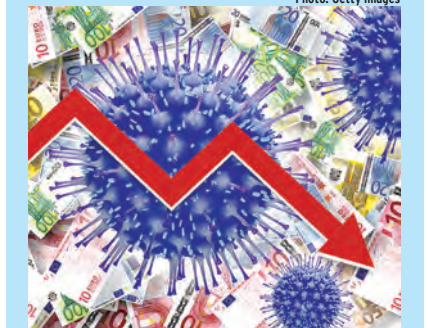


Even as vaccines start protecting the most-vulnerable, we're not going to achieve any levels of population immunity or herd immunity in 2021. Even if it happens in a couple of pockets, in a few countries, it's not going to protect people across the world. It is critical that countries and their population maintain strict social-distancing and other outbreak control measures for the foreseeable future
DR SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN, chief scientist, WHO

INDIA'S FY21 FISCAL DEFICIT SEEN AT OVER 7%, DOUBLE OF BUDGETED TARGET

Despite high-frequency indicators showing a turnaround, the revenue gap will continue to be high, forcing India to end the year with a higher than anticipated fiscal gap.

Photo: Getty Images



- According to sources, India's fiscal deficit for the year ending in March 2021 is likely to be over 7% of the gross domestic product (GDP), more than double of the 3.5% target that was set in the last budget
- The fiscal deficit could widen to as much as 8% of GDP, with the current expected economic contraction of 7.7% in 2020-21
- The government expects the tax revenue to decline by ₹ 4-5 lakh crore and a ₹ 1.2-1.5 lakh crore shortfall in divestment proceeds, officials said
- With the economy on the rebound, and crackdown on tax evaders, experts say the tax collection at best will increase by 70% from the current levels in the remaining months of the fiscal

VIEWPOINT

REMOVE 'UNHISTORICAL' REFERENCES FROM SCHOOL BOOKS: HOUSE PANEL

A Parliamentary panel has called in the education ministry over three critical issues flagged by various members of Parliament, including the need for a politically-sensitive 'reform', which includes the removal of 'unhistorical fact' and 'distortions' from the school textbooks.



Several members have pointed out the lacunae in textbooks in terms of history. They have highlighted on the need to include the role of great historic women heroes - from Gargi and Maitreyi to rulers like Rani of Jhansi, Rani Chennamma, Chand Bibi, Zalkari Bai, and so on, in the textbooks

Share your views at toinie175@gmail.com. You can also post your comments at toistudent.com

ORGANIC CHALK STICKS OUT OF RICE FLOUR AND EUCALYPTUS

After seeing the harmful effects that regular gypsum chalks have on the staff and students in their school, two students from a government school in Hyderabad's Adilabad, have come up with an innovative organic replacement for gypsum chalks. P Harshit Verma

INNOVATION

and K Rudra, students of the Telangana State Model School (TSM) in Bangari Guda, used rice flour and natural clay for the preparation of these chalks. Along with these two, they also mixed neem oil, lemon oil, camphor, and many other naturally-extracted substances. Further, to create a natural aroma in the classroom, they



added natural fragrances like rose water, extracts of Jasmine and sandal, and many other natural aromatic substances. "There are many schools, colleges and other educational institutions across India, which use chalks to write and teach. These chalks lead to many health issues like allergies, respiratory diseases, including asthma, and even eye infections. That is why we have come up with this idea to create organic chalks," said Rudra.

PM MODI NOW MOST-FOLLOWED ACTIVE POLITICIAN ON TWITTER AFTER SUSPENSION OF TRUMP'S ACCOUNT



NEWSMAKER

PM Narendra Modi has become the most-followed active politician on Twitter, after the micro-blogging platform permanently suspended the account of the US President Donald Trump, following the recent siege on the Capitol Hill by hundreds of pro-Trump rioters.

➤ PM Modi currently has 64.7 million followers, while Trump had 88.7 million followers, before his account was suspended. Former US President, Barack Obama, however, remains the most-followed politician on Twitter with 127.9 million followers.

NEWS IN CLUES

Which Indian state is home to the Earth's only saline soda lake?

- CLUE 1:** It has the country's largest road network.
- CLUE 2:** It is home to the world's largest planned city.
- CLUE 3:** It is home to five international airports.

ANSWER: MAHARASHTRA. The state's government has downgraded the security cover of several leaders, including former CM Devendra Fadnis, from Z-plus to Y-plus security with escort. Others whose security cover has been downgraded, include Fadnis' wife and daughter as also MNS chief Raj Thackeray.
DID YOU KNOW: With over 2.67 lakh-km of road length, the state, which is also home to a saline soda lake at Lonar, created by a meteor 52,000 years back, has India's largest road network. Navi Mumbai is the world's largest planned city

FACTOID

\$131 MN

The moolah minted by 'Wonder Woman 1984' in the US and Canada, leading the box office charts for the third straight weekend without much in the way of competition. Overseas, the film grabbed \$98.8 million, outperforming most-fellow pandemic-era releases.

➤ THE COMIC BOOK ADAPTATION WAS RELEASED SIMULTANEOUSLY ON HBO MAX, IN AN EFFORT TO BUOY STREAMING SERVICE SUBSCRIBERS. IT'S UNCLEAR HOW MANY HBO MAX USERS WATCHED THE MOVIE, THOUGH THE COMPANY TOUTED RECORD VIEWERSHIP

NOMADLAND BAGS FOUR NATIONAL SOCIETY OF FILM CRITICS AWARDS



ENTERTAINMENT

Hollywood film 'Nomadland' has won four awards at this year's National Society of Film Critics awards, including the best picture, best cinematography, best director and best actress. The Chloe Zhao-directed film won the most-awards at the 55th annual meeting for the organization recently. Frances McDormand was named the best actress for her role in 'Nomadland', while Zhao received the best director award.

- Delroy Lindo won the best actor for his role in Spike Lee's 'Da 5 Bloods'
- The other awards went to 'Collective' for the best foreign-language film, 'Time' for the best non-fiction film
- 'Never Rarely Sometimes Always', directed by Eliza Hittman, won for the best screenplay
- The National Society of Film Critics comprise 60 film critics from across the US

FLOATING IGLOO TO PROTECT PENGUINS!



Sajjad Navidi, an Iranian architect, has come up with a design for floating igloos that could protect the endangered penguins and stop the melting of polar ice in Antarctica. It uses igloos, both under and above the water, with the upper structure providing penguins the space to breed and the lower half connected to a swinging pendulum. The idea is, as the pendulum is moved by the waves, it produces electricity to cool the ice to stop it from melting