

India to be part of astronaut programme by SERA, Blue Origin

NEW DELHI, July 1 (IANS)

INA bid to democratise space, US-based Space Exploration and Research Agency (SERA) and Blue Origin on Monday announced India as a partner nation in their human space-flight programme.

SERA will offer citizens from India a seat on Blue Origin's future mission of reusable rocket New Shepard on an 11-minute journey past the Karmanline (100 km), the internationally-recognised boundary of space.

Indian citizens will be part of the six seats that together SERA and Blue Origin aim to offer to people from countries that have sent few or no citizen astronauts to space.

The astronauts will experience several minutes of weightlessness before making a controlled descent back to the landing pad.

"We're excited to have India as part of our human spaceflight programme," said Joshua Skurla, Co-Founder, of SERA.

Lt Gen N S Raja Subramani assumes charge as Vice Chief of Army Staff

NEW DELHI, July 1 (PTI)

LIEUTENANT General NS Raja Subramani on Monday assumed charge as the new Vice Chief of the Army Staff.

The officer, who was helming the Army's Central Command, succeeded General Upendra Dwivedi. General Dwivedi took charge as the Army Chief on Sunday.

LT GEN MANJINDER SINGH ASSUMES CHARGE OF SOUTH WESTERN COMMAND: LIEUTENANT General Manjinder Singh took over the reins of the Sapta Shakti Command here on Monday, a defence spokesperson said.

LT GEN DEVENDRA

SHARMA TAKES OVER AS NEW ARMY TRAINING COMMAND CHIEF: LIEUTENANT General Devendra Sharma on Monday took over as the new commander of the Army Training Command (ARTRAC) in Shimla.

LT GEN DHIRAJ SETH TAKES OVER REINS OF ARMY'S PUNE-BASED SOUTHERN COMMAND: LIEUTENANT General Dhiraj Seth, an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and the Indian Military Academy, on Monday took over as the 51st General Officer Commanding-in-Chief (GOC-in-C) of the Pune-headquartered Southern Command of the Indian Army.

1st time in 3 years, GST kitty growth slows to single digit

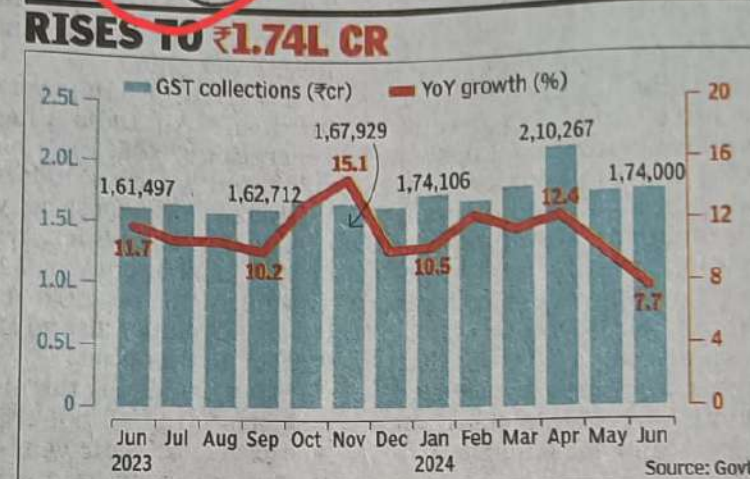
Central, State Mop-Up 8% Higher, Imports May Have Lagged

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: GST collections grew 7.7% in June to Rs 1.74 lakh crore, first time in three years when monthly mop-up rose at single-digit rate.

During the month, based on transactions in May, central GST collections are estimated to have increased 3.4% to Rs 32,067 crore, state GST went up 6.3% to Rs 40,715 crore, according to data available with sources. The two numbers (combined) show an 8% rise to Rs 73,134 crore, indicating a slower increase in integrated GST levied on imports and inter-state sales and cesses. Foreign trade has remained weak due to depressed prices for several commodities.

The IGST and compensation cess data was unavailable as the official numbers were not released by govt. During the first quarter, the kitty is



estimated to have swollen by 10.2% to Rs 5,57,006 crore. Since December, monthly collections have increased by 10-12%, in line with the nominal growth rate.

“While the growth in collection in June seems to be on a lower side compared to previous month, overall GST collections have shown an encouraging trend over last

few months. Industry hopes that the trend will enable the GST council to reinstate the rate rationalisation exercise as indicated in the last council meeting,” said Partik Jain, partner at consulting firm PwC. Economists said one month’s data may not point to any direction.

“The June 2024, GST collection of Rs 1.74 lakh crore is

a strong indicator of a booming domestic consumption sector. This marks an impressive four-month streak where collections have exceeded Rs 1.5 lakh crore, bringing the year-to-date total to a remarkable Rs 5.57 crore. This robust performance reflects a buoyant economy with businesses demonstrating commendable self-compliance. Timely audits, scrutiny measures, and effective enforcement by the department have all contributed to this success. The significant surge in collections also raises expectations for the next wave of GST reforms. These reforms could potentially address working capital blockages, streamline tax rates, ease ITC restrictions and implement sector-specific solutions to tackle existing challenges,” said Saurabh Agarwal, tax partner at EY India.

Assam's Kaziranga National Park proactive in dealing with floods

GOLAGHAT/JORHAT (Assam), July 1 (PTI)

WITH worsening flood condition in Assam, rising water levels have impacted more than 43 per cent of the 233 forest camps at Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, an

floods or accidents while crossing the highway.

Floodwaters have submerged a total of 101 forest camps, of which six have been vacated, across Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, according to a flood report.

It said 35 camps in Agoratoli range, 21 in Kaziranga, 10 in Bagori, five in Burhapahar range and nine in Bokakhat are submerged.

Besides, 21 forest camps in Biswanath Wildlife Division of the national park have been inundated, the report added.

"Kaziranga National Park is well-prepared for the upcoming flood season with comprehensive measures in place to ensure the safety of wildlife, staff and visitors. Continuous monitoring and timely interventions will be prioritised to mitigate the impact of flooding," the report said.

It said that herds of elephants have begun moving towards East Karbi Anglong through Hati Dandi corridor and animal sensors are in place to detect the movement.



official report said on Monday.

As a significant portion of wildlife habitat is now submerged, scores of animals have started crossing the National Highway 715 in search of higher ground towards the southern direction in East Karbi Anglong district. However, no death of animals has been reported as of now due to

Project Nexus

RBI inks pact to link UPI with 4 ASEAN countries

MUMBAI, July 1 (IANS)

RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) on Monday announced that it has now joined Project Nexus with the four ASEAN countries to create a platform to

by the Innovation Hub of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), aims to connect India's UPI (Unified Payments Interface), with the fast payment systems of ASEAN members -- Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. These four countries and India would be the founding members and first-mover nations of this platform, the RBI said.

An agreement to this effect was signed by the BIS and the central banks of the founding countries i.e., Bank Negara Malaysia
(Contd on page 5)



facilitate instantaneous cross-border retail payments.

Nexus, conceptualised