

US regulators rollback net neutrality rules

WASHINGTON: US regulators today voted to rollback "net neutrality" rules that require internet providers to treat all traffic equally. The Federal Communications Commission, in a 3-2 vote, adopted a proposal, by Republican-appointed chairman Indian-American Ajit Pai. The critics say the move is against the interest of the consumers and favours big corporate companies. By doing so, the Republican-majority commission has reversed the 2015 "net neutrality" rule of the previous Obama Administration, which mandated upon all internet service providers to treat all traffic equally, without blocking or slowing content. The move restores the longstanding bipartisan light-touch regulatory framework that has fostered rapid Internet growth, openness, and freedom for nearly 20 years, the FCC said in a statement after the voting. Following detailed legal and economic analysis, as well as extensive examination of comments from consumers and stakeholders, the Commission reversed the FCC's 2015 heavy-handed utility-style regulatory framework for broadband Internet access service, which imposed substantial costs on the entire Internet ecosystem, it said. In place of that heavy-handed framework, the FCC is returning to the traditional light-touch framework that was in place until 2015, it asserted. (PTI)

Over 26% land acquired for Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway

NAGPUR, DEC 15 /- The Maharashtra government has so far acquired 26.64 per cent land, of total 9,330.04 hectares, for the proposed Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway, called the 8 mruddhi Corridor. Maharashtra PWD, CMA, (public undertakings), Eknath Shinde, informed this in a written reply in the state Legislative Assembly here on Saturday. He also said that Rs 46,000 crore is the total cost of the project, of which Rs 10,000 crore is required for land acquisition alone. Shinde was responding to a question raised by Congress MLA Amin Patel in the state Legislative Assembly. "The state government has acquired 26.64 per cent land out of the total 9,330.04 hectares required for the project. Rs 1,631.82 crore have been spent so far on the land acquisition", he said. According to the minister, the state-owned agencies, such as MIDC, SRA, MHADA and MMRDA have made a provision of Rs 2,400 crore loan to MSRDC, which is implementing the Saurashtra Corridor project.

News In Brief

Sanofi India appoints N Rajaram as MD

MUMBAI, DEC 15 /- Sanofi India has elevated N Rajaram as the managing director, effective January 1 and he will be succeeding Shalish Ayyangar who will take up a regional role within Sanofi Asia. Rajaram joined Sanofi in February 2014 and was appointed as whole-time director in October 2015, the company said in a statement on Friday. Under Rajaram's leadership, Sanofi has doubled its diabetes business and established a foothold in the consumer healthcare sector.

Nokia, IIT-Delhi join hands

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /- Telecom giant Nokia and Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi (IIT-Delhi) have entered into a partnership to collaborate on futuristic technologies like data science, analytics and artificial intelligence (AI). The collaboration focuses on making service delivery pre-emptive and more reliable based on data science, analytics and AI, a Nokia release said. (PTI)



Airbus Chief Operating Officer Fabrice Bregier and Singapore Airlines CEO Goh Choo Phong pose for photos before a tour of Singapore Airlines' A380 fitted with newly launched cabin products at Changi Airport in Singapore

ICAI bags rise in campus placements



EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA, DEC 15 /- The Institute of Cost Accountants of India (ICAI) announced that the campus placements for the session June 2017 are significantly on the up compared to last year's placement figures. The Institute has recently organized campus placement drive in four regions for June 2017 batch in the month of October-November consecutively at Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai. An overwhelming response from the recruiters has been found this time and most of the qualified CMAs are placed through this initiative of the Institute. This year, companies like ITC, Larsen & Touber, NDC, PWC, CPCC, Vedanta, Tata Group, Deloitte, Genpact and others participated in the Campus Placement drive. The highest salary package offered this year is Rs. 12 lakhs per annum and the average CTC offered are around 6.5 lakhs per annum. More than 50% of the candidates were selected in the top salary bracket of Rs. 7 lakhs - Rs. 12 lakhs per annum. CMA Sanjay Gupta, President of the Institute said, "We are very much pleased with the kind of response we have received from corporates across India. We expect the number will further go up in the next session with the participation of more and more MNCs. The awareness level is also on the rise as more and more students are considering Cost Management Accounting as a career option. This is in turn will help to bridge the demand-supply gap. Salary packages are also expected to go up as this gap gets minimalised." CMA Manas Kumar Thakur, Immediate Past President, Chairman, Training & Education Facilities, Placement Committee and Board of Advanced Studies, ICAI, "With global economic activities shifting eastward through the Government of India initiatives, such as Make in India, Digital India, Start Up India, Smart Cities, India occupies a unique and special place today. It is estimated that by 2022, India will have the maximum number of work age population (population between the ages 15 and 59) in the world. This population bulge is a huge manpower reservoir and would definitely contribute to the economic growth of the nation. The Institute is also working in the same direction."

Govt raises import duty on items including smartphone, TV

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /- The government on Friday hiked import duty on smartphones, television sets, microwave, LED lamps and some other electronic items in a bid to protect domestic manufacturers. Imported smartphones will cost more with customs duty on them being increased to 15 per cent from nil now, the Finance Ministry said in a notification. The move will impact telecom companies that were sourcing cheap smartphones to offer bundled services to customers in a bid to capture market. Customs duty on television sets has been doubled to 20 per cent. LED lamps would now be charged with a 20 per cent import duty, the notification issued yesterday night said. The tax on import of microwave ovens too has been doubled to 20 per cent, the notification said. Customs duty on video recording equipment as well as TV cameras has been increased to 15 per cent from current 10 per cent. Import duty on set top boxes has been doubled to 20 per cent. Also, customs duty on lamps and lighting fittings including searchlights and chandeliers has been doubled to 20 per cent while the same on electricity meters has been increased from 10 per cent to 15 per cent, the notification said. (PTI)

Exports jump 30.55% to \$ 26.19b in Nov; trade deficit widens

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /- India's exports rose 30.55 per cent to USD 26.19 billion in November, reversing the decline witnessed in October, helped by robust growth in shipments of gems and jewellery and engineering goods. Exports had witnessed a decline of 1.12 per cent to USD 23 billion in October this year, retreating from a six-month high growth rate in September. On year-on-year basis, the country's outward shipments in November 2016 stood at USD 20.06 billion. Imports too grew 19.61 per cent to USD 40 billion in November from USD 33.46 billion in the same month last year, the Commerce Ministry data released on Friday showed. The trade deficit widened to USD 13.82 billion against USD 13.39 billion in November 2016. Meanwhile, gold imports dropped by 25.96 per cent to USD 3.26 billion last month. Oil imports and non-oil imports in November grew 39.14 per cent and 14.57 per cent to USD 9.55 billion and USD 30.47 billion respectively. Cumulative exports during April-November 2017-18 increased by 12.01 per cent to USD 196.48 billion, while imports grew 21.85 per cent to USD 296.45 billion, leaving a trade deficit of nearly USD 100 billion. In November, gems and jewellery, drugs and pharmaceuticals, organic and inorganic chemicals and engineering exports grew by 32.69 per cent, 13.39 per cent, 54.28 per cent and 43.76 per cent, respectively. (PTI)

US tech firms, consumer advocacy groups oppose net neutrality vote

WASHINGTON, DEC 15 /- Technology firms and consumer advocacy groups in the US are planning to challenge telecom regulators' decision to back a proposal by its Indian-American chairman Ajit Pai to rollback Obama-era net neutrality rules aimed at ensuring a free and open internet. The Federal Communications Commission, in a 3-2 vote, yesterday adopted a proposal by Republican-appointed chairman Pai. The action reversed the agency's 2015 decision, during the previous Obama administration, to have stronger oversight over broadband providers. The agency scrapped regulations that prohibited broadband providers from blocking websites or charging for higher-quality service or certain content. The federal government will also no longer regulate high-speed internet delivery as if it were a utility, like phone service. The critics say the move is against the interest of the consumers and favours big corporate companies. Pai and others in favour of the decision on the entire internet ecosystem would spur innovation, and that the Federal Trade Commission would have the authority to sue providers who abuse competition on the web. Yesterday's decision restores the longstanding, bipartisan light-touch regulatory framework that has fostered rapid Internet growth, openness, and freedom for nearly 20 years, the FCC said in a statement after the voting. Following detailed legal and economic analysis, as well as extensive examination of comments from consumers and stakeholders, the Commission reversed the FCC's 2015 heavy-handed utility-style regulation of broadband Internet access service, which imposed substantial costs on the entire Internet ecosystem, it said. In place of that heavy-handed framework, the FCC is returning to the traditional light-touch framework that was in place until 2015, it asserted. Moreover, the FCC also adopted robust transparency requirements that will empower consumers as well as facilitate effective government oversight of broadband providers conduct, it said.

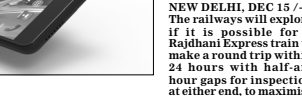
In particular, the FCC's action has restored the jurisdiction of the Federal Trade Commission to act when broadband providers engage in anticompetitive, unfair, or deceptive acts or practices," the federal commission said. It will take weeks for the repeal to go into effect, but the political and legal fight started immediately. Numerous Democrats called for a bill that would reestablish the rules, and several Democratic state attorneys general said they would file a suit to stop the change. Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi said the FCC's radical, partisan decision to dismantle net neutrality "strikes a stunning blow" to the promise of a free and open internet.

Govt okays Rs 2,600cr package for leather, footwear industry



NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /- The government Friday approved a Rs 2,600 crore special package for employment generation in the leather and footwear sector, which has the potential to generate 3.24 lakh jobs in three years and assist in the formalisation of 2 lakh jobs. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi here. The package involves implementation of central scheme Indian Footwear, Leather & Accessories Development Programme, with an expenditure of Rs 2,600 crore during 2017-18 to 2019-20. "The scheme would lead to development of infrastructure for the leather sector; address environmental concerns specific to the leather sector and facilitate additional investments, job creation and production," the government said. Moreover, the enhanced tax incentive would attract large-scale investments in the sector and reforms in labour laws in view of seasonal nature of the sector will support economic growth. The package has the potential to generate 3.24 lakh jobs in three years and assist in the formalisation of 2 lakh jobs as cumulative impact in footwear, leather and accessories sector. (PTI)

Kult launches "Ambition" Rlysto explore if a Rajdhani train can make round trip daily



EOI CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /- Kult, telecom brand, announced the launch of a budget smartphone, Kult Ambition. Priced at Rs 5,999, the device is available on Amazon.in. With multiple highly advanced features, the device is designed to offer best in class mobility experience to its consumers. Kult Ambition comes with a 5-inch ON-CELL HD IPS display with 720 x 1280 pixel resolution that will enhance the user experience allowing them to immerse themselves in the large screen. It is powered by a MediaTek MTK6737 SoC backed with 3GB RAM and offers a 32GB internal storage with external memory expandable up to 32GB via microSD card. Commenting on the launch, Nitesh Gupta, Director, New Product Development, Kult, said, "Ambition is our third launch within this quarter and is representative of the buoyant consumer sentiment around the brand Kult. We are dedicated to offer products that promise high reliability and compelling experience at a competitive price, and Kult Ambition is best suited to the needs of Indian youth who is a 24x7 digital native seeking to serve all his personal, entertainment and information needs through his device." "Kult will continue to bring innovative products at competitive and affordable price points at a pace that is aligned to the needs of the young consumer. Further, our endeavor will be to provide best quality service to our customers through our widespread network of 750+ service centers across India. We believe our unique products, compelling pricing, feature rich products coupled with our service strength will provide consumers the best overall ownership experience." He further added, "Noor Patel, Director Category Management, Amazon India, said, "At Amazon.in, we are continuously striving towards adding new selection for our customers across categories. Reiterating our long-term commitment with Kult, we are delighted to offer our customers exclusive access to Ambition".

Rlysto explore if a Rajdhani train can make round trip daily

NEW DELHI, DEC 15 /- The railways will explore if it is possible for a Rajdhani Express train to make a round trip within 24 hours with half-an-hour gaps for inspection at either end, to maximise utilisation of such rakes. This is one of the ideas that will be discussed at a day-long conclave -- "Sampark, Samanyav evam Samvad" (connection, coordination and conversation) -- here on December 16. The meet, to be attended by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal and senior officials, will chalk out a road map for the national transporter through coordination of new technologies in the meeting includes discussion on structural and cultural reforms and changes in processes and ways to increase market share and revenue of the railways by 40 per cent in freight transportation by 2022. The meeting will also deliberate on how to improve punctuality, customer safety, aesthetic and safety in railway operations. The senior railway officials are also mandated to come up with ideas and plans to device a procurement process which would enable production of new technologies in a short period of time. The meeting will address the issue of "happiness" among employees and find out what kind of incentives can be given to motivate them? "Some of the decisions on various issues listed for discussion will be taken on that day," said a senior official. (PTI)

Indian jails over-crowded with poor hygiene: Mallya's defence

LONDON, DEC 15 /- Vijay Mallya's defence team on Friday based prison service expert to claim that jails in India are over-crowded with poor hygiene as the defence and counter Indian government assurances on how the liquor baron would be treated in jail on being extradited to India. Mallya's barrister, Clare Montgomery, deposed Dr Alan Mitchell before the Westminster Magistrates' Court in an attempt to highlight that conditions in Barrack 12 of Mumbai Central Prison on Arthur Road, where the 61-year-old businessman is to be held, were "far from satisfactory". Dr Mitchell, former head of healthcare at the Scottish Prison Service and an elected member of the European Council's European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, said the assurances given by the Indian

government were "general in nature" to state that jail conditions would be "adequate for Mallya." But adequate in the eyes of whom, "Mitchell questioned. His evidence relied heavily upon his past inspection visit to Alipore Jail in Kolkata and also on an account of the prison conditions in Puzhal Jail in Chennai. From six former British soldiers referred to as the Chennai Six who have recently been released, Mitchell's account of his telephone conversation with one of the six men, identified only as Prisoner A in court, seemed to have caught the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), arguing on behalf of the Indian government, off guard. The CPS has questioned the "unusual" nature of the second-hand narration of an anonymous prisoner's account of an Indian jail on the "other side of India". CPS barrister

Mark Summers also pointed out that Prisoner A's use of the term "adequate" to bring a compensation claim against the UK and Indian authorities. As part of his second-hand account, Mitchell related gruesome details of open defecation, rats, cockroaches and snakes that the Chennai Six allegedly contended within their prison cell in Chennai. "In one instance, he recalls the deputy superintendent of the jail beating a prisoner with a lathi, for what appeared to be no apparent reason." Mitchell said in his cross-examination, Summers made a reference to how the same prison expert's testimony had proved critical in the extradition case of alleged bookie Sanjeev Chawla because he was to be lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail, which "suffered overcrowding, poor conditions, violence and ill treatment". (PTI)

