

CURRENT AFFAIRS
Weekly Capsule
18th January to 24th January 2021

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Weekly Current Affairs

(18th January 2021 to 24th January 2021)

IMPORTANT DAYS

Parakram Diwas celebrations mark 125th birth anniversary year of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on January 23

The nation paid homage to the great freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary. It was on this day in 1897; Neta Ji was born in Cuttack, Odisha. The day is being celebrated as Parakram Diwas. The year-long celebrations to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary year of Netaji also started on 23 January. The Government has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of Netaji as 'Parakram Diwas' every year. Tourism Ministry has organised Dekho Apna Desh webinar on relevance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the 21st Century.

National Girl Child Day being observed on January 24

The National Girl Child Day is being observed on January 24. The day is observed for focusing attention on ensuring equal opportunities to the girl child. Narendra Modi Government has given a lot of emphasis on the issue of girl child's education of and declining Child Sex Ratio. In January 2015, Narendra Modi government had launched Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme with an objective to address the issue of declining Child Sex Ratio. Mr Modi had said that there is an urgent need to reduce the increasing imbalance amongst the girl and boy child for the betterment of the society.

STATES IN NEWS

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar inaugurates state's first Bird Festival 'Kalrav'

The Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar inaugurated the first-ever bird festival of the state, 'Kalrav', at Naji-Nakti bird sanctuary, located in Jamui district.



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3-day Ports Review Meeting named 'Chintan Baithak' to be held at Gujarat

A three-day Ports Review Meeting named 'Chintan Baithak' will be held at Gujarat from 21st to 23rd of this month.

- It will be chaired by Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya.
- The Chintan Baithak will include sessions on exploring new vistas of urban transportation, effective implementation of SAROD-Ports and issues related to International Arbitrations.

India's first Labour Movement Museum to be set up in Kerala

The first-of-its-kind Labour Movement Museum, in India, would be launched in Alappuzha in Kerala, to showcase the history of the world labour movement.

- The museum will portray the growth of the world labour movement and the history of Kerala's labour movement, through pictures, documents and other exhibits.

Karnataka CM Yediyurappa launches Avalokana software

Chief Minister of Karnataka B. S. Yediyurappa launched Avalokana software that will enable the government to access data on sanctions and expenditures incurred by 39 departments on 1,800 programmes implemented by them.

- Avalokana software is a transparent e-governance tool that will provide Assembly constituency-wise release of Government grants and allocations under different development programmes.
- The software provides focused eye view on Sustainable Development goals, Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan, Tribal Sub-plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

1st consignment of green peas and white brinjals shipped on direct flight from Varanasi to Sharjah

The first consignment of green peas and white brinjals of Varanasi has been shipped from direct flight from Varanasi to Sharjah.

- The shipment was flagged-off by Dr. M Angamuthu, Chairman of agricultural and processed food products export development authority, APEDA and Deepak Agrawal, Divisional Commissioner Varanasi.
- The consignment of One metric ton fresh vegetables is the first one to be transported from Lal Bahadur Shastri International airport of Varanasi to Sharjah directly.



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Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani announces 'Horticulture Development Mission'

Chief Minister of Gujarat Vijay Rupani announced the 'Horticulture Development Mission' (Bagayat Vikas Mission).

- Under this mission, the waste land of the government will be given on 30-year lease for farming of horticulture and medicinal crops.
- As per an estimate, the government has about 50,000 non-cultivated land waste lands. The government intends to convert this land into cultivation.
- A list of land blocks for land allotment in transparent manner will be released on I-Khedut portal.
- The government will also offer priority assistance to lease owners for drip-sprinkler fountains.

Sikkim government has decided to set up a Film City Complex in the vicinity of the capital city of Gangtok

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh was briefed about the proposed Film City in Sikkim by a team of senior officers of the State government of Sikkim. As per the proposal, Sikkim government has decided to set up a Film City Complex in the vicinity of the capital city of Gangtok. The Film City Complex envisages an acting school, different kinds of film sets as well as artificial sets, ramps for fashion events, miniplex cinema, amphitheatre, mobile theatre, concert halls, recreation park, editing studios, and sound studios.

Meghalaya celebrates its 49th Statehood day in Shillong

Meghalaya celebrated its 49th Statehood day on 21 January 2021 at U Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong with an array of cultural programs in a subtle manner unlike yesteryears. The State gained its Statehood day on this very day in 1972 under the North Eastern Areas (Re-organisation) Act, 1971 along with Manipur and Tripura.

Karnataka tops in India Innovation Index-2020

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister Dr. C. N. Aswatha Narayana has expressed happiness over the top ranking received by Karnataka in the India Innovation Index-2020 released by Niti Aayog. He has said that the state could retain the top position despite the new indicators that were added as parameters.

India's largest multi-model logistic park to set up in Ahmedabad

India's largest multi-model logistic park will come up at VirochanNagar near Sanand in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat. A Memorandum of Understanding-MoU was signed between the Gujarat Government and Adani Port and SEZ Ltd. in the presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Gandhinagar. The multi-model logistic park will be set up with an estimated investment of Rs 50,000 crore. It will have potential to generate direct and indirect employment for 25,000 persons.



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Gujarat govt. announces to set up new industrial estates under Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation

Gujarat State Government has announced to set up new industrial estates under the Gujarat Industrial Development Corporation-GIDC. It will be set up over 987 hectares of land across eight districts. Among these new estates, Jalotra in Banaskantha district will cover the marble cutting and polishing industry. Shekhpat in Jamnagar district will house brass and ceramic units, while Kadjodra in Gandhinagar district will cover food and agro industry. Patan will have auto ancillary units, while Nagalpar in Rajkot district will cover the medical devices industry. Anand and Mahisagar districts will have industrial estates for engineering industries.

WIPRO group gears up to act as knowledge partner of Madhya Pradesh govt

WIPRO group is all set to act as knowledge partner of Madhya Pradesh. Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, while holding a discussion with Mr Azim Premji of WIPRO through video conference, informed that the company has taken initiative for establishment of a university in the State. The Wipro Group will also set up a Software Development Centre in Bhopal. The Chief Minister said, such centres will go a long way in providing more opportunities to the youth in the Information Technology sector. Azim Premji Foundation has been allotted 50 acres of land for the proposed university in Bhopal.

India's longest Road Arch Bridge inaugurated in Meghalaya

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma inaugurated India's longest road arch bridge "Wahrew Bridge" at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya on 22 January 2021. The arch bridge has been constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 49.395 crore under the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) of the Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER).

Uttar Pradesh celebrates its foundation day

Uttar Pradesh is celebrating its foundation day on 24 January. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the Sthapna Diwas at a gala at Awadh Shilpgram in capital city Lucknow. The programmes of foundation day programme will continue for next three days. Various events and programmes are being observed on this occasion to access the state. The theme of Uttar Pradesh Divas is 'Self-reliant Uttar Pradesh : Women, youths, Farmers: Development of all, Honour to All.' Sabka Vikas Sabka Samman '.

UP becomes first state to have 2 airstrips on expressways for landing, take-off of fighter planes

With the completion of the construction of the 3,300-metre-long airstrip near Kurebhar on Purvanchal Expressway, Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country with two airstrips on expressways to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes. One airstrip is on Lucknow-Agra Expressway while the other is on Purvanchal Expressway. Airstrips on expressways are designed to facilitate emergency landing and take-off of fighter planes.



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UP govt announces free coaching classes for NEET, JEE, UPSC and other exams

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath announced a statewide free coaching facility programme to help students prepare for various competitive examinations. Named 'Abhyudaya', the free coaching facility will start from upcoming Basant Panchmi, the day of worship to the goddess of learning, Saraswati. The classes will be held physically as well as virtually and guidance will be given for various examinations be it the NEET, IITJEE, NDA, CDS or UPSC examinations.

Union Tourism Minister inaugurates IISM branch in Kargil

In Kargil of Ladakh Union territory, the Union Tourism Minister Mr Prahlad Singh Patel has inaugurated a branch of Indian Institute of Skiing and Mountaineering (IISM). The Minister participated in various events to celebrate the National Tourism Day with National Events of Adventure Tourism, (NEAT) in Kargil district.

NATIONAL NEWS

India's first pull-push Rajdhani Express to run between Mumbai to New Delhi

Indian Railways first Rajdhani Express which operates on the push-pull technology will run daily from Mumbai to New Delhi

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar inaugurates Swachhata Pakhwada organised by NCC at India Gate

Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar inaugurated Swachhata Pakhwada organised by National Cadet Corps, NCC at India Gate. The theme of this Swachhata Pakhwada is 'Clean India, Green India, Yeh Hai Mera Dream India'. The ceremony culminated with the flagging off a Plog Run by the Defence Secretary. During the Swachhata Pakhwada the NCC cadets will keep Rajpath clean for the Republic Day Parade - 2021 by spreading awareness through displaying banners, distribution of pamphlets and showcasing Swachhata through Nukkad Nataks.

Birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to be celebrated as 'Parakram Diwas' every year

The Union Government has decided to celebrate the birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose as 'Parakram Diwas' on 23rd of January every year. The Ministry of Culture said in a notification that the decision has been taken to honour and remember Netaji's indomitable spirit and selfless service to the nation. It said, the people fondly remember Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's unparalleled contribution to the nation on his 125th Birth Anniversary.



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External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar hosts lunch-discussion with High Commissioners and Ambassadors of 8 African countries

External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar today hosted a lunch-discussion with High Commissioners and Ambassadors of Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Botswana, Burundi, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia. Dr Jaishankar said the conversation covered COVID recovery, vaccines, air travel and digital experiences. The Minister said, he also spoke about India's current priorities and challenges and assured them of India's interest in an early India Africa Forum Summit.

TRIFED and IFFDC enter into MoU to work together for tribal livelihood generation

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and Indian Farm Forestry Development Co-operative Ltd (IFFDC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together for tribal livelihood generation.

KVIC and Ministry of Tribal Affairs sign MoUs for purchase of Khadi fabric for tribal students and for PMEGP

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and the Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed two Memorandum of Understanding- MoUs today for purchase of Khadi fabric for tribal students, and on partnering as an implementing agency for Prime Minister Employment Generation Program (PMEGP).

Indian Railways renames iconic Howrah-Kalka Mail as 'Netaji Express'

Indian Railways in a tribute to freedom fighter Subhas Chandra Bose who is also known as 'Netaji' has decided to rename the Howrah-Kalka Mail as 'Netaji Express'.

- The train first operated in the year 1866 and it has been in service of the nation for more than 150 years.
- The Howrah-Kalka Mail is one of the oldest running trains at present in the Indian Railways network.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju assigned additional charge of Ministry of AYUSH

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju has been assigned the additional charge of the Ministry of AYUSH.

- In a Press Communique, President's Secretariat said, during the hospitalization and treatment of AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik following a road accident, his portfolio related to the Ministry of AYUSH has been temporarily assigned to Mr Rijiju in addition to his existing portfolios.

Road Transport and Highways Ministry and DRDO sign MoU for technical exchange on sustainable geo-hazard management

Road Transport and Highways Ministry and Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO signed a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen collaboration in the field of technical exchange and co-operation on sustainable geo-hazard management.



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- The MoU was signed by Secretary Ministry of Road and Transport Giridhar Aramane and Secretary DRDO Dr Satieesh Reddy.
- It has been agreed that both will co-operate in the areas of mutual benefit including, conceptual planning of integrated avalanche and landslide protection schemes for all weather connectivity in snow bound areas of the country.

Ministry of Minority Affairs to organise 24th Hunar Haat in Lucknow

Ministry of Minority Affairs will organise the 24th Hunar Haat at Avadh Shilpgram, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from 22nd January to 4th February with the theme of Vocal for Local.

- Artisans and craftsmen from 31 States and Union Territories of the country will participate in the Hunar Haat.
- About 500 artisans, craftsmen and culinary experts from different States including Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Chattisgarh, Jammu-Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal will display and sell their exquisite handmade products.

Union Cabinet approves MoU between India, Uzbekistan for cooperation in field of Solar Energy

The Union Cabinet approved signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Uzbekistan for cooperation in the field of Solar Energy.

- The main area of work under the MoU is to identify research, demonstration and initiation of pilot projects between the National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, India and the International Solar Energy Institute, Uzbekistan.
- The research and cooperation will primarily focus in the areas of Solar Photovoltaic, Storage Technologies and Transfer of Technologies.
- Based on mutual agreement, both parties would work for implementation and deployment of pilot projects in International Solar Alliance (ISA) member countries.

Cabinet approves investment of over Rs 5200 crore for 850 MegaWatt Hydro Power Project in J&K

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the investment of over Rs 5200 crore for 850 megawatt Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project located on Chenab river in Kishtwar in Jammu and Kashmir.

- This will be a new Joint Venture Company (JVC) of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and Jammu with equity contribution of 51 per cent and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDC) with 49 per cent.



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NITI Aayog releases 2nd edition of India Innovation Index-2020

NITI Aayog today released the second edition of the India Innovation Index-2020 .

- The index demonstrates the government's continued commitment towards transforming the country into an innovation-driven economy.
- In the India Innovation Index-2020, the States and Union Territories have been divided into 17 Major States, 10 North-East and Hill States and nine Union Territories and Small States for effectively comparing their performance.
- In the 2020 ranking, Karnataka retained its first position in the Major States category. Maharashtra moved one position higher and stood at 2nd spot while Tamil Nadu slide to 3rd position.
- In the North East and Hill States category, Himachal Pradesh stands at first position followed by Uttarakhand and Manipur. Delhi stands at the first position while Chandigarh retained its second spot in the Union Territories and small States category.

Cabinet approves Rs 5,282 cr investment for Ratle Hydro Power Project in J&K

The Cabinet has given its approval for the investment of over 5200 crore rupees for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric (HE) Project located on river Chenab, in Kishtwar in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This will be a new Joint Venture Company (JVC) of National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Ltd (JKSPDC) with equity contribution of 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates 1st small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at Gujarat

Union Minister for Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the first small-scale LNG supply infrastructure of Shell Energy India at its LNG terminal at Hazira in Gujarat. This will now augment Shell's natural gas supply offerings in India to include supply of LNG via trucks. After virtual inauguration, Mr. Pradhan complimented Shell for their efforts in expanding the LNG infrastructure in the country.

Railways finalises tender for Vande Bharat train sets in 'Make in India'

The Indian Railways awarded Hyderabad-based Medha Servo Drives Pvt. Ltd a ₹2,211 crore tender for procurement of Vande Bharat Express or Train 18. The procurement includes a five-year comprehensive annual maintenance contract with the supplier. For the first time, the tender required a minimum 75% local content requirement of the total value of the tender. The contract includes designing and manufacturing propulsion, control and other equipment required for making 44 rakes of Vande Bharat-type train sets.



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Amit Shah launches Ayushman CAPF scheme

Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Ayushman CAPF scheme and said it will benefit around 10 lakh personnel of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel and their family members.

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways signed MoU with IIT Roorkee

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and Indian Institute of Technology, IIT Roorkee signed an MoU in New Delhi for continuation of Ministry of Road Transport and Highways Professorial Chair focusing on research and development, teaching and training in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure. This collaboration of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways with IIT-Roorkee will strengthen Research and Development activities in the Road Sector and the Chair professor is expected to provide leadership in conducting and coordinating research, development and teaching in the area of Development of Highway Infrastructure.

MoS Home G Kishan Reddy inaugurates Special COVID Awareness Campaign in Hyderabad

Union Minister of state for Home G Kishan Reddy today inaugurated Special COVID Awareness Campaign launched in Hyderabad by Press Information Bureau (PIB) and Regional Outreach Bureau (ROB) of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He flagged off 8 Mobile Publicity Vans which will hold multi-media publicity about COVID vaccination in 8 COVID intense districts of Telangana including Hyderabad. The Minister also inaugurated a Photo Exhibition in connection with Parakram Diwas and COVID vaccination.

Dekho Apna Desh webinar organised on relevance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in 21st Century

Tourism Ministry has organised Dekho Apna Desh webinar on relevance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in the 21st Century. The webinar was presented by Chandra Kumar Bose, the Spokesperson and Convener of the Open Platform for Netaji. He has been associated with Netaji Subhas Foundation operating out of Kolkata and London.

Union Minister Arjun Munda Virtually Launches “Shramshakti” Portal for Migrant Workers

The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda launched a National Migration Support Portal “ShramShakti”, during a virtual programme organised at Panjim, Goa, on 22 January, 2021. The portal will help the government in smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers. Shramshakti portal will address the data gap and empower migrant workers who generally migrate in search of employment and income generation. Government would also be able to link the migrant population with the existing Welfare Scheme- under Atam Nirbhar Bharat.

Finance Ministry allocates ₹660 cr additional funds to MP for capex

The finance ministry said it has allocated an additional ₹660 crore to Madhya Pradesh for capital expenditure to undertake citizen-centric reforms. The Finance Ministry has allocated this additional funds to the state for capital expenditure for undertaking the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' reforms,



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Ease of Doing Business reforms, and urban local bodies reforms. The scheme of “Special Assistance to States for capital expenditure” was announced by the Finance Minister on 12th October last year under the AtmaNirbhar Bharat package.

Home Minister Amit Shah attends first BTR Accord Day celebration at Kokrajhar in Assam

Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that due to the efforts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, a new era of development and peace has prevailed in Bodoland Territorial Region. Addressing the opening ceremony of the 1st BTR (Bodoland Territorial Region) Accord Day celebration at Kokrajhar in Assam, the Home minister said that once the region was known for terror and bloodshed, this area will now become the most developed area of the state.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India and Japan sign MoC to promote movement of skilled workers from India to Japan

India and Japan signed a Memorandum of Cooperation, MoC a Basic Framework for Partnership for Proper Operation of the System Pertaining to Specified Skilled Worker (SSW). The MoC was signed by Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla and Ambassador of Japan to India Suzuki Satoshi. The MoC will help to promote the movement of skilled workers from India to Japan. The MoC covers 14 categories of specific skills under which skilled workers from India who meet the skills requirement and Japanese language tests would be eligible for employment in Japan on a contractual basis.

Britain invites PM Modi to attend G7 Summit to be held in June this year

The United Kingdom has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend the G7 Summit as a guest. The G7 Summit is to be held in June this year. The G7, made up of the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the US and the EU, is the only forum where the world's most influential and open societies and advanced economies are brought together for close-knit discussions.

India to give 2 million COVID-19 vaccines as gift to Bangladesh

India will give 2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines as a gift to Bangladesh. This will be in addition to 30 million doses of the vaccine for which a tripartite agreement has been done between Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Serum Institute of India and the government of Bangladesh.

India sends COVID vaccine to Nepal as gift under 'Vaccine Maitri' Initiative

India sent 1 million doses of a COVID vaccine to Nepal as a gift under the 'Vaccine Maitri' Initiative. Nepal health minister Hridayesh Tripathi said the vaccine gifted by India will be given to health workers and other front-line personnel within a week to 10 days.



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Joe Biden sworn in as 46th President of the USA

Joe Biden has taken oath as the 46th President of the United States of America at a scaled-back ceremony in Washington tonight that has been largely stripped of its usual pomp due both to the Coronavirus as well as security concerns.

- After taking oath, 78 year old Biden has become the oldest US President in history.
- His deputy Kamala Harris has sworn in as 49th Vice-President of the country. The daughter of immigrants from Jamaica and India, she will make history as America's first woman and first person with South Asian roots to take the office of the Vice President.
- Joe Biden and Kamala Harris took the oath on the West front of the US Capitol building at 10 PM (Indian Standard Time).

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh holds virtual meeting with Singapore Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a bilateral meeting with Singapore Defence Minister Dr Ng Eng Hen through video conferencing.

- Both sides discussed new areas of potential cooperation and articulated their vision in this direction.
- The Ministers witnessed the Signing of the Implementing Agreement on Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation signed between the Indian Navy and Republic of Singapore Navy.

Joe Biden's speechwriter is Indian-American Vinay Reddy from Telangana

Joe Biden, the new US President delivered his inaugural address laying out the agenda for his administration. Biden's speech writing team who helped him shape the draft is led by an Indian-American, Vinay Reddy, who was a speechwriter for the Biden-Harris campaign and previously served as chief speechwriter when Biden was Vice President in Barack Obama's second term.

India, EU hold their first maritime security dialogue in virtual format

India and the EU have held their first maritime security dialogue in a virtual format. The consultations involved exchanges on developments in maritime security environment, regional cooperation activities, developments of mutual interest and opportunities for cooperation between India and the EU. The EU-India Maritime Dialogue was chaired by Director Joanneke Balfoort on the European Union External Action Service side and Joint Secretary Sandeep Arya on the Indian side.

Israel allows US to deploy Iron Dome missile in Gulf

Israel has agreed to let the US deploy Israeli-made Iron Dome missile defence systems in its military bases in the Persian Gulf, Europe, and elsewhere in Asia, the Haaretz newspaper reported. The systems in the Middle East are intended to defend US forces in the Gulf from attacks by Iran and its proxies. Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd., the Israeli company that developed the system with partners, will open a production line in the US with defence contractor Raytheon Technologies Corp.



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India- Bangladesh hold Joint Steering Committee meeting on power sector

Nineteenth meeting of the Joint Steering Committee on India Bangladesh cooperation in the energy sector was held in Dhaka. The steering committee took stock of the progress of implementation of the decisions taken during the last meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) and Joint Steering Committee (JSC). The meeting also discussed the status of the 1320 MW Maitree Super Thermal Power Project at Rampal. Detailed discussions were held on power trade between India and Bangladesh through various interconnections. The meeting discussed ways for further enhancing the cooperation in the energy sector.

BANKING & FINANCE

As per the reports, Forex intervention by RBI to touch \$93 billion by March

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to spend at least \$20 billion more to support the rupee and increase the forex kitty through the remainder of the financial year, taking its overall forex intervention to \$93 billion, according to a report. The report by the Wall Street brokerage Bank of America Securities also expects the central bank to raise banks' HTM (held-to-maturity) limits of excess government securities by 2% of their books to fund the fiscal deficit if high forex intervention limits its open market operations (OMOs).

Axis Bank launches credit card with health, wellness benefits

Axis Bank, India's third-largest private sector bank, announced the launch of 'AURA', a credit exclusively loaded with several health and wellness benefits for its users. Aimed at health-conscious individuals, these features will be powered by Poshvine and other specialists such as Decathlon, Practo, Fitternity, IndushealthPlus, 1MG etc., to offer a complete and unique health & wellness solution. With Practo, the card will provide up to four free online video consultations per month, with 24*7 access to doctors across all 21 specialties and not just limited to general physicians.

IDFC First Bank to offer interest-free cash on credit cards

IDFC First Bank Ltd seeks to expand its credit card business with two unique offerings, including interest-free cash advances for 48 days and dynamic interest rates on revolving credit. The interest-free cash scheme is a first for the industry and is a feature that the bank is testing, B. Madhivanan, chief operating officer, IDFC First Bank, said in an interview.

Airtel Payments Banks launches 'safe pay' to curb online frauds

Airtel Payments Bank launched a mode of safe digital transactions to protect customers from online frauds, the company said in a statement.



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- Airtel SafePay is an additional wall that will prevent online frauds when customers transact through UPI (unified payment interface) or net-banking using the Airtel Payments Bank.
- The new payment gateway, which is free of cost, will offer protection against phishing, stolen credentials or passwords, and phone cloning

Yes Bank new initiative for MSME: ₹5 crore loan without collateral for startups

To strengthen the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), YES BANK has recently launched YES MSME - an initiative that will facilitate "speedy and easy access to funds" to the MSME sector.

- The bank will provide "curated offerings to address both business and individual needs of MSMEs, nurture new age entrepreneurs and maximise their potential.
- The bank will provide 'curated offerings to address both business and individual needs of MSMEs'.
- YES BizConnect – a collaborative solution to build strong market linkages involving over 700 industry associations will also be offered.

ICICI Bank launches 'InstaFX' mobile app

ICICI Bank today announced the launch of a new mobile application for authorised money changers to help customers of any bank get 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' swiftly.

- 'InstaFX', the app enables the authorised money changers, who are partners of the Bank, to complete the KYC verification and validation of customers digitally and on a real-time basis.
- This facility significantly improves customer convenience as the 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' gets activated swiftly within a few hours, as against the industry practice of up to two-days.
- ICICI Bank is the first bank in the country to offer such facility to money changers.

SEBI penalises HDFC Bank in BRH Wealth Kreators case

The Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has imposed a fine of Rs1 crore for invoking securities pledged by BRH Wealth Kreators in violation of the regulator's interim orders. SEBI said that the bank had extended loan facility to BRH and BRH commodities to the tune of ₹87.75 crore against shares, however, it invoked securities pledged to the extent of ₹158.68 crore without giving any notice to the clients. It has therefore asked HDFC bank to deposit an equivalent amount of ₹158.68 crore along with interest.

RBI imposes ₹2 crore penalty on Standard Chartered Bank

The Reserve Bank imposed a penalty of ₹2 crore on Standard Chartered Bank–India for delays in reporting of frauds to it. The monetary penalty has been imposed on the bank for non-compliance with certain directions contained in the 'Reserve Bank of India (Frauds - Classification and Reporting by commercial banks and select FIs) Directions 2016'.



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RBI proposes graded risk based approach to regulate NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India proposed a four- tier regulatory framework for non-banking finance companies based on systemic importance and potential risk to financial system stability . With this while the RBI has sought to bring the NBFC sector on par with banks, it has also assured that the proposed changes in regulation notwithstanding, NBFCs engaged in niche sectors and geographies will continue to have flexibility in terms of business operations and uniqueness going forward. 4 layers will include NBFC-Base Layer (NBFC-BL) , NBFC -Middle Layer (NBFC ML), NBFC - Upper Layer (NBFC UL) and NBFC - Top Layer (NBFC TL).

RBI Retains SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has retained State Bank of India, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank as domestic systemically important banks (D-SIBs) or banks that are considered as “too big to fail”. The updated list is based on the data collected from banks as on March 31, 2020. The new scheme has been launched for the health of brave CAPF personnel who guard the borders. The National Health Authority (NHA) on Friday said that the scheme is a joint initiative with the Ministry of Home Affairs to provide cashless and paperless medical treatment.

BUSINESS & ECONOMY

Udaan inks pan-India distribution partnership with Hummel

Business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce platform Udaan has signed a pan-India distribution partnership with Danish sportstyle brand, Hummel. As part of this partnership, Hummel will leverage Udaan’s vast distribution network to offer its range of products across the length and breadth of the country. Hummel continues to sponsor clubs and players within handball and football, Everton being one of them.

Amazon India launches startup accelerator programme to boost exports

Amazon India launched Amazon Global Selling Propel (AGSP), its accelerator programme which will help early-stage consumer products startups go global. Amazon India will provide an equity free grant of \$50,000 to each of these startups and has tied up with venture capital firms Sequoia Capital India and Fireside Ventures, who will make follow-on investment in some of these businesses.



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MeitY collaborates with Amazon to set up India's first quantum computing lab

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced a collaboration with Amazon Web Services (AWS) to develop a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in the country. The lab is meant to provide access to the quantum computing development environment for the developer, scientific and academic communities. "Enabling our scientific community with advanced technologies plays a key role towards scientific advancements and learning," said Ajay Sawhney, Secretary, MeitY. Amazon will provide hosting with technical and programmatic support for the lab.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

Rajendra Kumar Bhandari selected for Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society and Dr. Rajendra Kumar Bhandari have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their excellent work in Disaster Management. Union Home Ministry announced the award every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. The award carries a cash prize of 51 lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an institution and five lakh rupees and a certificate in case of an individual.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

PM Narendra Modi appointed as Chairman of Gujarat's Somnath Temple Trust

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been appointed as the new chairman of the Shree Somnath Trust (SST), the religious body which manages and maintains the famous Somnath Temple, situated near Veravalat at Prabhas Patan town of Gir-Somnath district in Gujarat.

- PM Modi is the only second Prime Minister to hold the post, after Prime Minister Morarji Desai.
- Apart from PM Modi, other members of the trust includes: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Veteran BJP leader LK Advani, Harshvardhan Neotia– chairman of Kolkata-based construction major Ambuja Neotia Goup, Pravin Laheri- , retired chief secretary of Gujarat and Jeevan Parmar- retired professor of Sanskrit in Veraval.



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RBL Bank board approves re-appointment of Vishwavir Ahuja as MD and CEO

Vishwavir Ahuja has been re-appointed as the Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Private sector lender, RBL Bank. Ahuja has been appointed for a period of three years, with effect from June 30, 2021 to June 29, 2024.

Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi presents Coal Minister's Award to 3 coal companies in function held in New Delhi

Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi presented Coal Minister's Award to three coal companies of Coal India Limited, Northern Coalfields Limited, Central Coalfields Limited and Western Coalfields Limited in a function held in New Delhi. The award has been instituted to promote best and sustainable practices for coal mining in the country. Mr Joshi also launched 'Project Passion'- the Enterprise Resource Planning of Coal India Limited which will help improve business performance and growth of the company with enhanced data integrity.

Siddhartha Mohanty set to take over as Managing Director of LIC w.e.f Feb 1, 2021

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of Siddhartha Mohanty as the new managing director (MD) of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). He will assume charge with effect from February 1, 2021, till his superannuation on June 30, 2023. He will replace TC Suseel Kumar, who will retire on January 31, 2021.

Justice Gita Mittal appointed new chairperson of BCCC

The board of directors of the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) has appointed Justice Gita Mittal, former Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, as the new chairperson of Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC). Justice Mittal succeeds former Supreme Court Judge, Justice Vikramajit Sen, whose tenure as BCCC chairperson has ended. Having served as the first woman Chief Justice of Jammu & Kashmir High Court, Justice Gita Mittal is also the first woman chairperson of BCCC.

Quantum Advisors announces Piyush Thakkar as CEO and Arvind Chari as CIO

Quantum Advisors has announced that Piyush Thakkar has been elevated to the position of CEO of Quantum Advisors. Piyush was serving as COO of Quantum Advisors. Quantum Advisors has also appointed Arvind Chari as Chief Investment Officer. Arvind was serving as Head - Fixed Income. Both the appointments have come in effect from Jan 1, 2021. Piyush Thakkar was serving as COO of Quantum Advisors. Arvind Chari was serving as Head - Fixed Income.



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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

DRDO successfully conducts captive and release trial of SAAW

DRDO successfully conducted captive and release trials of indigenously developed Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon SAAW from Hawk-I of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) off the Odisha coast. SAAW is indigenously designed and developed by DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI) Hyderabad. This is 125 Kg class smart weapon, capable of engaging ground enemy airfield assets such as radars, bunkers, taxi tracks, and runways etc. up to a range of 100 kilometres.

DEFENCE

DRDO hands over MotorBike Ambulance Rakshita to CRPF

Defence Research and Development Organisation handed over MotorBike Ambulance Rakshita to the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), Delhi-based DRDO laboratory, handed over Rakshita, a bike-based casualty transport emergency vehicle to CRPF today in a ceremony held at CRPF Head Office in New Delhi.

Indian Air Force, French Air and Space Force to conduct bilateral air exercise at Jodhpur

Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force will conduct a bilateral Air exercise, Ex Desert Knight-21 at Air Force Station Jodhpur. French side will participate with Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT), A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and approximately 175 personnel. The Indian Air Force aircraft participating in the exercise will include Mirage 2000, Su-30 MKI, Rafale, IL-78 Flight Refuelling Aircraft, AWACS and AEW&C aircraft.

Five day Indo-French Air exercise, Ex Desert Knight-21 begins in Jodhpur

Indian Air Force and French Air and Space Force are conducting a bilateral Air exercise, Ex Desert Knight-21 in Jodhpur.

- The French side will participate with Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport, A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and approximately 175 personnel.
- The Indian Air Force aircraft participating in the exercise will include Rafale, Mirage 2000, Sukhoi-30 MKI among other aircraft.
- The exercise marks an important milestone in the series of engagements between the two Air forces.
- It is unique as it includes fielding of Rafale aircraft by both sides and is indicative of the growing interaction between the two premier Air Forces.



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Surya Kiran along with Sarang aerobatic team to perform in 13th edition of Aero India show

Indian Aerobatic team of Surya Kiran will perform along with Sarang aerobatic team for the first time in the 13th edition of Aero India show to be held from February 3rd in Bengaluru. The Chief of Air Force station in Bengaluru Air Commodore Shailendra Sood informed that both Surya Kiran and Sarang helicopter aerobatic teams which will come together for the first time to take part in the aerobatics performance during the Aero India Show. He informed that fly past will be arranged twice a day in which 41 Indian and foreign aircrafts will take part.

SPORTS

Khelo India 1st Zaskar Winter Sports Festival begins in Ladakh

Khelo India 1st Zaskar Winter Sports Festival began in Ladakh. Engaging the Youth and opening new vistas of tourism in Zaskar are the main aims of the festival. On 21st January Union Youth Affairs & Sports Minister Kirren Rijju will be inaugurating the Zaskar Winter festival. A series of snow based activities are scheduled for next 13 days in the Snow bound, picturesque remote Zaskar.

Team India creates history; clinches test series against Australia 2-1

India created history by defeating Australia by three wickets in the fourth and final Test at the Gabba in Brisbane and retained the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. India successfully chased the 328-run target to seal the four-match series 2-1.

OBITUARY

Legendary Indian classical musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away

Legendary Indian classical musician and Padma Vibhushan awardee Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan died at his residence in Mumbai. He was 89. He was born on March 3, 1931 in Badaun in Uttar Pradesh. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1991, followed by Padma Bhushan in 2006 and Padma Vibhushan in 2018. In 2003 he was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, the highest Indian recognition given to practicing artistes.

Popular Bhajan singer Narendra Chanchal passed away

Popular Bhajan singer Narendra Chanchal passed away in New Delhi. He was 80.



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World renowned oncologist Dr V Shanta passed away

Dr. V. Shanta, the world renowned oncologist passed away due to brief illness in Chennai. She was 94. Dr. Shanta is the Chairperson of Adyar Cancer Centre. She joined the hospital in 1955 as a trainee and went on to become the Head of the Institution which expanded far and wide to deal with the deadly disease in a more precise manner. Heading the institute, she was also instrumental in opting for international joint ventures to improve the quality of affordable treatment for patients.

Malayalam actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri passed away

Veteran Malayalam actor Unnikrishnan Namboothiri has passed away while contracting COVID-19. He was 98. Unnikrishnan made his acting debut in 1996 with Desadanam. However, he became a household name among the Malayalam film audience for his performance as a witty grandfather in Kalyanaraman (2002).



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