

Awards and Honours

Name	Award Name	Extra Information
Bhawana Kanth	Become 1st woman fighter pilot at R-Day parade	Flight lieutenant Bhawana Kanth will become the 1st woman fighter pilot to take part in the Republic Day parade. She will be a part of the Indian Air Force's tableau in the 2021 Republic Day Parade
AIIMS Bhubaneswar	Kayakalp Award for 3rd time	The All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Bhubaneswar has proved its mettle once again for promoting cleanliness, hygiene and creating sustainable practices in public health facilities by winning the Kayakalp Award Scheme.
Biswajit Chatterjee	'Indian Personality of the Year' award at IFFI	Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar announced veteran actor, director and singer Biswajit Chatterjee as the recipient of the 'Indian Personality of the Year' award.
Bhawana Kanth	Become 1st woman fighter pilot at R-Day parade	She will be a part of the Indian Air Force's tableau in the 2021 Republic Day Parade that will showcase mock-ups of the light combat helicopter, light combat aircraft, and the Sukhoi-30 fighter plane.
Nikhil Srivastava	Joint winner of Michael and Sheila Held Prize	Nikhil Srivastava, a young Indian mathematician, has been named winner of the prestigious 2021 Michael and Sheila Held Prize along with two others for solving long-standing questions on the Kadison-Singer problem and on Ramanujan graphs. Sri
Shyam Srinivasan	Business Standard Banker of the Year	The award was given for his bank's consistent healthy performance at a time when most of its peers witnessed large stress on asset quality, registered losses, or even invited regulatory actions.

CURRENT AFFAIRS DAILY DIGEST – JANUARY 2021

Rajendra Kumar Bhandari	Subhash Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar 2021	The award carries a cash prize of Rs 51 lakh and a certificate for an institution and Rs 5 lakh and a certificate in case of an individual.
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Appointments

Name	Designation	Extra Information
Umesh Sinha	Deputy election commissioner	Sinha, a 1986-batch IAS officer (retired) is at present serving as secretary-general in the commission.
Suneet Sharma	Chairman & CEO of Railway Board	The appointments committee of the Cabinet has approved Suneet Sharma appointment as Chairman & CEO of Railway Board, Ministry of Railways and ex-officio Principal Secretary to Government of India.
Soma Mondal	Chairman of Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)	She is the first-ever women-head of the body. She replaces Anil Kumar Chaudhary, who superannuated on 31 December 2020. She joined SAIL in 2017 as the director (commercial).
Ashish Pethe	All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) – Chairman	Saiyam Mehra as vice chairman for a period of two years. Pethe has been closely associated with GJC and was the Zonal Chairman West, which he will continue even after this new position.
Sanjay Kapoor	All India Chess Federation president	Sanjay Kapoor was elected president of the All India Chess Federation (AICF) while Bharat Singh Chauhan retained the secretary's post. Kapoor, representing Uttar Pradesh Chess Association, defeated incumbent PR Venketrama Raja in a close contest.
Pankaj Mithal	Chief Justice (CJ) - High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh	Justice Pankaj Mithal has been appointed as the new Chief Justice (CJ) of the Common High Court for the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh in Jammu on January 04, 2021.
Judge Merrick Garland	U.S. attorney general	He serves as a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, one of 13 federal appeals courts.
Arup Kumar Goswami	Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court	Justice Goswami was transferred from the Sikkim High Court a few days ago. He replaced J.K. Maheswari.

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Alex Ellis	British high commissioner to India	Alexander Ellis has been appointed British high commissioner to India and will take up the key role later this month.
Karan Bajwa	Head Google Cloud in Asia Pacific	He will lead all regional revenue and go-to-market operations for Google Cloud, including on Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and Google Workspace. He succeeds Rick Harshman who leaves the organisation for a new opportunity.
Lt Gen Shantanu Dayal	Deputy Chief of Army Staff	He will take the place of Lt Gen SS Hasabnis who superannuated on December 31 as soon as his replacement arrives.
JK Maheshwari	Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court	Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari was sworn in as the new Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court. Governor Ganga Prasad administered the oath of office to Justice Maheshwari during a function held in Raj Bhavan.
Sudhanshu Dhulia	Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court	Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia appointed as Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court informed the Ministry of Law and Justice.
Raj Iyer	U.S. Army's first CIO	Indian-American Dr Raj Iyer has taken over as the first Chief Information Officer of the US Army, after the Pentagon created the position in July 2020.
Hima Kohli	1st Woman Chief Justice of Telangana High Court	The senior-most judge of Delhi High Court, Justice Hima Kohli has been appointed as the new Chief Justice of Telangana High Court. She is the first woman to be sworn in as CJ of Telangana HC.
Abhishek Yadav	First deputy general secretary of All India Football Federation (AIFF)	The 40-year-old former international, who has played with the likes of Bhaichung Bhutia, Sunil Chhetri, Mahesh Gawli and Climax Lawrence, has been serving as national team's director since January 2018.

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Kiren Rijiju	Additional charge of Ayush Ministry	Ministry for Sports and Youth Affairs, Kiren Rijiju has been given the additional charge of the Ayush Ministry. He will hold the fort till Shripad Yesso Naik recovers from an accident.
Joe Biden	46th US President	United States President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris will be sworn in as the 46th President and 49th Vice-President of the United States.
Jay Shah	BCCI's Official Representative on ICC Board	Jay Shah has been named as the official representative of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) for the International Cricket Council (ICC) Board meetings. Shah is the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
Sadyr Japarov	Presidential election in Kyrgyzstan	Mr Japarov, who served time in jail for taking a rival hostage, will also have sweeping new presidential powers after voters by a similar margin opted to amend the constitution in a referendum.
Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw	Vice Chairman of US-India Business Council	Biocon Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has been named as the new vice-chair of the US-India Business Council (USIBC). Shaw will be one of the three vice-chairs on the USIBC's board of directors.
Pat Gelsinger	Chief Executive Officer – Intel	Gelsinger will also join the Intel board of directors upon assuming the role. He will succeed Bob Swan, who will remain CEO until Feb. 15.
Sandeep Aggarwal	Chairman - Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC)	Aggarwal, the Managing Director and Promoter of Delhi-based Paramount Communications, will take over from Shyamal Ghosh, ex-Telecom Secretary.
Garima Verma	Digital director in Office of the First Lady	Incoming First Lady, Jill Biden has named Indian-American Garima Verma as her digital director and Michael LaRosa press secretary, the Biden transition team has announced.

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PM Modi	President of Somnath Temple Trust	Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become the President of Somnath Temple Trust, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said.
Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw	Vice – Chairman : US-India Business Council (USIBC)	The three new appointees will now work with USIBC President Nisha Biswal and the Council’s policy directors, for strengthening US-India commercial relationship for the future.
Avril Haines	US’ 1st Woman Director of National Intelligence	The former deputy CIA director will become a core member of Biden’s security team, overseeing agencies that make up US’ intelligence community.
Rajiv Lochan	Sundaram Finance - MD	Sundaram Finance Ltd has made top-level changes as the current managing director T.T. Srinivasaraghavan will be retiring on March 31, 2020.
Joe Biden	46th US President	United States President-elect Joe Biden and his deputy Kamala Harris will be sworn in as the 46th President and 49th Vice-President of the United States.
Kiren Rijju	Additional charge of Ayush Ministry	Ministry for Sports and Youth Affairs, Kiren Rijju has been given the additional charge of the Ayush Ministry. He will hold the fort till Shripad Yesso Naik recovers from an accident.
Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa	Portugal President	Portugal President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa secured a second term on Sunday, winning the presidential election by around 61% of the votes. The elections were held even as Portugal has gone into a lockdown, and the voter turnout was reportedly lowest in the country’s history.
Kaja Kallas	Estonia’s first female PM	The previous Centre Party-led government had resigned earlier this month over corruption allegations. In a joint statement, the two parties said they’ll form a government that’ll continue to effectively resolve the coronavirus crisis.

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JK Shivan	Dhanlaxmi Bank - MD and CEO	J K Shivan as managing director and CEO of the Bank. It may be recalled that the shareholders of the Kerala-based had voted against MD & CEO Sunil Gurbaxani On September 30, 2020.
CP Mohanty	New vice-chief of Army Staff	Lt General CP Mohanty is an alumnus of Rashtriya Indian Military College, Dehradun, and National Defence Academy. He is a June 1982 batch Infantry Officer from the Rajput Regiment.
Swaminathan Janakiraman and Aswini Kumar Tewari	MDs of SBI	Prior to this, Swaminathan Janakiraman was the deputy managing director (Finance) at SBI and Ashwini Kumar Tewari was serving as MD & CEO of SBI Card, a subsidiary of SBI.

Banking and Finance

RBI introduces the RBI-Digital Payments Index

Reserve Bank of India has launched a Digital Payments Index (DPI) to capture the extent of digitization of digital/electronic payments across the country.

This RBI-Digital Payments Index (DPI) has 5 broad parameters that will be used for the measurement of deepening and penetration of digital payments.

ADB to provide \$231 mn loan to enhance power generation capacity in Assam

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$231 million loan with the Government of India to augment electricity generation capacity in the state of Assam. This is the third tranche loan for the 'Assam Power Sector Investment Programme' that was approved by the ADB Board in July 2014.

SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank remain as (D-SIBs)

The RBI state-owned SBI, along with private-sector lenders ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank continue to be Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) or institutions which are 'too big to fail'. SBI, ICICI Bank, and HDFC Bank continue to be identified as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs), under the same bucketing structure as in the 2018 list of D-SIBs.

ADB and India sign \$10 million loan to support horticulture in HP

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India have signed a \$10 million project readiness financing (PRF).

This agreement aims to help finance piloting activities, and design and capacity building for an ensuing project that aims to expand horticulture production and farm household income in the hill state of Himachal Pradesh.

India and NDB signs USD 646 million loan agreement for Andhra Pradesh

The New Development Bank (NDB) has signed loan agreements worth USD 646 million with the Government of India for two road projects in Andhra Pradesh. Each project costs USD 323 million.

These projects will improve mobility and connectivity to the socioeconomic centres, enhance transport efficiency, improve road safety and riding quality, and provide all-weather accessibility for the State's road users.

RBI introduces Legal Entity Identifier for NEFT, RTGS transactions above Rs 50 crore

The Reserve Bank of India has introduced Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) for all payment transactions of value Rs 50 crore and above undertaken by entities (non-individuals) via Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) and National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT).

World Bank Projects Indian Economy to Contract By 9.6% in 2020-21

World Bank has projected the Indian economy to contract by 9.6 per cent in the fiscal year 2020-21, in its Global Economic Prospects report. World Bank estimates Growth to recover to 5.4 per cent in 2021.

Axis Bank launches Aura Credit Card with health, wellness benefits

Axis Bank has unveiled a credit 'AURA' exclusively loaded with several health and wellness benefits for its users at an affordable price. Axis Bank has partnered with Poshvine to offer benefits and specialists such as Decathlon, Practo, Fitternity, IndushealthPlus, IMG etc., to offer a complete and unique health & wellness solution to the cardholders.

SMCB becomes India's 1st urban co-operative bank to transition to SFB

Uttar Pradesh-based, Shivalik Mercantile Co-operative Bank (SMCB) has become the first urban co-operative bank (UCB) in India to receive a licence from RBI to operate as a Small Finance Bank (SFB). The RBI had given an 18-month timeline to commence business.

Exim Bank Has Raised \$1 Billion By Dollar-Bond Sale

The Export-Import Bank has raised US\$1 billion through the sale of US dollar bonds to international investors.

The Export-Import Bank of India is a specialized financial institution wholly-owned by the Indian government and was established in 1982 to provide financing, facilitation and promotion of trade in India.

IDFC Mutual Fund unveils new investor awareness campaign #PaisoKoRokoMat

IDFC Mutual Funds has launched its latest pan-India investor awareness campaign titled #PaisoKoRokoMat. With this new campaign, IDFC Mutual Fund aims to shift the conversation regarding wealth creation from the traditional to the contemporary.

RBI cancels the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Maharashtra-based Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank, with immediate effect. Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd will now not be allowed to conduct the business of 'banking', including acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits, with effect from the close of business on January 11, 2021.

RBI slaps Rs 2 crore fine on Deutsche Bank for non-compliance

The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of Rs 2 crore on Deutsche Bank AG for non-compliance with certain provisions of directions concerning interest rate on deposits.

RBI forms six-member working group to regulate digital lending frauds

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated and unregulated players, due to the growing instances of frauds in digital lending space.

The group will suggest steps to regulate digital lending including online lending platform and mobile lending.

ICICI Bank ties up with fintech Niyto to issue prepaid cards to MSMEs

ICICI Bank, a leading Indian private sector bank, and Niyto, a new age fintech company announced a tie-up to issue prepaid cards to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) workers. MSMEs will now be able to get 'ICICI Bank Niyto Bharat Payroll Card' powered by Visa, for their blue-collar workers.

YES Bank launches wellness themed credit card

Yes Bank has announced its partnership with Aditya Birla Wellness Private Limited to launch the 'YES BANK Wellness' and 'YES BANK Wellness Plus' Credit Cards – aimed at the holistic health, self-care and wellness of consumers.

This is an innovative step to encourage and promote self-care, mental and physical well-being.

Airtel Payments Bank launches 'Airtel Safe Pay'

To protect Airtel customers from the growing incidents of online payment frauds, Airtel Payments Bank has launched 'Airtel Safe Pay', a safe way to pay digitally. With 'Airtel Safe Pay', Airtel customers making UPI or net banking-based payments through Airtel Payments Bank, no longer have to worry about money flowing out of their accounts without their explicit consent.

SEBI imposes ₹1 crore fine on HDFC Bank for invoking securities of BRH

SEBI has imposed a fine of ₹1 crore on HDFC Bank for invoking securities pledged by stockbroker BRH Wealth Kreators and violating its interim order. The bank was also directed to transfer ₹158.68 crore along with 7% interest per annum in a separate escrow account. In 2019, SEBI had directed BRH to desist from undertaking activities in securities market.

ICICI Bank launches 'InstaFX' mobile app

ICICI Bank has launched a new mobile application 'InstaFX' for authorised money changers to help customers of any bank get 'ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card' swiftly. ICICI is the bank is the first in the country to offer such facility to money changers.

Indian Affairs

Covishield becomes first coronavirus vaccine to be approved for emergency use in India

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar today announced that the Covishield coronavirus vaccine has been approved for emergency use in India.

The Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine 'Covishield', the first to be approved in India, is being manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) in Pune. The Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine was approved for use in the UK on December 30.

India launches 40th Scientific expedition to Antarctica

India launched the 40th Scientific Expedition to Antarctica on January 4, 2021. The journey also marked the four decades of the nation's scientific endeavour to the Southern White Continent.

Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament begins in Chiktan, Kargil

Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament organised at Chiktan in Kargil, Ladakh. For the first time, the women team of Chiktan also participated in the Khelo India Games in Kargil district.

There are 13 teams from different villages of Chiktan participating in the tournament, which include 11 men's teams and 2 women's teams.

PM Modi inaugurates Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 450-km Kochi-Mangaluru natural gas pipeline built at a cost of Rs 3,000 crore via video conferencing.

The event marks an important milestone towards the creation of One Nation One Gas Grid. Natural gas pipeline network will be doubled in 5-6 years and CNG stations will be raised to 10,000 from current 1,500.

PM Modi launches Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched Rs 1,000-crore 'Startup India Seed Fund' on 16 January 2021, while addressing the 'Prarambh: Startup India International Summit' 2021. This initiative will help in setting up new startups and promote their growth.

Harsh Vardhan inaugurates 7th Edition of MASCRAGE 2021

The 7th edition of 'MASCRAGE 2021 – Movement against Smuggled & Counterfeit Trade' was inaugurated by Dr Harsh Vardhan, the Union Minister of Health and Family welfare. The two-day programme was organized by FICCI CASCADE (Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy), to combat illicit trade, especially in a post COVID era.

51st International Film Festival of India Concludes

The 51st edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI) was held from 16 January to 24 January 2021 at Shyamaprasad Stadium near Panaji in Goa. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the festival was held in hybrid mode, there was the physical and virtual screening of 50 films out of 224 films across various categories.

India's first COVID-19 Vaccine recipient is Manish Kumar

Manish Kumar, a sanitation worker in Delhi, became the first person to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in India after PM Modi flagged off the nationwide vaccination drive on 16 January 2021. Manish Kumar was given the injection at AIIMS in Delhi while Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan was also present.

Arjun Munda Virtually Launches “Shramshakti” Portal

The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Arjun Munda has launched a National Migration Support Portal “ShramShakti”, during a virtual programme organised at Panjim, Goa. The portal will help the government in smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers.

India's longest Road Arch Bridge inaugurated in Meghalaya

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Conrad K. Sangma has inaugurated India's longest road arch bridge “Wahrew Bridge” at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya on 22 January 2021. The project was sanctioned in 2013 and, the work started in 2014. The construction of the bridge was completed in December 2018.

15th India Digital Summit 2021 begins

The India Digital Summit, the flagship event of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) is one of the biggest conferences for the digital industry.

Honourable Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Law & Justice, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, who is the chief guest, will deliver the inaugural address at the Summit.

No foreign leader as chief guest on Republic Day this year

According to External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava, due to the global COVID-19 situation, it has been decided that this year there will not be a foreign Head of State or Head of Government as the Chief Guest for the Republic Day event.

President Ramnath Kovind will take the salute at the parade this time. This will be the first time in over five decades that India will not have a chief guest at the Republic Day parade.

Rajnath Singh unveils India's 1st indigenously developed driverless metro car

Union Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh has unveiled India's first ‘Driverless Metro Car’ on 15 January 2021 during a function held at BEML's Bangalore Complex.

The indigenously designed & developed state-of-the-art Driverless Metro trains are being manufactured at BEML Bengaluru manufacturing facility, for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA).

SAKSHAM Awareness Campaign

The campaign will spread awareness about clean energy. It is a one-month long people centric fuel conservation campaign. The campaign is to be launched by the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA).

EDUCON Conference Organized by CUPB

The Union Education Minister inaugurates Two-day Virtual International Akhand Conference 'EDUCON-2020'. The two-day international conference is organized by the Central University of Punjab (CUPB) in cooperation with the worldwide Educational Research Association (GERA).

India's 7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) at WTO

The second session of the 7th Trade Policy Review (TPR) of India concluded at the World Trade Organization (WTO). This was the final session of the 7th trade policy review. Trade Policy Review is a key mechanism under the monitoring function of WTO.

Nitin Gadkari to launch "Khadi Prakritik Paint" developed by KVIC

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari will be launching an innovative new paint developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called "Khadi Prakritik Paint" is a first-of-its-kind product, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.

IMD launches website to record weather conditions

The India Meteorological Department has launched a public outreach initiative through a website where citizens will be able to record realized weather and can upload their local weather conditions.

Naveen Patnaik inaugurates India's first 'Fire Park' in Bhubaneswar

The Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik virtually inaugurated a first of its kind 'Fire Park', to educate and bring awareness on basic fire safety measures among the people, particularly the students. The 'Fire Park' is located inside the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar.

Prarambh: Startup India International Summit

The Startup India International Summit is organised by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal trade (DPIIT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The summit is being organised as a follow-up of the announcement made by the prime minister Modi at the 4th Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic cooperation, BIMSTEC Summit held in 2018 at Kathmandu, Nepal. During the Summit India also committed to host the BIMSTEC Startup Conclave.

National Road Safety Month inaugurated by Defence Minister

The National Road Safety Month was inaugurated today by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari at an inaugural function in New Delhi.

The National Road Safety Month will be observed to spread awareness regarding road safety and reduce road accidents in India.

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Indian Railways' longest freight train 'Vasuki' sets a new record

The South-East Central Railways (SECR) zone in Chhattisgarh breaks its own previous record by successfully operating the longest ever freight train by amalgamating five rakes of goods trains as one unit of around 3.5 km. Named as 'Vasuki', it covered the distance of 224 km between the railway stations of Bhilai and Korba and took about seven hours.

Republic Day 2021: India celebrates its 72nd Republic Day

The nation celebrated the 72nd Republic Day with a grand military parade and exhibition of its history, cultural diversity and strategic weaponry at the Rajpath, Delhi. This day is celebrated by all Indians and 26th of January has been declared as a national holiday by the government of India.

PM Modi Chairs 35th PRAGATI Meet

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has chaired the 35th PRAGATI meeting to review multiple projects, grievances and programmes. In the meeting, ten agenda items were taken for review worth Rs. 54,675 crore, related to 15 states. These included nine projects and one programme. Prime Minister also reviewed the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana.

Environment Minister releases National Marine Turtle Action Plan

National Marine Turtle Action Plan has been recently released by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in New Delhi. The Ministry also released the 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' along with the Marine Turtle Action Plan.

Cabinet News

Assam Ease of Doing Business (Amendment) Bill, 2020

The Assam assembly recently passed the Assam Ease of Doing Business (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The bill makes amendments to the Assam ease of doing business act, 2016. The amendment will avail 0.25% additional borrowing from the centre.

Cabinet approves export of indigenously-developed Akash Missile System

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to export indigenously-developed Akash Missile System. The Cabinet has also approved to set up of a committee for faster approvals of exports.

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

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

The reserach and cooperation will primarily focus in the areas of Solar Photovoltaic, Storage Technologies and Transfer of Technologies.

Cabinet approves Rs 5,282-cr investment for 850 MW Ratle project on Chenab river

The Union Cabinet has approved 850 megawatts (MW) Ratle hydropower project worth an Rs. 5281.94 crore on Chenab river in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir. The project is being implemented under the Centre's plan to expedite strategically important hydropower projects in the union territory post its reorganization.

Cabinet approves industrial development scheme for J&K

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) on January 7, 2021 approved an industrial development scheme for Jammu and Kashmir.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade had put forward the proposal for the scheme and it was approved with a total outlay of ₹28,400 crore.

First time in history, Union Budget 2021 to be paperless

Union Budget 2021, slated to be presented on February 1, is going to be completely paperless in the wake of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. This will be the first time since independence that the budget papers will not be printed.

Union Cabinet approves MoU between India, UAE for scientific and technical cooperation

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi approved the Memorandum of Understanding on the scientific and technical cooperation between the Ministry of Earth Sciences, India and the National Centre of Meteorology, UAE.

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Cabinet Committee approves Rs 48,000 crore deal to buy 83 LCA Tejas fighters

The Cabinet Committee on Security chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the largest indigenous defence deal worth Rs 48,000 crores on January 13, 2021 to procure 83 LCA Tejas fighters for the Indian Air Force.

Union Cabinet approves investment of Rs. 5281.94 crores for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Power Project in J&K

The Union Cabinet gave its approval on January 20, 2021, to an investment of Rs. 5281.94 crores for 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric Project. It is located on river Chenab in Kishtwar district, Jammu and Kashmir.

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Centre Approves ‘Startup India Seed Fund Scheme’

The Central Government has approved the Rs 945-crore ‘Start-up India Seed Fund Scheme’ (SISFS), which aims to provide financial assistance to start-ups for the product trials, market-entry, proof of concept, prototype development and commercialization.

State Relates Affairs

Delhi government sets up Tamil Academy

Delhi government Department of Art, Culture, and Language has set-up a Tamil academy to promote the language and culture of the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

Delhi has a large population of people from Tamil Nadu and we want to present a platform to the people of Delhi to get a taste of the art and culture of Tamil Nadu.

TRIFOOD Parks in MP

The TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) operating under Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed a memorandum of understanding with Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to setup TRIFOOD parks in Madhya Pradesh.

UP government to launch ‘Kisan Kalyan Mission’ for the farmers

The government of Uttar Pradesh will launch a special program named ‘Kisan Kalyan Mission’ on January 6, 2021, to double the income of farmers of the state. The program will cover all the assembly constituencies of the state.

Kerala becomes 8th State to complete ease of doing business reforms

Kerala has become the 8th State in the country to successfully undertake “Ease of Doing Business” reform stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

Kerala has become eligible to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs.2,373 crore through Open Market Borrowings. Permission for the same was issued by the Department of Expenditure on 12th January 2021.

CM to inaugurate first child-friendly police station of U’khand

Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Trivendra Singh Rawat will inaugurate the first child-friendly police station of Uttarakhand, which is meant to provide a friendly environment to children associated with crimes. The child-friendly police unit has been set up in the Dalanwala police station with a budget of about Rs 5 lakhs on the recommendation of the Child Protection Committee of Uttarakhand.

Haridwar teen Shristi Goswami to be one-day CM of Uttarakhand

Shristi Goswami, a nineteen-year-old Haridwar-based student, become the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand for one day on National Girl Child Day. She is a student of BSc Agriculture, lives in Daulatpur village in Roorkee, Haridwar. The move has received the nod of Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.

UP Government launches ‘Udyam Sarathi App’ for Youths

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath has launched the 'Udyam Sarathi App' on the occasion of the 71st Foundation Day of the state, on 24 January 2021. The app will enable the youths to get every information related to self-employment and the job industry, across the state.

CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan launches 'PANKH Abhiyan' for Girl Child

In Madhya Pradesh, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has launched a new scheme 'PANKH Abhiyan' on 24 January, to mark the occasion of National Girl Child Day.

The scheme has been launched under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' scheme for the empowerment and growth of the girl child. The CM also announced scholarships worth Rs 6.47 crore for 26,099 girls under Ladli Laxmi Yojana.

New M-sand Policy 2020 Rajasthan

The Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot announced Rajasthan's new M-Sand policy, which is the government's commitment to meet the amount of sand required for construction work.

Maharashtra launches 'jail tourism' initiative from Pune's Yerawada jail

The Prison Department of Maharashtra has launched its jail tourism initiative starting with more than 150-year-old Yerawada Central Prison in Pune. The initiative was launched in a move to help students learn about historical experiences.

Ram Temple tableau of Uttar Pradesh on Republic Day wins 1st prize

The Ram Temple tableau of Uttar Pradesh that was on display during the Republic Day 2021 has bagged the first prize among all tableaux. The theme of Uttar Pradesh's tableau was 'Ayodhya: Cultural Heritage of Uttar Pradesh'. The cultural heritage of ancient holy town Ayodhya, a replica of a Ram temple, a glimpse of 'Deepotsav' and various stories from Ramayana epic were depicted in the tableau.

India's First 'Gender Park' in Kerala's Kozhikode

The Kerala government is all set to launch Rs 300 crore three-tower 'Gender Park' in Kozhikode. The park will become functional on the occasion of the second edition of the International Conference on Gender Equality (ICGE-II). The park will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan, in between February 11-13 that will also mark the inauguration of the second edition of ICGE-II.

CM Thakur launches HP's first online youth radio station

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has launched Himachal Pradesh's first online youth radio station "Radio Hills-Youngistan Ka Dil". The Chief Minister appreciated the efforts of young entrepreneurs. The developer of the online radio Karan, and Radio Jockeys Palak, Rahul and Nidhi were also present on the occasion.

India's 1st 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. Alappuzha is famous as the global houseboat tourism hub.

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

The Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar has inaugurated the first-ever bird festival of the state, 'Kalrav', at Nagi-Nakti bird sanctuary, located in Jamui district. The festival was organized by the state environment, forest and climate change department to create awareness among people about birds, especially the migratory birds.

Karnataka CM Yediyurappa launches Avalokana software

The Karnataka Chief Minister, BS Yediyurappa recently launched Avalokana software. The software will enable the state government to access data on expenditures and sanctions incurred on 1,800 programmes.

Odisha's famous 'Toshali National Crafts Mela' begins

Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has inaugurated the annual Toshali National Crafts Mela in Bhubaneswar. The Crafts Mela was inaugurated virtually. The Toshali Crafts Mela has become one of the most popular handlooms and handicrafts fairs in Eastern India.

Karnataka Government launches Krishi Sanjeevani Vans to test soil, water

The Chief Minister of Karnataka, B.S. Yediyurappa flagged off 40 Krishi Sanjeevani vans in Bengaluru. These vans have been launched by the state Agriculture Department with Central assistance under National Krishi Vikas Yojana to take up this novel programme.

Maharashtra renames Gorewada international zoo after Bal Thackeray

The Maharashtra government has renamed Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur as 'Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park. The zoological park will come up on nearly 2,000 hectares forest land.

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Arunachal Pradesh likely to be India's prime producer of Vanadium

Arunachal Pradesh can become India's prime producer of Vanadium. It is a high-value metal that has been used in strengthening steel and titanium. The largest deposits of Vanadium are in China, followed by South Africa and Russia.

Kerala Governor launches 'One School One IAS' scheme

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan has inaugurated the 'OneSchool One IAS' scheme which has been rolled out under the Vedhik Erudite Foundations Scholarship Programme. According to a notification released an institution considered by top academics and retired IAS and IPS officers in the state is conducting the programme which seeks to refute the general notion that the civil service is for the elite class only.

Dhannipur Mosque Project launched in UP

Dhannipur Mosque project was officially launched on the 5 acres of land in Dhannipur Village, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh on Republic Day. The Uttar Pradesh government allocated the land in accordance with the instructions of the Supreme Court in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi title suit.

International Affairs

U.S. Congress passes ‘Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act’

The U.S. Congress has passed the ‘Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act’ to increase the number of scholarships for Pakistani women in higher education under merit and needs-based programme. The bill was passed by the United States Senate by a voice vote on January 1. The bill now heads to the White House for U.S. President Donald Trump to sign into law.

Oscar nominee ‘Another Round’ to be opening movie at 51st IFFI

The 51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI) will open on 16th January, with the Indian premiere of the movie ‘Another Round’ by Thomas Vinterberg.

The movie starring Cannes Best Actor Award winner Mads Mikkelsen is among a star-studded line up of movies being showcased at IFFI.

51st IFFI is being organised from 16th to 24th January in Goa.

Japan working to develop first wooden satellites to reduce space junk

A Japanese Company and Kyoto University have decided to collaborate to develop the world’s first wooden satellites which will be made out of wood by 2023. The research has already started on tree growth and the use of wood materials in space.

Kazakhstan sanctions international protocol to abolish death penalty

The President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev signed a law that sanctions the ‘Second Optional Protocol’ to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The protocol entails a formal commitment to abolishing the death penalty.

President of Central African Republic Touadera wins reelection

As per the provincial results released on January 4, 2021, the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin-Archange Touadera has been reelected with more than 53% of the votes.

Pakistan Permits Dubai Royals to Hunt ‘Houbara bustard’

Pakistan has issued special permission to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, the Dubai Ruler; the crown prince, and 5 members of the royal family for hunting houbara bustard during the 2020-21 hunting season.

US designates UAE, Bahrain as ‘Major Strategic Partners’

The United States has recently designated the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the “major strategic partners” of the country. This has been announced before the formal transition of the president’s office from Donald Trump to Joe Biden. This announcement of “major strategic partners” was done by Kayleigh McEnany, the White House Press Secretary.

Japan commits Rs 2,113 cr support for COVID relief efforts

The Government of Japan has committed Official Development Assistance loan of 30 billion Japanese Yen which is approximately Rs 2113 crore rupees.

This programme loan aims to support India's efforts to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable across the country against the severe impacts of COVID-19 pandemic.

Mongolian Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa & his Government Resigns

The Prime Minister of Mongolia, Khurelsukh Ukhnaa, has resigned along with his entire government, following protests and public outrage over the government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 52-year-old served as the Prime Minister of Mongolia from 4 October 2017 to 21 January 2021.

WHO sets up global stockpile of Ebola vaccines

The World Health Organization along with partner agencies informed on January 12, 2021 that they are establishing a global stockpile of Ebola vaccines to control future outbreaks.

US government designates Cuba as state sponsor of terrorism

The government of the United States on January 11, 2021, re-designated Cuba as a State Sponsor of Terrorism for frequently providing support for the acts of international terrorism in granting safe harbor to the terrorists.

The step by the Trump administration has reversed an Obama era decision ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden on January 20.

Donald Trump becomes first US President to be impeached twice

US President Donald Trump on January 13, 2021 became the first US President to be impeached twice by the House of Representatives. The House voted to charge him for inciting the mob violence at the US Capitol building on January 6.

Foreign Relations

India becomes co-chair of Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP)

India has been chosen as the co-chair of the IUCN-supported Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for a period of three years till November 2023. India will replace South Korea, which held the post for 3 years until November 2020.

India-Oman Strategic Consultative Group meeting held

India-Oman Strategic Consultative Group (IOSCG) meeting was held in-person in New Delhi on January 14, 2021.

The Indian delegation was led by Sanjay Bhattacharya, Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, while the Omani delegation was led by Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali al-Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Foreign Ministry.

India-France Annual Strategic Dialogue

India and France held their annual strategic dialogue in New Delhi. The countries mainly focused on COVID-19 vaccines, nuclear, Indo-Pacific, space, environment, maritime safety, digital economy, environment and defence sectors.

India proposes 8 point agenda at UNSC open debate to combat terrorism

The External Affairs Minister of India, S.Jaishankar while speaking at the United Nations Security Council open debate on January 12, 2021, asserted that there must be no ifs and buts against terrorism and that the countries must not maintain double standards in this battle.

India supplies two Mobile Harbour Cranes to strengthen cargo handling capacity of Iran's Chabahar Port

The Indian government has supplied a consignment of two Mobile Harbour Cranes- MHC to Chabahar Port in Iran. The total contract value of the consignment is over USD 25 million under an agreement signed for the supply of 6 MHC.

India and Japan sign MoU to strengthen cooperation in Information and Communications Technology

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed between India and Japan on January 15, 2021, to enhance cooperation in the field of ICT- Information and Communications Technology.

The MoU was signed by Ravi Shankar Prasad, the Union Minister for Communications, Electronics and IT, and Takeda Ryota, the Internal Affairs and Communications Minister of Japan. The signing was exchanged through a video conference.

India, Singapore sign pact on submarine rescue support

The 5th edition of the Defence Ministers' Dialogue (DMD) between India and Singapore was successfully held on 20 January 2021 through a video conference, in an effort to deepen military cooperation. During the meeting, the 'Implementing Agreement on Submarine Rescue Support and Cooperation' was signed between the two Navies.

India, EU hold first virtual maritime security dialogue

India and the European Union held their first virtual maritime security dialogue on January 20, 2021. The maritime dialogue was chaired by the Joint Secretary Sandeep Arya from the Indian side and Director Joanneke Balfourt on the European Union External Action Service Side.

India, UK to strengthen international cooperation against cross-border terrorism

The 14th meeting of the India-United Kingdom Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was held virtually on January 21-22, 2021, under which both nations strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

India Inks Strategic Partnership Agreement with IEA

India has inked a strategic partnership agreement with the International Energy Agency (IEA), the world's premier energy monitor, on 27 January 2021. The objective of the MoU is to strengthen cooperation in global energy security, stability and sustainability as well as strengthen mutual trust and cooperation between IEA members and the Government of India.

India pledges \$150,000 for UN Peacebuilding Fund for 2021

India has announced a pledge of USD 150,000 to the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for the year 2021 to support the activities and programs this year. The Peacebuilding Fund has put forth its five-year strategy, which requires 1.5 billion dollars for 2020-2024. This was announced by TS Tirumurti, India's permanent representative to the United Nations on January 25, 2021.

Indo-French Alliance for Environment

Indo-French alliance moves towards the "Green Planet" year. The Union Environment Minister, together with his French Prime Minister, launched the Indo-French Environment Year.

The Union Environment Minister, together with his French Prime Minister, launched the Indo-French Environment Year. The basic goal is to strengthen cooperation between India and France in sustainable development, increase the effectiveness of actions that are conducive to global environmental protection, and make them more well-known.

5th Joint Meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum

The 5th joint meeting of the India-Japan Act East Forum (AEF) was held in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Shri Harsh Vardhan Shringla, and Suzuki Satoshi, Ambassador of Japan to India.

Ranks & Indices

Bajaj Auto becomes world's most valuable two-wheeler company

Indian multinational two-wheeler and three-wheeler manufacturing company, Bajaj Auto has become the most valuable two-wheeler company in the world, after it crossed a market capitalization of more than Rs. 1 lakh crore, on January 01, 2021.

Mukesh Ambani ranked 12th in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021

India's richest man Mukesh Ambani, the chairman and Managing Director of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) dropped down to 12th spot in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2021 (as on 2nd January 2021).

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos topped the charts with a net worth of \$201 billion. Tesla CEO and founder Elon Musk (\$145 billion) moved into the second position.

Elon Musk becomes world's richest person, overtakes Jeff Bezos

Elon Musk has become the world's richest person, surpassing Amazon founder Jeff Bezos on the Bloomberg Billionaires Index, which ranks the world's 500 wealthiest people.

India Innovation Index 2020: Karnataka tops among major states, Delhi tops among UT/city states

Karnataka retained its position as the most innovative major state in the country in the India Innovation Index 2020 released by NITI Aayog on January 20, 2021.

Karnataka scored 42.5, followed by Maharashtra at second place with a score of 38 and Tamil Nadu at third place with 37.91 score. Bihar was ranked the last in the index with 14.5 score.

China overtakes Germany to run world's largest current account surplus: Ifo

China overtook Germany as the country with the world's largest current account surplus in 2020, according to a survey by the Ifo Institute. China's current account surplus more than doubled to \$310 billion in 2020 while that of Germany shrank for the fifth straight year to \$261 billion. With a current account surplus of \$158 billion, Japan came third.

India ranks 4th in 'Break Out Economies'

Rapidly digitalising India was ranked 4th in "Break Out Economies" in the third edition of the Digital Evolution Scorecard developed by Tufts University's Fletcher School in partnership with Mastercard.

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

Which were the 10 cities with highest traffic congestion in the world in 2020?

Moscow had the highest traffic congestion in the world in 2020, according to TomTom Traffic Index, a report detailing the traffic situation in over 400 cities in 57 countries.

Moscow was followed by Mumbai, Bogota, Manila, Istanbul, Bengaluru, Kyiv, New Delhi, Novosibirsk and Bangkok in traffic congestion. In 2019, the same index had found Bengaluru to be the most congested.

Bengaluru world's fastest growing tech hub, Mumbai 6th: Report

Bengaluru has emerged as the world's fastest growing mature tech ecosystem since 2016, with Mumbai coming in at sixth place, according to Dealroom.co data analysed by London & Partners.

Investment in Bengaluru grew 5.4 times from \$1.3 billion in 2016 to \$7.2 billion in 2020, the report said. Bengaluru also ranked sixth for the most tech venture capitalist investments globally.

IndiGo now world's seventh biggest airline by capacity: Report

IndiGo is now the world's seventh biggest airline by capacity and the largest outside the US and China, according to data firm OAG. IndiGo took delivery of 44 planes from Airbus in 2020, the most by any airline, to replace older models. IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta said the airline had 52% domestic share in 2020 compared to 47% in 2019.

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China overtakes US as largest recipient of FDI in 2020

China surpassed the US as the largest recipient of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2020, with \$163 billion of inflows. The US attracted \$134 billion in inflows last year, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said in a report. In 2019, China had received \$140 billion in inflows while the US received \$251 billion.

India Ranks 7th in Global Climate Risk Index 2021 of Germanwatch

India has been placed among the top 10 most affected countries by climate change, in the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 published by the Bonn-based environmental think tank Germanwatch. India ranked as the seventh worst-hit country in terms of climate change in 2019.

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India in third position in scientific publications after China, US: DST

India has seen an exponential increase in the number of scientific publications over the last 10 years and is in the third position globally after China and the US, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) said.

Of the 13,045 patents in 2017-18, as many as 1,937 were by Indians.

Apple becomes biggest smartphone seller with record 90.1 mn shipments

Apple Inc cornered nearly a quarter of the global smartphone market in the fourth quarter, making it the world's biggest seller, while shipments for Huawei plunged as U.S sanctions against it took effect.

TCS ranks third most valued IT services brand globally

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been ranked third most-valued IT services brand globally, after Accenture and IBM, according to a report by Brand Finance. Third-ranked TCS is rapidly closing the gap with IBM following a healthy 11% brand value increase to USD 15 billion.

Airtel becomes India's first telecom company to operate 5G network

Bharti Airtel announced on January 28, 2021 that it has become the country's first telecom operator to successfully demonstrate live fifth-generation (5G) service over a commercial network in Hyderabad city.

Airtel operated the 5G network over its existing liberalised spectrum in the 1,800 MHz band through the NSA (non-standalone) network technology.

India Ranks 86 among 98 Countries in Lowy Institute's Covid-19 Response Index

India has been ranked at 86th position among 98 countries in the new Coronavirus Performance Index released by Australia-based Lowy Institute. Countries were ranked based on the publicly available and comparable data on Covid-19 response. The Lowy Institute is an independent international policy think tank, located in Sydney.

India Secures 86th Rank in Corruption Perception Index 2020

India has been ranked 86th among 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2020, released by Transparency International. This year, India's rank has slipped six places compared to 2019, when it was ranked at 80th spot.

India ranks 10th in 'Asia-Pacific Personalised Health Index'

India ranked 10th out of 11 Asia Pacific countries in a newly-launched health index to measure the progress towards personalised healthcare. Singapore(1st), Taiwan (2nd), Japan (3rd) and Australia (4th) also performed well in overall readiness. These include Policy Context, Health Information, Personalised Technologies and Health Service

Business News

BEL and Indian Navy inks pact for initial supply of Laser Dazzlers

The Indian Navy has signed a contract with the Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), to procure Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation Dazzlers (Laser Dazzlers).

Initially, agreement has been signed for 20 Laser Dazzlers. The Laser dazzler technology has been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and would be manufactured by BEL, Pune plant.

Tata Power partners with SIDBI to offer easy & affordable financing scheme for MSME

Tata Power, India's largest integrated power company, announced its partnership with SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) to offer easy and affordable financing scheme for MSME customers in the rooftop solar segment.

PNB Collaborates with IIT Kanpur to set up Fintech Innovation Centre

Punjab National Bank has partnered with IIT Kanpur and the Foundation for Innovation & Research in Science & Technology (FIRST) to set up a 'Fintech Innovation Centre (FIC)' at the institute's campus.

Airtel announces 5G ready network in Hyderabad

Bharti Airtel took an edge by becoming the first telecom operator in India to demonstrate 5G services successfully. Bharti Airtel announced that it orchestrated live fifth-generation (5G) service over a commercial network in Hyderabad.

Microsoft launches its new Taj Mahal inspired Engineering Hub

Tech major Microsoft has launched its new India Development Center (IDC) facility in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The new centre will serve as a leading hub for driving advanced engineering and innovation. The centre will build on Microsoft's commitment to tap India's world-class engineering talent and create solutions for a global impact.

Infosys receives Google Cloud Partner Status

Infosys has recently announced that it has been accredited with the Google Cloud Partner Specialization in the data and analytics space. Infosys is among the top global system integrators which have been accredited with this specialization.

IREDA-NHPC Partnership in Green Energy Projects

NHPC Limited has signed an MOU with the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) for providing assistance in setting up renewable energy (RE) projects for the next 5 years. The agreement was signed in the presence of Abhay Kumar Singh, NHPC CMD, and IREDA, CMD, Pradip Kumar Das.

Bharat Biotech signs deal with Brazil's Precisa Medicamentos for Covaxin supply

Bharat Biotech has signed an agreement with Precisa Medicamentos for the supply of COVAXIN to Brazil. The agreement follows a visit by a team from Precisa Medicamentos to Bharat Biotech's facility last week to discuss potential export possibilities of the vaccine.

NITI Aayog and Flipkart collaborate to enhance WEP

NITI Aayog and Flipkart, have come together to launch the revamped Women Entrepreneurship Platform.

The Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) is a unified access portal which brings together women from different parts of India to realise their entrepreneurial aspirations

Tesla sets up India subsidiary in Bengaluru

Elon Musk-owned electric vehicle (EV) company Tesla has registered a fully-owned subsidiary in Bengaluru, Karnataka. Tesla, the world's most valued carmaker has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary ahead as a first step to set up an R&D unit and a manufacturing plant for its electric vehicles in the country.

L&T Bags contract for Bullet Train Project

The Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has bagged a contract worth Rs 1390 crore for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project. This project is India's first such project. L&T has bagged the contract for the project from the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL).

NIC and CBSE to jointly launch CollabCAD Software

National Informatics Centre and Central Board of Secondary Education, CBSE will jointly launch CollabCAD Software on January 14, 2021 to provide a total engineering solution for students and Faculty of Engineering Graphics Curriculum. This initiative aims to provide a platform to students across the country to create and modify 3D digital designs.

FSS and IPPB join hands to promote financial inclusion

Financial Software and Systems (FSS), a leading payment processor and provider of integrated payment products, has partnered with India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to promote financial inclusion among underserved and unbanked segments.

POWERGRID and HPSEBL Signed the OPGW Telecom Network Agreement

The telecommunications connectivity in hilly areas is improved by signing the agreement between the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) and the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Limited (HPSEBL) to utilize 500 kilometers of OPGW telecommunications network in Shimla (HP).

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MeITY and AWS announced Quantum Computing Applications Lab in India

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced the establishment of a Quantum Computing Applications Lab in partnership with Amazon Web Services (AWS). The move will give select researchers, scientists access to Amazon's Bracket cloud-based quantum computing service.

HSBC inaugurates international banking unit in Gujarat

Global financial services major HSBC has inaugurated its International Banking Unit (IBU) branch at GIFT City near Gandhinagar city in Gujarat. HSBC is one of the earliest global financial institutions setting up a branch at India's GIFT City and was the first bank to get a licence from the newly set up International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).

Defence News

DRDO Celebrates 63rd Foundation Day on 1st January 2021

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) observed the 63rd Foundation Day of its establishment on January 01, 2021. DRDO was established in 1958 with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in the Defence sector. At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for Indian Armed Forces.

India & Israel successfully test MRSAM air defence system

India and Israel successfully tested a Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile (MRSAM) defence system. The MRSAM missile defence system has been developed jointly by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) to deal with airstrikes by enemy countries.

Indian Army inks pact with Goa Shipyard to get 12 fast patrol boats

Indian Army has inked a contract with Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) to procure 12 Fast Patrol Boats for surveillance and patrolling of large water bodies, including those in high altitude areas like Pangong Tso lake in Ladakh.

Andaman and Nicobar Command to conduct joint military exercise 'Kavach'

The Indian Army is to conduct a large scale joint military exercise Kavach in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal. The exercise is to be held under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command. The Joint Military Exercise Kavach will involve Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.

BSF launches Operation 'Sard Hawa' at Rajasthan border

The Border Security Force (BSF) has launched "Operation Sard Hawa" on the western international border of Rajasthan. The Operations aims to check the instances of infiltration due to the dense fog cover in the region and increase security on the border areas in Jaisalmer.

Indian Navy conducts exercise AMPHEX – 21 with Army and Air Force

A large-scale tri-service joint amphibious exercise AMPHEX – 21 was held in Andaman & Nicobar group of islands. The exercise involved the participation of troops of Army, Navy as well as the Indian Air Force.

Sea Vigil-21: Indian Navy kick starts second edition of coastal defence exercise

The second edition of the coastal defence exercise 'Sea Vigil-21' has been started on January 12 and will continue till January 13, 2021. The exercise aims at assessing India's preparedness in the domain of coastal defence and maritime security.

Government to buy 83 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft for Rs. 45,696 crores

The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Modi on January 13, 2021, gave its approval for the purchase of 10 trainer aircraft and 83 Tejas Light Combat Aircraft fighter jets at the price of Rs. 45.7 crores. The Tejas LCA is an indigenously designed and manufactured fourth-generation fighter.

DRDO develops India's first Indigenously-Developed 9mm Machine Pistol

India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by DRDO and Indian Army. Infantry School, Mhow and DRDO's Armament Research & Development Establishment (ARDE), Pune have designed and developed this weapon using their respective expertise in the complementary areas.

Indian Army inks \$20 mn contract to buy SWITCH drones

The Indian Army has recently signed a contract with Mumbai-based drone manufacturing company, ideaForge, to procure high-altitude variant of SWITCH unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The total cost of the deal is approximately USD 20 million.

India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol jointly developed by Indian Army, DRDO

India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by the Indian Army and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). This was informed by the Defence Ministry on January 14, 2021.

DRDO signs MoU with MoRTH for geo-hazard management

The Defence Research and Development Organization on January 20, 2021, signed an MoU with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. The agreement is for promoting and strengthening the collaboration in the area of cooperation and technical exchange on sustainable geohazard management.

DRDO Successfully Test Flights indigenously developed "SAAW"

The DRDO successfully conducted captive and release trial of indigenously developed Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW) from Hawk-I aircraft of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) off the Odisha coast. This was the 9th successful mission of SAAW conducted by DRDO till now and the first test conducted from the Hawk-i aircraft.

Operation Sard Hawa

The Operation Sard Hawa was launched by the Border Security Force in the western border of Rajasthan. The main purpose of the operation is to check the instances of infiltration due to dense fog in the region. The Operation has also been launched to enhance the security ahead of Republic Day. The operation is to run till January 27, 2021.

Science and Technology

India successfully isolates and cultures UK-Variant of Sars-CoV-2: ICMR

The Indian Council of Medical Research-ICMR announced on January 2, 2021, that the medical body has successfully isolated and cultured the UK- variant of Coronavirus strain. It had first originated in the United Kingdom.

Japan to launch the first wood-based satellite by 2023

Japan's Sumitomo Forestry company and Kyoto University aims to launch the world's first wood-based space satellite by 2023 to combat the problem of space junk. Currently, the initiative is in the nascent stage as several wooden materials are being tested by the research team to find a suitable one for space missions.

Pakistan successfully test fires "Fatah-1" Rocket System

The Pakistan Army successfully conducted the test flight of an indigenously developed Guided Multi Launch Rocket System, Fatah-1. The Fatah-1 weapon system is capable of precisely delivering conventional warheads deep into "enemy territory."

Japan aerospace agency to launch H3 rocket in 2021

Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency- JAXA announced on January 12, 2021, that it will launch its flagship rocket H3 to pave the way for the next generation of transportation technologies.

SpaceX launches 143 satellites on a single mission, breaks ISRO's record

SpaceX has launched its Transporter-1 mission with 133 commercial and government spacecraft, and 10 more Starlink satellites onboard, breaking ISRO's record. The launch is also SpaceX's first dedicated SmallSat Rideshare Program mission. ISRO's PSLV, on its 39th flight (PSLV-C37), had successfully launched 104 satellites on a single mission in 2017.

ISRO to launch city college's academic satellite

ISRO chairman K Sivan is likely to inaugurate the 'SriShakthiSat' ground station at Sri Shakthi Institute of Engineering and Technology in Coimbatore. The station will help monitor the satellite developed by the institute, which is set to be launched by the ISRO. A satellite communication lab was established in the college in 2010.

NASA targets final test of 'world's most powerful rocket'

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is looking to carry out the eighth and final test in its "Green Run" test series. This eighth stage termed "hot fire," will bring to an end a series of tests which, NASA says, will gradually bring together the core stage of the Space Launch System (SLS) to life for the very first time.

Books

A book titled “Vahana Masterclass” launched by Italian Writer Alfredo Covelli

Alfredo Covelli, an Italy based author has launched his new book Vahana Masterclass for children and Young Audience. The books will be illustrated and published by Scholastic India. Alfredo had a keen interest in our Indian culture and mythology which inspired him to write a story on Lord Ganesh for children.

A book on India’s tours Down Under by R. Kaushik

A book titled ‘India’s 71-Year Test: The Journey to Triumph in Australia’ and one which reflects on India’s previous 12 tours Down Under, was launched. The book, a Bradman Museum initiative, is authored by senior cricket scribe R. Kaushik, and it chronicles a rivalry that has given a fillip to Test cricket.

RBI officer Giridharan pens novel ‘Right Under our Nose’

A general manager at RBI, R Giridharan has authored his debut book ”Right Under our Nose”. In ”Right Under Your Nose”, a murderer eliminates scientists right under the nose of the police and leaves forensics baffled. In response, the chief minister calls upon Vijay, who is given an impossible deadline to solve the case before Parliament resumes in a week.

Goa CM releases book ‘Manohar Parrikar – Off the Record’

Goa Chief Minister, Pramod Sawant has released a book ‘Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record’ at a function organized at Institute Menezes Braganza hall in the city. The book has been written by senior journalist Waman Subha Prabhu.

“Modi India Calling – 2021” Book Released

A coffee table book named “Modi India Calling – 2021” has been released on the occasion of 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas. The book contains various photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi captured during his “107 overseas and bilateral visits”.

Ramchandra Guha’s latest book ‘The Commonwealth of Cricket’

Ramchandra Guha’s latest book ‘The Commonwealth of Cricket’ would be launching virtually in the Tata Literature Live (The Mumbai Lit fest) this month. His latest book juxtaposes his life with his abiding love for the game & this conversation could not come at a better time with India and Australia in the midst of an enthralling test series.

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Sports

Name	Tournament Name	Extra Information
Leon Mendonca	India's 67th Grandmaster	Goa's 14-year-old Leon Mendonca has become India's 67th chess Grandmaster by winning the third and final norm at a tournament in Italy. Mendonca, who achieved the feat at 14 years, 9 months and 17 days, is the second GM from the coastal State.
Claire Polosak	Become first female match official in men's Test match	Australia's Claire Polosak is set to become the first female match official in a men's Test match when she takes up the fourth umpire's role in the third Test between India and Australia.
Jigmet Dolma	Fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021	Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police. In the marathon, Hicham Lakohi of Morocco came first in the elite competition of the marathon in men's category while Angela Jim Asunde from Kenya won the women's category in the same event.
Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)	National Ice Hockey Championship	The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has won the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) 10th National Ice Hockey Championship trophy after a win over Ladakh in the finals in Gulmarg.

Obituary

Name	Associated Field
Michael Kindo	World Cup winning hockey player
Chitra Ghosh	Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's niece and eminent academician
Satya Paul	Veteran Indian Fashion Designer
Dr V Shanta	Padma Award winning Renowned Oncologist
Madhavsinh Solanki	Former Gujarat Chief Minister
D Prakash Rao	Social Activist and Padma Shri Awardee
Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan	Legendary classical musician
Mata Prasad	Former Arunachal Governor
Dr V Shanta	Padma Award winning Renowned Oncologist
Unnikrishnan Namboothiri	Veteran Malayalam actor
Narendra Chanchal	Popular Bhajan Singer
Larry King	Legendary American talk-show host
Narendra Luther	Veteran Bureaucrat, poet and Hyderabad historian
Cloris Leachman	Oscar winning-actor

Important Days

Day	Date	Theme
World Braille Day	January 04	
Journalist Day Observed in Maharashtra	January 06	
Pravasi Bharatiya Divas	January 09	
World Hindi Day	January 10	
Armed Forces Veterans Day	January 14	
Indian Army Day	January 15	
Parakram diwas	January 23	
National handwriting day	January 23	
International Day of Education	January 24	Recover and Revitalize Education for the COVID-19 Generation
National Tourism Day of India	January 25	
National Voters' Day	January 25	Making Our Voters Empowered, Vigilant, Safe and Informed
International Customs Day	January 26	Customs bolstering Recovery, Renewal and Resilience
International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust	January 27	
73rd Martyrs' Day	January 30	