



CURRENT AFFAIRS

16 January 2021

Today's Important News

DRDO & Army develops India's first indigenous machine pistol ASMI

1. DRDO & Army develops India's first indigenous machine pistol ASMI

- Defence Research and Development Organisation(DRDO) said that it has developed the country's first indigenous machine pistol ASMI.
- The pistol which is developed by DRDO along with the help of Indian Army is set to replace the 9mm pistols in the defence forces. It was displayed at an event of the Indian Army.
- The machine pistol can fire at a range of 100 metres and is in the class of the Uzi series guns of Israel. The prototype has fired over 300 rounds in the last four months of its development.
- In another development, Retractable landing gear systems for unmanned aerial vehicles, indigenously built by the Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment here, a unit of the DRDO, were handed over to the Navy on Sunday.



Foot Notes:

About DRDO:

Founded: 1958

Headquarters: DRDO Bhavan, New Delhi

Chairman: Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy

2. Joe Biden names Vidur Sharma as Policy Advisor for testing in Covid-19

- Joe Biden has named Indian-American health policy expert Vidur Sharma as testing advisor in his Covid-19 Response Team, as the US President-elect laid out his ambitious goal to intensify vaccinations across the country to tackle the spread of the deadly pandemic.
- The announcement of Sharma's appointment as Policy Advisor for Testing was made by Biden on Friday along with additional members of the White House Covid-19 Response Team.
- During the Obama administration, Sharma served as a health policy advisor on the Domestic Policy Council.
- Sharma supported the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, aligned Federal Department and Agencies, and collaborated with community stakeholders to further the administration's health policy agenda.



Foot Notes:

About US:

President elect: Joe Biden

Capital: Washington, D.C.

President: Donald Trump

Currency: United States Dollar

3. Govt to start skills training under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana-3.0 in 600 districts

- Government will start skills training in 600 districts across all states barring four under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana-3.0 launched on 15th January, 2021. This will be followed by a five-year PMKVY in 2021-22 with an enhanced target of skilling 1.5 crore youth.
- Under the scheme government will train 8 lakh candidates over next three months with an outlay of Rs 948.90 crore with focus on Covid-related skills. As per the plan, the Centre will strengthen district skill committees to identify and cater to local skilling needs under the scheme which will be demand based.
- The training will be imparted through 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras (PMKKs), empaneled non-PMKK training centres and more than 200 industrial training institutes (ITIs).
- Further, a five-year PMKVY will be launched in 2021-22 with an enhanced target of skilling 1.5 crore youth.



4. Rajnath Singh unveils India's first indigenously developed driverless metro car

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on 15th January, 2021 unveiled the country's first indigenously designed and developed Driverless Metro Car at the BEML manufacturing facility in Bengaluru.
- The minister, who visited the facility, said he was proud of the good work the team of engineers and technicians are doing at Bengaluru-headquartered BEML.
- According to BEML, state-of-the-art driverless metro cars, being manufactured at the company's Bangalore Complex, are made up of stainless-steel body with a capacity of carrying 2280 passengers in six-cars Metro train-set.
- BEML bagged a total order of 576 cars for Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)'s MRS1 project and the supply is scheduled progressively up to January 2024.



Foot Notes:

About BEML:

Headquarters: Bengaluru

Founded: May 1964

5. Human Rights Council Elects Nazhat Shameem Khan of Fiji to serve as its President for 2021

- The Human Rights Council today elected Ambassador Nazhat Shameem Khan, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations Office at Geneva, to serve as its President for 2021.
- Ambassador Khan was elected through a secret ballot process through which all 47 members of the Geneva-based human rights body cast their vote to appoint its president for 2021 – the Council's 15th annual cycle.



Foot Notes:

About Fiji:

Capital: Suva

Currency: Fijian dollar

President: Jioji Konrote

6. India inks MoU with Japan to enhance cooperation in field of ICT

- Union Minister for Communication, Electronics and IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad, on January 15, inked an MoU with Internal Affairs and Communication Minister of Japan, Takeda Ryota to enhance cooperation in the field of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT). The MoU was exchanged through a video conference
- Department of Telecom, Government of India and Ministry of Communications, Government of Japan will enhance mutual cooperation in the field of 5G technologies, telecom security, submarine optical fibre cable system to islands of India, spectrum management, smart cities, high altitude platform for broadband in unconnected areas, disaster management and public safety, etc.



Foot Notes:

About Japan:

Capital: Tokyo

Currency: Japanese yen

Prime Minister: Yoshihide Suga



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7. India Post Payments Bank teams up with FSS to help unbanked segments

- FSS (Financial Software and Systems), an integrated payment solutions provider, has partnered with India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to promote financial inclusion among the underserved and unbanked segments.
- As part of the collaboration, IPPB will use FSS' Aadhaar-enabled Payment System (AePS) services to deliver interoperable and affordable doorstep banking services to customers across India.
- FSS is also IPPB's preferred payment partner for Bill Payments, UPI, Card Management System, PoSability, Aadhaar Pay, Smart Recon and Switching systems.
- Highlighting the benefit of AePS-based cash withdrawal solutions, FSS said in a press release that the average time to reach a banking access point in rural and peri-urban areas potentially ranges between 1.5 and 5 hours, compared to the average of 30 minutes in urban areas.



Foot Notes:

About India Post Payments Bank:

Founded: 1 September 2018

Headquarters location: New Delhi

CEO: J Venkatramu

8. TEPC appoints Sandeep Aggarwal as new Chairman

- The Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC) has appointed Sandeep Aggarwal as the new Chairman.
- Aggarwal, the Managing Director and Promoter of Delhi-based Paramount Communications, will take over from Shyamal Ghosh, ex-Telecom Secretary, TEPC said.
- TEPC is an independent body set up by the government to promote and develop the export of telecom equipment and services.
- Aggarwal is also the Chief Mentor of PHDCCI's Telecom Committee, besides being the Chairman of Telecom Equipment Manufacturers Association (TEMA) and President of Railway Cable Development Association.



9. Former Manchester United star Wayne Rooney ends playing career, takes over as Derby's manager

- Wayne Rooney now has the Derby job on a permanent basis after England's record goal-scorer retired from playing and received a contract through 2023 to manage the second division team.



- The 35-year-old former Manchester United captain, who took temporary charge of Derby in November, is now focusing on his coaching career.
- “Despite other offers I knew instinctively Derby County was the place for me,” Rooney said Friday. “I can promise everyone involved in the club and all our fans, my staff and I will leave no stone unturned in achieving the potential .I have witnessed over the last 12 months of this historic football club.”

Foot Notes:

About England:

Capital: London

Currency: Pound sterling

Prime Minister: Boris Johnson

10. Former MP and Tamil Maanila Congress leader BS Gnanadesikan passes away

- Former Member of Parliament and vice-president of Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC) party, BS Gnanadesikan (71) passed away in Chennai on Friday. As per reports, he was admitted to Apollo Hospital on November 11 where he was being treated for an age-related illness.
- Gnanadesikan was a staunch follower of Congress leader and former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Kamaraj.
- In 1996, when GK Mooppanar-led faction split away from the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee (TNCC), Gnanadesikan joined Mooppanar and served as the general secretary of the party till 2002. After Mooppanar’s demise, his son GK Vasana merged the TMC with TNCC and Gnanadesikan returned to the Congress fold.



Foot Notes:

About Tamil Nadu:

Capital: Chennai

Governor: Banwarilal Purohit

Chief Minister: Edappadi K. Palaniswami

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