

# Weekly Current Affairs

10-16 January 2021

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## **NATIONAL NEWS**

### **1 Prime Minister Modi to Chair High Level Committee constituted to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose**

- A high-level committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had been constituted to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in a befitting manner.
- The high-level committee will decide on the activities for a one-year-long commemoration, beginning January 23, 2021.
- The commemoration activities will be held in Delhi, Kolkata and other places associated with Netaji and Azad Hind Fauj, both in India as well as overseas.
- There are 85 members in this committee including ministers, distinguished citizens, historians, authors, experts, family members of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as well as eminent persons associated with Azad Hind Fauj.

### **2. Union Education Minister inaugurated two-day Virtual International Akhand Conference ‘EDUCON-2020’**

- The Union Education Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ inaugurated the Virtual International Akhand Conference ‘EDUCON 2020’ through video conferencing on January 7, 2021.
- The two-day International Conference was organized by Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in collaboration with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA).
- The focal theme of EDUCON-2020 was Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace.
- The conference acted as a platform for the prospective teachers to become familiar with different technologies and their functioning to bring transformational change in the field of education.

### **3. Punjab banned import of poultry, declares whole State ‘Controlled Area’**

- Punjab Government had declared the whole state 'Controlled Area' in view of the outbreak of Avian Influenza Bird Flu affecting birds including poultry in the neighbouring states.
- In another major decision Punjab imposes complete ban on import of live birds including Poultry and unprocessed Poultry meat for any purpose into the state of Punjab with immediate effect till 15th January, 2021.
- Giving this information at Chandigarh a government spokesman said that the decision will be reviewed based on the evolving situation.
- The Additional Chief Secretary of the Animal Husbandry Department Mr. VK Janjua said that both the decisions were taken in consultation with the Animal Husbandry Minister Mr. Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa to

prevent/control the spread of Avian Influenza, a scheduled disease in the state.

#### **4. West Bengal CM inaugurated 26th Kolkata International Film Festival**

- The 26th Kolkata International Film Festival being inaugurated at Nabanna in the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and members of the film fraternity. A total of 81 feature films and 50 short and documentary films will be shown.
- The online booking system for the 26th Kolkata International Film Festival has been scrapped from January 11. In a late evening notification on Friday, the festival committee announced that people with delegate, press and guest cards will be allowed into the venues on a first-come-first-served basis.
- Chief minister Mamata Banerjee's announcement of issuing a notification to resume 100 per cent occupancy in cinemas will not have any bearing on the festival. Seating at the festival venues will continue to be at 50 per cent occupancy, he clarified.

#### **5. Heritage Conservation Committee approved construction of new Parliament building**

- The Heritage Conservation Committee headed by the additional secretary of the ministry of housing and urban affairs has cleared the Centre's proposal for the new Parliament building.
- "The proposal has been cleared by the committee. It was sent a few days ago, discussed and cleared," housing ministry secretary Durga Shankar said on Monday in response to a query during a press conference.
- The Heritage Conservation Committee does not hold a public hearing, he said. "The committee is headed by the additional secretary in the ministry, there are different officers from other organisations and experts from outside.

#### **6. PM Modi to address 2nd National Youth Parliament Festival on January 12**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the the second National Youth Parliament Festival on January 12. When the PM addresses the valedictory function at 10:30 am via video conferencing, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal will be among those present.
- The candidates selected in the youth parliaments held at state and district levels will take part in the national youth parliament on January 11 and 12. The first three winners will get the opportunity to express their views before the Prime Minister.
- According to a government release, "84 winners from states/ union territories will get an opportunity to be present in the central hall of

parliament before the Lok Sabha Speaker, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha along with Minister (IC), Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and other dignitaries. 29 national winners will get an opportunity to speak before the national jury comprising of Roopa Ganguly, MP, Rajya Sabha, Parvesh Sahib Singh, MP Lok Sabha and Prafulla Ketkar, an eminent journalist.”

### **7. Japan has best passport, India ranks 85 in Henley Passport Index 2021**

- The Henley’s passport index has retained Japan on top of passport rankings as it offers visa-free access to 191 destinations around the world.
- India is in the middle with a rank of 85 but three of its SAARC fellow members – Pakistan, Nepal and Afghanistan—bring up the rear with countries in the throes of civil war such as Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Iraq.
- Indian passport holders can access 58 countries in the world without a prior visa and share the spot with Tajikistan.
- Singapore also continues in second place since the rankings were last announced in July 2019 while South Korea and Germany are tied for third place.

### **8. First ever Ice climbing festival celebrated in Nubra valley**

- In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in Nubra valley. The Seven Day event was organized by Nubra Adventure Club. Ice climbing is a popular winter sport abroad. Taking the cue, local adventure sports lovers have explored several ice climbing spots in Nubra valley to attract the adventure tourists to the region.
- To promote winter tourism in Nubra valley, Nubra Adventure Club, with the help of Social activist Dr. Nordan Otzer, has organized the Seven Day Ice Climbing festival.
- 18 participants across Nubra valley including 4 women, have taken part in Ice climbing. All were trained in basic ice climbing skills during the festival at three locations, Podong Cake at Panamik, Artificial Glacier at Ayee Village and first ascent at " Nubra Adventure Club Crag" located near Warshi Village.

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

### **1. U.S. voids restrictions on diplomatic contacts with Taiwan**

- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on 9th January,2021 that the State Department is voiding longstanding restrictions on how U.S. diplomats and others have contact with their counterparts in Taiwan,

another move that is expected to upset China as the Trump administration winds to an end.

- The Trump administration has sought to strengthen bilateral relations with Taiwan. It announced that U.N Ambassador Kelly Craft would go to Taiwan, a move that sparked sharp criticism from Beijing and a warning that the U.S. would pay a heavy price.
- Pompeo said that the State Department has created complex restrictions when it comes to contacts between the two parties. He said those actions were taken to appease the Communist regime in Beijing.



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## 2. Iran leader bans import of U.S. and U.K. made coronavirus vaccines

- Iran's supreme leader said Friday that he had banned the import of U.S. and British-made coronavirus vaccines, a surprise move that contradicts his own government's recent efforts to ensure the country's access to safe and effective immunizations.
- Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's highest political and religious authority, made the announcement in a televised address, calling the vaccines "forbidden."
- "They are completely untrustworthy," he said.
- Khamenei singled out the vaccine developed in a joint venture between the U.S. pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer, and Germany's BioNTech. He said that he had already informed the relevant authorities of his decision but was now making it public.

## 3. WHO experts directly fly to Wuhan to probe COVID-19 origins amid virus spike in China

- A 10-member team of WHO experts assigned to probe the origins of COVID-19 will directly fly from Singapore to the central Chinese city of Wuhan on 14 January, where the virus first emerged in December 2019,

amid a resurgence of the deadly disease in several cities close to Beijing, prompting lockdowns.

- The World Health Organisation team's visit has become a bone of contention as Beijing, which questions the widely-held view about the virus origins in Wuhan, had delayed granting permission to it.
- China had confirmed the arrival of the WHO team, ending the uncertainty and delay which drew sharp criticism from the world health body.

#### **4. Japan aerospace agency to launch H3 rocket in 2021**

- Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) on January 11 announced the launch its new flagship rocket H3 or next-generation transportation technologies that aimed at achieving high flexibility, high reliability, and high-cost performance. Japan's H3 is aimed to target a fleet line up with two or three first-stage engines (LE-9), and zero, two, or four solid rocket boosters (SRB-3) that will deal with payload sizes and orbits.
- The H3 rocket of Japan is a successor to H-IIA and H-IIB expendable launch rockets the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) uses to launch satellites into space. The rockets were operated by Mitsubishi Industries and lifted off from the Tanegashima Space Center in Japan.

#### **5. France hosts One Planet Summit aimed at protecting global biodiversity**

- World leaders met for an online One Planet Summit to discuss climate change and the preservation of biodiversity and ecosystems.
- The one-day event had been scheduled to take place in the southern French port city of Marseille in 2020, but was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- Diplomacy on climate issues took a back seat last year as countries worldwide struggled to contain the pandemic and its economic effects.
- During a video address at the conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that countries around the world need to protect biodiversity and natural habitats by acting "not whenever, but right now," warning that the consequences of environmental degradation will soon be irreversible.

### **New Appointments and Person in News**

#### **1. Mike Pompeo to Designate Yemen's Houthi Rebels as Terrorist Group**

- Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had announced that he will designate Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels as a "foreign terrorist organization" as time runs down on the Trump administration. The designation will take effect on Jan. 19, one day before president-elect Joe Biden takes office.

- In addition to the Houthi designation, Pompeo in coming days is also expected to likely re-designate Cuba as a “state sponsor of terrorism,” according to several administration officials.
- Both moves will impose or re-impose sanctions on the targets and may complicate the incoming Biden administration’s diplomacy.

## **2. Home Minister Amit Shah launches 'Single Window Clearance System' for coal mines**

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the 'Single Window Clearance System', an online platform to obtain clearances for smooth operationalisation of coal mines.
- Speaking at the launch, Home Minister Amit Shah said the country has reached a position where the coal sector can be the biggest contributor towards the target of India becoming a USD 5 trillion economy by 2025. He said despite having the world's fourth-largest coal reserves, India is importing coal and this is not right for the country.

## **3. Suriname's President Chandrikapersad Santokhi to be Chief Guest at Republic Day 2021**

- After UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson called-off his India visit in light of the new strain of coronavirus in that country, the Indian-origin President of Republic of Suriname, Chandrikapersad Santokhi, is likely to be the chief guest at India's Republic Day parade on January 26.
- Earlier this week, he was the chief guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, where he delivered a keynote address and had expressed willingness to end visa permits between India and Suriname, advocating for a free movement of people between the two countries.
- He had also underlined the strategic importance of ties between the two countries and said that Suriname was a part of India's soft power and vice versa.
- Santokhi was sworn-in as the President of Suriname in July, 2020 after his party - Progressive Reform Party won the elections and ended the dictatorship of Dési Bouterse.

## **4. Nitin Gadkari launched eco-friendly, non-toxic paint developed by KVIC**

- 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 and anti-bacterial properties. Based on cow dung as its main ingredient, the paint is cost-effective and odorless, and has been certified by Bureau of Indian Standards.

- Khadi Prakritik Paint is available in two forms - distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint. Production of Khadi Prakritik Paint is aligned with Prime Minister's vision of increasing farmers' income.

### **5. Jay Shah to be India's official representative at ICC board meetings**

- Jay Shah the Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India will now officially represent India in all of the International Cricket Council's meetings. The decision was taken in the 89th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) held in Ahmedabad.
- However, the former India captain recently suffered a heart ailment for which he underwent angioplasty and is being monitored by a team of doctors at his home in Kolkata.
- The Board member also divulged details about one of the most important issues of tax exemption for the ICC World Cups, two of which are scheduled to be hosted in India in 2021 and 2023. The ICC has asked the Indian board to get a full tax exemption for the tournament from the Indian government.

### **6. Naveen Patnaik inaugurated India's first 'Fire Park' in Bhubaneswar**

- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on 12th January, 2021 inaugurated the 'Fire Park', a first of its kind initiative in the country, to bring awareness on fire safety measures. He also launched a dynamic online portal, 'AgnishamaSeva' of Odisha Fire Service on virtual platform.
- Located inside the premises of the Odisha Fire and Disaster Academy in Bhubaneswar, the Fire Park will be open to the public every Saturday from 3.30 pm to 5.30 pm.
- The Chief Minister said that the Fire Park will go a long way in educating and improving awareness on basic fire safety measures among the people, particularly the students. "It is no doubt an effort in the right direction to create a safety compliant citizenry," he said.

### **7. Sadyr Japarov wins the presidential election in Kyrgyzstan**

- The front runner in Kyrgyzstan's presidential election, Sadyr Japarov, has won by a landslide, official results show.
- 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.
- Kyrgyzstan has been in crisis since parliamentary elections last October.
- The results of those elections were disputed, leading to protests and the resignation of then-President Sooronbay Jeenbekov.



- In a victory speech at his campaign headquarters in the capital Bishkek, Mr Japarov promised to rule the country with an open government free of corruption.

## **8. Donald Trump becomes first US President to be impeached twice**

- President Donald Trump was impeached by the U.S. House on a single charge of incitement of insurrection for his role in a riot by his supporters that left five dead and the Capitol ransacked, putting an indelible stain on his legacy with only a week left in his term.
- He was impeached by 232 - 197 vote by US House on single charge of incitement of insurrection that left 5 dead and the Capitol ransacked.
- It was supported by all Democrats and 10 Republicans, including Liz Cheney, the third-ranking GOP leader in the House.

## **BANKING**

### **1. Icra forecasts India's real GDP to expand by 10.1% in FY22**

- India's real GDP is projected to record a growth of 10.1 per cent in 2021-22, according to Icra Ratings. The seemingly-sharp expansion will be led by the continued normalisation in economic activities as the rollout of Covid-19 vaccines gathers traction and the low base, it said.
- Icra's Principal Economist Aditi Nayar expects a multi-speed recovery in the next fiscal, with the contact-intensive sectors, discretionary consumption and investment by the private sector trailing the rest of the economy. The agency further said that the headline CPI inflation is expected to decline to 4.6 per cent in 2021-22 from 6.4 per cent in 2020-21. It also forecasts that the central bank will maintain an extended pause for the repo rate.

### **2. 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. The Centre has received permission for the same from both houses of parliament.
- The decision has been taken as several people (approximately 100) would be required to stay at the printing press for around a fortnight amid the COVID-19 fear.
- They are needed to stay on till the documents are printed, sealed and delivered on the day of the budget. However, this time the finance ministry has decided not to keep them in the printing press and make soft copies available to all members of the parliament.


### 3. RBI cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra to carry on banking business, with effect from the close of business on January 11.
- The Commissioner for Cooperation and Registrar of Cooperative Societies (RCS), Maharashtra has also been requested to issue an order for winding up the bank and appoint a liquidator for the bank. The RBI said the bank has failed to comply with the requirements and continuance of the bank is prejudicial to the interests of its depositors.
- The bank, with its present financial position, would be unable to pay its present depositors in full and it is necessary for public interest and for preventing the affairs of the bank being conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of its depositors to wind up the affairs of the bank, the RBI said.

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### 4. IRDAI Constitutes Panel of Experts, under Subhash Chandra Khuntia, to examine availability of health insurance products

- Insurance regulator IRDAI has set up a panel of experts called ‘Health Insurance Advisory Committee’ to examine the availability of health insurance products in the country, considering the need of the Indian society and recommend suitable products and processes.
- The expert committee will be headed by IRDAI Chairperson, Subhash Chandra Khuntia and will have a Member (Non-Life) as the vice-chairperson.

### 5. RBI forms working group on digital lending as frauds come into sharp focus

- With frauds in digital lending space coming into sharp focus, the Reserve Bank of India has set up a working group to study digital lending activities of the regulated and unregulated players. The group will suggest steps to regulate digital lending including online lending platform and mobile lending.
- The six-member panel comprised of four RBI internal and two external members is expected to submit its report within three months.
- The group will evaluate digital lending activities and assess the penetration and standards of outsourced digital lending activities in RBI regulated entities

## **SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE**

### **1. IREDA inks MoU with NHPC to provide technical expertise in green energy projects for 5 years**

- Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA), under administrative control of Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE), today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NHPC Ltd., the PSU under Ministry of Power, for providing its technical expertise in developing renewable energy projects.
- Under the (MoU), IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency & conservation projects for NHPC.
- For this, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial investigation and review of Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency & conservation projects for NHPC.
- The MoU will facilitate knowledge and technology transfer and provide consultancy & research services, which will contribute towards overall sustainable development of the country.

### **2. Air India All-Women's Team Creates History By Flying On World's Longest Air Route**

- The Air india all-women pilot team is creating history as they will cover the longest air route on Saturday. The flight will depart from San Francisco in the USA at 8.30 pm (local time) and it will land at the Kempegowda International Airport at 3.45 am (local time) on Monday.
- Air India Captain Zoya Agarwal will be commanding the inaugural flight AI176, which will cover the longest aerial distance between San Francisco and Bengaluru.
- An all-women pilot crew will operate the flight from San Fransico to Bengaluru for the first time.

- The Civil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri tweeted about the inaugural flight that will cover the longest aerial distance of 16,000 kilometers.

### **3. Arunachal Pradesh to become India's prime producer of vanadium, a high-value metal used in strengthening steel.**

- Arunachal Pradesh, considered a sleeping hydropower giant, could be India's prime producer of vanadium, a high-value metal used in strengthening steel and titanium.
- Exploration being carried out by Geological Survey of India (GSI) has placed the eastern Himalayan State on the vanadium map of the country and geologists are confident of identifying a deposit soon.
- India is a significant consumer of vanadium but is not a primary producer of the strategic metal. It is recovered as a by-product from the slag collected from the processing of vanadiferous magnetite ores (iron ore), GSI officials said.
- India consumed 4% of about 84,000 metric tonnes of vanadium produced across the globe in 2017. China, which produces 57% of the world's vanadium, consumed 44% of the metal.

### **4. MoRTH notifies rules for facilitating renewal of International driving licence while travelling abroad**

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a notification on 7th Jan 2021 to facilitate the issuance of International Driving Permit (IDP) for Indian citizens whose IDP has expired while they are abroad.
- There was no mechanism for its renewal while citizens were abroad and their IDP had expired.
- Now, with this amendment, it is proposed that Indian citizens can apply for renewal through the Indian Embassies / Missions abroad, from where these applications would move to the VAHAN portal in India, to be considered by the respective RTOs.
- IDP would be couriered to the citizen at his/her address abroad by the respective RTOs.
- This notification also removes the conditions of a Medical Certificate and a valid visa at the time of making the request for the IDP in India.
- The idea is that a citizen who has a valid driving licence should not have a requirement for another medical certificate.

### **5. India to get UN tag of international disaster response force for NDRF**

- India could soon be a part of the United Nations (UN) mandated international disaster rescue operations as its country's federal contingency force, NDRF, is expected to obtain a globally recognised standardisation later this year.

- The authorisation will be done by the Switzerland-headquartered INSARAG (or the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group) which is a network of more than 90 countries and organisations under the UN umbrella to deal with urban search and rescue related issues.
- An INSARAG committee, comprising Australian and Singaporean experts, has conducted preliminary review of NDRF teams in September, 2019, but the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic put the process on a back burner for a while.
- The National Disaster Response Force was raised in 2006 to undertake specific tasks of relief and rescue during natural and manmade disasters or life threatening situations.

## **6. LiDAR (Aerial Ground) survey starts on Delhi - Varanasi bullet train project**

- The proposed plan for Delhi-Varanasi High Speed Rail corridor will connect the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi with major cities like Mathura, Agra, Etawah, Lucknow, Raebareli, Prayagraj, Bhadohi, Varanasi and Ayodhya.
- The proposed Delhi Varanasi High-Speed Rail(DVHSR) corridor with a length of about 800 km gained momentum.
- The LiDAR (Aerial Ground)survey for Delhi-Varanasi High Speed Rail Corridor started from Greater Noida where a helicopter fitted with state of art Aerial LiDAR and Imagery sensors took the first flight and captured the data related to ground survey.

## **7. Indian Navy coordinated largest coastal defence exercise Sea Vigil-21**

- The second edition of the biennial pan-India coastal defence exercise ‘Sea Vigil-21’ has been organised on 12-13 January 2021 by the Indian Navy. The two-day exercise involving all stakeholders, states and Central government agencies will set the tempo of operations, including “transition from peace to conflict”.
- The exercise, inaugural edition of which was conducted in January 2019, will be undertaken along the entire 7,516-km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India. It will involve all 13 coastal states and Union Territories along with other maritime stakeholders, including the fishing and coastal communities.
- The entire coastal security set up was reorganised after the 26/11 Terror attack at Mumbai which was launched via the sea route.

## **8. India-Vietnam Hold 13th Defence Security Dialogue To Review Progress In Cooperation**

- Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar on January 12 co-chaired the 13th India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue with Vietnamese Sr Lt Gen Nguyen

Chi Vinh and Deputy Defence Minister, Socialist Republic of Vietnam. During the virtual interaction, both the Defence Secretary and Vietnam's Deputy Defence Minister expressed that they are satisfied with the ongoing defence cooperation between the nations despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The official statement by the Ministry of Defence, it said that both sides exchanged views executing the plans discussed in Virtual Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnamese counterpart Nguyen Xuan Phuc in December 2020.

### **9. NIC and CBSE to launch CollabCAD to provide solutions for students and faculty of engineering graphics curriculum**

- National Informatics Centre (NIC) along with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) are jointly launching CollabCAD software, a collaborative network, computer-enabled software system, providing a total engineering solution from 2D drafting and detailing to 3D product design for students and faculty of engineering graphics curriculum.
- NIC, CBSE and Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog will also jointly release a comprehensive e-book on CollabCAD 3D modeling. This ebook 1.0 is ready for public release through the CollabCAD portal and will guide CAD students, beginners, and professionals in understanding and using CollabCAD software. It is designed and authored by the CollabCAD Group of NIC, New Delhi.

### **10. ICT Grand Challenge for development of 'smart water supply measurement and monitoring system' underway**

- An ICT Grand Challenge for development of a 'smart water supply measurement and monitoring system' is underway. It was launched on the 15th of September, 2020 by National Jal Jeevan Mission in partnership with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Currently, 10 applicants which were selected are developing prototypes. They will be evaluated in the last week of January wherein best four techno-economically viable prototypes will be selected for product development.

## **Books and Awards**

### **1. The Book "Modi India Calling – 2021" Released on the occasion of 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas**

- Recently on the occasion of 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, a coffee table book named "Modi India Calling – 2021" was released.

- A coffee table book filled with over hundreds of photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from his "107 overseas and bilateral visits" was released here on the eve of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) on Friday.
- The book, titled "Modi India Calling - 2021", is the brainchild of senior BJP leader Vijay Jolly. It was released by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta at the Press Club of India.

## 2. A book titled “The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India” by Ex-CEC ‘S Y Quraishi’ released

- Former chief election commissioner (CEC) S Y Quraishi has come out with his book titled “The Population Myth: Islam, Family Planning and Politics in India”.
- The book will hit the stands on February 15, 2021. It has been published by HarperCollins India.
- The book evaluates India’s demographics from a religious perspective and seeks to demolish two basic myths that ‘Islam is against family planning’ and ”Muslim rate of growth” is linked to capture political power.

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## 3. Najma Heptulla Releases book titled "Making of a General-A Himalayan Echo"

- Manipur Governor Dr Najma Heptulla released a book titled “Making of a General-A Himalayan Echo” virtually on January 8, 2021.
- The book has been authored by (Retd) Lt. General Konsam Himalay Singh, in which he has conveyed his dreams and views as well as also highlighted about Manipur, the “Land of Emeralds”.
- “Making of a General’ is the memoir of Lt Gen (Dr) Himalay Singh who has traced his journey from a small village in Manipur to becoming the first person from North East India to hold the rank of a Three Star General of the Indian Army.

## **SPORTS**

### **1. Mohammed Siraj allegedly referred to as ‘Brown Dog’, ‘Big Monkey’ by Aussie fans in third test match**

- India pacer Mohammed Siraj was called a “Brown Dog” and “Big Monkey” in a series of racist slurs hurled by a group of Australian spectators, who were ejected from the Sydney Cricket Ground during the third Test on Sunday, a BCCI official has alleged.
- Siraj and his senior teammate Jasprit Bumrah were also subjected to racist slurs on Saturday, something that the Indian team management officially reported to ICC Match Referee David Boon.
- On Sunday, during the 86th over of the Australian second innings, Siraj was seen walking from his position in the deep and talking to the square-leg umpire before the straight umpire and other senior players joined the discussion.

### **2. SPO from Ladakh "Jigmet Dolma" wins 4th position in Dhaka Marathon 2021**

- Jigmet Dolma from India secured fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021 organised on Sunday. Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police.
- The marathon was organized to commemorate the return of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from Pakistan jail to Bangladesh in 1972. Two more women runners from India and a total of 8 athletes participated in the marathon.
- 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.
- The full marathon covered 42.19 kilometres while the half marathon covered 21.09 kilometers. Athletes from all over the world including India, Morocco, Kenya, France, Nepal, Ethiopia among others participated in various categories of the event.

### **3. 13-day Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth festival 2021 to begin from Jan 18**

- The UT administration is promoting far-flung and snowbound Zaskar as winter tourism destination. A 13-day Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sport & Youth festival 2021 to begin from 18th January.
- AIR correspondent reports that after Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal convinced the Union Sports Minister Kirren Rijiju about the potential for



various winter activities to promote tourism and economic activities in Zanskar, the tourism department of UT administration is conducting a festival.

- Starting from 18th till 30th January , Chadar Trek on Zanskar river, meditation, yoga, ice skating, Hockey, snow skieing, climbing, traditional Archery, snow scooter, biking, Yak and horse riding, Snow sculpturing and food and cultural festivals.

## **OBITUARIES**

### **1. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's niece Chitra Ghosh passes away**

- Chitra Ghosh, author, professor and social worker passed away on January 07, 2021 at the age of 90.
- Ghosh was born to Sarat Chandra and Bivabati Bose and her uncle was the legendary freedom fighter, Subhash Chandra Bose. Though not as well known as her uncle, she has served her country in many ways.
- She was a teacher- and was a lecturer in Calcutta University, Jadavpur University and the Netaji Institute for Asian Studies in Calcutta.
- She was trained as a social scientist and became President of the Political Science Association, whic would work to maintain human rights, especially for women. She also did similar work with the United Nations.

### **2. Vice President expresses grief on passing away of veteran journalist Turlapati Kutumba Rao**

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has expressed grief on the passing away of veteran journalist Turlapati Kutumba Rao.
- He was known for his service to journalism in Telugu language.
- He has written over 4000 biographies and delivered over 16000 public speeches that has been recorded by Telugu Book of Records as a world record.

### **3. Neil Sheehan, Pentagon Papers reporter, Vietnam war author, died at 84**

- Neil Sheehan, a reporter and Pulitzer Prize winning author who broke the story of the Pentagon Papers for The New York Times, and who chronicled the deception at the heart of the Vietnam War in his epic book about the conflict. He was 84.
- Sheehan died of complications from Parkinsons disease, said his daughter Catherine Sheehan Bruno.
- His account of the Vietnam War, ‘A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam’, took him 15 years to write. The 1988 book won the Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction.

#### 4. Padma Shri D. Prakash Rao dies in Odisha at 63

- Noted social activist D. Prakash Rao died on 13th January, 2021 at the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack. He was 63.
- Rao succumbed to a brain stroke at 4.15 p.m., SCB Medical College Hospital Emergency Officer B.N. Mohaparan said.
- “My father was under treatment at the SCB Medical College Hospital for 20 days and passed away this afternoon,” his daughter Bhanupriya said.
- The hospital official said Rao was admitted after he tested positive for COVID-19, but had later recovered from the disease. However, his condition worsened after he developed certain neurological ailments.
- Rao, a Padma Shri, was known for his contribution towards imparting education to slum and orphan children in Cuttack.

### Important News

#### 1. World Hindi Day 2021: 10 January

- The World Hindi Day is celebrated annually on January 10 since 2006 to promote the language at the global stage.
- Hindi is considered to be the mother language of India. It is the simplest source of expression of our nation. It is our heritage and the most widely spoken language across the country. The word Hindi originated from the Persian word Hind, meaning the land of the Indus river.
- Apart from India, the language is also spoken in Nepal, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Fiji, and Mauritius. Therefore, to promote the Hindi language all around the world, International Hindi Day or World Hindi Day is celebrated every year.

#### 2. National Youth Day 2021: 12 January

- National Youth Day is celebrated in India every year on 12 January to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The main aim behind this is to make sure that the students across the country can be encouraged to learn about the life, the ideas and philosophy of Swami Vivekananda and apply them in their lives.
- The day was declared by the Government of India in 1984 while the event was first celebrated in 1985.
- In 2021, we are observing 158th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekanand (12 January 1863).
- The theme for National Youth Day 2021 is 'YUVAAH – Utsah Naye Bharat Ka.'

#### 3. Armed Forces Veterans Day 2021: 14 January

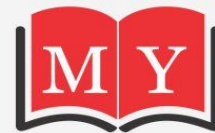
- Indian Armed Forces celebrated Veteran's Day on 14 Jan 2021. The day was chosen as recognition of the services rendered by the first Commander-in-Chief of Indian Armed Forces, Field Marshal KM Cariappa, who retired on this day in 1953.
- Honourable Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh along with Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat will be attending the Veteran's Meet at Air Force Station, Bengaluru.
- Celebrations in the National Capital will begin in the morning with the Wreath Laying Ceremony at National War Memorial. Senior military dignitaries, selected serving personnel and many veterans will be paying homage at the National War Memorial.

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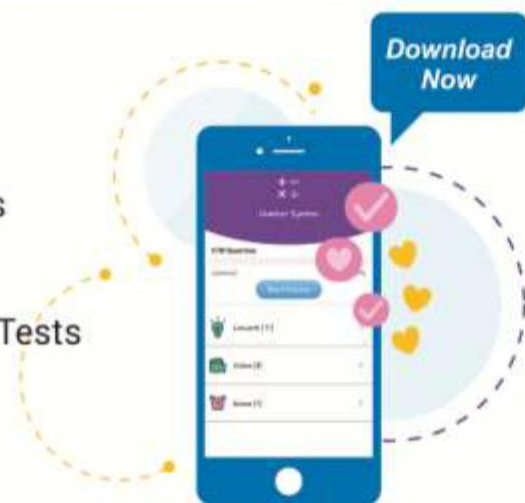
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