



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

18 January 2021

### Today's Important News

Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw selected as one of US-India Business Council's vice-chair

#### **1. Kiran-Mazumdar-Shaw selected as one of US-India Business Council's Vice-chair**

- US-India Business Council (USIBC) has selected Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw as one of its vice-chairs effective immediately. US Chamber of Commerce's USIBC on January 14 announced three vice-chairs to its 2021 Global Board of Directors. The two other business executives joining Shaw as vice-chairs are Amway CEO Milind Pant and Edward Knight who is the vice-chair at Nasdaq.
- USIBC has strengthened its leadership team as it plans to work with the new Joe Biden-led US administration. The Council advocates for strengthening US-India commercial relationship for the future. The three new appointees will now work with USIBC President Nisha Biswal and the Council's policy directors. Their aim is to elevate priorities in important sectors and also to lead meetings between the government and the industries, USIBC explained in a press release.



**Foot Notes:**

**About US:**

**President elect:** Joe Biden

**Capital:** Washington, D.C.

**President:** Donald Trump

## 2. Indian Embassy in China restricts Republic Day flag hoisting ceremony to staff due to COVID-19 measures

- The Indian Embassy here on Monday announced that the flag hoisting ceremony for this year's Republic Day on January 26 will be confined to its staff only, citing the resurgence of coronavirus cases in provinces adjoining Beijing and related restrictions.
- In view of the COVID-19 pandemic-related current scenario in Beijing and its adjoining provinces, Hebei and Heilongjiang and related measures, including restriction of movements, observation of prevention and control measures and prohibition of large gatherings, the flag hoisting ceremony will be held with participation of officials of embassy only, a note from the embassy said.
- Every year, a large number of Indian diaspora in Beijing and nearby provinces attend the flag hoisting ceremony on the Republic Day and Independence Day at the embassy.



### Foot Notes:

#### About China:

**Currency:** Renminbi

**Capital:** Beijing

**President:** Xi Jinping

## 3. PM announces Rs 1,000-crore startup India seed fund

- The government will launch a Rs 1,000-crore seed fund for startups, called Startup India Seed Fund, which will help startups with the initial capital for growth and operations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.
- “Going ahead, the government will provide guarantees to help startups raise debt-capital. We are trying to build a startup ecosystem which functions on the ‘of the youth, by the youth, for the youth’ mantra,” the Prime Minister said, speaking at the Prarambh Startup India International Summit in an online address.
- During the address, Modi said the target for India’s startups over the next five years should be to become global giants in their respective service areas.



## 4. Google Doodle honours the legacy of Basketball inventor Dr James Naismith

- Google Doodle has decided to honour the illustrious legacy of Dr James Naismith, a professor, who was also a physical educator, doctor and a coach, on Friday. In 1891, Dr Naismith invented the game of Basketball. He announced the game and wrote its original rules in the pages of a Springfield College newspaper, 'The Triangle'.
- The game, which has the most followed and watched sporting league around the world - NBA - has grown into a colossal phenomenon since then.
- Naismith, who did his bachelors in Physical Education from McGill University, was an instructor at the YMCA International Training College in Springfield, Massachusetts. The new instructor was given a task to engage his students and keep them away from chilling England winters. Thus, the game came into being with a soccer ball and ten rules, while being provided with two baskets.



### Foot Notes:

#### About Google:

CEO: Sundar Pichai

Founded: 4 September 1998

Founders: Larry Page, Sergey Brin



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### 5. PM Modi flags off 8 trains to boost connectivity to Statue of Unity

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday flagged off eight trains from various parts of the country connecting to Kevadiya in Gujarat, where the Statue of Unity is located, in a bid to increase tourism in the belt.



- Addressing the video conference, Modi said, “In the history of Indian Railways, for the first time, so many trains from various corners of the country have been flagged off for one place. After all, Kevadiya is a place that has its identity with someone who has united the country and given the message of ‘Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat’.

**Foot Notes:**

**About Gujarat:**

**Capital:** Gandhinagar

**Governor:** Acharya Devvrat

**Chief Minister:** Vijay Rupani

**6. US designates UAE, Bahrain as ‘major strategic partners’**

- The United States has designated the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain as its major strategic partners, the White House announced, amid preparations for a transition from the Donald Trump administration to that of President-elect Joe Biden.
- The announcement was made by White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany here.
- “Today, we are announcing the designation of both the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain as ‘Major Security Partners’ of the United States,” McEnany said on Friday.
- The designation of a ‘Major Security Partner’ is a status unique to the UAE and the Kingdom of Bahrain, she added.



**Foot Notes:**

**About UAE:**

**Capital:** Abu Dhabi

**Currency:** United Arab Emirates dirham

**President:** Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

**About Bahrain:**

**Capital:** Manama

**Currency:** Bahraini dinar

**Prime Minister:** Salman, Crown Prince of Bahrain

**7. 'Indian Army Losing More Personnel In Suicides Than Enemy Action': Study**

- "The Indian armed forces have been losing over 100 soldiers every year due to suicides and fratricides leading to the "grim reality" of one soldier dying every third day," the study states.
- The Indian Army has been losing more personnel every year in suicides and untoward incidents than in any enemy action and more than half of its soldiers seem to be under severe stress at present, a study by think tank United Service Institution of India (USI) has revealed.
- "Prolonged exposure of Indian Army personnel to CI (counter- insurgency)/CT (counter-terrorism) environment has been one of the contributory factors for increased stress levels," research undertaken by Col A K Mor, Senior Research Fellow at the USI during 2019-20 states.



#### Foot Notes:

##### About Indian Army:

**Chief of Army Staff:** M.M.Naravane

**Commander-in-chief:** President Ram Nath Kovind

#### 8. Biswajit Chatterjee awarded 'Indian Personality of the Year' at IFFI

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Prakash Javadekar, announced a new 'Indian Personality of the Year' award, which he announced was being conferred upon veteran actor, director and singer Biswajit Chatterjee.
- Chatterjee will be presented the award in March, along with winners of the National Film Awards.
- IFFI also chose Bangladesh as the country in focus for this year.
- To mark the 100th birth anniversary of Bangladesh's first president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, India and Bangladesh will be co-producing a film titled 'Bangabandhu'.
- The 'Lifetime Achievement' this year was given to Italian cinematographer Vittorio Storaro.



#### Foot Notes:

##### About IFFI:

**Awards:** Golden Peacock Award

**Founded:** 24 January 1952

#### 9. Sporting facilities to be named after renowned athletes

- Sports Ministry has decided to name all upcoming and upgraded sporting facilities of the Sports Authority of India, after renowned athletes, who have contributed to sports in India. In the first leg, the newly built air-conditioned wrestling hall and the learners swimming pool in the National Centre of Excellence, NOCE in Lucknow, the 100-bedded hostel in NCOE Bhopal, the multipurpose hall and Girls' hostel in NCOE Sonapat will be named after local star sportspersons.
- Speaking about the decision, Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju said, to build a sports culture in the country, it is important that our sportspersons get the honour that they deserve. He said, the government is already providing all support to present and even past athletes to ensure that they have a life of comfort and dignity. Acknowledging their contribution to sports by naming sporting facilities after them is yet another endeavour of the Government to strengthen its commitment to sportspersons.



#### **10. Legendary classical musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passes away at 89**

- Renowned Indian classical musician Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan passed away at the age of 89 on Sunday afternoon at his residence here, his family said.
- Khan's daughter-in-law Namrata Gupta Khan told that the veteran breathed his last at 12.37 pm at his Bandra home.
- "He was fine in the morning... but during his massage he vomited. His eyes were shut and he was breathing slowly. I tried connecting to doctors but by the time they came, he had already died," Namrata said.
- She said the family is in shock due to Khan's sudden demise as he was keeping well. The musician was going to turn 90 on March 3.
- Khan had suffered a brain stroke in 2019 that left one side of his body paralysed.



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