



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

17 January 2021

### Today's Important News

India will not have foreign head of state as Chief Guest for Republic Day 2021

#### 1. India will not have foreign head of state as Chief Guest for Republic Day 2021

- India will not invite any foreign dignitary to be the Chief Guest at the upcoming Republic Day celebrations, the Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs said.
- Addressing the weekly press briefing, Anurag Srivastava said the decision was prompted by the global pandemic which has intensified in several countries.
- "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," said Mr. Srivastava.



#### 2. North Korea unveils new submarine-launched ballistic missile

- A new type of submarine-launched ballistic missile was part of weapons displayed at a military parade in North Korea.
- The parade, held in the capital Pyongyang's Kim Il-sung Square to celebrate the eighth congress of the ruling Workers' Party, was attended by Kim and other senior officials, according to the Korean Central News Agency.
- The eight-day meeting that wrapped up on Tuesday was held for the first time since 2016 to prepare the country's strategy for the next five years.
- The congress also elected Kim as the general secretary of the ruling party.



#### Foot Notes:

**About North Korea:**

**Capital:** Pyongyang

**Supreme leader:** Kim Jong-un

**Currency:** North Korean won

### 3. Kite festival Shakrain celebrated in Dhaka

- The traditional festival of Shakrain was celebrated in several parts of Dhaka on Thursday.
- On this occasion, people engaged in kite flying and fireworks among many other recent additions like 'DJ Party' to celebrate this occasion. The kite flying competition is followed by winter cake festival -- pithapuli in which rice cake pudding is eaten by people.
- This is a centuries-old tradition in several parts of Bangladesh celebrated on the last day of the Bengali month of Paush. People in the old Dhaka city of Shakhari Bazar, Laxmibazar, Bangshal and Sutrapur among others celebrated this festival with great joy.



#### Foot Notes:

**About Bangladesh:**

**Capital:** Dhaka

**Currency:** Bangladeshi taka

**President:** Abdul Hamid



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### 4. PM Modi launched World's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive in the country

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination program through video conferencing.
- A total of 3006 session sites across all states and union territories has been virtually connected during the launch.
- The drive aims to first inoculate millions of its healthcare and frontline workers and reach an estimated 3 crore people by the end of its first phase
- The body will develop immunity against the corona only 2 weeks after the second dose.



### 5. Govt brings forward target of 20% ethanol-blending with gasoline by 2025

- India plans to achieve 20% ethanol-blending with gasoline by 2025, five years ahead of its previous target, to help reduce its dependence on costly oil imports.
- In 2020, the government had set a target of reaching 10% ethanol-blending by 2022 – meaning 10% of ethanol mixed with 90% of gasoline – and 20% by 2030.
- India relies on foreign suppliers to meet more than 80% of its demand.



#### 6. Petroleum & Natural Gas Ministry launches SAKSHAM campaign to spread awareness about green energy

- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry today launched month-long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about green and clean energy. The pan-India campaign will focus on adoption of cleaner fuels. The Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Tarun Kapoor launched the campaign in New Delhi.
- The campaign will spread awareness about seven key drivers that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently mentioned. They include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive bio-fuels and increased use of electric vehicles.



#### Foot Notes:

**About Petroleum & Natural Gas Ministry:**

**Union Minister:** Dharmendra Pradhan

#### 7. Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah lays the foundation stone of 97th Battalion of Rapid Action Force at Bhadravathi in Karnataka

- The Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah laid the foundation stone of 97th Battalion of Rapid Action Force (RAF) at Bhadravathi in Shivamogga district of Karnataka. On this occasion Union Minister of Coal & Mines and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Pralhad Joshi, Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, Deputy Chief Ministers Govind Karajol and Dr. Ashwath Narayan, Home Minister of Karnataka, Shri Basavaraj Bommai, CRPF Director General Dr. AP Maheshwari including senior Central and State Government Officers were present.
- The Union Home Minister said that this Battalion will always stand shoulder to shoulder with the people for peacekeeping throughout Southern India and within the region up to Goa. Shri Amit Shah informed that the Karnataka Government has allotted about 50 acres of land for its construction to be undertaken at a cost of about Rupees 230 crores. The administration block, residential lines, hospital, Central School as well as Sports Stadium will be constructed here. Shri Shah said that today with the foundation stone of the 97th Battalion, a new chapter has been added in the history of the RAF.



#### Foot Notes:

**About Karnataka:**

**Capital:** Bengaluru (Executive Branch)

**Governor:** Vajubhai Vala

**Chief Minister:** B. S. Yediyurappa

#### 8. ICICI Bank ties up with Niyto to issue prepaid cards to MSMEs

- ICICI Bank has tied up with Niyto, a new age fintech, to issue prepaid cards to workers of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs will now be able to get 'ICICI Bank



Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' powered by Visa, for their blue-collar workers, who are mostly under-banked. With this, MSMEs can upload the salaries of their workers on the card, which the workers can then utilise as per their need in a seamless manner.

- The 'ICICI Bank Niyo Bharat Payroll Card' allows an individual to receive funds up to Rs.1 lakh into the card account. It offers convenience and safety of digital banking to the blue-collar workforce while providing a state-of-the-art salary disbursement solution to the employers.

**Foot Notes:**

**About ICICI:**

**CEO:** Sandeep Bakhshi

**Headquarters:** Mumbai

**Founded:** June 1994, Vadodara

**9. Varun Kapur, Samiya Imad Farooqui and 4 other Indians shuttlers confirm Top-10 spots in latest world junior rankings of BWF**

- In badminton, promising Indian shuttlers Varun Kapur and Samiya Imad Farooqui along with four other Indians have confirmed Top-10 spots in the latest world junior rankings of Badminton World Federation (BWF).
- Starting 2021 on a high, Varun moved four places ahead in the men's rankings while Samiya took a six-spot jump as the youngsters achieved their career-best junior rankings and became World No. 2.
- Varun had a great run last year as he picked his sixth junior title when he won the XII Portuguese International-2020 in November. While the 17-year-old Hyderabad, a U-15 Asian Badminton Championship winner, Samiya has been one of the consistent performers at the junior circuit.



**Foot Notes:**

**About BWF:**

**Headquarters:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Founded:** 5 July 1934

**President:** Poul-Erik Høyer Larsen

**Formation:** 1934

**10. Former Union minister Kamal Morarka passes away at the age of 74**

- Kamal Morarka, a former Minister in the Chandra Shekhar government and ex-Rajya Sabha MP from Rajasthan, has passed away after a brief illness. The 74-year-old leader, a businessman who was also a former BCCI vice president, breathed his last on Friday. He was 74.
- "He was fine till around 5 pm today, but passed away shortly afterwards owing to a heart attack," said Rajendra Sharma, one of Morarka's aides.
- Rajkumar Sharma, MLA from Nawalgarh in Rajasthan, tweeted, "Shocked at the demise of former Union Minister and famous industrialist of Nawalgarh, Shri Kamal Morarka ji. This is irreparable damage to all of us."



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