

January Week 2- 11/01/2021 to 17/01/2021

Important News: State

4th edition of Cherry Blossom Festival

- The 4th edition of the Cherry Blossom Festival, Mao area of Senapati district in Manipur was virtually inaugurated by Chief Minister N Biren Singh.
- It was jointly organized by the Department of Tourism and Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), Shillong in association with the Organizing Committee Flower Festival, Mao.
- **Note:** Manipur has been celebrating this festival every year since 2017.
- The International Cherry Blossom Festival which is celebrated in Shillong was cancelled too for the global pandemic. Japan is renowned for its Cherry Blossom Festival too.

Arunachal Pradesh can become India's prime producer of Vanadium

- In an exploration being carried out by the Geological Survey of India, the eastern Himalayan State has been placed on the vanadium map and geologists are confident of finding a deposit soon.
- **About Vanadium:** In its pure form, it is a grey, soft and ductile element primarily derived from mined iron ore, steel slag, and phyllites. It is a high-value metal that has been used in strengthening steel and titanium.
- **Note:** The largest deposits of Vanadium are in China, followed by South Africa and Russia.

Important News: India

Government of India's UJALA and SLNP completes six years of Illuminating India efficiently

- Launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on January 5, 2015, the Government of India's zero subsidy Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) and Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) marks their sixth anniversary.
- Both the programmes are being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under the Ministry of Power, Government of India since their inception.
- **Note:** EESL has an ambitious plan in the SLNP portfolio for next 4-5 years where it intends to bring investment to the tune of INR 8,000 crores by 2024 by covering the entire rural India. It is expected that more than 30 million LED streetlights would be retrofitted/installed by EESL.

National Youth Parliament Festival 2021



- The Finals of National Youth Parliament Festival (NYPF) 2021 was held in the Central Hall of Parliament.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Valedictory Function of National Youth Parliament Festival 2021.
- The objective of the National Youth Parliament Festival is to hear the voice of youth between 18 and less than 25 years of age, who will join various careers in coming years, including public services.
- The 2nd National Youth Parliament Festival 2021 was launched on 23rd of December 2020 across the country at district, state and national level.
- **Note:** The first NYPF 2019 was organised from 12 January to 27 February 2019 at District, State and National level.

51st International Film Festival of India (IFFI)

- From 16 January to 24 January, 2021, the 51st Edition of the International Film Festival of India is going to be held in Goa.
- On 11 January, 2021, the International Film Festival of India announced this edition's Country in Focus. **For the 51st IFFI, the Country in Focus is Bangladesh.**
- **About International Film Festival of India:** It was founded in 1952. It is conducted jointly by the Directorate of Film Festivals (under Ministry of Information and Broadcasting) and the state Government of Goa.

Suriname's Indian-origin President to be Chief Guest at Republic Day 2021

- Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Indian-origin President of Suriname, will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade on January 26, 2021.
- **Note:** The Suriname President was earlier the Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, which was conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- India had initially invited UK PM Boris Johnson to be the Republic Day Chief Guest but the British PM later decided to cancel his visit due to the escalating COVID-19 situation in the United Kingdom.

The Supreme Court stayed the implementation of the three farm laws and set up a committee

- The court formed a four-member committee of experts to listen to the grievances of the farmers on the farm laws and the views of the government and make recommendations.
- The committee will comprise agricultural economist Ashok Gulati, Pramod Kumar Joshi, Director South Asia International Food Policy Research Institute, Anil Ghanwat of the Sethkari Sangathan and B S Mann of the Bharatiya Kisan Union.
- **The laws whose implementation has been suspended are-** (i) The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (ii) Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 (iii) Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020



Heritage Conservation Committee approves construction of new parliament building

- A few days ago, the Supreme Court cleared the decks for the ambitious Central Vista Project, which covers a three-km stretch from Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate in Lutyens' Delhi, by upholding the environmental clearance and the notification for change in land use.
- Additional secretary of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry is the chairman of the Heritage Conservation Committee.
- **Note:** The Central Vista revamp, announced in September, 2019 envisages a new triangular Parliament building, with a seating capacity for 900 to 1,200 MPs that is to be constructed by August, 2022 when the country will be celebrating its 75th Independence Day. The common Central Secretariat is likely to be built by 2024 under the project.

Important News: World

India to chair 3 important committees of United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- India began its eighth term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC on January 4, 2021.
- The 3 key subsidiary bodies of UNSC are **Taliban Sanctions Committee** (also called the 1988 Sanctions Committee), **Counter Terrorism Committee** (for 2022) and **Libya Sanctions Committee**.

Economy

RBI cancels the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cancelled the licence of Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra with effect from the close of business on January 11, 2021.
- Consequent to the cancellation of its licence, Vasantdada Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd., Osmanabad, Maharashtra is prohibited from conducting the business of 'banking' which includes acceptance of deposits and repayment of deposits as defined in Section 5(b) read with Section 56 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 with immediate effect.

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.
- The Budget papers - the Union Budget and Economic Survey - will not get printed, soft copies will be provided.

“New Foreign Trade Policy 2021-2026” to be rolled out from April



- Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry said that India's new Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) 2021-2026, under formulation, will come into effect from April 1, 2021, for five years and will strive to make the country a leader in international trade.
- **Note:** District Export Hubs Initiative will be an important part of the new FTP.

Tesla incorporates fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru for its electric vehicles

- US-based Electric car maker, Tesla has incorporated a fully owned subsidiary in Bengaluru as a first step to set up an R&D unit and a manufacturing plant for its electric vehicles in the country.
- Tesla has registered its 100 percent subsidiary, as - Tesla India Motors and Energy Pvt Ltd, according to disclosures with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Award and Honor

Indian Railways bags 13 awards at the 'National Energy Conservation awards 2020'

- Indian Railway has bagged 13 awards in three prestigious categories of National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) for the year 2020, organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power.
- Some important awards are: In the transport category', Western Railway has been awarded the First Prize.
- In the Building Category, Divisional Railway Manager's offices at Bhavnagar have won the first prize.
- In Railway workshops subcategory, Diesel Loco Shed, South Central Railway, Vijayawada has bagged the First prize.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and family Welfare inaugurated the 5th National Kayakalp Awards

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India launched a National Initiative 'Kayakalp' on 15th May 2015 to ensure hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India.
- Some Important awards are: **AIIMS (All India Institutes of Medical Sciences) Bhubaneswar** has been adjudged as the best central government hospital under B category for cleanliness for third consecutive year. It had earlier received the award in 2018 as well as in 2019 for becoming the second cleanest hospital among category B hospitals.
- **JIPMER (Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research)** has been awarded the second prize for the year 2019-20. The award was for the category Group A Central government health facilities. JIPMER had bagged the second place in 2018-19 and third place in 2017-18.



Defense

Sea Vigil-21: Indian Navy 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.
- The exercise by the Indian Navy will be undertaken along the entire 7,516 km coastline and Exclusive Economic Zone of India.
- **Note:** The inaugural edition of the exercise was conducted in January 2019. This is a biennial exercise.

Cabinet approves Procurement of 83 Light Combat Aircrafts (LCA) 'Tejas' from HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Limited) for Indian Air Force

- The Cabinet has approved procurement of 73 LCA Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircrafts and 10 LCA Tejas Mk-1 Trainer aircrafts at the cost of Rs. 45,696 Crore along with Design and Development of Infrastructure sanctions worth Rs.1,202 Crore from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- It is the first "Buy (Indian-Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured)" category procurement of combat aircrafts with an indigenous content of 50% which will progressively reach 60% by the end of the programme.

New Appointment

Karan Bajwa to head Google Cloud in Asia Pacific

- Google Cloud announced the elevation of Karan Bajwa as its new leader for the Asia Pacific. Presently, Bajwa leads Google Cloud in India.
- Bajwa succeeds Rick Harshman.

A K Goswami sworn in as Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court

- Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan administered the oath of office to Justice Goswami.
- Justice Goswami was the Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court prior to his appointment as CJ of AP HC, in place of Justice J K Maheshwari, who was shifted to Sikkim.

The Union government has appointed R S Sharma, former TRAI chief, as the chairperson of an empowered committee for administration of Covid-19 vaccine

- A ten member team has been constituted to be headed by Sharma. Top health ministry and UIDAI officials are part of the empowered committee.
- **Note:** He has also been included as a member of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration of Covid-19 that was formed in August 2020 and is headed by Niti Aayog member, VK Paul.



Science & Technology

Khadi Prakritik Paint

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways Nitin Gadkari launched an innovative new paint – India’s first cow dung paint - developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- The eco-friendly, non-toxic paint, called “*Khadi Prakritik Paint*” is a first-of-its-kind product, with anti-fungal, anti-bacterial properties.
- It is available in two forms – distemper paint and plastic emulsion paint.
- **Note:** The project was conceptualized by Chairman KVIC in March 2020, and later developed by Kumarappa National Handmade Paper Institute, Jaipur (a KVIC unit).

ISRO to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs to promote education

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will adopt one hundred Atal Tinkering Labs across the country to promote education in the field of Space Education and Space Technology related innovations for school students.
- To foster entrepreneurship and innovation, Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog has established over seven thousand Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.

Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan dedicates coastal research vessel ‘Sagar Anveshika’ to Nation at Chennai Port Trust

- Sagar Anveshika will enable scientists to conduct various oceanographic research missions.
- Marine scientists can travel six kilometers below the sea and stay for more than 16 hours and can conduct research activities.
- **Note:** NIOT (National Institute of Ocean Technology) already has Research Vessels- Sagar Kanya, Sagar Sampada, Sagar Nidhi, Sagar Manjusha & Sagar Tara.

Health

Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1, India Report

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare released India Report on Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1.
- The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has undertaken the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India, through International Institute for Population Sciences, (IIPS), Mumbai in collaboration with Harvard School of Public Health, University of Southern California, USA, Dte.GHS, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and National Institute on Ageing.



- It is India's first and the world's largest ever survey that provides a longitudinal database for designing policies and programmes for the older population in the broad domains of social, health, and economic well-being.

Environment & Ecology

Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife approves advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict management

- The advisory envisages empowering gram panchayats in dealing with the problematic wild animals as per the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Utilising add-on coverage under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna for crop compensation against crop damage due to Human Wildlife Conflict and augmenting fodder and water sources within the forest areas are some key steps envisaged to reduce Human Wildlife Conflict and payment of a portion of ex-gratia as interim relief.
- **Note:** The National Board for Wildlife is constituted by the Central Government under Section 5 A of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

Euphranta siruvani -New species of fruit fly from India named after Siruvani in Western Ghats

- Euphranta siruvani is a new species of fruit fly in the family Tephritidae. This species is reported from the Siruvani which is an ecological hot spot located in the Western Ghats of India.
- This species has been collected from a non forest area near Siruvani in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, India. This species is differentiated from other species of Euphranta by the presence of a 'V' shaped black band on the wing.

Summits & Conference

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention on January 9, 2021

- The theme of the event was 'Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.
- The names of Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees **2020-2021** will also be announced.
- **Youth Pravasi Bhartiya Divas** was observed on the theme "**Bringing together Young Achievers from India and Indian Diaspora**" on 8 January 2021.
- **About Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD):** This day has its own significance as it is the day when Mahatma Gandhi returned from South Africa in 1915.
- *The first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or Non-Resident Indian Day was celebrated on 9 January, 2003. Its format has been revised since 2015 to celebrate the PBD once every two years.*



4th 'One Planet Summit' for biodiversity

- **The Summit was organized by France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank on January 11, 2021.**
- The summit's theme is "Let's act together for nature!"
- The Summit programme focused on biodiversity preservation: the protection of terrestrial and marine ecosystems, the promotion of agroecology, the mobilization of funding for biodiversity, and the link between deforestation, species and human health.

Ranking & Index

Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar released Management Effectiveness Evaluation (MEE) report of 146 National Park and Wildlife Sanctuaries in the country

- At present, India has a network of 903 Protected Areas covering about five percent of the total geographic area of the country.
- 70 percent of the global tiger population, 70 percent of Asiatic lions and more than 60 percent of leopard's population in country, is a certificate of India's thriving biodiversity.
- The Minister also announced that from this year onwards ten best National Parks, five Coastal and Marine parks and top five Zoos in the country will be ranked and awarded every year.
- Javadekar also launched the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian Zoos framework which proposes guidelines, criteria and indicators for evaluation of zoos of the country.

India ranks 85th in World's most powerful passports index 2021

- Henley Passport Index 2021 has revealed the list of the world's most powerful passports and India has been ranked 85th on it.
- India's passport got a visa-free score of 58, which means Indian passport holders can visit 58 countries without prior visa.
- **First rank-** Japan (191), **Second rank-** Singapore (190)
- Iraq and Afghanistan are the countries with the worst passport with score 28 and 26 respectively.

Important Days

January 10, World Hindi Day

- Hindi is not only the country's most-spoken language, but it is **the third most-spoken language in the world** with 615 million speakers after English, Mandarin, according to the UN.



- Every year on Jan 10, World Hindi Day is marked to commemorate the anniversary of the first World Hindi Conference that took place in 1975 in Nagpur, Maharashtra. The then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, had inaugurated the conference.
- The World Hindi Day was observed for the first time in 2006.
- **Note:** National Hindi Divas is celebrated annually on September 14.

January 12, National Youth Day

- National Youth Day is celebrated on 12 January being the birthday of Swami Vivekananda. In 1984 the Government of India declared this day as National Youth Day and since 1985 the event is celebrated in India every year.

Obituaries

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's niece Chitra Ghosh passes away

- Chitra Ghosh, the youngest daughter of Sarat Chandra Bose and niece of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, passed away.
- Professor Chitra Ghosh made pioneering contributions to academics and community service.

Tamil writer A Madhavan passes away

- A Madhavan had won the Sahitya Akademi Award 2015 for his collection of short stories, *Ilakkiya Chuvadukal*. The Tamil Nadu government has honored him with the prestigious Kalaimamani Award.

Former Gujarat Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki passes away

- The veteran Congress leader Madhavsinh Solanki was Chief Minister of Gujarat four times between 1976 and 1990. He was the longest-serving Chief Minister of the state before Narendra Modi.
- He was also India's External Affairs Minister under Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

Senior Telugu journalist Turlapati Kutumba Rao passes away

- Veteran journalist and Padma Shri awardee Turlapati Kutumba Rao died in Vijayawada.
- Rao is known for his contribution to Telugu journalism with 4,000 biographies and 16,000 public speeches which won him a place in the world records.

Eminent social worker Padma Shri D Prakash Rao passed away

- Rao was conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award in 2019 by the Government of India for his contribution towards boosting the value of education among slum and orphan kids in Cuttack.

Renowned writer Ved Mehta passes away



- Indian-American novelist Ved Mehta, who overcame blindness and became widely known as the 20th-century writer most responsible for introducing American readers to India.
- He was the MacArthur Prize fellow and member of the British Royal Society of Literature.

Books and Authors

The book titled "Modi India Calling - 2021" 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 on the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
- The idea of this book was given by senior BJP leader Vijay Jolly. It was released by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta.

Manipur Governor released book "Making of a General A Himalayan Echo"

- Manipur Governor Dr Najma Heptulla released a book titled "Making of a General-A Himalayan Echo" authored by (Retd) Lt General Konsam Himalaya Singh.

January 15, Indian Army Day

- On the occasion of the 73rd Army Day on January 15, Army chief MM Naravane lauded the "supreme sacrifice" of the bravehearts in the line of duty.
- Army Day is celebrated on 15 January every year in India, in recognition of Field Marshal Kodandera M. Cariappa taking over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief of India, on 15 January 1949.

Sports

Claire Polosak becomes first female match official in men's Test match

- Australia's Claire Polosak became the first female match official in a men's Test match when she took up the fourth umpire's role in the third Test between India and Australia.
- **Note:** The 32-year-old from New South Wales had, earlier, already earned the distinction of being the first woman on-field umpire in a men's ODI match during ICC's Division 2 league between Namibia and Oman played at the Windhoek in 2019.

In UT Ladakh, Khelo India Ice Hockey Tournament organised at Chiktan in Kargil district

- Alongwith 11 teams from different villages of Chiktan, for the first time two Women Teams of Chiktan also participated in the Khelo India Games.
- Shakar Chiktan SDM, Kacho Asgar Ali khan inugurated the tournament.



Jigmet Dolma from India secured fourth position in the Dhaka Marathon 2021

- Jigmet Dolma is an SPO of Ladakh police.
- In the full marathon, among the SAARC and local runners, Bahadur Singh of India became the champion in the men's category and Pushpa Bhandari of Nepal became the champion in the women's category.
- 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.

First ever Ice climbing festival celebrated in Nubra valley

- In Leh, the first ever Ice climbing festival was celebrated in Nubra valley.
- 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.

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