

## Daily News Decode

08.01.21

### Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention 2021



- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention is the flagship event of the Ministry of External Affairs and provides an important platform to engage and connect with the overseas Indians
- In view of the sentiments of our vibrant diaspora community, the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, is being organized on 9th January 2021, despite the ongoing Covid pandemic.
- The Convention will be held in virtual format, as were the PBD Conferences held recently in the run up to the Convention. The theme of 16th PBD Convention 2021 is "Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat".
- PBD Convention will have three segments. The PBD Convention will be inaugurated by Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India and will feature a keynote address by the Chief Guest, H.E. Mr. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Hon'ble President of the Republic of Suriname.
- The winners of the online Bharat ko Janiye Quiz for the youth will also be announced.
- The names of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees for 2020-21 will also be announced.
- Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards are conferred to select Indian diaspora members to recognize their achievements and honour their contributions to various fields, both in India and abroad.

### India to chair three-key subsidiary bodies of UNSC



- India will be chairing three-key subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).
- The panels are, Counter-Terrorism Committee (for 2022), Taliban Sanctions Committee, and Libya Sanctions committee.
- This was announced by the Permanent Representative of India at the United Nations Security Council, TS Tirumurti today.

- India will chair the Counter-Terrorism Committee of UNSC in 2022.
- Mr Tirumurti said, chairing of this committee has a special resonance for India which has not only been at the forefront of fighting terrorism especially cross border terrorism but has also been one of its biggest victims.
- He said, Taliban Sanctions Committee has always been a high priority for India keeping in mind its strong interest and commitment to peace, security, development, and progress of Afghanistan.

## One Nation One Ration Card plan



- The government is implementing the ambitious One Nation One Ration Card plan to ensure seamless access to Public Distribution System and delivery of food-security entitlements to all beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security.
- This is being done through nation-wide portability of ration cards in association with all States and Union Territories.

- In a move to reform and modernize the Public Distribution System 'One Nation One Ration Card' will be implemented under which any migrant beneficiary with a ration card can get his food provisions at any Fair Price store located anywhere in India.
- Presently, this initiative is seamlessly enabled in a single cluster of 32 States and UTs covering about 69 crore beneficiaries. Due to its potential to serve the migrants

## Asteroids passing near Earth



- Recently, NASA has cautioned about six asteroids, including two which are as big as the Eiffel Tower to pass near the earth
- Asteroids are small, rocky objects that orbit the Sun.
- Although asteroids orbit the Sun like planets, they are much smaller than planets.
- There are lots of asteroids in our solar system.
- Most of them live in the main asteroid belt a region between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter.
- Asteroids are leftovers from the formation of our solar system about 4.6 billion years ago when a big cloud of gas and dust collapsed.
- After this phenomena, most of the material fell to the centre of the cloud and formed the sun.
- Some of the condensing dust in the cloud became planets.
- The objects in the asteroid belt never had the chance to be incorporated into planets

## Declaration of Dividend by NBFCs



- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a draft circular on distribution of dividend by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs)
- Only those NBFCs, which comply with the following minimum prudential requirements, would be eligible to declare dividend:
  - Capital Adequacy and Leverage: NBFCs should comply with the prescribed minimum capital adequacy and leverage ratio as under:
  - Deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC-D) and Systemically Important Non-Deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC-ND-SI) should have CRAR Capital to Risk (Weighted) Assets Ratio (CRAR) of at least 15% for last 3 years, including the accounting year for which it proposes to declare dividend.
  - Non-Systemically Important Non-Deposit taking Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC-ND) should have leverage ratio of less than 7 for the last 3 years, including the accounting year for which it proposes to declare dividend.
  - Core Investment Company (CIC) should have Adjusted Net Worth (ANW) of at least 30% of its aggregate risk weighted assets on balance sheet and risk adjusted value of off-balance sheet items for the last 3 years, including the accounting year for which it proposes to declare dividend.
  - Non-Performing Assets (NPA): The net NPA ratio should be less than 6% in each of the last three years, including the accounting year for which it proposes to declare dividend.
  - Declaring dividend: NBFCs may be eligible to declare dividend even if the above criteria are not met for the previous two years, provided:
    - The norm for capital adequacy is achieved, and net NPA is less than 4%, for the year for which dividend is proposed to be declared.

### Amount of dividend payable:

- As per the draft circular, the maximum dividend payout ratio that will be permitted for various combinations of capital adequacy and net NPA.
- NBFCs achieving higher capital adequacy ratio and lower net NPA will be allowed to declare a greater proportion of their net profit as dividend (dividend pay-out ratio).
- The permissible pay-out ratio ranges from 10% to 50%.
- Restrictions on dividend pay-out ratio do not apply to NBFCs that don't access or intend to access public funds, or interface with customers (Type I NBFC).
- Applicability: If notified, the circular would be applicable for dividend to be declared for financial year 2020-21 onwards



## Non-Banking financial company (NBFC)



- A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares/stocks/bonds/debentures/securities issued by Government or local authority or other marketable securities of a like nature,

leasing, hire-purchase, insurance business, chit business but does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture activity, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property.

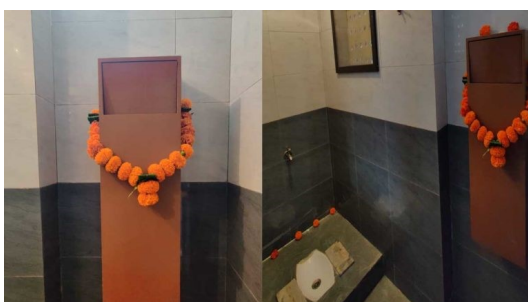
- A non-banking institution which is a company and has principal business of receiving deposits under any scheme or arrangement in one lump sum or in instalments by way of contributions or in any other manner, is also a non-banking financial company (Residuary non-banking company)

## World food price index rises for seventh straight month in Dec.



- The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) food price index, which measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar, averaged 107.5 points last month versus 105.2 in November.
- For the whole of 2020, the benchmark index averaged 97.9 points, a three-year high and a 3.1% increase from 2019.
- It was still down more than 25% from its historical peak in 2011.

## Thane shows the way, slum marks a room for menstrual hygiene



- Thane's Lokmanya Nagar, a one storey toilet block stands out for its freshly painted outer wall in shades of green and yellow, and a message: "Menstrual cycle is a natural process."
- Tyabaddal lajjaspad ase kahihi nahi (There is nothing shameful about it)."
- One of the 10 toilets in the women's section is now a 'period room', the first of its kind in a public toilet in a slum

## US, Japan set to see recovery in 2nd half of 2021



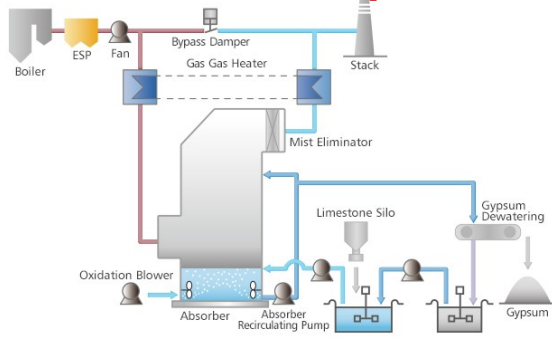
- Economic stimulus approved in the US and Japan at the end of 2020 will help them power a recovery in the second half of 2021, IMF Chief Economist Gita Gopinath said.
- Recovery in some developing economies could be delayed until 2022 due to limited vaccine availability, she added. However, Gopinath further said, global economy started 2021 in a stronger position.

## School Bag Policy 2020



- The Directorate of Education has issued a circular asking schools to follow the new 'School Bag Policy, 2020' released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- It lays down the guidelines on homework and weight of school bags for classes I to XII.
- School bags should not be more than 10% of the bodyweight of students across classes I to X and there should be no bags in pre-primary students.
- It recommends no homework up to class II and a maximum of two hours per week for classes III to V, one hour a day for classes VI to VIII and two hours a day for classes IX and above.
- The Policy will also require schools to introduce infrastructural changes as students will not be able to carry many books daily.
- The schools need to provide lockers right from preschool to senior secondary to enable children to leave books in school and carry home only what is required.
- It adds that the teachers should take the responsibility of checking the weight of school bags of the students every three months on a day selected for the whole class and any information about heavy bags should be communicated to the parents.
- It adds that files and thin/light exercise books should be preferred to thick/heavy ones.

## Flue Gas Desulphurisation



- Power Ministry of India has proposed to dismiss or push back the deadlines for adoption of new emission norms by coal-fired power plants, saying "an unworkable time schedule" that would burden utilities and lead to an increase in power tariffs.

- Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FGD) is the removal of Sulphur Dioxide.
- The plant of flue gas desulphurisation removes sulphur dioxides from the flue gas produced by boilers, furnaces, and other sources.

More than 300 FGD plants have been supplied worldwide and have acquired a larger market share due to the below-mentioned features:

- ⇒ High SO<sub>2</sub> removed efficiency meeting required emission standards for all kinds of fossil fuels
- ⇒ Various pollutant control associated with environmental control equipment
- ⇒ High reliability
- ⇒ Energy and utility savings

### Common methods used:

- ⇒ Wet scrubbing using a slurry of alkaline sorbent, usually limestone or lime, or seawater to scrub gases;
- ⇒ Spray-dry scrubbing using similar sorbent slurries;
- ⇒ Wet sulfuric acid process recovering sulfur in the form of commercial quality sulfuric acid;
- ⇒ SNOX Flue gas desulfurization removes sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates from flue gases;
- ⇒ Dry sorbent injection systems that introduce powdered hydrated lime (or other sorbent material) into exhaust ducts to eliminate SO<sub>2</sub> and SO<sub>3</sub> from process emissions.

### Sulphur dioxide

- It is an inorganic compound, heavy, colourless, and poisonous gas.
- It is produced in large quantities in intermediate steps of sulphuric acid manufacture.
- It has a pungent, irritating odour, similar to the smell of a just-struck match.
- In nature, it occurs in volcanic gases and in a solution of some water warm springs.
- Usually, it is prepared industrially by the burning in air or oxygen of sulphur or such compounds of sulphur as iron pyrite or copper pyrite.

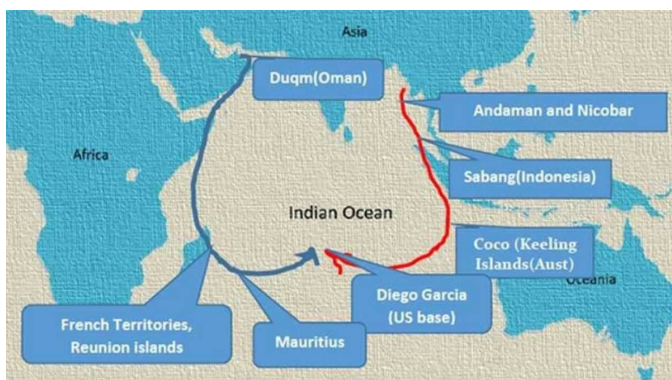


- It can combine in the atmosphere with water vapour to form sulphuric acid which is a major component of acid rain. Measures to control acid rain were widely adopted in the second half of the 20th century.
- Under moderate pressures at room temperatures, sulphur dioxide can be liquified and the liquid freezes at -73 degree Celcius and boils at -10 degree Celcius under atmospheric pressure.

#### Sulphur Dioxide uses are:

- ⇒ It is used in the preparation of sulphuric acid, sulphur trioxide, and sulphites.
- ⇒ It is also used as a disinfectant.
- ⇒ It is used in a refrigerant, a reducing agent, a bleach, and food preservation mainly in dried fruits.

## India's Double Fishhook Strategy



- To counter Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean, the Indian Navy is also working on a strategic plan which is now being referred to as the "double fishhook" strategy.
- There are basically two fishhooks, the eastern one and the western one.
- To counter China's strategies in the Indian Ocean Region, India started strengthening its relations with its Eastern Indian Ocean neighbours such as Indonesia, Australia, and island nations in the Southern Indian Ocean region such as Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, and French territories spread across the Indian Ocean.
- The double fish hook involves a string of port developments and alliances that India has entered into
- The first fish hook covers the eastern Indian Ocean and begins in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and ends at the US military base (Diego Garcia) in the Chagos Archipelago.
- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands constitute the endpoint of the US fish hook strategy.
- The western fish hook begins at the Duqm port through India's Maritime Transport Agreement with Oman and traverses Mauritius, Seychelles, and Madagascar.
- India also develops maritime linkages with France, which has security interests for its territories in the Indian Ocean region.

## Pakistan Successfully Test Fires Indigenously Developed Rocket System

- Pakistan on Thursday successfully conducted the test-flight of an indigenously developed Guided Multi Launch Rocket System, capable of delivering conventional warheads, with a maximum range of 140 km.
- According to Director General of Army, Media Wing, Major General Babar Iftikhar, Fatah-1 weapon rocket system can hit targets up to a range of 140 km.

## France Conducts Improved ASMPA Nuclear Missile Test Shot From Rafale



- France has performed a first test firing of an updated MBDA ASMPA nuclear missile from a Dassault Rafale fighter.
- Conducted on 9 December 2020, the test activity involved the airframer and weapons provider, plus the flight-test organisation of France's DGA defence procurement agency.
- Tracking of the unarmed medium-range missile was performed from facilities in Biscarrosse, Hourtin and Quimper, the DGA notes.
- The French air force and navy have been equipped with supersonic ASMPA strategic weapons since 2009 and 2010, respectively, currently on F3-standard Rafales.
- The recent test firing marks the completion of detailed design activities, with the updated weapon's formal qualification expected early this year.
- This will be followed by series production work and a future qualification firing before the ramjet-powered weapon is approved to enter operational service.
- France plans to eventually replace the air-launched ASMPA with a future nuclear weapon named ASN4G. Rafale is a twin-jet combat aircraft manufactured by Dassault Aviation and is capable of carrying out a wide range of short and long-range missions.
- It can be used to perform ground and sea attacks, reconnaissance, high-accuracy strikes and nuclear strike deterrence.
- Source : Flight Global



## NSG Commandos, CRPF Tableau Part Of Republic Day Parade 2021



- A contingent of the NSG 'black cat' commandos and a tableau of the country's largest paramilitary force CRPF will be part of the forthcoming Republic Day parade in the national capital, official sources said on Thursday.
- Marching and band contingents of the Delhi Police, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the famed camel-mounted band of the Border Security Force will also be part of the annual parade on January 26 that is going to be curtailed this year due to the coronavirus pandemic
- The National Security Guard (NSG) commandos, who first came on the Rajpath for this event in 2017, are making a comeback this year
- The commandos, called 'black cats' due to their black-coloured overalls and stealth techniques, will be seen sporting their sophisticated weapons like the MP-5 assault rifle, dagger, night vision headgear, bullet proof jackets and counter-terror equipment's like hydraulic lifts and anti-hijacking van 'sherpa'.
- The special force was raised in 1984 as the federal unit to undertake specialist counter-terror, counter-hijack and hostage rescue operations across the country.
- The Central Reserve Police Force tableau will depict the three primary areas of its deployment in the country — anti-Naxal operations theatre, duties in Jammu and Kashmir and counter-insurgency duties in the north east of the country — apart from assisting in various law and order duties like guarding the annual Amaranth Yatra route, sources said.

## Aero India 2021



**AERO INDIA**

The Runway to a Billion Opportunities

- Aero India 2021 is scheduled to take off in Bengaluru on February 3 also on screens .But those waiting to witness the dazzling display of gravity-defying manoeuvres during the show will be in for disappointment.
- Aero India is a biennial international military and civil airshow.
- It is a premier event that draws international and Indian military and civil aircraft makers, their support industries, military brass and government dignitaries and business visitors.
- It provides a unique opportunity for the exchange of information, ideas and new developments in the aviation industry, in addition to giving a fillip to the domestic aviation industry furthering the cause of Make in India.

- The Yelahanka air base, about 30 km from the city centre Bengaluru, has been hosting the air show in February since it was started in 1996.
- In 2019, it was organised by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) and in 2021, it will be organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Ministry of Defence.
- Defence Exhibition Organisation (DEO) is an autonomous organisation of the Indian Government established in 1981, to promote the export potential of the Indian defence industry.
- It is responsible for organising international exhibitions such as DefExpo and Indian participation at overseas exhibitions.

## India Ready To Sign Major Defence Agreement With France



- India Ready To Sign Major Defence Agreement With France After signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement or BECA with the United States of America late last year, India is readying to sign a major agreement with France, leading for closer defence cooperation, particularly between the two navies.

- The Indian government has already cleared the decision that will lead to closer information exchange between India and France.
- The information exchange will be at the tactical level and theoretically, sources said, any information that has operational significance can be passed on in real-time by France to India and vice versa.
- The exchange can be at 'ship level' and during difficult times like conflict, the exchange can prove to be crucial.
- The French Navy is present in strength in the Indian Ocean area.
- The agreement with India will benefit both navies.
- France–India relations have traditionally been close and friendly and both countries have a 'special relationship' with each other, so much so that by August 2019, France has been called "India's new best friend" by a researcher of the Hudson Institute.
- Both nations have a centuries-old history of trade relations.

Source: Times Now

## Flu in full flight



- Just three months after India declared itself to be free of the avian influenza outbreak, the highly pathogenic avian influenza subtypes, H5N1 and H5N8, have been reported from a dozen epicentres in four States — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala.
- The two subtypes have targeted different birds — crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, migratory birds in Himachal Pradesh, and poultry in Kerala.
- While tests have confirmed H5N1 for causing the deaths of over 2,000 migratory birds in Himachal Pradesh, H5N8 has been identified for killing thousands of poultry in Kerala, and hundreds of crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- Migratory birds have been largely responsible for long-distance transmission of the virus into India during winter.
- It then spreads through local movement of residential birds and poultry.
- Movement of men and material from poultry farms too has been a cause for further spread.
- This is why States have been asked to strengthen biosecurity of poultry farms, disinfection and proper disposal of dead birds.
- A recent European Food Safety Authority report says 561 avian influenza detections were made between August-December in 15 European countries and the U.K.
- The virus was predominantly found in wild birds, and a few in poultry and captive birds. H5N1 and H5N8 were two of three subtypes found in Europe.
- Genetic analysis helped confirm the spread from Asia to west-central Europe, suggesting a “persistent circulation of this virus strain, likely in wild birds in Asia
- While avian influenza virus crossing the species barrier and directly infecting humans happens occasionally, human-to-human spread has been rare.
- But mutations or genetic reassortment of an avian influenza A virus and a human influenza A virus in a person can create a new influenza



## Getting ready for vaccination (Written by Kumud Mohan Rai & Prabhat Chand)



- Are we prepared to dramatically increase the number of doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals who are trained for immunising and treating us
  - Over 4,00,000 frontline workers in India have been trained to respond to COVID-19.
  - India was a beneficiary of a successful global innovation called Project ECHO.
  - It's a low-cost solution for increasing the capacity of health workers in underserved communities to provide patients with the best possible care.
- Using videoconferencing technology, community health workers, nurses and doctors — generalists by training — learn specialty care from subject matter experts and from each others' community informed knowledge.
  - ECHO started as a strategy for treating Hepatitis C, and is now responsible for newly trained experts in HIV, malaria, tuberculosis, addiction, mental health, and many other conditions.
  - Who will deliver these vaccines? How do we store and handle the vaccines? How do we overcome cultural and religious barriers for those who are reluctant to accept a vaccine? How do we counsel people about side-effects so that they come to embrace the vaccine even if they start out with reservations?