

## CURRENT AFFAIRS= 28-03-01-2021

### DRDO Celebrates 63rd Foundation Day on 1st January 2021

- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** observed the **63rd Foundation Day** of its establishment on **January 01, 2021..**
- DRDO was established in **1958** with just 10 laboratories to enhance the research work in Defence sector.
  - At that time, it was tasked with designing and developing cutting edge defence technologies for Indian Armed Forces.
- As of now, DRDO is working in multiple cutting edge military technology areas, which include aeronautics, armaments, combat vehicles, electronics, instrumentation, engineering systems, missiles, materials, naval systems, advanced computing, simulation, cyber, life sciences and other technologies for defence.
- **Dr G Satheesh Reddy** – Secretary Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D) & Chairman DRDO.



### PM Modi lays foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs) across six states

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the **foundation stone of Light House projects (LHPs) at six sites across six States** through video conference on 1st January 2021.
- The LHPs will be implemented at **Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).**
- The project is being constructed under **Global Housing Technology Challenge (GHTC)-India**. It has been conceptualised by the **Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.**
- GHTC-India envisages to provide an ecosystem for adoption of innovative technologies in the housing construction sector in a holistic manner.
- Under the programme, over **1,000 houses would be build in each of the six cities in 12 months** along with allied infrastructure facilities.
- The houses are called light house projects in technical language. Houses being built under the Light House Projects (LHPs) will take less time to build and will be resilient, affordable and comfortable as they use the best of new-age alternative global technologies, materials and processes in the construction sector.

## IFSCA becomes Associate Member of IOSCO



- The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** has become an Associate Member of the **International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO)**. The Headquarter of IOSCO is at **Madrid, Spain**.

- The IOSCO is the international organization of the world's securities regulators, covering more than 95% of the world's securities markets, and is also the global standard setter for the securities sector.

- With this new membership, IFSCA will get the platform to exchange information at the global level and regional level on areas of common interests and help to learn from the experiences and best practices of the regulators of other well established financial centres.
- The **International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)** was established by the Ministry of Finance in April 2020 as a unified authority to regulate all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in the country.
- The body has its headquarter in **Gandhinagar in Gujarat**.

## Suneet Sharma takes over as new Chairman & CEO of Railway Board



- **Suneet Sharma**, a Special Class Railway Apprentice Officer of the 1978-batch, has been appointed as the **new Chairman & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Railway Board**, Ministry of Railways and ex-officio Principal Secretary to Government of India.

- He took over in his new role with effect from January 01, 2021.
- Prior to this, Suneet Sharma was working as General Manager in Eastern Railway.

## Soma Mondal takes charge as new SAIL Chairman

- **Soma Mondal** has taken over as the new Chairman of **Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL)** with effect from January 01, 2021. She is the **first-ever women-head** of the body.
- She replaces **Anil Kumar Chaudhary**, who superannuated on 31 December 2020.

- Prior to this, Soma was the Director (Commercial) of SAIL.

## ADB & India sign \$231 million loan to enhance power generation capacity in Assam



- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has signed a **\$ 231 million loan with the Government of India on 30 December 2020** to augment electricity generation capacity in the state of Assam.
  - This is the third tranche loan for the ‘**Assam Power Sector Investment Programme**’ that was approved by the ADB Board in July 2014.
- Under the project, 120 megawatts (MW) hydroelectric power plant would be constructed.
- The programme, focuses on enhancing capacity and efficiency of the energy generation and distribution systems in Assam to improve availability of electricity service to end users.

## ADB & India sign \$10 million loan to support project preparation to expand horticulture in Himachal Pradesh

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the Government of India has signed a **\$10 million** project readiness financing (PRF) on 30<sup>th</sup> December 2020.
- This agreement aims to help finance piloting activities, and design and capacity building for an ensuing project that aims to **expand horticulture production** and farm household income in the hill state of **Himachal Pradesh**.

## India's first Pollinator Park inaugurated in Haldwani, Uttarakhand

- **India's first pollinator park** has been developed at **Haldwani in Nainital**, of the state of **Uttarakhand**.
  - The new Pollinator Park was inaugurated on 29 December 2020 by renowned butterfly expert **Peter Smetacek**.
    - The colourful park has been developed by the research wing of the Uttarakhand Forest Department over **four acres** of land.
    - There are over **40 species** of butterflies, honeybees, birds and insects in the park.





- The park will conserve various pollinator species, create awareness among people in general about the importance of conservation of these species and promote further research on various aspects of pollination, including threat to habitat and impact of pollution on pollinators.



### Testbed for autonomous navigation systems, ‘TiHAN-IIT’, set up at IIT-Hyderabad



The Union Minister of Education **Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’** laid the foundation stone of ‘**TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad**’, through virtual mode on 29 December 2020 at IIT Hyderabad.. ‘**TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad**’ is **India’s first Testbed for Autonomous Navigation Systems (Terrestrial and Aerial).**

The **Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems (TiHAN)** for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles will focus on the R&D of interdisciplinary technologies in the domain of Autonomous Navigation and Data Acquisition Systems.

The Department of Science and Technology has sanctioned **Rs.135 crore** to IIT Hyderabad under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to set up a Technology Innovation Hub.

### Indian Navy & DRDO conduct maiden trial of first indigenous air-dropped container ‘SAHAYAK-NG’

- The **Indian Navy** successfully conducted the **maiden test trial of ‘SAHAYAK-NG’**, off the coast of Goa on 30 December 2020.
- SAHAYAK-NG is **India’s first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container** that will enhance the operational logistics capabilities of the navy.



- The test trail was conducted by Indian Navy in association with the **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** from IL 38SD aircraft of Indian Navy.

- The SAHAYAK-NG container has been developed by DRDO laboratories, Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam and Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra.



## UNDP and Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation collaborates to co-create India's first Social Impact Bond



- **Pimpri Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, Pune** has recently signed an MoU with **UNDP India** to co-create **India's first Social Impact Bond (SIB)**.

- A Social Impact Bond, also called pay-for-success bond or pay-for-success financing or simply social bond, is basically a contract with public sector authority, where it pays for better social outcomes.

- This bond is a form of outcome-based contracting and aims at improving social outcomes for a specific group of citizens.
- The PCMC administration will bear the costs of a public welfare project associated with the bond if the pre-defined project targets are fulfilled.



## ISRO Chairman K Sivan gets one year extension up to January 14, 2022

The Central Government has approved the **extension of the term of ISRO Chairman K Sivan, for a period of one year.**

He was due to retire on **January 14, 2021.**

Sivan will now continue as ISRO chairman and

Secretary, Department of Space up to **January 14, 2022.**

He is serving the post since January 14 2018, replacing AK Kiran Kumar.

## Pt Satish Vyas conferred with prestigious Tansen Samman by MP Government

- The world famous **Tansen Music Festival** was held at Behat village in **Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh** from 26 December to 30 December 2020.
- The Tansen Music Festival is organised every year by the MP culture department, since the past 94 years in Gwalior, in the memory of music maestro Tansen, one of the greatest artists in Indian history.
- Behat village is the birthplace of Tansen.
- As a part of the event, renowned **santoor player Pt Satish Vyas** was conferred upon the prestigious **Tansen Samman for 2020.**
- Apart from this, Bhopal-based institution **Abhinav Kala Parishad** was **honoured with Raja Mansingh Tomar award.**

## Union Territory of Ladakh

- The Union Minister of Earth Sciences, **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** inaugurated the **meteorological centre (MC)** of the **India Meteorological Department at Leh in Ladakh** via video conferencing on 29 December 2020.
- The centre would provide localised weather forecasts in the region, which would result in strengthening weather-related early warning system for the region.



Union Territory.

- The meteorological centre at Leh is the **second MC located in the Himalayas**. The first such facility is based in **Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh**.

- The facility is located at a height of **3,500 metres, which makes it the highest meteorological centre in India**.

- This new MC will provide short range (three days,) medium range (12 days) and long range (one month) forecast for Leh and Kargil districts of the

## Cabinet Approves Export of indigenously-developed Akash Missile System



The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the proposal to export **indigenously-developed Akash Missile System**.

The Cabinet has also approved to set up of a committee for faster approvals of exports..

The export version of Akash will be different from System currently deployed with Indian Armed Forces.

- Akash is a **short range Surface to Air Missile with a range of 25 Kms** to protect vulnerable areas and vulnerable points from air attacks.
- It was inducted in IAF in 2014 and in the Indian Army in 2015.

## Indian Railways' new Vistadome coach successfully completes 180 kmph speed trial

- Recently, the Indian Railways successfully completed the **180 km per hour speed trial of its new design Vistadome tourist coaches**.
- The luxurious tourists coaches have been manufactured by the **Integral Coach Factory in Chennai**.
- These Vistadome coaches will make train journeys memorable for the passengers, as well as give a further boost to tourism





The **European-style coaches** are made with see-through glass rooftops and wide windows for the indulgent sightseeing experience.



Currently **13 Vistadome coaches** are being operated on select routes including the Nilgiri Mountain Railway line, Darjeeling Himalayan

Railway, Kalka-Shimla Railway, Kangra Valley Railway, Matheran Hill Railway, between Dadar in Mumbai and Madgoan in Araku Valley as well as in the Kashmir Valley.

### ICICI Bank and Google Pay collaborate to digitally issue FASTag



**Private sector lender ICICI Bank** has collaborated with payment app, **Google Pay**, to issue FASTag to users digitally.

The partnership will allow users to **order, track, and recharge ICICI Bank FASTag digitally through the UPI on the Google Pay itself.**

The ICICI Bank is the first bank to partner with Google Pay for issuing FASTags.

This initiative will ensure the safety of users as it will put an end to visiting the merchants in person, or going to toll locations to buy a FASTag, as well as strengthen digital payments for FASTag.

### YES Bank appoints Niranjan Banodkar as new CFO

- The private sector lender **Yes Bank** has appointed **Niranjan Banodkar** as its new Group **Chief Financial Officer (CFO)**.
- He will take over from **Anurag Adlakha**, who has been designated as the new Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO).
- Both of them will assume the new role with effect from **January 1, 2021**.
- Banodkar, who started working with Yes Bank in April 2006 is currently Group President & Head of Strategy, Sustainability & Investor Relations.

### Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan nominated to the Board of 'GAVI', The Vaccine Alliance

The Union Health Minister **Dr. Harsh Vardhan** has been nominated as the **board member of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI)**.

The seat is currently held by **Myint Htwe of Myanmar**.

Dr. Vardhan will represent the **South East Area Regional Office (SEARO)/ Western Pacific Regional Office (WPRO)** constituency on the GAVI Board.



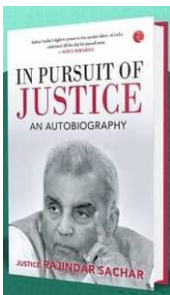
Dr. Vardhan will assume the charge with effect from **January 1, 2021 and serve till December 31, 2023.**

### About GAVI

- The vaccine alliance GAVI is an international organisation based in **Geneva, Switzerland**, that provides a forum for balanced strategic decision-making, innovation and partner collaboration.
- It was created in the year 2000 to improve access to new and underused vaccines for numerous vaccine-preventable diseases for children who live in the world's poorest countries.
- The GAVI board is responsible for strategic direction and policy-making, oversees the operations of the Vaccine Alliance and monitors programme implementation.

### Justice Rajindar Sachar Autobiography 'In Pursuit of Justice' released posthumously

- The **autobiography of late Justice Rajindar Sachar**, titled, **"In Pursuit of Justice: An Autobiography"**, was launched posthumously by Sachar's family on the occasion of his birth anniversary on 29 December 2020.



The book was launched through virtual platform, in association with The Indian Society of International Law and The Indian Law Institute.

The book is a story of a great jurist who was an even a greater human being, as he delivered a lot to the society and did not allowed politics to cloud his judgements.

Justice Sachar is most remembered for the Sachar Committee report of 2006 which documented the social and economic condition of Muslims in India.

