

News Digest

NATIONAL

Aero India-2023 Concludes with More than 200 Agreements Encompassing Product Launches, ToTs

The Aero India-2023 held in Bengaluru from 13th to 17th February 2023 witnessed a series of bilateral meetings aimed at strengthening defence and aerospace ties with friendly countries. Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh chaired the 'CEOs Round Table' which featured participation from officials, delegates and CEOs from 26 countries, including leading investors such as Boeing, Lockheed, Israel Aerospace Industries, General Atomics, and Raytheon Technologies. The event mainly aimed at bolstering the 'Make in India' campaign and improving the 'Ease of doing business' by providing a favorable platform to Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) for manufacturing in India. On the sidelines, the annual defence innovation event 'Manthan' was organised by Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), bringing leading innovators, start-ups, MSMEs, incubators, academia, and investors from the defence and aerospace ecosystem under one roof. More than 200 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs)/Agreements, Transfer of Technologies (ToTs), Product Launches, and other major announcements with an expected investment of INR 75,000 crore were announced during the event.



Indian Army Notifies Modified Recruitment Procedure for JCOs, Agniveers

The Indian Army has announced modification to the recruitment procedure for Junior Commissioned Officers / Other Ranks / Agniveers. As per the modified recruitment procedure, Computer based Online Common Entrance Exam (CEE) will be conducted before the Recruitment Rally. The recruitment will be carried out in three stages. In Stage-I, all candidates who have registered and applied online on www.joinindianarmy.nic.in website will undergo a Computer based Online Common Entrance Exam (CEE). In Stage-II, the shortlisted candidates will be called for a recruitment rally at a location decided by respective Army Recruitment Offices (AROs) where they will undergo Physical Fitness Test and Physical Measurement Test. In Stage-III, the selected candidates will undergo Medical Tests. The Computer based Online Common Entrance Exam (CEE) is planned to be conducted at approximately 175 - 180 Examination Centers all over India between 17th April 2023 and 30th April 2023. Educational videos on 'How to Register' and 'How to appear' in Online Entrance Exam have been uploaded on Join Indian Army website; www.joinindianarmy.nic.in, and on YouTube. The aim is to make the recruitment process more streamlined, simpler to execute and is in keeping with current technology.

Indian Railways Launches Rail Post Gati Shakti Express Cargo Service

The Indian Railways has launched the Rail Post Gati Shakti Express Cargo Service, in partnership with India Posts, to facilitate seamless logistics for the services sector in the country. The cargo service will provide end-to-end logistic solutions, including pick-up and delivery at customer premises. Under this initiative, India Post will collect the consignment from the customer's doorstep and transport it to the railway station, where it will be further transported to the destination railway station by India Post, and finally delivered to the destination address. According to the Railways Ministry, the service has been initiated on four sectors - Delhi to Kolkata, Bangalore to Guwahati, Surat to Muzaffarpur, and Hyderabad to Hazrat Nizamuddin in New Delhi. The Ministry has also stated that a total of 15 sectors are planned to be covered in the first phase, in compliance with the recent budget announcements.



Cabinet Approves Seven New Battalions of ITBP; 9400 Personnel to be Recruited

The Cabinet Committee on Security has approved a proposal to raise seven new battalions of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Information and Broadcasting Minister Shri Anurag Singh Thakur said that the approval has also been given for setting up of one sector headquarters of ITBP. He informed that 9,400 personnel will be recruited under this decision.

INTERNATIONAL

Air India to Acquire 250 Aircraft from French Aerospace Giant Airbus

Air India has signed an agreement to acquire 250 aircraft from Airbus of France, which has been hailed as a historic deal by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. During a virtual meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron, PM Modi expressed confidence in India's potential to emerge as the third-largest global market in the aviation sector in the coming years. He also highlighted the country's vision of 'Make in India and Make for the World', which he believes will create new opportunities in the aerospace manufacturing sector, making India Maintenance, Repair, Overhaul (MRO) hub for the aviation sector. The Indian aviation sector is expected to require more than 2,000 aircraft in the next 15 years, and this deal is seen as instrumental in fulfilling the growing demands for aircraft. The French President congratulated India for offering an opportunity for strategic partnership in the aerospace sector, and highlighted that France's companies are fully dedicated to developing new areas of cooperation. He also praised the successful partnerships between the two countries in various sectors, including space, cyber, defence, and energy transition.

Prominent Indian-American Politician Nikki Haley Announces US Presidential Bid

Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has announced that she will make a bid for the White House, becoming the first Republican to challenge former President Donald Trump for the party's nomination. Haley, who served under Trump, made the announcement in a video posted online, in which she declared that it's time for a new generation of leadership. The daughter of Indian immigrants, Haley was born in Bamberg, South Carolina, and was Carolina's first female governor and the first Indian-American to lead the state. If she wins the Republican presidential nomination in 2024, she would make history again as the first woman and first Asian-American at the top of the GOP (Grand Old Party) ticket.



ECONOMY

'Vibrant Villages Programme' for Northern Border Gets Cabinet Nod

The Union Cabinet has given the green signal for the implementation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme called the 'Vibrant Villages Programme' (VVP) for the Financial Years 2022-23 to 2025-26. The scheme, with a financial allocation of Rs 4800 crore, aims to comprehensively develop the villages along the northern border to improve the quality of life of people residing in areas. The ultimate goal of the programme is to encourage people to stay in their native locations in the border areas and reverse the outmigration from these villages, thereby improving the security of the border. The VVP is designed to identify and develop the economic drivers based on the local natural, human, and other resources of the border villages. It aims to develop growth centers on a "Hub and Spoke Model" through the promotion of social entrepreneurship, the empowerment of youth and women through skill development and entrepreneurship, leveraging the tourism potential through the promotion of local cultural, traditional knowledge and heritage, and the development of sustainable eco-agribusinesses on the concept of "One village-One product" through community-based organizations, cooperatives, self-help groups (SHGs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), among others.



Cabinet Approves Plan to Cover All Villages with Dairy, Fisheries Cooperatives and PACs

The Union Cabinet has approved a plan to establish Primary Agricultural Credit societies (PACS) in all uncovered panchayats, viable dairy cooperatives in each uncovered panchayat/village, and viable fishery cooperatives in each coastal panchayat/village, as well as in panchayat/villages having large water bodies, while also strengthening the existing cooperative societies. The plan will be implemented with the support of the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) through a "whole-of-government" approach to converge various schemes of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying. The initial target is to establish 200,000 multipurpose PACS/dairy/fishery cooperatives within the next five years. The plan will provide farmers with requisite forward and backward linkages to market their produce, enhance their income, obtain credit facilities and other services at the village level. Further, establishing new PACS/dairy/fishery cooperative societies would generate employment opportunities in rural areas, which would have multiplier effect for the rural economy.

SPORTS

Khelo India Youth Games Concludes with Maharashtra Topping Medal Tally

The Khelo India Youth Games-2022 concluded on 11th February 2023 with a vibrant ceremony in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. Maharashtra clinched the top spot on the medals table by winning 161 medals, including 56 gold. Haryana secured second place with 128 medals, including 41 gold, while hosts Madhya Pradesh claimed the third position with 96 medals, including 39 gold. The Khelo India Youth Games saw 5,812 players from 36 states and union territories compete in nine cities. Approximately 40% of the participants were girls, and 25 national records were shattered, with weightlifting accounting for the most significant number of broken records, totaling 19.



Khelo India Winter Games Concludes in Gulmarg

The third edition of Khelo India Winter Games concluded in Gulmarg with Jammu and Kashmir securing the top position in the medal tally. The event saw the participation of over 2,000 participants, including players, tourists, and officials of different departments. J&K won a total of 26 gold, 25 silver, and 25 bronze medals. Maharashtra secured the second position with 13 gold, 8 silver, and 6 bronze medals. Himachal Pradesh achieved the third position by winning 10 gold, 14 silver, and 7 bronze medals, while the Army secured 10 gold, 10 silver, and 9 bronze medals.



(Source: AIR/PIB)