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WEEKLY CA JAN 2021

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NATIONAL AFFAIRS

1. The **Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry** has launched a month-long mass awareness campaign '**SAKSHAM**' to spread awareness about green and clean energy. It will focus on the adoption of cleaner fuels which include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive **biofuels** and increased use of electric vehicles.
2. **India** plans to achieve **20%** ethanol-blending (E20) with gasoline by 2025 (five years ahead of its previous target) to help reduce its dependence on costly oil import. Earlier, the govt. 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 is the **world's third-biggest oil importer**, relying on foreign suppliers to meet more than 80% of its demand.
3. Piyush Goyal has inaugurated two-day '**Prarambh**', Startup India International Summit in New Delhi, which has been organized by **Dept for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, under M/o Commerce & Industry. Inaugural event of summit was attended by **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)** nations.
4. Defense Minister **Rajnath Singh** has launched **India's First Indigenously Designed & Developed Driverless Metro Car**. This driverless metro has been indigenously designed & developed for **Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA)**. It has been manufactured at **BEML Bangaluru** manufacturing facility.
5. The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) recently developed a bike ambulance called "**Rakshita**". The bike ambulance will attend the evacuation needs of the CRPF personnel during emergency or battle injury. The ambulance was developed by INMAS (Institute of Nuclear and Allies Science) operating under DRDO.
6. PM **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated **8 trains** connecting different regions of the country **to Kevadiya, Gujarat**. These trains are launched to facilitate seamless connectivity to **Statue of Unity** situated in Gujarat. **Kevadiya station** is **India's 1st railway station with Green Building Certification**.
7. **TRIFED** and **IFFDC** entered into an MoU to work for tribal livelihood generation. Both the organizations have agreed to partner with each other to organize training programmes for tribal artisans in the area of entrepreneurship skill and business development. They will also collaborate further to identify and implement **CSR initiatives**.
8. **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)** has notified **Inter Country Transport Vehicles Rules, 2021** to facilitate and regulate the movement of passenger and goods vehicles between India and neighboring countries.

9. Union Minister for Communications, Electronics & IT and Law & Justice, **Ravi Shankar Prasad** has inaugurated **15th edition of India Digital Summit 2021** virtually. Theme of 2021 Summit: '**Aatmanirbhar Bharat – Start of New Decade**'. India Digital Summit is the flagship event of the **Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)**.
10. NITI Aayog has released book on **Fecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM)** in urban areas. It is jointly developed with **National Fecal Sludge and Septage Management (NFSSM)** Alliance. It presents 27 case studies across 10 states and various service and business models adopted by Indian cities while implementing FSSM initiatives.
11. **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** along with **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** will establish '**Quantum Computing Applications Lab**' to accelerate quantum computing-led research and development.
12. **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has launched **Regulatory Compliance Portal** to minimize Regulatory Compliance Burden for Businesses and Citizens.
13. Union Minister Harsh Vardhan has inaugurated **7th Edition of MASCRAD (Movement against Smuggled & Counterfeit Trade) 2021**. It is being organized by **FICCI Cascade**.
14. **DRDO** has successfully conducted captive and release trial of indigenously developed **Smart Anti-Airfield Weapon (SAAW)** from **Hawk- Mk132** of **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** off the Odisha coast.
15. **Arjun Munda** has virtually launched '**ShramShakti**' at a programme in Goa. It is **National Migration Support Portal** that will help in the smooth formulation of state and national level programs for migrant workers. It will address the data gap and empower migrant workers who generally migrate in search of employment and income generation. Along with this, **tribal migration cell, tribal museum at Goa** and '**ShramSaathi**' (training manual for migrant workers) has also been launched.
16. The **Operation Sard Hawa** was launched by the **Border Security Force** in the western border of Rajasthan. The main purpose of the operation is to check the instances of infiltration due to dense fog in the region. The Operation has also been launched to enhance the security ahead of Republic Day.
17. The Indian Army has conducted a large scale joint military exercise **Kavach** in the **Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal**. The exercise is to be held under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command. The Joint Military Exercise Kavach will involve Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast.

STATES AFFAIRS

18. Kerala Governor **Arif Mohammad Khan** has rolled out '**One School One IAS**' scheme. It will provide free coaching for civil services and other competitive examinations to 10,000 meritorious but financially weak students.

19. The state of Tamil Nadu celebrates **Thiruvalluvar Day** during Pongal celebrations. Every year, the Thiruvalluvar Day is celebrated on the second day of Tamil month "thai". Thiruvalluvar is a Tamil poet and is best known as the author of *Thirukkural*. Thirukkural is a collection of couplets on political and economic matters, ethics and love.
20. **India's first Labor Movement Museum** will be launched in **Kerala's** houseboat tourism hub, **Alappuzha** showcasing the history of world labor movement.
21. The **Karnataka** Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa recently launched **Avalokana software**. The software will enable the state government to access data on expenditures and sanctions incurred on 1,800 programmes. Avolokana software It is a transparent e-governance tool that will provide Assembly constituency wise release of government grants and allocations to different government programmes.
22. **WE Hub** recently announced its partnership with i-Hub. I-Hub operates under Government of Gujarat. WE Hub operates under Government of Telangana. WE Hub is Women Entrepreneurs Hub. It is a **start-up incubator**, that is, it provides an environment for the women entrepreneurs to grow their business.
23. Maharashtra govt has renamed **Gorewada International Zoo** in Nagpur as 'Balasaheb Thackeray Gorewada International Zoological Park'.
24. Meghalaya CM **Conrad K. Sangma** has formally inaugurated **India's longest road arch bridge** named as '**Wahrew Bridge**' at Sohbar in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.
25. The government of **Maharashtra** has decided to start a '**jail tourism**' from the **Yerawada** prison of **Pune**. It will start on January 26, 2021. This initiative is being launched in the state with the aim of facilitating the people to visit and see the historical prisons in the state.
26. The **Gujarat** chief Minister recently announced the "**Horticulture Development Mission**". It is also called "**Bagayat Vikas Mission**". The main objective of the mission is to double the income of the farmers involved in horticulture and medicinal farming.

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INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

27. **India** has signed MoU with **Japan** to enhance cooperation in the field of **Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)**. Under the MoU, both nations will enhance cooperation in ICT including 5G technologies, telecom security, submarine optical fiber cable system etc.
28. **India** and **France** will carry out a five-day **Mega Air Ex- Desert Knight 21** near **Jodhpur**. It is expected to see **Rafale** jets of the two countries engaging in complex maneuvers to enhance operational coordination.
29. **India** and **Japan** have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on a basic partnership framework for the operation of the 'specified skilled worker' (SSW) system. **SSW** is a new status of residence created in **Japan** in **April 2019**, to accept foreign nationals who have a certain level of expertise and skill.
30. Uganda's incumbent President **Yoweri Museveni** has been elected as **President of Uganda** in presidential election for 2021. Capital of Uganda: **Kampala**. Currency of Uganda: **Ugandan shilling**.
31. **Joe Biden (78 years)** was sworn in as the **46th President of United States** in the US Capitol building in Washington. He is the **oldest US President in history**.
32. Nine former officials who served in the Michigan, US and the state's former governor Rick Snyder were recently charged in connection with a criminal investigation into the Flint Water crisis. The **Flint Water Crisis** is an ongoing investigation on public health crisis. The issue began when the City of Flint in the state of Michigan shifted its water supply from Lake Huron to Flint river.
33. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the **Chinese President Xi Jing Ping** are to participate in the Davos Agenda Summit. The Davos Agenda Summit is organised by the World Economic Forum. The "**Great Reset Initiative**" of the World Economic Forum is to be launched during the Davos Agenda Summit. The theme of the Davos Agenda Summit, 2021 is "**Stakeholders for a cohesive and sustainable world**"
34. The US President Joe Biden recently proposed to extend New **START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)** Treaty by five years. Russia has welcomed the proposal. The New START Treaty was signed between United States and Russia in 2010 in Prague (capital of Czech Republic).

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REPORTS & INDICES

35. **NITI Aayog** along **Institute for Competitiveness** has released **2nd edition of India Innovation Index 2020** examining innovation capabilities and performance of states and UT. It has 5 parameters:

- **Human Capital**
- **Investment**
- **Knowledge Workers**
- **Business Environment**
- **Safety and Legal Environment**

Karnataka occupied top position, followed by **Maharashtra** and **Tamil Nadu** across the major categories. In UT, **Delhi** topped followed by **Chandigarh**. **Himachal Pradesh** occupied top state in hill category.

36. **World Economic Forum (WEF)** in partnership with **Marsh McLennan, SK Group** and **Zurich Insurance Group** has released **16th edition of Global Risk Report**. Report presents the results of latest **Global Risks Perception Survey (GRPS)**. It had two categories:
- **Risk by Livelihood:** *Extreme weather, followed by climate action failure, Human environment damage.*
 - **Risk by Impact:** *Infectious disease top this factor followed by Climate action failure, weapons of mass destruction.*
37. The **Global Firepower Index** ranks the countries based on their potential military strength. **India** was ranked **fourth** in the index. The Global Firepower Index ranked 138 countries. The countries were evaluated based on prolonged offensive and defensive military campaigns. The **United States topped** the index.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES

38. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** announced the launch of Rs 1,000-crore '**Startup India Seed Fund**' to support startups and help budding entrepreneurs pursue innovative ideas. The action plan of this initiative is focusing on **three areas**:
- *Simplification and Handholding.*
 - *Funding Support and Incentives.*
 - *Industry-Academia Partnership and Incubation.*

ECONOMY & BUSINESS

39. **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** has approved acquisition of **Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd (ABFRL)** by **Flipkart Investments Pvt Ltd (FIPL)**.
40. The Union Cabinet recently approved the **Ratle Hydropower Project of 850 MW**. The cabinet has nodded to an investment of Rs 5,281.94 crores in the project. The project is located in **River Chenab** in Jammu and Kashmir.
41. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (**DPIIT**) recently launched a regulatory compliance portal. The portal is to act as a bridge between the industries, citizens, and the government in minimising burdensome compliances

FINANCE & BANKING

42. **Yes Bank** launches the '**YES BANK Wellness**' and '**YES BANK Wellness Plus**' Credit Cards – aimed at the holistic health, self-care and wellness of consumers.
43. **State Bank of India (SBI)** has launched loan settlement schemes 'Rin Samadhan Yojna' in **Maharashtra**. Under the **Rin Samadhan Yojna**, if the farmer who has borrowed loan, pays **20 per cent** of the principal amount of the total dues, pending since two years, then the entire loan will be waived.
44. **India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)** has collaborated with **Financial Software and Systems (FSS)** to promote financial inclusion among underserved and unbanked segments. Under this, IPPB will use **FSS' Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS)** to provide interoperable and affordable doorstep banking services to customers across India.
45. **ICICI Bank** has launched mobile app named as '**InstaFX**' for authorized money changers, helping customers of any bank get '**ICICI Bank Forex Prepaid Card**' swiftly.
46. **Airtel Payments Bank** has launched secure mode of payment gateway titled as '**Airtel Safe Pay**' to protect Airtel customers from incidents of online payment frauds.
47. **Axis Bank** has rolled out '**AURA**' credit card exclusively loaded with several health and wellness benefits for its users at an affordable price.
48. **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has retained **State Bank of India, ICICI Bank** and **HDFC Bank** as domestic systemically important banks (**D-SIBs**) or banks that are considered as '**too big to fail**'.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

49. Tribal Affairs Minister **Arjun Munda** virtually received **SKOCH Challenger Award**, conferred to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for e-Governance.

PERSON IN NEWS

50. **Nazhat Shameem Khan** has been elected as the **President of UN Human Rights Council for 2021**. Nazhat Shameem Khan is the **Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations**.
51. Human Rights Council HQs: **Geneva, Switzerland**.
52. **Govt** has nominated **28 non-official members** on **National Startup Advisory Council** for 2 years. Council has been set up by **Dept for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** to advise govt on measures needed to build an ecosystem for nurturing innovation. Council members consist of founders of successful startups, veterans, etc. such as:
- Byju Raveendran (Founder of Byju's)
 - Lizzie Chapman (ZestMoney Co-founder)
 - Kris Gopalkrishnan (Axilor Ventures founder)

53. Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister **Kiren Rijju** has been given the **additional charge of Ministry of AYUSH**.
54. Goa CM Pramod Sawant released a book '**Manohar Parrikar- Off the Record**' at a function organized at Institute Menezes Braganza hall in the city. The book has been written by senior journalist Waman **Subha Prabhu**.
55. Flight lieutenant **Bhawana Kanth** will be the **1st woman fighter pilot** to take part in the Republic Day parade on 26 January 2021. She is one of the **first women fighter pilots to be inducted in IAF**.
56. **Siddhartha Mohanty** has been appointed as **Managing Director of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**.
57. **Supreme Court** has recently **upheld the validity of Section 32 A of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)** that mandated minimum of 100 home buyers to file an insolvency application together in National Company Law Tribunal against defaulting developer.

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OBITUARIES

58. Veteran Malayalam actor **Unnikrishnan Namboothiri (98 years)** passed away due to COVID-19.
59. Former Governor of Arunachal Pradesh and senior Congress leader **Mata Prasad** passed away. Mata Prasad hailed from Jaunpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
60. Famous Indian Bhajan singer **Narendra Chanchal** passed away in Delhi due to age-related ailment.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. Government of India has decided to celebrate the birth anniversary of **Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose** that falls on **January 23** as '**Parakram Diwas**'.

SPORTS

2. **First Khelo India Zaskar Winter Sports Festival** has begun to engage the Youth and opening new vistas of tourism in **Zaskar**.
3. **Sports Ministry** has decided to name all upcoming and upgraded sporting facilities of the Sports Authority of India, after renowned athletes, who have contributed to sports in India.

4. **Badminton World Federation (BWF)** conducted **Yonex Thailand Open Super 1000 badminton tournament** from 12 to 17 January 2021.
- Men's Single: **Viktor Axelsen of Denmark** by defeating Angus Long (Hong Kong)
 - Women's Single: **Carolina Marin of Spain** by defeating Tai Tzu-ying (Taiwan)

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