

Current Affairs Roundup - 2020

International

US Space Force members are now known as "Guardians"

The Trump administration celebrated the first birthday of the US Space Force by announcing that its members will be known as "guardians" on December 19.

- ★ Vice President Mike Pence made the announcement at a celebratory event tracing the development of the newest branch of the military over the past year. He said that the men and women of the United States Space Force will be known as "guardians".



International Bharati Festival-2020

The International Bharati Festival organized by the Vanavil Culture Centre in Chennai virtually on December 12.

- ★ Addressing the International Bharati Prime Minister Narendra Modi said 15-crore women have disbursed MUDRA loans and they have become economically self-reliant. Noting that women's empowerment is an important vision of Mahakavi Subramaniya Bharati.
- ★ The Prime Minister said Bharati held both Indian nationalism and Tamil linguistic pride as his two eyes.
- ★ Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswamy said Bharati stressed national unity and integrity in all his writings and fiery speeches. In the function, Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred this year's Bharati Award to the noted writer Seeni Viswanathan.
- ★ International Bharati Festival is being held in honor of the national poet, Mahakavi Subramanya Bharati, whose 138th birth anniversary is being celebrated.

Top Iranian nuclear scientist assassinated

High-ranking Iranian nuclear physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, named by the West as leading the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program until its disbanding in the early 2000s, has been assassinated in an ambush near Tehran. He is 63.

- ★ Iran's Foreign Ministry said that Fakhrizadeh was shot "by terrorists" in his vehicle in Absard, a suburb in eastern Tehran, and he later succumbed to his injuries in what amounted to a "martyr's death."
- ★ Fakhrizadeh served as the head of the Research and Innovation Organisation of the defense ministry at the time of his death. He had been a member of Iran's Revolutionary Guard and was an expert in missile production.

Indian-American Mala Adiga appointed as policy director to Joe Biden

US President Joe Biden has appointed an Indian-American Mala Adiga, as the policy director of his wife Jill Biden, who will be the first lady.

- ★ Adiga has served as a senior advisor to Jill and a senior policy advisor on the Biden-Kamala Harris campaign. Previously, Adiga was director for Higher Education and Military Families at the Biden Foundation.

Pakistan summons Indian Chargé d' Affaires over Kashmir issue

Pakistan summoned the Indian Chargé d' Affaires to protest over the Kashmir issue.

- ★ The Foreign Office in a statement said the Indian diplomat was summoned to register "strong protest" on the "Kashmir Black Day".
- ★ It demanded that India rescind its "unilateral" action" of withdrawing Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcating it into two union territories Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- ★ Pakistan has been unsuccessfully trying to drum up international support against India for withdrawing Jammu and Kashmir's special status on August 5 last year and bifurcating it into two union territories.
- ★ India has categorically told the international community that the scrapping of Article 370 of the Constitution was its internal matter. It also advised Pakistan to accept reality and stop all anti-India propaganda.
- ★ Prime Minister Imran Khan in his message said that Pakistan will continue to raise his voice in support of Kashmiris.
- ★ India has firmly told Pakistan that the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been, is, and shall continue to be an integral part of India.

India launches maiden Direct Cargo Ferry Service to the Maldives

The maiden voyage was launched in an e-flag off ceremony jointly by MOS (Independent Charge) Ministry of Shipping Mansukh Mandaviya and Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation of Maldives Aishath Nahula.

- ★ MoU between the Ministry of Shipping in India and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Maldives to commence the Cargo Ferry service was signed during the PM's visit to the Maldives in 2019 June.
- ★ The Cargo Ferry Vessel MCP Linz operated by the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) will connect Tuticorin and Cochin ports in India with Kulhudhufushi and Male ports in the Maldives. This vessel provides direct cargo connectivity between India and the Maldives.

Indian Navy quietly deployed its frontline warship in the South China Sea

The Indian Navy deployed its frontline warship in the South China Sea immediately after the Galwan valley clash on June 15 in Eastern Ladakh.

- ★ The Chinese have been objecting to the presence of Indian Navy warships in the region where it has significantly expanded its presence since 2009 by building artificial islands and military presence.
- ★ The Navy had also deployed its vessels along the Malacca Straits near the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the route from where the Chinese Navy enters the Indian Ocean Region to keep a check on any activity of the Chinese Navy.



Russian lawmakers want to ban same-sex marriage

Russian lawmakers submitted draft legislation that would ban same-sex marriage. They defined marriage as a union of a man and a woman only.

- ★ The changes, championed by President Vladimir Putin, were overwhelmingly approved by voters this month in an exercise that opened the door to Putin staying in power until 2036.
- ★ Enshrining a de facto ban in the constitution means any potential successors would find it hard to legalize same-sex marriage even if they wanted to.

India-Bangladesh form LPG joint venture

India and Bangladesh signed an agreement for the formation of a 50:50 Joint Venture Company (JVC) for LPG business in Bangladesh.

- ★ The agreement was signed between the IOC Middle East FZE, Dubai, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and RR Holdings Ltd., Ras Al Khaimah, UAE, the holding company of Beximco LPG of Bangladesh.
- ★ The Joint Venture Company (JVC) will help reduce the import cost of LPG and make it available at an affordable price to the people of Bangladesh. The JVC also plans to diversify into other linked businesses like LNG, Petrochemicals, and LPG export to North East India through pipeline.
- ★ Presiding over the function, Minister for Petroleum and Natural gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan said that the agreement was a major milestone in India-Bangladesh relations. He expressed the hope that the new joint venture would help in greater penetration of affordable LPG in Bangladesh.

Nuclear Agreement between India and Pakistan

India and Pakistan exchanged the list of nuclear installations under the Agreement on the prohibition of attack against nuclear installations on January 1. This practice is being followed for 29 years, for now, to prevent them from attacking each other's atomic facilities.

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