

Headlines at a Glance - 14th February 2022

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Govt approves Rs 26,275 cr scheme for continuation of police modernisation

The Modi government has approved the continuation of a mega police modernisation scheme for five years up to 2025-26 with a financial outlay of Rs 26,275 crore. The Union Home Ministry said the scheme includes security-related expenditure in Jammu and Kashmir, northeastern states and Maoists-affected areas, for raising new battalions, developing high-tech forensic laboratories and other investigation tools. The government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of the umbrella scheme of Modernisation of Police Forces (MPF), an official statement said.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

India signs MoU to hand over wheat to WFP in Kandahar

India signed an agreement with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) for the distribution of 50,000 MT of wheat that it has committed to sending Afghanistan as part of a humanitarian assistance, with diplomatic efforts under way to begin sending truck convoys through Pakistan by road, expected to begin after Punjab elections on February 20 are completed. The agreement was announced by the Indian Embassy in Rome, where Ambassador Neena Malhotra handed over the MoU for WFP to take charge of the wheat convoys when they reach Afghanistan, and to distribute them to those Afghans who are

facing a humanitarian crisis. In a tweet, WFP headquartered at Rome called it a “landmark” agreement thanking India for the “generous contribution of wheat in support of the people of Afghanistan facing severe food shortages”.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

EAM S. Jaishankar holds talks with Australian counterpart Marise Payne

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has welcomed the reopening of the Australian border which will help stranded Indian students and visa holders to return to Australia. Australia is set to open its border for fully vaccinated tourists and all visa holders, almost two years after borders were first closed due to COVID-19. Addressing a joint press conference with his Australian counterpart Marise Payne in Melbourne, Mr Jaishankar said, it will help those who have been in India waiting to come back, especially students, temporary visa holders and separated families and this is something which is greatly appreciated. Dr Jaishankar said the discussion with his Australian counterpart was very comprehensive and very fruitful. He said, both sides looked at a very wide range of topics concerning the bilateral, regional and global partnership.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*

Australia announces ‘Maitri’ Scholars Program to support Indian students in its universities

The Australian government announced a series of Maitri initiatives to boost its education and cultural ties with India. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said the initiatives are called the “Maitrī”, meaning friendship initiatives. The Maitri Scholars Program will provide over \$11 million for four years to support Indian students to study at Australian universities, said Payne at a joint Australia-India press conference on Saturday. “The Maitrī Fellowships Program will provide \$3.5 million over four years to build links between future leaders. It will support mid-career Australian and Indian professionals to collaborate on strategic research initiatives,” she said.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*