

Headlines at a Glance - 18th December 2020

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ISRO sets up dedicated control centre for Space Situational Awareness

A dedicated control centre for Space Situational Awareness (SSA) activities in the country, aimed at monitoring, tracking and protecting India's space assets, has been set up here, the Indian Space Research Organisation said recently. The control centre is envisaged to function as a hub of all SSA activities within India," the space agency said. The Directorate of Space Situational Awareness and Management (DSSAM) engages in evolving improved operational mechanisms to protect Indian space assets through effective coordination amongst ISRO/DOS Centres, other space agencies and international bodies, it said. According to ISRO, the Network for space object Tracking and Analysis (NETRA) project is initiated as a first step towards meeting this goal, its main elements being a radar, an optical telescope facility, and a control centre. The control centre was formally inaugurated by Chairman, ISRO and Secretary, Department of Space K Sivan on December 14. Other core SSA activities will comprise close approach analysis between ISRO's satellite and launch vehicles, timely dissemination of advance alerts on upcoming critical conjunctions for collision avoidance of operational assets, prediction of atmospheric re-entry of derelict satellites and rocket bodies, it said. In addition, dedicated labs will also be set up in this control centre for Space Debris mitigation and remediation, compliance verification of UN/IADC guidelines and various R&D activities.

SOURCE: The Hindu

India and Bangladesh hold bilateral summit

Connectivity and cross-border development projects are expected to top the agenda for a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina on December 17. The meeting will also focus on giving impetus to bilateral relations after they were affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and Bangladesh's misgivings about the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), people familiar with developments said on condition of anonymity. The two prime ministers will hold "comprehensive discussions on the entire spectrum of the bilateral relationship, including further strengthening cooperation in the post-Covid era", the external affairs ministry said on Monday.

As first reported by HT last month, the two sides are expected to sign four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) during the virtual summit. The Chilahati-Haldibari rail link, which was closed during the 1965 war with Pakistan, will be revived during the summit and some more projects will be inaugurated by the two leaders, Bangladesh foreign minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters in Dhaka on Sunday. This will be the fifth rail link between the two countries.

SOURCE: Hindustan Times

SC proposes committee of farmer leaders

The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued a notice to the Centre and others on petitions seeking that protesting farmers camping at roads near the Delhi borders be removed from the spots. The farmers have been protesting against the three new agriculture laws brought by the Centre. The petitioners have cited difficulties faced by commuters and the threat to COVID-19 cases posed by the protests. A bench comprising Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, and Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian also indicated that the court may form a committee having representatives of the government and farmer unions across the country to resolve the deadlock over the legislations. "All of you sit together. Prepare a tentative list of committee members. Government's engagement with farmers won't workout it seems," CJI Bobde said.

SOURCE: The Wire

PSLV-C50 launches CMS-01 successfully

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro)'s PSLV-C50 lifted off from the Sriharikota spaceport near Chennai, and successfully placed India's 42nd communications satellite CMS-01 (formerly GSAT-12R) into orbit 20 minutes after lift-off. The rocket lifted from the second launch pad at the rocket port in Sriharikota, in Andhra Pradesh. After about 20 minutes into its flight, it ejected CMS-01 into geosynchronous transfer orbit (GTO) and from there, the satellite will be taken up and positioned in the geosynchronous stationary orbit. The 44-metre-high four-staged engine, PSLV-C50, is the 22nd flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration (with six strap-on motors hugging the first stage). It will be the 52nd mission for India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). The PSLV in normal configuration is a four-stage expandable rocket powered by solid and liquid fuels alternatively, with six booster motors strapped on to the first stage to give higher thrust during the initial flight moments.

SOURCE: Business Standard

Defence acquisition Council approves 27,000 crores of rupees

proposals

Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) meeting, headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, today approved proposals to procure equipment worth Rs 27,000 crore from the domestic industry. DAC approved Capital Acquisition proposals of various weapons, platforms, equipment and systems required by the Indian Army, the Navy and Air Force at an approximate overall cost of Rs 28,000 crore. This was the first meeting of the Council under the new regime of Defence Acquisition Procedure 2020 and this will give a boost to the Make in India and Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiatives of the Government. Acquisition proposals approved today include the DRDO designed and developed Airborne Early Warning and Control Systems for the Indian Air Force, Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels for the Indian Navy and Modular Bridges for the Indian Army. The DAC approved seven capital acquisition proposals for various weapons, platforms, equipment and systems required by the army, navy and air force at an approximate overall cost of Rs 28,000 crore. Six of these acquisitions, worth Rs 27,000 crore, will be made from Indian industry, the statement said, without giving further details.

SOURCE: Hindustan Times