

Headlines at a Glance - 20th January 2022

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PM Modi to host first India-Central Asia Summit on January 27

After rising Covid-19 cases cancelled the visit of the leaders of five central Asian nations, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Wednesday said India will host the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan virtually. The summit will be held a day after Republic Day, which the five presidents were to attend as the chief guests. The MEA added Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host the “first meeting of the India-Central Asia Summit, with the participation” of the five Presidents — Kazakhstan’s Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Uzbekistan’s Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Tajikistan’s Emomali Rahmon, Turkmenistan’s Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow and Kyrgyz Republic’s Sadyr Japarov — in a virtual format. This, the statement said, “will be the first engagement of its kind between India and the Central Asian countries at the level of leaders.”

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*

BSF to conduct ‘Operation Sard Hawa’ along Pak border

The Border Security Force will increase surveillance along the Pakistan border in Rajasthan under its “Operation Sard Hawa” from January 23 to 28. Arun Kumar Singh, Deputy Inspector General of the BSF, North Zone, said in a statement that due to fog and haze on the border during winter, the force remains on “high alert” to deal with infiltration and other nefarious activities from across the border. The operation will be carried out on the border from January 23 to 28. Under this, the security will be increased on the border. All personnel and officers of the headquarters will remain on the border during this period and will monitor the situation 24 hours, Singh said.

The BSF conducts “Operation Garam Hawa” in summer and “Operation Sard Hawa” in winter every year.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Eleven cities selected as the winners of the Streets for People Challenge

The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry on Tuesday said 11 cities, including Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad, have been selected as the winners of the ‘Streets for People Challenge’ for their pilot projects to make roads more pedestrian-friendly. In a statement, the ministry said that under the challenge, 38 cities had piloted re-imaginings of an important street each by prioritizing them for pedestrians. Pune city constructed smart roads on JM road, FC road, Baner and Aundh areas which were appreciated at the national level. Pune won the accolades for reclaiming space along several roads to create safe and exciting ‘experience zones’ for all citizens. The city activated these edges by painting the spaces, conducting laughter yoga sessions, music sessions and introducing kids play areas. Going ahead, the city plans to build wider footpaths and install street furniture at different locations, said officials.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*

Cabinet approves Rs 1,500 crore infusion in IREDA

The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved the infusion of Rs 1,500 crore in the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA). This will enable IREDA to lend Rs 12,000 crore to the renewable energy sector, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said. Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Thakur said the decision was taken in the wake of the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) lending norms. He said this Cabinet decision will help IREDA to create renewable energy capacity of 3,500 to 4,000 MW. The fresh infusion will also enhance IREDA’s net worth which will help it in additional renewable energy financing. It will also improve the capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio to facilitate its lending and borrowing operations, the government informed in a release.

SOURCE: *The Indian Express*