

Headlines At a Glance - 23rd Jan 2020

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ISRO to send lady robot 'Vyommitra' in unmanned Gaganyaan

Before orbiting astronauts on India's first manned mission to space in December 2021, the Indian Space Research Organisation will send 'Vyommitra', a 'lady robot' in the unmanned Gaganyaan spacecraft. The robot was the centre of attraction at the inaugural session of the "Human Spaceflight and Exploration - Present Challenges and Future Trends". Vyommitra, a combination of two Sanskrit words Vyoma (Space) and Mitra (Friend), took everyone by surprise when she introduced herself to the audience gathered there. ISRO chairman K Sivan told reporters the half humanoid will simulate human functions in space and also interact with the environment control life support system.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Daman to be headquarters of UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday designated Daman as headquarters of newly-carved out Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. Briefing reporters after the cabinet meeting, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the Cabinet also approved

amendments and repeal in Acts dealing with Goods and Services Tax (GST), Value Added Tax and Excise Duty in view of the merger of Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. He said Daman has been designated as headquarter of the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. Parliament had last month passed a bill to merge the two union territories.

SOURCE: *Business Standard*

India completes phasing out of ozone-depleting chemical Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141b

India has successfully completed the phasing out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141b, used by foam manufacturing companies and one of the most potent ozone-depleting chemicals, the Union Environment Ministry said on Wednesday. Ozone occurs naturally in small amounts in the upper atmosphere of the earth. It protects life on earth from the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Simultaneously, the use of HCFC-141b by foam manufacturing industry has also been closed as on January 1 under the Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2014. HCFC-141b is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.

SOURCE: *The New Indian Express*

Gujarat tops SKOCH State of Governance 2019 ranking

SKOCH State of Government report is one of the most awaited and discussed publications on the state of governance in the country. The focus on primary data and grassroot level interventions makes it unique. This year the traditional frontrunner Gujarat has occupied the top spot, replacing West Bengal that had sprung a surprise in 2018. The report lists the best and the rest of Indian states on the basis of their performance. Gujarat has regained the top spot on the back of splendid performance in Health, Education, Power and e-Governance segment.

SOURCE: *Outlook India, inclusion.skoch.in*

India ranked 51st in 2019 Democracy Index: EIU

India slipped 10 places to 51st position in the 2019 Democracy Index's global ranking, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit, which cited "erosion of civil liberties" in the country as the primary cause for the downtrend. India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in the Index that provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories. On India, the report said, the country dropped ten places in the Democracy Index's global ranking to

51st. The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country.

SOURCE: *Economic Times*