

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2021**

### **Aircraft carrier built in India will be ready next year, says Rajnath Singh**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that India's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC), INS Vikrant, is likely to be commissioned next year.

The IAC has been under construction at the Cochin Shipyard for over a decade. He visited the site to review its progress. "Reviewed first-hand the ongoing work on the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier, which is India's pride and a shining example of Atmanirbhar Bharat. The IAC has made significant progress. Commissioning of the IAC next year will be a befitting tribute to 75 years of India's independence," he tweeted.

At present, India has only one aircraft carrier, the Russian-origin INS Vikramaditya. The Navy said in a statement that the IAC will be "as INS Vikrant in the first half of 2022, which would be the most potent sea-based asset". It will operate MiG-29K fighter aircraft, Kamov-31 Air Early Warning Helicopters, the soon-to-be-inducted MH-60R multi-role helicopter, and the indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters, it said.

### **Smart City awards: Surat tops list of cities using data for delivering governance**

Surat has emerged at the top among Indian cities to have successfully implemented governance through institutionalised use of data — especially through big data crunching — according to an official assessment.

As many as 42 in a list of 100 "smart cities" have been certified as having put in place systems to use data-based evidence for governance delivery, under the second round of the 'Data Maturity Assessment Framework' by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Following Gujarat's Surat, are Pimpri Chinchwad in Maharashtra and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh. Pune has bagged the fourth spot.

### **Govt launches LiDAR survey reports to augment water in forest areas**

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar released LiDAR-based reports mapping out the water requirement within forest areas in 10 states. These reports will be used to augment groundwater in forest areas so that animals don't venture out in search of water, Javadekar said.

The LiDAR (light detection and ranging) technology was used to create 3-D images of the project areas to recommend soil and water conservation structures. The surveys were carried out at forest areas in Assam, Bihar, Chhatisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, and Tripura.

Javadekar said that the project, awarded to WAPCOS, a PSU under the Jal Shakti Ministry, is “a first of its kind and a unique experiment using LiDAR technology which will help augment water and fodder in jungles areas thereby reducing human-animal conflict”.

“The survey will help us in identifying areas which need groundwater recharge which will in turn help local communities. We have partnered with 26 states to pilot this project,” he said.

The soil and water conservation structures will help in catching rainwater and prevent stream run-off, which will help in recharging groundwater, said officials.

The project was awarded to WAPCOS in July 2020 at a cost of over Rs18 crore for implementation in 26 states over 261897 hectares.

### **Covid test for Rs 50 launched by IIT Delhi**

Minister of State for Education Sanjay Dhotre launched an “affordable” and “accurate” Rapid Antigen Test kit for Covid developed by The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.

The kit costs just Rs 50, and is hundred per cent indigenously developed and manufactured. The Antigen testing kit has been developed by IIT-D’s Centre for Biomedical Engineering (CBME) led by Professor Harpal Singh.

“IIT Delhi disrupted the RT-PCR market with a Rs 399 probe-free RT PCR kit launched in July 2020. Over 8 million high quality PPE kits are supplied so far, using the technology developed at IIT Delhi,” IIT-D Director V Ramgopal Rao said in a Facebook post.

### **Pakistan to remain on FATF grey list**

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has refused to take Pakistan out of the ‘Grey List’ yet again. It said Pakistan had failed to take appropriate action against UN-designated terrorists such as 26/11 accused Hafiz Saeed and JeM chief Masood Azhar.

Although the global anti-money laundering and terror financing body has acknowledged some progress made by Pakistan, it said the country should continue to work to address its strategically-important deficiencies.

FATF president Marcus Pleyer said the decision was taken at the conclusion of the virtual plenary of the Paris-based organisation. Pakistan continues to remain on “increased monitoring list”, Pleyer said at a virtual press conference. “Increased monitoring list” is the another name for the Grey List.

### **Standoff talks: India, China discuss ‘early resolution’, agree to hold military talks soon**

India and China agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the “remaining issues” along the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh.

At the 22nd meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC), held virtually, the two sides agreed to hold the next (12th) round of the Senior Commanders meeting at an early date to achieve the objective of complete disengagement from all the friction points along the LAC.

The last WMCC meeting took place on March 12.

A statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said that the two sides had a “frank exchange” of views on the situation along the LAC in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas.

“Both sides agreed on the need to find an early resolution to the remaining issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh keeping in view the agreement reached between the two Foreign Ministers in September 2020.

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