

December 27th news:

International:

Beijing moot backs talks with Taliban

Pakistan, Afghanistan and China reaffirmed on 26th December their support for a broad-based and an inclusive process to bring peace to the war-torn Afghanistan and stressed the need for dialogue between the government in Kabul and the Taliban militants

According to a joint press release, the foreign ministers of the three regional nations, at a meeting in Beijing, also agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism coordination and cooperation in an effort to combat all terrorist organisations and individuals without any discrimination

Khawaja Asif joined his counterparts, Wang Yi of China and Salahuddin Rabbani of Afghanistan in the first-ever trilateral China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Minister's Dialogue in Beijing on 26th December

Wang said that Beijing and Islamabad will look at extending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, adding that the \$57 billion project could benefit the whole region and act as an impetus for development.

Afghanistan has urgent need to develop and China hopes it can join inter-connectivity initiatives. The successful implementation of CPEC projects will serve as a model for enhancing connectivity and cooperation through similar projects with neighbouring countries, including Afghanistan, Iran and with central and west Asia

Emphasising the importance of stability for progress and prosperity, the foreign minister said that Pakistan wants a peaceful Afghanistan to facilitate safe repatriation of Afghan refugees currently in Pakistan.

The press release said that the three sides reaffirmed that a broad-based and inclusive peace and reconciliation process, which is "Afghan-led, Afghan-own", and fully supported regionally and internationally, is the most viable solution to end the violence in Afghanistan.

The three sides agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism coordination and cooperation in an effort to combat all terrorist organisations and individuals without any discrimination. The countries are expected to communicate and develop a memorandum of understanding on counter-terrorism cooperation.

Worlds Longest Glass Bridge Opens in China

The world's longest glass bridge opened in China to the public. Though it has a capacity to hold 2000 people, only 500 would be allowed at a time. It is Located in Shijiazhuang, the magnificent bridge lies 218 meters above hanging between the two cliffs in Hongyagu Scenic Area in Pingshan county.

The bridge is 488 meters long and two meters wide, with two dragon statues on top that could produce smoke. Another 430 meters long and 6 meters wide bridge was opened last year in the Grand Canyon Scenic Area in Zhangjiajie, China.

National:

Mumbai Gets India's First Ever AC Local Train

Mumbai got India's first ever AC suburban local train as Christmas gift. The first service of the 12-coach EMU will commence between Borivali and Churchgate. The first and 12th coaches from Churchgate end are earmarked as ladies coaches. This will be the first train with automatic doors in the suburban system. Out of 12 services of AC Local train, 8 will run fast and will only halt at major stations. The services of AC local train will replace existing 12 Non AC services.

India's First Runway on 'Sea Bridge' in Lakshadweep

India is all set to get its first runway on a 'sea bridge', as the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been given a nod to extend Lakshadweep's Agatti Airport. The task will be carried out by building an RCC platform on the beach and shallow area which will allow bigger ATRs to operate on the island. The Project is likely to cost about Rs 1,500 crore.

Economy:

Honda to set up electric car battery plant in India

Honda Motor is planning to set up a lithium-ion battery manufacturing unit in India with the main aim to move only potential electric vehicles on roads by 2030. Under the global agreement on climate change, the company is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As per reports, it is involved in building up of electric vehicle strategy for the Indian market. According to an announcement made by Honda, by 2030, electric cars will comprise 65% of the company's overall sales. Of that, 15% will be pure electric while the rest will be hybrid, plug-in hybrid and fuel-cell-powered vehicles

Environment

Environment Ministry Launches Pilot Project Blue Flag for Beach Clean-up

The environment ministry launched a pilot project 'Blue Flag' for its clean-up and development. With the prime objective of enhancing standards of cleanliness, upkeep and basic amenities at beaches.

The 'Blue Flag' is a certification by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) that a beach, Marina or sustainable boating tourism operator, meets its stringent standards.