

December 28th news:

National:

Parliament passes Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill

Parliament on 27th December passed The Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, 2017 to exclude bamboo from the definition of a tree under the Indian Forest Act. The bill claims that it the exclusion of bamboo will improve the livelihoods of tribals and people living near forest areas.

The Indian Forest (Amendment) Bill, which was adopted by the Lok Sabha on December 20, was passed by a voice vote in the Rajya Sabha

The bill permits felling and transit of bamboo, which is grown in non-forest areas. However, bamboo grown on forest lands would continue to be classified as a tree and would be guided by the existing legal restrictions

President Kovind inaugurates Andhra Pradesh Fiber Grid Project

President Ram Nath Kovind on Wednesday dedicated Andhra Pradesh (AP) Fibre Grid and drone project to the nation. The vision of Fibre Grid project is "to establish a highly scalable network infrastructure, accessible on a nondiscriminatory basis, to provide on demand, affordable and end-to-end broadband connectivity of 15 Mbps for all households and 100 Mbps to 1 Gbps for institutions & Offices by 2018, to enable realization of the Vision of Digital AP, in partnership with the Government of India and the private sector."

AP State FiberNet Limited (APSFL) is responsible for undertaking the works of AP Fibergrid , its operations and maintenance and business activities.

The AP government wants to use drones for governance, administration, and for the maintenance of law and order in the state.

These flying objects can be used to monitor real-time situations in an area, and deploying multiple drones can help the police keep a tab on traffic and crime.

The state also plans to employ drones in area like tourism, agriculture, mines, forests and irrigation projects. In case of mines, forests and agriculture, surveillance can be done for regular checks and improving the operating conditions.

President inaugurates conference in Andhra Pradesh

President Ram Nath Kovind formally inaugurated the Annual Conference of Indian Economic Association at Acharya Nagarjuna University campus near Guntur in Andhra Pradesh.

About 2,000 economists from across the country are taking part in the conference. They include 55 prominent economists from India and 16 from foreign countries.

Bilateral:

Second India-Afghan air cargo route launched

The second India-Afghanistan air cargo route linking Kabul to Mumbai was launched on 27th December, with officials saying that it is expected to boost the export of fresh fruits and medicinal plants from Afghanistan. The second route follows the success of the Kabul-New Delhi air corridor that was inaugurated by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in mid-June.

10,640 tons of fresh produce, fresh and dried fruits, medicinal plants and handicrafts worth more than \$20 million had been exported to India since the launch of the first corridor. The second corridor was inaugurated by Afghan and Indian officials at the Hamid Karzai international airport in Kabul.

Economy:

Lok Sabha passes GST (Compensation to States) Amendment Bill- 2017

Lok Sabha on 27th December has passed the Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Amendment Bill 2017. Last week, the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had introduced the bill in the lower House. The bill results in an increase in the maximum rate at which the Compensation Cess can be levied from 15 to 25 percent on motor vehicles for transport of not more than 13 persons, including the driver and motor vehicles.

The Bill amends the Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 and replaces an Ordinance promulgated in September 2017. The Act allows the central government to notify the rate of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Compensation Cess on items such as pan masala, coal, aerated drinks, and tobacco, subject to certain caps. The amount received by levying the GST Compensation Cess is used to compensate states for any loss in revenue following the implementation of GST.

Sports:

Indian Boxers won 5 Medals at Galym Boxing Tournament

Indian boxers have claimed three gold, a silver, and a bronze medal at the Galym Zharylgapov Boxing Tournament in Karaganda, Kazakhstan. In the event, the country's Gold Medal winners were K Shyam Kumar in 49kg, Naman Tanwar in 91kg and Satish Kumar in the 91kg category claimed gold medals. Naman Tanwar was also adjudged the best boxer of the tournament.

Persons in news:

Jai Ram Thakur: Senior BJP leader **Jai Ram Thakur** took oath as the 6th Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. He has replaced Virbhadra Singh. A five-time MLA, Mr Thakur won Siraj Assembly seat of Mandi district this time. Governor Acharya Devvrat administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr Thakur.