

December 31st news:

International:

Nepal bans solo climbers from Mount Everest under new rules

Nepal has banned solo climbers from scaling its mountains, including Mount Everest, in a bid to reduce accidents. The new safety regulations also prohibit double amputee and blind climbers from attempting to reach the summit of the world's highest peak without a valid medical certificate.

A tourism official said the law had been revised to make mountaineering safer and to decrease deaths. A record number of climbers have tried to climb Everest this year. But among the record-breaking attempts, there has been the familiar tally of casualties.

The death toll so far this season stands at six, including 85-year-old Min Bahadur Sherchan, who died attempting to reclaim his title as the world's oldest person to reach the top.

World-renowned Swiss climber Ueli Steck, who was known as the "Swiss Machine", also died during a solo climb to a peak neighbouring Everest.

Economy:

Start-up Incubation Centre launched in Mangalore

Nirmala Sitharaman launched a start-up incubation center called the Centre for Entrepreneurship Opportunities and Learning (CEOL) in Mangaluru, Karnataka. She has allocated Rs. 1.5 crore from her MPLAD (Member of Parliament's Local Area Development) scheme for the development of CEOL. She represents Karnataka as an MP in the Rajya Sabha.

Only 7% of Rs.9,860 cr spent so far under Smart City Mission: Govt

Out of Rs 9,860 crore released to 60 cities under the Smart City Mission only seven per cent, or about Rs 645 crore, have been utilised so far, an issue which has raised concerns in the Urban Affairs Ministry.

Of the Rs 196 crore released to each of around 40 cities, Ahmedabad has spent the maximum amount of Rs 80.15 crore, followed by Indore (Rs 70.69 crore), Surat (Rs 43.41 crore) and Bhopal Rs 42.86 crore, according to a data of the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry.

On the other hand, the data revealed that of the sanctioned funds Andaman and Nicobar could utilise only Rs 54 lakh, Ranchi 35 lakh, and Aurangabad Rs 85 lakh.

Among cities which got around Rs 111 crore each from the Centre, Vodadara has spent Rs 20.62 crore, Namchi in Sikkim spent Rs 6.80 crore, while Salem, Vellore and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu could utilise only Rs five lakh, Rs six lakh and Rs 19 lakh, respectively.

Ninety cities have so far been selected by the government under the smart city mission and each of them will get Rs 500 crore as central assistance for implementing various projects. The cities are

required to set up Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to get funds from the Centre for the implementation of the project.

Rs 14000cr for 8 NE Smart City projects

In October last, Hardeep Singh Puri informed that 464 projects costing Rs 14,124 crore were approved for eight cities of the North East under the Smart Cities Mission.

It includes Rs 826-crore Brahmaputra riverfront development project in Guwahati and Rs 409 crore ropeway project in Kohima.

Currently, five projects costing Rs 95.5 crore were under execution, the minister said after reviewing the progress of urban missions in the North Eastern states.

Science and Technology:

China successfully tested its first Photovoltaic road

China successfully tested its first photovoltaic (solar) highway based on home-grown technology in country's eastern Shandong province. With this, China became the second country in the world to construct a photovoltaic highway.

China's photovoltaic highway is constructed using solar panels which have a thin sheet of transparent concrete on top of them, protecting the surface.

Persons in news:

George Weah: The closest rival of Mr. Weah was his opponent Joseph Boakai. Mr. Weah won the elections with more than 60% of the vote. He succeeded Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Africa's first elected female president, in Liberia's first democratic handover in decades.