DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 07-02-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

Shivraj Singh Chouhan Launches Watershed Yatra

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched a 'Watershed Yatra' in a hybrid mode.

The Yatra was launched by the Minister in the virtual mode while it was launched in a physical mode by the concerned officials in 800 Gram Panchayats in which more than one lakh people participated in the launch program.

The Watershed yatra aims to create awareness and encourage mass participation of the people about the watershed development activities in the areas where Watershed Development activities are being carried out under the Watershed Development Component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY 2.0) programme.

Watershed refers to the area of land that drains or sheds water into a specific waterbody like a lake, stream, river, and finally into the ocean. The watersheds drain melted snow and rainfall into these water bodies.

The Watershed Yatra has been launched by the Union Ministry of Rural Development.

The Watershed Yatra will be through a specially designed and equipped mobile van which will cover around 805 projects in 13587 villages in 26 States and the Union Territories in 60-90 days.

The Watershed Yatra aims to involve the people in the conservation of soils and water and inspire community participation in the effective and successful implementation of WDC PMKSY Projects.

Government Expands Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana for Senior Citizens

The Government of India expanded Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to provide free treatment benefits up to ₹5 lakh per year for all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, irrespective of socio-economic status, including tribal communities.

The National Health Authority (NHA) introduced a revised Health Benefit Package (HBP) covering 1,961 medical procedures across 27 specialties such as General Medicine, Surgery, Orthopedics, Cardiology, and Oncology.

States have flexibility to customize the Health Benefit Packages based on local needs.

Beneficiaries of Ayushman Vay Vandana Cards can avail of these benefits through a network of 30,072 hospitals, including 13,352 private hospitals.

Extensive awareness campaigns are being conducted through newspapers, radio, street plays, digital displays, mass messaging, and Doordarshan to reach rural and backward areas.

Frontline workers such as ASHAs, AWWs, and VLEs are engaged to promote mass awareness.

For assistance, beneficiaries can call the 24x7 helpline (14555) or give a missed call to 1800-110-770.

The Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Prataprao Jadhav, shared this information in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.

The Government of India Introduces 'Haj Suvidha App'

The Government of India has launched the 'Haj Suvidha App', aimed at improving the pilgrimage experience for Indian Haj pilgrims.

The app serves as a comprehensive guide for pilgrims, providing them with essential services throughout their journey to ensure they have a smooth and fulfilling experience while performing the sacred rituals.

The initiative underscores the government's commitment to modernizing the pilgrimage experience by enhancing accessibility, support, and convenience for Indian pilgrims.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias

The Indian capital city of New Delhi hosted the 15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias from 5-7 February 2025.

The International meeting provided a platform for the global pharmacopoeial leaders, regulatory authorities, and industry stakeholders to strengthen cooperation in Pharmacopoeias and to improve public health outcomes.

They discussed measures to improve pharmaceutical standards, harmonization of pharmaceuticals, and regulatory convergence.

The first International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias was held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 29th February to 2nd March 2012.

The 15th International Meeting of World Pharmacopoeias was organised by the WHO and was hosted by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

US to Withdraw from UNHRC and Stop Funding of UNRWA

Donald Trump, the 47th President of the United States of America, has signed an executive order to withdraw the country from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and permanently

stop the funding of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

He has also ordered the review of the American contribution to UNESCO and the funding of the United Nations.

Since coming into power in January 2025, Donald Trump has been following a policy in which the United States is reviewing its contribution to all international organisations.

The world's largest economy, the United States, contributes around 22% of the United Nations budget.

These measures were announced by US President Donald Trump after his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington.

During his meeting with Netanyahu, he also announced that the United States would take over the Palestinian territory of Gaza, under the control of Israel.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IIT Madras Launches Bharat Cancer Genome Atlas

IIT Madras launched India's first cancer genome database, Bharat Cancer Genome Atlas (BCGA), to enhance cancer research and diagnostics.

Addresses the underrepresentation of Indian genetic data in global cancer genome studies, impacting diagnostic kits and targeted therapies.

Since 2020, IIT Madras has sequenced 960 whole exome analyses from 480 breast cancer tissue samples across India.

BCGA provides genetic insights into Indian breast cancer cases, aiding early diagnostics, disease progression tracking, and treatment improvements.

The project is a collaborative effort with Karkinos Healthcare, Mumbai; Chennai Breast Clinic; and the Cancer Research and Relief Trust, Chennai.

Centre of Excellence on Cancer Genomics and Molecular Therapeutics at IIT Madras played a key role, funded under the "Institutions of Eminence" initiative.

BCGA will help identify cancer-specific biomarkers, enabling early detection and novel drug discovery for Indian patients.

The database will act as a national genomic repository, accepting contributions from researchers across different cancer types.

It enables personalized medicine, ensuring cancer treatment strategies are tailored to genetic and molecular profiles, improving medical care and patient outcomes.

BANKING

HDFC Bank to Fund Over 50 Startups with 15 Incubators

India's largest private sector bank,HDFC Bank has launched the 8th edition of its Parivartan Start-Up Grants initiative, with a total commitment of up to ₹20 crore.

The initiative aims to support 50-60 social ventures this fiscal year.

HDFC initiative funds startups in AI for social good, climate innovation, financial inclusion, agriculture, and sustainable rural development, along with education, livelihood enhancement, gender diversity, and inclusion.

Selected startups will receive grants of up to ₹50 lakh.

HDFC Bank has partnered with 15 incubators and accelerators, including IIT Madras, IIM Ahmedabad Ventures, Villgro, and ICAR Pusa Krishi, to identify promising social ventures.

The program will conclude with "Demo Day" events, where funded startups will showcase their work to investors, corporates, and media.

Startups from Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Haryana, and northeastern states will participate.

Since 2017, HDFC Bank Parivartan has supported 400+ startups through 120+ incubators, continuing its focus on social entrepreneurship and sustainability.

Beacon Introduces India Bill Pay Within the My Beacon Super App

Beacon launched Beacon India Bill Pay, enabling users in Canada to pay bills in India directly from their Beacon Money account.

This service allows payment of over 20,000 bills in India using Canadian Dollars, integrating with Bharat Connect (formerly Bharat Bill Payment System, BBPS).

The service complies with Reserve Bank of India policies and eliminates the need for NRI accounts or intermediaries.

Beacon Money allows Indian nationals to open Canadian accounts before arriving in Canada, with no SIN or Canadian address required, offering a digital onboarding process.

Visa cards are delivered within 7–10 days after arrival, supporting global transactions, Interac e-Transfers®, and bill payments.

Beacon is the first company in North America to tie up with Bharat Connect for bill payments.

For the first time, immigrants can settle utility bills, hospital bills, family expenses, and other

payments in India from all within a single app and through your Beacon Money account, eliminating intermediaries and complex NRI accounts.

BUSINESS

Amazon and UP Government Collaborate to Boost Women Entrepreneurs

Amazon India has partnered with Uttar Pradesh's ARGA initiative to support women entrepreneurs in Gonda through its Saheli programme.

The initiative helps small businesses access digital tools and e-commerce opportunities to expand their reach.

Amazon India will provide training on digital marketing, product listing optimization, advertising, and data analytics to improve online sales.

The program aims to strengthen rural entrepreneurship by addressing challenges like packaging and marketing.

The partnership was launched during World Wetlands Day at Parvati Arga Bird Sanctuary, attended by CM Yogi Adityanath and Minister Kirti Vardhan Singh.

CM Yogi Adityanath emphasized the importance of e-commerce in scaling rural businesses through better packaging and digital marketing.

The initiative enables rural women entrepreneurs to sell products on Amazon, gaining access to a wider customer base across India and beyond.

The collaboration aligns with Amazon India's strategy to support small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) and integrate local products into mainstream e-commerce.

DEFENCE

Indian Navy Concludes Joint Manship Drills Under TROPEX-25

The Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX-25) was held off India's western coast.

Senior military leadership participated, including Lieutenant General Johnson P Mathew (Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee) and vice chiefs from the Army, Navy, and Air Force.

The exercise involved dynamic naval operations with Indian Navy ships, submarines, and aircraft.

Key vessels involved included INS Vikrant (aircraft carrier), INS Visakhapatnam (guided missile destroyer), INS Satpura (stealth frigate), and INS Jalashwa (amphibious vessel).

Highlights included precision missile, gun, and rocket firings, anti-submarine warfare drills, and amphibious landings by Indian Army troops.

MiG-29K fighter jets and helicopters showcased aerial strength through bomb busts, rocket firings, and low-level aerobatics.

The exercise demonstrated the Navy's ability to project air power across the maritime domain.

In addition to TROPEX-25, the Indian Navy maintains a strong schedule of bilateral and multilateral exercises with navies globally.

Conducted in the Indian Ocean, it aims to validate operational concepts and enhance operational readiness and interoperability in a multi-threat environment.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 in Dogri Conferred on Late Chaman Arora

The Sahitya Akademi Award 2024 in Dogri has been conferred on Late Chaman Arora for his short story collection, "Ik Hor Ashwthama."

The prestigious award was approved by Sri Madhav Kaushik, President of Sahitya Akademi, based on the recommendation of a three-member jury.

First Black Woman to Win Mrs World 2025

Tshego Gaelae, a Soweto-born attorney, has made history by becoming the first Black woman to win the Mrs World 2025 title at the grand finale in Las Vegas.

The 34-year-old, who is also the 2024 Mrs South Africa Queen, follows in the footsteps of Candice Abrahams, the only other South African to hold the title (2016).

Gaelae's victory is a historic moment in the 40-year history of the Mrs World pageant, and she plans to leverage her platform to champion women's empowerment while representing South Africa on the global stage.

Gaelae becomes the first Black woman to win the prestigious Mrs World title in the pageant's history.

She is only the second South African to win the Mrs World title, following Candice Abrahams, who won in 2016.

IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day Of Zero Tolerance For Female Genital Mutilation

International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation 2025 is observed on the 6th February 2025.

The Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting was initiated by UNFPA and UNICEF in 2007 to accelerate the abandonment of the practice.

In 2008, WHO and 9 other United Nations partners released a declaration titled "Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement" regarding the abolition of FGM.

WHO 2010 published a "Global strategy to stop health care providers from performing female genital mutilation" in collaboration with other key UN agencies and international organizations.

The UN General Assembly in 2012 adopted a resolution A/RES/67/14 on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).