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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 08-07-2023

NATIONAL NEWS

Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in States

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has launched a "Scheme for Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the States" from the earmarked allocation of the Preparedness and Capacity Building Funding Window under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF)
- It is to strengthen fire services in the States with a total outlay of Rs. 5,000 crores.
- An amount of Rs. 500 crores, out of the total outlay, has been kept for incentivizing the States based on their legal and infrastructure-based reforms.
- Under the able guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, several key initiatives are being taken to ensure 'zero death' and minimum loss of property during disasters by strengthening the disaster risk reduction system in India to make it disaster resilient.
- The Objective of the scheme is to expand and modernize Fire Services in the States with a view that activities for strengthening fire services at the State-level through preparedness and the capacity-building component of the NDRF will be ensured.

The Union Cabinet Approved the DPDP Bill

- The Union Cabinet cleared the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill.
- The clearance paves the way for the Bill to be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming Monsoon Session, scheduled to begin on July 20.
- Along with the data protection law, the Union government may also table the Indian Telecommunications Bill, a draft of which was circulated in a public consultation last year.
- The telecom Bill would overhaul the Telegraph Act, which is the legal framework for telecom firms and internet service providers.
- The Bill essentially allows laypersons to complain to the Data Protection Board of India,

consisting of technical experts constituted by the government, if they have reason to believe that their personal data has been used without their consent – for example, cell phone numbers or Aadhaar details.

- Bill has a clause for offering voluntary undertaking in case an entity wants to admit that a breach has occurred and pay a penalty as a mitigation measure to avoid court litigation.
- Penalty of up to ₹250 crores could be levied for each instance of the breach with an upward revision of ₹500 crores.
- Fines for individual offences would begin from ₹10,000.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Hosted 23rd Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization

- India virtually hosted the 23rd Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the 23rd Summit of the SCO Council of Heads of State.
- All SCO member states China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan were invited to participate in the summit.
- Iran, Belarus and Mongolia were invited as observers.
- As per SCO tradition, Turkmenistan was also invited as the guest chair.
- The heads of two SCO bodies, the Secretariat and the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure – the Rats, also participated in the summit.
- The theme of India's Chairmanship of SCO-SECURE is derived from the acronym given by the Prime Minister at the 2018 SCO Qingdao Summit.
- SECURE stands for Security, Economic development, Connectivity, Unity, Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, and Environmental protection.
- India has established new pillars of cooperation under its chairmanship by prioritising startups and innovation, traditional medicine, digital inclusion, youth empowerment, and shared Buddhist heritage.

BANKING

Piramal Finance Opens First All-Women Branch in Kochi

- Piramal Finance opened the first all women branch named ‘Maitreyi’ at Thripunithura near Kochi to cater to the unique needs of women customers.
- Kerala was chosen as the location for the inaugural branch due to its demographic and market dynamics, 50% of customers in Kerala are women, as against the national average of 20%.
- Kerala also has a high percentage of self-employed individuals, highlighting the entrepreneurial spirit of the state's population.
- Each Maitreyi branch has a dedicated team of 7-15 women employees to cater to the specific needs of the customers.
- The branch offers a wide range of services including home loans, MSME loans with a focus on home construction and property loans.

1st Bank to Offer Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme

- The Bank of India (BoI), one of the largest public sector banks (PSBs) in the country, has become the first bank to officially roll out Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC) scheme.
- The MSSC is a government-guaranteed limited-period small savings scheme aimed at empowering women and fostering their financial inclusion.
- Under the scheme, individual girls or women can open an account, or a guardian can open one on behalf of a minor girl.
- The scheme was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her Budget speech FY 2023-24.
- The scheme offers an interest rate of 5% per annum, compounded quarterly.
- While the minimum investment is Rs 1,000, any sum in multiples of Rs 100 can be deposited, up to a maximum limit of Rs 2 lakh.
- Individuals can open multiple accounts with a gap of 3 months between each account, subject to the overall investment cap of Rs 2 lakh.
- The account will mature after 2 years from the date of opening.
- Accounts under this scheme can be opened until March 31, 2025.

India Post and Canada Post Join Hands

- India Post has entered into an agreement with Canada Post to introduce International Tracked Packet Service (ITPS) between the two countries to facilitate e-commerce exports.
- India Post already provides ITPS service with 38 partner countries and Canada will be the 39th country.
- The service was expanded to 38 countries from 16 nations by adding 22 new partners, including Britain, France, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Oman, etc.
- The International Tracked Packet Service (ITPS) is a competitive service that enables the transmission and delivery of packets and is designed to meet the cross-border shipping requirements of e-commerce exporters, including Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), small businesses, merchants, etc to promote exports of their products using local post offices.
- The ITPS rates are kept very economical in comparison to International EMS (Speed Post) and other market products.
- The postage for the first 50 gms would be Rs 400 and Rs 35 for every additional 50 gms.
- This will provide an affordable shipping solution up to 2 kg to exporters along with the pick-up and volume-based discount to contractual customers.

Indian Overseas Bank Unveils Rupay Select Debit Card

- The Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) unveiled an all-new RuPay Select Debit card.
- The Rupay Select debit card will provide “luxury, convenience, and security, all in one card.”
- The introduction of the RuPay Select debit card will offer users with gym memberships, free health check-up, complimentary golf lessons, spa services, and lounge access in selected domestic and international airports.
- The Eligible One is required to have a savings bank account or a certificate of deposit (CD) with IOB, maintaining an average daily balance of ₹ 1 lakh.
- Cash withdrawal limit is set to ₹50,000.
- Daily limit for usage in merchant establishments (PoS) is set at ₹ 5 lakh.
- An amount of up to ₹3,50,000 is set for daily usage in e-commerce platforms.
- Charges for the issuance of the card and annual maintenance fee is ₹800 along with GST, respectively.

AWARDS & PRIZES

British National Award

- Noted film director Shekhar Kapur has been presented with the British National Award for Best Director for 'What's Love Got To Do With It'.
- At the award ceremony, the film 'What's Love Got To Do With It' was nominated in nine categories, out of which the film won four.
- Apart from Best Director, the film was also awarded Best British Film, Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actor.
- Shekhar Kapur is best known for directing films ranging from Bandit Queen, Mr. India to Elizabeth.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Acting Chairman of NGT

- The Central Government has authorized Justice Sheo Kumar Singh-I, Judicial Member of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), to act as the Chairperson of the Tribunal till a new Chairperson is appointed.

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change issued a notification on 06 July 2023 authorizing Justice Sheo Kumar Singh-I to act as the Chairperson.

- He was appointed as a judicial member of NGT in 2020.

- He is currently working as Judicial Member in the Central Zone Bench of Bhopal.

MISCELLANEOUS

Youngest Indian To get Commercial Pilot Licence

- Sakshi Kochhar has become the youngest commercial pilot in India at the age of 18.

- She achieved this milestone by surpassing Maitri Patel, who previously held the record by obtaining her licence at the age of 19.

- Sakshi, born on May 30, 2005, in a small town Parwanoo, the Gateway of Himachal Pradesh (HP).

- She confesses to initially wanting to be a choreographer.

- Her first solo flight was on December 21, 2022, and this year, she received her commercial pilot licence from the United States (US) on May 30, which is also her birthday.

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