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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 18-01-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

India- United States Trade Policy Forum Held in New Delhi

The 14th Ministerial-level meeting of the India- United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF) was held in New Delh

Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Katherine Tai co-chaired the forum meeting.

Ministers committed to pursuing a foundation to launch future Joint Initiatives in certain areas, including critical minerals, customs and trade facilitation, supply chains, and trade in high-tech products.

For this, both nations will develop an ambitious and forward-looking roadmap for enhanced cooperation to achieve economically meaningful outcomes.

In the forum, both nations agreed to establish a Joint Facilitative Mechanism (JFM) to mitigate non-tariff barriers which would pursue mutual recognition of results from International Laboratories and establish mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs), on a bilateral basis whenever possible.

Karnataka Government has initiated the Yuva Nidhi Scheme

The Karnataka Governmenthas initiated the Yuva Nidhi Scheme to provide financial support to educated unemployed youth in the state.

This scheme aims to offer economic security to the youth and reduce their dependence on others for their financial needs.

The Yuva Nidhi Scheme in Karnataka, launched by the state government, is a commendable initiative to bolster the economic prospects of educated, unemployed youth.

Under the Yuva Nidhi Scheme, eligible beneficiaries will receive monthly financial assistance directly in their bank accounts through Direct Bank Transfer (DBT). This financial aid will continue until they secure employment or for a maximum period of two years, whichever occurs earlier.

The government will disburse the following amounts to unemployed youth in Karnataka who have completed their degree or diploma courses in the academic year 2022-2023:

Rs. 3,000 per month for unemployed graduates.

Rs. 1,500 per month for diploma pass-outs.

Farsi Would be the 9th Indian Classical Language

In a move to strengthen cultural ties, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced that the Indian government has included Farsi (Persian) as one of the nine classical languages in India under the New Education Policy.

It is announced that Farsi will be a new classical language Under the New Education Policy 2020.

Recognising Farsi as a classical language will foster a greater understanding and appreciation of Farsi's rich heritage within the Indian educational framework.

BANKING

SBI Launches Green Rupee Term-Deposit Scheme

State Bank of India (SBI), has launched a special fixed deposit (FD) scheme named SBI Green Rupee Term Deposit (SGRTD) to mobilise funds to support environment-friendly initiatives and projects, thereby fostering the growth of a green finance ecosystem in India.

A green deposit is a fixed-term deposit for people looking to invest their surplus cash reserves in environmentally friendly projects.

By offering this product, lenders stride towards fulfilling the goal of the Government of India of making the nation net carbon zero by 2070.

SBI Green Rupee Term Deposit scheme is open to resident individuals, non-individuals, and NRI customers.

SGRTD offers investors the flexibility to choose from three distinct tenors: 1111 days, 1777 days, and 2222 days.

Currently, the scheme is available through the branch network, and it will soon be made available through other digital channels such as YONO and Internet Banking Services (INB).

New Development Bank to Provide $500 Million Loan to Gujarat

New Development Bank (NDB) signed an agreement for providing a $500-million loan to the Gujarat government.

As part of Vibrant Gujarat Summit, a project loan will be provided for the State’s Mukhayamantri Gram Sadak Yojana.

An agreement in this regard was finalised between NDB and Gujarat government at the summit in Gandhinagar.

NDB will support the roads and buildings department of the State government for construction of an estimated 1,200 km of roads.

NDB will also provide knowledge support to strengthen the rural road network in the State by adopting new technology, safeguarding the environment and implementing safer road designs.

SPORTS

Australian Open

India's Sumit Nagal entered the second round of the Australian Open tennis tournament for the first time by defeating Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik.

The Australian Open 2024 is being held at Melbourne Park from 14 January to 28 January 2024.

Australian Open 2024 is a Grand Slam tennis tournament. It is being held in Melbourne Park from 14 January this year to 28 January 2024.

The Australian Open marks the inaugural Grand Slam of the tennis calendar year.

It is the 112th edition of the Australian Open and the first major since 2024.

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Global Firepower Military Strength Ranking 2024

Global Firepower a website and a leading authority on military might has released its annual ranking report of the world’s most powerful Armies.

In the Military Strength Ranking Report 2024, America's military capability has been rated the highest in the list of the most powerful armed forces in the world.

Russia is in second place, with China being in third.

India is ranked fourth in this list.

This year 145 countries have been assessed in the Global Fire Power Rankings for the year 2024.

This year's rankings took into account more than 60 factors.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Swachh Survekshan Awards 2023

The President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu conferred Swachh Survekshan awards 2023 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

13 awardees received felicitations under categories of Clean Cities, Cleanest Cantonment, SafaiMitra Suraksha, Ganga Towns and Best Performing State were given away.

Port city Surat bagged the top honours, and Indore, who had conquered the top spot alone for 6 consecutive years.

In the category of cities with a population of less than 1 lakh, Sasvad, Patan and Lonavala secured the top three spots.

Mhow Cantonment Board in Madhya Pradesh was adjudged the Cleanest Cantonment Board.

Varanasi and Prayagraj won the top two awards amongst the Cleanest Ganga Towns.

Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh won the top three awards for Best Performing State.

FIFA Male and Female Players

Argentina's star football player Lionel Messi has won the FIFA Best Men's Player award for the third time in the last four years.

Barcelona striker Aitana Bonmati received the Best FIFA Women's Player award.

Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola won the Best Male Manager of 2023 award.

On the other hand, England coach Sarina Wigman won the women's best coach award for a record fourth time.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

Deputy Governor of RBI

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the reappointment of the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) Deputy Governor Michael Patra for one year.

The reappointment will be effective from January 15, 2024.

The term of Patra was scheduled to end on January 14, 2023, as per the RBI website.

Patra was appointed as RBI Deputy Governor in January 2020, and last year he got an extension of one year.

Patra joined RBI in 1985 and has worked in various positions at the central bank.

DEFENCE

20th India-Japan Coast Guard Exercise

The 20th joint exercise between the Coast Guard of India and Japan took place off the coast of Chennai.

Indian Coast Guard ships Shaunak, Shaurya, Sujay, Samudra Paheredar, Rani Abbakka, Annie Besant, C-440, Sagar Anveshika and Matsya Drushti and six aircraft, and Japanese Coast Guard ship Yashima participated in the exercise.

A release stated the presence of Yashima in our country is a result of the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between India and Japan in 2006.

The MoC aims to facilitate interaction between the two Coast Guard, fostering high-level visits, annual joint exercises, and participation in short-term workshops.

The exercise aims to strengthen ties and mutual understanding between the maritime security agencies of India and Japan.

The exercise also aims to strengthen bilateral ties, enabling both Coast Guard to collaborate in protecting shared interests, search and rescue missions or marine environment protection.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

NSPAAD Launches Mobile App ‘Report Fish Disease’

National Surveillance Programme for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD) project, under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, has launched the ‘Report Fish Disease-App’ on the Google Play Store.

This innovative mobile application aims to empower fish farmers with a convenient and efficient platform to report diseases on their farms, stated ICAR-CIFT (Central Institute of Fisheries Technology) in a statement.

Its intuitive and user-friendly interface enables easy accessibility for fish farmers. This data is crucial for a rapid response and an accurate diagnosis.

Geo-tagging is a technology to pinpoint the exact location of the farm and facilitate swift responses from authorities and the receivers to get real-time updates on the status of their reported cases, ensuring transparency and accountability in the disease management process.