DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 20-02-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

National Conference on JJM and SBM-G concluded in Lucknow

The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation organized a National Conference on Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

The conference brought together stakeholders from States/UTs to ensure 'an integrated approach towards sustainable solutions in the rural WASH sector'.

The conference focused on key themes such as innovation, collaboration, sustainability and O&M.

The conference served as a crucial platform for in-depth discussions on rural drinking water and sanitation issues.

Participants shared best practices, strategized collaborative planning and discussed new approaches to rural sanitation.

The highlight of the second day of the conference on 17 February was on the activities of the SBM-G program and achievements of the States/UTs.

The agenda was carefully drafted to allow for interactive discussions, meaningful ideas and learning.

JJM was started in the year 2019. JJM comes under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

JJM envisages supply of 55 liters of water per person per day to every rural household through functional household tap connections by the year 2024.

Mahindra Finance Partners with IBM

Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services Limited and IBM announced their partnership to create a “Super App” aiming to provide customers with a single digital financial services platform.

The “super app” will enable the customers to access the different services of Mahindra Group’s NBFC arm and have 24/7 digital access to them.

IBM Consulting will support “human-centred design methodology” to elevate the super app experience for its consumers, tracking actions of their lending journey.

BANKING

IREDA and PNB Signed an MoU

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with an aim to promote renewable energy initiatives across the country.

The two organizations will work together to finance a variety of renewable energy projects by co-lending and loan syndication.

The MoU includes various provisions to enhance support for renewable energy projects.

These provisions include joint lending, loan syndication and underwriting, management of Trust and Retention Account (TRA) for IREDA borrowers, and working towards competitive terms of sanction, including pricing on IREDA borrowings.

IREDA and PNB can invest in each other's bonds through this collaboration.

India has made significant progress in renewable energy, ranking 4th globally in Renewable Energy Installed Capacity, Wind Power capacity, and Solar Power capacity, according to the REN21 Renewables 2022 Global Status Report.

Indian Highways Management Company Limited Excludes Paytm Payments Bank

Indian Highways Management Company Ltd (IHMCL), toll collecting arm of state-owned NHAI, has advised highway users to buy FASTags from 32 authorised banks excluding Paytm Payments Bank for hassle-free travel.

The 32 authorised banks include Airtel Payments Bank, Allahabad Bank, Bank of Baroda, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, IDBI Bank, Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India, and Yes Bank, among others.

India has over 8 crore FASTag users and Paytm Payments Bank (PPBL) has around 30 per cent market share.

Earlier, IHMCL had barred Paytm Payments Bank from issuing fresh FASTags.

On January 31,2024 the Reserve Bank directed PPBL to stop accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer accounts, wallets, FASTTags and other instruments after February 29.

However, any interest, cashbacks, or refunds may be credited back to customers anytime.

IHMCL is encouraging FASTag users to complete the 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) process of their latest FASTag as per RBI guidelines.

Federal Bank Introduces Stellar Savings Account for Customer Base

Federal Bank has launched its latest banking product, the Stellar Savings Account, to revolutionize the banking sector by offering exceptional benefits and innovative features.

The introduction of the Stellar Savings Account aims to enhance customer experience, promote financial wellness, and encourage eco-friendly banking practices.

Federal Bank includes a complimentary one-year wellness plan with the Stellar Savings Account, emphasizing the importance of overall well-being for its customers.

The account provides robust insurance coverage, offering financial security and peace of mind to customers and their families in case of unforeseen events.

Milestone benefits are introduced, allowing customers to celebrate each banking achievement with exclusive perks and privileges.

Customers can earn reward points on every transaction with the account, with accelerated points for debit card expenditures in specific segments such as travel, electronics, and apparel, maximizing their rewards.

Federal Bank offers an eco-friendly debit card with the Stellar Savings Account, aligning with its commitment to sustainability and enabling customers to make environmentally conscious choices while managing their finances.

SPORTS

Badminton Asia Team Championship 2024

Indian women's badminton team has won the title of Badminton Asia Team Championship 2024.

In the final of this championship played in Malaysia, the Indian Women's team defeated Thailand 3-2.

This was the 5th edition of the championship being played since 2016.

PV Sindhu led the Indian team in this championship. The young and dynamic group of the Indian women's team won against two-time bronze medalists Thailand.

MI Emirates Wins ILT20 Title

MI Emirates has won the title of the second edition of UAE International League T20 (ILT20) in February 2024.

MI Emirates secured the title by defeating Dubai Capitals by 45 runs in the final match at Dubai International Stadium.

Dubai Capitals reached the finals with a streak of four consecutive victories.

MI team posted a total of 208 runs for the loss of 3 wickets in their 20 overs, batting first.

In response, Dubai Capitals team could score only 163 runs at the loss of 7 wickets in 20 overs.

Best Batsman of the Tournament (Green Belt Winner): This award was won by Desert Vipers opening batsman Alex Hales. He was given a prize money of 15,000 US dollars (Rs 12.47 lakh).

Australia Clinch U19 Men's Cricket World Cup

Australia beat India by 79 runs to win their fourth ICC U19 World Cup.

The Australian team posted a target of 253 runs in 50 overs.

However, India fell short, managing to score only 174 runs in their innings.

The 2024 ICC Under-19 Men's Cricket World Cup was an international limited-overs cricket tournament organized by the International Cricket Council (ICC), that was held in South Africa from 19 January to 11 February 2024.

It was the fifteenth edition of the Under-19 Cricket World Cup.

The tournament was originally scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka, but its hosting was pulled in November 2023 after Sri Lanka Cricket was suspended by the ICC.

The Man of the match was awarded to Mahli Beardman who took 3 wickets for 15 runs in the final match.

The performers of the tournament were, Uday Saharan from India (397 runs) and Kwena Maphaka from South Africa (21 wickets).

South Africa pace sensation Kwena Maphaka has been named the Player of the Tournament at the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup 2024.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Recipients of Jnanpith Award 2023

Jnanpith Selection Committee announced Gulzar and Jagadguru Rambhadracharya as recipients of the 58th Jnanpith Award.

Sampooran Singh Kalra, who is popularly known as Gulzar, is a renowned figure in Hindi cinema and a highly regarded Urdu poet. He is considered one of the best poets of his time.

Gulzar has received many accolades for his works, including the Sahitya Akademi Award for Urdu in 2002, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2013, the Padma Bhushan in 2004, and at least five National Film Awards.

Gulzar has created something new through his poetry. Recently, he has been paying serious attention to writing children's poetry.

Rambhadracharya, who is 74 years old, is a well-known Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer. He is the founder and head of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot and has written over 240 books and texts, including four epics.

Rambhadracharya has been holding the position under the Ramananda sect as one of the current four Jagadguru Ramanandacharya since 1982.

He had memorized the entire Bhagavad Gita by the age of eight and the entire Ramcharitmanas.

The Jnanpith Award is an annual Indian literary award presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their exceptional contribution to literature.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

World's 1st Wooden Satellite Will be Launched by NASA and JAXA

NASA and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are planning to launch the world's first wooden satellite called the LignoSat probe into space to make space flight more sustainable.

Lignosat is a coffee mug-sized satellite which is made of magnolia wood, and is set to launch into Earth orbit by the summer of 2024.

Wood doesn't burn or rot in the lifeless vacuum of space, but it will turn into fine ash upon re-entry into Earth's atmosphere, making it a surprisingly useful, biodegradable material for future satellites.

After successfully testing their wood samples on the International Space Station (ISS) earlier this year, scientists believe the test is suitable for satellite launch.

According to researchers, wooden satellites like LignoSat should theoretically be less harmful as space junk.

India's First Military Grade Spy Satellite will be Launched by SpaceX

India's first spy satellite built by Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) will be launched in a SpaceX rocket by April and will be used by the armed forces to obtain secret information.

The ground control centre is expected to be operational soon in Bengaluru.

It will be used for guidance and processing of imagery sent by the satellite.

The report said that this center is being built in partnership with Latin-American company Satélogic.

Imagery sent by the TASL satellite will also be allowed to be shared with friendly countries.

The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) also has satellites that can help in sharing imagery but their application is only limited given the vast coverage required. India currently uses US companies to obtain necessary spying data.

Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) is the strategic aerospace and defense arm of Tata Group, functioning as both an operating and holding company.

ISRO has also been involved with the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) to develop synthetic aperture radar satellites to study the Earth.

OBITUTARY

Ex Indian Test Cricketer Dattajirao Gaekwad

India's oldest Test cricketer and former captain, Dattajirao Gaekwad, passed away at the age of 95 due to age-related issues.

Gaekwad is the father of former India cricketer and coach Aunshuman Gaekwad.

He represented India in Test cricket from 1952 to 1961, playing a total of 11 Tests during this period.

Gaekwad was a key player for Baroda in domestic cricket, scoring 3,139 runs, including 14 centuries, in the Ranji Trophy.

After the death of Deepak Shodhan in 2016, he became the oldest living Indian Test cricketer.