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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 22-08-2023

NATIONAL NEWS

Dr. Jitendra Singh Unveils the Unique 'NAMOH 108' Lotus

- Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh launched a new 'Lotus flower variety named 'Namoh 108' developed by CSIR-NBRI in Lucknow.
- This lotus has an extraordinary 108 petals and holds religious and symbolic significance.
- The unveiling of 'NAMOH 108' is seen as a special gift to commemorate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dedicated ten years in office.
- The Lotus Mission was also launched on the occasion and this project, like other priority schemes, aims to achieve specific goals.
- For example, the National Honey and Bee Mission, the National Bamboo Mission, and many other missions were mentioned.
- The unique 'Namoh 108' lotus variety blooms from March to December, rich in nutrients. In particular, its whole genome sequencing has been completed to better understand its characteristics.
- Under the Lotus research program, NBRI in collaboration with FFDC, Kannauj introduced a garment made of lotus fiber and a perfume named 'Frotas' extracted from lotus flowers.

India New Car Assessment Program (India NCAP) Launched

- On 22 August 2023, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will launch the India New Car Assessment Program (Bharat NCAP).
- This initiative represents significant progress in the commitment of the Government of India to enhance road safety.
- The primary focus is on raising safety standards for motor vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tonnes across India.
- The central goal of the program is to equip car customers with a valuable tool to compare the crash safety features of various motor vehicles available in the market.
- The test results will determine star ratings in two categories: Adult Occupant (AOP) and Child Occupant (COP).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

United States Has Approved for The Transfer of F-16 Fighter Jets

- The United States has approved the transfer of F-16 fighter jets from Denmark and the Netherlands to Ukraine.
- This is a significant milestone for Ukraine in its conflict against Russia.
- F-16 Reliability: The F-16 is widely considered one of the world's most reliable fighter jets.
- Ukraine's Defense Minister, Oleksii Reznikov, welcomed the decision and expressed confidence in Ukraine's inevitable victory.
- Initially, the US had refrained from providing F-16s to Ukraine due to concerns about escalating tensions with Russia.

BANKING

RBI Launches Centralised Web Portal UDGAM

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has launched a centralised web portal to help citizens search for their unclaimed deposits, known as UDGAM (Unclaimed Deposits – Gateway to access information).
- The portal has been developed by the central bank for the public to help them search for their unclaimed deposits across multiple banks at one place.
- Reserve Bank Information Technology Pvt Ltd (ReBIT), Indian Financial Technology and Allied Services (IFTAS), and participating banks have collaborated on developing the portal.
- Earlier, the RBI had announced the development of the centralised web portal on 06 April 2023.
- Customers can register on the 'Udgam' platform using their mobile number.

- Once registered, they can search for unclaimed deposits under their name and provide additional inputs such as Permanent Account Number (PAN), voter ID, driving licence and passport number.

- Customers can then retrieve their deposits by completing a KYC process with their branch.

- In case the deposit-holder has passed away, their nominee will be required to submit documents.

Axis Bank Partners with RBI Innovation Hub

- Axis Bank, one of the largest private sector banks in India has launched 2 lending products Kisan Credit Card (KCC) and unsecured Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) loans powered by the Public Tech Platform for Frictionless Credit (PTPFC), introduced by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Axis Bank will offer KCC and unsecured MSME loans to small business customers, powered by the platform.
- Both the products will be offered in a completely digital manner and require no submission of documents by customers.
- As a pilot, Kisan Credit Cards will be offered in Madhya Pradesh and will be available to customers for up to 1.6 lakh to start with.
- MSME loans will be available across the country and will offer loans up to 10 lakh to customers.
- As part of the pilot, Axis Bank will leverage the PTPFC for accessing data for customers in a consented and secure manner.
- These include PAN validation, Aadhaar electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC), Account Aggregator data, verification of land records and penny drop service to validate bank accounts.

SPORTS

Asian Junior Squash Championship

- Anahat Singh represented India by winning the gold medal in the Under-17 category of the Asian Junior Squash Individual Championship.

- The event took place in Dalian, China from 16 August to 20 August.

- In the final match held on August 20, 2023, 15-year-old Anahat defeated Hong Kong's Anna Kwong by a score of 3-1 to win the gold medal.

- In the quarter-finals, Anahata defeated Doyce Lee and, in the semi-finals, she emerged victorious against Whitney Isabel Wilson.

DEFENCE

Indian Submarine INS Vagir Completes Historic 7,000 Km

- India's Scorpene class submarine INS Vagir has successfully completed its longest deployment ever by covering a remarkable distance of nearly 7,000 km to reach Australia.
- This deployment, which begins in June 2023, is a significant achievement for the Indian Navy.
- Since deployment, INS Vagir has been operational without interruption, except for one port call in Sri Lanka.
- The submarine re-surfaces every 3-4 days to recharge its batteries while maintaining its operational status.
- The visit of INS Vagir is the first instance of an extended-distance deployment to Australia by an Indian submarine.
- During her visit to Australia, INS Vagir will participate in exercises with units of the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) off the West Coast.
- The objective of these exercises is to enhance cooperation and interoperability between the two naval forces.
- INS Vagir is in Australia, Indian naval ships and aircraft are concurrently engaged in Exercise MALABAR and AUSINDEX off the east coast of Australia.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Sadbhavana Diwas

- Sadbhavana Diwas is celebrated on 20 August every year.
- The birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi is observed as ‘Sadbhavana Diwas’ on August 20.
- On Sadbhavana Diwas in India, numerous cultural events and contests are held across the states.

- The main goal of Sadbhavana Diwas is to promote consciousness among citizens about these critical environmental challenges.

- Planting saplings is also proposed on this day.

- Rajiv Gandhi's modern perspective is reflected in his contributions to the nation's progress.

- In 1986, he suggested a National Education Policy to upgrade and expand higher education in India.
- In the same year, Rajiv Gandhi launched a federal government-based institution, the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV), to enhance rural society by offering free residential education from Class 6th to Class 12th.
- Rajiv Gandhi's initiatives resulted in the establishment of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam (MTNL) in 1986.
- In addition, he constructed Public Call Offices (PCOs) to provide telephone service to outlying regions.
- The first Sadbhavana Diwas was observed in 1992, a year after Rajiv Gandhi died in a suicide bomb attack in Tamil Nadu's Sriperumbudur.

MISCELLANEOUS

Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden Enters the Record Books

- The Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, located at the foothills of the beautiful Zabarwan Range, earned recognition in the World Book of Records as the largest and most stunning park of its kind in Asia.

- The garden features an impressive array of 1.5 million flowers in bloom, a remarkable testament to the beauty and diversity of the natural world.

- With a collection of 68 distinct varieties of tulips, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden is a spectacle of colors and shapes.

- Each tulip variety brings its own unique character, with shades ranging from delicate pastels to vibrant, eye-catching colors.

- The careful selection of flowers in the garden highlights the dedicated work of the gardeners and botanists who have worked tirelessly to develop this breathtaking display of nature's wonders.

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