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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23-05-2025

NATIONAL NEWS

India Set to Become World's Leading Potato Producer by 2050

India is projected to overtake China and become the largest potato producer globally by 2050, with production expected to reach 100 million tonnes annually.

This growth is being attributed to scientific innovation, government-backed reforms, and a long-standing partnership with the International Potato Center (CIP).

India currently produces 60 million tonnes of potatoes annually; this is projected to rise to 100 million tonnes by 2050.

The projection was made during the International Symposium on Root and Tuber Crops Research and Development in India and South Asia, highlighting India's increasing global prominence in potato cultivation.

India has a 50-year strategic partnership with the Peru-based CIP, which is credited for driving advances in potato farming.

The Indian government is focusing on investment in research and innovation, and promoting food and incomesecurity through agriculture.

Tuber crops, including potatoes, are recognized for their low water requirement, climate adaptability, and nutritional value.

Centre Launches e-Zero FIR to Fast-Track Cybercrime Cases

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has launched a new tech-based initiative called e-Zero FIR to strengthen India's cybercrime response system.

Announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah the project has been introduced as a pilot in Delhi and is designed to automatically convert high-value cyber financial fraud complaints into Zero FIRs, enabling quicker investigations.

Objective is to accelerate the registration and investigation of cyber financial frauds involving losses above ₹10 lakh.

Under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), the system will:

Automatically convert complaints received through the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal or

helpline 1930 into Zero FIRs.

Route the FIRs to the appropriate cybercrime police station.

Require the complainant to visit the police station within 3 days to convert the Zero FIR into a regular FIR.

A Zero FIR can be lodged at any police station, regardless of jurisdiction, and later transferred to the correct station.

It ensures speed and flexibility in filing cybercrime cases.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India Becomes Chairman Of Asian Productivity Organisation For 2025-26

India has become the chairman of the Asian Productivity Organisation for the 2025-26 term. It assumed the chairmanship during the 67th session of the Governing Body Meeting of the Asian Productivity Organisation. The 67th session was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from 20-22 May 2025.

The Governing Body Meeting is the highest decision-making body of the Asian Productivity Organisation.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry represents India at the Asian Productivity Organisation.

The Secretary DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, is also the Asian Productivity Organisation Director for India.

Amardeep Singh Bhatia, Secretary of DPIIT, will assume the responsibility of Chairmanship of the Asian Productivity Organisation on behalf of India.

Aim and Function is to contribute to Asia and the Pacific's sustainable socioeconomic development by enhancing productivity.

It will increase and sustain productivity in the Asia-Pacific region through cooperation.

It will also assist member economies in formulating national strategies for enhanced productivity.

BANKING

RBI To Release New ₹20 Currency Notes

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will soon issue ₹20 denomination banknotes in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series bearing the signature of the new RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra.

The design remains unchanged from the existing ₹20 notes, except for the signature.

Dimensions: 63 mm x 129 mm

Base Colour: Greenish Yellow

Reverse Illustration: Ellora Caves, symbolizing India's cultural heritage.

Legal Tender Status:All previously issued ₹20 notes will remain legal tender.

Legal tender refers to coins or banknotes that are legally acceptable to discharge debts or obligations.

IRDAI Imposes ₹1 Crore Fine on Acko General Insurance

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) imposed a penalty of ₹1 crore on Acko General Insurance.

Reason for Penalty is violation of regulations on outsourcing activities.

Breach of norms related to payment of commission, remuneration, or reward to insurance agents and intermediaries.

IRDAI ordered that the penalty order must be placed before Acko's board in the upcoming board meeting.

The insurer is required to provide a copy of the minutes of the discussion to IRDAI.

Acko General Insurance must submit an action taken report within 90 days from the date of the penalty order.

DEFENCE

Indian Navy Inducts Handmade Ancient Stitched Ship INSV Kaundinya

The Indian Navy formally inducted a handmade stitched ship, INSV Kaundinya, inspired by a 5th-century CE painting of the Ajanta Caves.

The Indian Naval Ship Vessel (INSV) Kaundinya was inducted in a ceremony hosted by the Indian Navy at its Karwar Base in Karnataka on 21 May 2025.

Project INSV Kaundinya was an attempt to revive and preserve the Indian traditional shipbuilding

craft and the rich maritime heritage of India.

In July 2023, the Union Ministry of Culture, the Indian Navy, and M/s Hodi Innovations signed an agreement to build a ship based on a painting depicted in the Ajanta Caves.

The ship was to be made using the traditional method of shipbuilding through stitching with square sails and wooden steering oars.

The M/s Hodi Innovations company was responsible for constructing the ship at its shipyard in Goa.

The ship was launched in the sea in February 2025 in Goa at the e M/s Hodi Innovations shipyards.

After its sea trial, it was formally inducted into the Indian Navy as INSV Kaundinya.

Iran and Azerbaijan Begin Joint Military Exercises in Nagorno-Karabakh

Iran and Azerbaijan launched a joint special forces exercise named "Aras-2025" running from May 18 to May 21, 2025.

The drill involves Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Azerbaijani troops.

The exercise takes place in Karabakh, a region previously disputed with Armenia before Azerbaijan regained control in September 2023.

The drill aims at boosting border security and confronting potential threats.

The drill follows a rare visit by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Baku in April 2025, where he met Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

Bilateral ties had been strained due to Azerbaijan’s close security cooperation with Israel and a deadly 2023 attack on the Azerbaijani embassy in Tehran.

The embassy was reopened in mid-2024 after the attacker was sentenced to death.

Iran opposes the Zangezur corridor, a proposed transport route linking Azerbaijan to Turkey, which runs along Iran’s border with Armenia.

In November 2024, Iran and Azerbaijan conducted a joint naval exercise in the Caspian Sea.

AWARDS & PRIZES

2025 International Booker Prize

Banu Mushtaq has become the second Indian, after Geetanjali Shree, to win the International Booker Prize.

Banu Mushraq’s short story collection “Heart Lamp,” originally written in Kannada as Hridya Deepa and translated into English by Deepa Bhasthi, won the prestigious literary prize.

Deepa Bhasthi is also the first Indian translator to win the International Booker.

The £50,000 prize money was conferred to Banu Mushtaq and Deepa Bhasthi in a ceremony in London, England. Both Banu Mushraq and Deepa Bhasthi will equally share the prize money.

The International Booker Prize is given to a book written in any language except English and translated into English.

The Heart of Lamp is the English name of the Hridya Deepa, a collection of 12 short stories written by Banu Mushtaq in the Kannada language between 1990 and 2023.

The stories are based on the lives of women and girls and their struggles in a patriarchal society of Karnataka.

Banu Mushtaq, who is a lawyer by profession, based her stories on the women who came to her seeking help.

She champions the cause of women's rights and is against caste and religious oppression in India.

OBITUTARY

Eminent Astrophysicist and Padma Vibhushan Awardee Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar

Eminent astrophysicist, science communicator, and Padma Vibhushan awardee Dr. Jayant Vishnu Narlikar passed away in Pune on May 20, 2025, at the age of 87.

Dr. Narlikar was renowned for his pioneering contributions to cosmology, popularising science, and establishing premier research institutions in India.

He was born on July 19, 1938, and completed early education at Banaras Hindu University (BHU), where his father was a professor and head of the Mathematics Department.

He joined the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) from 1972 to 1989, expanding the Theoretical Astrophysics Group to international recognition.

In 1988, he was invited by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to establish the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) and served as its Founder Director until retirement in 2003.

Under his leadership, IUCAA became a world-renowned centre for teaching and research in astronomy and astrophysics.

Narlikar was also an Emeritus Professor at IUCAA.