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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 28-02-2024

NATIONAL NEWS

Global Pulses Conference

The Global Pulses Conference, an annual meeting of pulses producers, processors and traders, suggested that India augment the production of pulses to meet the nutritional requirements.

The two-day conference is jointly organised by the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED) and the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) in New Delhi.

Last decade pulses production had grown by 60% from 171 lakh tonnes in 2014 to 270 lakh tonnes in 2024.

India had become self-reliant in chickpeas (chana) and many other pulses crops, with only a slight deficiency remaining in pigeon peas (tur) and black gram.

India is aiming to achieve self-sufficiency in pulses by 2027, focusing on expanding cultivation and supplying new varieties of seeds.

Global Pulse Confederation (GPC) membership includes 24 national associations and over 500 private sector members.

It is based in Dubai and licensed by the Dubai Multi Commodity Centre (DMCC).

India is the largest producer (25% of global production), consumer (27% of world consumption) and importer (14%) of pulses in the world.

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Initiates 'Savera' Initiative

Haryana Chief Minister Shri Manohar Lal, inaugurated the 'Savera' program initiated by the Medanta Foundation in collaboration with the Health Department in Gurugram, aimed at early detection and prevention of breast cancer, a growing concern among women.

This groundbreaking initiative marks the first of its kind in the country, focusing on detecting breast cancer in its early stages among women.

In its initial phase, the program will be launched at the Civil Hospital in Sector-10 of Gurugram, the Polyclinic in Sector-31, and the Primary Health Center in Wazirabad.

The program capitalizes on the naturally heightened tactile sensitivity possessed by visually impaired individuals.

The launch of Savera coincides with the establishment of the National Cancer Institute at AIIMS Jhajjar, equipped with 1,000 beds.

This comprehensive approach signifies Haryana's commitment to providing accessible and advanced cancer care to its citizens.

Khattar stated that cancer often goes undiagnosed until its later stages,ranging from stage 2 to stage 4, impacting various parts of the body.

Similarly, breast cancer is also one of those cancers.

About 90,000 women across the country lose their lives every year due to breast cancer.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Dubai Launches 5-Year Multiple Entry Visa for Indian Tourists

In a bid to promote economic collaborations and encourage tourism and business ties, Dubai has introduced a five-year multiple-entry visa for Indian tourists.

The introduction of the multiple-entry visa aims to strengthen the relationship between Dubai and India, making Dubai a more accessible and appealing destination for Indian nationals.

According to the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), the visa issued within 2 to 5 working days, allows a 90-day stay, extendable once for a similar period, with a total stay not exceeding 180 days in a year.

Through this initiative, tourists can leverage multiple entries and exits, providing operational flexibility for business engagements, leisure travel, and seamless connectivity.

According to DET, Dubai experienced a surge in tourism from India, welcoming 2.46 million overnight visitors in 2023.

This signifies a substantial increase from the 1.84 million tourists in 2022, surpassing the pre-pandemic figure of 1.97 million visitors in 2019.

Bader Ali Habib, Regional Head of Proximity Markets, DET, highlighted the long-standing relationship with India and the significant contribution of Indian tourists to Dubai's record-breaking tourism sector in 2023.

India, with a remarkable 34% year-on-year growth, maintains its position as the leading source market for Dubai.

BANKING

HDFC Bank Raises $300 Million through Inaugural Sustainable Finance Bond Issue

Largest private sector lender HDFC Bank has raised $300 million in its maiden sustainable finance bond issue.

The country's biggest private lender by market capitalisation priced its three-year sustainability bond at a yield of 5.196%.

This is 95 basis points (bps) over the 3-year U.S. Treasury yield, sharply lower than the initial guidance of a 125-bps spread.

The money raised is part of the $750 million bond-raise that will be listed on the GIFT City.

The $300 million sustainable finance bonds have been raised for a tenure of three years at a spread of 0.95 per cent over the US treasury, while the remaining $450 million will be repaid in 5 years at 1.08 per cent over the US Treasury.

The bank stated that proceeds of the sustainable finance bond will be utilised for funding green and social loans in accordance with the sustainable finance, while the rest will be deployed for financing general banking activities.

SPORTS

Archery Asia Cup 2024

India finished the Archery Asia Cup 2024 with 14 medals, including nine golds, four silvers and one bronze in Baghdad, Iraq.

In the women’s individual recurve category, three-time Olympian Deepika Kumari won the gold medal by defeating compatriot Simranjeet Kaur 6-2.

Dhiraj Bommadevara beat Tarundeep Rai 7-3 to win the men’s recurve archery title.

India swept the top podiums in all the individual events, clinching top positions in both the men’s and women’s compound events.

Parneet Kaur beat Iran’s Fatemeh Hemmati 138-135 for the women’s gold medal match while Prathamesh Jawkar beat team-mate Kushal Dalal 146-144 for the men’s title.

Indian women’s recurve team comprising Simranjeet Kaur, Deepika Kumari and Bhajan Kaur defeated Uzbekistan 5-4 via shootout in a closely-fought final to clinch gold.

Meanwhile, the trio of Dhiraj Bommadevara, Pravin Ramesh Jadhav and Tarundeep Rai ousted Bangladesh 6-2 to claim the gold.

Dhiraj and Simranjeet also teamed up to win the mixed team recurve gold, blanking Bangladesh 6-0 in the final.

APPOINTMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

First Female Chief Minister of Pakistan

Maryam Nawaz was sworn in as the first woman Chief Minister (CM) of Pakistan's Punjab province on 26 February 2024.

Maryam Nawaz took oath at the Punjab Governor House in the presence of her father Nawaz Sharif and uncle Shahbaz Sharif.

Maryam has become the first woman Chief Minister of any state of Pakistan.

Whereas Benazir Bhutto was the first and only woman Prime Minister of Pakistan till date.

Maryam Nawaz has been the senior vice president of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party.

Voting took place in the Punjab Assembly, in which Maryam Nawaz won. Maryam got the support of 220 MLAs.

World Bank's Global Environment Facility’s First Female Director

Geeta Batra has been appointed as the Director of the Independent Evaluation Office of the World Bank's Global Environment Facility (GEF).

She is the first woman from a developing country to hold this position.

Her nomination for the role received unanimous approval during the 66th GEF Council Meeting in Washington.

Her role involves building partnerships with multilateral and bilateral agencies, foundations, and networks, and sharing knowledge on effective environmental strategies.

Batra currently serves as the Chief Evaluator and Deputy Director for Evaluation at the GEF's Independent Evaluation Office, affiliated with the World Bank.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India Selects 4 Pilots for its 1st Manned Space Mission, Gaganyaan

India announced the names of four Indian pilots for the Gaganyaan mission to space on 27 February 2024.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced their names during his visit to the Vikram Sarabhai Space Center (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram.

The Gaganyaan mission represents a significant milestone in India's human spaceflight programme led by ISRO.

The Gaganyaan mission marks India's inaugural manned spaceflight endeavor. These four Indian pilots are Group Captain Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair (Kerala), Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, Group Captain Angad Pratap and Wing Commander Subhanshu Shukla.

Gaganyaan mission is India's first manned space mission. The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) aims to launch in 2024-2025.

The astronauts were given rigorous training, both physical and mental. This is necessary to increase the ability to live and work in space. This training strengthens physical balance and endurance in zero gravity conditions.

Amazon Web Services Collaborates with T-Hub and Minfy

Amazon Web Services (AWS) India announced its launch of an accelerator programme for space startups called AWS Space Accelerator: India.

It is a technical, business, and mentorship opportunity designed to foster startups focused on space technology, and accelerate their development, with support from T-Hub and Minfy.

This initiative follows a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between AWS, ISRO, and IN-SPACe in September the previous year.

The partnership aims to nurture startups in the space tech sector and support innovation in the field.

The 14-week accelerator program will offer dedicated business resources, expertise, and guidance on technology and business capabilities. Startups will leverage AWS to build, grow, and scale their missions.

Startups will learn about space domain technologies and applications, leveraging space data, and building scalable solutions using cloud computing, data analytics, machine learning, and generative artificial intelligence (AI).

IMPORTANT DAYS

World NGO Day

‘World NGO Day’ is celebrated across the world every year on 27 February.

More than 89 countries and 6 continents of the world celebrate this day at their own level.

This day was started to recognize and appreciate the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the world.

The day aims to motivate people to become more actively involved within NGOs.

The purpose of celebrating this day is to increase the awareness of the needy people towards NGO.

The theme of World NGO Day 2024 focuses on "Building a Sustainable Future: The Role of NGOs in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”.

The initiative to celebrate World NGO Day was first proposed by the ‘Baltic Sea NGO Forum’ in 2010. Initially it was celebrated only in the countries participating in the Forum.