

The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. A large, red, arrow-shaped graphic points from the right side of the page towards the center, containing the main title and date.

Weekly Current Affairs

18 to 24 Oct 2020

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NATIONAL NEWS

1. Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurates Food and Agri Week 2020

- Union Minister, Narendra Singh Tomar, the Food Processing Industries Minister inaugurated the India-International Food & Agri Week virtually. The focus of the Food and Agro Tech will be on the use and benefit of the technology in the field of food and agriculture sector. India - International Food & Agri Week is being organized from 16th to October 22 2020.
- CII in association with the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Ministry of Fisheries & Animal Husbandry and Ministry of Food Processing Industries, Government of India, is organizing its first-ever Virtual CII Agro & Food Tech: India - International Food & Agri on CII HIVE – virtual platform with an intent to create a platform for the benefit of the stakeholders involved in the agriculture & allied sectors.

2. CM Yogi launches 'Mission Shakti' campaign in UP for safety of women

- Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath asserted that culprits of crimes against women will be punished swiftly as there will be a separate room now for women complainants in 1,535 police stations across the state.
- Adityanath made these remarks while launching "Mission Shakti" programme for women security in Uttar Pradesh. Young girls demonstrated self-defence techniques during the event.
- "To pay homage to the victim of a very unfortunate incident, I decided to kick-off the Mission Shakti campaign from Balrampur and I am extremely delighted to launch this programme. Mission Shakti aims at guaranteeing security and respect for every woman in the state," he said.

3. All India Bar Association demands action against Andhra CM for letter against Justice Ramana

- The All India Bar Association (AIBA) urged the Chief Justice of India (CJI) to initiate contempt of court proceedings against the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for making "scandalous" allegations against Justice NV Ramana, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court and judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.
- AIBA chairperson Dr Adish C Aggarwala, while condemning the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister for his October 6 letter to the CJI SA Bobde, said the "scurrilous and scandalous" remarks against Justice Ramana, the next in line to become the Chief Justice of India, and judges of Andhra Pradesh High Court have "shaken the independence of the judiciary".

4. India ranks 94th among 107 countries in Global Hunger Index

- India ranked 94 among 107 nations in the Global Hunger Index 2020 and is in the "serious" hunger category with experts blaming poor implementation processes, lack of effective monitoring, siloed approach in tackling malnutrition and poor performance by large states behind the low ranking.
- Last year, India's rank was 102 out of 117 countries.
- The neighbouring Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan too are in the "serious" category but ranked higher than India in this year's hunger index. While Bangladesh ranked 75, Myanmar and Pakistan are in the 78th and 88th position.
- Nepal in 73rd and Sri Lanka in 64th position are in "moderate" hunger category, the report showed.

5. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurates and lays foundation stones for 16 NH projects in Andhra Pradesh

- Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid the foundation stones for 16 National Highways projects with a total length of 1411 kms worth Rs 15,592 crore in Andhra Pradesh.
- The event was presided by the Chief Minister Shri Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. Union MoSs Gen (Retd) Dr V K Singh and Shri G Kishan Reddy, Ministers from the State, Members of Parliaments, MLAs and senior officers from the Centre and the State. Speaking on the occasion, Gadkari said that the length of National Highways in Andhra Pradesh before May 2014 was 4193 Km, which has now increased to 6860 Km

6. J&K Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha announces 'My Town My Pride' programme

- Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha announced the 'My Town My Pride' programme, starting from October 19, as a part of the public outreach initiative "in J&K's towns to deliver services at doorsteps to the urban population".
- Its main objectives are public outreach in towns, strengthening grassroots democracy, and service delivery at doorsteps
- The programme will also ensure on-the-spot grievance redressal, instant delivery of services to the masses, and on the ground speedy execution of people-centric projects.

7. India has been ranked at 4th position, with a score of 39.7 in the Asia Power Index 2020

- India stands as the fourth most powerful country in Asia but falls just short of the major power threshold in 2020, a study showed.
- According to the Sydney-based Lowy Institute's Asia Power Index for 2020, although India is the fourth most powerful nation in the Asia-Pacific

following the US, China and Japan, it stops short of attaining the "major power" status in the said year (2020).

8. India invites British government to explore business opportunities in North East

- The Development of North East Region minister, Dr. Jitendra Singh invited the UK government and the private sector to explore various forms of business opportunities present in India's North-East Region.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh during a virtual meeting with the officials of the British High Commission stated that both India and UK are two vibrant democracies that enjoy mutually rewarding business relationships. He added that both countries can work together in exploiting and exploring new opportunities in the North East region.



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9. India's agricultural exports rise by 14.8 % during first five months of current fiscal

- India's agricultural exports have recovered from a pandemic-induced decline. Exports of major farm products stood at 53,000 crore rupees in the five-month period between April and August 2020-21, a rise of 14.8 percent compared to the corresponding period last year.
- During the April to August period, farmers gained from higher exports of rice, wheat and sugar. Exports of basmati rice, a big-ticket export item among cereals, during April-August rose 8.2 percent from the year-ago period, while the value of non-basmati rice exports grew 91.3 percent.

10. NITI Aayog to establish Frontier Technologies Cloud Innovation Centre with AWS

- In order to address societal challenges through digital innovation, NITI Aayog announced the establishment of a Frontier Technologies Cloud

Innovation Centre, CIC with Amazon Web Services, AWS. It is the first of its kind in India.

- This CIC is part of the AWS CIC Global Programme which provides an opportunity for government agencies, non-profits and educational institutions, to come together on pressing challenges, apply design thinking, test new ideas, and access the technology expertise of AWS.

11. Nitin Gadkari lays foundation of country's 1st multimodal logistics park in Assam

- Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari virtually laid the foundation stone for the first-ever multi-modal logistic park of the country in Assam. The 694 crore rupees park at Bongaigaon district will provide direct connectivity to air, road, rail and waterways to the people of Assam.
- It will be developed under the Bharatmala Pariyojana of the Centre.
- The fund for the multimodal logistics park would be spent in 3 components - road and railway connectivity as well as building and infrastructure work.

12. Govt bans gas, CBM producers from buying their own produce

- The government has banned natural gas and coal-bed methane (CBM) producers from buying their own produce in the newly notified gas marketing freedom guidelines.
- The reforms give producers the freedom to discover the market price of gas through a standard e-bidding process.
- As per the notified guidelines, producers have the liberty to market or sell the gas produced to anyone including affiliates but the producer or any member of its gas field consortium cannot bid and buy the fuel.

13. Indian Vice Chief of Army visits US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii

- Vice Chief of Army Lt Gen SK Saini on Tuesday visited the US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii and held talks with senior American military commanders on ways to enhance strategic cooperation between the two forces.
- The US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), comprising over 3,75,000 military and civilian personnel, is one of the largest unified formations of the US armed forces and it is tasked to protect Washington's interests in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The visit by the Vice Chief of Army Staff to the command comes in the backdrop of renewed efforts between India and the US to bolster cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, which has been witnessing growing Chinese muscle-flexing.

14. Kati Bihu festival celebrated across Assam

- Assam's third Bihu festival, known as Kati Bihu or Kongali Bihu, was being celebrated across the state.
- Assam Governor Jagadish Mukhi and Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal extended their prayers and best wishes to the people of the state on the occasion of Kati Bihu hoping that the festival will bring in peace and prosperity in the state, an official release said here.
- On the occasion of Kati Bihu, women, both in urban and rural areas, try to ward off evil and pray for a rich harvest by lighting earthen lamps.

15. Uttar Pradesh Governor launches Safe City Project, a women's safety campaign, in Lucknow

- Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel inaugurated the 'Safe City Project'. It is a 180-day-long campaign under which the police and other departments will work towards the safety of women.
- The Governor flagged off 100 pink scooties and 10 four-wheeler police vehicles as part of the campaign.
- Lucknow is among eight cities in the country selected for the 'Safe City Project'.
- The central government has approved the project for Lucknow at a total cost of Rs 194 crore with an aim to strengthen security of women in public places.
- The projects will be financed under Nirbhaya Fund at a cost of INR 2919.55 Crores.

16. PM Modi to inaugurate three key projects in Gujarat on 24th October

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate three key projects in Gujarat on 24th October, via video conferencing. Prime Minister will launch the 'Kisan Suryodaya Yojana' for the farmers of Gujarat. He will inaugurate the Paediatric Heart Hospital attached with U.N Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre and a Mobile Application for tele-cardiology at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad. He will also inaugurate the Ropeway at Girnar on the occasion.
- To provide day-time power supply for irrigation, the Gujarat Government under Chief Minister Shri Vijay Rupani had recently announced the 'Kisan Suryodaya Yojana'. Under this scheme, farmers will be able to avail power supply from 5 AM to 9 PM. The state government has allocated a budget of Rs.3500 crore for installing transmission infrastructure under this scheme by 2023.
- Prime Minister will also inaugurate Paediatric Heart Hospital attached with the U.N Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre and a Mobile Application for tele-cardiology at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital in Ahmedabad.
- Gujarat will once again be highlighted on the global tourism map as the Prime Minister will inaugurate the Ropeway at Girnar on 24th October,

2020. Initially, there will be 25-30 cabins, with a capacity of 8 people per cabin. A distance of 2.3 kms will now be covered in just 7.5 minutes through the ropeway. In addition to this, the ropeway will also provide a scenic view of the lush green beauty surrounding the Girnar mountain.

17. Haryana tops Anemia Mukht Bharat Index in country

- The Anemia Mukht Bharat, an initiative of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF, has been launched to reduce the prevalence of Anemia all over India.
- In a recently released scorecard of the Anemia Mukht Bharat (AMB) Index by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Haryana was ranked at the top slot with an AMB Index of 46.7.

18. India participates in 18th meeting of Prosecutors General of SCO via video conference

- India today participated in 18th meeting of Prosecutors General of SCO via video conference.
- Representing India, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said India has zero tolerance to corruption and black money.
- He also highlighted government's flagship Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna, saying it has expanded India's financial architecture.
- Today's meeting of Prosecutors, agreed to strengthen cooperation in preventing and combating corruption, mutual legal assistance and exchange of regulatory legal acts.
- India will host the next meeting of Prosecutors General in 2021. SCO Law ministers met last week and SCO Trade Ministers will meet next week.



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19. India to host third India-US 22 Ministerial Dialogue on Oct 27

- India will be hosting the Third India-US 22 Ministerial Dialogue on 27th of October in New Delhi.

- United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark T. Esper will be visiting India to participate in the dialogue.
- From the Indian side, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar will lead the delegation.
- The first 22 Ministerial Dialogue was held in New Delhi in September 2018 and followed by the second in Washington DC in 2019.
- The agenda for the third dialogue will cover all bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS & FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. India, Chile hold first joint commission meeting

- India and Chile held their first joint commission meeting and agreed to add new momentum to their relations in a wide range of fields including trade and commerce, agriculture, health and social security, defence and space.
- The meeting held virtually was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Chilean counterpart Andres Allamand Zavala.
- Both sides noted that the Joint Commission was a significant development in India - Chile relations, being the first institutionalized dialogue between the two countries at the level of Foreign Ministers.

2. New Zealand's Ardern wins 2nd term in election landslide

- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern won a second term in office in an election landslide of historic proportions.
- With most votes counted, Ardern's liberal Labour Party was winning 49% of the vote compared to 27% for its main challenger, the conservative National Party.
- In a victory speech in front of hundreds of cheering supporters in Auckland, Ardern said her party had gotten more support from New Zealanders than at any time in at least 50 years.

3. Sweden bans Huawei, ZTE from 5G, calls China biggest threat

- Sweden is banning Chinese tech companies Huawei and ZTE from building new high-speed wireless networks after a top security official called China one of the country's biggest threats.
- The Swedish telecom regulator said that four wireless carriers bidding for frequencies in an upcoming spectrum auction for the new 5G networks must not use equipment from Huawei or ZTE.
- Wireless carriers that plan to use existing telecommunications infrastructure for 5G networks must also rip out any existing gear from Huawei or ZTE, the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority said.

4. UAE delegation reaches Israel for first time in history

- In an historic first visit by a Gulf Arab nation, a United Arab Emirates delegation reached Israel.
- It was accompanied by top US officials to cement the normalisation of ties between the two nations.
- As part of the US-brokered deal, four agreements were signed relating to investment, scientific cooperation, civil aviation and visa exemptions, during the visit.

5. Sushil Kumar Singhal accredited as next High Commissioner of India to Solomon Islands

- Sushil Kumar Singhal, a 2000-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, has been concurrently accredited as the next High Commissioner of India to the Solomon Islands.
- Mr Singhal will be residing in Port Moresby.
- He is presently serving as the High Commissioner of India to the Independent State of Papua New Guinea.

6. Brazil's President Bolsonaro rejects purchase of coronavirus vaccine from China

- Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has decided on Wednesday to cancel the purchase of Coronavac, a COVID-19 vaccine in phase-3 clinical trials by Chinese firm Sinovac.
- A day before, on Tuesday, Health Minister Eduardo Pazuello had confirmed that Brazil would buy the vaccine developed by Sinovac to include it in the immunization program, in addition to one developed by the UK-based AstraZeneca and Oxford University.
- Bolsonaro said on social media, For sure, we will not buy the Chinese vaccine, because it is unjustifiable to pay billions for a vaccine that has not been through its testing phase.

New Appointments and Person in News

1. Supreme Court appoints Former Justice M B Lokur as one-man panel to prevent stubble burning

- The Supreme Court has appointed Justice (retd) Madan B Lokur, a former judge of the apex court, as a one-man monitoring committee to prevent stubble burning in the states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

- These states are known as the main source of pollution in Delhi-national capital region (NCR).The new committee will monitor the stubble burning and take preventive steps.
- The panel shall submit its report on stubble burning within 15 days to the apex court.


2. Union Bank of India MD & CEO Raj kiran Rai is new chairman of IBA

- Indian Banks' Association (IBA) said Union Bank of India's MD and CEO Raj kiran Rai G has been elected as the association's chairman for the term 2020-21.
- State Bank of India's Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara has been elected as the deputy chairman of the association.
- IBA is an association of banks and other entities in the banking ecosystem in India catering to its members.

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3. Vishal V Sharma appointed as India's next permanent representative to UNESCO

- Vishal V Sharma has been appointed as the next permanent representative of India to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).Sharma has succeeded Jawed Ashraf.
- Sharma is expected to take up the assignment shortly.

4. Michael Irani appointed as International weightlifting federation Interim President

- The International Weightlifting Federation announced the appointment of Michael Irani as its interim president.
- Irani is chair of the IWF Medical Committee and a former chair of the IWF Anti-Doping Commission.

- He has extensive experience of the fight against doping and in safeguarding athlete welfare.
- Prior to this, Michael Irani was serving as the chairman of the IWF Medical Committee.

5. Aishwarya Sridhar becomes first Indian woman to win Wildlife Photographer of the Year award

- Making India proud, Aishwarya Sridhar became the first Indian to win the Wildlife Photographer of the Year award. The announcement was made at the Natural History Museum in London.
- It is the 56th year of the prestigious award.
- Aishwarya Sridhar's photo won among 50,000 entries from over 80 countries across the world. Only 100 images were shortlisted and she won the award for her photograph in the Behaviour Invertebrates category.
- She is the first and youngest girl to win this prestigious award from India in the Adult category. The award winners were announced at the Natural History Museum in London.

6. Parle agro ropes in Priyanka Chopra Jonas as brand ambassador

- Parle Agro has roped in Priyanka Chopra Jonas as the national brand ambassador to maximise reach and awareness of its fruits plus fizz portfolio 'B-Fizz'.
- The campaign will be aggressively promoted across IPL on Hotstar and YouTube. B-Fizz is a unique and refreshing apple juice-based malt flavoured carbonated drink that is set to revolutionize the taste experience of consumers across age groups.

BANKING

1. IDBI Bank launches banking services on WhatsApp

- IDBI Bank announced the launch of banking services on WhatsApp.
- The WhatsApp Banking service is being offered through a dedicated WhatsApp verified number ensuring end-to-end encryption, the Bank stated.
- The facility will enable IDBI Bank customers to avail various essential services such as account balance information, last five transactions, request for a cheque book and an email statement, interest rates, as well as details of IDBI Bank branches/ATMs in the vicinity, to begin with.

Books and Awards

1. Shashi Tharoor announces ‘solidly researched & passionately-argued work’, new book titled “The Battle of Belonging”

- Renowned Author and Politician, Shashi Tharoor is set to release his new book titled “The Battle of Belonging” is set to be released in November 2020. The book is published by Aleph Book Company.
- Shashi Tharoor described this book as his “magnum opus” on the Theory, evolution and practice of Nationalism across the globe and especially in India. The book appears to be an extension of his book “Why I Am a Hindu”.

2. NK Singh's new book “Portraits of Power” traces origin and growth of the PMO

- Veteran Economist and bureaucrat N K (Nand Kishore) Singh has released his autobiography titled “Portraits of Power: Half a Century of Being at Ringside”.
- ‘Portraits of Power’ recalls Singh’s various stints over the decades- starting from 1964 when he joined the IAS, serving at highest echelons of the government of India before taking a political plunge with a Rajya Sabha term.
- He is currently the Chairman of the 15th Finance Commission.

SPORTS

1. Nine States, Union Territories selected for upgradation to KISCE

- Nine States and Union Territories have been selected for upgradation to Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE). The States and UTs include Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Chandigarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Puducherry, Tripura and Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Sports Ministry said, the centres have been selected based on their past performances, quality of infrastructure, management and sports culture in the State.
- Earlier this year, the Ministry had identified a total of 14 centres to be upgraded to Khelo India State Centre of Excellence. The overall number now stands at 24 KISCEs from 23 States and UTs. The assistance to these centres will be provided in the form of bridging the gaps in sports equipment, high performance managers, coaches, sports scientists and technical support.

2. Mohun Bagan receive I-League trophy, 7 months after clinching title

- More than seven months after Mohun Bagan clinched the 2019-20 I-League title, they were handed over the trophy. Bagan won it when they clinched a 1-0 win over Aizawl on March 10 this year.
- The I-League, is one of the two coexisting premier football leagues in India along with Indian Super League.

3. Elavenil wins gold, Shahu Mane silver in Sheikh Russel International Air Rifle Championship

- World number one Indian Elavenil Valarivan won a gold medal and Shahu Tushar Mane bagged a silver in the Sheikh Russel International Air Rifle Championship. The championship was organised by Bangladesh Shooting Sport Federation (BSSF).
- In the 60-shot competition in which shooters from six nations participated, including hosts Bangladesh and India, Elavenil shot a modest 627.5 to come out on top.
- Shiori Hirata won the silver with 622.6, while Indonesian Vidya Toyyiba took the bronze with 621.1.
- Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju Attends Y20 Summit Virtually.



SCIENCE TECH & DEFENCE

1. BrahMos missile test-fired from destroyer INS Chennai in Arabian Sea

- On October 18, 2020, the Defence Research Development Organization test fired the BRAHMOS missile from INS Chennai successfully. The missile was test fired from an indigenously built stealth destroyer INS Chennai. The missile hit a target in Arabian Sea
- BRAHMOS is a supersonic missile. It was jointly developed by India and Russia. The major classification of the missiles is Cruise Missiles and Ballistic Missiles.

- The Ballistic Missiles are those missiles that have a ballistic trajectory. The currently operational ballistic missiles in the Indian Defence Systems are Prithvi I, Agni I, Prithvi II, Agni II and Dhanush.

2. India Successfully conducts night trial of nuclear-capable Prithvi-2 missile

- India successfully conducted a night trial of the indigenously developed nuclear-capable Prithvi-2 missile as part of a user trial by the Army from a test range in Odisha.
- The state-of-the-art surface-to-surface missile blasted off around 7.30 pm from launch complex 3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur near Balasore and the trial was successful.
- The last trial of Prithvi-2, carried out after sunset on September 23 from the same base, was also successful. The trial of the missile, which has a strike range of 350 km, was carried out from a mobile launcher.

3. India and Sri Lanka begin eighth edition of bilateral maritime exercise “SLINEX-20”

- The 8th annual joint exercise between Indian and Sri Lankan navies - SLINEX-20 - will begin at Trincomalee coast. The 3-day exercise will continue till 21st of October.
- SLINEX-20 aims to enhance interoperability, improve mutual understanding and exchange best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations between both navies.
- SLINEX series of exercise exemplifies the deep engagement between India and Sri Lanka which has strengthened mutual cooperation in the maritime domain.

4. BepiColombo spacecraft swings past Venus on long road to Mercury

- The BepiColombo SpaceCraft has crossed Venus in its journey towards Mercury. The spacecraft was launched jointly by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and European Space Agency to explore planet Mercury.
- This spacecraft mission has been launched to explore and study the mercury.
- It was launched on the Ariane 5 rocket and will arrive in Mercury in 2025.

5. India successfully test-fires SANT Missile off Odisha coast

- Indian successfully test-fired the Stand-off-Anti-tank (SANT) missile off the Odisha coast on October 19, 2020.
- The recently tested missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Reportedly, the missile will have both Lock-on after launch and Lock-on before launch capability.

6. Australia will participate in Malabar naval exercise with India, US and Japan

- Australia will participate in the Malabar naval exercise next month involving India, the US and Japan that will bring the four key defence partners and democracies in the region together, demonstrating their collective resolve to support an open and prosperous Indo-Pacific.
- This year, the exercise has been planned on a 'non-contact-at sea' format.
- The Malabar series of Naval exercises started in 1992 as a bilateral Indian Navy-US Navy exercise and Japan joined the Naval exercise in 2015.

7. IIT Madras startup Stellapps launches 'mooPay' for dairy farmers in Rajasthan

- Stellapps, the digital technology solutions provider has recently announced the launch of a fully-automated direct payment platform 'mooPay' for dairy farmers in Rajasthan.
- Moreover, mooPay is the first-of-its-kind platform developed for dairies and dairy farmers.
- This IIT-Madras incubated dairy-tech startup and World Economic Forum's technology pioneer, Stellapps, launched mooPay in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan in the presence of Bilwara Dairy Union (Saras Dairy) Chairman, Ramlal Jat, LK Jain, Advisor to the Union, and Asha Sharma, MD of the Dairy.

8. Indian Navy Operationalizes First Batch of Women Pilots

- The first batch of women pilots of Indian Navy have been operationalized on Dornier Aircraft by the Southern Naval Command (SNC) at Kochi. The three women pilots were part of the six pilots of the 27th Dornier Operational Flying Training (DOFT) Course, who graduated as 'Fully operational Maritime Reconnaissance (MR) Pilots' at a passing out ceremony held at INS Garuda, Kochi on 22 Oct 20.
- Rear Admiral Antony George, VSM, NM, Chief Staff Officer (Training) of SNC was the chief guest of the event and presented awards to the pilots who are now fully qualified on Dornier aircraft for all operational missions. The three women pilots of first batch are Lieutenant Divya Sharma (from Malviya Nagar, New Delhi), Lieutenant Shubhangi Swaroop (from Tilhar, Uttar Pradesh) and Lieutenant Shivangi (from Muzaffarpur, Bihar). These officers had initially undergone basic flying training partly with Indian Air Force and partly with the Navy prior to DOFT course. Amongst the three women pilots operationalized for MR flying, Lt Shivangi was the first to qualify as a naval pilot on 02 Dec 2019.

9. IIT Kharagpur's cheapest Covid-19 Test Kit 'COVIRAP' gets ICMR Certification

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has validated the efficacy of 'COVIRAP', a diagnostic machine developed by IIT Kharagpur researchers to detect coronavirus. With ICMR's approval, several business houses have approached the institute for technology licensing.
- After rigorous testing with patient samples in one of their authorised laboratories and following strict guidelines, the ICMR granted the certification for 'COVIRAP COVID-19 Diagnostic Test Kit'. It is affordable, easy to use and can produce results in a custom-developed mobile phone application within an hour.
- Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal at a virtual press conference said, "This will impact the lives of many in rural India as the device is portable and can be operated on a very low-energy supply. Minimally trained rural youth can operate this device."

OBITUARIES

1. Joseph Mar Thoma, head of Kerala's Malankara Mar Thoma Church, passes away at 89

- Supreme head of the Mar Thoma Christian church Joseph Mar Thoma Metropolitan died at the age of 89 in Kerala.
- The 21st metropolitan of the Mar Thoma church was undergoing treatment for cancer for sometime. His conditioned became critical a few days back and he breath his last by early hours of Sunday at a private hospital in Pathanamthitta.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his condolence message that the metropolitan was a remarkable personality who served humanity and worked hard to improve the lives the poor and downtrodden.

2. Founder of UAE state-run WAM news agency dies at 78

- Ibrahim al-Abed, the founder of the United Arab Emirates' state-run WAM news agency and a pioneering media figure as the oil-rich nation grew into a regional power died. He was 78.
- Al-Abed long served as the head of the country's National Media Council, a government regulatory body. He also was a de facto government spokesman, with his phone number the first rang by foreign journalists for decades as Abu Dhabi and Dubai grew into the skyscraper-studded cities they are today.

IMPORTANT DAYS

1. World Statistics Day observed on 20 October

- The World Statistics Day is observed globally on 20 October. The celebration of World Statistics Day 2020 is a global collaborative endeavour, organized under the guidance of the United Nations Statistical Commission.
- At its 41st Session in February 2010, the United Nations Statistical Commission proposed celebrating 20 October 2010 as World Statistics Day (Decision 41/109).
- 2020 theme “Connecting the world with data we can trust.”

2. National Police commemoration Day is observed on October 21

- Every year National Police commemoration Day is observed on October 21. The day is observed to pay homage to the CRPF personnel who lost their lives during an ambush by the Chinese troops in 1959 in the hot spring area of Ladakh region.
- On October 21 1959, at a height of 10500 feet, a small CRPF petrol was ambushed by the Chinese army. The Chinese army threw grenades and opened fire at twenty CRPF personnel. 7 were taken as prisoners and ten of them died. The day is commemorated to honour these personnel. Since 1961, around 33000 police personal have sacrificed their life in their service to the country.
- In order to honour the police personnel, police commemoration parade is held at the National Police Memorial located in in Chanakya Puri. This is being conducted since 2012.

3. International Stuttering Awareness Day is observed 22 October

- International Stuttering Awareness Day is observed globally on 22nd October every year.
- The day is intended to raise public awareness of the millions of people who have a speech disorder of stuttering or stammering.
- Stuttering is a speech disorder that involves frequent and significant problems with normal fluency and flow of speech. People who stutter know what they want to say, but have difficulty saying it.
- 2020 theme “Journey of Words – Resilience and Bouncing Back”.

4. World Snow Leopard Day observed on 23 October

- World Snow Leopard Day is observed globally on 23rd October. The main purpose of this day is to show the importance of snow leopard conservation and raise awareness about this incredible animal.

- The day also emphasizes the importance of taking measures to stop poaching, as well as consolidating efforts in terms of an environmental organization in the countries of the snow leopard range.
- The day was initiated by the countries that encompass the snow leopard's range. They include Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Russia, Pakistan, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, India, China, Bhutan, and Afghanistan.



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