WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS 10/08/24 TO 16/08/24











Announcing his retirement from wrestling is Vinesh Phogat.

Why in News?

On Thursday, the Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat declared her retirement from the sport, following her disqualification from the 50-kg Olympic division final the previous day.

Reason:

At the morning weigh-in before the final, the seasoned wrestler weighed 100 grams over the allowed limit and was disqualified.

Phogat requested that she be given a shared silver medal in an appeal against her disqualification that was filed in the Court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) a few hours ago. The information was verified to PTI by an Indian Olympic Association (IOA) source inside the visiting Indian delegation.

Government views:

The government of Haryana declared that Phogat will receive the same facilities and prize money as an Olympic silver medallist.

The First State to Adopt Disaster Insurance is Nagaland



Nagaland has partnered with SBI General Insurance to launch the nation's first disaster management insurance program. The Disaster Risk Transfer Parametric Insurance Solution (DRTPS), a brand-new program, is intended to offer protection from natural disasters.

Parametric insurance: what is it?

The way parametric insurance operates is by providing fixed benefits based on particular occurrences, like the intensity of a natural disaster. This implies that prompt financial assistance is provided following a disaster, negating the necessity for indepth damage evaluations.

The MoU's goals

The primary objectives of the accord are to safeguard Nagaland's crucial infrastructure and mitigate financial damages resulting from natural disasters. The program will assist in preventative disaster management by covering the entire state. This is an example of the collaborative effort between SBI General Insurance and the Nagaland State Disaster Management Authority (NSDMA) to improve the state's capacity to handle catastrophes.

Importance of the Project

Nagaland is leading by example as the first state in India to use this kind of finance structure. With greater preparedness and reaction to disasters, people and resources would be better protected. This novel approach aims to achieve this.

Additional Information About Nagaland

Northeastern Indian state of Nagaland is home to sixteen large tribes, each with distinctive customs. It is home to Dendrocalamus giganteus, the second-largest species of bamboo in the world. Every year, the Hornbill Festival honors the diversity of cultures in the state. The capital city of Kohima saw one of the biggest battles of World War II. Nagaland residents have long engaged in "jhum," or shifting farming. The state's official language is English. Along with its vivid festivals like Moatsu and Sekrenyi, Nagaland is renowned for its handcrafted shawls.

Bronze in 57 kg wrestling won by Aman Sehrawat at Paris 2024



Aman Sehrawat of India created history in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games by taking home a bronze medal in the men's 57 kg wrestling division, adding a memorable moment to India's Olympic wrestling heritage. His performance was outstanding, demonstrating his talent and willpower all along the tournament. With an outstanding score of 13-5, Sehrawat's victory over Darian Toi Cruz of Puerto Rico in the bronze medal match solidified his status as a rising talent in the sport.

How to Get the Medal

Round of 16: Aman Sehrawat got off to a great start by easily dispatching Vladimir Egorov of North Macedonia, winning 10-0.

Quarterfinal: He defeated Zelimkhan Abakanov of Albania 12-0 thanks to his better technical skills, extending his winning run.

Semifinal: He lost a close match against Japan's top-seeded player Rei Higuchi, but he didn't let it stop him from moving on to the next challenge.

Final Score and Outcome

Sehrawat didn't waver in the face of the semifinal loss. He put up a strong performance in the bronze medal match, defeating Cruz and earning a podium spot. This accomplishment carries on India's successful Olympic wrestling heritage, which dates back to 2008. In addition to commemorating Sehrawat's trip, his achievement shows how Indian wrestling is becoming more and more powerful on the international front.

Notable Features

Youngest Wrestler: Aman Sehrawat, the youngest male wrestler from India competing in the Paris Games, is barely 21 years old.

Historic Achievement: After Ravi Kumar Dahiya's silver medal at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, his bronze medal extends India's winning streak in the Olympic wrestling competition.

Aman Sehrawat's journey to the Olympics started in the national trials when he defeated seasoned wrestler Ravi Kumar Dahiya,

demonstrating his potential and paving the way for his future in Indian wrestling.

Aman Sehrawat: Who is he?

On July 16, 2003, Aman Sehrawat was born in Haryana. He is a renowned freestyle wrestler who competes in the 57 kg weight class. Sehrawat first gained recognition in junior wrestling events, when he took home two medals: one from the Asian U23 Wrestling Championships in 2022 and one from the World Wrestling U23 Championships in 2021. His distinctive wrestling style has been developed by his training, which is firmly based in customs from his hometown. Aman Sehrawat is a vital figure to follow in the future of Indian wrestling because of his perseverance and talent, which have allowed him to go from small-time contests to the Olympic podium.

AMIDST THE MPOX EPIDEMIC IN AFRICA, THE WHO CONVENES AN EMERGENCY MEETING.

The World Health Organization (WHO) called an urgent meeting to discuss whether to declare a public health emergency of international concern due to the serious mpox outbreak that is now affecting Africa. Fifteen African nations—including formerly unaffected Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda—are already reporting confirmed cases of mpox.



Mpox: What is it?

The virus that causes mpox, also known as monkeypox, is a member of the Orthopoxvirus family. In 1958, it was initially found in lab monkeys. The virus be contracted by touching can contaminated objects, coming into intimate contact with an infected person, or being bitten by an infected Fever, rash, and enlarged animal. the lymph among nodes are symptoms. Most cases of mpox occur in Central and West Africa. Certain protection against mpox can be obtained with smallpox vaccination. The virus's primary hosts are rats, not monkeys, despite its name. A public health emergency was declared for mpox in 2022 as a result of outbreaks that were taking place beyond of its usual geographic range.

The World Health Organization's (WHO) facts

On April 7, 1948, the World Health Organization (WHO) was established.

It is situated in Switzerland's Geneva.

There are 194 member nations of WHO.

to guarantee that everyone on the planet has access to quality medical care.

It treats medical crises and manages illnesses like polio.

Doctors can refer to ailments globally by using the same terminology thanks to the WHO's International Classification of Diseases.

It targets the variables that impact health by means of a number of programs.

THREE UNDERWATER STRUCTURES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN ARE NAMED BY INDIA



In response to suggestions from India, three undersea geographical features in the Indian Ocean have been given official names. These include the Ashoka Chandragupt Ridge, Seamount, and Kalpataru Ridge, which were recently acknowledged by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of International UNESCO and the Hydrographic Organization (IHO).

Specifications of the Buildings

Ashoka Seamount: This 180 square kilometer underwater mountain was found in 2012 by the Russian research ship Akademik Nikolay Strakhov.

Chandragupt Ridge: This long, ovalshaped ridge covers 675 square kilometers and was discovered in 2020 by the Indian research ship MGS Sagar.

Kalpataru Ridge: This 430 square kilometer ridge was also found in 2012 by the Akademik Nikolay Strakhov a

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and may provide a home and food supply for marine species.

Context of History

India has contributed to the naming of seven underwater features in the Indian Ocean, most of which bear the names of Indian scientists. Among these previously mentioned features are:

In 1992, Raman Ridge was named in honor of renowned physicist Sir CV Raman.

1993's Panikkar Seamount: A monument dedicated to oceanographer NK Panikkar.

Named after the Indian research ship, Sagar Kanya Seamount (1991).

Wadia Guyot (1993): DN Wadia, the geologist, recognized.

Research Projects

The 2004-launched Indian Southern Ocean Research Programme includes these discoveries. These ocean studies, which have focused on a variety of subjects like the chemistry of the ocean and the diversity of marine life, have been led by the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa. By highlighting India's scientific accomplishments in worldwide oceanography, naming these undersea structures not only fosters national pride but also advances our understanding of marine ecosystems.

Concerning the Indian Ocean

At 20% of the planet's surface, the Indian Ocean is the third-largest ocean in the world. It is bordered by 38 nations and home to Lake Urmia, the biggest saltwater lake in the world. There are distinct ecosystems found in the ocean, such the Seychelles' Aldabra Atoll, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The world's largest seawater exchange, the Agulhas Current, is another feature of the Indian Ocean. It has the only oceanic trench in this area, the Sunda Trench, and the Indian Plate, a tectonic plate that has broken apart.

THE CARBON CYCLE: NATURE'S METHOD FOR CARBON MANAGEMENT

The carbon cycle has been nature's method of eliminating extra carbon from the atmosphere for billions of years.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) is released into the atmosphere by life forms and volcanic eruptions in the natural world. During photosynthesis, plants and trees subsequently take in and store this CO2.

The Role of Plants in Mitigating Climate Change

The carbon cycle has recently drawn attention as a means of mitigating climate change. The ability of plants to store carbon created by burning fossil fuels can provide a break. This is a view that fossil fuel companies and governments alike have adopted in an attempt to reduce their steadily increasing carbon footprints. New Study Reveals Shortcomings in Carbon Storage Estimates.



However, a recent study by a global team of experts that was published in the journal Science indicates that plants take more CO2 from the atmosphere than anticipated and also retain it for a shorter amount of time before releasing it into their environment.

Using climate models, the researchers examined the remnants of nuclear bomb testing carried out by the US and the USSR in the 1960s in order to validate their conclusions.

The Impact of Nuclear Testing on Climate Research

Scientists subsequently discovered that the numerous nuclear bomb tests carried out in the second half of the 20th century during the Cold War preserved a climate of fear throughout the world and provided a chance to study climate change.

Radiocarbon as a Tool for Measuring Carbon Dynamics

Radioactive material was sprayed all over the earth by the explosions, with a large amount ending up in the atmosphere. Radiocarbon, another name for the isotope carbon-14, was one of them. Compared to the nucleus of the more widely used carbon-12, the nucleus of this atom contains two more neutrons. Although very little radiocarbon is present in nature, the atmospheric concentration of radiocarbon increased throughout time as a result of nuclear bomb tests.

The Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT), which forbade nuclear testing on land, in the air, or underwater, was signed by Cold War superpowers in 1963. After this year, the amount of radiocarbon in the atmosphere stopped rising. Using models, Dr. Graven and her colleagues monitored the decline in this level from 1963 to 1967 and discovered a steady decline.

Carbon Absorption and the Efficiency of Plant Photosynthesis

Radiocarbon frequently forms CO2 bonds with oxygen. During photosynthesis, plants, trees, and other vegetation absorb this CO2 to create food and, eventually, energy. The models the researchers used to analyze the data indicated that radiocarbon was entering vegetation from the atmosphere.

"The system is cycling faster overall."

In order to survive, plants produce their own sustenance. During photosynthesis, they take up CO2 from the atmosphere and use it to produce glucose. Part of the glucose is consumed by the plant, and the remainder is stored as starch in the leaves. As the plant respires, some carbon is also exhaled by the CO2 it exhales. There is currently no direct method for measuring the rates at which carbon is gained and lost by vegetation. However, they have been able to determine the amount of carbon that worldwide vegetation hosts thanks to satellite data.

Revised Estimates of Carbon Storage in Vegetation

The new study's authors estimated the annual amount of carbon stored in vegetation worldwide using climate models. This figure has been estimated by earlier research to be between 43 and 76 billion tonnes of carbon annually worldwide. However, the research team estimated that it might be as high as 80 billion tons annually, with the majority of the carbon being stored in the plant's non-woody sections, such as its leaves and finer roots.

In addition, plants must be expending carbon faster than previously believed if the higher number is accurate. If not, the scientists reasoned, their carbon content would exceed what was calculated from satellite data.

The results also clarified the rate at which carbon is transferred from vegetation to the atmosphere.

THENEEDFORACCURATECLIMATEMODELSANDCONSIDERATIONS



It would be difficult to determine the precise impact on the carbon cycle "In theory, you should incorporate every detail, but there are irreducible uncertainties, a lack of data, and gaps in our understanding."

According to him, certain assumptions in the models used in the study to simulate the storage of carbon in vegetation could drastically alter the outcomes.

Incorporating Radiocarbon into Climate Projections

The Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP), established in 1995 by the World Climate Research Program, creates climate projections that are used to create the United Nations' climate reports.

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To generate more accurate estimates for the CMIP, researchers from many nations combine their separate climate models. However, radiocarbon data hasn't been used to test the majority of these hypotheses.

The "Community Earth System Model 2" created by the U.S. University Corporation for Atmospheric Research was the only model to incorporate radiocarbon into its simulations; nevertheless, it also indicated that plants had absorbed a significantly lower amount of radiocarbon than what Dr. Graven and colleagues discovered.

There have always been unknowns in climate models.

"They're not in error. They are not flawless. It resembles an automobile that can be driven but pulls to one side. Therefore, a mechanic must inspect it to ensure that it eventually drives straight.

Several of the most recent versions of the CMIP models—versions 5 and 6—were employed in the study. According to Dr. Wieder, the shortcomings found in the study are more of a springboard for further investigation into climate modeling. "We need this kind of data in order to make improvements to the models for CMIP 7 and beyond."

Nevertheless, every one of these climate specialists concurred that more consideration should be given to radiocarbon in climate projections. "Limited resources, both funding and effort, available for model development and observational research" have so far hindered radiocarbon inclusion.

Future Directions for Climate Modeling

In the future, he continued, "representation of isotopes, ice sheet dynamics, permafrost, etc. in models is likely to gain momentum." Waqf Act and Amendment.

ON AUGUST 8, THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED A BILL IN THE LOK SABHA TO AMEND THE WAQF ACT OF 1995.



The proposed law, to be renamed the Integrated Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act, 2024, seeks to increase central control over waqf properties and allow non-Muslims to join waqf boards for the first time.

Major Provisions and Changes

The bill introduces centralized registration of waqf properties, empowers the Center to audit waqf properties and revises the definition of 'waqf', limiting its creation to Muslims who have been practicing for at least five years.

It also abolishes the 'Waqf by Use' concept and allows non-Muslim members in Waqf institutions.

Cons and concerns

The bill has faced criticism from several opposition parties and legal experts for potentially violating the religious rights of the Muslim community. It has been referred to a joint parliamentary committee for further investigation.

STATISTICAL EFFECTS PUSH INFLATION TO 59-MONTH LOW OF 3.54% IN JULY



India's consumer inflation fell sharply in July, falling to 3.54% from 5.1% in June, its lowest level in nearly five years. Food inflation also eased, falling to 5.4% from 9.4% in June.

Base effect behind the decline

The decline was mainly due to the base effect of last July, when inflation was higher at 7.4% and the food index rose 11.5%. Prices rose 1.4% month-on-month despite the overall decline, while food prices rose 2.8%.

Urban vs. rural inflation

Urban consumers experienced a sharper drop in inflation to less than 3%, while rural inflation remained higher at 4.1%. Food prices rose 5.9% in rural areas compared to 4.6% in urban areas.

Future Inflation Forecast

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has raised the inflation forecast for the July-September quarter to 4.4%, indicating a likely rise in prices in the coming months.

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IIT-MADRAS RETAINS TOP SPOT IN NIRF RANKINGS FOR SIXTH YEAR IN A ROW



For the sixth consecutive year, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has been ranked the top academic institute in India, according to the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024. The rankings were announced by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

Key Rankings and Categories

IIT Madras has also topped the engineering category for the ninth consecutive year. The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru continued to top the universities and research categories.

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IIM-Ahmedabad has been named the best management institute for the fifth year while AIIMS New Delhi retained its position as the top medical institute.

New categories and increased participation

The 2024 rankings have introduced three new categories:

- Open universities
- Skills universities
- State public universities

Participation has seen a significant increase, with 6,517 institutions submitting over 10,000 applications. The government is considering including institutions from neighboring countries in future rankings.

DAY LENGTHENING IS A RESULT OF POLAR ICE Melting brought on by climate change.



The invisible impact of climate change:

How melting ice is slowing Earth's rotation Climate change, which is often discussed in terms of rising temperatures and extreme weather events, has a wide-reaching impact that extends to regions we don't notice. One such surprising impact is the effect of melting polar ice sheets on Earth's rotation. Researchers have found that as polar ice melts, Earth's rotation slows down, an effect that, although very small, can have significant implications for our technological and time measurement systems. Understanding Earth's rotation change The process behind this change is rooted in a basic physics principle called "conservation of angular momentum." This principle explains that as the ice melts and moves toward the equator, Earth's rotation slows down. To understand this, imagine an ice skater who is spinning with his hands outstretched. When he contracts his hands, he spins faster; when he spreads them, he spins slower. Similarly, as polar ice melts and redistributes, Earth's shape and rotation speed also adjust.

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Melting ice contributes to the Earth's sphericity, causing a slight bulge around the equator, explains Mostafa Kiani Shahvandi, a geophysicist at ETH Zurich. This changes the moment of precession, causing the planet's rotation to slow down.

The effects of slowing rotation

Recent studies, which analyze data from the last 200 years, show that climate change has caused the Earth's rotation to slow by about 1.3 milliseconds per century. If high emissions scenarios continue, this slowing could double to 2.6 milliseconds per century. While this may seem trivial, even small changes can affect our extremely precise time measurement systems.

Duncan Agnews, emeritus professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, says this shift, even if small, highlights the profound effects of climate change. Precise time measurement technologies such as GPS, stock trading systems and space travel are crucial. The milliseconds added to this could affect these systems, demonstrating how climate change affects even the most fundamental aspects of our modern lives

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Call to Action

The evidence is clear: climate change is not just transforming our environment but also affecting the fundamental processes of our planet. Given these changes, it is imperative that we act swiftly to reduce emissions and control their impacts. The slowing of the Earth's rotation is a clear sign that our actions have far-reaching consequences. To avoid further disruption and protect our planet, we must accelerate the transition to sustainable practices and curb emissions. The time to act is now, before the consequences become even more profound and impossible to control.

DRDO CONDUCTS FLIGHT TEST OF LONG-RANGE GLIDE BOMB

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Tuesday conducted a successful first flight test of the long-range glide bomb (LRGB) Gaurav. The test was carried out off the coast of Odisha using Indian Air Force's Su-30 MK-I fighter jets.

KEY FEATURES OF GAURAV

Gaurav is a 1,000 kg class airlaunched glide bomb, designed to attack targets at long ranges. The bomb uses a highly accurate hybrid navigation system to steer towards its target after launch.



INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED BY DRDO

LRGB Gaurav was designed and developed by Research Centre Imarat, a DRDO facility in Hyderabad. During the test, Gaurav successfully hit the target with pinpoint accuracy, demonstrating its effectiveness.

SUCCESSFUL TEST EXECUTION

The glide bomb hit its intended target at Long Wheeler Island, marking a significant milestone in India's defence capabilities.

ASEAN-INDIA FELLOWSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SCIENCES

The ASEAN-India Fellowship for Higher Education in Agriculture and Allied Sciences is an initiative launched to strengthen the partnership between India and ASEAN member countries. The program is designed to support postgraduate studies in agriculture and allied sciences, promoting mutual growth and collaboration in these fields.



Objectives

- Promote Higher Education: The fellowship aims to provide students from ASEAN countries with opportunities to pursue master's degrees in various emerging fields of agriculture and allied sciences at Indian agricultural universities.
- Capacity Building: The initiative focuses on building a pool of expert human resources in ASEAN, contributing to the development and growth of agriculture and allied sciences in the region.
- Fostering Collaboration: The program aims to strengthen the ties between India and ASEAN countries through educational and research collaborations, supporting India's 'Act East Policy' and the 'Indo-Pacific Vision.'

Program Structure

- Fellowships: Starting from the academic year 2024-25, a total of 50 fellowships (10 per year) will be awarded to students from ASEAN member countries. The fellowship covers tuition fees, living expenses, and other incidental costs.
- Duration: The fellowship program is set to run for five years, funded under the ASEAN-India Fund.
- Research and Education: The program will expose students to cutting-edge research in Indian agricultural universities, preparing them for future innovations in agriculture and allied sciences.

Significance

- Strengthening ASEAN-India Relations: The fellowship program is a cornerstone in enhancing India-ASEAN relations, reflecting India's commitment to ASEAN unity and centrality.
- Addressing Food Security: By providing quality researchbased education, the fellowship aims to address food security issues in ASEAN countries through collaborative efforts with India.
- Intercultural Exchange: The program fosters intercultural and international exchange of knowledge, bringing together students from diverse backgrounds to learn and innovate in the field of agriculture.

Implications for India

- Sustainable Development: The fellowship aligns with India's goals of sustainable development in the agricultural sector by ensuring the quality of agricultural education and research.
- Strategic Partnership: The initiative supports India's strategic partnership with ASEAN, enhancing collaboration in key areas like agriculture, education, and research.
- Global Influence: By hosting international students and fostering research collaboration, India strengthens its global influence in agricultural education and innovation.

HONORS AND AWARDS CONFERRED BY THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE ON INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024



Honorary Ranks Awarded

On the occasion of Independence Day 2024, the Ministry of Defence announced the conferment of various honorary ranks. These ranks are awarded as a mark of recognition for exceptional service, both to serving personnel and those who have retired. The honorary ranks conferred include:

Honorary Captain and Honorary Lieutenant:

- Active List: A total of 450 honorary ranks were awarded.
- Post-Retirement: A total of 1,352 honorary ranks were awarded after retirement.
- Honorary Naib Subedar Ranks: 3,819 honorary ranks were conferred post-retirement.

GALLANTRY AWARDS

The President of India conferred several gallantry awards to Indian Air (IAF) personnel Force for their exceptional courage, leadership, and professionalism in handling lifethreatening situations during various operations. These awards included the prestigious Medal Vayu Sena (Gallantry) and the Shaurya Chakra. Below are some notable recipients:

 Wing Commander Akshay Arun Mahale was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his exemplary courage and presence of mind during a critical in-flight emergency on September 26, 2023, where he successfully averted a catastrophic situation by skillfully maneuvering the aircraft away from populated areas and safely recovering it.

- Junior Warrant Officer Vikas Raghav was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his bravery during a humanitarian operation on August 15, 2023, in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh. He led the rescue of 494 individuals during severe floods, demonstrating exceptional courage and professionalism.
- Sergeant Ashwani Kumar received the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his courageous actions during a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operation on August 15, 2023. He played a crucial role in saving 510 lives, displaying remarkable bravery in adverse situations.
- Squadron Leader Deepak Kumar was awarded the Shaurya Chakra for his exceptional gallantry during a night sortie on August 25, 2023. He successfully force-landed a gravely stricken aircraft, showcasing extraordinary piloting skills and composure under life-threatening conditions.
- Squadron Leader Mahipal Singh Rathore received the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his bravery during a critical takeoff situation on January 4, 2024. His prompt and decisive actions averted a potential disaster, ensuring the safe recovery of the aircraft.
- Wing Commander Anand Vinayak Agashe was awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his leadership during flood relief operations in Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, on August 15, 2023. He coordinated the rescue of over 1,000 individuals, demonstrating meticulous planning and exceptional flying skills.
- Wing Commander Jaspreet Singh Sandhu received the Vayu Sena Medal (Gallantry) for his actions during an aircraft emergency on January 25, 2024.

- His quick thinking and expertise ensured the safe recovery of the aircraft from an unprecedented control failure situation.
- Wing Commander Vernon Desmond Keane was awarded the Shaurya Chakra for his gallantry during a sortie on July 24, 2023. Despite a critical dual engine failure, he managed to safely recover the aircraft, preventing a potential disaster in a densely populated area.

These awards recognize the bravery and dedication of the Indian Air Force personnel in protecting national assets, saving lives, and executing their duties with the highest level of professionalism and courage.

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ADDITION OF THREE NEW RAMSAR SITES ON INDEPENDENCE DAY 2024

On the eve of Independence Day 2024, India has added three new wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites, bringing the total number of Ramsar sites in the country to 85. These new additions are part of India's ongoing efforts to conserve and manage its wetlands, which are crucial for maintaining biodiversity and supporting ecological balance.

New Ramsar Sites

The three newly designated Ramsar sites include:

1. Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu): A large shallow wetland situated in the Tiruppur District, this sanctuary spans an area of 125.865 hectares. It is home to a diverse range of species, including 191 bird species, and plays a crucial role in groundwater recharge and agricultural water supply in the region.

- 1. Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary (Tamil Nadu): Covering 5,151.6 hectares, this brackish shallow lake is located on the Coromandel Coast. It serves as an important stopover site for migratory birds along the Central Asian Flyway and supports a rich biodiversity, including degraded mangrove patches and reed beds.
- 2. Tawa Reservoir (Madhya Pradesh): Spanning 20,050 hectares, this reservoir is situated near Itarsi town and is part of the Satpura Tiger Reserve. It supports a wide range of aquatic flora and fauna and serves as a critical habitat for both local and migratory birds.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ADDITION

- Growth in Ramsar Sites: With the addition of these three sites, India's total Ramsar site area now stands at 1,358,068 hectares. This expansion reflects the government's commitment to wetland conservation and its role in global environmental efforts.
- Policy Push for Conservation: The increase in Ramsar sites is a testament to the significant policy push from the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change for the conservation and management of wetlands in India. This initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of creating harmony with nature and promoting a "Green Bharat."

HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND PROGRESS

India has been a signatory to the Ramsar Convention since February 1, 1982. Between 1982 and 2013, the country designated 26 Ramsar sites. However, from 2014 to 2024, 59 new wetlands have been added, indicating a strong focus on environmental conservation over the past decade.

LEADING STATES IN RAMSAR SITES

Tamil Nadu leads the country with the highest number of Ramsar sites (18), followed by Uttar Pradesh, which has 10 Ramsar sites.

THE CENTER LAUNCHED A NEW AI-BASED MONITORING SYSTEM FOR PEST MANAGEMENT



The central government has unveiled the National Pest Surveillance System (NPSS), an AI-powered platform designed to help farmers manage pests by connecting them with agricultural scientists and experts through mobile phones.

PROMOTION OF SCIENTIFIC PEST MANAGEMENT

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has highlighted that the NPSS aims to reduce farmers' dependence on pesticide retailers and encourage a scientific approach to pest control.

The system uses AI to analyze data, giving farmers timely advice on pest
management.gaganthedeservingindia32

BENEFITS FOR FARMERS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

NPSS, expected to help around 14 crore farmers, enables users to send photos of infected crops to experts for quick identification and advice.

Union Agriculture Secretary Devesh Chaturvedi emphasized that this system will help in the precise use of pesticides, improve pest control, increase crop yields, and preserve soil health. This technology has been successfully tested and will be promoted in the states.

WHY DID THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN LEAVE THE POST?

On August 14, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced his resignation as leader of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), ending his term earlier than expected.

CONSTANT CHALLENGES DURING KISHIDA'S TENURE

Kishida, who took office in October 2021, has struggled with low approval ratings and has faced controversies, including the LDP's ties to the Unification Church and a fundraising scandal.

The scandal has affected his position despite pressure to disband his faction and disband other factions. Although prosecutors chose not to indict him or other senior LDP leaders, Kishida's popularity remains low, with 74% of respondents opposing his continued leadership.



LEADERSHIP CONTENDERS AND PROSPECTS

ith Kishida gone, potential successors are gearing up for leadership elections. The candidates include Shigeru Ishiba, LDP Secretary General Toshimitsu Motegi, Digital Minister Taro Kono, Economic Security Minister Sane Takaichi, and Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

The new leader will have to address Japan's economic issues before the next national election and boost the LDP's electoral prospects.

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DIGITAL PLATFORM POWERED BY DRONE MAPPING READY TO REVIVE SOLAR ENERGY SCHEME



DELAY IN PM-KUSUM YOJANA

The Rs 34,000 crore PM-Kusum scheme aimed at promoting solar energy in agriculture is running behind its targets.

The scheme, launched to install 100 GW of solar power on farmers' land, install 1.4 lakh solar pumps and connect 3.5 lakh grid-connected farm pumps to solar power, has seen limited progress, generating only 256 MW of electricity by June 2023. plants and 3.97 lakh solar pumps have been installed. The deadline has been extended to 2026.

CHALLENGES OF LAND AVAILABILITY

A major obstacle is the difficulty in acquiring suitable agricultural land for solar projects. Unlike utility-scale projects in regions like Gujarat and Rajasthan, agricultural land requires pooling of multiple parcels, making project development complex.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS IN RAJASTHAN

In response, Rajasthan, in partnership with the Global Energy Alliance for People and Planet (GEAPP), is using drone technology to map land parcels, helping facilitate solar installations. As a result of this approach, 12.3 MW has been installed in the state and there are plans to expand it further.