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1. Inauguration of ICONS 2023 - 3rd International Conference on Structural Integrity (Aug. 26, 2023)

The 3rd International Conference on Structural Integrity (ICONS 2023) began virtually at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu on August 23, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- ICONS 2023 was inaugurated under the leadership of **Dr. N. Kailaiselvi, Director General, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.**
- ICONS 2023 is organized by **Indira Gandhi Center for Atomic Research, Kalpakkam and Society for Failure Analysis.**
- Association with **Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Indian Society for Non-Destructive Testing (Kalpakkam Chapter)**, Indian Institute of Metals (Kalpakkam Chapter), and Indian Structural Integrity Society.
- **Executive Director, LWR Engineering, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited, N. Ram Mohan** shared insights from setting up critical infrastructure in areas such as design, manufacturing and construction.

Diverse Participation and Conference Focus

- ICONS 2023 was attended by **around 250 delegates** from India and abroad, including **mechanical engineers, materials scientists, academicians, industry experts, plant managers and regulatory personnel.**
- The aim of the conference is **to discuss recent developments and future directions in assessing and ensuring structural integrity in industries such as nuclear, defence, aerospace, chemical and oil.**
- The next two days featured around **35 invited lectures by experts and around 200 contributed papers.**

About Tamil Nadu

The state was formed on **26 January 1950** but its boundaries were **redrawn on 14 January 1969.**

Governor - **Ravindra Narayan Ravi**

Chief Minister - **MK Stalin**

Assembly seats - **235 seats**

Rajya Sabha seats - **18**

Lok Sabha seats - **39**

2. National Technology Day-11 May (May 11, 2023)

National Technology Day is celebrated every year on **11 May**.

An overview of the news

- On this day, various government organizations, institutes, schools and colleges organize events **to honor the scientists of India and their achievements.**
- India is one of the fastest growing developing countries in the world, and much of the credit goes to technological advancements.
- In the 21st century, scientists and engineers are leading the country on the path of development.
- India has made significant progress in science and research in the last three decades.
- India's science and technology has improved the country's position on global forums.
- For 2023, the theme is '**School to Startups-Igniting Young Minds to innovate.**

Background of the day

- Under the leadership of then **Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, India conducted a series of **five nuclear bomb tests at Pokhran in May 1998.**
- After the success of **Pokhran-II**, the government declared **May 11 as National Technology Day in 1998.**
- In doing so, India became the **sixth country to join the 'nuclear club'.**
- The test was led by the late **APJ Abdul Kalam**, an aerospace scientist who became the **eleventh President of India.**
- On the same day in 1998, India test-fired its **first indigenous aircraft Hansa-3** which took off in Bengaluru.
- On that day, the **surface-to-air missile Trishul** was also successfully test fired.
- With many technological advancements in a single day, the Government of India announced the celebration of May 11 as National Technology Day.
- The first nuclear test was conducted in May 1974.
- The day was **first officially celebrated on 11 May 1999.**

Significance of the day

- It reminds people of the **scientific achievements of the country.**
- It is a day to honour all those who have contributed to the advancement of science.
- It honours the hard work and efforts of all those who have contributed to the technological progress of our country.

3. Indian Air Force's MiG-21 crashes near Hanumangarh in Rajasthan (May 8, 2023)

Indian Air Force's MiG-21 crashes near Hanumangarh in Rajasthan

Three people died after a MiG-21 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF) crashed in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh on 8th May.

An overview of the news

- The fighter jet was doing a routine training sortie earlier in the day when it crashed.
- According to IAF sources, the MiG-21 jet had taken off from Suratgarh.

MiG 21 and its high crash rates :

- Mikoyan and Gurevich were two Soviet engineers who designed the MiG series of fighter jets for the Soviet Union.
- India inducted MiG-21 fighters in 1963 and it inducted a total 874 planes.
- More than 400 MiG-21s have been involved in accidents that have claimed the lives of around 200 pilots during the last six decades.
- One of the main reasons for the high rates of crashes is that it is the largest number of planes in the IAF.
- The IAF has been forced to fly Mig-21 despite the fact that it has outlived its age.
- The government of India has failed to buy an adequate number of planes to replace existing MiG -21 planes.
- Now the government plans to replace the MiG-21 plane with the various versions of the indigenously developed Tejas fighter Aircraft.

4. Army Commanders' Conference to be organized in Hybrid format (April 16, 2023)

The first **Army Commanders' Conference (ACC)** for the year 2023 will be held on the **17th of April in Hybrid format.**

An overview of the news

- The conference is scheduled from **17 to 21 April 2023.**
- For the first time, the ACC is being held in a hybrid format using available technology for secure communication, with the **Army Commander and other senior officers** meeting virtually on the first day.
- On the first day of the conference, the agenda points sponsored by **various Command Headquarters** will be discussed.

- The Forum will also review the progress on the **Agneepath plan, digitization and automation initiatives, Combat Engineers tasks and budget management** as well as activities drawn up as part of the '**Year of Transformation-2023**'.
- The top leadership will also brainstorm on the current and **emerging security scenarios** and review the operational preparedness of the Indian Army.
- Defense Minister **Rajnath Singh** will address the conference on 19 April.
- He will also review the performance of equipment focused on **niche technology, innovation, solutions for surveillance, artificial intelligence, training, robotics and operational logistics**.

About Army Commanders' Conference (ACC)

- It is an **apex-level biannual program** which is an institutional platform for conceptual level discussions.
- In this, important **policy decisions** are taken for the Indian Army.

5. Kolkata Metro becomes India's first metro train to run under river (April 13, 2023)

Kolkata Metro becomes India's first metro train to run under river

On 12 April 2023, the Kolkata Metro reached Howrah from Kolkata through a river tunnel for the first time in India, carrying only officers and engineers. This tunnel is built across the Hooghly River.

An Overview of the News:

- Services on this route of Kolkata Metro will start from this year itself. Once the services start, Howrah will become the country's deepest metro station (33 meters below the surface).

520 meter long tunnel:

- The route from Howrah to Esplanade is about 4.8 km long, of which 520 m will be completed by tunneling under the Hooghly river. It will take about 45 seconds to cross this tunnel built across the Hubli river.
- The tunnel is 32 meters below the surface of the water. The entire length of this tunnel is 10.8 km underground.

Tunnel built on the lines of Eurostar

- This tunnel of Kolkata Metro has been built like the Eurostar trains passing through the Channel Tunnel in Europe between London and Paris.
- The work of digging this tunnel was completed by Afcons in four months (April-July 2017).

Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC):

- The Kolkata Metro Rail was inaugurated on 24 October 1984 as India's first metro.
- Now again, for the first time in the country, the tunnel under the river has also been built here, the Kolkata Metro.
- The tunnel will remain like this for 120 years

Based on the standard of tunnel seismic zone 3:

- The Kolkata Metro tunnel has been designed according to seismic zone 3, the zone in which Kolkata falls.

Kolkata metro tunnel age 120 years:

- The Kolkata Metro tunnel is designed for a service life of 120 years. Not even a drop of water can enter the tunnels of the river.
- General Manager of Kolkata Metro Railway: **P Udaya Kumar Reddy**
- MD of Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation (KMRC): **H N Jaiswal**

6. DHARA - Annual Meeting of Members of the River Cities Alliance to be held In Pune (Feb. 12, 2023)

A first of its kind two-day international conference, **DHARA 2023**, is being organised in **Pune** to discuss **strategies for managing urban rivers**.

An overview of the news

- DHARA stands for -**Driving Holistic Action for Urban Rivers**.
- DHARA is the annual meeting of the members of the **River Cities Alliance (RCA)**.
- The meeting is being organised by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** in association with **National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA)** from **13 to 14 February** in Pune.
- Union Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat** will deliver the keynote address on the inaugural day of the event, while **Kaushal Kishor**, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, will deliver the concluding speech on the second day.
- DHARA 2023 will provide a forum for commissioners, additional commissioners, chief engineers and senior planners of the **95 member river cities** in India to discuss management and solutions for local water bodies.
- The event has strong synergy with the **Urban 20 (U20) initiative** under India's G20 Presidency.

River Cities Alliance (RCA)

- It was **launched in 2021** as a dedicated platform for river cities of India for discussion and exchange of information for sustainable management of urban rivers.

- It was started with **30 cities in 2021** and currently has **95 cities as members** across India.
- It is formed by the successful partnership of the two Ministries - **Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.**
- It focuses on three broad themes - **networking, capacity building and technical support.**
- It will enable cities to learn from each other's success and failure and connect people to rivers.

7. Chief of Army Staff General Manoj Pande embarks on 4-day official visit to France (Nov. 14, 2022)

Manoj Pande embarks on 4-day official visit to France

The Chief of Army Staff (COAS) **General Manoj Pande** left on a 4 day (14-17 November) official visit to France on 14 November 2022. General Pande will hold a meeting with his French counterparts and senior military leadership with the aim to strengthen defence ties between the two nations.

His visit is aimed to give impetus to the ever growing Indo-French defence ties. During his visit he will lay a wreath at **Neuve Chapelle Indian Memorial**, which commemorates the sacrifices of 4,742 Indian soldiers during the First World War.

Earlier on November 7, Army Chief General Manoj Pande held a meeting with French Chief of Staff of Air and Space Force, **General Stephane Mille**. During the meeting, both sides discussed various aspects of defence cooperation between France and India.

The seventh edition of the bilateral exercise between the Indian Air Force and the French Air and Space Force, '**Exercise Garuda-VII**' concluded at Air Force Station in **Jodhpur** on 12 November 2022.

General Manoj Pande is the 29th Chief of Army Staff in India .He is the first officer from the Corps of Engineers to become the Chief of Army.

8. PM to inaugurate the RFCL fertilizer plant at Ramagundam in Telangana (Nov. 11, 2022)

PM to inaugurate the RFCL

In an effort to boost local production of fertilizer in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on 12 November 2022 inaugurate the RFCL fertilizer plant at **Ramagundam** in Peddapalli district of Telangana. The plant which started commercial production in 2021 has been revived at a cost of Rs 6,338 crore.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate 54.1 km of railway line from Bhadrachalam Road to Sattupalli built with a budget of Rs 990 crore.

Government effort to become self-sufficient in Urea by 2024

India is a big importer of Urea and meets around 30% of its 35 million tonnes of annual urea requirement from imports. **China, Oman, UAE, Egypt and Ukraine were the main source of Urea in 2021-22.**

India aims to end imports of urea from 2025 by boosting its local production capacity with the commissioning of new plants.

According to the Union Fertilizers and Chemical ministry, the government plans to commission and revive five new plants at **Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, Ramagundam in Telangana, Talcher in Odisha, [Barauni in Bihar](#) and Sindri in Jharkhand**. These plants are expected to add an additional capacity of 6.5 million tonnes of urea every year.

RFCL fertilizer plant

The Ramagundam Fertilizers and Chemical limited (RFCL) was set up in 2015 to set up a natural gas based ammonia urea complex along at Ramagundam, Telangana with design capacity of 2,200 MTPD(metric tonnes per day) **Ammonia Unit** and 3,850 MTPD **Urea Plant**.

RFCL is a joint venture of **National Fertilizers Limited (NFL), Engineers India Limited (EIL), Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited (FCIL)** and **Telangana government**.

Gas Authority of India (GAIL) and HTAS Consortium (consisting of HT Ramagundam A/S, IFU and Danish Agribusiness Fund, Denmark) have also invested in the project.

9. Odisha Village 'Govindpur' declared as Birds Village (Sept. 26, 2022)

Located near the Hirakud Lake in Bargarh district of Odisha, **Govindpur village** has declared itself as a "Birds Village". The residents of the village have resolved to keep the area pollution free and protect the migratory birds during its nesting period.

The Govindpur village lies within the Lakhanpur wildlife range and the locals have taken the initiative under the guidance of Hirakud wildlife division.

More than 2 lakh birds migrate to Hirakud Reservoir every year for breeding and stay for six months. The migratory birds of about 100 species come to the reservoir, spread over 746 sq km, in October every year.

With the declaration of the Hirakud Lake as Ramsar site in 2022, the area is expected to attract tourists, photographers in large numbers.

Hirakud Dam

The Hirakud Dam is the world's longest earthen dam built on river Mahanadi in Sambalpur district of Odisha. The dam is 25.79 km long and has an artificial lake called Hirakud reservoir.

It is a multipurpose river project which was conceived by **[M. Visvesvaraya](#) in 1937**, after recurrence of devastating floods in Mahanadi River.

The construction of the dam began in 1947 and it was inaugurated in 1957.

The largest earthen dam in the world is the Tarbela Dam on River Indus in Pakistan.

The largest earthen dam in India is the **Banasura Sagar Dam**, on the river **Karamanathodu** which is the tributary of the Kabini River. It is in Kerala.

It is also the 2nd largest earthen dam in Asia after Tarbela dam.

10. National Engineer's Day (Sept. 15, 2022)

Engineer's Day is celebrated each year on 15 September in India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted all engineers of the country on the occasion of Engineers Day.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This day is celebrated to recognize the contribution of engineers in the development of the nation.
- The day is celebrated as the birth anniversary of **Sir Moksha Gundam Visvesvaraya**, who is considered one of the great engineers of India.
- Apart from India, **Sri Lanka and Tanzania** also celebrate Engineers Day on 15 September 2022 in honour of Sir Moksha Gundam Visvesvaraya.
- The Government of India In **1968**, decided to celebrate 15 September as National Engineers Day.
- India ranks second in the world in terms of the number of engineers.
- The day serves as a reminder to all engineers, particularly civil engineers to make Visvesvaraya their role model and work towards fulfilling the goals for the betterment of the country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION -

About Sir Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya :

- He was born on September 15, 1861 in **Karnataka**.
- He joined Madras University to study for a Bachelor of Arts.
- He later decided to change career paths and obtained a Diploma in Civil Engineering from the College of Science, Pune.
- He is credited with the creation of the '**Block System**'.
- He patented and installed an irrigation system with water floodgates in a reservoir near Pune city to increase the level and storage of water supply.
- He was awarded the '**Bharat Ratna**' in **1955** for his exceptional contribution to the making of India.

- He has also been awarded the **British Knighthood** and was the **Diwan of Mysore** from 1912 to 1918.