

Current Affairs search results for tag: national

1. Russia to quit International Space Station 'after 2024' (July 27, 2022)

Russia has decided to leave the International Space Centre after 2024.

Important facts

- The decision was announced by Yuri Bori Sof, the newly appointed President of Russia's space agency Roscosmos.
- The decision comes at a time when the Kremlin's war with Ukraine has isolated Russia both commercially and economically.
- Russia will focus on building its own space station after 2024.
- Russia will fulfill its obligations to other partners in the International Space Station before leaving the project.

Why does Russia want to leave the International Space Station?

- Russia focuses on building its own space outpost.
- Russian cosmonauts were criticized for using the space station to flag Russian occupation of Ukraine's territory.
- NASA strongly condemned Russia's political use of the ISS.
- The US alleges that Russia has used the station for support in the Ukraine war while the station's original purpose is to use it for scientific and technological development in a peaceful manner.
- Space relations between Russia and the US began to deteriorate even before the Russia-Ukraine war, when NASA announced its Artemis Agreement.
- Russia had disagreed with this agreement and it was clear that Russia and America would not be able to cooperate in space matters for long.

About International Space Station (ISS)

- The ISS was commissioned in the year 1998 and has been operating at its full capacity since 2011.
- The first astronauts were sent to this space station in the year 2000.
- The ISS is being operated by 16 countries led by the NASA space agency of America.
- These countries include America, Russia, Japan, Brazil, Canada and 11 countries in Europe.
- The ISS is the most complex international scientific and engineering project in history and the largest manned spaceflight structure.
- The space station flies at an average altitude of 400 kilometres from Earth, orbiting the globe every 90 minutes at a speed of about 28,000 kilometres per hour.

- The space station appears as a bright moving light in the night sky, similar to the bright planet Venus.

ISS program joint project of five space agencies

1. NASA (United States)
2. Roscosmos (Russia)
3. JAXA (Japan)
4. ESA (Europe)
5. CSA (Canada)

2. Supreme Court upholds ED's power to arrest in money laundering cases (July 27, 2022)

The Supreme Court on 27 July upheld the constitutional validity of certain provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Important facts

- A bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar delivered the verdict on petitions challenging the process of arrest, seizure and investigation conducted by the ED.
- The Supreme Court upheld the Enforcement Directorate's power to make inquiries, arrests and attachments in relation to assets under the Prevention of Money Laundering (PMLA) Act.
- The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the provisions of sections 5, 8 (4), 15, 17 and 19 of the PMLA, which deal with the ED's powers of arrest, attachment and search and seizure.
- The Supreme Court clearly said that the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) which is considered as a copy of FIR in a way, it is not necessary to give this copy to the accused. It will be enough for the ED to give reasons at the time of arrest.

What is the Prevention of Money Laundering Act?

- The Act was enacted in 2002 and came into force in 2005.
- The main objective of this law is to fight the process of converting black money into white (money laundering).
- The authority responsible for investigating crimes under PMLA is the Enforcement Directorate-ED.
- Persons found guilty of money laundering shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment of not less than 3 years, which may extend to 7 years, with fine.

Objectives of PMLA

- To prevent the use of black money in illegal activities and economic crimes
- Seizing property involved in or derived from money laundering
- Attempts to prevent other forms of money laundering offences

Enforcement Directorate (ED)

- It was established in the year 1956 and its headquarter is in New Delhi.
- It is responsible for implementing certain provisions under the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.
- It works under the administrative control of the Revenue Department for operational purposes.

3. Spending on 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign declared CSR activity under Companies Act (July 27, 2022)

The Corporate Affairs Ministry has said that companies can spend their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds for activities related to the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Abhiyan'.

Important facts

- The circular issued by the ministry states that 'the expenditure of CSR funds for activities related to this campaign such as mass production and supply of the national flag, outreach and promotion efforts and other related activities are CSR activities.
- The circular also states that companies can carry out these activities under the **Companies (CSR Policy) Rules, 2014**.
- It aims to encourage people to bring home the national flag and hoist it to mark the 75th year of India's independence.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- Under CSR, companies integrate social and environmental concerns with their business partners with their stakeholders.
- It is regulated under **Section 135** of the Companies Act, 2013.
- India is the first country in the world to make CSR mandatory.
- The provision of CSR is applicable to companies whose net worth is more than **₹ 500 crores** or turnover is more than **₹ 1000 crores** or net profit is more than **₹ 5 crores**.
- Certain categories of profitable companies are required to spend at least **two per cent** of their annual average net profit for three years on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities.

CSR Activities

- Promotion of education
- Gender equality and women empowerment
- Eradication of poverty and hunger
- Preparing to fight HIV and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental balance
- Improvement in infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate in the country.
- Contribution to Prime Minister's National Relief Fund
- Promoting sports, Slum area development etc.

4. Zimbabwe launches gold coins as legal tender to tackle inflation (July 26, 2022)

Zimbabwe has launched new gold coins to be sold to the public to combat extreme hyperinflation.

Important facts

- The country's central bank, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, announced this unprecedented move on July 25 to boost confidence in the local currency.
- According to the IMF, confidence in Zimbabwe's currency is low after people's savings from hyperinflation reached 5 billion in 2008.
- Confidence in Zimbabwean currency is already so low that many retailers do not accept it.
- The central bank has distributed 2,000 coins to commercial banks.
- Coins can be used for purchases in stores, depending on whether there is substantial change in the store.
- Any individual or company can buy coins from authorized banks outlets.

About Gold Coins

- The gold coins are called Mosi-oa-Tunya.
- In the local Tonga language it refers to Victoria Falls.
- The coins would have liquid asset status, meaning they would be able to be easily converted into cash and would be tradable both locally and internationally.
- The coin may also be used for transactional purposes.
- People can trade for cash only after holding the coins for at least 180 days.

About Zimbabwe

- President - Emmerson Mnangagwa
- Capital - Harare
- Official Name - Republic of Zimbabwe

5. India Designates 5 New Ramsar Sites (July 26, 2022)

India has designated 5 other Indian wetlands of international importance as Ramsar sites. Ramsar sites in India have increased from 49 to 54.

Names of five Indian wetlands that have been designated as Ramsar sites

1. Pichavaram Mangrove Forest

Pichavaram is a Village in the Cuddalore District of Tamil Nadu, Near Chidambaram.

Pichavaram Mangrove Forests is the second largest Mangrove forest in the world.

It is spread over 1,100 hectares and joins the Bay of Bengal, where it's separated by a lengthy sand bank.

1. Sakhya Sagar Lake

Sakhya Sagar Lake is a beautiful lake located in Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh.

This lake is built on the Maniyar river.

Indian pythons, marsh crocodiles, monitor lizards, and reptiles can be seen here.

1. Pallikarnai Marsh

It is one of the last remaining natural wetlands of Chennai city.

It is known locally by the common Tamil name 'Kazuveli', which means flood plain or waterlogged area.

Pallikaranai Marsh covers 65 wetlands in an area of 250 sq km south of Chennai.

1. Pala wetland

Pala wetland is situated in Mizoram.

1. Karikili Bird Sanctuary

It is located in Kanchipuram district 86 kms from Chennai.

It is spread over an area of 61.21 hectares and is just 10 km from the well-know Vedanthagal Bird Sanctuary.

What are Ramsar sites?

- A Ramsar site is a wetland site specifically designated for international importance as a waterfowl habitat under the Ramsar Convention.
- Ramsar Convention is an intergovernmental environment treaty established in 1975 by UNESCO.
- Ramsar refers to wetlands of international importance in terms of site ecology, botany, zoology or hydrology.

6. Government launches NDDB's subsidiary for manure management (July 26, 2022)

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Purushottam Rupala launched NDDB MRIDA Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) to take forward the manure management initiatives across the country.

Important facts

- NDDB MRIDA Limited, an unlisted public limited company, was incorporated on 1 July 2022 by the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) under the Companies Act, 2013.
- This will open the way for additional income to dairy farmers from the sale of slurry or dung.
- This will help in saving the farmers by virtue of substituting cooking fuel with biogas.
- Efforts are being made for better use of bovine dung, under this effort this new company will give impetus to manure management efforts.
- Promoting the use of cow dung based manure will gradually replace chemical fertilizers with organic fertilizers thereby reducing India's dependence on fertilizer imports.

Manure management initiatives

- Under the Sub-Mission on Seeds and Planting Materials (SMSP), the government provides 50% cost support for distribution of green manure required for one acre of area per farmer.
- Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) is promoting cluster based organic farming with PGS (Partnership Guarantee System) certification.
- The manure management initiative has the potential to generate biogas equivalent to 50 per cent of India's current LPG consumption.
- Manure produces bio slurry equivalent to 44 per cent of India's NPK requirement.

7. Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al-Sabah Becomes New Kuwait PM (July 26, 2022)

Sheikh Ahmed Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Sabah was appointed as the new Prime Minister of Kuwait on 25 July.

Important facts

- He replaced Sheikh Sabah Al Khalid, who stepped down in April 2022.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conveyed his congratulations and best wishes on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Kuwait.
- In April 2022, Kuwait's government resigned just months after its formation, creating new uncertainty as it grappled with a worsening political crisis and stalled important economic and social reforms.
- Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al Hamad Al Sabah, former Prime Minister of Kuwait, submitted the resignation of the cabinet to the Crown Prince ahead of a no-confidence motion in parliament.

India-Kuwait Relations

- India and Kuwait have traditionally enjoyed friendly relations that have stood the test of time.
- India has consistently been one of Kuwait's top trading partners. Kuwait has been a reliable supplier of crude oil to India.
- India is the world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer.
- Major items exported by India to Kuwait include food items, textiles, electrical and engineering equipment, ceramics, automobiles, chemicals, jewellery, metal products etc.
- Kuwait is one of the top sources of remittances for India.
- The Indian community in Kuwait has been growing at 5-6% per annum.
- Indians are the largest expatriate community in Kuwait while Egypt ranks second.

8. Centre amends flag code to allow people to display tricolor 24X7 (July 25, 2022)

With the Centre launching the "Har Ghar Tiranga" (Flag hoisting at every house in the country) campaign, it has also amended the Flag Code of India 2002 to allow the Tricolor to be hoisted both day and night by the public.

Important facts

- The display, hoisting and use of the Indian National Flag is controlled by the Flag Code of India, 2002 and the Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act, 1971.
- The central government will launch the 'Har Ghar Tiranga' campaign from August 13 to 15, 2022 under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' program.

What is the amendment?

- The Flag Code of India, 2002 has been further amended through an order dated 20 July 2022.
- Clause (xi) of paragraph 2.2 of Part-II of the Flag Code of India, 2002 shall now read as follows:- (xi) "Where the flag is displayed in the open or is displayed at the residence of a member of the public, It can be hoisted day and night."
- Earlier, the tricolor was allowed to be hoisted from sunrise to sunset, irrespective of the season.
- Earlier the government had amended the provision for the material used for manufacturing the Indian flag by adding machine-made and polyester flags as well.
- The amendment made in December 2021 states, "The national flag shall be made of cotton/polyester/wool/silk khadi bunting, whether hand-woven or machine-made."
- Earlier machine-made and polyester flags were not allowed to be used in the country.

9. WHO declares monkeypox a global emergency (July 25, 2022)

The World Health Organisation has declared the global monkeypox outbreak a 'Public Health Emergency of International Concern' (PHEIC), one step below the 'pandemic'.

Important facts

- According to WHO, PHEIC constitutes an exceptional event, which constitutes a public health risk to other countries through international spread, and which potentially requires a coordinated international response.
- On January 30, 2020, WHO had categorised COVID-19 as a PHEIC, when about 7,500 cases of novel coronavirus were reported.
- On 11 March that year, the WHO declared it a 'pandemic'.
- At present, more than 16 thousand cases of monkeypox have been registered in 75 countries and five deaths have been confirmed.
- The WHO estimates that the risk of monkeypox is moderate in the world and in all regions, but the risk is highest in Europe.
- According to the WHO, 99 percent of monkeypox cases found outside Africa are related to men, in which 98 percent of the patients are men who are gay.

Criteria on the basis of which WHO declares PHEIC

- It is declared in the event of certain "serious public health events" that could endanger international public health.
- The responsibility of declaring an event as an emergency rests with the Director-General of the WHO and requires the convening of a committee of members.
- Declaring a PHEIC may result in restrictions on travel and trade.

What Is Monkeypox?

- It is a viral zoonotic disease that is transmitted from animals to humans.
- Monkeypox virus is an orthopoxvirus similar to smallpox.
- It has been identified as a smallpox-like disease in monkeys, hence it is called monkeypox.
- It was first observed in 1958, in monkeys in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and in humans in 1970.
- The disease outbreak in Nigeria in 2017 was the largest ever.
- The monkeypox virus mutates at a high rate but is treatable once symptoms appear.

Symptom of disease

- Fever, intense headache, muscle aches, back pain, low energy, swollen lymph nodes and a skin rash or lesions.
- Infected people develop a rash resembling smallpox.
- In the early stages of the disease, monkeypox and smallpox can be differentiated because the monkeypox lymph gland enlarges.

Transmission of disease

- It spreads through close face to face, skin to skin and direct contact.
- The disease can be spread through contact with bodily fluids, sores on the skin or internal mucous surfaces, such as the mouth or throat, respiratory droplets and contaminated objects.
- Treatment and Vaccine
- There is no specific treatment or vaccine available for monkeypox infection.
- The anti-smallpox vaccine has been shown to be 85% effective in preventing monkeypox.
- A newer vaccine MVA-BN, developed for Smallpox was approved in 2019 for use in preventing Monkeypox but is not yet widely available.

10. Cochin Shipyard, IIM-Kozhikode Sign Agreement To Boost Start-Ups In Maritime Sector (July 25, 2022)

Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) has signed an agreement with IIM, Kozhikode (IIM-K), business incubator of the Laboratory for Innovation Ventures and Entrepreneurship (LIVE) to support start-ups in the maritime sector.

Important facts

- The idea of such a framework is to develop an ecosystem in India for start-ups in the maritime sector from a technical, regulatory, financial and marketing perspective.
- IIM-K Executive Director Rajesh Upadhyay and CSL General Manager Dipu Surendran signed the agreement in the presence of IIM-K Director Debashish Chatterjee and CSL Chairman and Managing Director Madhu S Nair.
- Under this initiative, start-ups can get Rs 50 lakh as initial grant, Rs 1 crore as prototype grant and equity funding for start-ups at scale up stage.
- IIM-K will act as the implementation partner of the initiative and provide incubation, mentorship and training to the start-ups selected under the programme.

Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode

- Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode (IIM Kozhikode or IIMK) is an autonomous public business school located in Calicut (Kozhikode), Kerala.
- It was established in 1996 by the Government of India in collaboration with the Government of Kerala State.
- It was the fifth IIM to be established in India.
- Director - Debashish Chatterjee