

NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

ISRO successfully launches record 104 satellites in single mission

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) created history by successfully launching a record 104 satellites in single mission.
- These satellites were launched on board of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C37, on its 39th mission from Satish Dhawan Space Centre
- Of the total 104 satellites, three were Indian and remaining 101 belonged to international customers.
- India's three satellites included earth-mapping Cartosat-2 satellite (main payload) and nanosatellites INS-1A and INS-1B.

Union Cabinet approves establishment of Food Legumes Research Platform at Amlaha

- Cabinet approval confers FLRP an international status as contemplated in Clause 3 of the United Nations (Privileges and Immunities) Act, 1947.
- The FLRP will be established by International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) for meeting the emerging food security challenges.
- It will enable India to harness the best of international science in meeting the emerging food security challenges. It will help India to rapidly and effectively absorb research output in the agriculture.
- The research output through this centre will benefit farmers (big, small or marginal) of all regions and technologies developed will be available for all farmers in equitable and inclusive manner.

Union Cabinet approves bill to amend Collection of Statistics Act, 2008

- The Amendment will be pertained to statistics under Union (List-I) and Concurrent lists (List- III) in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution and Constitution (Application to Jammu & Kashmir Order, 1954.
- It will strengthen data collection mechanism in the state of Jammu & Kashmir.
- It will extend the jurisdiction of the parent Act to J&K in respect of matters not reserved for the State as per the 1954 Order.
- It also envisages appointment of nodal officer at Centre and in each State/UT to effectively coordinate data collection activities and provide consultation to government departments to avoid unnecessary duplication.

No need to stand if National Anthem is part of film: SC

- The Supreme Court has clarified that there is no need to stand inside a cinema hall when the national anthem is featured as a part of a film, documentary or a newsreel.
- This is second clarification issued by SC on its November 2016 order, directing all persons to stand up when the national anthem is sung or played in a cinema theatre.

- The apex court's clarification came after several applications were filed on the question, including from the Kodungallur Film Society and the Conference for Human Rights.

India's air pollution is world's deadliest compared to China: Study

- According to a new study of global air pollution India's rapidly worsening air pollution is now surpassing China's as the deadliest in the world.
- The number of premature deaths in China caused by dangerous air particles PM2.5, has stabilized globally in recent years but has risen sharply in India.
- About 1.1 million people to die prematurely each year in India which has registered an alarming increase of nearly 50% in premature deaths from particulate matter between 1990 and 2015 period.
- The air pollution in recent times has worsened in parts of the world, including South Asia, but it improved in the United States and Europe.

IMF opens technical assistance and training centre SARTTAC in New Delhi

- International Monetary Fund (IMF) has opened a first-of-its-kind South Asia Training and Technical Assistance Centre (SARTTAC) in New Delhi for economic capacity building in South Asia.
- It will work to support local member countries of South Asia viz. India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka to build human and institutional capacity and implement policies for growth and poverty reduction.
- SARTTAC is financed mainly by its six member South Asia countries with additional support from Australia, South Korea, European Union and United Kingdom.
- Its strategic goal is to help its member countries strengthen their institutional and human capacity to design and implement macroeconomic and financial policies that promote growth and reduce poverty.

India joins UN network to halve maternal, newborn deaths

- India has joined Network for Improving Quality of Care for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, a global health network focused on improving the quality of care for new mothers and babies.
- India is among nine countries that will be part of the network. Other countries are Bangladesh, A Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda.
- Under this network, countries will work to improve the quality of health care facilities to mothers and babies. They will strengthen national efforts to end preventable deaths of pregnant women and newborns by 2030.
- The member counties will build and strengthen their national institutions, identify quality of care focal points at all levels of the health system.
- The network will also build a community of health practitioners from facility level and develop evidence-based strategies to improve quality of care, harvest implementation ideas, and collect information and experiences about what is working.

AWARDS

70th BAFTA Awards 2017

- 70th British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards ceremony was held at the Royal Albert Hall in London.
 - Best Film: La La Land
 - Best Director: Damien Chazelle (La La Land)
 - Best Actor: Casey Affleck (Manchester by the Sea)
 - Best Actress: Emma Stone (La La Land)
 - Best Supporting Actor: Dev Patel (Lion)
 - Best Supporting Actress: Viola Davis (Fences)
 - Best Original Music: La La Land
 - Best Original Screenplay: Manchester by the Sea
 - Best Adapted Screenplay: Lion
 - Best Cinematography: La La Land

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Government launches TAMRA Portal and Mobile App

- Ministry of Mines has launched Transparency, Auction Monitoring and Resource Augmentation (TAMRA) Portal and Mobile Application to ensure transparent award of statutory Clearances for mining operations.
- The TAMRA platform was simultaneously launched across 12 mineral rich states as a part of the Ease of Doing Business in the Mining sector and to double mining contribution to GDP.
- TAMRA covers block-wise, state-wise and mineral-wise information of mines to be auctioned. It monitors various statutory clearances and also highlights the additional resources generated through e-auction.
- In case of delay in obtaining any statutory clearances, TAMRA platform will send triggers to the concerned authority so that they can take remedial steps immediately.

Scientists develop Thubber, stretchable rubber material with high thermal conductivity

- Thubber is an electrically insulating composite material that exhibits an unprecedented combination of metal-like thermal conductivity, elasticity similar to soft, biological tissue.
- Thubber consists of a soft elastomer with non-toxic, liquid metal microdroplets suspended within it. This semi-liquid state allows the metal to deform with the surrounding rubber at room temperature.
- Potential applications include usage in developing wearable computing and soft robotics, industries like athletic wear and sports medicine and in advanced manufacturing, energy, and transportation etc.

IAF inducts indigenous early warning system NETRA

- Indian Airforce (IAG) has formally inducted the first indigenously built Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AEW&C) dubbed as NETRA.
- AEW&C NETRA has been indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It was unveiled at the 2017 Aero India exhibition held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- This system gives 240-degree coverage of airspace. DRDO has developed three NETRA systems and its three aircraft will be based at Bhatinda, facing the Western border.
- With this India, joins group of other countries such as United States, Russia and Israel which have developed the AEW&C system.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1970s banned chemicals discovered in deep ocean fauna

- Scientists for the first time have found high levels of human-made pollutants, including chemicals that were banned in the 1970s, in the tissues of marine creatures dwelling in the deepest oceans of the Earth.
- These chemicals were discovered after sampling amphipods from the Pacific Ocean's Mariana and Kermadec trenches, which are over 10 km deep and 7,000 km apart.
- Researchers found presence of extremely high levels of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) in the organism's fatty tissue.
- These banned pollutants are invulnerable to natural degradation and persist in the environment for decades. They may have been released into the environment through industrial accidents.
- Researchers claim that these pollutants may have found their way to deep trenches through contaminated plastic debris and dead animals sinking to bottom of ocean, where they were consumed by amphipods and other fauna.
- This research shows that the remote and pristine oceanic realm which was earlier considered safe from human impact is actually not.