

IACE

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

16TH & 17TH July 2023

DESCRIPTIVE

❖ India to open consulate in southern French city of Marseille

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India will open a consulate in the southern city of Marseille, France.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Indian community at La Seine Musicale in Paris during his visit to France.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was awarded the highest French award '**Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour**' by the President of the Republic of France, Emmanuel Macron.
- Prime Minister Modi is on an official visit to France and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This is the **sixth** visit of Prime Minister Modi to France.
- The Prime Minister was the chief guest at the **Bastille Day** Parade, in which a contingent of the Indian Armed Forces from the three services also participated.
- This year also marks the **25th** anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership and the Prime Minister's visit will provide an opportunity to chart out a roadmap for the future of the partnership in various areas such as strategic, cultural, scientific, educational and economic cooperation.

France: Capital: Paris, Currency: Euro, President: Emmanuel Macron, Prime Minister: Elizabeth Bourne

❖ Manoj Ahuja launched a new campaign called India for Banks

Under Agri Infra Fund

- Agriculture Secretary of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Manoj Ahuja launched a new campaign called **BHARAT** (Banks Heralding Accelerated Rural and Agricultural Transformation) for Banks under Agri Infra Fund.

➤ The campaign will run for a month from 15 July 2023 to 15 August 2023, with a target of raising Rs. 7,200 crore.

➤ The launch event took place through a video conference, in which more than 100 banking officials including MDs/Chairmen, EDs, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, NBFCs and select Co-operative Banks from public and private sectors participated.

➤ Joint Secretary Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF) Samuel Praveen Kumar highlighted the progress made under the Agri Infra Fund scheme which has seen construction of over 31,850 agriculture infrastructure projects in the country with a loan amount of Rs. 24,750 crore.

➤ The total outlay of the scheme is Rs 42,000 crore.

❖ **Tamil Nadu's Authoor betel leaves get Geographical Indication (GI) certificate**

➤ Authoor betel leaves from Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu have been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) certificate by Tamil Nadu State Agricultural Marketing Board and NABARD Madurai Agribusiness Incubation Forum.

➤ The Authoor Vattara Vetrilai Vivasayigal Sangam, a body representing growers of the Authoor betel leaf, has been awarded the GI certificate.

➤ This recognition as a Geographical Indication opens up new opportunities for the marketing of Authoor betel leaves.

➤ The certification allows authoor betel leaves to be marketed domestically and internationally, thereby increasing their reach in different markets.

➤ This recognition also highlights the marketing potential of Authoor betel leaves and paves the way for increased demand and popularity.

❖ **Third Sherpa G20 meeting begins in Hampi, Karnataka**

➤ The 3rd Sherpa meeting of G20 under the chairmanship of India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant began in Hampi, Karnataka.

- The meeting will last for three days on the banks of the Tungabhadra river near Hampi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- The main objective of the meeting is to collaborate on the drafting of the Leaders' Declaration, which will be adopted by the G20 leaders at the New Delhi Summit.
- Key issues on the agenda include green growth, climate finance, promoting eco-friendly lifestyles, inclusive and resilient growth, sustainable development goals, technological change, digital public infrastructure, multilateral institutions for the 21st century and women-led development Are.
- Over 120 delegates from G20 member states, invitees and international organisations, led by the G20 Sherpa of India, will participate in the talks to finalize the text representing the priorities of the presidency.
- Delegates will have the opportunity to explore the fascinating landscape of Hampi including its monuments, boulders and waterways, which were developed during the Vijayanagara Empire from 1336 to 1646 AD.

❖ **'Golden Peacock' Environment Management Award 2023 to Adani Transmission Limited**

- Indian company Adani Transmission Limited (ATL) has been awarded the 'Golden Peacock Environment Management Award' by the 'Institute of Directors' in the 'Power Transmission Sector'.
- This year an assessment group comprising environment, health and safety, energy and climate change experts assessed more than 520 applications.
- The review was done by an eminent jury committee headed by Venkatachaliah.
- The award is given for reducing its ecological footprint through programs such as zero waste in landfills, single-use plastic free, water-positive operations, promoting renewable energy integration and implementation of best-in-class environmental management strategies.

➤ ATL was declared the 'Winner' by its B2C arm i.e. Adani Electricity Mumbai Limited for its unique strategic initiative of increasing renewable energy in bulk power purchase for distribution in Mumbai region.

❖ **Israel Parliament Approves Bill Limiting Supreme Court's Power**

- Israel's parliament approved a bill in its first reading that aims to limit the Supreme Court's oversight powers.
- The bill received a majority of 64 to 56 in favor of the proposed limit, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right ruling coalition overwhelming the opposition.
- The bill is part of a controversial judicial reform initiated by Netanyahu's government, raising concerns about the erosion of checks and balances within the government system.
- The bill still needs two more votes to become law. With Netanyahu's ruling coalition holding a 64-seat majority in parliament, the bill is likely to pass. If this happens, there is a possibility of intensifying the protests.
- The Bill aims to limit the power of the Supreme Court to invalidate decisions taken by the government, ministries and elected officials as unreasonable.

About Israel: Capital - Jerusalem, Prime Minister - Benjamin Netanyahu, Official language - Hebrew.

❖ **Wimbledon 2023: Marketa Vondrousova defeats Ons Jabeur for first Slam title**

- Marketa Vondrousova became the first unseeded player in the Open Era to win the women's singles championship at Wimbledon 2023.
- In the final, Marketa Vondrousova defeated Ons Jabeur, who had been runner-up in the previous year's tournament.
- Marketa Vondrousova is a Czech tennis player who achieved her career-highest career ranking of world No. 14 according to the Women's Tennis Association (WTA).

About Wimbledon Championships:

- It is the oldest and most prestigious tennis tournament.

- It has been held at the All England Club in Wimbledon, London since 1877, played on grass courts.
- Wimbledon is one of the four Grand Slam tournaments, along with the Australian Open, the French Open and the US Open.
- The tournament takes place over two weeks in late June and early July, culminating in a singles final.

❖ **Rare bird 'Jerdon's Babbler' spotted in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, Uttar Pradesh**

- A rare and globally endangered bird species called 'Jerdon's Babbler' was recently spotted in the grasslands of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR) in Uttar Pradesh.
- According to surveyors, more than 95% of 'Jerdon's Babbler' in India are from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Jordanian babbler lives in pairs in small flocks in tall grasslands.
- This globally threatened bird has been listed as 'vulnerable' by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) since 1994.

About 'Jerdon's Babbler':

- It is a passerine bird native to the wetlands and grasslands of the **Indian subcontinent**.
- Its scientific name is **Chrysomma altirostre**.
- It is a member of the genus Chrysomma of the family Paradoxornithidae.
- It is found in Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan.
- It lives throughout the year near river channels, where it inhabits dense reeds and tall grasslands.

❖ **Parul Chaudhary Bags Gold in Women's 3000m Steeplechase Event**

- Long-distance runner Parul Chaudhary has won the fifth gold for India in the ongoing 2023 Asian Athletics Championships in Bangkok.

- She has clinched the 3000m Steeplechase event in the women's category and left behind her Chinese counterpart Xu Shuangshuang and finished the event in 9 minutes 38.76 seconds.
- Japan's Yoshimura Reimi eclipsed her by 0.02 seconds, sealing the third place and completed her run in 9 minutes and 48.48 seconds.

❖ **Government forms new panel to review all NSO data**

- The government has constituted a new internal oversight mechanism for official data, revamping a Standing Committee on Economic Statistics (SCES) set up in late 2019, soon after the findings from the last round of household surveys on consumption expenditure and employment were junked, citing 'data quality issues'.
- The Statistics Ministry said that the SCES — which was tasked with examining economic indicators only — will now be replaced by a Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS) which has a broader mandate to review the framework and results of all surveys conducted under the aegis of the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- Pronab Sen, former Chairman of the National Statistical Commission (NSC), has been named the chair of the new committee.

'System overhaul'

- The SCoS — with "enhanced terms of reference" visàvis the SCES, "to ensure more coverage"— has 10 official members, and four nonofficial members who are eminent academics.
- It can have up to 16 members, as per the order issued by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. (MoSPI)
- The development assumes significance amid sharp critiques of India's statistical machinery by members of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, including its chairperson Bibek Debroy.
- He had mooted an overhaul of the system, and contended that the Indian Statistical Service has "little expertise in survey design".

❖ **TSSPDCL director appointed Commissioner of Customs and Indirect Taxes**

➤ Director (Finance) in the Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana Ltd (TSSPDCL) **P. Narasimha Rao**, a 2005 batch IRS officer, has been promoted and appointed Commissioner of Customs and Indirect Taxes by the Ministry of Finance.

➤ He was on deputation to the Southern Discom since 2018.

❖ **Nod for multi-role chopper by early 2024 : Safran, HAL to set up firm in Bengaluru**

➤ The project sanction for the Indian Multi-Role Helicopter (IMRH), being developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL), is expected within this financial year, defence sources.

➤ Meanwhile, Safran Helicopter Engines and HAL have decided to set up their new joint venture company in Bengaluru, which will be dedicated to the “Design, Development, Production, Sales and Support of helicopter engines” with the focus first on the IMRH, the French company announced.

➤ The IMRH, expected to be ready by the end of this decade, is meant to replace the Mi-17s and will also have a naval version, the **Deck- Based Multi - Role Helicopter (DBMRH)**.

➤ "This project is on schedule and HAL is utilising its own funds right now. The proof of concept is on track and the Detailed Project Report (DPR) is expected to be submitted next month for approval from the Cabinet Committee on Security".

❖ **After Chandrayaan-3 launch, ISRO prepares for a PSLV mission**

➤ PSLV-C56, a commercial mission that will have seven satellites as payloads, scheduled to lift off from Sriharikota.

➤ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched two customer satellites in a textbook launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles.

➤ The 228-ton PSLV, on its 57th flight, lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space in Sriharikota into an eastward low inclination orbit.

➤ The two satellites belong to Singapore and combined weighed 757 kilograms.

- This was the third big launch of the year for the Indian space agency, which is in the midst of prepping for bigger missions going forward including the Chandrayaan - 3 and the maiden solar mission, Aditya L-1.
- Spectacular start to the Chandrayaan-3 moon mission, scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will be back in Sriharikota for another important launch later this month.
- The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle — C56 (PSLV-C56) mission is expected to lift off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre towards July-end.

❖ **World International Justice Day - July 17**

- The day focuses on promoting international criminal justice and advocating for the rights of victims.
- It commemorates the adoption of the **Rome Statute**, which established the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- The ICC is tasked with protecting individuals from heinous crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression.
- Theme: Overcoming barriers and unleashing opportunities for social justice.

❖ **Skill India project successfully revives the dying Namda art of Jammu and Kashmir**

- Union Minister of State for Skill Development, Rajeev Chandrasekhar Flagged off the first batch of Namda Art products for export to the United Kingdom.
- The Namda craft of Jammu and Kashmir was facing extinction, but has been successfully revived through the Skill India pilot project under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY).
- Around 2,200 candidates from six districts of Jammu and Kashmir received training in Namda art, thereby preserving this traditional craft and empowering local weavers and artisans.
- The project demonstrates a successful Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model in skill development in collaboration with local industry partners.

➤ The initiative was implemented in collaboration with Meer Handicrafts and the Srinagar Carpet Training and Market Centre, demonstrating the power of public - private partnerships in promoting skill development and attracting investments for economic development.

➤ The project was launched following Union Minister Rajiv Chandrashekhar's visit to Jammu and Kashmir in 2021, where the need to preserve and revive the vanishing traditional crafts of the region was recognised.

➤ The Namda craft involves making rugs from sheep's wool through felting techniques instead of traditional weaving.

❖ **India-Mongolia Joint Military Exercise "Nomadic Elephant-2023"**

➤ The 15th edition of India-Mongolia joint military exercise "Nomadic Elephant-2023" is scheduled to be held from 17 to 31 July 2023 at Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

➤ Exercise Nomadic Elephant is an annual training program of India with Mongolia which is conducted alternately in Mongolia and India.

➤ Earlier the military exercise program was organized at Special Forces Training School, Bakloh in October 2019.

➤ Troops from Mongolian Armed Forces Unit 084 and Indian troops from the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry Regiment will participate in the 15th edition of the military exercise.

❖ **Inauguration of new Integrated Terminal Building at Veer Savarkar International Airport, Port Blair**

➤ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new Integrated Terminal Building of Veer Savarkar International Airport, Port Blair through video conferencing on 18th July.

➤ The architectural design of the airport terminal resembles a shell-shaped structure, drawing inspiration from nature.

➤ The design represents the sea and the islands, reflecting the unique environment of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

❖ Sustainable features for minimal environmental impact:

- The new terminal building includes a number of sustainability features to ensure minimal negative impact on the islands' environment.
- This includes a double-insulated roof system to reduce heat and skylights to maximise natural sunlight, reducing the need for artificial lighting.
- LED lighting and low heat gain glazing are used to conserve energy.
- The terminal building has a rainwater harvesting system that collects water in an underground tank and an on-site sewage treatment plant, where 100% of treated wastewater is reused for landscaping.
- In addition, a 500 kW capacity solar power plant has been set up to harness renewable energy.

❖ Project Gajah Kotha launched in Assam

- Assam has launched a campaign named **Gajah Kotha** to mitigate the escalating human-elephant conflict (HEC) issue.
- Focus: On HEC-affected villages in eastern Assam, where it aims to educate residents about the behavior, ecology, and cultural significance of elephants in the region, emphasizing the importance of conservation
- It is a joint initiative of Aaranyak (wildlife NGO), British Asian Trust, and the Assam Forest Department, supported by the Darwin Initiative.

❖ Veteran Marathi film actor Ravindra Mahajani passes away

- Veteran Marathi film actor Ravindra Mahajani has passed away at the age of 74 in Pune.
- He has mainly acted in Marathi, Hindi, and Gujarati films.
- He made his film debut with a 1975 Marathi film Zunj, directed by veteran director V. Shantaram.
- His other popular films included Lakshmi, Duniya Kari Salaam, Gondhalat Gondhal, and Mumbaicha Faujdaar.

➤ Mahajani also Directed and produced the 1997 film Sattesathi kahihi

❖ **Coal ministry considering coal gasification scheme**

➤ Coal Ministry has set a target to achieve coal gasification of 100 Million Tonnes of coal by FY 2030 to harness the power of coal gasification.

➤ The proposal incorporates comprehensive measures that capitalize on natural resources and demonstrate coal gasification's financial and technical feasibility.

➤ Adopting gasification technology in India will revolutionize the coal sector, reducing reliance on imports of Natural Gas, Methanol, and other products.

❖ **Tata AIG appointed lead insurer for Maharashtra**

➤ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India has selected Tata AIG General Insurance as the lead non-life insurer for the State of Maharashtra.

➤ As lead insurer the company will collaborate with all non-life and health insurance companies in the state to increase insurance penetration.

➤ The concept of a lead insurer to increase insurance penetration in the states was developed by the regulator in line with its vision of “**Insurance for all by 2047**”.