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DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Early onset of monsoon in Kerala from today; IMD forecasts above normal rain

CONTEXT: After a harsh summer, Kerala is all set for the southwest monsoon on Thursday, two days ahead of its normal onset.

BACKGROUND: Southwest monsoon usually sets in over Kerala around June 1 and progresses northward in surges, covering the entire country around July 15. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday announced that the southwest monsoon will arrive in Kerala in the next 24 hours.



When the three-month-long summer season gave way to monsoon, Kerala also witnessed some of the unusual weather events. For the first time in the history of Kerala, a heatwave was confirmed.

The monthly and seasonal forecast issued by the IMD for June and the entire four-month season has warned of above normal rainfall in Kerala.

Indian Meteorological Department was established in 1875. It is the National Meteorological Service of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects. It works as an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India. It is headquartered in New Delhi. IMD is also one of the six Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organization.

National Monsoon Mission (NMM): Government of India launched NMM in 2012 with a vision to develop a state-of-the-art dynamical prediction system for monsoon rainfall on different time scales.

Mausam App: Tool for dissemination of weather information and warnings in an attractive and user friendly manner.

Doppler Weather Radars: Based on Doppler principle, the radar is designed to improve precision in long-range weather forecasting and surveillance using a parabolic dish antenna and a

foam sandwich spherical radome.

DWR has the equipment to measure rainfall intensity, wind shear and velocity and locate a storm center and the direction of a tornado or gust front.

ECONOMICS

People in 3 States get citizenship under the CAA

CONTEXT: Citizenship certificates under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) were granted to some people in West Bengal, Uttarakhand, and Haryana, the Union Home Ministry said. The Ministry did not specify the number of people

BACKGROUND: The Ministry did not specify the number of people who acquired citizenship through the CAA in the three States. However, a source said that at least eight Hindu migrants from Bangladesh were granted citizenship in West Bengal.

“The process of granting citizenship certificates under the Citizenship (Amendment) Rules, 2024 has now commenced in the State of West Bengal, where the first set of applications from the State was today granted citizenship by the Empowered Committee, West Bengal,” the Ministry said in a statement.

The CAA, which will potentially benefit over 2.5 crore people from the Matua and Namasudra communities in West Bengal, has been opposed by the State’s Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, on the grounds that it is discriminatory and communal.

The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955.

The CAA provides citizenship on the basis of religion to six undocumented non-Muslim communities (Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians) from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who entered India on or before 31st December, 2014.

It exempts the members of the six communities from any criminal case under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1920.

The two Acts specify punishment for entering the country illegally and staying here on expired visas and permits.



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

ED searches 13 locations in Punjab illegal mining case

CONTEXT: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday seized about ₹3.5 crore in cash during searches at 13 locations in Punjab's Rupnagar district as part of a money-laundering probe into alleged illegal mining on land attached by the agency in 2015 in connection with a drug trafficking-related case.

BACKGROUND : The Adjudicating Authority under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act confirmed the attachment of assets on September 3, 2015. The agency zeroed in on the suspects by analysing their call records. "Bank account statements of Baljinder Singh (suspect) and others associated with him were obtained from the banks and analysed for identification of suspected persons. Subsequently, the search operation was conducted," said a source.

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) is a multi-disciplinary organization mandated with investigation of offences of money laundering and violations of foreign exchange laws. It functions under the Department of Revenue of the Ministry of Finance.

As a premier financial investigation agency of the Government of India, the Enforcement Directorate functions in strict compliance with the Constitution and Laws of India.

The Directorate of Enforcement, with its headquarters at New Delhi, is headed by the Director of Enforcement.

There are five regional offices at Mumbai, Chennai, Chandigarh, Kolkata and Delhi headed by Special Directors of Enforcement.

The Directorate has 10 Zonal offices each of which is headed by a Deputy Director and 11 sub Zonal Offices each of which is headed by an Assistant Director.

GEOGRAPHY

More volcanism on Venus than was previously known: study

CONTEXT: Venus appears to be more volcanically active than previously known, according to scientists whose new analysis of decades-old radar images has spotted evidence of eruptions at two additional sites on the surface of the earth's inhospitable planetary neighbour.

Radar images obtained by NASA's Magellan spacecraft from 1990 to 1992 indicated large lava flows at these two locations in the Venusian northern hemisphere at the time of the observations, the researchers said. These findings, coupled with previous studies, indicate that the planet's volcanic activity is comparable to the earth's, they added.

Magellan mapped 98% of the Venusian surface. Advances in computing capability have made analysing Magellan's radar data easier in recent years.

Studying volcanic activity provides a fuller understanding of a planet's internal heat and geological processes. It provides insights into the planet's thermal evolution, surface renewal processes and atmospheric interactions.

Magellan mission to Venus was one of the most successful

deep space missions. It was the first spacecraft to image the entire surface of Venus and made several discoveries about the planet it was launched on May 4, 1989. On October 13, 1994, communication with Magellan was lost when it was instructed to descend into the atmosphere of Venus.

GOVERNMENT SCHEME

An overview of the AMRUT scheme

AMRUT was launched in 2015 to provide basic civic amenities like water supply, sewerage, urban transport, parks as to improve the quality of life for all especially the poor and the disadvantaged.

Some of the challenges in infrastructure development with respect to water, mobility, and pollution were to be met by this scheme with some financial assistance from the Centre and the rest of the share mobilised by both States and respective cities. The mission was drawn to cover 500 cities and towns with a population of over one lakh with notified municipalities.

The purpose of the AMRUT mission was to (i) ensure that every household has access to a tap with assured supply of water and a sewerage connection (ii) increase the value of cities by developing greenery and well-maintained open spaces such as parks and (iii) reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorised transport. The total outlay for AMRUT was ₹50,000 crore for five years from FY 2015-16 to FY 2019-20.



What went wrong with the scheme

The basic fundamental of the scheme was erroneously constructed. Instead of a holistic approach, it took on a project-oriented attitude. Furthermore, AMRUT was made for cities with no participation from the cities. It was quite mechanical in design, with hardly any organic participation of the elected city governments, and driven by mostly private interests. The project was owned by bureaucrats, parastatals, and large technology-based companies. For example, in the governance architecture, the apex committee is headed by the secretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) and all the members are non-elected. Similarly, the State level high powered committee is headed by the chief secretary with a private nexus of consultants and professionals. Peoples' representatives are completely missing, in violation of the 74th constitutional amendment.

ECONOMY

India to import wheat after six years, to shore up reserves

CONTEXT: India will begin wheat imports after a six-year gap, to replenish depleted reserves and hold down prices that leaped following three years of disappointing crops, sources say, as the approaching end of general elections removes a key hurdle.

BACKGROUND: New Delhi is expected to abandon a 40% tax on wheat imports this year, officials and other sources told Reuters, paving the way for private traders and flour millers to buy from producers such as top exporter Russia, albeit in modest volumes.

As the new wheat harvest season begins, the Centre is likely to wait until after June to scrap the import tax, in time for Russia's harvest, sources said.

In 2023, India produced a record 112.74 million metric tons of wheat, according to the farm ministry, but trade and industry officials said last year's wheat production was at least 10% less than the government's estimate.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Spirit of UN dead in Gaza, says Erdogan

CONTEXT: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday hit out at the United Nations and called on the "Islamic world" to react after the latest deadly Israeli strikes in Gaza.

Mr. Erdogan's comments came as the UN Security Council met to discuss a deadly Israeli attack on a displacement camp west of Rafah on Tuesday that killed 21 people. The Turkish leader also hit out at fellow Muslim-majority countries for failing to take common action over the Israeli strike.

The UN has contributed to dramatic failures—often as a result of indecision, either when member states can't agree, as in the war in Syria; when their agreement falls far short of what's needed, as in Bosnia or Rwanda; or when they selectively apply, or don't apply, international norms to suit their interests, as in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

INTERNAL SECURITY

RudraM-II air-to-surface missile flight test successful

CONTEXT: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Wednesday successfully flight-tested the indigenously-developed RudraM-II air-to-surface missile from a Su-30 MKI jet off Odisha coast.



BACKGROUND: The flight-test met all the trial objectives, validating the propulsion system and control & guidance algorithm, DRDO said in a statement. The performance of the missile has been validated from the flight data captured by range tracking instruments, it added. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said that the successful test consolidated the role of RudraM-II as a force multiplier to the Indian armed forces.

The Indian Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Programme, launched in 2000 post-Kargil War, is pivotal in safeguarding India against missile threats, primarily from Pakistan and China. Utilising a multi-layered approach, it deploys two interceptor missiles: Prithvi Air Defence for high altitudes and Advanced Air Defence for lower altitudes.

More recently, efforts have focused on improving capabilities through global cooperation and serial manufacture, as seen by the acquisition of the Russian S-400 Triumf system. Phase two, led by DRDO, is dedicated to developing anti-ballistic systems such as THAAD, while projects like AD-II focus on missiles with a longer range.

In light of shifting geopolitics, India's commitment to national security is emphasised by the Ballistic Missile Defence Programme.

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