

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS – FEBRUARY 20, 2023

NATIONAL

- The world's largest vaccine manufacturers, Serum Institute of India (SII) - announced the establishment of Dr Cyrus Poonawalla Centre of Excellence in infectious diseases and pandemic preparedness in Hyderabad.
- ✓ The state-of-art technology centre will be located within the premises of Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH), Hyderabad.
- ✓ It will work as a centralised location for information, resources and support during public health emergencies.
- ✓ The centre will also serve as a hub for public health education, outreach and provide real-time information on current epidemics.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- A B20 (Business 20) Conference for the delegates from G20 countries and other invited countries - was held in Imphal, Manipur on February 17



- ✓ The inaugural function was attended by Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, Union MoS of Commerce and Industries Som Prakash and Union MoS of External Affairs RK Ranjan, among others.
- ✓ The conference was a part of the official G20 Dialogue Forum for the global business community.
- ✓ The theme of the conference was 'Sustainable Growth and Development'.
- ✓ The dignitaries from 23 nations comprising 26 overseas business delegates and 24 diplomats participated in the conference.
- ✓ The areas of interaction in medical tourism, ICT and other sectors were discussed during the conference.

PERSONALITIES

- **Rayyana Barnawi – is all set to become the first female astronaut from Saudi Arabia who will be sent to the International Space Station (ISS) later this year**



- ✓ Rayyana Barnawi will join fellow Saudi Ali Al-Qarni on a 10-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS)
- ✓ Barnawi and Al-Qarni will fly to the ISS aboard a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft as part of the Ax-2 mission by the private space company, Axiom Space
- ✓ Axiom Space carried out its first private astronaut mission to the ISS in April 2022
- ✓ The Ax-2 crew will be launched to the ISS by a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.
- ✓ In 2019, United Arab Emirates became the first Arab country to send one of its citizens into space, after astronaut Hazzaa al-Mansoori spent eight days on the ISS.
- ✓ Another fellow Emirati, Sultan al-Neyadi, will also make a voyage to the space station later this month.

- ✓ Nicknamed the "Sultan of Space", Neyadi will become the first Arab astronaut to spend six months in space when he blasts off for the ISS aboard a Falcon 9 rocket.
- ✓ United Arab Emirates had also become the first Arab country to send woman astronaut Noura Al-Matrooshi into space in 2021.
- ✓ In 1985, Saudi royal Prince Sultan bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, an air force pilot, took part in a US-organized space mission, becoming the first Arab Muslim to travel into space
- ✓ In 2018, Saudi Arabia set up a space program and last year launched the next one to send astronauts into space, all part of Prince Salman's Vision 2030 agenda for economic diversification.

DEFENCE

- **The top-notch Malabar naval exercise - will be conducted off Australia for the first time this August.**
 - ✓ India will be dispatching frontline warships as well as P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft for the forthcoming 27th edition of the Malabar exercise
 - ✓ The exercise began as a bilateral exchange between India and US in the 1990s
 - ✓ It had then formally included Japan as a regular participant in 2015 and finally Australia in 2020 to complete the presence of Quad countries in the crucial Indo-Pacific region
 - ✓ The last edition of the Malabar exercise was held off Yokosuka near the East China Sea
 - ✓ Australia has also invited India to participate in its largest biennial 'Talisman Sabre' tri-service exercise with the US and a few other nations that will be conducted from July 21 to August 4.
 - ✓ Australian PM Anthony Albanese will be visiting India on a four-day bilateral visit next month, and will return for the G20 summit in September.
 - ✓ In between, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in Australia for the Quad leaders' summit.

- **The Indian Air Force - has developed an innovative solution called VAYULINK to help pilots in dealing with bad weather and also provide jam-proof uninterrupted communication with the base station**
 - ✓ The data link communication VAYULINK uses the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) that is also known as NAVIC, to send radio communication to the base station when the signals are low
 - ✓ The IAF has put up the Vayulink gallery to give information about its platform at the India Pavilion in the recent Aero India 2023
 - ✓ The Vayulink system also prevents aircraft collision, provides better combat teaming and helps real-time planning where multiple teams can get together and go towards the target coming from different areas

AWARDS

- **Union Home Minister Amit Shah - presented the President's Colour to Haryana Police in recognition of its exceptional service recently on February 14**



- ✓ Shah presented the award on behalf of President Droupadi Murmu in a ceremony at the Haryana Police Academy in Karnal's Madhuban
- ✓ The award is usually presented by the President of India, the Supreme Commander of the Indian military
- ✓ The President's Colour is a special flag awarded to a military, paramilitary or police unit as a mark of recognition for its services.
- ✓ A replica of the flag presented to the unit can be worn as an insignia by all officers and ranks of the force on their uniform.

SPORTS

- **Saurashtra - defeated Bengal by nine wickets to lift the Ranji Trophy title for the second time in their history at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata on February 19**



- ✓ Saurashtra's earlier triumph was in 2019-20 season when they defeated Bengal on the basis of first innings lead.
 - ✓ In the last 10 seasons, they have made the final on five occasions
 - ✓ With 3 wickets in the first innings and a 6-wicket haul in the second, Skipper Jaydev Unadkat starred for Saurashtra
 - ✓ The left-arm pacer returned to lead the side in the Ranji Trophy final after being released from the India camp
 - ✓ Arpit Vasavada was adjudged the Player of the Series for his consistent run this Ranji season scoring 907 runs, while Unadkat received the Man of the Match award for his nine wickets in the match
 - ✓ Unadkat dedicated the title to his teammate and one of Saurashtra cricket's greatest star Cheteshwar Pujara
 - ✓ The Ranji victory for Saurashtra marks their second title this season after the lifting of Vijay Hazare Trophy.
- **Sania Mirza – to retire from professional tennis after the Dubai Duty Free WTA 1000 Series championship, which begins this week**



- ✓ She will play women's double event with Madison Keys of the USA – world No. 23 in the WTA singles rankings
- ✓ The WTA 1000 event, which takes place at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Stadium, runs until February 25.
- ✓ It is the first WTA 1000 event of the 2023 season
- ✓ Sania Mirza made her first professional appearance in Dubai in 2005 and was the 2013 women's doubles tournament champion
- ✓ A former doubles world No. 1, Mirza won six major titles – three in women's doubles and three in mixed doubles, in her 22-year professional career
- ✓ Sania Mirza has won 44 WTA titles in her career, including just one in singles.
- ✓ Her last double triumph came at the Ostrava Open 2021 in the Czech Republic, where she partnered with Chinese Zhang Shuai.
- ✓ From 2003 until her retirement from singles in 2013, she was ranked by the Women's Tennis Association as the Indian No. 1 in singles

- ✓ Sania Mirza played at the Australian Open 2023 last month and reached the mixed doubles final alongside Rohan Bopanna.
- ✓ She is currently ranked No. 28 in the world in doubles.

RANKINGS

- **India – was ranked at 47th position among 50 countries in Services Trade Restrictiveness Index (STRI) released by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for the year 2022**
- ✓ Last year, the country was ranked at 48th position.
- ✓ The OECD STRI index covers the 38 OECD members, as well as Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Peru, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- ✓ Japan was ranked at the top, followed by UK, Netherlands, Czech, and Chile in second, third, fourth, and fifth places respectively.



- ✓ The countries in the last four spots were Indonesia (at the 50th spot), Thailand (49), Russia (48), and India (47).
- ✓ The report covers service trade regulations among all its members.

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **World Pangolin Day – February 18**
- ✓ World Pangolin Day is celebrated every year on the third Saturday of February and this year, the day falls on February 18.



- ✓ The day is observed annually to remember about pangolins, promote their awareness, and fight against their global capture.
- ✓ An estimated one million of these unique creatures were killed in African and Asian nations to meet the enormous demand for their scale, skin, blood, and even fetuses, which are believed to have multiple purposes in fashion, traditional medicine, and cookery.
- ✓ A pangolin is a mammal of the order Pholidota, the only member of the family Manidae and are found in tropical regions of Africa and Asia
- ✓ They are typically covered in tough scales made of keratin, which protect them from predators.
- ✓ Pangolins are nocturnal animals that spend most of their time in trees, eating ants and termites.
- ✓ They are hunted for their meat and for their scales, which are used in traditional Chinese medicine
- ✓ There are eight different species of pangolins, all of which are endangered and this includes Indian pangolin.
- ✓ Indian Pangolins are hunted and exported to markets in South Asia and China

