



Contact: 097418 69722

09 October 2018**Daily News Pedia****Mobile Health app for citizens of India Launched by IAF**

On the occasion of 86th anniversary, the Indian Air Force has launched an innovative mobile health App named 'MedWatch'.

'MedWatch' in keeping with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Digital India, Ayushman Bharat and Mission Indradhanush'.

'MedWatch' will provide correct, Scientific and authentic health information to air warriors and all citizens of India. 'MedWatch' is the first mobile health app in the three Armed Services.

Source: The Hindu.

CII and UNEP Sign MoU for Implementation of Sustainable Development

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the UN Environment has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

The CII will work towards voluntary codes in Indian industry on the issue of plastics, for which there is already a precedent with benefits to firms in terms of credit and shareholder value. The MoU encompasses 'coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development according to an official statement.

It provides a framework of cooperation and facilitates cooperation in issues of environment, climate change, renewable energy, energy efficiency, resource conservation and management, water sanitation, smart cities and urban infrastructure.

A major activity planned under the MoU, will be the #Un-plastic Initiative of CII and UN Environment, beginning with a Call to Action, including commitments by industry on actions to curb plastic pollution.

Source: The Hindu.

Crop Damages in Animal Attacks put Under PMFBY on Pilot Basis

The Union government has decided to cover damages to crops in wild animal attacks under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna in select districts on an experimental basis.

Several parliamentarians have been raising this issue from time to time and demanding insurance cover for damages to the crops in animal attacks under the Centre's scheme. The government has also brought under the PMFBY ambit certain horticultural crops on an experimental basis, the minister said.

Damages to individual or limited number of cultivators in localised events like water logging, land slide, hailstorms etc did not fall under the ambit of PMFBY scheme earlier.

However they too are being covered now under new provisions. Now damages to the individual fields due to incidents of local disasters like cloud bursts and fire too are being taken up now for insurance claims.

Source: The Hindu.

Make II Scheme

Department of Defence production under Ministry of Defence has recently cleared 31 projects and has given them in-principle approval under the Make-II scheme.

Make II Scheme corresponds to Make in India initiative in Defence production.

The provision of 'Make' category in Defence procurement Procedure is a pillar for realising the vision behind Make in India. Make Scheme fosters indigenous capabilities through design & development of required defence equipment/product/upgrades by both public and private sector industry in a faster time frame.

Make I scheme is Government-funded and the projects under 'Make-I' sub-category will involve Government funding of 90%.

Make II scheme is Industry-funded and the projects involve development of products/equipment for which no government funding will be provided for development purposes.

Source: The Hindu.

Singphan Wildlife Sanctuary

Singphan wildlife sanctuary has been declared as an Elephant reserve by the Government of Nagaland.

With the approval of Government of India, it becomes the 30th Elephant reserve in the country. The reserve lies in the North-western part of the State of Nagaland.

The declaration will boost the elephant conservation in the country especially north eastern region.

Source: The Hindu.

Nirman Kusuma programme

Odisha government has launched the *Nirman Kusuma' programme* to help the children of construction workers get trained in Industrial Training Institutes and polytechnics.

Under the scheme, the children of construction workers would get financial assistance for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics.

While an ITI student will be entitled to get financial assistance of Rs. 23,600, a diploma student to get Rs. 26,300 per annum.

Source: The Hindu.

Editorial

To Read

India's S-400 balancing act

While the India-Russia relationship is no longer what it was, the current transnationalism suits both countries for now

Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India last week saw the long-overdue materialization of the S-400 deal. Despite the threat of sanctions by the US under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), India is likely to get a waiver. This signifies how strategically important India is, for both Russia and the US.

The deal is being projected in some quarters as India daring the US and displaying strategic autonomy. It even betrays a touch of the Cold War-style non-aligned movement (NAM) mindset. However, a country that imports the majority of its critical weapons is restricted in its strategic autonomy. India needs the S-400 to plug the gaps in its air defence, especially against China. The fact is, India had been pursuing this deal since 2015, well before Donald Trump became the US president and CAATSA was legislated. India has spent a lot of political capital to get a waiver. It was one of the main talking points during the 2+2 dialogue between India and the US. Both Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defence James Mattis have supported waivers for India for its weapon deals with Russia.

While India enjoys bipartisan support in the US, the anger at Russia over its meddling in the US elections along with the domestic political partisanship could make it tricky for India.

Russia comes out as the clear winner in this deal. It has managed to secure one of the biggest arms deals in recent times. It is apparent that Russia commands a massive lead over its competitors in the Indian defence sector, and is a crucial supplier of advanced weapons for India.

If Trump is not able to give a waiver and India is sanctioned, it will only shift the geopolitical scales in favour of Russia. Despite India and Russia sharing a strong defence relationship, the ties between the two countries have been drifting as India slowly started becoming an important partner to the US. Sanctions could cool relations.

Russia is opposed to India's policy in the Indo-Pacific. It does not want India to be a counterbalance against China. Russia itself is dependent on China for arms and energy sales and investments, and disregards India's concerns about its northern neighbour. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had an informal summit with Putin in Sochi before he delivered a tempered speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on India's policy in the Indo-Pacific. Although the 'Quad' grouping is focussed on China's expansionism, it is possible that Russia conveyed to India its sensitivities in joining a US-led security grouping in the Indo-Pacific.

The US recently sanctioned China for buying the S-400 and Su-35 fighter jets from Russia. A waiver for India for buying the same weapons system will send a positive message to India about the US recognising India's security needs. However, there are warnings on interoperability with US and other Western systems. India has had Russian air defence systems for decades, and they are integrated with other western systems like fighter jets and radars.

Some reports indicate that the US has precluded any potential F-35 stealth fighter jets sale to India. This is likely a coercion tactic to stop India from buying the S-400, and also to push US air

defence systems, like the PAC-3, in India. The US will not refuse a potential 200 fifth generation fighter jet requirement of India.

The S-400 deal does, however, shows the gaps in Indo-US defence relations. Despite the close defence ties and the countries staging a large number of bilateral military exercises in recent years, shortcomings in defence trade remain. The Defence Framework and Defence Technology and Trade Initiative to pursue joint development and co-production of defence equipment has failed to address India's needs. It has also failed to estimate what the US can deliver and how far India will go in trusting the US for critical weapons systems. Indian decision makers still seem to be saddled with the legacy of the Cold War and non-alignment. On the other hand, in comparison to Russia—which has helped India with strategic technologies like leasing and developing nuclear-powered submarines—the US is still not open to supplying India with advanced weapons platforms and military technologies.

With the S-400, India has achieved what it wanted. But it underscores the transactional relations between India and Russia. Indo-Russian trade is largely defence driven, and India continues to be Russia's biggest weapons buyer. India will keep Russia engaged with defence deals amid Russia's growing relations with Pakistan. Russia is no longer coy about selling weapons to Pakistan. But by making big-ticket purchases, India hopes to thwart Russia from selling any advanced weapons to Pakistan.

There is a definite sense of realism in India, Russia and the US. Transactionalism is suiting both India and Russia. India gets the advanced weapons it needs and Russia charges top dollar for it. It does not give "friendship prices" to India anymore. Russia is not going to help India in its strategic competition with China, nor is it as committed as it once was to India in its case against Pakistan. Indian interests will be served as long as Russia meets its strategic weapons needs and doesn't make any moves that compromise India's security. The US not reacting too sensitively to India's weapons purchase will be pivotal for India-US economic and defence ties as well.

Mains Question

Q: What is 'pravasi bhartiya divas'? Discuss the role of Indian diaspora in socio-economic growth and development of India.