

August 24th and 25th news:

International:

Exercise SCO Peace Mission 2018 Started In Russia

Exercise Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Peace Mission 2018, the latest in 'Peace Mission' series formally started at Chebarkul, Russia. All the 8 member nations will participate in this exercise. The SCO Peace Mission Exercise is one of the major defense cooperation initiatives amongst SCO nations and will be a landmark event in the history of SCO defense cooperation.

National:

NITI Aayog releases five thematic reports on Sustainable Development in Indian Himalayan Region

NITI Aayog released five thematic reports on Sustainable Development in Indian Himalayan Region. The themes include Inventory and Revival of Springs in Himalayas for Water Security, Sustainable Tourism, Transformative Approach to Shifting Cultivation, Strengthening Skill and Entrepreneurship Landscape in Himalayas. Listing challenges in all five thematic areas, the reports said, nearly 30 per cent of springs crucial to water security of people are drying and 50 per cent have reported reduced discharge.

Himalayan Tourism which is growing annually at 6.8 per cent has created huge challenge related to solid waste, water, traffic, loss of bio-cultural diversity.

According to an official release, the call for action include setting up of a Himalayan Authority for coordinated and holistic development of entire Himalayan region and launching of Himalaya Calling : An Awareness to Action Campaign as people's movement

Bilateral:

India, Singapore sign Second Protocol amending bilateral trade pact

India and Singapore on 24th August signed the "Second Protocol" amending the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) to boost trade ties between the two countries

The protocol was signed by Joint Secretary of Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Rajneesh and Francis Chong, Senior Director, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Government of Singapore

The CECA was signed on June 29, 2005 and its first review was concluded on October 1, 2007

Signing of the Second Protocol formally brings the negotiations on second review of CECA, which began on May 11, 2010, to a closure.

Both sides agreed to expand the coverage of tariff concessions, liberalise the "Rules of Origin", rationalise "Product Specific Rules" and include provisions on "Certificate of Origin" and cooperation on its verification

The conclusion of the Second Review of CECA was announced during the visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Singapore on June 1, 2018. The provisions of the Second Protocol will come into effect on September 14, 2018.

As per Commerce Ministry, both the countries are exploring the possibility of launching the third review of India-Singapore CECA in September, 2018.

Singapore is the second largest trading partner of India within ASEAN and India is the largest trading partner of Singapore in South Asia, with a bilateral trade of \$17.7 billion in 2017-18.

Prasar Bharati & Mizzima Media of Myanmar ink an MoU

Prasar Bharati and Mizzima Media of Myanmar signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 24th August. This will boost centuries old ties between India and Myanmar. It will also strengthen India's soft power in its neighbourhood.

The Agreement will realize cooperation and collaboration in various fields of broadcasting. It also envisions content-sharing covering a wide range of genres, including culture, entertainment, education, science, news and sports. India and Myanmar have shared history of their independent struggle and Prasar Bharati's rich archive will help them relive those precious moments.

Mizzima's Managing Director Soe Myint said that there is a huge audience of Indian movies and music and this collaboration among myanmarese population, will help them have more access to indian infotainment content.

This MoU will give further boost to centuries old ties of India and Myanmar. Beside, it will also act to spread India's soft power in its neighborhood.

Economy:

Government Unveils Draft UDAN Scheme For International Routes

The Centre unveiled a draft scheme for extending the affordable air travel programme UDAN to international circuits, with state governments identifying the routes for operation.

The draft International Air Connectivity (IAC) scheme envisages to increase the international ticketing to 20 crore by 2027.

According to the draft scheme, state governments will identify the routes to be connected, and airline operators will assess demand on the identified routes and submit proposals for providing connectivity.

World Bank Launches World's 1st Blockchain Bond

The World Bank launched 'bond-i', the world's first bond to be created, allocated, transferred and managed by using distributed ledger technology. This two-year bond successfully raised 110 million Australian dollars (USD 80.48 million). This was the first time that investors supported the World Bank's

development activities in a transaction that is fully managed using the blockchain technology from start to finish.

India's Largest Business Incubator Bhamashah Techno Hub Launched In Jaipur

In a big step forward to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Rajasthan, the Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje launched India's largest business incubator the Bhamashah Techno Hub in Jaipur.

The incubator will provide end-to-end support to startups, ranging from infrastructure, technology, angel funding, access to venture capitalists, mentorship, exposure to national and international organization and experts

Science and Technology:

EU Wind Survey Satellite 'Aeolus' Launched

A new satellite that will use advanced laser technology to track global winds and improve weather forecasts has been successfully put into orbit, launch company Arianespace said. The launch of the "Aeolus" satellite -- named after the guardian of wind in Greek mythology -- took place after a 24-hour delay due to adverse weather conditions.

It is part of a European project to monitor environmental damage and help disaster relief. Sun-synchronous orbits allow satellites always to have view of the Sun, for example so their solar panels can always draw power.

The satellite "will probe the lowermost 30km (18 miles) of the atmosphere in measuring winds around the Earth," Arianespace said.

Aeolus is part of the Copernicus project, a joint initiative of the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA) to track environmental damage and aid disaster relief operations.

The satellite is equipped with a single instrument: a Doppler wind lidar -- an advanced laser system designed to accurately measure global wind patterns from space.

The LIDAR's near-real-time observations will provide reliable wind profiles, further improving the accuracy of numerical weather and climate prediction, as well as advance the understanding of tropical dynamics and processes relevant to climate variability," Arianespace said after the launch.

It described the satellite as the world's first space mission to gather information on Earth's wind on a global scale.

Tropical winds in particular are very poorly mapped because of the almost complete absence of direct observations.

The Doppler LIDAR transmits short, powerful pulses of laser light toward Earth in the ultraviolet spectrum. Particles in the air -- moisture, dust, gases -- reflect, or scatter, a small fraction of that light energy back to the transceiver, where it is collected and recorded.

The delay between the outgoing pulse and the so-called "backscattered" signal reveals the wind's direction, speed and distance travelled.

Once per orbit, data is downloaded to a ground station in Svalbard, Norway. Aeolus is the fifth of the ESA's planned Earth Explorer missions.

Others already completed or in operation have measured Earth's gravity and geomagnetic fields, soil moisture, ocean salinity and frozen expanses collectively known as the cryosphere. The new mission is also Arianespace's 50th launch for the European Space Agency.

Sports:

India Wins 2nd Gold In Rowing In Asian Games

Indian rowers Sawarn Singh, Dattu Bhokanal, Om Prakash and Sukhmeet Singh won the men's Quadruple Sculls to win India's fifth gold medal at the Asian Games 2018. The medal is only the second ever gold medal for India in the rowing competition in Asian Games history.

Bopanna, Sharan Win: Top seeds Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan notched up their maiden men's tennis doubles gold medal at the Asian Games, in Palembang, Indonesia. Bopanna and Sharan defeated Aleksander Bublik and Denis Yevseyev of Kazakhstan. India have claimed the men's doubles gold on four occasions at the Games, the last pair being Somdev Devvarman and Sanam Singh in the 2010 Guangzhou edition

Persons in news:

Vajiz dar: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has appointed former Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice S J Vazifdar as head of a three-member committee to decide mining company Vedanta's plea challenging closure of its Sterlite copper plant at Tuticorin. A bench headed by chairperson A K Goel had stated a credible mechanism, through which rival contentions can be balanced and final view taken, has to be evolved

Scott Morrison: Scott Morrison has been elected the new Prime Minister of Australia after winning an internal vote of 45-40 against former Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton.

U.K.Verma: Industry chamber Assocham appointed former bureaucrat Uday Kumar Varma as its new Secretary General. He succeeds DS Rawat who held the position for nearly 14 years. Varma has extensive administrative experience at the highest levels of administration both in the state government (of Madhya Pradesh) and central government