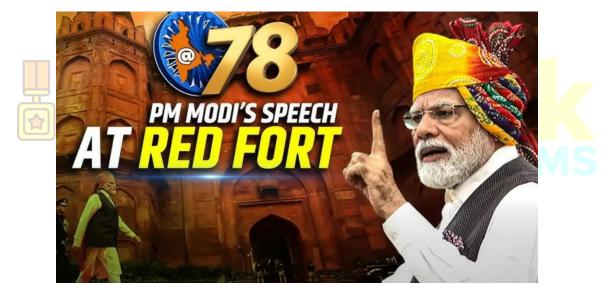# Daily Current Affairs
16 August 2023

P.M Modi's Speech On 78th Independence Day

- From **ways and means** to achieve the '**Viksit Bharat 2047'** goal to reforms brought about by the NDA government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the occasion of the 78th Independence Day, laid out a **roadmap for the country** for the coming years.
- PM Modi also noted that his government was **committed to reforms** and the blueprint for growth is not borne of any political compulsion but the dedication to the nation first.

- Prime Minister Modi honored those who **sacrificed their lives for the country's** freedom. "The country is indebted to them," he remarked, acknowledging the weight of the legacy left by India's freedom fighters.
- **Sympathy to all those affected by natural disasters** The Prime Minister also took a moment to address the series of natural disasters that have recently struck various parts of the country. "Many have lost their families and loved ones in these calamities**.**
- **"Viksit Bharat 2047** are not mere words; they are reflections of the resolve and dreams of 140 crore people," he emphasized, reiterating that this vision is shaped by the collective aspirations of the Indian populace.

- **Addressing the nation's security**, PM Modi highlighted the pride felt by every Indian when the armed forces conduct surgical and air strikes. He reflected on the transformation in public expectations from the government, noting.

- **Citing the banking sector reforms** as an example, he pointed out that Indian banks now rank among the strongest globally. "The path of reforms chosen by us has become a blueprint for growth and not just for debate clubs," he asserted.

- **Reforms in the space sector :** India's "vibrant" space sector is playing a key role in making India a strong nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his Independence Day address. Mr. Modi also said his government has made many reforms in the space sector, liberating it from the restrictions of the past "Hundreds of start-ups have come up in the space sector.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address **said 75,000 more medical seats** will be created in the next five years. "In the last 10 years we have increased the medical seats to nearly 1 lakh," PM Modi said.
- He said that as a neighbour we are concerned and hope for normalcy in Bangladesh. He also said that **Indians are worried about safety of Hindus** and minorities in Bangladesh. "We are committed to peace in the neighbourhood, we hope for Bangladesh's progress," he added.
- He said that there is a need to widely publicise punishments given for **atrocities against women,** so that there is a fear of consequence.

- Mr. Modi said his government has worked on a **"women-led development model,"** but he was still concerned over incidents of rape and violence against women.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi **addresses many global companies** want to invest in India and asked the state governments to compete among themselves to attract them.
- PM Modi also said the country needs to work **on "Design In India" and "Design for the World".**
- **'Skill India' programme :** Through 'Skill India' programme, India has ignited growth and a new momentum, he added**. "Vocal for Local"** has become the mantra of India's Arthatantra (economy), he further said. During his

Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that it is India's dream to host the 2036 Olympics.

- **Uniform Civil Code**: "I believe we should discuss the civil code in the country. Discriminatory laws need to be abolished, and we should implement a secular civil code. We need to transition from a communal civil code to a secular one." said PM Modi during his speech.

National Pest Surveillance System

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chauhan inaugurated the **National Pest Surveillance System** (NPSS) in New Delhi.
- Mr Chauhan highlighted that through NPPS, the farmers will be able to know different types of **insecticides and pesticides** and save their crops from their harmful effects.
- On the occasion, Mr Chauhan also interacted with many farmers who are the beneficiaries of the various schemes being implemented by the Central Government. Around Five Hundred farmers were present in the event.

India Adds Three New Ramsar Sites

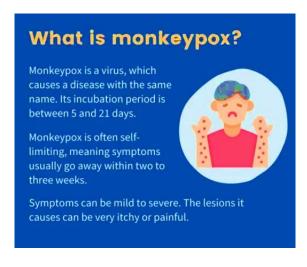- Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Bhupendra Yadav has said India has added **three more Ramsar sites** to the network, **taking the tally to 85.**
- **Nanjarayan Bird Sanctuary and Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary** in Tamil Nadu and **Tawa Reservoir** of Madhya Pradesh have been added to the list of India's Ramsar sites.

- Minister said this achievement reflects the emphasis that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid on **establishing harmony with nature.**
- Prime Minister Modi called this a joyous occasion for India, saying that this indicates the priority government accords to sustainable development as well as **living in harmony with nature**. He gave compliments to the people of Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. He said his government will continue to be at the forefront of such efforts in the times to come.

WHO: Mpox As A Global Public Health Emergency

- **World Health Organization** (WHO) has declared **mpox a global public health emergency** for the second time in two years.
- The health emergency declaration came following an **outbreak of the viral infection** in the **Democratic Republic of Congo** which subsequently spread to neighbouring countries including Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda.
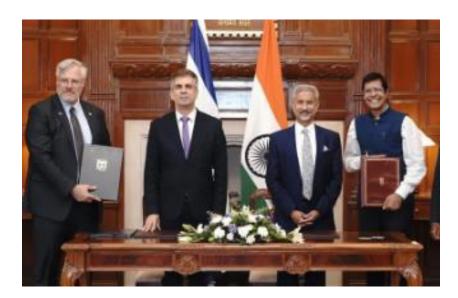
- **Mpox can spread** through close contact. Usually mild, it is fatal in rare cases. It causes flu-like symptoms and pus-filled lesions on the body.
- WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that a coordinated international response is essential to stop these outbreaks and save lives. Mr Tedros said that **WHO had released 1.5 million US dollars** in contingency funds and plans to release more in the coming days.
- Earlier, Africa's top public health body had declared an mpox emergency for the continent after more than **17 thousand suspected** cases and more than 500 deaths this year, mainly among children in Congo.

India And Israel Launch New Water Technology Centre

- **India and Israel have launched** a joint project to set up a **Centre of Water Technology at the Indian Institute of Technology** (IIT) **Madras.**
- This initiative is designed to strengthen **India's efforts in sustainable water management** and improve water resource management practices. The Embassy of Israel has called this collaboration a "significant milestone," underscoring the growing partnership between the two countries in addressing water-related challenges.
- The joint venture reflects a mutual commitment to tackling water scarcity issues in India.

- A formal agreement, known as the **Joint Statement of Intent**, was signed by the **Embassy of Israel, IIT Madras, and the AMRUT mission** (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- This agreement outlines the framework for establishing the new water technology centre.
- The **Centre of Water Technology** is expected to be a hub for innovation and research, focusing on developing sustainable solutions for urban water supply and advancing water technology capabilities.
- As part of the initiative, a capacity-building **course titled '24/7 Water Supply in Urban Areas'** was held at IIT Madras from August 5 to August 8. This training is crucial for providing stakeholders with essential skills in managing urban water systems.

Dynamic Reference Rate

- **India and Russia** are working on introducing **a "dynamic reference rate"** for their currencies, the **Indian Rupee (INR) and the Russian Rouble** (RUB), to make financial transactions between the two countries easier and **to reduce the impact of U.S. sanctions** on Russia.
- Currently, converting **Indian Rupees to Russian Roubles** is a complicated process. It usually involves **first converting INR to U.S. dollars** (USD) and then from USD to RUB.
- This process is made even more complex by U.S. sanctions, which limit Russian banks' access to international financial systems, particularly for large transactions.

- Additionally, because **India imports more from Russia than it exports**, Russian banks end up holding large amounts of Indian Rupees, which complicates financial dealings further.
- To simplify this, **India and Russia are considering** setting up a **direct exchange rate between the INR and RUB**.
- This rate would be adjusted according to the market by both the **Reserve Bank of India and the Bank of Russia**.

- This plan is similar to a system India has with the UAE, where local currency settlements are used for transactions. Additionally, there is potential for Russia to invest its funds in Indian financial markets, which could strengthen economic ties between the two countries.

- **"Dynamic Reference Rate" (DRR)** that India and Russia are considering would adjust according to real-time market conditions. It would serve as a benchmark for various financial products, such as loans and derivatives.

- **Unlike fixed rates, the** DRR is designed to increase transparency and reflect the rates set by central banks, which can help stabilize markets during volatile times. The use of DRR is growing, especially in emerging markets, as digital finance continues to advance.

Vinesh Phogat

- **Wrestler Vinesh Phogat's** joint silver medal hope came to an end with the Court of Arbitration for Sport, **CAS, rejecting her appeal** against disqualification from the Paris Olympics.

- The **ad-hoc division of the CAS rejected** her appeal days after it concluded the hearing in the case.

- inesh Phogat was disqualified after she weighed **100 grams more than her 50-kg weight** category on the day of her final gold medal bout. Following this, Phogat approached the CAS for a joint silver medal. In a statement, IOA President PT Usha expressed shock and disappointment at the decision of the CAS. The IOA said that it is exploring the next legal remedy available for Phogat.

Hockey India Retires Jersey Number 16

- **Hockey India has retired jersey number 16** from the national senior men's team in honour of goalkeeper PR Sreejesh. In a statement, Hockey India termed Sreejesh the **'God of Modern Indian Hockey'**.

- The sports body said that no player from the senior team will wear jersey number 16. Sreejesh recently announced his retirement from Hockey after a **successful Paris Olympics**.
- Sreejesh's decision to retire came after an 18-year-long career that included securing back-to-back Olympic bronze medals in 2020 and 2024.
- **Hockey India has also decided to appoint Sreejesh** as the coach of the junior men's hockey team.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **India & Israel Launched Joint Project To Establish A Center Of Water Technology At Which Institute**
A. IIT Bombay
B. IIT Madras
C. IIT Roorkee
D. IIT Kanpur
   ANSWER: B

2. **Which Institution Launched The Centre For Narmada River Basin Management**
   A. IIT Gandhinagar
   B. IIT Delhi
   C. IIT Bombay
   D. IIT Kharagpur
   ANSWER: A

3. **Saint Martin Island, Is Located In Which Country**
A. Bhutan
B. Myanmar
C. Bangladesh
D. Sri Lanka
   ANSWER: C

4. **Which Institute Issued An Advisory To Farmers To Control 'Fruit Rot Disease'**
A. Central Research Institute of Dryland Agriculture, Hyderabad
B. Central Plantation Crops Research Institute, Kasaragod
C. Central Institute for Arid Horticulture, Bikaner
D. Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal
   ANSWER: B

5. **Mount Kilimanjaro, Is Located In Which Country**
A. Ethiopia
B. Kenya
C. Tanzania
D. Nigeria
   ANSWER: C

6. What Is The 'Nankai Trough'

A. A Mountain Range In Japan

B. A River In Africa

C. A Subduction Zone Between Two Tectonic Plates In The Pacific Ocean

D. A Desert In Japan

ANSWER: C

7. What Is The Theme Of 'International Youth Day 2024'

A. From Clicks To Progress: Youth Digital Pathways For Sustainable Development

B. Green Skills For Youth: Towards A Sustainable World

C. Intergenerational Solidarity: Creating A World For All Ages

D. Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation For Human And Planetary Health

ANSWER: A

8. ' Neelakurinji Plant', Is Mostly Found In Which Region Of India

A. Ladakh

B. Western Ghats

C. Northeastern

D. Rajasthan

ANSWER: B

9. World's Oldest Calendar Has Been Discovered In Which Country

A. Egypt

B. Turkey

C. Iran

D. Iraq

ANSWER: B

10. Which State Become First In The Country To Give Money To Girl Students To Buy Sanitary Napkins

A. Rajasthan

B. Gujarat

C. Madhya Pradesh

D. Odisha

ANSWER: C

11. Which Day Is Observed As 'World Organ Donation Day'

A. 12 August

B. 13 August

C. 14 August

D. 15 August

   ANSWER: B

12. Which Institution Remained On The Top Spot In The National Institute Ranking Framework, 2024

A. IIT Madras

B. IIT Kanpur

C. IIT Delhi

D. IIT Roorkee

   ANSWER: A

13. Tungabhadra Dam, Is Located In Which State

A. Madhya Pradesh

B. Maharashtra

C. Odisha

D. Karnataka

   ANSWER: D

14. Which Organization Released "World Development Report 2024: The Middle Income Trap"

A. IMF

B. World Bank

C. UNDP

D. UNEP

   ANSWER: B

15. Zika Virus, Is Transmitted By Which Mosquito

A. Culex mosquito

B. Aedes mosquito

C. Anopheles mosquito

D. Mansonia mosquito

   ANSWER: B

16. Which Institution Published A Report Titled "Strategy For The Development Of Seaweed Value Chain"

A. World Bank
B. NABARD
C. NITI Aayog
D. RBI
   ANSWER: C

17. Which Organization Launched A Report Titled 'The Case For Investment In Nutritious Foods Value Chains'

A. Oxfam International
B. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
C. Red Cross
D. Oxfam International
   ANSWER: B

18. Koderma Thermal Power Station, Is Located In Which State

A. Odisha
B. Jharkhand
C. Maharashtra
D. Kerala
   ANSWER: B

19. Bluetongue Disease, Is Transmitted By Which Species

A. Spider
B. Culicoides midges
C. Fish
D. Frog

   ANSWER: B

20. Who Added A Pillared Cupola To Qutab Minar During Its Restoration In 1828

A. Firuz Shah Tughlaq
B. Sikandar Lodi
C. Major Robert Smith
D. Viscount Hardinge
   ANSWER: C