

Third National Dam Safety Conference Held



Third National Dam Safety Conference organized by Central Water Commission in association with Uttarakhand Jal Vidyut Nigam and IIT Roorkee concluded at Roorkee today. The conference focused on key challenges in dam safety field that are being encountered in the on-going Dam Safety Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)

implementation.

- Sharing of the knowledge, experience, innovations, novel technologies etc. by different national and overseas experts further helped in reshaping the strategies for effectively managing the uncertainties associated with dam design, construction, operation, and maintenance.
- The conference received an overwhelming response with over 400 delegates attending and submission of over 70 technical papers from experts within and outside India. About 40 national and overseas organizations showcased their technologies, products and services through Exposition organized at the conference venue.
- The professionals from USA, Australia, Japan, UK, France, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, and Germany attended this event.
- The Conference was inaugurated by Dr Amarjit Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development, Govt. of India in the presence of Sh S Ramaswamy, Chief Secretary, Government of Uttarakhand, Sh U P Singh, Director General, NMCG, MoWR, RD&GR, Prof. Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi, Director, IIT Roorkee, as well as other senior Central, State Government and DRIP implementing officials.

**NATIONAL
NEWS**

Radha Mohan Singh inaugurates India's Western Regional Agriculture Fair – 2017 in Bikaner



Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated India's Western Regional Agriculture Fair – 2017 in Bikaner today.

- Shri Singh, while addressing the people, said that most of the blocks in Rajasthan have gone into dark zones.

- In such circumstances, the

scientists are to develop such techniques and high yielding varieties of seeds which are adaptable with lesser quantity of water.

- He further said that the farmers and agriculture scientists should work together for the utilization of every drop of water in agriculture.
- The Minister of Agriculture briefed this today on the eve of inaugural function organized in the complex of Swami Keshwanand Rajasthan Krishi University, Bikaner on the occasion of Indian Western Regional Agriculture Fair 2017.
- The Minister of Agriculture said that the government has initiated Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana to channelise maximum potential for irrigation and to get rid of the problems related to drought. He added that the scheme aims at water for every farm.
- The government has started another ambitious programme titled as Soil Health Card Scheme for the farmers.
- Now, the farmers will be capable to get the knowhow of nutritious elements existed in their soil resulting in better production on their farms.

Aerobatic display teams mark the conclusion of Aero India 2017



To mark the successful conclusion of the Aero India 2017 and to serve as a token of remembrance of fruitful association over the last few days during the airshow, the aerobatic display teams got together today.

NATIONAL NEWS**NATIONAL NEWS**

- Posing in front of the Grumman G-164 A of the Scandinavian team and the Yak-50 of the Yakovlev team, stunt pilots of the Surya Kiran Aerobatic team (SKAT), the Yakovlevs and the Scandinavian along with their three 'skycats' provided for a visual treat.
- The SKAT pilots, led by Wg Cdr Ajit Kulkarni, looked resplendent in their red flying overalls.
- The Scandinavian leader Jacob Hollander's flying suit matched the colour of his flying machine while the skycats placed themselves atop the yellow and blue airplane for photographs.
- The Yakovlev pilots, led by Jez, in their black flying suits gave a very professional look.
- After the 'photo session' the SKAT daredevils met up with the spectators to shake hands and distribute memorabilia.

Vikas Swarup appointed as High Commissioner of India to Canada



Vikas Swarup was appointed as the High Commissioner of India to Canada. A decision in this regard was taken by the Union Ministry External Affairs (MEA) on 16 February 2017.

- At the time of elevation, Swarup was working as the Spokesperson of the MEA. Gopal Baglay, the Joint Secretary in the Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan (PIA) Division in the MEA, will succeed Swarup.
- Vikas Swarup is a 1986-batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer.
- In his nearly over three-decades long career, he represented India in various positions.
- In his diplomatic career, Vikas has been posted in various countries such as Turkey (1987-1990), the United States (1993-1997), Ethiopia (1997-2000), the United Kingdom (2000-2003) and South Africa (2006-2009).
- He served as the Consul General of India in Osaka-Kobe, Japan from 2009 to 2013.
- He also served as the Director of PAI (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran) Division in the MEA.
- The book has been published in 43 languages, including Arabic, French, German and Chinese.
- In May 2015, he was appointed as the Official Spokesperson of the

APPOINTMENTS

MEA.

Hindi Scholar and writer Surendra Verma selected for Vyas Samman 2016



Surendra Verma, a well known Hindi scholar and writer, was selected for Vyas Samman 2016.

- He was chosen for the prestigious award for his novel Kaatna Shami Ka Vriksha: Padma Pankhuri Ki Dhar Se.
- The book, Kaatna Shami Ka Vriksha, was published in 2010.
- Born on 7 September 1941 in Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh, Verma will be the 26th recipient of the Vyas Samman.
- In 1993, he was conferred with the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.
- In 1996, he was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award.
- He has published about fifteen titles of short stories, novels, satires and play.
- Some other novels and plays (drama) penned down by Verma includes Mujhe Chand Chahiyae, Surya Ki Antim Kiran Se Surya Ki Pahli Kiran Tak, Athwan Sarg and Qaid-e-Hayat among others.
- His play Surya Ki Antim Kiran Se Surya Ki Pahli Kiran Tak (From Sunset to Sunrise) has been translated into six Indian languages.

Tata Motors, Microsoft India signed strategic agreement to leverage IoT & AI



Tata Motors and Microsoft India on 16 February 2017 announced the signing of a strategic agreement to redefine connected and personalized driving experiences for Indian customers.

- The agreement was signed in the presence of Guenter Butschek, CEO & MD of Tata Motors and Anant Maheshwari, President, Microsoft India.
- The agreement will enable the Tata Motors to traverse the digital and physical worlds and create a highly personalized, smart and safer driving experience across the digital life of a vehicle owner.
- The first vehicle showcasing these state-of-the art technologies will be

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unveiled at the 87th Geneva International Motor Show on 7 March 2017.

- The partnership between the Tata Motors and Microsoft India will benefit vehicle owners in the following ways.
- Based on their profile and location data, vehicle owners can receive proactive point-of-interest, shopping and route assist recommendations.
- Pre-emptive service alerts based on vehicle health data will enable owners to avoid costly downtime en-route on planned road trips.
- Using industry-leading firmware over the air (FOTA) and software over the air (SOTA) technologies, key vehicle settings can be updated remotely over the cloud.

Indian Panorama Film Festival begins in Port Blair



The Indian Panorama Film Festival commenced on 15 February 2017 in Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- The Festival is organised jointly by Andaman and Nicobar Administration and Directorate of Film Festivals, Government of India.

- The Festival was inaugurated by Anindo Majumdar, Chief Secretary of the

Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

- The inauguration event was followed by the screening of Telugu film Bahubali directed by S.S. Rajamouli.
- The five-day festival will see screening of about 15 films of different languages and genres. The film festival will conclude on 19 February 2017.
- On 16 February 2017, Bengali films Bastu Shaap, directed by Kaushik Ganguly, and Sankachil, directed by Goutam Ghose, will be screened at PBMC Auditorium at 10 A.M.
- Tamil films titled Radiopetti, directed by Hari Vishwanath, and Irudhi Suttru, directed by Sudha Kongara, will be screened at 2 P.M. at the same venue.
- Hindi film Sultan, directed by Ali Abbas Jaffar, will be screened at PBMC Auditorium at 6 P.M.

AWARDS

India ranks 143rd in 2017 Index of Economic Freedom



India ranked a dismal 143rd in 2017 Index of Economic Freedom, which released in the third week of February 2017.

- The index was released by a top US based Think Tank, The Heritage Foundation.

- The Think Tank in its Index of Economic Freedom report stated

that despite India sustaining an average annual growth of about 7% over the last five years, growth is not deeply rooted in policies that preserve economic freedom.

- In its 23rd edition, the Index analyzed economic policy developments in 186 countries.
- Countries are graded and ranked on 12 measures of economic freedom that evaluate the rule of law, government size, regulatory efficiency, and the openness of markets.
- Greater economic freedom is strongly correlated to overall well-being, taking into account factors such as education, environment, health, innovation, democratic governance and societal progress.
- Global average economic freedom increased by 0.2 point to a record level of 60.9 on the 0–100 scale used in the Index of Economic Freedom.

**REPORTS
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RANKINGS**