



Pakistani Mole in India's Embassy in Russia Arrested | Uttar Pradesh | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The **Anti-Terrorism Squad of the Uttar Pradesh Police** has **arrested Satendra Siwal**, a security assistant at New Delhi's diplomatic mission in Moscow.

- It is revealed that **Pakistan's military spy agency had planted a mole at the Embassy of India in Moscow** to obtain **classified information** about the country's relations with Russia, including defence cooperation between the two nations.

Key Points

- He was a **resident of Hapur** and one of the **multitasking staff at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)** who was **posted at the Embassy of India in Moscow** as a security assistant from 2021.
 - His exposure as an agent of Pakistan's **Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)** came almost 14 years **after the arrest of Madhuri Gupta**, a **Grade B officer** of the **Indian Foreign Service (IFS)**, who was **posted at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad** and was used by the neighboring country's intelligence agency for espionage.
- **New Delhi's ties with Moscow** have also been **under the scanner** of the United States and the rest of the West, after India refused to lend its voice **to the clamour against Russia's "special military operations" in Ukraine** and defied American and European sanctions to continue procuring crude oil and military hardware with the former Soviet Union nation.
- The **last public exposure of an ISI mole** in a diplomatic mission of New Delhi had taken place after 10 Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists had carried out the **26/11 carnage in Mumbai from November 26 to 28 in 2008, killing 166 persons and injuring many others**.
 - Madhuri Gupta was posted at the High Commission of India in Islamabad when she was lured by the ISI agents, who used her to secure classified information from New Delhi's diplomatic mission in the Pakistani capital.
 - India's intelligence agencies put her under the scanner, and it was confirmed that she was working for the ISI. She was summoned to New Delhi for some official work and was arrested. She was later convicted and imprisoned. She passed away in 2021.

UP Budget 2024-25 Highlights and Key Announcements | Uttar Pradesh | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

On 5th February, **Uttar Pradesh finance minister** Suresh Kumar Khanna presented **the budget for the financial year 2024-2025** in the state assembly.

Key Points

- The **total expenditure** is estimated at **Rs 7,36,437.71 crore**.
- Out of the total expenditure, **Rs 5,32,655.33 crore** has been **allocated for the revenue account and Rs 2,03,782.38 crore for capital account**.
- After deducting the total expenditure from the receipts of the consolidated fund, **a deficit of Rs 15,103.89 crore is estimated** in the budget.
- **Three schemes** to push the agriculture sector:
 - **State Agricultural Development Scheme**, will have a provision of **Rs 200 crore**.
 - **Rs 200 crore** has been **allocated for the World Bank-assisted UP Agris Scheme**.
 - For the **installation of automatic weather station-automatic rain gauge** in blocks and panchayats has been allocated Rs 60 crore.
- An **increase in the amount payable to eligible beneficiaries** under the **Destitute Women Pension Scheme** from Rs 500 per month to Rs 1,000 per month was announced.
 - A **total of 31,28,000 destitute women** have benefited from the scheme until the third quarter of 2023-2024.
- The **Women Farmer Empowerment Project** aims to provide technical support by forming 200 producer groups in the financial year 2024-2025.
- The **state's budget for 2023-2024 was Rs 6.90 lakh crore**, which included the **allocation of Rs 32,721 crore for new schemes**.

Article 112

- According to Article 112 of the Indian Constitution, the **Union Budget** of a year is referred to as the **Annual Financial Statement (AFS)**.
- It is a statement of the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government in a Financial Year (which begins on 1st April of the current year and ends on 31st March of the following year).

The Destitute Women Pension Scheme

- It is a State scheme under which destitute or deserted women and widows of 18 years of age or above are given pension as per eligibility criteria laid down in the rules of the scheme.
- The aim of the scheme is to provide social security to women who are unable to sustain themselves with their own resources and are in need of financial assistance.

Uttar Pradesh Budget: Rs. 1,150 crore Allocated for Noida International Airport | Uttar Pradesh | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has **allocated Rs. 1,150 crore** for the upcoming **Noida International Airport at GautamBuddha Nagar** in the **budget for 2024-25**.

Key Points

- The announcement was made by **UP's Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna** as he tabled the **budget for the fiscal year in the state assembly**.
- Development is underway for **phase one of [Noida International Airport](#)**, which is scheduled to open for commercial operations **by the end of 2024**.
- To enhance air connectivity in the state, initiatives are being carried out under [Regional](#)

[Connectivity Scheme \(RCS-UDAN\)](#) of the Centre and Civil Aviation Promotion Policy of the state government.

- For air connectivity, selected airports like **Aligarh, Azamgarh, Moradabad, Shravasti** and **Chitrakoot** have been developed. **Development work** of the airports of **Mayorpur (Sonbhadra) and Sarsawa (Saharanpur) is in progress.**
 - A proposal of Rs. 150 crore has been made for expansion of [Maharishi Valmiki International Airport in Ayodhya](#).
 - Rs. 1,100 crore has been proposed for construction, expansion, and strengthening of airstrips as well as land acquisition.

Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)

- It was launched as a **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)** under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016.
- It was formulated based on the review of **The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)-2016** and it was planned to remain in force for a period of 10 years.
- Under this Scheme, **Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF)** was created, which funds the **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** requirements of the scheme through a levy on certain domestic flights.
 - VGF means a grant one-time or deferred, provided to support infrastructure projects that are economically justified but fall short of financial viability.

Cold and Fog in Bihar Hits Rabi Crops | Bihar | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

According to agriculture department officials, **preliminary assessments** from various districts in Bihar indicated that intense **cold and fog damaged potato and mustard** the most, followed by lentils. However, there are **no significant reports of damage to wheat crops.**

Key Points

- Scientists at [Krishi Vigyan Kendra \(KVK\)](#) in different districts **confirmed damage of Rabi crops** due to the **cold wave and cold day conditions** that lasted for days.
 - They highlighted the **adverse effects of late sowing on yield and production**, particularly with the changing climate.
 - Late-sown potato crops reported damage ranging from 25 to 40%, while early-sown potato crops faced a 15% damage. Mustard crops also suffered damage between 10 to 15%.
- The challenge faced by farmers is that they harvest paddy until December and then begin sowing rabi crops, including mustard and potato, either in mid-December or early January, exposing them to severe cold conditions.
- The extended cold spell and reduced sunshine during the day have affected rabi crops. These conditions have negatively impacted the growth, flowering and yield-making process, leading to widespread reports of Jhulsa Rog in potatoes. However, wheat crops remain largely unaffected.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)

- KVK is an integral part of the **National Agricultural Research System (NARS)**. The first KVK was **established in 1974 at Puducherry**.
- The mandate of KVK is technology assessment and demonstration for its application and capacity development.

- It aims at **assessment of location specific technology modules in agriculture** and allied enterprises, through technology assessment, refinement and demonstrations.
 - KVKs also produce quality technological products (seed, planting material, bio-agents, livestock) and make it available to farmers.
 - The KVK scheme is 100% financed by the Government of India and the KVKs are sanctioned to Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutes, related Government Departments and Non Government Organizations (NGOs) working in Agriculture.
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NITISH Device | Bihar | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The **Bihar State Disaster Management Authority** has launched the **Novel Initiative Technological Intervention for Safety of Human Lives (NITISH) device**.

- It is an innovative **pendant-shaped device** designed to **provide timely alerts to farmers and the public**, specifically targeting **lightning, floods, heatwaves**, and cold waves.

Key Points

- The initiative was triggered by recurring deaths among farmers due to lightning and flash floods, emphasizing the device's role in saving lives.
- It is introduced in collaboration with **the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Patna**.
- The device is connected to the **Bihar Meteorological Service Centre**, ensuring **real-time and accurate weather-related alerts**.
- The pendant will get **charged from body heat**. The device **will sound an alert in three ways**:
 - It will send **voice messages**.
 - Its **colour will change from green to red**.
 - The **device will keep warning till its user switches it off**.

Bihar State Disaster Management Authority

- Bihar SDMA was set up on 6th November 2007, under Section 14 (1) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 passed by the Parliament.
- Its aim is to build a safe and disaster-resilient Bihar by developing a holistic, proactive, multi-disaster and technology-driven strategy for Disaster Management.
- This will be achieved through a culture of prevention, mitigation and preparedness.



SC notice to Centre Regarding Private Sector Jobs Reservation in Haryana | Haryana | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The Supreme Court sought response from the Centre on a **plea filed by the Haryana government against the Punjab and Haryana High Court order** declaring as 'unconstitutional' its law providing **75% reservation in private sector jobs to the residents** of the state.

Key Points

- The high court had admitted multiple petitions against the [Haryana State Employment of Local Candidates Act, 2020](#), that came into effect from **January 15, 2022** and provided **75% reservation in jobs in the private sector** to candidates from the state.
 - It **covered jobs offering a maximum gross monthly salary** or wages up to Rs 30,000.

- The Punjab and Haryana High Court was of the opinion that **it is beyond the purview of the state to legislate on this issue** and restrict private employers from recruiting from the open market for the category of employees who were receiving less than Rs 30,000 per month.
- The high court had observed that the **concept of constitutional morality** has been **violated by introducing a secondary status** to a set of citizens not belonging to the state of Haryana and **curtailing their fundamental rights** to earn their livelihood.
- It had also stated that **there is a bar under the Constitution on discrimination** among citizens in **matters of employment on the basis of their places of birth and residence.**

Note

- Job reservation Bills or laws for domiciles have also been announced in other States including Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.
- The job quota Bill passed in the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 2019, also reserved three-fourths of private jobs for locals.

Article 16 (Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment)

- Article 16 of the Indian constitution provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment or appointment to any public office.
- There are provisions for reservation in appointments or posts for any backward class that is not adequately represented in the state services.

Uttarakhand High Court gets First Woman Chief Justice | Uttarakhand | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

On 4th February, **Justice Ritu Bahri** was sworn in as the **first woman Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court.**

Key Points

- The Uttarakhand **Governor**, Lieutenant General Gurmeet Singh, administered the oath of office to Justice Bahri.
 - **Prior to her appointment** as the Chief Justice of Uttarakhand, Justice Bahri served as a judge in the **Punjab and Haryana High Court from 2010.**
- She is **specialised in civil, constitutional, taxation, labor, and service matters.**
- During her 24-year legal practice, she also served as **Assistant Advocate General, Deputy Advocate General, and Senior Deputy Advocate General** for the State of Haryana.

Advocate General

- **Article 165 of Chapter 2 (The Executive) in Part VI (The States)** of the Constitution of India provides for the office of the Advocate General for the States.
- He is **appointed by the Governor of the State**, who must be a person **qualified to be appointed a judge of a High Court.**
- The Advocate General is **entitled to appear before any court of law within the State** in the performance of his official duties.
- The Advocate General has the **right to speak and to take part in the proceedings of both**

Uttarakhand Weather: Mercury Dips, Hills Jammed | Uttarakhand | 06 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Parts of **Uttarakhand received a fresh round of snow and rainfall**, offering respite from the prevailing dry spell and bringing down temperatures across the region.

- The overcast conditions led to a surge in **tourist influx to Mussoorie** and its vicinity.

Key Points

- According to [India Meteorological Department's](#) regional meteorological centre in Dehradun, upper reaches of the **Garhwal Himalayas**, such as [Kedarnath](#), [Badrinath](#), [Gangotri](#), [Yamunotri](#) and [Harsil](#) received substantial snowfall.
- In the foothills, sporadic rainfall has occurred which led to a **notable drop in daytime temperatures**.

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- IMD was **established in 1875**. It is the **National Meteorological Service** of the country and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects.
 - It works as an agency of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** of the Government of India.
- It is **headquartered in New Delhi**.
- IMD is also one of the six Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organization.

Yamunotri

- Location: Uttarkashi district.
- Dedicated to: Goddess Yamuna.
- River Yamuna is the second-most sacred river in India after River Ganga.

Gangotri

- Location: Uttarkashi district.
- Dedicated to: Goddess Ganga.
- Considered the most sacred of all Indian rivers.

Kedarnath

- Location: Rudraprayag district.
- Dedicated to: Lord Shiva.
- Situated on the bank of the Mandakini River.
- One of the 12 Jyotirlingas (divine representations of Lord Shiva) in India.

Badrinath

- Location: Chamoli district.
- Home to the sacred Badrinarayan Temple.
- Dedicated to: Lord Vishnu.
- One of the holy shrines for Vaishnavites .

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