



## Rapid Fire Current Affairs

### Dust-Raising Winds and High PM10 Levels: Impact on AQI in Delhi

Recently, **Delhi witnessed a surge in Particulate Matter (PM)10 levels** with strong winds raising dust and reducing visibility. According to [India Meteorological Department\(IMD\)](#), the dust-raising winds are a result of **low rainfall, heating, and gusty winds prevailing over the past few days**, with **temperatures remaining above 40 degrees Celsius**. IMD scientists explained that the **high temperatures caused the dry soil to be suspended in the air due to strong winds**. The **PM10 levels were 19 times higher than the 24-hour standard**, and the PM2.5 levels also saw an increase. The 24-hour average [Air Quality Index \(AQI\)](#) for the city was categorized as 'very poor' or 'poor' at most monitoring stations.

Inhalable particulate matter in the air can cause respiratory symptoms such as coughing, and aggravated asthma. The source of dust in summer was attributed to dry conditions and higher wind speeds. The sub-committee for invoking actions under the [Graded Response Action Plan \(GRAP\)](#) met but decided not to invoke any actions as the situation is likely to improve in the next few days.

**Read more:** [Air Quality and Health in Cities](#)

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### Bangladesh Withdraws "Extra Security Escort" for Diplomats

Bangladesh has decided to **withdraw extra security provided to top diplomats** from India, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Saudi Arabia, deeming it **discriminatory and unnecessary due to the country's well-controlled law and order situation**. The decision comes after **heightened security measures were implemented following a militant attack in 2016**. The foreign minister stated that the current law and order situation does not warrant additional security for specific envoys, suggesting that **private security services can be hired if needed**. **Normal security measures** for diplomatic missions, in line with **international conventions, will continue to be upheld by the host country**.

In the context of diplomatic security, the [Vienna Convention](#) on Diplomatic Relations of 1961 plays a significant role. This international treaty establishes the framework for diplomatic relations between independent countries. The convention grants diplomatic agents and missions various privileges and immunities to ensure their effective performance and protection from undue interference by the host state. Article 22 of the convention emphasizes the inviolability of the mission premises, with the receiving state having the duty to protect them against any intrusion or damage. Furthermore, Article 29 highlights the inviolability of the person of a diplomatic agent, with the **receiving state being obligated to treat them with respect and prevent any attack on their person, freedom, or dignity**. **The convention also grants diplomatic agents immunity from criminal jurisdiction**. However, it also mandates that diplomatic agents respect the laws and regulations of the receiving state and refrain from interfering in its internal affairs. These provisions ensure the security and functioning of diplomatic missions and personnel.

**Read more:** [Vienna Convention](#)

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### Indigenous Dengue Vaccine Trials in India

**Serum Institute of India and Panacea Biotech**, two prominent drug manufacturers, have taken a

significant step towards **developing India's first vaccine against dengue**. They have submitted applications to the [Indian Council of Medical Research \(ICMR\)](#) in response to the '**Expression of Interest**' for collaborative **Phase-III clinical trials** for indigenous manufacturers. Phase-III trials are conducted **to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and immunogenicity** of the tetravalent dengue vaccine candidate developed by Indian manufacturers.

Dengue virus disease poses a substantial health burden globally, with **India reporting 2 to 2.5 lakh cases annually**. The [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) has recognized dengue as one of the **top ten global health threats**. Presently, there is no specific treatment for dengue, underscoring the urgent need for effective vaccines.

Dengue is a mosquito-borne tropical disease caused by the **dengue virus (Genus Flavivirus)**, transmitted by several species of female mosquito within the genus *Aedes*, principally *Aedes aegypti*. This mosquito also transmits [chikungunya](#), yellow fever and [Zika infection](#).

**Read more:** [Dengue](#)

## Sikkim's Statehood Day



On the occasion of [Sikkim's Statehood Day](#), Prime Minister extended his greetings to the people of Sikkim. Celebrated annually on **May 16**, this day marks the acknowledgment of **Sikkim's integration with India and its establishment as the 22<sup>nd</sup> state of the country in 1975**.

The formation of the state of Sikkim came about through the **36<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution**. Sikkim has a rich history that dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the **Namgyal dynasty founded the Kingdom of Sikkim**. It is a former British protectorate, maintained its **administrative independence under the Chogyal rulers**. After India's independence, **Sikkim continued as a protectorate with India overseeing its external relations**, defense, and communications. However, in 1973, the people's agitation led to changes in governance. The Chogyal became a titular figure, and **Sikkim was designated an "associated state."** In 1975, Sikkim was granted statehood, integrating it into India and abolishing the monarchy on May 16.

Sikkim is bordered by the [Tibet Autonomous Region of China](#) to the north and northeast, by [Bhutan](#) to the southeast, by the Indian state of [West Bengal](#) to the south, and by [Nepal](#) to the west.

**Mount Kanchenjunga**, India's highest peak and the world's third highest mountain **lies in Sikkim**. The

[Kanchenjunga National Park](#) (KNP) (established in **1977**), near the peak is among the largest of India's high-elevation conservation areas. KNP was designated a [World Heritage Site](#) in **2016** under the **'mixed' category** (sites containing elements of both natural and cultural significance). Sikkim is drained by the [Teesta river and its tributaries](#) such as the Rangit, Lhonak, Talung and Lachung. [Teesta river water conflict](#) is one of the most contentious issues between [India and Bangladesh](#). Teesta river is a **tributary of Brahmaputra River**.

Read more: [Sikkim's Statehood Day](#)

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## National Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships 2023

The 26th Edition of **National Federation Cup Senior Athletics Championships** is going at [Birsamunda Stadium, Ranchi](#) (Jharkhand) from 15 May 2023. The Competition is **organized in Men and Women section**. It is a **domestic tournament** of the Indian athletics season. It is organised by the **Athletics Federation of India (AFI)**. Some of the Events are Jumps; throws- shot put, discus throw, javelin throw; Sprinting Events etc.

The AFI is the apex body for running and managing athletics in India and affiliated to the **International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) and Indian Olympic Association**. The AFI has as many as 32 affiliated state units and institutional units. The AFI came into existence in 1946 and the federation organises the National Championships, trains the Indian Athletics National Campers and **selects the Indian Athletics Teams for various international competitions**, including the Olympics, Asian Games, World Championships, Asian Championships and other international meets.

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## ICC Implements Changes to Playing Conditions

The [International Cricket Council \(ICC\)](#) has made some changes to the playing conditions of cricket matches. One of the major changes is that the **'soft signal'** by on-field officials has been scrapped. According to ICC rules, a soft signal is the **visual communication by the bowler's end umpire to the third umpire of his/her initial on-field decision prior to initiating an Umpire Review**. This signal **was used to determine whether catches taken inches off the ground were valid or not**. It was often criticized by experts for creating more confusion, and the TV umpire found it difficult to make decisions based on this signal.

Another significant change is that **helmets are now mandatory for high-risk positions**, including batters facing fast bowlers, wicketkeepers standing up to the stumps, and fielders standing close to the batter in front of the wicket. Additionally, there has been a minor addition to the **free hit rule**, which states that **any runs scored off a free hit when the ball hits the stumps will be counted as runs scored**. These changes will come into effect on June 1st, 2023, with the **Lord's Test between England and Ireland being** the first match to follow the new rules. The ICC made these changes after the Cricket Executive Committee approved the recommendations from the men's and women's cricket committees.

ICC is the **global governing body for cricket**. Representing **104 members**, the ICC governs and administers the game and works with its members to grow the sport. It has its headquarters **in Dubai, UAE**.

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