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1. PM Modi emerges as world's most popular leader, with approval rating of 78% (Feb. 4, 2023)

PM Modi emerges as world's most popular leader, with approval rating of 78%

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has been rated as the **world's most popular leader** with an approval rating of **78 per cent**, according to a survey by US-based consulting firm '**Morning Consult**'.

An overview of the news

- According to the rating, PM Modi's rating is ahead of other leaders including **US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak**.
- The poll surveyed **22 global leaders** for the ratings.
- Of the 22 leaders surveyed by the research firm, Prime Minister Narendra Modi topped with **78 per cent**.
- Mexican President **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** is in **second** place with a **68 percent** approval rating, and Swiss President **Alain Berset** is **third** with a **62 percent** approval rating.
- US President **Joe Biden and Canada's Justin Trudeau** received an approval rating of 40 percent and ranked **seventh and ninth**, respectively.
- UK Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** ranked **13th** on the list with a 30 percent approval rating.
- PM Modi's approval rating had reached an all-time high of 84 percent on **May 2, 2020**.

Morning Consult

- US based Morning Consult's "**Global Leader Approval**" survey is based on data collected from January 26-31 this year.
- Surveys are weighted in each country by age, gender, region, and in some countries by official government sources and education.

2. The first meeting of the G-20 Energy Transition Working Group under the chairmanship of India will be held in Bengaluru from 5 to 7 February. An overview of the news Representatives of G-20 countries and guest countries will be part of the working gr (Feb. 4, 2023)

The **first meeting of the G-20 Energy Transition Working Group** under the chairmanship of India will be held in **Bengaluru** from 5 to 7 February.

An overview of the news

- Representatives of **G-20 countries and guest countries** will be part of the working group.
- In addition, representatives of major international organizations such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United National Development Program, the International Energy Agency, the Clean Energy Ministerial, and the International Solar Alliance will participate in the meeting.
- The delegates will visit the **Infosys Green Building Campus in Bengaluru** and the **Mega Solar Park in Pavagada** as evidence of efforts to mitigate climate change.

Topics of discussion

- Technology gaps in energy transition,
- Low-cost financing for energy transition,
- Energy security and diversified supply chain,
- Industrial carbon transition
- Fuel for the future
- A roadmap for doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030,
- An action plan for enhancing and promoting bio-energy cooperation,
- Recommendations on global best practices for supporting affordable, and inclusive energy transitions

Planned Energy Transition Ministerial Meeting (ETMM)

- To set the agenda and identify action areas, the ETWG will hold three working group meetings in **Gandhinagar** (April), **Mumbai** (May), and **Goa** (July).

3. Government approves conversion of Rs 16,133 crore interest dues of Vodafone Idea into equity (Feb. 4, 2023)

Government approves conversion of Rs 16,133 crore interest dues of Vodafone Idea into equity

The government has approved the **conversion of debt-ridden Vodafone Idea's interest dues of over Rs 16,133 crore into equity.**

An overview of the news

- The government said **Aditya Birla Group**, one of the promoters, has committed to bring in additional funds.
- With this conversion, the government is expected to become the largest shareholder in the loss-making telecom company with **33.14 per cent stake.**

- Vodafone Idea will issue equity shares at a **face value of Rs 10** each to the government.
- This relief for the company comes as part of the reform package announced by the government in September 2021.

Merger of Vodafone and Idea

- Kumar Mangalam Birla's telecom company Idea Cellular agreed to merge with Vodafone in **March 2017**.
- According to the latest data published by telecom regulator TRAI, the company has 243 million mobile subscribers, with a market share of 21.33 per cent.
- It is the only telecom operator that is yet to place purchase orders for equipment for **5G services** and is struggling to clear dues to its vendors.

Largest mobile subscriber companies in India

- **Reliance Jio** is a leading wireless telecom company with more than 411 million customers across India.
- **Bharti Airtel** (21.5 crore), **Vodafone Idea** (12.2 crore) are in second and third place respectively.

Vodafone Idea

- It is a joint venture of **Vodafone (United Kingdom) and Aditya Birla Group**.
- It has the **third largest mobile telecommunication network in India**.
- Headquarters: **Gandhinagar, Gujarat**
- Corporate Headquarters: **Mumbai**
- Chairman: **Ravinder Takkar**
- Chief Executive Officer: **Akshay Moondra**

4. PM Modi to launch key green energy initiatives at India Energy Week (Feb. 4, 2023)

PM Modi to launch key green energy initiatives at India Energy Week

Key **energy initiatives** will be unveiled by PM Modi during **India Energy Week** which will be held in **Bengaluru** from February 6 to 8.

An overview of the news

- It will witness the participation of over **600 exhibitors** from across the globe, over **34 ministers** and **several CEOs** from top energy companies.
- He will dedicate the **HAL helicopter factory at Tumakuru** to the nation and also lay the foundation stone for various development initiatives.
- **China, America, Russia, Brazil** and many other countries will participate in this important event.
- This is the **first time** that India is hosting such an event with a record number of CEOs from top energy companies.
- According to the **International Energy Agency (IEA)**, India will account for **25 percent of global energy demand by 2040**.

Blending of ethanol in fuel

- An important initiative to be launched during the India Energy Week will be to increase **blending of ethanol in the fuel**.
- PM Modi is expected to launch the **E20 initiative** at the upcoming event.
- Under the E20 programme, India aims to increase the percentage of blending of ethanol in fuel to **20 per cent by 2025**, as against the earlier target of **2030**.
- In the initial phase, the program will cover **13 states and 100 petrol pumps**.
- India has saved **Rs 40 lakh crore** on fuel by blending **10% ethanol** and farmers have got economic benefits for producing ethanol.
- This initiative has environmental and economic benefits.
- Ethanol blending will play an important role in reducing fuel imports and help the country move towards clean energy.

India Energy Week 2023

- It is expected to feature more than **30 energy Ministers, 50 CEOs and 10000+ delegates**.
- This will provide a unique opportunity to showcase India as an engine of global economic growth and a driver of global consumption.
- It will provide an unprecedented opportunity for regional, international leaders and CEOs to come together for strategic policy making and technical knowledge sharing.
- During the 19 strategic conference sessions, a wide spectrum of issues covering the entire energy sector will be discussed.
- It covers themes such as Energy Security, pathways for decarbonization, Resilient Energy Supply Chains, Emerging Fuels such as Biofuel and Hydrogen, Investments in Upstream and Midstream Sector etc.

5. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chairs CEO Conclave at PLASTINDIA 2023 (Feb. 4, 2023)

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chairs CEO Conclave at PLASTINDIA 2023

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya chaired the **CEO Conclave at PlastIndia 2023** in New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- The conference was attended by more than **90 CEOs** from the plastics industry both from India and abroad.
- Exhibitors from more than **45 countries** of the world as well as more than **2,00,000 trade visitors** from around the world participated in it.
- This conclave is a step where all the stakeholders are encouraged to understand the nature of India and invest in India's growth story.
- The conclave will create opportunities to showcase India's capabilities and help facilitate the growth of the Indian plastics industry.

About PLASTINDIA 2023

- It refers to a series of exhibitions under the **PlastIndia Foundation**, the **11th International Plastics Exhibition and Conclave** being organized from February 1 to 5, 2023 at **ITPO Pragati Maidan, New Delhi**.
- The exhibition will provide employment generation opportunities, facilitate the growth of the Indian plastics industry and make India a hub for sourcing plastics for global needs.
- It will promote India as a global source of processed plastics, raw materials, machinery and products for use in all aspects of human existence.

6. IIT Madras to get Rs 242 cr grant for research on Lab Grown Diamonds (Feb. 3, 2023)

IIT Madras to get Rs 242 cr grant for research on Lab Grown Diamonds

The **Indian Institute of Technology Madras** will be provided a grant of **Rs 242 crore** over a period of **five years** to carry out research on **Lab Grown Diamonds (LGD)**.

An overview of the news

- It will encourage indigenous production of **LGD seeds, machines and reduce import dependence**.
- The research will focus on **indigenization** of the LGD manufacturing process.

- Presenting the Union Budget 2023-24, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** said that
- "Laboratory grown diamonds (LGD) is a technology and innovation-driven emerging sector with high employment potential.
 - The government has proposed to cut duty on import of '**seeds**', used as raw material for lab-grown diamonds.

About Lab-Grown Diamonds

- Lab-grown diamonds are diamonds that are produced using specific technology that mimics the geological processes that grow natural diamonds.
- These **eco-friendly diamonds** have optically and chemically similar properties to natural diamonds.
- LGDs are chemically, physically and optically similar to natural diamonds and thus it is difficult to identify "lab-grown" diamonds.

Significance of LGDs

- LGD is often used for industrial purposes, in **machines and equipment**.
- Their hardness and added strength make them ideal for **use as cutters**.
- Additionally, **pure synthetic diamond** has **high thermal conductivity**, but negligible electrical conductivity.
- As the Earth's natural diamond reserves dwindle, LGDs are slowly **replacing the precious stones** in the jewellery industry.
- Like natural diamonds, LGDs go through the same processes of polishing and cutting that are required to provide diamonds their distinctive lustre.
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7. First G20 Employment Working Group meeting commence at Jodhpur in Rajasthan (Feb. 3, 2023)

On 2 February the first **G20 Employment Working Group** meeting began in **Jodhpur, Rajasthan**.

An overview of the news

- The meeting will be held from February 2 to 4 where guest nations including **Spain, the Netherlands and Singapore** will take part.
- The Employment Working Group under the Indian Chairmanship of the G20 has a mandate to address priority **labour, employment and social issues** for strong, sustainable, balanced and sustainable employment for all.
- The significance of this meeting lies in the fact that the G20 countries represent **85% of world GDP, 3/4 of global trade** and almost two-thirds of the world population.

- International organisations like ILO, OECD and ISA, Indian institutions like NITI Aayog and MSDE (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship), and EPFO (Employees' Provident Fund Organisation) will also share their views on various topics.
- G20 member states have also been invited to share their interventions on key areas.
- India is hosting over **73 delegates from 19 countries**, the European Union and 9 guest countries and 9 regional and international organisations.

Thematic areas of the deliberations

- Addressing global skill gaps
- Gig and platform economy and social protection
- Sustainable financing of social security
- A panel discussion has also been organised to discuss the Framework for Global Skills and Competency Harmonisation, Common Skills Classification.

8. Government e-Marketplace achieves a Gross Merchandise Value of Rs 1.5 Lakh Crores (Feb. 3, 2023)

Government e-Marketplace achieves a Gross Merchandise Value of Rs 1.5 Lakh Crores

As of 1 February 2023, the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has achieved **Rs 1.5 lakh crore** of **Gross Merchandise Value (GMV)** in FY23 alone.

An overview of the news

- GeM is well positioned to cross its annual target of **Rs 1.75 lakh crore**.
- GeM has crossed a gross business value of **Rs 3 lakh crore** since inception with the support of its stakeholders.
- The total number of transactions on GeM has crossed **1.3 crore**.
- GeM has over **66,000 government buyer organisations** and over **58 lakh sellers and service providers**.
- GeM portal features over **11,000 product categories** with more than **29 lakh listed products**.

About Government-e-Marketplace (GeM) platform

- Launch** - 9 August 2016
- Purpose** - to bring transparency and efficiency in the government buying process
- Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- GeM works on **inclusion, transparency and efficiency.**
- **Who registered on GeM** - Artisans, weavers, SHGs, startups, women entrepreneurs & MSMEs are registered on GeM
- **The portal is open for** - all government buyers, Central and State Ministries, departments, public sector enterprises, autonomous institutions, local bodies, etc
- Private buyers cannot buy on the platform but private people can sell products to government bodies by the portal.

9. MoU signed to develop waste-to-wealth plants in million plus cities (Feb. 3, 2023)

MoU signed to develop waste-to-wealth plants in million plus cities

The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** and **Engineers India Limited (EIL)** have signed an **MoU** for construction of **waste-to-energy and bio-methanation projects** in million plus cities for "**Green Growth**" of India.

An overview of the news

- The MoU was signed in the presence of **Manoj Joshi**, Secretary, MOHUA and **Vartika Shukla**, CMD, EIL.
- The ministry has decided to set up **solid waste processing facilities** on a large scale in million plus cities.
- India has **59 million plus cities** and to manage the organic/wet fraction of municipal solid waste bio-methanation plants have been proposed in these cities.
- In February 2022, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **Asia's largest municipal solid waste based cow dung plant in Indore**, aimed at generating **19,000 kg of bio-CNG gas.**
- Bio-methanation plants linked to the **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, Gobardhan and SATAT schemes** will produce bio-CNG as a renewable energy.
- In the first phase, **25 million plus cities** will be selected to develop large scale process plants.

Waste to Energy plants

- Waste-to-energy plants use the **dry waste fraction** of municipal solid waste and produce **renewable energy.**
- These plants work by burning waste at high temperatures and using the heat to produce steam.
- The steam drives a turbine which produces electricity.

10. India welcomes Congo into International Solar Alliance (Feb. 3, 2023)

India welcomes Congo into International Solar Alliance

India has welcomed **Congo** into the International Solar Alliance.

An overview of the news

- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, the **International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement** was signed by **Raymond Serge Bell**, Ambassador of the Republic of Congo in the presence of Joint Secretary (Economic Diplomacy).

International Solar Alliance

- It is a treaty-based **intergovernmental organization** whose primary function is to promote solar development by reducing the cost of financing and technology.
- It is the nodal agency to implement '**One Sun, One World, One Grid**'.
- It aims to transfer the solar energy generated in a specific region to meet the electricity demand of another region.
- It was launched by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France on **30 November 2015** at the Conference of the **Parties (COP-21)** to the UNFCCC in **France (Paris)** along with 121 solar resource rich nations.
- Its key objectives include achieving a global potential of over **1000 GW** of solar power generation capacity and mobilising about \$1000 billion to invest in solar energy by 2030.
- Member-**113 countries** have signed this Framework Agreement. 86 out of 106 countries have signed and ratified this Framework Agreement.
- Headquarters - **Gurugram, India**

Democratic Republic of Congo

- It is located in **Central Africa**. It is the second largest country in Africa after **Algeria**.
- Capital : **Kinshasa**. It is on the bank of **River Congo**.
- Congo is the only river in the world to cross the **equator twice**.
- Currency : **Congo franc**