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1. Jindal Shaded Group to set up a \$3 billion green steel plant in Oman (Dec. 5, 2022)

Jindal Shaded Group to set up a \$3 billion green steel plant in Oman

The **Jindal Shaded Group** has announced that it will invest more than **\$3 billion** to set up a green steel plant in a special economic zone in the southern port city of Duqm, **Oman**. The [hydrogen](#)-ready steel project will have a capacity to produce 5 million tonnes of steel a year. The proposed new green steel plant will use **natural gas** for the production of steel.

Jindal Shaded Group is a wholly owned subsidiary of Naveen Jindal's Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) Company. It also has a 2 million tonnes steel per annum steel plant at Sohar in Oman.

What is Green Steel?

Green steel is the manufacturing of steel without the **use carbon intensive fossil fuels**. The steel is produced by using low-carbon energy sources such as hydrogen, natural gas, coal gasification, or electricity instead of the traditional carbon-intensive manufacturing route of coal-fired plants.

Why the need for Green steel?

Steel is one of the most used metals in the modern Industrial sectors. It is used to make household items, cars, defence equipment etc. The Steel Industry is one of the major contributors to global warming. Around 75 per cent of steel globally is made in coal-fired blast furnaces, which releases large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere contributing to global warming.

To reduce the carbon emission the government is encouraging the steel companies to use hydrogen or low carbon energy sources for production of steel.

Green Steel and India

The iron ore and steel industry globally accounts for around **8 percent of total CO2** emissions on an annual basis, whereas in India, it contributes **12 percent to the total CO2 emissions**.

India has committed itself to achieve net zero carbon emission by [2070](#) and if India has to achieve that target then the Indian steel industry needs to reduce its emissions to net-zero by 2070.

Anil Agarwal-owned **Vedanta company** has signed an agreement with **IIT-Bombay** to develop technology for producing green steel using hydrogen.

Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL) plans to develop its Odisha plant into the largest and greenest facility in the world. The company claims to be the first steelmaker in the world to build coal gasification to produce steel using clean coal technologies.

2. Millets- Smart Nutritious Food Conclave held in New Delhi (Dec. 5, 2022)

Millets- Smart Nutritious Food Conclave

To promote the **export of millets**, a one-day '**Millets-Smart Nutritive Food' conclave** was organised by the government on 5th December in **New Delhi**.

Important facts

- Union Commerce and Industry Minister **Piyush Goyal** was the chief guest of the conclave.
- It was organised by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** through its apex agricultural export promotion body, **[Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority \(APEDA\)](#)**.
- Its purpose is to promote the export of millets.
- This is the first conclave to be held in the pre-launch program of the **[International Year of Millets - 2023 \(IYOM - 2023\)](#)**.
- In the Conclave, Farmer Producer Organisations, startups, exporters, producers of millets based value added products participated.
- In the conclave, exhibition and B2B meetings were also organized to showcase Indian millets and millet based products.
- Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry **Anupriya Patel** was the **guest of honour** at the conclave.
- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** announced on March 5, 2021 that 2023 will be observed as the International Year of Millets (IYOM).
- The government is currently organising IYOM-2023 at domestic and international level to popularise Indian millets and its value added products across the world and make it a mass movement.

3. Dr Jitendra Singh led the Indian delegation at the Abu Dhabi Space Debate (Dec. 5, 2022)

Dr Jitendra Singh led the Indian delegation at the Abu Dhabi Space Debate

Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Atomic Energy and Space, led the Indian delegation to the **Abu Dhabi Space Debate**, which began in the United Arab Emirates on 5 December. He addressed the inaugural session along with Israeli **President Isaac Herzog**.

Important facts

- In this two-day international meeting, Dr. Jitendra Singh participated in the Ministerial level meeting on '**Role of Foreign Policy in Enabling Space Diplomacy and International Cooperation**'.

- He also discussed ways to strengthen bilateral space cooperation with **Sarah Al Amiri**, UAE Minister of State for Advanced Technology and Chairperson of the UAE Space Agency.
- During the conversation, Dr. Singh also discussed the **joint startup venture** between India and UAE on cutting edge and emerging space technology.
- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the UAE Space Agency (UAESA) signed an MoU in 2016 regarding cooperation in the exploration and **uses of outer space for peaceful purposes**.
- UAE's first nanosatellite- 'Nayif-1' was launched by PSLV from Sriharikota to collect environmental space data.

UAE's achievements in the space sector

- The UAE is an emerging space power and has made rapid progress in the last 25 years of its space journey.
- In July 2020, the UAE sent its **Mars mission** into space named '**Hope Probe**', which entered Mars orbit in February 2021.
- The UAE is the **first Arab country** and the **sixth country in the world** to achieve this feat.
- UAE is planning to launch **Rasheed Rover or Emirates Lunar Mission** soon.
- In September 2019, **Hanzala Al Mansoori** from the United Arab Emirates became the **first astronaut** to go into space when he went to the International Space Station (ISS) for eight days via a Russian spacecraft from **Kazakhstan**.
- This year, another astronaut from the United Arab Emirates was selected to travel to the ISS aboard NASA's crew rotation flight, **SpaceX Crew-6**, for a period of six months.

About UAE

- Capital : **Abu Dhabi**
- Currency: **Emirati Dirham**
- President : **Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

4. Indonesia raises volcano warning to highest after Semeru erupts (Dec. 4, 2022)

Indonesia raises volcano warning to highest after Semeru erupts

The Indonesian authorities raised the warning on **Semeru volcano** to the highest level on 4 December 2022 after an eruption spewed a column of ash high into the air.

The eruption in the Semeru volcano located in the East Java province follows a series of earthquakes on the west of the island, including one last month that killed more than 300 people.

The eruption started on 3 December 2022 and the plume from the volcano reached a height of 50,000 feet (15 km).

The Indonesian authorities have started the evacuation of people including children and seniors, living near the volcano.

Mount Semeru last erupted in December 2021, killing at least 69 people. At that time the eruption had left entire streets filled with mud and ash, swallowing homes and vehicles, with nearly 10,000 people seeking refuge.

Indonesia sits on the Pacific Ring of Fire, where the meeting of continental plates causes high volcanic and seismic activity.

Indonesia has around 142 volcanoes and it has the largest population (86 lakh) in the world living within 10 km close range to volcanoes.

5. 3 Indian-Origin Women Scientists Among Australia's "Superstars of STEM" (Dec. 3, 2022)

"Superstars of STEM"

Three Indian-origin women among 60 scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians have been selected as Australia's '**STEM Superstars**'.

Important facts

- It is an initiative aimed at breaking the gendered perceptions of society about scientists.
- In 2022, three Indian-origin women to be recognized as STEM superstars are **Neelima Kadijala, Dr. Ana Baburamani and Dr. Indrani Mukherjee**.
- Apart from Indians, women scientists of **Sri Lankan** origin have also been selected in this.

About Australia's 'Superstars of STEM'

- Each year Science and Technology Australia (STA), the country's apex body in this field and representing more than 105,000 scientists and technologists, selects 60 Australian experts working in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Neelima Kadijala

- Kadijala is an IT Program Manager at Challenger Limited and has 15 years of experience across multiple industries including Financial Services, Telco and FMCG.
- She moved to Australia in 2003 as an international student to pursue a Master of Business in Information Systems.

Dr. Ana Baburamani

- Baburamani is Scientific Adviser in the Department of Defense - Science and Technology Group and has always been fascinated by how the brain develops and functions.
- Baburamani completed her PhD at Monash University and has spent 10 years as a post-doctoral researcher in Europe.

Dr. Indrani Mukherjee

- Ms Mukherjee is a geologist at the University of Tasmania and focuses on what drove the biological transition.
- She is working as a postdoctoral researcher in Tasmania, as well as in the areas of public outreach, geoscience communication and diversity initiatives.

6. President presents National Awards on International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec. 3, 2022)

President presents National Awards on International Day of Persons with Disabilities

President **Droupadi Murmu** on December 3, conferred the **National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities** for the year 2021 and 2022 on the occasion of **[International Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)** at a function in New Delhi.

Important facts

- The program was organised by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.**
- Social Justice and Empowerment Minister **Dr. Virender Kumar** presided over the function.
- On this occasion, President Murmu presented annual national awards to individuals, institutions, organisations and states and districts doing remarkable work for the empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- The National **Awards for 2021** were given to **25 individuals**, institutions and organisations.
- The National **Awards for 2022** were presented to **29 individuals**, institutions and organisations for their outstanding achievements and work done towards the empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- These awards were given in various categories including Sarvshresth Divyangjan, Shresth Divyangjan, Shresth Divyang Bal and Balika, Sarvshrestha Vyakti working towards the empowerment of Divyangjan and Sarvshrestha Rehabilitation Professional worker.
- This award is presented by the **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities**, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment every year on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities i.e. 3rd December.

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment - **Virendra Kumar**

7. Scientists revive nearly 48,500-year-old 'Zombie Virus' from bottom of frozen lake in Russia (Dec. 3, 2022)

Scientists revive nearly 48,500-year-old 'Zombie Virus'

French scientists have warned of the onset of another outbreak after they **revived a 48,500-year-old zombie virus** buried under a **frozen lake in Russia**.

Important facts

- It has broken the previous record of a **30,000-year-old virus** discovered by the same team in Siberia in 2013.
- This report is published in the **New York Post**.
- The new research was prepared by **Jean-Marie Alempic**, a microbiologist at the **French National Center for Scientific Research**.
- It has been said in the report that due to the survival of this zombie virus, a more devastating situation can arise in plants, animals and humans.
- Scientists have expressed the possibility of another epidemic like corona due to the survival of this virus.

Threat of melting glacier

- According to the report, due to **global warming**, permanently frozen ice is melting, which covers a quarter of the **northern hemisphere**.
- This has a destabilising effect on organic matter that has been frozen for millions of years, including **deadly microbes**.
- Research has shown that part of this organic matter includes revived cellular microbes (prokaryotes, unicellular eukaryotes) as well as viruses that have been dormant since prehistoric times.

What is a Zombie Virus?

- **Zombie virus** is the term given to a virus that is frozen in ice and therefore dormant.
- Research mentions **13 viruses**, each of which has its own genome.
- It is called **Pandoravirus Yedoma** which is 48,500 years old and has the ability to infect other organisms.
- It was discovered at the bottom of a lake in **Yukechi Alas in Yakutia, Russia**.

- All of the zombie viruses have the potential to be infectious and hence pose a health danger.
- Scientists believe that epidemics like **Covid 19** will become more common in the future.

8. Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (Dec. 3, 2022)

Horticulture Cluster Development Programme

The Union **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare** has prepared a **Horticulture Cluster Development Program (CDP)**, for which a meeting was held on November 30 under the chairmanship of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister **Narendra Singh Tomar**.

Important facts

- The implementation of the CDP will focus on the overall development of horticulture in the country.
- Horticulture is the branch of agriculture that deals with garden crops, generally fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants.

About Horticulture Cluster Development Programme

- The Nodal Agency of CDP is the **National Horticulture Board (NHB)**.
- Aim of CDP is to improve exports of targeted crops by about 20% and create cluster-specific brands to enhance the competitiveness of cluster crops.
- Its objective is to promote the Agriculture sector in the country and to increase the income of the farmers by giving them a reasonable price for their produce.
- It will support integrated interventions to enhance the competitiveness of targeted clusters.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has identified **55 horticulture clusters**.

9. Russia refuses to give Pakistan 30-40 percent discount on crude oil (Dec. 2, 2022)

Russia refuses to give Pakistan 30-40 percent discount on crude oil

On 1 December, **Russia denied Pakistan a 30-40 percent discount on Russian crude oil** after the Pakistani delegation demanded a reduction in the price during talks in Moscow.

Important facts

- Earlier this week, a **Pakistani delegation** demanded oil concessions during talks in **Moscow**.
- Pakistani officials said that they should also be given oil with a discount of 30-40 per cent on the price like India.
- Pakistan's official delegation was on a three-day visit to Moscow starting on the 29th of November.
- Russia also promised to consider **Pakistan's demand** and to share its mind later on through diplomatic channels.
- Russian crude oil can be processed in Pakistan's refineries, and in the past one private refinery had used Russian crude oil to deliver finished products.
- Russia can offer crude at the rates it is providing to its large client countries, which are reliable and sound economies, at a suitable time.

10. Govt approves Production Linked Incentive scheme for drones and drone components (Dec. 2, 2022)

Linked Incentive scheme for drones and drone components

The government has approved the [Production Linked Incentive \(PLI\) scheme](#) for **drones and drone components** for implementation during **2022-23 to 2024-25** with an outlay of **120 crore rupees** on 2 December.

Important facts

- The scheme is being implemented by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation**.
- The objective of this scheme is to incentivize the manufacturing of **drones and drone components** in the country with a focus to make the indigenous' industries globally competitive.
- Support under the scheme will be provided only to companies engaged in the manufacturing of drones and drone components in India.
- As per the guidelines, the minimum annual sales turnover to claim the benefit of PLI should be **Rs 2 crore for drones** and **Rs 50 lakh for single component segment** for MSMEs and startups.
- **Non-MSMEs** must have an annual sales turnover of **Rs 4 crore** for drones and **Rs 1 crore** for components segment.
- **Empowered Group of Secretaries** chaired by the Cabinet Secretary will monitor the scheme.