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1. India's largest floating solar plant commissioned in Telangana (July 2, 2022)

NTPC announced commercial operation of the last part of 20 MW capacity out of 100 MW Ramagundam Floating Solar PV Project at Ramagundam, Telangana from July 1.

- With the commissioning of the 100 MW Solar PV Project at Ramagundam, the total commercial operation of floating solar capacity in the Southern Region increased to 217 MW.
- Earlier, NTPC had announced commercial operation of 92 MW floating solar at Kayamkulam (Kerala) and 25 MW floating solar at Simhadri (Andhra Pradesh).
- With this, the standalone installed and commercial capacity of NTPC has become 54,769.20 MW.
- **About the 100 MW Floating Solar Project**
- The 100 MW Floating Solar Project at Ramagundam is fitted with advanced technology and eco-friendly facilities.
- The project is spread over 500 acres of its reservoir.
- The project has been constructed as an EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction) contract by BHEL with the help of Rs 423 crore.
- It is divided into 40 blocks and each having 2.5 MW.
- Each block consists of one floating platform and a formation of 11,200 solar modules.
- The floating platform consists of an inverter, transformer and HT breaker.
- With the presence of floating solar panels, the rate of evaporation from water bodies is reduced, which helps in water conservation.
- About 32.5 lakh cubic meters of water can be saved from evaporation every year.

2. Defence Ministry inaugurated PayRoll Automation for Distribution of Monthly Allowances (PADMA) (July 1, 2022)

Recently the Defence Ministry inaugurated PayRoll Automation for Distribution of Monthly Allowances (PADMA), an automated pay and allowance module for the Indian Coast Guard.

- **About PADMA**
- PADMA is an automated platform leveraging latest technology that will ensure seamless and timely disbursement of salaries and allowances to around 15,000 Indian Coast Guard personnel.
- This module has been developed under the aegis of Defence Accounts Department and will be operated by Pay Accounts Office, Coast Guard, Noida.

Importance

- This initiative marks the beginning of a centralised pay system, the foundation of which is being laid by the Defence Accounts Department Headquarters to provide a 'one stop pay accounting' solution for all organisations under the ministry.
- The launch of PADMA will strengthen the concept of Digital India Vision. Also it is a 'Self-reliant India' initiative as the entire module is designed and developed by Indian entrepreneurs assisted by domain experts.

About Indian Coast Guard

- The Indian Coast Guard was established under the Coast Guard Act, 1978 by Parliament on 18 August 1978 as an independent armed force with the objective of safeguarding the Indian seas in peacetime.
- Motto - "Vayam Raksham: We Protect".
- Headquarters- New Delhi
- Director General- Director General Virender Singh Pathania
- Coast Guard Day - February 1

3. Russia quits Snake Island (July 1, 2022)

Ukrainian forces have taken control of Snake Island in the Black Sea, which was occupied by Russia at the beginning of the war.

- The quitting of the Russians from the island is a major setback, and possibly undermines their control over shipping routes that are vital to Moscow's strategic objectives.
- Last week Ukraine said it had inflicted "significant damage" on Russia in air strikes on the island.
- Ukraine had claimed the first successful use of Harpoon anti-ship missiles.

About Snake Island

- It is also known as Zmiinyi Island, Snake or Serpent Island.
- It has a small piece of rock less than 700 metres from, that has been described as being "X-shaped".
- It is located 35 km from the coast in the Black Sea.
- The island is marked on the map as a small village and belongs to Ukraine.
- The island is close to the coast of Romania, with which Ukraine has had a dispute and which was settled in 2009 by the International Court of Justice.
- It drew a new maritime border between the two countries.
- Parts of the Black Sea around Snake Island are believed to have significant oil and gas reserves.

- On 24 February, Russia invaded Ukraine and attacked Snake Island with two modern warships.

- **About Black Sea**

- It is a marginal sea of the Atlantic Ocean.
- It is located between Eastern Europe and Western Asia.
- It is bound by Ukraine to the north and northwest, Russia and Georgia to the east, Turkey to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west.
- The Black Sea drains into the Mediterranean Sea via the Turkish Straits and the Aegean Sea.
- It has traditionally been Russia's warm water gateway to Europe.

4. Government approves sale of electoral bonds from July 1 (July 1, 2022)

The government approved the issuance of the 21st tranche of electoral bonds that will open for sale from July 1.

- In the 21st phase of sale, State Bank of India has been authorised to issue electoral bonds through its 29 authorised branches with effect from July 1 to July 10.
- An electoral bond will be valid for 15 days from the date of issue.
- No payment would be made to any political party, if the bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
- The authorised SBI branches are in Lucknow, Shimla, Dehradun, Kolkata, Guwahati, Chennai, Patna, New Delhi, Chandigarh, Srinagar, Gandhinagar, Bhopal, Raipur, and Mumbai.
- The 20th tranche of electoral bond sales took place from April 1 to April 10, 2022.
- The sale of the first batch of electoral bonds was initiated from March 1-10, 2018.
- SBI is the only authorised bank which issues Electoral Bonds.

- **What are Electoral Bonds?**

- It was introduced in the Finance Bill, 2017, the Electoral Bond Scheme was notified on January 29, 2018.
- It is just like a promissory note that may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- Bonds are available for purchase by any person (who is a citizen of India) for a period of ten days each in the months of January, April, July and October.
- A person can buy bonds either singly or jointly with other persons.
- These are issued in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore without any maximum limit.

- The main objective of the electoral bond scheme was to bring transparency in electoral funding in India.
- Only registered Political Parties which secured not less than one percent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.

5. 'Dak Karmayogi' e-learning portal (June 30, 2022)

The 'Dak Karmayogi' e-learning portal has been developed internally under the vision of 'Mission Karmayogi' envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to boost the efficiency of government employees.

- The 'Dak Karmayogi' e-learning portal of the Department of Posts has been launched by the Minister of Communications, Ashwini Vaishnav.
- This portal will enhance the efficiency of about 4 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks and employees by providing uniform standardised training material in online or mixed campus mode.
- Meghdoot Awards were also given in eight different categories in recognition of the good performance of the employees of the Department of Posts.
- The Meghdoot Award was started in 1984.
- It is the highest award of the Department of Posts at the national level for overall performance and excellence.

6. 'Partners in the Blue Pacific' program launched by US and allies (June 30, 2022)

Recently the US and its allies - Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United Kingdom have launched a new initiative called 'Partners in the Blue Pacific' for "effective and efficient cooperation" with the small island states of the Blue Pacific region.

- The purpose of the PBP is to promote cooperation in the areas of "climate crisis, connectivity and transport, maritime safety and security, health, prosperity and education".
- **Partners in Blue Pacific (PBP) Initiative:**
- The PBP is an "informal mechanism" of five countries to support the Pacific islands and promote diplomatic, economic ties in the region.
- It focuses on increasing "prosperity, resilience and security" in the Pacific region through closer cooperation.
- That is, through the PBP, these countries together and individually will provide more resources to the Pacific Island countries to counterbalance China's aggressive outreach.

- Former members will "promote Pacific regionalism" and forge strong ties with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF).
- **Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) -**
- The Pacific Islands Forum is the region's premier political and economic policy organisation.
- It was established in 1971.
- It consists of 18 members including Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. countries are included.

7. 'One Health' pilot project launched in Bengaluru (June 30, 2022)

On June 28, 2022, the Ministry of Dairying and Animal Husbandry launched the 'One Health' pilot project in Bengaluru.

- "One Health Pilot Project" was launched by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as implementation partners.
- This health project is being implemented in Uttarakhand and Karnataka.
- The One Health pilot project will bring together stakeholders from human, animal and environmental health to develop solutions to prevent future zoonotic disease outbreaks such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The success of this pilot project will help the Centre develop a national 'One Health' roadmap.
- The roadmap will be equipped with better feedback mechanisms and management.
- It will also incorporate world best practices.
- **About Confederation of Indian Industry**
- CII is a non-governmental advocacy group and trade association.
- Its headquarter is in New Delhi.
- This association was established in 1895.
- It engages with other leaders in business, academia, political and society in shaping industry, regional and global agendas.
- It is a membership based organisation.

8. Phase II of the 'Going Online As Leaders' (GOAL) program launched (June 30, 2022)

Recently, the second phase of 'Going Online as Leaders' program has been started by the Union Tribal Ministry in association with Facebook to provide mentorship to tribal youth through a digital system.

- The GOAL program will provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode.
- This digitally enabled program is envisaged to act as a catalyst to explore the hidden talents of tribal youth, which will help in their personal development as well as contribute to the all-round upliftment of their society.
- This program is designed in such a way that tribal youth and women can acquire knowledge in various fields like horticulture, food processing, bee keeping, tribal art and culture etc. on a long-term level through digital skills and technology.
- This program will play an important role in their empowerment by connecting tribal women to the digital world.
- The GOAL program will prove to be helpful towards enabling the tribal youth to become financially independent.
- **Key points of the goal program:**
- Digital-skills training will be provided to 5,000 young tribal entrepreneurs, professionals, artisans and artists selected under the program
- The youth who are trained will be called 'Mentees' and will be called 'Mentors' by experts from different disciplines and fields.
- The selected 5,000 'mentees' will participate in the program for nine months or 36 weeks, which will include a 28-week mentorship program followed by an eight-week internship.
- **The main focus of this program will be on three main areas, which include**
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 - 1. Digital Literacy
 - 2. Life Skills, Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Agriculture
 - 3. Art and Culture, Handicrafts, Clothing, Health, Nutrition
- **GOAL 1st Stage:**
- The first phase of Goal was conducted by Facebook in the year 2019 on a pilot project basis with 100 'Mentis' and 25 mentors in 5 states from February to October, 2019.

9. Establishment of an India Centre to promote India-centric activities in South Korea (June 30, 2022)

The India Centre has been established at Busan University of Foreign Studies, South Korea to promote activities related to India.

- This centre will act as a major organisation for India related programs in Busan.
- It will provide necessary resources for interested students in India and will emphasise on increasing academic and cultural cooperation with Busan University.
- An MoU was also signed on the occasion to promote cooperation in the field of education and cultural exchange between Busan University and the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Seoul.
- Busan University of Foreign Studies and Hanuk University of Foreign Studies in South Korea are the two higher educations where Hindi is taught as a full-time subject.
- The Department of Hindi Language was established in 1983 at Busan University of Foreign Studies (BUFS).

- **About South Korea**

- South Korea is a country located in East Asia that is known as the 'Land of Quiet Mornings'.
- The nation's capital, Seoul, is the world's second largest metropolitan area and a major global city.
- North Korea is the only country bordering this country.
- Martial arts Taekwondo originated in Korea.
- President- Yoon Suk-yol
- Currency- South Korean won

10. Gabon and Togo join the Commonwealth of Nations (June 29, 2022)

Two African countries, Togo and Gabon, were inducted into the Commonwealth of Nations as the 55th and 56th members, respectively, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting held in Rwanda's capital, Kigali, chaired by Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

- Rwanda was the last country to join the Commonwealth in 2009.
- Togo and Gabon were historically French colonies that were never British colonies.
- **New members Togo and Gabon**
- The formal Commonwealth member process for the Central African nation of Gabon began in 2017 while the process for the West African nation of Togo began in 2014.

- Gabon is surrounded by Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Republic of the Congo, which is also a member of the Commonwealth.
- Togo is bordered by Ghana, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, as well as by Benin and Burkina Faso.
- **About Commonwealth -**
- The Rashtramandal, commonly referred to as the Commonwealth, is a political union of previously 54 and now 56 member states.
- It was originally created as the British Commonwealth of Nations through the Balfour Declaration at the royal convention of 1926.
- The current Commonwealth of Nations was formally formed in 1949 by the London Declaration.
- The current head of the Commonwealth is Queen Elizabeth II.
- Secretary General – Patricia Scotland
- Headquarters- London