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1. India's first solar cycle track inaugurated in Hyderabad (Oct. 5, 2023)

Taking inspiration from a similar solar panel-covered cycle track in South Korea, Hyderabad inaugurated India's first solar cycle track.

An Overview of the News

- This innovative project in Hyderabad is now the world's second solar roof-covered cycle track, after similar initiatives in Dubai and Switzerland.

Features of Hyderabad Solar Cycle Track:

- The solar cycle track has been constructed along the Outer Ring Road (ORR) of Hyderabad and has a total length of 23 kilometres, consisting of two lines.
- The Pink Line extends from Nanakramguda to Telangana State Police Academy (TSPA), covering a distance of 8.5 kilometres, while the Blue Line runs from Narsingi Hub to Kollur, covering a distance of 14.5 kilometres.
- The track is designed with the safety of cyclists in mind, featuring three dedicated lanes with protective barriers.
- It comprises five access points equipped with various facilities such as parking, food stalls, repair and rental stations, first aid facilities, rest areas and advanced signaling systems.
- A notable feature of the track is its solar roof, capable of generating 16 megawatts of power, which not only illuminates several streetlights but also provides extensive coverage.

Implementation and Cost Savings:

- Hyderabad Growth Corridor Limited (HGCL), a division of the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA), is responsible for implementing the project, taking inspiration from similar facilities in South Korea.
- The project is expected to provide cost savings to HMDA, with an estimated recovery period of six years for the solar panels and an estimated period of 15 years for the entire project.

Importance of Solar Cycle Track:

- In addition to its environmental impact, the cycling track aims to reduce carbon emissions and establish itself as the world's most eco-friendly cycling track.
- The strategic lighting system enables year-round, 24x7 use, with additional security provided by CCTV surveillance.
- Future plans include the installation of bicycle rental agencies, health food shops, and retail kiosks to enhance the overall cycling experience.

- Using rooftops for solar panels not only saves land, but also generates clean energy in line with sustainable practices. Additionally, the roof provides protection from sunlight, rain and pollution, contributing to accident prevention.

2. Union Cabinet approves Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University in Telangana (Oct. 5, 2023)

The Union Cabinet on October 4, 2023 approved the establishment of Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University in Mulugu district of Telangana.

An Overview of the News

- Amendments to the Central Universities Act 2009 were approved to facilitate the establishment of the university.
- The Central Universities (Amendment) Bill-2023 will be introduced in Parliament for legislative action.

Legal Mandate and Delayed Establishment:

- The University has been established under the provisions of the 13th Schedule of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act-2014.
- This Act mandated the establishment of a tribal university in both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.
- A tribal university was established in Andhra Pradesh in 2019, after delays in land allocation had prevented the establishment of the university in Telangana.

Financial Provisions and Educational Objectives:

- Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University will receive funding provision of Rs 889.07 crore.
- The university aims to increase access to higher education in Telangana and improve the overall quality of education in the state.
- It will also focus on promoting tribal art, culture and traditional knowledge systems through instructional and research facilities.
- The establishment of the university seeks to address regional educational imbalances and create additional educational capacity.

Central Tribal Universities in India:

- Earlier, the Central Government had established two Central Tribal Universities in India:
 - Indira Gandhi National Tribal University is located in Amarkantak.
 - Andhra Pradesh Central Tribal University is located in Vizianagaram.

- Sammakka Sarakka Central Tribal University in Telangana will be the third such university established with the aim of providing higher education and research facilities to the tribal population of the country.
- At present there are a total of 45 central universities in India.

3. Jaipur hosts a two-day regional conference on good governance (Oct. 4, 2023)

A two-day regional conference on “Good Governance” began in Jaipur on October 4, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The conference also saw the presentation of 2022 award winners under the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration.
- The program was presided over by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh.
- The conference featured 13 award winners from various categories, including the PM Award and National e-Governance Award winners from Rajasthan.

Highlights of the Conference:

- The conference included plenary sessions on "Administrative Reforms and Effective Redressal of Public Grievances" and "Technology in Governance".
- These sessions will feature presentations, short films and discussions on the journey of the Prime Minister's Awards Scheme and the role of technology in governance.

Objectives of the Conference:

- The primary objective of the conference is to facilitate the exchange of experiences and innovative ideas in public administration both at the national and state levels.
- It aims to promote good governance, e-governance, and digital governance by bringing together representatives from all the states and union territories of India to share their initiatives and practices.

About Rajasthan

- It is a state in northern India and is the largest Indian state by area and the seventh largest state by population.
- It is bordered by five other Indian states: Punjab to the north; Haryana and Uttar Pradesh in the northeast; Madhya Pradesh in the southeast; and Gujarat in the southwest.
- Rajasthan is also home to three national tiger reserves, Ranthambore National Park in Sawai Madhopur, Sariska Tiger Reserve in Alwar and Mukundara Hills Tiger Reserve in Kota.

Formation - 30 March 1949

Capital - Jaipur

Districts - 33 (7 divisions)

Governor - Kalraj Mishra

Chief Minister - Ashok Gehlot (INC)

Assembly - Rajasthan Legislative Assembly (200 seats)

Rajya Sabha - 10 seats

Lok Sabha - 25 seats

4. Chhattisgarh Chief Minister and Food Minister unveiled Ulkia Village Food Park (Sept. 30, 2023)

With the joint efforts of Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel and Food Minister Amarjeet Bhagat, the first food park was inaugurated on 27 September 2023 in village Ulkiya of Sitapur development block of Surguja (Ambikapur) district.

An Overview of the News

- To ensure the success of the food park, adequate arrangements have been made for essential facilities like electricity, water supply and transportation.
- The state government has allocated Rs 6 crore 27 lakh for the establishment of this new food park.
- District Collector Kundan Kumar confirmed that the ownership of 8.920 hectare area for the food park project has been transferred from District Trade and Industry Center Surguja to CSIDC (Chhattisgarh State Industrial Development Corporation).
- The proposed food park will offer around 60 plots of various sizes including 3000, 5000, 7500 and 10000 square feet exclusively for setting up micro and small scale industries. These industries are expected to contribute to government revenue through various taxes.
- The establishment of this new food park is expected to provide many benefits to the local community including job creation, economic growth and improved infrastructure.

Food Park:

- Food parks are special industrial areas built specifically for food processing businesses.
- These parks provide shared infrastructure and facilities to food processing units, including:
 - Cold Storage: A facility for preserving and storing food products at low temperatures.
 - Cold Chain: A system for maintaining cold storage and transporting perishable goods.
 - Waste treatment plant: A facility for the treatment and management of waste generated by food processing.

- Storage: Storage space for raw materials and finished products.
- Power Connection: Reliable power supply for processing operations.
- Water Facilities: Adequate water supply for various processing requirements.
- Sewerage: A system for managing waste water.
- Food parks are particularly beneficial to small and medium-sized food processing businesses as these facilities can be expensive to set up individually.
- By providing the necessary infrastructure, food parks help reduce wastage in the food processing industry.
- The types of processing units installed within a mega food park often depend on the availability of raw materials and the location of the park.

5. UP achieves 100% ODF+ coverage in Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (Sept. 29, 2023)

Uttar Pradesh achieved 100% ODF Plus status for all 95,767 villages as part of Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Phase II.

An Overview of the News

- An ODF Plus village is one that has achieved open defecation-free status through the establishment of effective systems for solid or liquid waste management.
- As of January 1, 2023, only 15,088 villages were ODF Plus in the state.
- In just nine months, more than 80,000 villages achieved ODF Plus status, accelerating the success of the programme.
- Of the 95,767 ODF Plus villages, 81,744 are ODF Plus Aspirational Villages, 10,217 are ODF Plus Emerging Villages, and 3,806 are ODF Plus Model Villages.
- Solid waste management exists in 15,649 villages, while liquid waste management exists in 95,048 villages.

ODF Plus Model Village:

- ODF Plus model villages maintain ODF status, have both solid and liquid waste management, minimal waste, no plastic waste in public areas, and display ODF Plus related IEC messages.
- At present, there are 96,192 such villages across India.

Swachhta Hi Seva (SHS) Campaign 2023:

- The feat was achieved during the ongoing SHS campaign, which takes place from 15 September to 2 October every year.
- About 88 lakh people participated in SHS and contributed significantly in achieving ODF Plus status.

Progress across India:

- About 75% of India's 4.43 lakh villages have declared themselves ODF Plus.
- This progress is in line with the targets of Swachh Bharat Mission Phase II for 2024-25.

Best Performing States/UTs:

- Many states and union territories, including Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Ladakh, Puducherry, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Tripura have achieved 100% ODF Plus villages.

Details of ODF Plus Villages:

- There are currently 4,43,964 ODF Plus villages in India.
- This includes villages making progress towards solid waste management or liquid waste management (2,92,497), villages having both (55,549) and ODF plus model villages (96,018).
- There are 2,31,080 villages with solid waste management and 3,76,353 villages with liquid waste management.

Components of Phase-II of SBM(G):

- Phase II includes sustaining ODF-S, solid waste management, plastic waste management, liquid waste management, faecal sludge management, cow dung, IEC/BCC and capacity building.

Participation in Swachhta Hi Seva (SHS) - 2023 Campaign:

- More than 5 crore people participated in this campaign in India, in which more than 2.05 crore people donated labor.
- Additionally, 34 States/UTs and 42 partner Ministries/Departments actively participated in SHS 2023.

Waste Management:

- Plastic waste management includes setting up of units with utilization of waste plastic in road construction and waste collection and segregation sheds in 23 States/UTs.
- Biodegradable waste management includes composting at the community level and the construction of biogas and CBG plants in various districts.

Gray Water Management:

- In rural areas, grey-water management is important, and initiatives like the 'Sujlam' campaign have achieved success in this regard.

- About 63% of the villages have implemented grey-water management, contributing to the ODF Plus status.

6. Uttarakhand launches India's first polythene waste bank for sustainable waste management (Sept. 27, 2023)

On September 25, 2023, Dehradun Cantt Board in Uttarakhand launched the first three polythene waste banks in the country.

An Overview of the News

- These polythene waste banks are strategically placed, two of which are in Garhi and one in Premnagar.
- The inauguration of Garhi Kuda Bank was presided over by State Urban Development Minister Premchand Aggarwal.
- The primary objective of these garbage banks is twofold: waste management and income generation.
- Various polythene waste items including bags, chips wrappers, packing bags, plastic cutters and bread wrappers will be collected.
- Contributors will be compensated at the rate of Rs 3 per kg for the polythene waste brought by them.
- The collected polythene waste will be processed to make decorative items like tiles, boards and utensils.

Expansion Plans and Environmental Impact:

- Additional polythene waste banks are planned to be operational soon, including at places like Bindal Chowki, Dairy Farm in Garhi, and Special Wing in Premnagar.
- This initiative has set a target to purchase a minimum of 70 tonnes and a maximum of 100 tonnes of polythene waste every month.
- This initiative addresses the issue of low-value plastics such as polythene bags and chip wrappers, for which there is often a lack of buyers and markets.
- Polyethylene waste banks aim to provide a solution for responsible disposal of such waste, which can potentially have a positive impact on waste management and the environment.

7. Inauguration of Marwar International Center in Jodhpur (Sept. 27, 2023)

Marwar International Center was inaugurated by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in Jodhpur.

An Overview of the News

- It aims to deliver on the government's commitment to preserving the cultural heritage of every region of the state and promoting intellectual exchange.

- As part of this effort, town halls are being constructed in many districts across Rajasthan.
- Notable establishments in Jaipur include the Rajasthan International Center and the Constitution Club.
- Inspired by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Social Sciences has also been established.
- Additionally, MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, and exhibitions) centers are under construction at a cost of Rs 100 crore in four districts including Jodhpur.

MICE Center in Rajasthan

- MICE centers are being developed to promote the tourism sector in Rajasthan.
- These centers will facilitate international-level conferences and exhibitions in popular tourist destinations like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur and Ajmer.
- Plans for these centers were announced in the budget for 2023-24.

Marwar International Center

- Marwar International Center aims to serve as a center of cultural and ideological exchange.
- It will play an important role in the preservation and promotion of art, culture and traditions.
- Situated on 65,000 square meters of land, the center has an auditorium with a seating capacity of 1350 people.
- It includes two hostels for artists, two green rooms, two banquet lawns and an exhibition center spread over 5820 square meters.

Prestigious Institute in Jodhpur

- The foundation stone of many prestigious institutions in Jodhpur includes MBM University, Rajiv Gandhi Fintech University and Mahatma Gandhi Divyang University and Marwar Medical University.
- These institutions contribute to the educational and healthcare infrastructure of Jodhpur and the entire state.

8. 'India Smart Cities Conclave 2023' organized in Madhya Pradesh (Sept. 26, 2023)

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India organized the 'India Smart Cities Conclave 2023' in Indore, Madhya Pradesh on September 26, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The event brought together all 100 smart cities that are leading urban innovation and changing the city development process.

- The conclave aims to showcase the excellent work done under the Smart Cities Mission and shape the future of urban transformation in India.
- President Draupadi Murmu on September 27, 2023, honored the winners of the India Smart Cities Awards Competition (ISAC) 2022, which has been organized by the ministry since 2018.

Main activities during the Event:

- The event was scheduled for two days on September 26 and 27, 2023.
- On the first day of the conclave, an exhibition of the award-winning projects of ISAC 2022 was inaugurated.
- Attendees had the opportunity to interact with Smart City Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and participate in site visits of notable projects implemented under the Smart City Mission in Indore and Ujjain.
- ISAC 2022 awards were distributed on the second day of the conclave. The awards will recognize 5 States/Union Territories (UTs), 31 distinguished cities and 7 partner organizations for their outstanding contributions.
- In total, there have been 66 recipients of ISAC awards.
- Additionally, several reports will be released during the conclave, including:
 - ISAC 2022 Awards Collection
 - UN Habitat report: "Smart Cities Mission – Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals"
 - A collection of Smart City Mission newsletters
 - ISAC 2023 Awards Booklet.

Smart City Mission:

- The Smart Cities Mission was launched on 25 June 2015 as a centrally sponsored scheme with the goal of transforming 100 cities using "smart solutions".
- The mission aims to provide essential infrastructure, a clean and sustainable environment and a high quality of life to the citizens through smart solutions.

Mission Achievements:

- More than 6000 projects costing more than Rs 1.1 lakh crore have been completed as part of the Mission, with the remaining projects targeted to be completed by June 30, 2024.
- One of the notable achievements was the establishment of Integrated Command and Control Centers (ICCC) in all 100 smart cities, functioning as the city's operational center for urban management.

- ICCRC has significantly improved various urban services including crime tracking, civil defense, transport management, solid waste management, water supply and disaster management.
- Smart cities have launched projects in areas such as mobility, energy, water, sanitation, solid waste management, public space, social infrastructure and smart governance.

9. Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve becomes the 7th tiger reserve of Madhya Pradesh and 55th in India. (Sept. 26, 2023)

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change declared Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve as the 7th Tiger Reserve of Madhya Pradesh.

An Overview of the News

- The primary objective is to ensure better conservation efforts for the wildlife of the area.
- There are now a total of 55 designated tiger reserves in India.
- Earlier the 54th Tiger Reserve was Dholpur-Karauli Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan.
- Madhya Pradesh was already home to six tiger reserves: Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Satpura, Pench, Panna and Sanjay-Dubri.

Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve:

- Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve was established as per the conditions laid down by the Central Government while approving the Ken-Betwa River Linking Project.
- Madhya Pradesh was entrusted with the task of merging Nauradehi and Durgavati wildlife sanctuaries to create this sanctuary.
- In June 2023, the combined area spanning Sagar, Damoh and Narsinghpur districts was officially notified as the Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve.
- The reserve covers approximately 2,339 square kilometers, comprising 1,414 square kilometers of core area and 925.12 square kilometers of the buffer zone.

Tiger Population in India

- India is home to a significant portion, approximately 75%, of the global wild tiger population.
- Russia is second only to India in terms of the second-largest population of wild tigers.

Tiger population in states

- Madhya Pradesh leads with the largest population of tigers in India with 785 tigers.
- Karnataka and Uttarakhand stand second with 563 and 560 tigers respectively.
- Maharashtra also plays an important role with 444 tigers.

Tiger population in the reserve

- Jim Corbett Tiger Reserve has the highest tiger population with 260 tigers.
- Other notable reserves include Bandipur (150), Nagarhole (141), Bandhavgarh (135), Dudhwa (135), Mudumalai (114), Kanha (105), Kaziranga (104), Sunderbans (100), Tadoba (97), Sathyamangalam. (85), and screw (77).

Largest and smallest tiger reserves in India

- Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh is the largest tiger reserve in terms of area.
- Bor Tiger Reserve of Maharashtra holds the title of the smallest tiger reserve in terms of area.

About Madhya Pradesh

- It is the second largest state of India in terms of area after Rajasthan.
- Forests occupy 25.14 percent of its area.
- Governor - Mangubhai Patel
- Chief Minister - Shivraj Singh Chauhan
- Capital - Bhopal
- Union Cabinet Minister for Labor and Employment, Environment, Forest and Climate Change in the Government of India: Bhupendra Yadav

10. Jammu and Kashmir's first Tata Memorial Cancer Care Center inaugurated in Kathua (Sept. 26, 2023)

On September 24, 2023, Jammu and Kashmir inaugurated its first Tata Memorial Cancer Care Center affiliated with Tata Memorial Cancer Care Center (TMC) Mumbai in the newly constructed block of Government Medical College (GMC) in Kathua.

An Overview of the News

- The establishment of the Tata Satellite Cancer Care facility in Kathua addresses the increasing incidence of cancer in the region, which is attributed to factors such as aging, lifestyle changes and environmental impacts.
- This healthcare facility in Kathua aims to serve not only Jammu and Kashmir but also the neighboring areas of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, which lack facilities like the Tata Memorial Center (TMC).
- The introduction of the day-care chemotherapy unit at GMC Kathua makes cancer treatment more accessible and affordable for the local population, eliminating the inconvenience and high cost associated with travel to TMC Mumbai.

India's Healthcare Vision

- Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is expanding its healthcare infrastructure, including the establishment of medical colleges, AIIMS institutes and biotech parks. 'Kathua-Udhampur-Doda' parliamentary constituency is moving towards becoming the future 'health circuit' of India.

India's Vision for Bio-economy

- India aims to achieve a \$150 billion bioeconomy by 2025, with a significant focus on biotechnology and its contribution to vaccine development and cancer treatment.

Leading Cancer Hospital in India

- Tata Memorial Hospital is located in Mumbai.
- All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is located in New Delhi.
- Cancer Institute, located in Chennai.
- Apollo Specialty Hospital is located in Chennai.
- Gujarat Cancer and Research Institute is located in Ahmedabad.
- Rajiv Gandhi Cancer Institute and Research Centre is located in Delhi.
- Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology is located in Bengaluru.
- Regional Cancer Centre, located in Thiruvananthapuram.
- HCG (Healthcare Global Enterprises), based in Bengaluru.
- Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research is located in Chandigarh.