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1. Coal Ministry Action Plan 2023 -24 : Targets 1012 Million Tonne Coal Production (May 4, 2023)

The **Ministry of Coal** has prepared an **action plan for the financial year 2023-24** with the aim of making Atmanirbhar Bharat by increasing **production, efficiency, sustainability, new technologies etc. in the coal sector.**

Action Plan for the FY 2023-24

Coal Analytics

- **Coal Production** - The total coal production target of 1012 MT for FY 2023-24.
- **Outsourcing of Mines**- Various steps to increase coal production and efficiency like Mining Developers cum Operators (MDO).
- **Coking Coal Strategy** - Ministry of Coal has formulated a coking coal strategy to enhance coking coal availability in the country to reduce imports.
- **Quality of Coal** - Various measures to achieve the objective of supply of quality coal to all consumers.

Private Investment

- **CAPEX and Asset Monetization** -The overall projected target of Assets Monetization plan for FY 2023-24 is Rs 50,118.61 Crores.
- **Commercial Mining** - During FY 2022-23, the Ministry signed agreements for a total of 23 coal mines having cumulative PRC of 33.224 MTPA.

Infrastructure Projects

- **PM Gatishakti National Master Plan** - Ministry of Coal is closely monitoring the new railway line projects that are critical for coal evacuation.
- **Coal Evacuation**- FMC & Railway Lines - Ministry of Coal has adopted a Coal Logistics Policy/Plan for effective and environmentally friendly transport of coal.

Safety in Mines

- The Ministry of Coal reaffirms its commitment to the best safety standards and utmost priority to the safety in Coal Mines.
- **Scientific closure of Mines** - To restore the ecological balance in the mined-out areas, mine closure activities will begin this year.

Technology Push to Coal

- **Technology roadmap in the Coal sector** - Ministry is going to circulate the Monitoring framework for coal companies towards Implementation of Technology Roadmap.
- **Coal to Chemical** - Various initiatives like Coal to Hydrogen, Coal & Lignite gasification, CBM/CMM etc.
- **Diversification of Coal India Limited (CIL)** - Coal India Limited is being diversified for sustainable future business operations like New Business Areas (Aluminium, Power, Solar wafer, Solar Power & Renewable) etc.

Sustainability in the coal sector

- The Ministry of Coal envisages promoting a sustainable development model in which coal production goes hand in hand with measures for environment protection, resource conservation, care for society and protection of forests and biodiversity.

2. National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign- 2023 (May 4, 2023)

Union Agriculture Minister **Narendra Singh Tomar** inaugurated the **National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign 2023-24** on 3rd May at NASC Complex New Delhi.

An overview of the news

- Agriculture remains the major pulse of the Indian economy and lies at the core of the **country's socio-economic development.**
- It accounts for about **19 percent of the GDP** and about **two-thirds of the population** is dependent on the agriculture sector.
- India's agriculture sector has been witnessing strong growth with an average **annual growth rate of 4.6 percent** over the past six years.
- As per the Second Advance Estimates (2022-23), the **production of food grains in the country is estimated at 3235 lakh tonnes** which is 79 lakh tonnes more than the production of food grains during 2021-22.

The objective of the conference

- To review and assess the crop performance during the preceding crop seasons.
- fix crop-wise targets for the Kharif season in consultation with State Governments.
- ensure supply of critical inputs.
- facilitate adoption of innovative technologies with a view to enhance production and productivity of the crops.
- Record production is estimated of rice, maize, gram, pulses, rapeseed and mustard, oilseeds and sugarcane.

National target for 2023-24

- In the conference, a **national target of 3320 lakh tonnes** has been fixed for the total food grain production for the year **2023-24**.
- The **target of pulses production** has been set **at 292.5 lakh tonnes** as against 278.1 lakh tonnes this year.
- **Oilseeds production** will be increased from 400 to **440 lakh tonnes in 2023-24**.
- **Shri Anna** aims to increase the total production from **159.1 lakh tonnes in 2022-23 to 170.0 lakh tonnes in 2023-24**.

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4. India's first underwater sea tunnel (May 3, 2023)

India's First Undersea Tunnel in Mumbai Set to Open by November 2023.

An overview of the news

- The tunnels begin close to **Girgaon (before Marine Drive)**, travel under the **Arabian Sea, Girgaon Chowpatty, and Malabar Hill**, and finally terminate at **Breach Candy's Priyadarshini Park.**
- The high-speed coastal route aims to **reduce the 45-minute peak-time trip from Girgaon to Worli to only 10 minutes.**
- The **diameter of the tunnels is 12.19 meters** which is **17-20 meters below sea level. About 1 kilometer part is under the sea.**
- The tunnels reach a **depth of 72 meters in Malabar Hill.** The front part at the entry and exit points of the tunnel will be made of fiberglass.
- Construction of tunnels is a part of the **Mumbai Coastal Road Project (MCRP)** being built by the **Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).**

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6. Government launches Vivad se Vishwas scheme (May 3, 2023)

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The **Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance**, has launched the scheme, “**Vivad se Vishwas I - Relief to MSMEs**” for providing relief to **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) for COVID-19 period**.

An overview of the news

- The scheme was announced in the **Union Budget 2023-24** by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The relief provided under this scheme is in continuation to the efforts of the government in **promoting and sustaining the MSME sector**.
- Under the scheme, ministries have been asked to refund performance security, bid security and liquidated damages forfeited/ deducted during the Covid pandemic.

Additional benefits to eligible MSMEs, affected during the COVID-19 period

- **95% of the performance security** forfeited shall be refunded.
- **95% of the Bid security** shall be refunded.
- **95% of the Liquidated Damages (LD)** deducted shall be refunded.
- **95% of the Risk Purchase amount** realized shall be refunded.

Eligibility Criterion

- Registered as a Medium, Small or Micro Enterprise as per relevant scheme of Ministry of MSME on the date of **claim by supplier/ contractor**.
- MSME could be registered for any category of Goods and Services.

7. Paraguay's Colorado Party's Santiago Peña wins presidential election (May 3, 2023)

Paraguay's Colorado Party's Santiago Peña wins presidential election

Santiago Peña, an economist from **Paraguay's ruling conservative Colorado party**, won the **country's presidential election**.

An Overview of the News

- The election was decided in a single round of voting, and with nearly all ballots counted, **Santiago Peña received over 42% of the vote**.

- His main challenger, **Efrain Alegre**, who represented the **Concertación Nacional coalition**, received about **28% of the vote**.
- The Colorado Party has been the dominant political force in Paraguay for more than 70 years, and Santiago Peña's victory solidified its hold on power.
- Despite an expected economic growth of more than 4% this year, Paraguay still struggles with high levels of poverty and corruption.

About Paraguay

- It is a country **located in the middle of South America**. It is a landlocked country, bordered by **Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia**.
- **Asuncion is the capital of Paraguay** and is situated on the banks of the Paraguay River.
- Official languages - **Paraguayan Guarani, Spanish**

8. 60th Foundation Day of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (May 3, 2023)

60th Foundation Day of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi celebrated **Diamond Jubilee on 2nd May on 60th Foundation Day**.

An overview of the news

- On the occasion, **Vice-Chancellor of IIFT Prof. Satinder Bhatia** released the commemorative issue of **Foreign Trade Review (FTR) Journal**.
- On this significant occasion, Prof. Satinder Bhatia, remembered Late **HD Shourie, the founding Director General of IIFT**.
- She mentioned that he was the **father figure to IIFTians**, who laid the foundation of IIFT with the motto, '**Excellence is a way of life**'.
- In the journey of 60 years, IIFT has consistently achieved better rankings among top business schools by earning AACSB accreditation for offering an impressive range of innovative MDP/EDP offered by the institute.

Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT)

- The Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) was **established in 1963** as an **autonomous body under the Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry** to contribute in the skill building for the external trade sector of India.
- It is one of the top business schools of India with a **special focus on Trade and Finance**.
- The Institute was granted "**Deemed to be University**" status in **2002**.
- It has campuses at **Delhi, Kolkata and Kakinada**.

Vice Chancellor : **Prof. Satinder Bhatia**

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10. Maiden ASEAN-India Maritime exercise begins in Singapore (May 2, 2023)

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The first ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise (AIME-2023) began on 2 May in **Singapore**.

An overview of the news

- The maiden exercise is being conducted **off the coast of Singapore**.
- It aims **to enhance interoperability and exchange of best practices** among the participating navies.

- **INS Satpura and INS Delhi**, accompanied by RADM Gurcharan Singh, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet, have reached Singapore to participate in the exercise.
- AIME 2023 will provide an opportunity for **Indian Navy and ASEAN navies** to work together closely and conduct seamless operations in the maritime domain.
- Indian Navy ships will also participate in the **International Maritime Security Conference (IMSC)** and the **International Maritime Defense Exhibition (IMDEX-23)**.
- The Philippine Navy has deployed its **missile frigate BRP Antonio Luna (FF-151)** with a 140-man crew of Naval Task Group 80.5 onboard in the exercise.

Phase of the exercise

- **Harbour Phase** - to be conducted at Changi Naval Base.
- **Sea Phase** - to be conducted in the South China Sea.

INS Delhi and INS Satpura

- **INS Delhi** is **India's first indigenously-built guided missile destroyer**.
- **INS Satpura**, is an **indigenously built guided missile stealth frigate** and are fitted with **state-of-the art weapons and sensors**.
- Both are part of the **Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam** and are under the operational command of the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command.