

Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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1. 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**

2. Equatorial Guinea appoints Manuela Roka Botey as first female PM (Feb. 2, 2023)

Equatorial Guinea appoints Manuela Roka Botey as first female PM

Equatorial Guinea has appointed **Manuela Roka Botey** as prime minister on 31 January.

An overview of the news

- She is the **first woman in the country to reach this position.**
- She was appointed by President **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo** who has ruled the country since **1979.**
- Bote, who was the deputy minister of education in the West African country, replaced **Francisco Pascual Obama Asue**, who held the position of prime minister for nearly eight years.
- The country of about 1.5 million people has had only two presidents since independence from **Spain in 1968.**
- Obiang overthrew his uncle, Francisco Macías Nguema, in a coup in August 1979.

Equatorial Guinea

- It is located on the **west coast of Africa.**
- Capital: **Malabo**
- President: **Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo**
- Currency -**franc**

3. MISHTI, Amrit Dharohar, PM PRANAM ecological conservation initiative in the budget (Feb. 2, 2023)

Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman's** budget speech launched various schemes and policies aimed at **ecological conservation.**

An overview of the news

- Targeting various ecological issues, these schemes come with the promise of preserving the ecological health of India.
- The newly introduced schemes are **MISHTI, Amrit Dharohar and PM PRANAM.**

MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes)

- This is a new scheme which will facilitate **mangrove plantation** on salt lands along the sea coast of India.
- The scheme will operate through **“convergence between MGNREGS, Campa Fund and other sources”.**
- It aims at intensive afforestation of coastal mangrove forests.

- There are such forests on both the east and west coasts of India, with the **Sundarbans** in Bengal being one of the largest mangrove forests.

Amrit Dharohar

- The scheme will be implemented over the next three years to encourage optimum use of **wetlands and enhance biodiversity**, carbon stock, ecotourism opportunities and income generation for local communities.
- It will emphasise on the importance of lakes and their conservation.

PM PRANAM (Prime Minister Programme for Restoration, Awareness, Nourishment and Amelioration of Mother Earth)

- The program will endeavour to encourage States and Union Territories promoting balanced use of **alternative fertilisers and chemical fertilisers**.
- It aims to **reduce the subsidy burden** of the government, which is estimated to reach Rs 2.25 lakh crore in 2022-23.

Bhartiya Prakritik Kheti Bio-Input Resource Centres

- To adopt "**natural farming**", 10,000 **bio-input processing centers** will be set up.
- These centers will form a nationally distributed micro fertilizer and pesticide manufacturing network.
- This will affect more than 1 crore farmers in the next three years.

4. Union Budget 2023: Unity Malls to be set up in states (Feb. 2, 2023)

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the budget that states would be encouraged to set up "Unity Malls" in their capitals and most prominent tourist centres.

Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** announced in the budget that states would be encouraged to set up "**Unity Malls**" in their capitals and most prominent tourist centres.

What is a unity mall?

- The main objective behind setting up Unity Mall is to promote **ODOP (One District, One Product) of the states**.
- These products may be depicted as having a **Geographical Indication tag**. Other handicraft products will also be sold in these malls.
- The Center will also request the states to sell such products from other states as well.
- Currently, there is a Unity Mall operating near the **Statue of Unity at Ekta Nagar in Kevadia, Gujarat**.

What is ODOP?

- **One District, One Product (ODOP)** is a government initiative aimed at making regional products more accessible by providing capital to producers.
- Under the scheme, the state identifies the main product for a district, and then provides assistance for its processing, storage and marketing.
- These products can be perishable agricultural products, grain-based products or food products such as mangoes, potatoes, meat and fish.

What is GI?

- **Geographical Indication (GI) tags** are usually given to **well-known products** coming from a particular region.
- These products also include agricultural products, manufactured goods or other food items including prepared dishes.
- Basically it is like branding a particular product.
- For example, the GI tag for **Darjeeling tea** has been given to Darjeeling.

5. National Commission for Women organises Panel Discussion on theme 'Sashakt Nari Sashakt Bharat' (Feb. 2, 2023)

National Commission for Women organises Panel Discussion on theme 'Sashakt Nari Sashakt Bharat'

The **National Commission for Women** organised a panel discussion on the topic '**Empowering Women Empowering India**' as part of its Foundation Day (January 31) celebrations.

An overview of the news

- The Commission for Women organised a two-day program to celebrate its **31st Foundation Day** from January 31, 2023 to February 1, 2023.
- President **Draupadi Murmu** also participated in the Foundation Day function of the National Commission for Women.
- On the occasion, the President received the first copy of the National Commission for Women's book '**Sashakt Nari Sashakt Bharat**' from the Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani.
- It aims to honour the experiences of women who have done excellent work and paved the way for themselves to leave their mark.
- National Commission for Women Chairperson **Rekha Sharma** was also present on the occasion.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

- It was founded in **January 1992** as a **statutory body** under the **National Commission for Women Act, 1990**.
- It was established to review constitutional and legal safeguards for women, recommend remedial legislative measures, and advise the government on policy matters affecting women.
- It consists of a **chairman**, a **member secretary** and **five other members** who are nominated by the central government.
- At least one member should belong to **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes** respectively.

6. Alkesh Kumar Sharma inaugurates G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill (Feb. 2, 2023)

Alkesh Kumar Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, inaugurated the **G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill** for over 400 domestic and international participants under **India's G20 Presidency** in **New Delhi** on 31 January.

An overview of the news

- This cyber security exercise and drill was conducted in **hybrid mode** (physical and virtual) by the **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team**.
- International participants from more than **12 countries** participated in it through online mode.
- Domestic participants from **various sectors** such as Finance, Education, Telecom, Ports & Shipping, Energy and IT/ITES participated in person as well as in virtual mode.
- Cyber incidents are changing rapidly and affecting not only one nation but also having international ramifications.
- Countering cyber attacks requires resilience for which there is an urgent need to act collectively.
- The first table top exercise focused on **Crisis Management and Crisis Communication** was conducted for the Board and Top Management on the theme "**Synergy to Counter Global Cyber Crisis**".
- The second table top exercise, an operational drill was designed for CISOs and mid-management on the theme "**Building Collective Cyber Resilience**".
- The entire scenario for the exercise was modeled from real life cyber incidents which included cyber extortion, data breach, supply chain attacks and disruptions.

7. United Nations Reforms (Feb. 1, 2023)

The urgent need for reforms in the **United Nations**, ongoing Ukraine conflict and developmental issues figured prominently during talks between External Affairs Minister **S. Jaishankar** and United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) President **Csaba Korosi**.

An overview of the news:

The crucial hurdle in the way of reforming the United Nations comes from the disunited state of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), said Csaba Korosi, President of the **77th UNGA, in New Delhi** on January 30, 2023.

Reform of the United Nations:

On **31 May 2018**, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the resolution “Repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system ”.

The landmark resolution contains measures to enhance the capacity of the **United Nations Development System (UNDS)** to better support countries in implementing the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and provides guidance to the Secretary-General and the UNDS on their implementation.

A new generation of **UN Country Teams (UNCTs)** and **UN Development Nations Assistance Framework (UNDAFs)**.

A reinvigorated Resident Coordinators (RCs) system with enhanced capacity, leadership, accountability and impartiality.

Common business service and back offices functions.

A revamped UNDS regional approach to better support work on the field.

Enhanced transparency and accountability of system-wide results and stronger capacities for system-wide evaluations.

A system-wide approach to partnerships for the 2030 Agenda.

A Funding compact to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.

A system-wide strategic document to accelerate the system’s alignment to the 2030 Agenda.

8. Ajit Doval launches US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (Feb. 1, 2023)

National Security Advisor **Ajit Doval**, US counterpart **Jake Sullivan** launched the **US-India Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET)** in **Washington** on 31 January.

An overview of the news

- iCET reflects conv.of **strategic, commercial, and scientific** approaches in the field of technology.
- iCET was announced by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi and President Biden**.
- The United States and India concluded the US-India iCET meeting and also decided to launch a new Innovation Bridge.
- In May 2022, US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced iCET to enhance and expand their strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between governments, businesses and academic institutions of the two countries.
- Both countries also underlined their commitment to work to resolve issues related to regulatory barriers, trade and talent mobility through a permanent mechanism under the iCET.

9. Tourism minister launches Visit India Year 2023 initiative (Feb. 1, 2023)

Tourism Minister **G Kishan Reddy** launched the **Visit India Year-2023 initiative** in New Delhi on 31 January and also **unveiled its logo**.

An overview of the news

- The Tourism Minister also unveiled the logo of the campaign which is inspired by the **image of 'Namaste'**.
- The logo represents India as a microcosm of countless stories.
- It imbibes the philosophy of '**Atithi Devo Bhava**' along with the heritage of India to the art of **cooking divine food and our rich wildlife**.
- The emblem depicts elements of **India's heritage and its monuments**.
- The campaign aims to encourage travel in the country that currently holds the G-20 presidency. It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Tourism**.
- According to the Ministry of Tourism, the G-20 chairmanship provides an excellent opportunity to highlight the specialties of the country's tourism sector.
- This year more than **one lakh foreign delegates** will visit India and they will be shown all aspects of India's culture including monuments and festivals.
- Each foreign representative of the G20 will be a **brand ambassador of India's culture**, heritage and tourist destinations.

10. President Droupadi Murmu address her maiden joint session of Parliament (Feb. 1, 2023)

President Droupadi Murmu address her maiden joint session of Parliament

Focusing on '**Aatmanirbhar Bharat**', President **Droupadi Murmu** addressed her **maiden joint session** (Lok Sabha and Rajay Sabha) of Parliament on 31st January.

An overview of the news

- President Murmu said, India has entered the **Amrit Kaal** by completing 75 years of its independence.
- Amrit Kaal is the period of **100 years** of independence and the making of a developed India. These 25 years is a period for all citizens to focus on their duty.
- She said that the government is trying to get rid of every sign of slavery, an example of which is the renaming of **Rajpath to Kartavya Path**.
- She said that the '**Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao**' campaign has been successful, due to which the number of women in India is more than men for the first time.
- The government's priority is the **11 crore small farmers** who were deprived of government benefits for decades.
- Earlier there was a long wait for the tax refund, but today the refund is received within a few days of filing the income tax return.
- Indian Railways is fast moving towards becoming the largest electric railway network in the world.
- India is trying to find collective solutions to global challenges along with the **G20 member countries**.

Parliamentary Sessions

In general, the parliamentary sessions are of **three types**:

1. Budget Session

- It is the longest Session, starts at the end of **January** and concludes by the end of **April** or the first week of May.
- The session has a recess so that Parliamentary Committees can discuss the budgetary proposals.
- This session begins every year with the President's address to both the Houses.

1. Monsoon Session

- Monsoon session is held every year from **July to September**. It begins after a gap of two months from the budget session.

• **Matters of public interest** are discussed in this session.

1. **Winter Session**

- This session is held every year from **mid-November to mid-December**. This is the shortest session.
- It takes up those matters which could not be considered earlier.

Joint Sitting of Parliament

- The **Constitution of India** provides for a joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament to resolve a deadlock between the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.
- The joint sitting of the Parliament is called by the **President of the country**.
- The **speaker presides over the joint sitting**. In the absence of the Speaker, the **Deputy Speaker** of the Lok Sabha presides over it.
- If none of the above is present, any other **member of Parliament** may preside with the consensus of both the Houses.
- **Article 108** of the Indian Constitution provides for a joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament.
- According to the provision given in **Article 87** of the Constitution, the President addresses both the Houses of the Parliament twice under the legislative powers-

1. After each new election
2. Every year on the first session of the Parliament