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1. Nepal, India agree to formulate modality to supply electricity to Indian states via Bihar (March 19, 2023)

Nepal, India agree to formulate modality to supply electricity to Indian states via Bihar

Nepal and India have agreed to formulate a **modality to supply electricity from Nepal to multiple states of India through central transmission line via Bihar grid.**

An overview of the news

- The **14th meeting of the Nepal-India Power Exchange Committee** concluded on March 17 in New Delhi.
- It was decided in the meeting to work out modalities for **export of power from Nepal to various states of India via Bihar** within a month.
- **Kulman Ghising**, Executive Director, Nepal Electricity Authority, and **Ashok Kumar Rajput**, Power System Member, Central Electricity Authority of India, agreed to finalize the modalities within a month.
- The agreement has ensured the **additional market for the sale of surplus electricity during the rainy season.**
- Under the power exchange agreement in the meeting, the **price of electricity per unit has been fixed at Rs 11.54** for the financial year 2022-23.
- **Kataiya (Bihar)-Kushaha (Nepal) and Raxaul-Parawanipur 132-KV transmission line** are connected with Bihar.
- Nepal imports power from India when needed through the **Power Exchange Agreement and competition with the Mahakali Treaty.**
- Power is being imported into Nepal through the **Dhalkebar-Muzaffarpur cross-border 400 KV double circuit transmission line** and other transmission lines.
- The Nepal Electricity Authority has been importing electricity from India's **Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand** as per the electricity exchange agreement.
- Only **Bihar and Uttar Pradesh** are connected to Nepal through **132 KV transmission lines.**

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3. Indian Higher Education Meet 2023 inaugurated in Dhaka (March 19, 2023)

Indian Higher Education Meet 2023 inaugurated in Dhaka

High Commissioner **Pranay Verma** and Minister of Education of Bangladesh **Dr Dipu Moni** on 18 March jointly **inaugurated the Indian Higher Education Meet 2023** in **Dhaka, Bangladesh.**

An overview of the news

- It is being organized under the aegis of the **Study in India program in Dhaka.**
- Top ranking higher educational institutions from different parts of India participated in the event.
- A large number of Indian students are pursuing higher education in each other's country.
- The Indian High Commissioner invited Bangladeshi students to take advantage of **India's globally prestigious higher education system** and build new bridges of friendship and understanding between the youth of the two countries.

- Bangladesh Education Minister Dr. Deepu Moni recognized the important role of
- education in promoting better understanding between India and Bangladesh and thanked Study in India for taking the initiative to organize the event in Dhaka.

Study in India programme

- It is a **flagship project launched by the Ministry of Education, Government of India in 2018.**
- Its main goal is **to increase the number of international students in the country** and improve the global reputation and ranking of Indian educational institutions.
- The programme provides **meritorious foreign students fee waiver and scholarship.**
- The program is designed to encourage and invite the global student community to pursue their higher education in India.
- Since its inception, the Study in India program has attracted students from over **150 countries, including Bangladesh.**

4. International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant against Vladimir Putin for war crimes in Ukraine (March 19, 2023)

International Criminal Court issues arrest warrant against Vladimir Putin for war crimes in Ukraine

The **International Criminal Court** on 17 March issued an **arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin** on charges of **war crimes.**

An overview of the news

- The move **mandates 123 member states** to arrest Putin and transfer him to The Hague for trial if he steps onto their territory.
- It was immediately **rejected by Moscow** while Ukraine on the other hand welcomed the decision.

Why did the International Criminal Court issue the warrants?

- The International Criminal Court says **Putin committed war crimes in Ukraine.**
- He is responsible for the **crime of kidnapping and deportation of Ukrainian children.**
- According to the court, these crimes were allegedly committed from 24 February 2022 on Ukrainian-occupied territory.
- The court also issued a warrant for **Maria Lvova-Belova**, Russia's commissioner for children's rights.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- It was **set up in July 2002** under the **Rome treaty of 1998**.
- It is the **only permanent court to prosecute persons for crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes and crimes of aggression**.
- At present **123 countries are its members**. The **United States, China, and Israel** are not its members.
- The court's jurisdiction extends to offences that occurred after **July 1, 2002**, that were committed either in a state that has ratified the agreement or by a national of such a state or the case which was referred to it by the United Nations Security Council.
- The Headquarters of ICC: **The Hague, Netherlands**
- ICC is different from the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**.
- ICJ is a **United Nations court** which hears disputes involving the **member states of the United Nations**.

5. Ram Sahaya Prasad Yadav elected Nepal's third Vice President (March 18, 2023)

Ram Sahaya Prasad Yadav elected Nepal's third Vice President

Ram Sahai Prasad Yadav has been elected as the **third Vice President of Nepal** and is the **leader of the Janata Samajwadi Party**.

An Overview of the News

- In the voting, Yadav defeated **Astalakshmi Shakya of CPN (UML) and Mamta Jha of Janmat Party**.
- Yadav received support from the ruling coalition, including the **Nepali Congress, CPN (Maoist Centre), and CPN (Unified Socialist)**.
- A total of 311 federal MPs and 518 provincial assembly members participated in the vote.
- The polling station for the election was located in the Federal Parliament Building at **New Baneshwar in Kathmandu**.
- According to the Constitution of Nepal, the Vice President can perform the duties of the President during the absence of the President.
- The **term of the Vice President is five years** from the date of his election.
- Yadav was a former **Minister of Forest and Environment and a member of Nepal's first federal parliament**.

About Nepal

- The kingdom of Nepal was established by the **Shah dynasty**.
- It is a landlocked country in **South Asia**.

President - **Ram Chandra Paudel**

Prime Minister - **Pushpa Kamal Dahal**

Capital - **Kathmandu**

Currency - Nepalese Rupee

6. Flu cases rising in India, Two suspected H3N2 deaths (March 18, 2023)

one death each in Haryana and Karnataka due to H3N2 subtype of flu virus

The **Union Health Ministry** has confirmed **one death each in Haryana and Karnataka due to H3N2 subtype of flu virus** in March.

An overview of the news

- Figures from the **Integrated Disease Surveillance Program** show that at least nine people died of the flu in January.

What is the H3N2 virus?

- Influenza virus, which causes the infectious disease called flu, is of **four different types - A, B, C and D**.
- **Influenza A** is classified into different subtypes and **one of them is H3N2**.
- Influenza A is **an RNA virus**. It is classified into subtypes based on the type of two proteins found on its surface.
- Influenza D virus is found in cattle and pigs.
- According to the **United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, H3N2 caused the **flu pandemic of 1968**, which caused the death of about **one million people worldwide and about 100,000 in the US alone**.

Symptoms of H3N2

- Symptoms are **similar to that of any other flu**.
- **Cough, fever, body ache and headache, sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, and extreme fatigue** are common symptoms.
- In some cases, **nausea, vomiting and diarrhea** are also seen.

Transmission

- H3N2 influenza is **highly contagious** and can **spread from person to person** when an infected person talks, coughs, or sneezes.
- It can also spread by touching a surface contaminated with the virus and then touching someone's mouth or nose.
- People at higher risk of complications from the flu include pregnant women, young children, the elderly, and people with underlying medical conditions.

Treatment

- Getting proper rest, drinking plenty of fluids, and using pain relievers such as **acetaminophen or ibuprofen** to reduce fever are all parts of H3N2 influenza treatment.
- Doctors may also recommend antiviral drugs like **oseltamivir and zanamivir** if a patient has severe symptoms.

7. Global Millets Conference to be inaugurated by PM Modi in New Delhi (March 18, 2023)

Global Millets Conference

The **Global Millets Conference** will be inaugurated by Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on March 19, 2023 in **New Delhi**

An Overview of the News

- **Agriculture ministers from six countries, international scientists, nutritionists, health experts**, start-up leaders and other stakeholders from over 100 countries will participate in the conference.
- The Prime Minister will **unveil a customised postage stamp and currency coin on the International Year of Millets (IYM) - 2023** during the event.
- The two-day conference will have sessions on a **wide range of issues related to millets, including publicity and awareness, value chain development, health and nutrition, market linkages and research and development.**
- An exhibition-cum-buyer-seller meet will also be organised with a focus on millets with the participation of over **50 domestic and international buyers, importers, exporters and processors.**
- The exhibition will showcase millet and millet-based ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat products, by millet-based startups and exporters, and live cooking sessions by various international and national chefs.
- Based on India's proposal, the year 2023 was declared by the **United Nations General Assembly as the International Millet Year.**

- Engaged all Ministries and Departments of the Central Government, States and Union Territories, farmers, start-ups, exporters, retail businesses and other stakeholders to promote and spread awareness about the benefits of millets to the farmer, consumer and the climate.

About Millet

- India is the **largest producer of millets in the world and the second largest exporter of these grains.**
- Millets have been an integral part of India's food culture for centuries, and several types of millets are grown in the country, including **jowar, ragi, bajra, kuttu, ramdana, kangni, kutki, kodo, china, and sama.**
- Millets are known for their many health benefits, including being a good source of protein, fibre and micronutrients.
- **Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttarakhand** being the top 10 states in terms of millet production.
- Together, these **10 states account for almost 98% of millet production in India** during the 2020-21 period.

8. Cabinet approves listing of IREDA on Stock Exchanges (March 18, 2023)

Cabinet approves listing of IREDA on Stock Exchanges

The **Union Government** on 18 March **approved the listing of the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) on the stock exchanges.**

An overview of the news

- The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** decided to approve an **Initial Public Offer (IPO)** by way of partial sale of the government's stake in CPSEs to raise funds by issuing fresh equity shares.
- The **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)** will carry out the listing process.
- Earlier in the year **2017 also IREDA** was given approval to bring IPO.
- According to the government, in March 2022, it was decided **to invest Rs 1500 crore in IREDA.**
- This has changed the capital structure of the company, due to which it has become necessary to bring an IPO.

Significance of the move

- The approval will **help the IPO unlock the value of the government's investment** and provide an opportunity to the public to own a stake in national assets and earn from it.
- This will help IREDA to raise a part of its capital requirement for carrying out development plans without depending on the exchequer.
- The move will **improve governance through greater market discipline and transparency** arising out of listing requirements and disclosures.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)

- It was incorporated as a **Public Limited Company** in the **year 1987** as a '**Non-Banking Financial Institution**'.
- It is a **Miniratna (Category 1) type company** functioning under the administrative control of '**Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India**'.
- Its function is to encourage projects related to new and renewable energy sources and to provide them financial assistance for their development.
- It has been notified as a '**Public Financial Institution**' under **section 4'A' of the 'Companies Act, 1956'**.
- Chairman and Managing Director - **Pradip Kumar Das**

9. India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline to be jointly inaugurated by PM Modi and Sheikh Hasina (March 17, 2023)

Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** and Bangladesh Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina** will inaugurate the **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline** through video conference on March 18, 2023.

An Overview of the News

- The India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline is a proposed **130 km long pipeline for high-speed diesel transport from Siliguri in India to Parbatipur in Bangladesh**.
- Maitri Pipeline is the **first cross-border energy pipeline between India and Bangladesh** with an estimated cost of Rs 377 crore.
- The pipeline has a capacity to transport **1 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of high-speed diesel (HSD)**, and will be constructed by **India's Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) at an estimated cost of USD 1.6 billion**.
- Initially, the pipeline will supply high-speed diesel to seven districts in northern Bangladesh.
- The operationalization of the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline will provide a **sustainable, reliable, cost-effective and environment-friendly mode of HSD transportation from India to Bangladesh**.

- The pipeline will enhance cooperation in energy security between India and Bangladesh.
- This is part of the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Bangladesh in April 2017** to strengthen cooperation in the energy sector.
- The pipeline will help Bangladesh meet its growing energy demand and reduce its dependence on imported fuel, while providing an opportunity for India to expand its energy exports to neighbouring countries.

About Bangladesh

- Prime Minister - **Sheikh Hasina**
- Currency - **Bangladeshi Taka**
- Capital - **Dhaka**

10. Union Home Ministry announced 10% reservation for former Agniveers (March 17, 2023)

Union Home Ministry announced 10% reservation for former Agniveers

The **Union Home Ministry** has announced a **10% reservation for former Agniveers** in the **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**

An Overview of the News

- Its **objective** is to provide opportunities to a specific group and promote their participation in the Armed Forces.
- This reservation is similar to the reservation announced for former **Agniveers in the Border Security Force (BSF)**.
- Former Agniveers will get relaxation in the upper age limit and will also be exempted from **Physical Efficiency Test**.
- The upper age limit for candidates of the **first batch of Agniveers** shall be relaxed by up to five years, whereas the other batches shall get age relaxation by up to three years.
- The **Agnipath scheme** has been launched by the central government for recruitment in the Armed Forces.
- The **Agnipath scheme was approved by the Indian Government in June 2022**.
- The scheme aims to induct youth between **17-and-a-half years of age and 21 years of age** on a four-year short-term contractual basis.
- The scheme has been designed to ensure a **youthful profile of the Armed Forces**.