

Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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1. Luminous to build India's first green solar panel factory in Uttarakhand (Jan. 28, 2023)

Luminous Power Technologies on 27 January announced its plan to build the **country's first green energy-based solar panel manufacturing factory in Uttarakhand.**

An overview of the news

- The new manufacturing plant located in **Rudrapur** is expected to be fully operational by the **end of 2023.**
- This state-of-the-art facility will be equipped with the **latest technology** to design and produce **high quality solar panels** that will be used for both **residential and commercial applications.**
- Spread over **4.5 lakh sq ft/10 acres**, the facility will help enable a solar generation capacity of **500 MW per annum**, which can be scaled up to **1 GW.**
- It will produce a range of solar panels with power output from **40W to 600W.**
- The plant has been certified as a green facility by the **Indian Green Building Council (IGBC)** and will **reduce CO2 emissions** by over **70 million tonnes per year.**
- This solar panel facility is completely robotic and will harness energy from **100 percent solar power.**

2. Coal India Ltd to Launch M-Sand Projects in a Big Way (Jan. 28, 2023)

With a focus on **cost-effective and high-quality sand production**, **Coal India Limited's** subsidiaries will commission **five M-Sand (sand) plants by 2024.**

An overview of the news

- Sand is classified as a "**minor mineral**" under the **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.**
- Administrative control of minor minerals rests with the **state governments** and is regulated through state specific rules.
- Due to high demand, regular supply and complete ban on sand mining to protect the river ecosystem during monsoon, it has become very necessary to find an alternative to river sand.
- The '**Sand Mining Framework' (2018)** prepared by the Ministry of Mines envisages alternative sources of sand obtained in the form of sand (M-Sand) manufactured from **crushed rock fines (crusher dust) from overburden (OB) of coal mines .**

- During '**opencast mining**', the top soil and rocks are removed as waste and the broken rock (overburden or OB) is dumped in the dump to extract the coal.

What is M-sand?

- It is a form of **artificial sand**, which is made by **crushing hard stones**, mainly **rocks or granite**, into **fine particles**, which are then washed and pulverized.
- It is widely used as a **substitute for river sand** for construction purposes, mostly in the production of concrete and mortar mixes.

Advantages of M-sand

- Using manufactured sand is more economical than using natural sand, as it can be produced in **large quantities at a lower cost**.
- This sand can have a uniform grain size, which can be **beneficial for construction projects** that require a specific type of sand.
- The use of manufactured sand **reduces the need for mining natural sand**. The mining of natural sand has negative environmental impacts.
- Its use can help **reduce the amount of water needed** for construction projects, as it does not need to be washed before use.
- Manufactured sand is more granular and has a rougher surface, making it **more practical for construction projects**.

3. Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launches "Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0" (Jan. 28, 2023)

Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) launched "**Nidhi Aapke Nikat 2.0**"- A District Outreach Program for expanding its presence in more than 685 districts of the country on 27 January.

An overview of the news

- It was e-launched by **Arti Ahuja**, Secretary (Ministry of Labour & Employment) from the EPFO Headquarters, in the presence of Central Provident Fund Commissioner (CPFC) and officers of EPFO.
- It is a massive **district outreach program** in all the districts of the country through **Nidhi Aapke Nikat program**.
- The objective of this program is to reach all the districts of the country on the same day i.e. 27th of every month. EPFO has organised camps in 685 districts of the country.

About EPFO

- Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is a **statutory organisation** set up under the Union **ministry of Labour and Employment** was **set up in 1951** by an Ordinance issued by the President.
- Later Parliament passed the **Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, act 1952.**
- It is the country's **largest social security organisation.**
- EPFO assists the Central Board of Trustees in the administration of a provident fund scheme, pension scheme and an insurance scheme for the registered establishments in India.

4. 'She Feeds the World' program (Jan. 28, 2023)

'She Feeds the World' program

The 'She Feeds the World' program has been **launched by PepsiCo and CARE in India.**

An overview of the news

- The program will be **initially implemented in Coochbehar and Alipurduar districts of West Bengal.**
- Through this program, PepsiCo and CARE **aim to improve the status of over 48,000 women.** More than 1.5 million people of West Bengal will benefit from this program.
- The main objective of this program is to increase crop yield, increase income of women of BPL families, ensure access to healthy and balanced diet as well as provide training to women on sustainable agriculture.
- Women will be empowered in the agriculture sector through the programme, which will primarily focus on small-scale women producers.
- In developing countries, women make up about half the number of men in agricultural work and work 13 hours more per week than men.
- Research shows that if women farmers are given the same access to resources as men, they can increase their farm yields by 20-30 percent, potentially reducing the number of hungry people in the world by 150 million can be reduced.

5. India, South Africa sign MoU to introduce 12 African Cheetahs annually over next eight to ten years (Jan. 27, 2023)

India and South Africa on 27 January signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** to introduce **12 African Cheetahs** annually over the **next eight to ten year.**

An overview of the news

- As per the agreement, an initial batch of **12 cheetahs** will be brought from South Africa to India during **February 2023**.
- These cheetahs will be joined by **eight cheetahs** brought to **India from Namibia during 2022**.
- Increasing the cheetah population is a priority for the Government of India and its conservation will have important and far-reaching consequences, aiming to achieve a number of ecological objectives.
- After the import of 12 cheetahs in February, there are plans to move **12 cheetahs annually for the next 8 to 10 years**.
- The initiative to reintroduce the cheetah to India comes after a request from the Indian government, after the species had become **locally extinct** due to over-hunting and habitat loss.

Reintroduction Action Plan

- Reintroduction of a species means releasing it in an area where it is capable of surviving.
- Under the scheme, **50 cheetahs will be released in various national parks** of the country over a period of 5 years.

Extinction of cheetahs

- The last cheetah of the country was found dead in the **year 1947 in Chhattisgarh** and in the year 1952 it was declared extinct in the country.
- Habitat loss, conflict with humans, poaching and high susceptibility to diseases are the major causes of their extinction.

About 'Project Cheetah'

- This is a one of its kind project in which a species is being brought out of the country (**from South Africa / Namibia**) and restored to the country.
- The subspecies of the extinct cheetah in India was the **Asiatic cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus)** and the subspecies of the cheetah being brought back to the country is the **African cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus jubatus)**.
- Research has shown that the genes of both these subspecies are similar.

6. National Child Science Congress begins in Ahmedabad (Jan. 27, 2023)

The **30th National Child Science Congress** began at **Science City in Ahmedabad** on 27 January.

An overview of the news

- It was inaugurated by **Vijay Nahera**, Secretary, Gujarat Science and Technology Department.
- The **Gujarat Council on Science and Technology**, Gujarat Council of Science City, and SAL Education are hosting the five-day Congress, which will conclude on **January 31**.
- More than **1400 delegates** including child scientists, escort teachers, evaluators and government officials will participate in it.
- More than **850 students** from across the country will be showcasing their unique projects at the Congress.

National Children Science Congress

- It sparks **children's curiosity**, provides an opportunity to unleash their creativity and give shape to their imagination.
- This program is supported by the **National Council for Science and Technology Communication**, Government of India.
- Selected awardees are sponsored for the **National Children's Science Congress** held every year from 27th December to 31st December at selected places.
- It aims to transform the way science is taught and learned in schools by linking the learning process to the surrounding physical and social environment.

7. PM Modi interacts with students on Pariksha Pe Charcha (Jan. 27, 2023)

PM Modi interacts with students on Pariksha Pe Charcha

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** on 27 January interacted with students during the 6th edition of **Pariksha Pe Charcha program** at **Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi**.

An overview of the news

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the event and has encouraged everyone to take part in the program.
- The Prime Minister emphasised that students must match their determination and their own strength with the expectations of their parents.
- The Prime Minister gave the mantra to adopt micro-management techniques on multi-tasking and efficient time management.

About Pariksha Pe Charcha

- It is a unique interactive program that brings together **students, parents and teachers** from India and abroad to discuss their concerns related to examinations and life after school.
- The goal of Pariksha Pe Charcha program is to help participants **overcome stress and celebrate life as a celebration.**
- The **Department of School Education and Literacy** under the **Ministry of Education** has successfully organised this program for the last **five years.**

8. Senior ISIS leader Bilal al-Sudani killed in US raid in Somalia (Jan. 27, 2023)

Senior ISIS leader Bilal al-Sudani killed in US raid in Somalia

Bilal al-Sudani, a prominent regional leader of the **Islamic State group**, was killed on January 25 in a **US military raid** in **Somalia** ordered by President **Joe Biden**.

An overview of the news

- The US military operation has also killed **10 members of the terrorist group.**
- The US President authorised the strike earlier this week after consulting with top defence, intelligence and security officials.
- Bilal al-Sudani had been on the radar of **US intelligence officials** for the past several years.
- He played a key role in providing financial support to IS operations in **Africa** as well as **ISIS-K**, a terrorist organisation operating in **Afghanistan.**

About Islamic State

- **ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria)**, also known as **ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant).**
- It is an **Islamist militant jihadist group** that follows **Salafi jihadist doctrine** based on the **Sunni branch** of Islam.
- It was founded in **1999 by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi** and gained global prominence in **2014.**
- It soon took control of large parts of **Iraq and Syria**, raised its flag and imposed strict Islamic rule.
- It strictly enforces **Sharia or Islamic law.**

9. India-Pakistan on brink of nuclear war after Balakot strike: Never give an inch (Jan. 27, 2023)

Never Give An Inch: Fighting for the America I Love'written by former United States Secretary of StateMike Pompeo

The book '**Never Give An Inch: Fighting for the America I Love**' written by former United States Secretary of State **Mike Pompeo** has been in the limelight, commenting on India and many of its politicians.

An overview of the news:

- Pompeo mentioned in his book 'Never Give An Inch' that India-Pakistan were on the brink of nuclear war after the **Balakot strike** in February, 2019.
- Mike Pompeo said that the then Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj had told him that Pakistan was preparing for a nuclear attack after the strike and India was also preparing an aggressive response.
- Referring to this matter, Pompeo said that after the Balakot strike, his team held talks with India and Pakistan overnight to avoid nuclear confrontation between the two countries. His effort prevented a possible war between the two countries, which could turn into a nuclear war at any time.
- In his book, Pompeo does not use respectful words for former Indian External Affairs Minister late Sushma Swaraj, while praising National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and in some cases describing S Jaishankar as his superior.

10. North India's largest floating solar plant in Chandigarh (Jan. 27, 2023)

North India's largest floating solar plant in Chandigarh

Administrator **Balwari Lal Purohit** inaugurated a **2MWp capacity solar plant** on January 23, 2023, with the aim of making the city self-sufficient in power generation by the **Chandigarh administration**.

An overview of the news:

- **North India's largest floating solar plant** has been installed at Chandigarh's Water Works.
- Apart from this, Balwari Lal Purohit also inaugurated a 500 kWp floating solar power plant in Dhansa Lake.
- The solar plant with 2MWp capacity will generate 28 million units of electricity. Also, due to the installation of panels on water, this project will reduce the evaporation of about 382 million litres annually.
- Also, a major benefit from this project would be that, due to the cooling effect of water, this project would generate more electricity than all other projects.

- Both these projects are on water, due to which about **eight acres of valuable land of the city has been saved.**
- The electricity generated from the solar panels installed on Dhansa Lake will be used by the Forest Department. The forest department will light up all its offices with the electricity generated from this solar panel.