

Tranche of Offshore Mineral Blocks

Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy has launched the first tranche of offshore mineral blocks auction in New Delhi.

Key Points

- ❖ This first tranche of auction includes **13 mineral blocks spanning across the Arabian Sea and Andaman Sea**, featuring a mix of minerals, such as construction sand, lime-mud, and polymetallic nodules and crusts.
- ❖ These minerals are critical for infrastructure development, high-tech manufacturing, and the green energy transition.
- ❖ In August last year (2023), the **Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002**, was amended, mandating auction as a mode of allocation of mineral blocks in the offshore areas.
- ❖ **About Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002**
- ❖ To regulate the offshore mining sector in India the Parliament of India had enacted the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002.
- ❖ The **Act officially came into effect from 15th January 2010**, via an order dated 11th February 2020 notified by the Central Government.
- ❖ The Act provides for development and regulation of mineral resources in the territorial waters, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone and other maritime zones of India and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

- ❖ The **OAMDR Act** has recently been **amended w.e.f. 17.08.2023** which introduced a transparent and non-discretionary auction process as the method of allocation of operating rights in the offshore areas. Also, provision has been made for establishing a trust to work for mining affected persons and for increasing exploration, providing relief upon occurrence of any disaster etc.

JPC on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024

Joint committee on Waqf Amendment Bill gets extension up to February 2025 for final report.

Key Points

- ❖ The **Centre tabled the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, on August 8, 2024** and then referred it to the JPC following the Opposition's objections.
- ❖ The committee was tasked by the panel to submit a report by the end of the first week of the Winter Session.
- ❖ **However on 28th November 2024**, the **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Waqf (Amendment) Bill got extension** to submit its final report up to the last day of Budget Session, 2025.
- ❖ **About Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024**
- ❖ Waqf refers to properties **dedicated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes** under Islamic law, and any other use or sale of the property is prohibited.
- ❖ The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, **is to amend the Waqf Act, 1995**, to redress the issues and challenges in regulating and managing Waqf properties.
- ❖ The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, **aims to bring significant reforms, including digitisation of records, stricter audits, increased transparency**, and legal mechanisms to reclaim illegally occupied Waqf properties.

- ❖ The Bill is aimed at reforming the management and regulation of Waqf properties across the country.

About the Committee

- ❖ The **JPC committee is chaired by: BJP MP Jagdambika Pal.**
- ❖ The JPC comprises **21 members from the Lok Sabha and 10 from the Rajya Sabha, including 13 Opposition members.**
- ❖ The JPC is holding a series of meetings to gather input from government officials, legal experts, Waqf Board members, and community representatives from different states and Union Territories, aiming for the most comprehensive reform possible.

Eklavya

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General, Upendra Dwivedi launched Eklavya.

Key Points

- ❖ It is an **online digital platform for officers training.**
- ❖ This initiative was launched in **New Delhi** and it aligns with the Indian Army propelling itself into the **Decade of Transformation and also with the Indian Army's theme for 2024** as the Year of Technology Absorption.
- ❖ This platform enables Headquarters Army Training Command to seamlessly integrate any number of training establishments of the Indian Army, each capable of hosting an extensive range of courses.
- ❖ Student officers are permitted to **register for multiple courses simultaneously.** A total of 96 courses by 17 Category 'A' Training Establishments of the Indian Army have already been hosted on the platform.

CII Ease of Doing Business and Regulatory Affairs Portal

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal launched the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) Ease of Doing Business and Regulatory Affairs Portal.

Key Points

- ❖ The portal will provide status and updates on key initiatives on Ease of Doing Business by both the union government and CII.
- ❖ Users can track progress and submissions on a real-time basis.

About CII

- ❖ The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes.
- ❖ It is a **non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization.**
- ❖ From 1st January 1992, it came into existence in its present form.
- ❖ **It is headquartered in New Delhi.**
- ❖ Saniv Puri is the present President.

PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

According to the latest parliamentary data, Gujarat saw the maximum growth in rooftop solar registrations, followed by Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- ❖ The government approved the PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana to increase the share of solar rooftop capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity.

- ❖ According to the latest parliamentary data, **Gujarat saw the maximum growth in rooftop solar registrations, followed by Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.**
- ❖ This growth contributes to the total of 616,019 installed solar projects recorded in the country as of November 21, 2024.
- ❖ The shared data revealed that Gujarat reported installing 281,769 MW of rooftop solar projects out of 310,845 applications received. Maharashtra installed 120,696 projects, while **Uttar Pradesh installed 51,313 rooftop projects** out of 481,206 and 534,529 applications, respectively.

About PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana

- ❖ It was approved by the **Government of India on 29th February, 2024.**
- ❖ It is to increase the share of solar rooftop capacity and empower residential households to generate their own electricity.
- ❖ The scheme **has an outlay of Rs 75,021 crore and is to be implemented till FY 2026-27.**
- ❖ The scheme is to be implemented by a **National programme Implementation Agency (NPIA)** at the National level and by the State Implementation Agencies (SIAs) at the state level.

Veerangana Rani Durgavati

- ❖ On 28th November 2024, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath unveiled the statue of 'Veerangana' Rani Durgavati at the main entrance of the medical college in Banda.

Key Points

- ❖ Veerangana Durgavati, **one of India's most revered warrior queens, was born in 1524 in Mandla, Madhya Pradesh.**
- ❖ She was the **daughter-in-law of King Sangram Shah of the Gondwana Empire.**
- ❖ After the death of her husband, Raja Dalpat Shah, Rani Durgavati ascended the throne and led the kingdom to greater prosperity and strength.
- ❖ When Mughal Emperor Akbar's commander Asaf Khan launched an attack on her kingdom, Rani Durgavati demonstrated unmatched courage and commanded her forces with valour.
- ❖ In the **Battle of 1564**, she fiercely resisted the invaders, but when defeat seemed inevitable, she chose to embrace martyrdom rather than surrender. Her legacy of bravery, sacrifice and dignity continues to inspire generations.

India-Israel Drive 3.0

The skilled workers from Uttar Pradesh are being selected for employment opportunities in Israel.

Key Points

- ❖ The India-Israel Drive 3.0 **was launched on November 26, 2024 and will conclude on Dec 3.**
- ❖ This drive **aims to provide skilled workers from Uttar Pradesh with employment opportunities in Israel**, boosting their careers and expanding global work prospects.
- ❖ It is expected to send around 5,000 workers to Israel.
- ❖ As part of this initiative, skill testing will be conducted at the Government Industrial Training Institute (ITI) in Aliganj.

National Quantum Mission

Govt selects 8 startups for support under quantum, cyber-physical systems missions.

Key Points

- ❖ In a recent announcement, **eight startups have been chosen to receive support under two of India's flagship initiatives:** the National Quantum Mission and the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems.
- ❖ This selection is part of the country's broader strategy to drive innovation in advanced technologies and achieve technological self-reliance by the year 2047.
- ❖ **Selected Startups are:** QNu Labs (Bengaluru), QPiAI India Private Ltd. (Bengaluru), Dimira Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (IIT Mumbai), Prenishq Pvt. Ltd. (IIT Delhi), QuPrayog Pvt. Ltd. (Pune), Quanastra Pvt. Ltd. (Delhi), Pristine Diamonds Pvt. Ltd. (Ahmedabad), Quan2D Technologies Pvt. Ltd. (Bengaluru).

National Quantum Mission

- ❖ It was launched in April 2023.
- ❖ The National Quantum Mission is focused on seeding and scaling quantum research on a national level. Other key objectives include:
 - Secure satellite-based quantum communication over 2,000 kilometers.
 - Development of atomic clocks and magnetometers for precision navigation.
 - Design of advanced quantum materials like superconductors and topological structures.

Short News- Uttar Pradesh

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government has ordered a judicial inquiry into the recent incident of violence in Sambhal in which at least four persons lost their lives.
 - A **three-member committee headed by retired High Court judge Devendra Kumar Arora** has been handed the responsibility of conducting an investigation into the matter.
 - The two other members of the committee are **retired IAS officer Amit Mohan Prasad** and **former IPS officer Arvind Kumar Jain**.
- ❖ The UP state Government agencies have procured over **7.28 lakh metric tonnes of paddy under the Kharif procurement season for 2024-25**.
- ❖ Currently, **6,708 rural cow shelters (Go-ashray sthal)** are operational across the state of UP, utilising 100 per cent of the tagged 'gauchar' (grazing) land, which spans 9,091.21 hectares.
 - The **districts with the highest number of cow shelters in the state** are Jalaun (396), Hardoi (357), Hamirpur (319), Banda (309), Chitrakoot (306), Budaun (297), Unnao (291) and Mahoba (266), where large-scale green fodder cultivation is actively underway.

Person In News- Obituary

Amiya Kumar Bagchi

He was an esteemed **economic historian** and founder of the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata. He **passed away** recently at the age of 88.



Person In News- Achievements

Ghanavenothan Retnam

- ❖ Classical musician **Ghanavenothan Retnam** has been honoured with **Singapore's highest arts accolade**, the Cultural Medallion, for his contribution to Indian music.
- ❖ Retnam, who is the first Indian classical musician to receive the Cultural Medallion, has advocated for Indian classical music for over 40 years.



Important News- Other States

Haryana

- ❖ On 28th November 2024, the **International Gita Mahotsav** started in Kurukshetra, Haryana and will continue till 15th December 2024. It is being organised by the **Kurukshetra Development Board and Haryana Tourism**.

Maharastra

- ❖ Pune will host the **prestigious Army Day Parade on January 15, 2025**. It will be the third time this event will be held outside New Delhi. Previously, Bangalore and Lucknow hosted the parade in 2023 and 2024, respectively.
- ❖ It commemorates the historic moment in 1949 when General (later Field Marshal) **KM Cariappa became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief** of the Indian Army.

Odisha

- ❖ The **all-India Director Generals and Inspector Generals of Police conference** was held at Bhubaneswar. It was attended by the PM of India and other higher dignitaries. The conference focussed on national security challenges and the evolving responsibilities of police forces.

Miscellaneous

- ❖ The **fourth meeting of the Working Group on Military Cooperation under the India – Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military-Technical Cooperation**, concluded **successfully in Moscow Russia**. The Working Group, a crucial forum for India-Russia defence cooperation, provides a platform to assess existing military engagements and identify new areas for collaboration to address evolving security challenges.
- ❖ The Indian Navy successfully conducted a **test firing of the 3,500 km-range K-4 ballistic missile from its newly inducted nuclear-powered submarine, INS Arighaat**. The test, conducted in the Bay of Bengal, marks a significant milestone in India's defence capabilities, particularly in enhancing its nuclear deterrence and validating the country's second-strike capability.
- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi to launch the **"Bima Sakhi Yojana"** in Panipat on 9th December 2024.

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