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Floating Solar Power Plant

- India's biggest floating solar power plant (by generation capacity) is being developed by National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Ltd.
- The 100 megawatt plant, known as Telangana Super Thermal Power Project (TSTPP), is being built in the reservoir of NTPC's thermal plant at Ramagundam, Telangana.
- This plant is part of the renewable (solar) energy plants being developed by NTPC with a capacity of 447MW in the Southern Region, and the entire capacity would be commissioned by March 2023. It comprises,
    1. A 217 MW ground-mounted solar power plant at Ettayapuram, Tamil Nadu
    2. A 25 MW floating solar plant at Simhadri thermal power plant near Visakhapatnam
    3. A 92 MW floating solar plant at Kayamkulam in Kerala.
- As all the thermal plants would have reservoirs, establishing floating solar plants in them was the immediate available opportunity without going for any land acquisition.
- The infrastructure needed for flue gas de-sulpherisation (FGD) work is in progress in these plants would be completed by December 2022.

ISRO-JAXA Agreement

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) reviewed cooperation in earth observation, lunar cooperation and satellite navigation.
- They agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in space situational awareness and professional exchange program.
- Both agencies signed an Implementing Arrangement for collaborative activities on rice crop area and air quality monitoring using satellite data.
- India and Japan are already working on a joint lunar polar exploration (LUPEX) mission.
- [LUPEX mission aims to send a lander and rover to the South Pole of the moon around 2024.]
- Earlier, India and Italy decided to explore opportunities in earth observation, space science and robotic and human exploration.

- Also, India and Australia signed an amendment to the MoU which will build on the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Indian Ocean Research Project

- National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) researchers onboard NIO's research vessel Sindhu Sadhana will do research in the Indian Ocean to reveal the internal working of the body of the ocean at a cellular level.
- This first-of-its-kind research project of India is aimed at understanding the biochemistry and the response of the ocean to climate change, nutrient stress and increasing pollution.
- The NIO's research project will be flagged off at Visakhapatnam.
- The researchers would course the Indian Ocean from India's east coast, to Australia, then onward towards Port Louis in Mauritius and up to the border of Pakistan, off India's west coast.
- They would gather the samples for genome mapping of microorganisms in the Indian Ocean.
- Understanding the interactions of trace metals with marine biota would help us understand about nutrient cycling and productivity of oceans.

Inner Line Permit

- Uttarkhand government, in a recent meeting with Union Home Minister, had sought withdrawal of "inner-line permit" (ILP) system in Niti Valley (Chamoli district) and Nelang Valley (Uttarkashi district).
- They want the withdrawal for a better border management and expansion of tourism and other economic activities in villages there.
- The ILP system restricts movement in areas close to the border for everyone other than those with a formal permission.
- In Uttarkhand, tourists have to obtain ILP for locations near China border in the three districts of Uttarkashi, Pithoragarh and Chamoli.
- Among the 13 districts of Uttarkhand, 5 districts have borders with China and Nepal.
- Pithoragarh is strategically more sensitive as it shares boundaries with both China and Nepal.

Nelong Valley

- Nelong valley - 100 km from Uttarkashi - is an inner line area (India-China border) opened to domestic tourists only during the day.
- In Nelong valley, there are two villages - Nelong and Jadong - both of which have been abandoned since the 1962 war.
- Foreign tourists are prohibited in this area while domestic tourists are

allowed entry with ILP. People cannot stay there at night.

Niti Valley

- Located at an altitude of 3600 metres, Niti village in Joshimath (Chamoli district) is the last populated village before China border.
- The Niti Pass was an ancient trade route between India and Tibet, and it was sealed after the 1962 Sino-Indian War.
- Foreign tourists can travel to Niti village after obtaining ILP from Joshimath for a single-day visit, but night stay remains prohibited.
- Domestic tourists can travel to the village any time in the year by producing any identity proof.
- The village remains populated with locals for 6 months in a year as they migrate to lower altitudes during winters due to adverse weather.

Milam Glacier

- It is a major glacier of the Kumaon Himalaya. It is located in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.
- Milam village is open to tourists but movement in the valley after Lilam village is not allowed without ILP.
- Tourists come here for glacier trek. ITBP allows minimum number of tourists to enter the valley due to the risk of getting trapped in snowfalls.
- Villagers in Milam migrate to lower reaches in winters due to snowfall.

Vyas Valley

- Vyas valley, also known as Kalapani, is a Himalayan valley located in Dharchula, Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.
- It shares border with China and Tibet. Kuti is the last habitable village.
- Permit is required for tourists to visit Naabhi and Kuti villages. Domestic tourists require ILP to move after Chhiyalekh - 40 km before Kuti village.

Appointment of Regular CBI Director

- A plea in Supreme Court seeks appointment of a regular Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director.
- It seeks urgent directions from the court to the Centre to initiate and complete the process of the selection of CBI director.
- This plea has been made as the government decides to appoint an interim director for the CBI bypassing the selection procedure provided in the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act.
- The CBI director will be appointed by the Department of Personnel and

Training for a two-year term, after the approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times

