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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

21ST Feb 2023

DESCRIPTIVE

❖ **EU agrees 2-billion-euro ammunition plan for Ukraine**

- European Union ministers agreed on a two-billion-euro plan to raid their own arsenals and jointly purchase desperately needed ammunition for Ukraine.
- Meeting in Brussels, defence and foreign ministers backed an initiative aimed at providing Ukraine with one million artillery shells in the next 12 months as well as replenishing EU stocks.
- Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba hailed the "game-changing decision" from the EU.
- The first part of the EU plan commits a further one billion euros (\$1.06 billion) of shared funding to try to get EU states to tap their already stretched stocks for ammunition that can be sent quickly.
- The second part will see the bloc use another one billion euros to order 155-millimetre shells for Ukraine as part of a massive joint procurement push intended to spur EU defence firms to ramp up production.

❖ **Oil prices hit lowest levels since 2021 on banking fears**

- Oil prices dropped to their lowest levels in 15 months on concerns that risks in the global banking sector and a potential increase in U.S. interest rates could spark a recession that would sap fuel demand.
- The slide in oil occurred despite an historic deal in which UBS, Switzerland's largest bank, agreed to buy Credit Suisse in an attempt to rescue the country's second-biggest bank.
- In volatile trading, Brent crude futures for May was down 83 cents, or 1.1%, to \$72.14 a barrel by 1425 GMT. The U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude contract for April was down 91 cents, or 1.4%, at \$65.83 before its expires.

❖ **CUMI signs pact with DRDO for licensing missile technology**

➤ Murugappa group firm Carborundum Universal Ltd. (CUMI) has signed an agreement with DRDO's Research Centre Imarat (RCI) Laboratory for licensing technology to manufacture "Ceramic Radomes (GELCAST Process) Technology" used in missile systems.

- Ceramic Radomes Technology is considered 'state-of-the-art' across the globe.
- CUMI's high-performance lightweight ceramic materials enable the highest levels of ballistic and blast-proof protection for armoured vehicles.
- Chairman of DRDO: Dr. Samir V Kamat
- HQ of DRDO: New Delhi

❖ **India on track to achieve energy independence by 2047**

➤ India can achieve energy independence by its 100th year of independence in 2047, according to a new study by the US Department of Energy's Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

➤ Study title: Pathways to Atmanirbhar Bharat

➤ The study suggests that achieving this goal would result in significant economic, environmental, and energy benefits for India, including USD2.5 trillion in consumer savings by 2047 and reducing fossil fuel import expenditure by 90 percent or \$240 billion annually.

➤ The study shows that India's energy independence pathway would involve the installation of more than 500 GW of non-fossil electricity generation capacity by 2030, followed by an 80 percent clean grid by 2040 and 90 percent by 2047.

➤ Furthermore, the study suggests that nearly 100% of new vehicle sales could be electric by 2035, and heavy industrial production could shift primarily to green hydrogen and electrification.

❖ 5th Poshan Pakhwada celebrations begins

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development will celebrate the fifth Poshan Pakhwada from 20th March to 3rd April 2023 with various activities nationwide. Every year, Poshan Pakhwada is celebrated in the month of March for 15 days.
- Theme: "Nutrition for All: Together Towards a Healthy India".
- Focus of Poshan Pakhwada will be to popularise 'Shree Anna' - the mother of all grains, as a valuable asset to address malnutrition.
- Poshan Abhiyaan, launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 8th March 2018, has been instrumental in ensuring people's participation and bringing the discourse on nutrition to the forefront. Poshan Abhiyan was launched with the aim to improve nutritional outcomes in a holistic manner.

❖ Rohan Bopanna becomes oldest player ever to win ATP Masters 1000 title

- Rohan Bopanna became the oldest tennis player ever to win the Masters 1000 title, as he and Matthew Ebden of Australia beat the top seeds Wesley Koolhof and Neal Skupski 6-3, 2-6, [10-8] in the doubles final of the \$10,143,750 ATP tournament in Indian Wells, USA.
- The 43-year-old Bopanna broke the record of Daniel Nestor of Canada who had won the Cincinnati Masters title when he was 42 in 2015.
- Bopanna has now won 24 ATP titles, including five ATP Masters 1000 and this was Bopanna's second title this year, having won the Qatar Open with Ebden in February this year.

❖ **ISRO to conduct young scientist programme in Bengaluru**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation is organizing a young scientist program named Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (YUVIKA) to impart basic knowledge on space applications to students of class IX.
- Registration for the program has been started on March 20, 2023.
- The YUVIKA program will be conducted between May 15 and 26 at seven centers.
- Interested students studying in class 9 as on 1 January 2023 within India are eligible to apply.
- ISRO chairman: Shri S. Somanath; HQ: Bengaluru.

❖ **Supreme Court sets new timeline for OROP arrears payment**

- The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Centre to clear all **One Rank One Pension (OROP)** arrears totalling Rs 28,000 crore for ex-servicemen by February 28 next year.
- A bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud took note of the financial difficulties pointed out by the Centre in paying the entire Rs 28,000 crore OROP dues in one go, and laid down the schedule to the Ministry of Defence to pay the arrears to the ex-servicemen, categorised under several heads.
- It noted that out of 25 lakh Defence pensioners, four lakh did not qualify for the OROP scheme as they were getting enhanced pensions.
- **Note:** Under the One Rank One Pension scheme or OROP scheme, uniform pension is to be paid to armed forces personnel retiring at the same rank with the same length of service, regardless of when they completed their service or retired.

❖ **Indian-origin Laxman Narasimhan assumes role of Starbucks CEO**

- In September last year, Starbucks had announced that Narasimhan would become the company's next chief executive officer and a member of the Starbucks Board of Director.

- Following the global search for the new leader of Starbucks to succeed company founder and now former CEO, Howard Schultz, Narasimhan joined Starbucks as incoming CEO on October 1, 2022 after relocating from London to the Seattle area.
- “Effective today, Laxman Narasimhan has assumed the role of chief executive officer and will join the company’s board of directors,” Starbucks said in a statement. Narasimhan will lead Starbucks Annual Shareholder Meeting on March 23.

❖ **Ratan Tata has been appointed to 'Order of Australia' for bolstering bilateral ties**

- India's top industrialist and philanthropist Ratan Tata has been appointed to the 'Order of Australia' for distinguished service to the Australia-India relationship, particularly to trade, investment, and philanthropy, Australia's Governor General has announced.
- As of 2022, Ratan Tata, the Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons and former Chairman of Tata Group, has a net worth of Rs 3800 crore.
- Ratan Tata has played a crucial role in promoting and strengthening the relationship between Australia and India. He has been a vocal proponent of the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement, which was successfully concluded in 2022, and has lent his support to various delegations of business and government officials visiting India.
- Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been operating in Australia since 1998 and currently has the largest Australian workforce of any Indian company, employing approximately 17,000 staff and associates.

❖ **Joe Biden to present 2021 National Humanities Medals to Indian-American Mindy Kaling**

- US President Joe Biden would present the 2021 National Humanities Medals to Indian-American Vera Mindy Chokalingam, known professionally as Mindy Kaling , the White House announced.

➤ The National Medal of Arts is the highest award given to artists, arts patrons, and groups by the US government and honors exemplary individuals and organisations that have advanced the arts in America and offered inspiration to others through their distinguished achievement, support, or patronage.

➤ According to an announcement from the White House, US President Joe Biden will present the 2021 National Humanities Medals and National Medal of Arts to over a dozen recipients, including Indian-American actress and writer Mindy Kaling.

❖ **India & Sri Lanka inaugurate exhibition ‘Geoffrey Bawa’ in New Delhi**

➤ External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar today inaugurated the Sri Lankan exhibition “Geoffrey Bawa: It is Essential to be There”, at the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi. Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture of India, Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi was also present on this occasion.

➤ The historic exhibition which features the works of Sri Lanka’s iconic architect the late Geoffrey Bawa, is jointly organized by the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi and the Geoffrey Bawa Trust to mark the 75th anniversary of Indo-Lanka diplomatic relations, which falls this year.

➤ A large number of invitees including diplomats, senior officials of the Government of India, academics, journalists, art lovers and professionals attended the ceremonial opening of the exhibition.

❖ **International Day of Forests 2023**

➤ The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 21 March the International Day of Forests in 2012 to raise awareness about the importance of forests and trees for the survival of humanity.

➤ Theme for 2023: **Forests and health**

➤ In 2011, the United Nations declared the years 2011 to 2020 as the International Decade of Forests.

➤ This day can be traced back to 1971 when the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) established World Forestry Day.

❖ **Carlos Alcaraz retakes World No. 1 spot from Novak Djokovic**

- Spanish teen sensation Carlos Alcaraz dethroned Novak Djokovic to reclaim World No.1 spot after clinching his maiden Indian Wells title.
- The 19-year-old Alcaraz ended Russian star Daniil Medvedev's 19-match winning streak to secure a 6-3, 6-2 victory and leapfrogged 22-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic in the ATP rankings.
- He also became the youngest world number one ever after his triumph and claimed his third Masters 1000 title.

❖ **Lalit Kumar Gupta appointed as CMD of Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)**

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Lalit Kumar Gupta as Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), a PSU under the Ministry of Textile.
- Presently, he is serving as Director (Finance) in the same organization.
- According to an order issued from the Department of Personnel & Training (DoPT), Gupta has been appointed as CMD of CCI with effect from the date of his assumption of charge of the post for a period of five years, or till the date of his superannuation, or until further orders, whichever is the earlier.

❖ **World Poetry Day 2023: 21 March**

- Every year on March 21, people throughout the world celebrate World Poetry Day to honour an expression of language with which they can all identify.
- The theme of World Poetry Day 2023 is “Always be a poet, even in prose.”
- In 1999, during its 30th General Conference in Paris, UNESCO suggested and established the day to “provide fresh recognition and energy to national, regional, and international poetry movements.”