



Chhattisgarh Inaugurates Country's Biggest Solar Energy Plant | Chhattisgarh | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Chhattisgarh has inaugurated the **country's biggest solar energy plant** with a battery energy storage system located near the Dhaba village **in the Rajnandgaon district**.

- It is established by the [Solar Energy Corporation of India \(SECI\)](#) and **Chhattisgarh Power Distribution Company** provides a **capacity of 100 megawatts**.

Key Points

- This solar plant ensures that there will be **electricity even during the night** generating over **five lakh units per day**.
 - This will **reduce 4.5 lakh metric tons of carbon emission** and **boost green energy**.
- The on-grid solar power plant set-up by the [Chhattisgarh Renewable Energy Development Agency \(CREDA\)](#) is a significant step towards sustainable energy.
- The plant was established on 1st February, 2024. It features a **100-megawatt solar plant equipped with 2,39,000 bifacial solar panels** which is producing electricity from both the sides.
- The plant is expected to **generate power for the next seven years using solar energy**.
- The decision to establish the **first solar park in the Bairam hill area** of the Rajnandgaon district was taken by the Chhattisgarh government to maximize the use of these hilly terrains for solar power.
 - The **project began in 2016**, with the first phase covering five villages and 181.206 hectares and the second phase including four villages and 196-217 hectares.

Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI)

- It was set up in 2011 to facilitate the **implementation of the National Solar Mission (NSM)** and to achieve the targets set forth by it.
- SECI was initially incorporated as a **section 25 company (Not-for-profit) under the Companies Act, 1956**. In the year 2015, it was converted into a Section-3 company.
- SECI is a Schedule- A Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU). It is the **only CPSU dedicated to the development of the Renewable Energy (RE) sector in India** and its scope of activities covers all RE sources.

Eight National Highway Projects Established in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari laid the **foundation stones of 8 National Highway projects** worth Rs 2217 crore in **Tanakpur, Uttarakhand**.

Key Points

- The road widening of Kathgodam to Nainital road with a 2-lane paved shoulder will **improve connectivity to Nainital-Manaskhand temples**.
- The 4-lane widening of Kashipur to Ramnagar road will make it easier for tourists to reach [Jim Corbett National Park](#) and **Manaskhand temples**.
- The 2-lane widening and rehabilitation of Kanda Marg from Udiyari Band on National Highway 309A will **facilitate access to Bagnath and Baijnath temples in Bageshwar**.
- The significant aim of establishing excellent infrastructure in Uttarakhand is not only for roads and highways but **for the safety of people, walls are being constructed on the National Highway 87 extension**.
 - The **repair work of two bridges on Saryu and Gomdi rivers in Bageshwar district** is also being done.
- The projects will not only benefit the tourists but will also make commuting easier for the local people and the **local economy will also be strengthened** without causing any harm to the environment.

India's First Helicopter Emergency Medical Service to Start in Uttarakhand | Uttarakhand | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

India is set to witness its first [Helicopter Emergency Medical Service \(HEMS\)](#) which will operate from **All India Institute for Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Rishikesh**.

Key Points

- The new HEMS would operate under **project 'Sanjeevani'** with a coverage radius of 150 kilometers.
 - This will ensure timely transportation of accident victims and patients from hilly terrain to AIIMS.
- The emergency helicopter services will be indispensable for saving patients during the critical **'golden hour,'** soon after an accident, when expert medical care is vital.
 - This initiative will be a boon for Uttarakhand, a state that attracts tourists, pilgrims, and adventure enthusiasts annually, while also contending with [natural disasters](#).
- The commencement of another project was also announced, responding to the state government's request for air connectivity from **Hindon Air Base to Pithoragarh**.

Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS)

- It is called Project Sanjeevani; a helicopter will be deployed to provide emergency medical services at AIIMS Rishikesh.
 - It **encompasses multiple initiatives** targeting various sectors such as education, environment, agriculture, and livestock healthcare.
- The helicopter will be based at the **hospital at 20-minute notice** and will have a service covering an area of 150 km radius.

30 National Highway Projects Inaugurated in Haridwar | Uttarakhand | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stones of **30 National Highway projects worth Rs 4,755 crore in Haridwar.**

Key Points

- The projects inaugurated include widening of **2-lane paved shoulder from Lameri to Karnaprayag in Rudraprayag and Chamoli and Dudhdhari elevated flyover in Haridwar.**
- These projects will not only ease transportation but will also provide better connectivity from **Rishikesh to the [India-China border](#).**
- The flyover will provide relief from traffic jams in religious city Haridwar and it will be easier to reach other religious places.
- Uttarakhand will achieve a faster pace of development with the construction of these projects. The journey of devotees on **[Chardham routes](#) will be facilitated.**
- Connectivity of Uttarakhand with other states will increase, accelerating economic and social development .

Uttarakhand to Levy Green Cess | Uttarakhand | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The Uttarakhand government is all set to implement a **[green cess](#)** on vehicles entering the state from other states.

- A Green cess is a **form of tax** levied by the government with the **purpose of environment conservation.**

Key Points

- The cess would be collected at **toll plazas through [FASTag](#)**, with amounts ranging from **Rs 20 to Rs 80. [Electric vehicles](#) and cars fuelled by Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) will be exempted.**
- It will be collected by the concessionaires of **[National Highways Authority of India \(NHAI\)](#).**
- According to the transport department, **three-wheelers and four-wheelers (Light Motor Vehicles)** will be subject to **Rs 20 and Rs 40** respectively as green cess, while medium and heavy motor vehicles will have to pay **Rs 60 and Rs 80** respectively.
 - **Two-wheelers, government vehicles, fire tenders and ambulances, Army vehicles and vehicles** used for farming will be **exempted from the green cess.**
- Vehicles from other states will have the option for one-time entry by paying the prescribed rate for

a day.

- Alternatively, they can opt to pay 20 times the standard rate for a three-month period or 60 times the green cess rate for the entire year.

FASTag

- It is a device that employs **Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology** for making toll payments directly while the vehicle is in motion.
- **NHAI launched two mobile Apps** - MyFASTag and FASTag Partner to facilitate the availability of FASTags.
- The **tag is valid for 5 years** from the date of issuance and comes in seven different color codes.

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)

- NHAI was **constituted by an Act of Parliament in 1988** under the administrative control of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways as a Central Authority to develop, maintain and manage the National Highways entrusted to it by the Government of India.
 - The authority, however, **became operational in February, 1995.**
- The Authority consists of a full time Chairman, and **not more than five full time Members and four part time Members** who are appointed by the Central Government.

UPDIC Poised to Make India 'Atmanirbhar' in Defence Production | Uttar Pradesh | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC)** is attracting **investments** of ₹24,510.60 crore and aims to **generate 41,667 employment opportunities.**

Key Points

- Major companies like [BrahMos Aerospace](#), **Tata Technologies**, and **Adani Defence Systems** have proposed investments in the corridor.
- UPDIC is witnessing significant **progress, attracting major investments** and demonstrating commitment to **make India 'Atmanirbhar' (self-reliant) in the defence and aerospace sector.**
- **34 investment projects** worth ₹3585.85 crore are ready to be included in the upcoming groundbreaking ceremony.
 - These **projects are spread across Aligarh, Jhansi, Kanpur and Lucknow** nodes of the defence industrial corridor and would generate over **8,530 employment opportunities.**
- The Government of UP is investing in developing basic infrastructure across nodes, creating a conducive environment for investors.
 - **IIT Kanpur and IIT (BHU) Varanasi** have been **nominated as Centres of Excellence**, conducting research and filling critical R&D gaps.
- UPDIC is transforming the State into a **major hub for defence and aerospace manufacturing**, contributing to India's self-reliance and economic growth.
 - It has collaborated with financial institutions to offer customized loans and cater to the specific needs of MSMEs and start-ups in the defence and aerospace sector.

Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC)

- It is an aspirational project that intends to reduce foreign dependence on the Indian Aerospace & Defence Sector. **It was inaugurated in 2018.**
- The Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) was made the **nodal agency to execute this project** in conjunction with various other state agencies.

Bihar Government Tables Rs 2.78 Lakh Crore Budget | Bihar | 15 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Bihar government presented a Rs 2.78 lakh crore budget**, making education its top priority by allocating over 22% of funds to the department.

Key Points

- The government also laid **special focus on information and technology, tourism** and earmarked over **Rs 1 lakh crore for sundry government schemes.**
- Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Samrat Choudhary presented a **budget of Rs 2,78,725.72 crore:**
 - Allocating Rs 22,200.35 crore (22.20%) to the education department.
 - Rs 13,840.56 crore (13.84%) to the rural development department.
 - Rs 8,191.79 crore (8.19%) to the social welfare department.
 - The rural works and health departments were allocated Rs 7,409.13 crore (7.41%) and Rs 7,117.56 crore (7.12%).
 - The government would spend Rs 3,073.26 crore on several scholarship schemes alone.
 - The government has estimated an expenditure of **Rs 5.040 crore** on good governance schemes under the **Saat Nischay, Part-II programme.**
- The budget has a **revenue surplus of Rs 1,121.41 crore** and shows a fiscal deficit of 2.98%. It also shows an outstanding debt of Rs 3.48 lakh crore.

Saat Nischay, Part-II Programme

- Nischay 1. Yuva Shakti - Progress of Bihar
- Nischay 2. Strong woman, capable woman
- Nischay 3. Irrigation water to every field
- Nischay 4. Clean Village - Prosperous Village
- Nischay 5. Clean City - Developed City
- Nischay 6. Easy Connectivity
- Nischay 7. Additional health facilities for all