Testwale Current Affairs PDF

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1. Climeworks launches world's largest DAC+S plant "Mammoth" in Iceland (May 10, 2024)

On May 8th, 2024, Climeworks AG, a Swiss startup, inaugurated Mammoth, the largest operational Direct Air Capture and Storage (DAC + S) facility globally, located in Iceland.

An Overview of the News

- Mammoth's purpose is to extract carbon dioxide (CO_2) from the atmosphere and sequester it underground in rock formations.

- Mammoth can capture up to 36,000 tons of CO_2 annually, representing a substantial advancement in carbon capture technology.

Regarding Mammoth:

Scale and Progress

- The second DAC + S facility by Climeworks, Mammoth, is ten times larger than its predecessor, Orca, established in Iceland in 2021.

- Mammoth's modular design allows for scalable growth and is set to be completed by the end of 2024.

Infrastructure

- Comprising a total of 72 collector containers, with 12 already operational on-site, indicating its phased deployment strategy.

Cost Reduction Projections

- Mammoth aims to drive down the cost of CO_2 removal significantly:
- Projections target USD 400 to 600 per ton by 2030.
- A further reduction to USD 200 to 350 per ton is anticipated by 2040.

Renewable Energy Integration

- Mammoth harnesses geothermal energy as its primary renewable energy source, facilitating the low-temperature heat required for the air capture process.

Carbon Transformation Process

- Captured CO_2 is transported underground, where it undergoes a natural process of reacting with basaltic rocks, ultimately transforming into stone.

Important Points:

- Co-Chief Executive Officers of Climeworks AG: Jan Wurzbacher and Christoph Gebald.

- Headquarters: Zurich, Switzerland.

Corporate Address: A102, A Block, Sector 58, Noida, Uttar Pradesh-201301

Iceland's capital: Reykjavik.
*
* Prime Minister of Iceland: Bjarni Benediktsson.

2. John Swinney Elected 7th First Minister of Scotland by Scottish Parliament (May 9, 2024)

On May 7, 2024, John Ramsay Swinney, leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP), was elected as the 7th First Minister of Scotland by the Scottish Parliament.

An Overview of the News

* John Swinney replaces Hamza Haroon Yusuf, who officially resigned from the position on May 7, 2024.

* Swinney's formal appointment will be granted through a Royal Warrant from His Majesty King Charles III of the United Kingdom (UK).

* John Swinney's nomination for First Minister was the result of a vote within the Scottish Parliament.

* Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) voted 64 to 57 in favor of selecting John Swinney as First Minister out of a total of 4 nominees, with seven abstentions.

About John Swinney

Background:

* John Swinney, aged 60, was born on April 13, 1964, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He joined the Scottish National Party (SNP) in 1979.

Political Career:

* In 1997, Swinney was elected as the Westminster Member of Parliament (MP) for North Tayside.

* Transitioning to Scottish politics, he became the Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Tayside North in 1999.

* Swinney held the position of deputy leader of the SNP from 1998 to 2000, and subsequently served as party leader from 2000 to 2004.

Government Positions:

* From 2011 to 2014, Swinney served as the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Employment, and Sustainable Growth.

* He assumed the role of Deputy First Minister from 2014 to 2023, achieving the distinction of being the longest-serving Deputy First Minister in the history of UK devolution.

* In addition to his deputy leadership, Swinney held various cabinet positions:

  ◦ Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Constitution, and Economy from 2014 to 2016.

       Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills from 2016 to 2021.
- ○
  - ○ Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery from 2021 to 2023.

About Scotland

- First Minister- John Ramsay Swinney

- Capital - Edinburgh

- Currency - Pound sterling

- Official languages - Scots, Scottish Gaelic, English, British Sign Language

- National animal - Unicorn

- National flower - Thistle

3. Sweden becomes 38th country to sign NASA's "Artemis Accords" (April 22, 2024)

On April 16, 2024, Sweden officially became the 38th nation to sign NASA's "Artemis Accords," joining other countries in establishing guidelines for peaceful space exploration.

An Overview of the News

- The agreement was signed by Mats Persson, Minister for Education of Sweden, and Erik D. Ramanathan, the United States Ambassador to Sweden, in Stockholm.

Switzerland's Entry into Artemis Accords

- Switzerland preceded Sweden, becoming the 37th country to sign the Artemis Accords on April 15, 2024.

- Guy Parmelin, Swiss Federal Councillor and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education, signed the accords on behalf of Switzerland.

- The signing ceremony took place at NASA headquarters in Washington D.C., with Bill Nelson, NASA administrator, present.

List of signatories to the Artemis Accord as of April 20, 2024:

- New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, and Sweden.

Artemis Accords Overview

- Initiation: Launched jointly by NASA and the **US Department of State in 2020.**

- Signatories: Eight founding countries signed on **October 13, 2020.**

- Nature: **Non-binding agreement** with no financial commitments.

- Purpose: Establish a framework for implementing key obligations from the Outer Space Treaty of 1967, promoting responsible and sustainable space exploration.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

- It is an autonomous body under the **United States federal government.**

- Its primary duties i**nclude overseeing the civilian space program.**

- Additionally, NASA conducts research in the fields of aeronautics and space.

- Its mandate includes **exploration beyond Earth's atmosphere.**

- The agency is responsible for advancing scientific knowledge and technological innovation in space exploration and related fields.

  - Established - **29 July 1958**

  - Founder - **Dwight D. Eisenhower**

  - Headquarters: **Washington, D.C., United States**

4. Doha's Hamad International Airport Crowned World's Best in 2024 Skytrax Awards (April 22, 2024)

Hamad International Airport (HIA) in Doha, Qatar, clinched the title of World's Best Airport in the 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards.

An Overview of the News

- **Singapore Changi Airport,** previous winner of the 2023 Airport of the Year award, **secured 2nd place** overall and was recognized as the Best Airport in Asia. It also won the **accolade for the World's Best Airport Immigration Service.**

- **Incheon Airport in Seoul, South Korea**, **ranked 3rd globally** and was honored with the title of **World's Most Family Friendly Airport for 2024.**

- The awards ceremony took place at the **Passenger Terminal EXPO** in **Frankfurt, Germany,** on **April 17th, 2024.**

- Skytrax, an international aviation research organization **headquartered** in **London, United Kingdom (UK),** organizes the prestigious World Airport Awards.

Indian Airports in the 2024 Global Rankings:

- Delhi Airport retained **36th place.**

- Mumbai Airport maintained a position within the top 100, **dropping to 95th from 84th.**

- Bengaluru Airport climbed to **59th place.**

- Hyderabad Airport rose to **61st place.**

- Goa's Manohar International Airport secured the **92nd spot.**

2024 Global Airport Rankings:

1. Hamad International Airport, Doha, Qatar

2. Singapore Changi Airport, Singapore

3. Incheon International Airport, Seoul, South Korea

4. Tokyo Haneda International Airport, Japan

5. Tokyo Narita International Airport, Japan

6. Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport, France

7. Dubai International Airport, United Arab Emirates (UAE)

8. Munich Airport, Germany

9. Zurich Airport, Switzerland

10. Istanbul Airport, Türkiye

5. World's first 'Miss AI' beauty pageant launched by WAICAs (April 19, 2024)

World AI Creator Awards (WAICA) launches the inaugural Miss AI beauty pageant.

An Overview of the News

- The program evaluates contestants' aesthetic appeal, technical proficiency and online influence.

Competition Details:

- Open to AI creators around the world to showcase their models.

- Evaluated based on appearance, etiquette and social media engagement.

- Social clout is measured by fan engagement and audience growth rates.

Partnership with Fanview:

- Fanview, a platform hosting virtual models, is a partner.

- Co-founder Will Monanez aspires to make the WAICAs like the Oscars.

Award:

- The winner receives a $5,000 cash prize, Fanview promotion and PR support.

- Runners-up and third-place winners also receive prizes.

- The winners will be announced on May 10 with an online awards ceremony at the end of the month.

Judge Panel:

- It features AI-generated models Aitana Lopez and Emily Pellegrini.

- It also includes human experts such as entrepreneur Andrew Bloch and beauty pageant historian Sally-Ann Fawcett.

6. Government forms panel to promote scientific mining of critical minerals (April 19, 2024)

A **seven-member panel** has been set up by the government under the leadership of **NITI Aayog member Vijay Kumar Saraswat** to promote scientific mining of critical minerals.

An Overview of the News

- The panel's primary goal is **to propose legislative measures for the cost-effective and scientific extraction of critical minerals such as copper, gold, and diamond.**

- These minerals are often found in deeply embedded deposits, requiring underground mining for extraction.

- Strategies will be devised by the panel to raise awareness among states about the implications of mining reforms.

- In **2023, the Geological Survey of India (GSI)** discovered approximately 5.9 million tonnes of lithium deposits in the Salal-Haimana area of Jammu & Kashmir, crucial for electric vehicle manufacturing.

About Critical Minerals

- Critical minerals are vital for both economic development and national security.

- India's government has identified a list of **30 critical minerals.**

- These minerals include Antimony, Beryllium, Bismuth, Cobalt, Copper, Gallium, Germanium, Graphite, Hafnium, Indium, Lithium, Molybdenum, Niobium, Nickel, platinum group elements (PGE), Phosphorous, Potash, Rare Earth Elements (REE), Rhenium, Silicon, Strontium, Tantalum, Tellurium, Tin, Titanium, Tungsten, Vanadium, Zirconium, Selenium, and Cadmium.

7. Appointment of Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as Prime Minister of Kuwait (April 17, 2024)

His Highness Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, issued an Emirati decree to appoint Kuwaiti economist Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah as Prime Minister (PM) of Kuwait.

An Overview of the News

- Sheikh Ahmed replaces former Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Sabah Al Salem Al-Sabah, who resigned following new parliamentary elections in April 2024.

- According to Article 57 of the Kuwaiti Constitution, the current government must submit its resignation before the inauguration of the legislature.

Details about Sheikh Ahmed Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah:

- Sheikh Ahmed is a member of the House of Sabah, Kuwait's ruling family.

- He started his career as a financial analyst at the Kuwait Financial Center in 1977.

- In 1978, he joined the Central Bank of Kuwait as a financial researcher.

- Sheikh Ahmed served as Acting Manager of the Department of Banking Supervision at the Central Bank of Kuwait from 1984 to 1985, and Manager from 1985 to 1987.

- From 1987 to 1997, he held the position of Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) at Bergen Bank and later served as Deputy CMD of Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait from 1997 to 1999.

Sheikh Ahmed's previous ministerial roles:

- Minister of Communications (2005 to 2006)

- Health Minister (2005 to 2007)

- Oil minister

- Minister of Information (2009 to 2011).

Head of the Diwan of His Majesty the Crown Prince:

- Sheikh Ahmed served as H.H. from September 2021 until his appointment as Prime Minister. Served as head of the Crown Prince's Diwan.

About Kuwait

Capital - Kuwait City

Currency - Kuwaiti Dinar (KWD)

8. Israel's C-Dome Defense System Successfully Deployed in Eilat for First Time (April 15, 2024)

Israel has introduced its maritime defense system, known as the C-Dome, for the first time in Eilat, Israel's southernmost city.

An Overview of the News

- The C-Dome is essentially a naval adaptation of the Iron Dome, a renowned air defense system designed to safeguard against rocket and missile threats.

- Notably, on April 8, 2024, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) effectively intercepted a suspicious airborne target breaching Israeli airspace using the C-Dome defense mechanism.

- The C-Dome Defense System is a product of Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, a state-owned Israeli defense corporation.

About IDF:

- The Israel Defense Forces (IDF), also known as Tzahal in Hebrew, serves as the national military of the State of Israel.

- Comprising three main service branches, namely the Israeli Ground Forces, the Israeli Air Force, and the Israeli Navy, it covers various aspects of defense.

- As the singular military arm of Israel's security infrastructure, the IDF holds exclusive responsibility for national defense.

9. Roscosmos Launches 1st Angara-A5 Rocket from Vostochny Cosmodrome (April 15, 2024)

Angara-A5 successfully launched on April 11, 2024, from Vostochny Cosmodrome, replacing Proton M as Russia's heavy-lift rocket.

An Overview of the News

- The rocket attained speeds exceeding 25,000 km/hr and placed a test payload into low orbit.

- The launch coincided with Russia's Cosmonaut Day on April 12, commemorating Yuri Gagarin's historic spaceflight in 1961.

- It will replace Russia's heavy-lift rocket Proton-M, which has served in this role since the mid-1960s.

Angara-A5:

- The Angara-A5 stands 54.5 meters tall and comprises three stages, with a hefty weight of approximately 773 tonnes.

- It boasts a payload capacity of up to 24.5 tonnes to lower orbit.

- Notably, the rocket employs a more environmentally friendly fuel combination of oxygen and kerosene, departing from the toxic heptyl used in previous models.

- The Angara series, developed by the Khrunichev State Research and Production Space Centre, derives its name from the Angara River, originating from Lake Baikal in Siberia.

Project Angara Origins:

- Conceptualized in 1991 following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Project Angara aimed to diminish Russia's reliance on the Baikonur Cosmodrome, leased from Kazakhstan until 2050.

About Roscosmos:

- Headed by Director-General Yuri Ivanovich Borisov, Roscosmos operates from its headquarters in Moscow, Russia.

- Established in 1992, the agency has been instrumental in advancing Russia's space exploration endeavors.

10. Israeli Mathematician Avi Wigderson Wins 2023 ACM Turing Award (April 14, 2024)

Avi Wigderson, an Israeli mathematician and computer scientist, was awarded the 2023 ACM A.M. Turing Award.

An Overview of the News

- This award is widely regarded as the "Nobel Prize of Computing".

- He holds the position of Herbert H. Maass Professor in the School of Mathematics at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey, USA.

Reason for Award:

- Wigderson was honored for his foundational contributions to the theory of computation.

- His work significantly influenced the understanding of randomness in computation and mathematics.

- He was recognized for his intellectual leadership in theoretical computer science.

- The ACM A.M. Turing Award carries a prestigious cash prize of USD 1 million.

Contributions and Career Highlights:

- In 1986, Wigderson began his academic career as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel.

- He was promoted to Associate Professor in 1987 and later became a full Professor at the Computer Science Institute of the Hebrew University.

- In 1993, he assumed the role of Chairman of the Computer Science Institute at Hebrew University.

- In 1999, he joined the faculty as a Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton, New Jersey.