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4TH NOVEMBER 2022

Medicines may soon have traces of ultramicroscopic gold powered by a super mushroom for greater efficacy. Cordy gold nanoparticles (CorAuNPs), the outcome of a collaborative experiment by scientists from four Indian institutions, has earned an international patent from Germany. These nanoparticles, derived from the synthesis of the extracts of Cordyceps militaris and gold salts, could make drug delivery in the human body faster and surer. Cordyceps militaris is a high-value parasitic fungus, lab grown at the Department of Biotechnology's Technology Incubation Centre (TIC) in Bodoland University, one of the collaborators of the patented work. Gold salts are ionic chemical compounds of gold generally used in medicine.

Gujarat is now among the top performers in school education, according to an index released by the Ministry of Education. Though no State found a place in the top grade, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh have joined Kerala, Punjab, Chandigarh, and Maharashtra categorised under Level 2 with a score of 901 to 950 out of a total score of 1,000. The Performance Grading Index of the Ministry of Education classifies States and Union Territories into 10 grades based on their score out of a total 1,000 points. Their performance is assessed on a total of 70 indicators in five domains, which are learning outcome, access, infrastructure and facilities, equity and governance process.

The number of children entering pre-primary classes in 2021-2022 saw a further decline, resulting in 30% fewer students in this school section as compared to pre-Covid as younger students with less access to remote learning continue to bear the biggest brunt of learning loss during the pandemic, according to a report released by the Ministry of Education. A total of 94.95 lakh students entered pre-primary classes in 2021-2022, registering a drop of 10% as compared to the previous year when 1.06 crore children enrolled in these classes.

20,000 number of schools shut down across India during 2020-21, while the number of teachers also declined by 1.95% compared to the previous year, according to a new report by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, only 44.85% of schools had computer facilities, while nearly

APEDA LOOKS TO BOOST MILLET EXPORTS TO ₹2,000 CR BY FY26

1. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) intends to achieve this by exporting value-added and processed organic millet products to at least 100 countries. India ranks fifth in global millet trade and exports of millet is less than 1% of domestic production. In 2021-22, millet exports were estimated at ₹460 crore.

2. **About Millets-Millets are collective group of small seeded annual grasses that are grown as grain crops, primarily on marginal land in dry areas of temperate, sub-tropical and tropical regions. India is a major producer of Millets, accounting for 80% of Asia's production and 20% of global production.** Major Millets crops grown in India are Pearl Millet (Bajra) (highest share), Jowar (Sorghum), and Finger Millet (Mandua/Ragi). Major producers include Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana. Does not require high mechanization and it can withstand drought.

3. Initiatives taken for promotion of Millet 2023 declared as International Year of Millets (IYOM) by UNGA on India's proposal. National Year of Millets celebrated in 2018. Millets notified as nutri-cereals and included under POSHAN Mission Abhiyan.

4. It was established under agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority Act, 1985. It is an autonomous body under Ministry of Commerce and Industry. APEDA has been actively engaged in the development of markets besides upgradation of infrastructure and quality to promote the export of agro products.

REINVIGORATING INDIA'S ECONOMIC ENGAGEMENTS WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. Released by Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank), working paper highlights need for strategic alliances between India and South African Development Community (SADC) countries. In existence since 1980, SADC includes 16 member countries, comprising 35.4% of Africa's total land area, 28.4% of its GDP and 28.2% population (refer image).

2. SADC shares strong and deep ties and is an important trade partner for India with total trade of USD 30.8 billion in 2021 and USD 69.9 billion investment from India in SADC in last 26 years.

3. Strategies to Enhance India's Engagements with SADC Rare-Earth Elements (REE): SADC region is richly endowed in lithium, graphite, cobalt, nickel, copper, and other REE. Strategic Alliance for sourcing other Critical Minerals for Electric Vehicle value chain through joint exploration activities.

4. Maritime and Defense Cooperation: SADC is home to India's major defense exports countries and includes 9 Indian Ocean Littoral countries (IOLC) in Africa. Both sides can work on ensuring a safe and secure maritime environment based on cooperative framework of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region). Developing Manufacturing Value Chains in SADC by increased FDI in manufacturing from Indian companies.

WORLD SLIPS ON DEFORESTATION, LOSES COVER EQUAL TO IRELAND'S AREA IN 2021: FOREST DECLARATION ASSESSMENT (FDA)

1. FDA is an independent, civil society-led initiative to assess progress toward global goals of halting deforestation and restoring 350 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. These goals are set out in international declarations such as New York Declaration on Forests (2014) and Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use (2021).

2. **Key Findings-World is not on track of stopping forest loss and degradation goals by 2030. Deforestation rates worldwide declined only modestly in 2021 by 6.3% compared to 2018-20 baseline. Brazil was world's largest contributor to deforestation in 2021.**

3. Global demand for commodities such as beef, fossil fuels and

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34% had an internet connection.

38 %, the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Thursday, which, experts said was the reason behind the thick layer of pungent smog over the national capital. Delhi's air quality slipped back into "severe" zone on Thursday morning amid raging farm fires. Punjab had on Wednesday reported 3,634 farm fires, the highest this season so far.

88 %, Turkey's inflation in October, the highest level since 1997 as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan sticks to unorthodox policies to combat cost of living crisis. Central banks worldwide are raising borrowing costs to tame soaring consumer prices, but Turkey has bucked the global trend, with Mr. Erdogan calling higher interest rates his "biggest enemy".

2 years after war broke out in northern Ethiopia between federal forces and Tigrayan rebels, a breakthrough agreement has been announced. The region of six million people has been largely closed off to the outside world for well over a year, making it very difficult to assess conditions on the ground. The country remains in deep crisis, with its once vibrant economy in ruins.

2 million number of children in areas of Pakistan devastated by summer's floods still missing school, according to UN children's agency. The deluge, which began in mid June, destroyed nearly 27,000 school buildings, the UNICEF said. According to Pakistani officials, 647 children were killed by the flooding. The World Bank said the floods caused \$40 billion in damages.

India will insist on "action" and a clear pathway that developed countries must follow to deliver long promised finance to developing countries for adapting to climate change threats, Bhupender Yadav, Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change, said on Thursday, ahead of the 27th edition of the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) in Sharm El Shaikh, Egypt that begins on November 7. "This ought to be a COP for action. We will seek clarity on climate finance, technology transfer and clear definitions of what constitutes climate finance. There are several claims made on funds being given by the West but loans and grants must

timber, and for mined commodities such as fossil fuels drive much of forest loss. Nations lagging behind in fiscal support for forest protection and restoration as total mitigation finance for forests averages \$2.3 billion per year.

4.Major Recommendations-Governments, companies, and civil society must collaborate to accelerate forest action. Incorporate forest risks and impacts into public budgeting frameworks. 200 times more funding for forests required to meet 2030 goals. Redirect harmful agricultural subsidies and other incentives (domestic and international) that drive deforestation and forest degradation.

MINISTRY OF HEAVY INDUSTRIES (MHI) MANDATED NEW SAFETY TESTS FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVs) RECEIVING SUBSIDIES

1.MHI announced a list of safety tests that will be mandatory for EVs manufacturers from April 2023 to receive subsidies under following EV promotion schemes: Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobiles and Auto Components. PLI Scheme for Advance Chemistry Cell (ACC).

2.FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) II. These tests, carried at 3 levels (Battery Pack, Battery Management System (BMS) and Cell Level), are accepted internationally for safeguarding Human Safety.

3.Currently, there are no centralised testing facilities for EVs in India and manufacturers have their own benchmarks. In recent months, safety concerns have been raised due to multiple instances of fires in EVs. Possible reasons for fire incidents include manufacturing defects, external damage, faults in the deployment in BMS, faulty charging etc.

4.Initiatives taken for EV Safety-Automotive Research Association of India to set up infrastructure for testing, certification. Issuance of performance norms for lithium-ion battery packs and traction systems (in line with broader ISO norms) by Bureau of Indian Standards. Ministry of Road Transport and Highways released additional safety requirements for EV batteries under Central Motor Vehicles Rules of 1989.

CABINET APPROVES MECHANISM FOR PROCUREMENT OF ETHANOL BY PUBLIC SECTOR OIL MARKETING COMPANIES (OMCS) UNDER ETHANOL BLENDED PETROL (EBP) PROGRAMME

1.Cabinet has approved higher ethanol price derived from different sugarcane based raw materials (molasses and sugarcane juice/sugar/sugar syrup) under EBP Programme for 2022-23 sugar season.

2.An ethanol blend is defined as a blended motor fuel containing ethyl alcohol that is at least 99% pure, derived from agricultural products, and blended exclusively with gasoline. Apart from sugarcane-based raw materials, ethanol production from surplus rice with Food Corporation of India and Maize is also allowed.

3.Government has been implementing EBP Programme wherein OMCs sell petrol blended with ethanol up to 10%. It has been extended to whole of India except UTs of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands. Target of achieving average 10% blending was achieved in June, 2022 and target of 20% ethanol blending in petrol is advanced to 2025 from earlier target of 2030. India is world's fifth largest producer of ethanol after US, Brazil, EU and China.

4.Significance-Less polluting fuel, and offers equivalent efficiency at lower cost than petrol. Achieving energy security, lowering crude oil import bill and transitioning to a low carbon economy. Enable local enterprises and farmers to participate in energy economy. Union Budget 2022-23 announced an additional differential excise duty on unblended fuel.

PIG IRON

1.Russia has emerged as the biggest exporter of pig iron to India for April-September period of FY23. Pig iron, also known as crude iron, is produced by smelting Iron ore or ilmenite. Smelting is a form of extractive metallurgy which is used to produce a metal from its ore.

2.Pig Iron has a very high carbon content (3.5-4.5%) along with silica, Manganese, Sulphur, Phosphorus, Titanium and other

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be clearly differentiated.

India has abstained on yet another resolution involving Ukraine, this time a motion sponsored by Russia at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that sought to establish a commission to investigate claims by Moscow that the U.S. and Ukraine are carrying out “military biological activities” in laboratories in Ukraine in violation of the biological weapons convention (BWC). The resolution failed to get adopted on November 3 as only two Council members — Russia and China — voted in its favour.

Amazon India has informed the national child rights body that it had no information regarding funding to the All India Mission which was involved in “unlawful activities” and would get the same from its office in the United States. They sought 10 days’ time for providing the information sought by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). NCPCR chairperson Priyank Kanungo said three representatives of Amazon India had informed funding was governed by the Amazon U.S. office.

trace elements. High carbon content makes it brittle and not useful directly except for limited applications. It is refined to produce steel, wrought iron, alloys etc.