

# NEWS TODAY

## KABIL UNDER MINISTRY OF MINES ENGAGING WITH COUNTRIES FOR EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES OF MINERAL ASSET ACQUISITION ABROAD

- **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)** is a joint venture company set up with the participation of 3 Central Public Sector Enterprises namely, National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Ltd. (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd. (MECL).
- KABIL is mandated to **identify and acquire overseas mineral assets of critical and strategic nature** such as lithium, cobalt, nickel, Copper, Neodymium, other rare earths etc.
  - KABIL is **already engaging with countries like Australia, Argentina, Bolivia and Chile** which are endowed with cited critical and strategic minerals.
- **Significance of the initiative**
  - Ensure mineral security and **attain self-reliance (Atma Nirbhar Bharat) in the area of critical & strategic minerals.**
  - Cater to **requirements of crucial sectors such as e-mobility, renewable energy, medicine, aerospace, aviation etc.**
- **Critical and strategic minerals**
  - A mineral is **labelled as critical when the risk of supply shortage and associated impact on the economy is (relatively) higher** than the other raw materials.
  - These minerals are termed **strategic due to the limited availability of substitutes and their demand in high-technology products** such as hybrid cars, wind turbine magnets, and defence equipment.
- **Issues with availability of such minerals:** Complex global supply chains (High degree of monopoly), supply risks (due to domestic factors and interruptions in international trade) etc.

Critical Minerals	Strategic Minerals
1. Beryllium	1. Antimony
2. Germanium	2. Molybdenum
3. Rare earths (heavy and light)	3. Borates
4. Rhenium	4. Nickel
5. Tantalum	5. Chromium
6. Graphite	6. Cobalt
7. Zirconium	7. Silver
8. Chromium	8. Copper
9. Limestone	9. Titanium
10. Niobium	10. Diamond
11. Silicon	11. Tungsten
12. Strontium	12. Germanium
	13. Vanadium
	14. Lithium
	15. Zinc
	16. Rare earths

## MINISTRY OF EDUCATION LAUNCHES NEAT 3.0 TO PROVIDE BEST-DEVELOPED ED-TECH SOLUTIONS

- National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) 3.0 will serve as a **single platform to provide the best-developed ed-tech solutions** and courses to students of the country.
  - It aims to:
    - Provide the **use of best-developed technological solutions** in the education sector.
    - **Enhance the employability of the youth** on a single platform for learners' convenience.
  - Solutions use **Artificial Intelligence for a personalized and customized learning experience** for better learning outcomes and skill development in the niche areas.
  - During the first phase, the portal was **launched as a pilot phase in AICTE** (All India Council for Technical Education) **approved Government Colleges of India only.**
- **Benefits of NEAT 3.0 and EdTech:**
  - **Bridging the digital divide**, particularly amongst economically disadvantaged students
  - **Enables scale and speed** using a direct to the device model,
  - **Breaks down geographical barriers** helping students access high-quality education,
  - Teachers become **facilitators and curators**, managing remotely.
- In related news, government also **launched AICTE prescribed technical books in regional languages.**
  - Learning in regional languages is **one of the features of National Education Policy 2020.**
  - **Diverse languages helps to strengthen at grass root level** in building an innovative society.

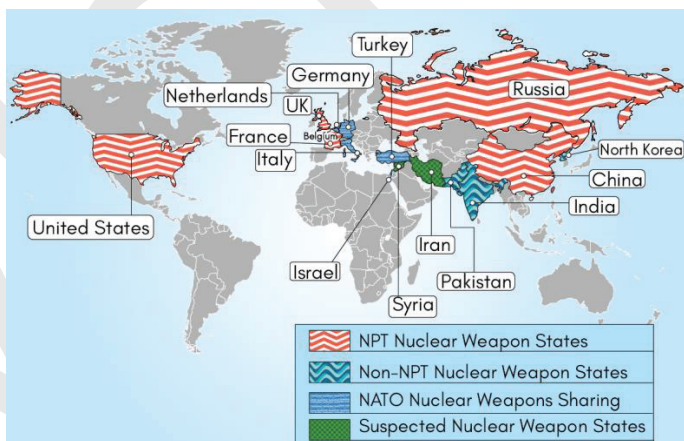
## SUPREME COURT (SC) NOTICE TO CENTRE, MANIPUR ON INNER LINE PERMIT (ILP) SYSTEM

- SC sought Centre and Manipur State government's response on a **plea challenging the constitutional validity of the ILP system extension in Manipur.**
  - The petition challenged the **decision of the Centre in 2019 to extend the ILP system in Manipur** by way of an order promulgated by the President.
  - The plea contended that the **ILP provides unrestrained power to the state to restrict entry and exit of non-indigenous people** or those who are not permanent residents of Manipur.
  - As per plea, **ILP violates the fundamental rights of the citizens guaranteed under Articles 14, 15, 19 and 21.**
- About ILP**
  - ILP is an **official travel document or permit granted to outsiders for travel** to protected areas for a limited period.
  - It was introduced by the British under the **Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR) of 1873.**
  - ILP is seen as a way to **protect the demographic, cultural, political and social integrity** of the small tribal populations in the hill states.
  - Foreigners need a Protected Area Permit (PAP)** to visit tourist places which are different from Inner Line Permits needed by domestic tourists.
- Manipur is the fourth State after **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram** where the ILP regime is applicable.



## 5 UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL (UNSC) STATES PLEDGE TO AVOID NUCLEAR WAR

- In a joint statement, UNSC's Permanent members (Britain, China, France, Russia and U.S.) **pledged to prevent further spread of nuclear weapons and to avoid a nuclear war.**
  - They also emphasized importance of **preserving and complying with bilateral and multilateral non-proliferation, disarmament, and arms control agreements** and commitments.
- Development came ahead of a five-yearly review conference (now postponed) for **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).**



- NPT came to force in 1970 to:**
  - Prevent spread of nuclear weapons & weapons technology
  - Foster peaceful uses of nuclear energy,
  - Further goal of disarmament.
- India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea are not part of NPT.**
- Other multilateral treaties for preventing nuclear proliferation and for promoting progress in nuclear disarmament:**
  - Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in Atmosphere, In Outer Space And Under Water, also known as **Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT)**. **India has ratified it.**
  - Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)** that bans all nuclear weapons test explosions. It was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force.
  - Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)** includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. **India is not part of TPNW.**

## RELIANCE JIO GETS APPROVAL TO BUY 5G GEAR FROM 'TRUSTED' VENDORS

- It will enable Jio to use equipment from **various vendors**, including Ericsson, Nokia Networks, Cisco, and Dell, which have been endorsed as a **trusted source by National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS).**
  - Recently, HFCL Ltd also received approval as a **'Trusted Source' from NSCS.**
- Government in June 2021 **launched Trusted Telecom Portal (TTP) for giving clearance to trusted products** that telecom service providers (TSPs) can install in their network.
  - 'Trusted Products' are **those equipment, whose critical components and the products themselves are sourced from 'Trusted Sources'.**
- TTP was launched as a **part of National Security Directive on Telecommunications Sector (NSDTS).**
  - NSDTS was approved in 2020 **to control installation of telecom gears from non-friendly countries** which can pose security threats to the country.
- Under NSDTS, **government declares a list of trusted sources and trusted products** for installation in the country's telecom network.
  - List will be decided **based on approval of National Security Committee on Telecom** headed by deputy national security advisor.
  - Also, directive has **provisions to qualify telecom gears made by domestic players in trusted category.**

# RBI RELEASES FRAMEWORK FOR OFFLINE DIGITAL PAYMENTS

- Framework has been released **under Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.**
- **Offline Payment** refers to a transaction which does not require internet or telecom connectivity to take effect.
  - It includes **any channel or instrument like cards, wallets or mobile devices**, with certain Conditions for Authorised Payment System Operators (PSOs) and Payment System Participants (PSPs).
- Framework is **aimed at pushing digital transactions in rural and semi-urban areas.**
  - It will allow **offline payments of up to Rs 200 per transaction**, subject to the **total limit of Rs 2,000.**
  - It will enable small value digital payments in offline mode using cards, wallets and mobile device and allowed **face-to-face mode only.**
  - Offline payment transactions may be offered **without an additional factor of authentication (AFA).**
  - RBI's **integrated ombudsman scheme**, will be applicable for grievance redressal.
- **Benefits of Offline Mode Payments**
  - Enable **retail digital payments** in remote areas with **low speed** or **no internet connectivity.**
  - Boost the **adoption of digital payments** and encourage **technological innovations** in payment system.

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Highest Ever Merchandise Export Figures for December

- As per the Preliminary Data for December 2021, India's merchandise export in December 2021 was USD 37.29 billion, **the highest ever monthly achievement.**
  - It shows an increase of 37.0% for December 2020 and an increase of 37.55% for December 2019.
- The **trade deficit has reduced** from April-December 2021 (143.97 billion) to **December 2021** (USD 21.99 billion).



### Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

- Recently, the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** released Basic and advanced manuals on Cyber Hygiene for Cyber Space - Dos and Don'ts, and a Quarterly Newsletter - 'CyberPravah' under I4C.
  - It aims to create awareness of cyber crimes and cyber crime terminology etc.
- I4C, under MHA, acts as an **agency for coordinating at the Central level and to support States/UTs** by providing a common framework in their **fight against cybercrimes.**
  - It **brings together academia, industry, public and government** in prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of cybercrimes.



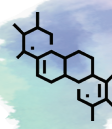
### Crops create cooling effect

- **As per new study:**
  - **Converting annual crops to perennial bioenergy crops can induce a cooling effect** on the areas where they are cultivated.
  - Global air **temperature decreases by 0.03~0.08 °C**, after 50 years of large-scale bio-energy crop cultivation.
  - **Large-scale bioenergy crop cultivation induces a biophysical cooling effect** at the global scale and induces secondary effects on natural greenhouse gas fluxes.
- Bioenergy crops are defined as any **plant material used to produce bioenergy.**
  - Bioenergy is "energy derived from recently **living material such as wood, crops, or animal waste.**"



### Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF)

- Recently, Prime Minister approved ex gratia from PMNRF for the victims of stampede at Mata Vaishno Devi Bhawan.
- PMNRF was established in 1948 with public contributions to assist displaced persons from Pakistan.
- The resources of the PMNRF are utilized to **render immediate relief to families of those killed in natural calamities like floods, cyclones and earthquakes, etc.**
- It does not get any budgetary support and it **accepts voluntary contributions from Individuals, Organizations, Trusts, Companies and Institutions etc.**
- Donation to PMNRF is **completely tax exempt** and **contributions made to it qualify as CSR expenditure** under Companies Act, 2013.



### Perovskite-based devices

- Recently, IIT Guwahati have found a way to make solar panels more efficient, cheaper and recyclable — by **stabilising hybrid perovskite-based solar or photovoltaic devices** to produce electricity.
- Perovskite-based devices are considered **heavily used semiconductor materials** as they are affordable and easy to manufacture.
  - The perovskite materials are **extremely unstable towards ambient (humidity and oxygen) conditions** that restrict their commercialisation.





Personalities in News

### Rani Velu Nachiyar (03 January 1730 - 25 December 1796)

- Rani Velu Nachiyar was daughter of King Chellamuthu Vijayaragunatha Setupathy of **Ramanathapuram**.
- She is also known as **Veeramangai** (brave women in Tamil),
- She became the **queen of Sivaganga estate** (in present day Tamil Nadu) from 1780-1790.
- Personality Traits:** A trained fighter with proficiency in multiple languages (English, French, Urdu etc.), personifies **women empowerment** through her virtues of **indomitable courage, bravery and strong determination**.
- Significant Contributions:** She formed an **alliance with Hyder Ali** against the British in 1780, and she was the first queen to wage war against the **East India Company**.

### Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara (10 February 1805 - 03 January 1871)

- Also known as **Chavara Pithavu**, Saint Chavara was born at **Kainakary** (Kerala).
- He belonged to **Syro-Malabar Church** and became a **priest in 1829**.
- Personality Traits:** An iconic **spiritual and social leader**, known for virtues of **compassion, tolerance and humanity**.
- Significant Contributions:**
  - Started a **Sanskrit school at Mannanam** in 1846 for education,
  - Established the **first non-government press** in Kerala.
  - Worked towards **spiritual, educational, cultural and social reforms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**.
  - Started the concept of **Palikoodam**, i.e. setting up a school alongside every parish church.



Places in News

### Sudan (Capital: Khartoum)

- Political boundaries:** Shares borders **with seven countries** (Libya, Egypt, Chad, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea).
  - In 2011, **South Sudan was separated** from Sudan.
- Geographical features**
  - White and Blue Niles meet in Khartoum** and merge to become the **Nile River**.
  - Sahelian belt** (semiarid region extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan) with the **desert in the far north and fertile land in the Nile valleys**.
  - Bounded on the:
    - West by the Nile-Congo watershed** and the highlands of **Darfur plateau**.
    - East by the Ethiopian Plateau and the Red Sea Hills**.



### Pangong Tso

- China is building a new bridge on Pangong Tso.**
- Location:** In eastern Ladakh
- Salient features**
  - Situated at a height of almost 4350 m, it is the **world's highest saltwater lake**.
  - Derives its **name from the Tibetan word, "Pangong Tso"**, which means "high grassland lake".
  - One-third of the Pangong Lake lies in India** and the other two-thirds in China.
  - It is not part of Indus river basin area and geographically a separate land locked river basin.**
  - Khurnak Fort lies on the northern bank** of the lake.
  - Contested area of the lake is divided into 8 Fingers** with India claiming territory up to Finger 8.



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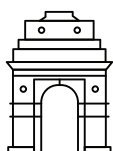
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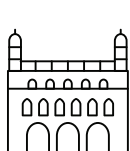
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DELHI



LUCKNOW



JAIPUR



HYDERABAD



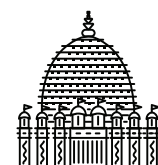
PUNE



AHMEDABAD



CHANDIGARH



GUWAHATI