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Science Reporter

विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
सत्यमेव जयते



MK Yadav Sir

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BUSINESS STANDARD

Page 1

Adani Enterprises' ₹20k-cr FPO likely before Budget

Will be first to issue partly paid-up shares

SAMIE MODAK
Mumbai, 13 January

Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), the flagship entity of the Adani group, is planning to launch its ₹20,000-crore follow-on public offer (FPO) before the Union Budget on February 1, thanks to an encouraging response from global investors during the ongoing roadshows, sources in the know said.

The firm's FPO will be the first to issue partly paid-up shares. Issuing such shares will allow AEL to raise ₹20,000 crore in multiple tranches, they added.

The move is from the playbook used by Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL) during its ₹53,124-crore rights issue in 2020. RIL had collected only 25 per cent each in the first two tranches, and the balance 50 per cent in the final tranche over an 18-month period.

According to people in the know, AEL plans to collect ₹20,000 crore in two tranches, and the initial tranche could be less than ₹10,000 crore. Turn to Page 10

MEGA FUNDRAISING

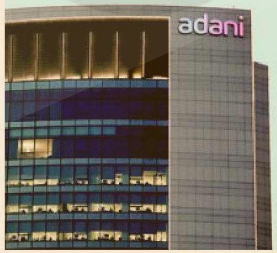
- **AEL's FPO will be done under the fast-track route**; the framework was revised in 2020
- **Under this, a company having public shareholding** of at least ₹500 crore is exempted from filing DRHP with Sebi
- **After the FPO, the largest-ever in India, partly paid shares** of AEL will be traded separately on the bourses

TOP NIFTY PERFORMER

Shares of Adani Enterprises have doubled in the past one year



Sources: Bloomberg, exchanges



FOLLOW ON PUBLIC OFFER

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Context: Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), the flagship entity of the Adani group, is planning to launch its ₹ 20,000 crore **follow on public offer (FPO)** before the Union Budget on February 1, thanks to an encouraging response from global investors during the ongoing roadshows.

Follow on Public Offer (FPO)

- **About**: A follow-on public offer (FPO), also known as a **secondary offering**, is the additional issuance of shares after the initial public offering (IPO).
  - Companies usually announce FPOs to raise equity or reduce debt.
- **Two main types of FPOs:**
  - **Dilutive**: meaning new shares are added.
  - **Non-dilutive**: meaning existing private shares are sold publicly.
- **ATM FPO**: An **at-the-market offering (ATM)** is a type of FPO by which a company can offer secondary public shares on any given day, usually depending on the prevailing market price, to raise capital.
- **Key Developments:** In 2021, Capital markets watchdog **SEBI relaxed the framework for follow-on public offers (FPOs):**
  - The **applicability of minimum promoters' contribution norm** and the subsequent lock-in requirements for the issuers making the FPO have been done away with by the regulator.
    - Earlier, promoters were mandated to contribute 20% towards a FPO.
  - Besides, in case of any **issue of capital to the public,** the minimum promoters' contribution was required to be locked-in for three years.
  - The relaxation would be available for those companies which are frequently **traded on a stock exchange for at least three years.** Also, such firms should have redressed 95% of investor complaints.

LIVEMINT Page 15

INDIA AND CHINA TRADE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

India-China trade deficit climbs past $100 billion for the first time

PTI
feedback@livemint.com
BEIJING

The trade between India and China touched an all-time high of ₹135.98 billion in 2022, while New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing crossed the ₹100 billion mark for the first time, according to data released by the Chinese customs on Friday.

The total India-China trade for 2022 has registered a rise of 8.4% from year-ago level of $125.62 billion, the annual Chinese customs data said. China's exports to India climbed to $118.5 billion, a year-on-year increase of 21.7%.

During 2022, China's imports from India dwindled to $17.48 billion, a year-on-year decline of 37.9%.

The trade deficit for India stood at $101.02 billion, crossing the 2021 figure of $69.38 billion.

This is the first time the trade deficit, a serious concern constantly expressed by India, has crossed the $100 billion mark.

In 2021, the overall trade with China saw an increase of 43.32% year-on-year crossing the $100 billion mark for the first time.

The trade deficit in 2021 stood at $69.56 billion as India's imports from China witnessed an increase of 46.14% to reach $97.59 billion.

India's exports to China rose by 34.28% year-on-year to reach $28.03 billion in 2021.

The trade between the two countries continued to boom despite border tensions following the military standoff in eastern Ladakh in May 2020.

According to an official brief on trade posted on the Indian Embassy website in Beijing, the rapid expansion of India-China bilateral trade since the beginning of this century has propelled China to emerge as India's largest goods trading partner by 2008.

During 2022, China's imports from India dwindled to $17.48 billion, a year-on-year decline of 37.9%

"The growth of trade deficit with China could be attributed to two factors: narrow basket of commodities, mostly primary, that we export to China and second, market access impediments for most of our agricultural products and the sectors where we are competitive in, such as pharmaceuticals, IT/ITES," the embassy brief said.

Context: The **trade between India and China touched an all-time high** of USD 135.98 billion in 2022, while New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing crossed the USD 100 billion mark for the first time despite frosty bilateral relations.

Key Points

- The **total India-China trade for 2022 has climbed** to 135.98 billion, overtaking the USD 125 billion mark a year earlier by registering a rise of 8.4 per.
- China's exports to India climbed to USD 118.5 billion, **a year-on-year increase** of 21.7 per cent.
- During 2022, **China's imports from India dwindled** to USD 17.48 billion, a year-on-year decline of 37.9 per cent.
- The **trade deficit for India stood at USD 101.02 billion**, crossing the 2021 figure of USD 69.38 billion.
- This is the first time the trade deficit, a serious concern constantly expressed by India, **has crossed the USD 100 billion mark.**
- In 2021, the overall trade with China totalled USD 125.62 billion, an **increase of 43.32 per cent year on year crossing the USD 100 billion** mark for the first time.
- The trade deficit in 2021 stood at USD 69.56 billion as **India's imports from China witnessed an increase** of 46.14 per cent to reach USD 97.59 billion.
- India's exports to China increased by 34.28 per cent year on year to reach USD 28.03 billion in 2021.
- From 2015 to 2021, **India-China bilateral trade grew by 75.30 per cent,** an average yearly growth of 12.55 per cent.
- **Demand for Indian cancer drugs was so predominant in China** that a film highlighting the plight of cancer patients and their attempts to get the drugs from India struck a chord with the Chinese public.
- As per the customs data, **China's overall exports in 2022 rose by seven per cent** and imports rose by 1.1 per cent, while China's trade surplus last year stood at USD 877.6 billion.
- **China's exports increased** to USD 3.95 trillion, decreasing from 2021's high growth of 29.9 percent while imports increased by 1.1 per cent to USD 2.7 trillion, compared to the previous year's 30.1 per cent rise.

ECONOMIC TIMES

Page 8

Goyal to Unveil MAARG to Aid Entrepreneurs on Monday

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal will launch the mentorship, advisory, assistance, resilience and growth (MAARG) platform on Monday, which would facilitate mentorship between startups and entrepreneurs across sectors, stages and functions.

"The matchmaking phase of the portal, which will be launched on the occasion, will allow startups to connect with mentors and discuss their mentorship needs," the commerce and industry ministry said in a release on Friday.

Goyal will also announce the results of the National Startup Awards 2022

Goyal will also announce the results of the National Startup Awards 2022.

"The winning and finalist startups will benefit from the support extended for their business growth, mentorship, funding, partnerships, market access opportunities, that will further enable them to serve as a role model for other entrepreneurs," the ministry said.

The winning startups will be given a cash prize of Rs 5 lakh each.

MAARG PLATFORM

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy)

Context: Commerce and industry minister will launch the **mentorship, advisory, assistance, resilience and growth (MAARG) platform** which would facilitate mentorship between startups and entrepreneurs across sectors, stages and functions.

MAARG Platform

- **About**: It is the **National Mentorship Platform** by Start-up India to help and guide new start-ups grow and flourish.
  - It is a one stop platform to facilitate mentorship for start-ups across diverse sectors, functions, stages, geographies, and backgrounds.
- **Nodal Ministry**: Ministry of **Commerce and Industry.**
- **Launched by:** Department for **Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).**
- **Objectives of the MAARG portal:**
  - To **provide sector focused guidance**, handholding, and support to start-ups throughout their lifecycle
  - To **establish a formalized and structured platform** that facilitates intelligent matchmaking between the mentors and their respective mentees
  - To **facilitate efficient and expert mentorship** for start-ups and build an outcome-oriented mechanism that allows timely tracking of the mentor-mentee engagements.
- **Key Features of MAARG Portal:** Startups can now effectively **connect with academicians, industry experts, successful founders, seasoned investors,** and other experts from across the globe, through Artificial Intelligence (AI) based matchmaking, to get personalized guidance on growth and strategy.
  - Other features of the portal include **customizable mentorship programs** for ecosystem enablers, mobile-friendly user interface, recognition for contributing mentors, video and audio call options, etc.
- **Implementation of MAARG Initiative:**
  - **Phase I: Mentor Onboarding**
    - Successfully launched and executed, 400+ expert mentors are on boarded across sectors
  - **Phase II: Startup Onboarding**
    - DPIIT launched the onboarding of startups on the MAARG Portal with effect from 14th November 2022
  - **Phase III: MAARG Portal Launch and Mentor Matchmaking.**
    - Final launch where the mentors will be matched to the startups DPIIT has initiated onboarding process of startups under Phase II.

DTE JAN 14

BASMATI RICE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Economy & Agriculture)





Context: In a bid to promote the business around basmati rice, the **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) notified standards for basmati rice** January 12, 2023.

- They will be enforced from August 1, 2023.

Key Points

- The authority has set **standards on parameters such as average size of grains and their elongation ratio** after cooking.
- It has set the maximum limits for **moisture, amylose content, uric acid, damaged grains and presence** of non-basmati rice.
- The standards are applicable to **brown basmati rice, milled basmati rice, parboiled brown basmati rice and milled parboiled basmati rice.**
- Basmati rice is **cultivated in the Himalayan foothills** of the Indian subcontinent.
- The **specific agro-climatic conditions,** processing techniques such as harvesting and ageing are said to make this rice unique.
- In India, **rice grown in specific parts** of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Uttarkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir can be labelled as basmati.
- Basmati rice is **just one of the thousands of rice varieties available in India.** However, this **fragrant rice** has invited the most controversy.
- In 2020, **India's application for a geographical indication tag** recognised in the European Union market was put on hold after Pakistan opposed the move.
- Before this, in 1997, **Texas-based company RiceTec developed American basmati varieties** and patented them.
- These were introduced in the international market as **'Kasmati' and 'Texmati'.**
- However, the patent was contested in the year 2000 by the **Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)**, India's premier science and industry organisation, saying the term 'basmati' could be used only for rice grown in India and Pakistan.
- On August 14, 2001, the final decision ensured that the US company could no longer use basmati in their name.
- **Basmati rice is exported out of India** and had an annual forex earning of Rs 25,053 crore during 2021-22.
- India accounts for **two-thirds of the global supply** of basmati rice.

PIB JAN 14

5G USE CASE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Infrastructure)

Vidisha becomes the first ever district in India for on ground deployment of innovative 5G use cases offered by startups

Context: Vidisha, an aspirational district of Madhya Pradesh became the first ever district in India for on ground deployment of innovative 5G use cases offered by startups - a joint initiative by Vidisha District Administration and Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DOT), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under the guidance of Additional Secretary (Telecom) & Administrator USOF.

5G use case promotional pilot

- On 12th January 2023 during the Additional Secretary(T) visit to Vidisha district, the following 5G/IoT use cases were demonstrated by startups in collaboration with C-DOT:
  - **Superceuticals**: 5G/4G Enabled **smart health kiosk** for measuring vitals & performing tests almost instantaneously with
  - **Ambupod**: 5G/4G **Enabled Auto Ambulance** with basic life safety support & measurement of vitals with remote doctor support.
  - **LogyAI**: C**ataract Eye Screening application** using smart phone for quick & effective screening of cataract disease
  - **Easiofy**: AR/VR-3D visualization application for **Lung & Brain scans** (CT/XRAY etc.) for effective diagnosis.
  - **TechXR**: AR/VR- 3D immersive experience **kit for students** for enhanced learning & teaching tool for innovative teaching mehods.
  - **BKC Aggregators**: Fasal Salah App- **personalized crop advisory for farmers** to take informed decisions and connecting with Mandis/Traders, state subsidies/insurance for crops
  - **Dvara- Surabhi**: Unique Biometric muzzle **identity of cattle** to be used by state department and insurance companies, and predicting health status of cattle to be used by dairy farmers
  - **C-DOT (R&D Arm of DoT)**: One stop platform **integrating all the health suits** enabling Tele consultation and e-learning solution suit.
- Under 5G use case promotional pilot, aforementioned use cases will be deployed at community & district health centers Model Schools, Agri & Dairy Farmers, skill development centers for a **period of 1 year and may be extended subsequently** as per the need. These digital solutions will also be powered by BharatNet broadband to provide uninterrupted services to user communities of Vidisha.

INDIAN EXPRESS

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PM-POSHAN SCHEME
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - Health)

FUND MISUSE CHARGE

Centre orders review of PM-Poshan scheme in Bengal

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 13

DAYS AFTER West Bengal Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari wrote to Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan alleging "misappropriation" of mid-day meal funds by the Trinamool-led government, the Centre on Friday ordered a joint mission for sweeping review of the PM-Poshan scheme in the state.

According to the PM-Poshan guidelines, these joint missions, also called JRMs, "shall visit eight to 10 states every year to review the implementation of the scheme at state, district and school levels on defined parameters".

In a statement, the Education Ministry said that the mission formed for West Bengal will examine various aspects of the implementation of mid-day meal of PM-Poshan scheme ranging from "fund flow from state to schools" to "convening the meetings of district-level committee under chairpersonship of senior



Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan

most Member of Parliament".

To be sure, the terms of references are in tune with the guidelines. However, it also assumes significance as Adhikari's letter to Pradhan coincided with the decision of the Mamata Banerjee government to add meat and seasonal fruits to the mid-day meal menu.

The announcement, which comes ahead of the panchayat elections in the state where the BJP is trying to make inroads, triggered a political row. And the formation of the joint mission is set to escalate the tensions between the state and the Centre.

The Education Ministry said that the JRM includes officials from the Centre, state, and nutrition experts. Its terms of reference include "reviewing" the fund flow from state to schools, delivery mechanism of food grains, and identification of children who are undernourished and over nourished.

Under the scheme, renamed as PM-Poshan last year, most components including cooking cost are split in a 60:40 ratio between the Union government and the states and UTs with legislatures, and 90:10 with the Northeastern states, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The cost of food grains is borne entirely by the Centre.

In his letter to Pradhan on January 5, Adhikari had alleged that "irregularities" in PM-Poshan was "one of the biggest scams" in West Bengal. "The misappropriation of the funds granted by the Central government in this regard has been systematically diverted unethically by the state government on a regular basis to serve their own interests," he had alleged.

Context: The Centre ordered a joint mission for sweeping review of the PM-Poshan scheme in the state of West Bengal..

- According to the **PM-Poshan guidelines**, these joint missions, also called JRMs, "shall visit eight to 10 states every year to review the implementation of the scheme at state, district and school levels on defined parameters".

PM-Poshan Scheme

- **About**: It is the **largest school food programme** in the world and is designed to help primary education become universal.
- **Origin**: The Midday Meal Scheme, a **centrally sponsored scheme** , was introduced in 1995 under the **Ministry of Education.**
  - The program's name was changed to **"Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman" programme (PM Poshan Scheme)** in 2021. .
  - It also covers students of **balvatikas (children in the 3–5-year age group)** from pre-primary classes.
- **Objectives**: Goals include addressing hunger and malnutrition, increasing school enrollment and attendance, enhancing caste socialisation, and giving women, in particular, access to employment at the local level.
- **Key Feature**: **Provides cooked meals to every child** within the age group of six to fourteen years studying in classes I to VIII who enrolls and attends the school.
  - If the Mid-Day Meal is not provided in school on any school day due to non-availability of food grains or any other reason, the **State Government shall pay food security allowance by 15th of the succeeding month.**
- **Implementing Authority**: The **State Steering-cum Monitoring Committee (SSMC)** oversees the implementation of the scheme including establishment of a mechanism for maintenance of nutritional standards and quality of meals.
- **Nutritional Standards:** Cooked meals having n**utritional standards of 450 calories and 12 gm of protein for primary (I-V class)** and 700 calories and 20 gm protein for upper primary (VI-VIII class).
- **Coverage**: All government and government aided schools, Madarsa and Maqtabs supported under the **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).**
  - The scheme covers 11.80 crore children across Classes 1 to 8 (age group 6 to 14) in11.20 lakh government and government-aided schools and those run by local bodies such as the municipal corporations in Delhi under the provisions of the **National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA).**

PIB JAN 14

VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH SUMMIT 2023

(Syllabus: GS Paper 2 - International Relations)

Environment Ministers' Session of 'Voice of Global South Summit' held

Context: The Environment Ministers' Session as part of the two day **'Voice of Global South Summit'** was held virtually.

- Ministers from fourteen countries of the Global South participated in the session.

The Voice of Global South Summit 2023

- **About**: The summit bring together 120 countries from the **Global South** to share their perspectives and priorities on a common platform.
- India hosted the virtual 'The Voice of Global South' Summit on January 12-13.
- **Theme and Sessions**: The theme of the summit is **'Unity of Voice, Unity of Purpose'.**
  - It consist of ten sessions over the **course of two days.**
  - The **inaugural and concluding sessions** are at the head of state or government level and hosted by the Prime Minister.
  - The theme of the **Inaugural Leaders' session is 'Voice of Global South - for Human-Centric Development',** and the theme of the Concluding Leaders' session is 'Unity of Voice -Unity of Purpose'.
  - **Eight ministerial sessions and themes:**
    - Finance Ministers' session on **'Financing People-Centric Development'**
    - Environment Ministers' session on **'Balancing Growth with Environment Friendly Lifestyles (LiFE)'**
    - Foreign Ministers' session on **'Priorities of the Global South – Ensuring a Conducive Environment'**
    - Energy Ministers' session on **'Energy Security and Development – Roadmap to Prosperity'**
    - Health Ministers' session on **'Cooperation to Build Resilient Healthcare Systems'**
    - Education Ministers session on **'Human Resource Development and Capacity Building'**
    - Commerce and Trade Ministers' session on **'Developing Synergies in the Global South – Trade, Technology, Tourism and Resources'**

Global North and Global South

- The classification of countries as 'Global North' or 'Global South' is **based on similarities in terms of wealth, indicators of education and healthcare, etc.**
- **'Global North'** refers loosely to countries like the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia, and New Zealand, while **'Global South**' includes countries in Asia, Africa, and South America.
- In recent years, **some countries in the Global South, such as India and China**, have experienced significant economic growth, challenging the idea that the North is the ideal.

DTE

JAN 14

LANTANA CAMARA

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Env & Eco)



Study offers clues on ecological gain of weeding out Lantana

Researchers look into effect of removing invasive bush in Madhya Pradesh's critical tiger conservation site

NEXT NEWS >

By Rohini Krishnamurthy
Published: Friday 13 January 2023

Lantana camara

- Lantana camara was first introduced in 1807, had spread to **wildlife reserves, river banks and the Project Tiger areas** where it had obliterated native grass and reduced biodiversity.
- It is a **thicket forming shrub,** has covered vast tracts of land in the sanctuary and it is stopping the natural light and nutrition for flora and fauna.
- In some regions, the plant has **made inroads into pastures and shrunk the cattle grazing areas,** affecting the livelihood of villagers.
- The toxic substance in its foliage and ripe berries affected the animals, while its e**xpansion stopped the natural growth of grass** and other shrubs.
- With the herbivores not getting sufficient forage, the prey base for **carnivorous animals was declining,** leading to ecological disturbances in the food chain.

Context: Weeding out the **invasive tropical American shrub, Lantana camara,** appears to alter the composition of bird species in a forest, according to a new study conducted in Central India.

Key Points

- **Lantanas arrived in India as a decorative shrub** in the British colonial period but quickly took over several ecosystems as an invasive plant.
- The shrub can spread on the forest ground, climb over trees an a creeper and entangle with other native plants with ease.
- Though dry forests sequester less carbon, **people heavily depend on them.**
- **Forest restoration** by removing lantana was done for the convenience of people.
- **Local communities carried out the removal** with the state forest department and a non-governmental organisation.
- The team used sound recorders to assess how lantana removal in **Madhya Pradesh's Bichhiya, a critical tiger conservation site,** impacted animals that vocalise in frequencies between the range of 2-8 Kilohertz.
- **Bioacoustics**, which is the study of animal vocalisations, helps researchers monitor species.

DST

JAN 14

HEMO-HALT BANDAGE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 - Sci & Tech)

Hemo-halt bandage: a dressing for rapid prevention of blood loss

Context: A newly developed bandage containing **chitosan (a natural polymer that halts bleeding)** and **agonist (a substance that improves clotting)** nanoparticles can rapidly minimize blood loss from wounds.

- The Hemo-halt bandage **can reduce blood loss before treatment,** save lives, and reduce disabilities on the battlefield. It can also contribute to the reduction in hospitalization costs.

Key Points

- **MACS-Agharkar Research Institute, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), has developed** a hemostatic bandage that incorporates chitosan (a natural glucosamine-containing polymer) and of agonist (a substance that improves clotting) nanoparticles for rapid hemostasis.
- Chitosan, which **can be controls bleeding due to its cationic nature and hydrogel-forming ability** that leads to the concentration of erythrocytes and platelets in the injury site.
- **Commercial chitosan preparations** like Celox, a lightweight chitosan foam powder produced by bubbling, and Hem-Con, chitosan-coated bandages, are approved by FDA and are in use for hemorrhage control by the US army.
- However, these wound dressings show variable performances due to a lack of stabilization of blood clots, mechanical strength, lack of porosity, and a tendency for adherence to wound surface.
- In the newly developed homeostatic bandage, the **synergistic effects of combining chitosan and agonist nanoparticles** resulted in the highly efficient blood clotting ability.

Significance

- Worldwide, **uncontrolled hemorrhage** is the leading cause of traumatic death during accidents or injuries among the military and civilian populations.
- **Severe bleeding** triggers trauma due to shock, hypothermia, coagulopathy, tissue damage, and organ failure that often causes mortality.
- Therefore, efforts for **early hemorrhage control** are important to prevent disability or death during severe blood loss.
- Though critical care guidelines recommend topical **hemostatic agents** in the form of pads, patches, bandages, or gel applications for early control of bleeding, most of these are inadequate in halting heavy blood loss.
- **Conventional physical hemostatic agents** like bone wax and gelatin foam, biological agents such as bovine thrombin, and fibrin sealants, and synthetic agents including cyanoacrylates and glutaraldehyde, cause inflammation, viral infection, and tissue toxicity.
- Considering these limitations, the development of **effective and safe dressing for hemorrhage contro**l occupies high significance for both civilian and battlefield populations.

TIMES OF INDIA

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Russia claims win at salt-mining town of Soledar, Ukraine denies it



Smoke rises from strikes on the frontline city of Soledar in Ukraine

Kyiv: Russia said on Friday that its forces had taken control of the salt-mining town of Soledar in eastern Ukraine, claiming to have made its first big battlefield gain after half a year of military setbacks. However, the spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command, Serhiy Cherevatyi, denied that Russian forces had seized control of Soledar. Earlier, Ukraine had said its forces were holding out in Soledar after a "hot" night of fighting. Reuters was not immediately able to verify the situation in the town.

Russia's defence ministry said its forces had captured the town on Thursday evening. It said this would make it possible to cut off Ukrainian supply routes to the larger town of Bakhmut, to the southwest, and trap remaining Ukrainian forces there. The ministry credited the town's capture to Russian troops and aviation. If confirmed, the capture would mark Russia's first significant gain since last July. Around 100 people have been evacuated from Soledar, RIA news agency said. Ukraine said Thursday 500 civilians including 15 children were trapped inside Soledar. REUTERS

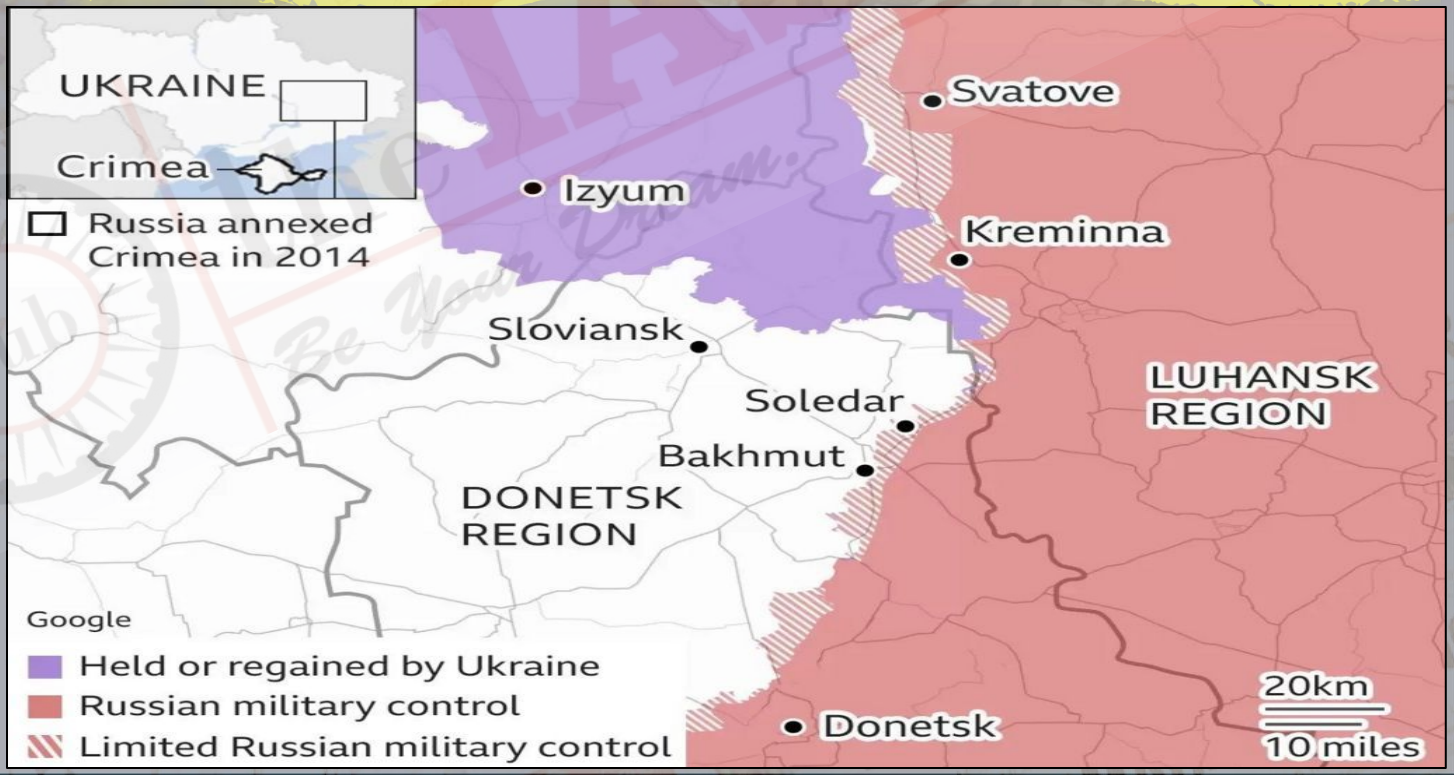
SOLEDAR SALT MINE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 - Geography)

Context: Russian forces had taken control of the **salt-mining town of Soledar in eastern Ukraine,** claiming to have made its first big battlefield gain after half a year of military setbacks.

Soledar Salt Mine

- **About**: The Soledar Salt Mines (also called **Artyomsol Salt Mines** after the State Enterprise Association Artyomsol that operates the mines) are located in the city/suburb of Soledar in the Bakhmut municipality in **Donetsk Oblast, Ukraine**.
  - It is **Ukraine's eastern salt mining town.**
- **Donetsk:** It, formerly known as **Aleksandrovka**, Yuzivka (or Hughesovka), Stalin and Stalino, is an **industrial city** in eastern Ukraine located on the Kalmius River in Donetsk Oblast.



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