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Children Abandoning Education in Mica Mining Districts

The **survey** on 'education & well-being of children in mica mining areas of Jharkhand and Bihar' has revealed that **over 5,000 children**, in the **age group of six to fourteen**, have **left schools to work as labourers** to supplement their family income.

- This survey was conducted by the **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** from May 2018 after a report by Terre Des Hommes (an international development agency) revealed that more than 22,000 children are employed as child labourers in the mica mining areas of Jharkhand and Bihar.
- The survey was conducted in the districts of Koderma and Giridih in Jharkhand and Nawada district in Bihar.

Key Findings

- 4,545 children, in the age group of six to fourteen years, in the area of Jharkhand, were reported as not attending schools.
- 649 children were reported as not attending schools in Nawada district of Bihar.
- **Reasons:** Lack of enough opportunities, lack of interest and **mica scraps collection**.
 - Several families do not see the benefit of sending their children to school and instead prefer them working in collecting and selling mica scraps.
 - **Selling mica scraps is the main means of livelihood** for many families in these districts.
- **Malnourishment:** In case of Giridih and Koderma, the undernutrition cases reported in 14% and 19% of the habitations and villages, respectively in the survey area. In case of Nawada, 69% habitations have reported that some children are undernourished.
- **Recommendations:**
 - NGOs/development agencies should work with the local and district administration as well as with the industries to chalk out a strategy to make the

- supply chain of mica mining, free of child labour.
- There should be a **strict action against buyers of mica scraps from children.**
 - A special drive to abolish child labour in the mica mining areas of Jharkhand and Bihar should be carried out by the administration.
 - **Rehabilitation centres for such children** and residential schools for girls in the areas, should be opened.
 - The districts need to ensure proper implementation of child right laws.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

- NCPCR is a **statutory body** set up in **March 2007** under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.
- It is under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Women & Child Development.**
- The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- It inquires into **complaints** relating to child's right to free and compulsory education under the **Right to Education Act, 2009.**
- It **monitors** in the implementation of **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.**

Source: TH

India-Bahrain

The Prime Minister of India, during his visit to Bahrain, launched a **USD 4.2 million redevelopment project of the 200-year-old Lord Sri Krishna temple** in the Bahraini capital, Manama.

- This is the **first time that an Indian Prime Minister has visited Bahrain.**



- The heritage and the 200-year-old legacy of the Shreenathji (Shree Krishna) temple in Manama will be highlighted in the redevelopment and the new iconic complex will house the sanctum sanctorum and prayer halls.
- India and Bahrain also agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of **security and counter-terrorism**.
In a joint statement, both the countries urged the international community to reject terrorism infrastructures and to cut off any kind of support to the terrorists.
- An MoU was also signed between BENEFIT, a Bahrain company handling ATM and POS transactions among others, and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for **launch of RuPay card**.
- The two countries also signed MoUs on **cultural exchange programme, space technology, solar energy**.
- India welcomed the interest of Bahrain to join the **International Solar alliance (ISA)**.
- Both the sides also emphasised on the urgent need to pursue **UN reforms**, including the Security Council through an expansion of both categories of its membership, to make it more representative and effective in tackling global challenges.

Source: TH

Panel on Power Reforms

The Centre has formed a **high-level group** to make recommendations for changing the **structure and system of power sale and purchase in the country**.

- Led by the Special Power Secretary - **Sanjiv Nandan Sahai**, the group will recommend reforms needed in **Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs)** and for **increasing competitiveness in the power markets**.
- The Panel has been given **six months** for submitting its recommendations.

Problems within the Power Sector

- Power sector has witnessed a huge growth in terms of capacity addition during the last few years but it is reeling under stress as the **mismatch in demand and supply, has led to stressed power assets or non-performing assets (NPAs).**

About 34 power plants in the country amount to about ₹1.40 lakh crore NPAs.

- **Reasons behind huge NPAs:** Capacity addition without tied-up PPAs with Distribution Companies (DISCOMs), coal supply issues, the inability of DISCOMs to pay to generators, regulatory issues, the inability of promoters to infuse equity, tardy implementation etc.

Power distribution companies have historically entered into long term PPAs with the generating firms for the supply of power and appropriate regulatory commissions determine tariffs.

- **Volatility of Prices in Power Trading:** The power procured from power exchanges consists of around 3-4% of total power procured in the country. The comparatively **smaller proportions of power procured through power exchanges** result in lower depth and higher volatility of power prices in the power exchanges.

Source: HT

Clouded Leopards and Their Habitats

Recently a study conducted in **nine** countries (Bhutan, Nepal, **India**, Peninsular Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar) suggested that **only 9.44%** of the studied region was **'highly'** suitable for **clouded leopards** (*Neofelis nebulosa*).

- In India, the **Dampa tiger reserve in Mizoram** was chosen as the study site.
- Dampa had **one of the highest population densities of clouded leopards**, among the sites surveyed.



- **Clouded leopard:**

- Named after cloud shaped pattern on its skin.
- It is listed as **Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.**

- It is the **State animal of Meghalaya**.
- It has been added to India's **Recovery Programme for Critically Endangered Species** to aid more research and strengthen conservation efforts.
- **Habitat:**
 - Clouded Leopard prefers **grassland, shrubs, subtropical and dense tropical forest up to a height of 7,000 feet** occurring from the Himalayan foothills through mainland Southeast Asia into China.
 - In India, it occurs in Sikkim, northern West Bengal, Meghalaya subtropical forests, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
 - Clouded leopard's presence is positively related to:
 - Dense forest cover
 - High rainfall
 - Hard terrain
 - Low human presence
- **Factors affecting Clouded leopards distribution:**
 - Deforestation
 - Changing rainfall patterns
 - Human-animal conflict
 - Development projects

Thus, steps should be taken to make land-use and development policy to facilitate coexistence of people alongside **clouded leopards** as umbrellas for wider nature.

Dampa Tiger Reserve

- It is located in **Meghalaya**.
- It received the status of a tiger reserve under **Project Tiger**.
- Recently in the news, as the tigers were estimated to be zero as part of the **latest all India tiger estimation exercise**.

Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitat (IDWH)

- It is a **centrally sponsored scheme** launched to provide **technical and financial assistance to States/UTs** for protection of wildlife habitat.
- The activities covered under the scheme include
 - Staff development and capacity building,
 - Wildlife research and evaluation
 - Anti-poaching activities
 - Wildlife veterinary care
 - Addressing man-animal conflict
 - Promoting eco-tourism.
- **Financial assistance** is also provided to States for the **relocation of communities from within protected areas to other areas**.

- The scheme includes three components:
 - **Support to Protected Areas (National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves & Community Reserves)**

All Protected Areas (PAs) in different states are eligible for assistance, except those areas which receive assistance under Project Tiger.
 - **Protection of Wildlife outside Protected Areas Many wildlife habitats fall outside the network of protected areas.**

Under this component, funds are granted against Biodiversity Plans prepared by Chief Wildlife Wardens of the respective States. Priority is given to regions contiguous to the Protected Areas.
 - **Recovery Program for critically endangered habitats and species**

16 species have been identified for recovery under this component. These are snow leopard, leopard, dolphin, hangul, Nilgiri Tahr, marine turtles, dugongs, edible nest swiftlet, Asian wild buffalo, Nicobar Megapode, vultures, Malabar Civet, Indian rhino, Asiatic lions, Swamp deer, Jerdon's Courser and Brown antlered deer. **A scientific Recovery Plan** has to be prepared by the **Chief Wildlife Warden in each state.**

Source:TH
