

October 24th, 2018 Sample Current Affairs

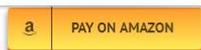
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1. Fake moon: Could China really light up the night sky?

- How might a 'fake moon' work?
- Why China is planning artificial moon?
- Is it scientifically viable to launch an artificial moon?
- What impact would this have on the environment?

GS paper 3 (Science and technology Awareness in space)

In this video, you can find detailed answers for all the above questions.

The above article has been retrieved from:

Harikrishnan Nair. (2018, October , 24).

What is the 'artificial moon' planned in China?. Indian Express. Retrieved from

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/what-is-the-artificial-moon-planned-in-china-5413449/>

What is the context about?

- A Chinese company has announced ambitious plans to put a "fake moon" into space to brighten the night sky.
- According to the People's Daily state newspaper, officials at a private aerospace institute in Chengdu want to launch this "illumination satellite" in orbit by 2020.
- The objective is to provide an alternative means of street lighting and save on electricity. Since then, the idea has not only received wide coverage but also been viewed with some skepticism.

How might a 'fake moon' work?

- The artificial moon would work as a mirror, reflecting sunlight back to Earth.
- It would orbit 500km about Earth - roughly the same height as the International Space Station.
- The Moon orbits, on average, about 380,000km above Earth.
- The reports gave no details about what the fake moon would look like, but it would reflect sunlight across an area of between 10km and 80km with brightness "eight times" that of the real Moon.
- According to Mr Wu, both the accuracy and intensity of the light would be controllable.

Why China is planning artificial moon?

- To save money. It might sound ridiculous but the Chengdu aerospace officials say putting a fake moon in space could actually end up being cheaper than paying for street lights.
- Illuminating an area of 50sq km could save up to \$173 million, a year in electricity charges.
- It could also "illuminate blackout areas" after, say, a natural disaster like an earthquake.

Is it scientifically viable to launch an artificial moon?

- Scientifically, it's viable. But to serve its purpose, the fake moon would have to be permanently in orbit over Chengdu - a relatively tiny area when you look at the Earth from space.
- That would mean it would need to be in geostationary orbit, which is about 37,000km from the Earth.
- The only problem is at that distance you'd need the satellite pointing direction to be extremely accurate.
- If you want to light up an area with an error of say 10km, even if you miss by one 100th of a degree you'll have the light pointing at another place.

What impact would this have on the environment?

- Some said it will surely confuse nocturnal animals, while others say that many cities in China already suffer from light pollution.
- The moon would significantly increase the night-time brightness of an already light-polluted city, creating problems for Chengdu's residents who are unable to screen out the unwanted light.
- If the light is too strong "it will disrupt the night cycle of nature and this could possibly affect animals.
- But conversely if the light is so faint then the question is, what is the point of it?

2. Did you know that Earth has a third pole? And it's melting quickly?

GS paper 1 (Important Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, cyclone etc., geographical features and their location- changes in critical geographical features (including water-bodies and ice-caps) and in flora and fauna and the effects of such changes)

Source: The Hindu

What is the context about?

Scientists conducting research in the third pole area have warned of disturbing global warming trends, and how, if they continue, they could affect the lives of 1.3 billion people. The glacier has lost 60% of its mass and shrunk 250 m since 1982.

What is the Third Pole?

- ❑ The Hindu Kush-Himalayan region spans an area of more than 4.3 million square kilometres in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan.
- ❑ The region stores more snow and ice than anywhere else in the world outside the polar regions, giving its name: 'The Third Pole'. The Third Pole contains the world's highest mountains, including all 14 peaks above 8,000 metres, is the source of 10 major rivers, and forms a formidable global ecological buffer.

Significance:

- ❑ The Third Pole region has enormous socioeconomic and cultural diversity; it is home to many different ethnic communities speaking more than 600 languages and many more dialects.
- ❑ It is endowed with rich natural resources and contains all or part of four global biodiversity hotspots.
- ❑ The mountain resources provide a wide range of ecosystem services and the basis for the livelihoods to the 210 million people living in the region, as well as indirectly to the 1.3 billion people — one fifth of the world's population — living in the downstream river basins. More than 3 billion people benefit from the food and energy produced in these river basins that have their origin in the mountains.

The Third Pole and Climate Change:

- ❑ Climate change has become a major concern in the Third Pole. Mountain systems are particularly sensitive to climate change and the Third Pole region is home to some of the people most vulnerable to these changes in the world. Changes in the river systems and their basins have impacted directly on the wellbeing of millions of people.
- ❑ The rate of warming in the Third Pole region is significantly higher than the global average, and the rate is higher at higher altitude, suggesting a greater vulnerability of the cryosphere environment to climate change. This trend is expected to continue.

- ❑ Climate change projections suggest that all areas of South Asia are likely to warm by at least 1°C by the end of the century, while in some areas the warming could be as high as 3.5-4°C. The life and livelihoods of the people in the Third Pole region is challenged due to climate change, and the stability and prosperity of the region affected by the Third Pole is at risk, which will have implications for all of Asia and for the world.

3. “Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali” campaign launched by Ministry of Environment

GS paper 3 (Conservation)

Source:

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=184304>

What is the context about?

- ❑ Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign aimed to reduce adverse environmental conditions especially pollution in the country after post Diwali celebrations due to excessive bursting of crackers which contributes significantly to air and noise pollution.

Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign

This campaign was initiated in 2017-18 to enlighten children about harmful fire crackers and motivate them to celebrate Diwali in environment-friendly manner and not to buy fire crackers, instead buy gift, food items, or sweets for poor and underprivileged children living in their locality.

Significance

- ❑ Under this campaign, the MoEFCC will undertake various activities for creating awareness among various stakeholders and encourage people to participate in combating air pollution. This campaign was extremely successful and the air quality had not deteriorated post Diwali in 2017 unlike what was experienced in 2016.

2018 Campaign: Following its earlier precedence, MOEFCC has initiated similar campaign, but has extended pan-India. It also merged this year's campaign with "Green Good Deed" movement that has been initiated as social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment. All schools and colleges have been encouraged to be part of this campaign.

4. India and Myanmar have signed an important MoU for Operation and Maintenance of Sittwe Port

GS paper 2 (India and its neighbourhood relations)

Source: The Hindu

What is the context about?

India and Myanmar have signed an important MoU for the appointment of a private Port Operator for the Operation and Maintenance of Sittwe Port, Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities included in the Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project in implementation of India's Act East Policy.

Where is Sittwe located?

Sittwe is the capital of Rakhine State (which has been in the news for the plight of Rohingya Muslims) in south-western Myanmar. It is located at the mouth of the Kaladan river, which flows into Mizoram in north-eastern India.

Significance of this port for India:

- ❑ India has for years sought transit access through Bangladesh to ship goods to the landlocked north-eastern States. At present, the only route to this region from the rest of India is a rather circuitous one through a narrow strip of Indian territory nicknamed the Chicken's Neck in West Bengal, sandwiched between Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- ❑ The new route through Sittwe would significantly lower the cost and distance of movement from Kolkata to Mizoram and beyond.

About Kaladan project:

- ❑ The Kaladan project connects Sittwe Port in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border.
- ❑ The project was jointly initiated by India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal platform for cargo shipments from the eastern ports to Myanmar and to the North-eastern parts of the country through Myanmar.
- ❑ It is expected to open up sea routes and promote economic development in the North-eastern states, and also add value to the economic, commercial and strategic ties between India and Myanmar.

- ❑ This project will reduce distance from Kolkata to Sittwe by approximately 1328 km and will reduce the need to transport good through the narrow Siliguri corridor, also known as Chicken's Neck.

5. Insolvency Law Committee submits its 2nd Report on Cross Border Insolvency

GS paper 2 (Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth)

Source:

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=184298>

What is the context about?

- ❑ The Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) on October 22, 2018 submitted its 2nd Report on Cross Border Insolvency to Arun Jaitley, Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs. The ILC was constituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to recommend amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India, 2016.
- ❑ The ILC recommended the adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency, 1997 as it provides for a comprehensive framework to deal with cross border insolvency issues.
- ❑ The Committee also recommended a few steps to ensure that there is no inconsistency between the domestic

insolvency framework and the proposed Cross Border Insolvency Framework.

Need for cross-border insolvency framework:

- ❑ As the size of the Indian economy grows, business and trade have adopted an increasingly international character. Creditors and corporates frequently transact business in more than one jurisdiction. Foreign banks and creditors finance Indian companies and Indian banks have foreign exposure. Also, as part of its Ease of Doing Business and Make in India policies, India seeks to attract foreign companies to set up manufacturing facilities in India.
- ❑ Besides, global experience demonstrates that cross-border investment decisions and their outcomes, are considerably affected by the insolvency laws in force in a country. Towards this end, even though the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 has resulted in significant improvement in India's insolvency regime, there is a need to include cross-border insolvency in the Code to provide a comprehensive insolvency framework.

Significance

- ❑ Inclusion of cross-border insolvency framework will further enhance ease of doing business, provide a mechanism of cooperation between India and other countries in the area of insolvency resolution, and protect creditors in the global scenario.

- ❑ Also, it will make India an attractive investment destination for foreign creditors given the increased predictability and certainty of the insolvency framework.

6. Tea Board of India is planning to launch an app aimed at guiding small growers, whose share in total tea production is increasing.

- The proposed name of the app is Chai Sahay (tea help).
- The mobile platform would have user-interface facilities with the targeted user groups (the small tea grower) and the various officials. It would also have information on the various activities of the board officials.
- The existing database of the STGs would be incorporated in the app, which would also give information on their registration process. There would be advisories on application of farm inputs and pesticide use. Small growers can also post queries for advice on pest control.