

CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 08 ■ ISSUE 07 ■ FEBRUARY 2021 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 52

FOOD FORTIFICATION

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health and power economies**

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people

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2020 biodiversity targets,
world leaders pledge
action and funds

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optimise electronics design
for better performance under
fluctuating power



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2021 must focus on clean energy



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
rt@iccsr.org

IN THE PARIS AGREEMENT INDIA HAS COMMITTED TO AN INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS TARGET OF ACHIEVING 40% OF ITS TOTAL ELECTRICITY GENERATION FROM NON-FOSSIL FUEL SOURCES BY 2030.

Despite that the world is not on track to meet climate objectives and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7) for universal access to clean, affordable and reliable energy, Marcel Alers, UNDP Head of Energy, said that clean energy solutions exist that can get us there.

"There is growing momentum to make them political and investment priorities. Fossil fuels used to be less expensive than clean energy but that is changing," according to Alers.

This we believe is one of the biggest move of the UN agency.

Renewables are becoming more affordable every year, and some options are now cheaper than fossil fuels.

Alers has out that since 2010, the price of solar had decreased by 89 per cent. It is now cheaper to go solar than to build new coal power plants in most countries, and solar is now the cheapest electricity in history, the UN agency feels.

Moreover, amidst an exceptionally challenging year, and despite suffering setbacks, the renewables sector has shown resilience.


"This fall in price, coupled with technological progress and the introduction of innovative business models, means we are now at a tipping point", he said, urging for large-scale clean energy investments from the public and private sectors.

In fact, for India, too this is significant – which is working on a mix of energy solutions to meet the future needs.

In the Paris Agreement India has committed to an Intended Nationally Determined Contributions target of achieving 40% of its total electricity generation from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.

The country is aiming for even more ambitious target of 57% of the total electricity capacity from renewable sources by 2027 in Central Electricity Authority's strategy blueprint.

According to 2027 blueprint, India aims to have 275 GW from renewable energy, 72 GW of hydro-electricity, 15 GW of nuclear energy and nearly 100 GW from "other zero emission" sources.

These targets would place India among the world leaders in renewable energy use and place India at the centre of its "Sunshine Countries" International Solar Alliance project promoting the growth and development of solar power internationally to over 120 countries. Energy plays a vital role in the economic development of all countries. India ranks second position in terms of population that accounts to 17% of world's overall population. The increase in standard of living and population in India makes India to rank third place in consumption of energy in the globe. As fossil fuels are depleting and creating more pollution causing global warming, and also since energy demand is increasing day by day, energy production from renewable energy resources becomes the best solution in present condition as renewable energy resources are not exhaustible, clean, and green energy. 

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CSR TODAY

FEBRUARY 2021 | VOL. 08 | ISSUE 07

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Printed, Published and Edited by Rajesh Tiwari on behalf of Indian Centre For Corporate Social Responsibility, Printed at The Pack-Age, 196-I, Katrak Compound, J.S.S. Road, Gaiwadi, Girgaon, Mumbai - 400 004 and Published from Indian Centre For Corporate Social Responsibility, 106/A, Nirman Kendra, Plot No.3, Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi Estate, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai 400 011.

Editor: Rajesh Tiwari

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Akshaya Patra's kitchen Sponsored by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched



Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal along with the delegates Inaugurating the Akshaya Patra's Kitchen Sponsored by the Airports Aut



Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal along with the delegates serving the food at the Akshaya Patra's Kitchen in Guwahati, Assam

The Chief Minister of Assam, Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurated The Akshaya Patra Foundation's new centralised kitchen in Guwahati, Assam. Through this kitchen sponsored by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), Akshaya Patra will endeavour to implement the Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme in the state. The kitchen has a built-up area of 40,000 sq. ft., and the capacity to prepare 50,000 meals in three hours. Akshaya Patra will initially serve about 40,000 children in 600 Government schools in the region and gradually reach out to more children.

The guests of honour for the event Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, who shared a video message, and Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Hon'ble Minister of Education, Health and Finance - Government of Assam. Regional Executive Director of AAI, M. Suresh attended the ceremony and spoke on behalf of Shri Arvind

Singh, Chairman of AAI. The event was presided by Shri Chanchalpathi Dasa, Vice-Chairman of Akshaya Patra. Shri Janardhana Dasa, President of Akshaya Patra - North East Region, was also present on the occasion. The inauguration event was followed by a tour of the kitchen facility and symbolic serving of meals to the children. The dignitaries present congratulated Akshaya Patra for successfully completing 20 years and commended the Foundation's efforts to address hunger and malnutrition through its kitchen network spread across the country.

Speaking on this occasion, Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal said "The Akshaya Patra Foundation has taken the great programme nationwide with commitment and conviction to serve the children by providing nutritious and hygienic mid-day meals. They have established kitchens across India based on best practices and scientific

ways of providing hygienic and safe meals. Akshaya Patra's initiative will definitely make our society mindful of the importance of humanitarian service and motivate people to come forward and take the initiative to work for society. He further added, "I would like to thank my colleague and minister Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma Ji. He took such an important step of bringing Akshaya Patra to Kamrup."

Minister of Education, Health and Finance - Government of Assam, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "Currently, Assam has 40 lakh students in Government schools. Of these, 50,000 students have the opportunity to eat freshly cooked, nutritious meals from Akshaya Patra. I am highly optimistic that the rest of the students from Assam will also get this benefit in the future." He also thanked AAI for their support through CSR activities and requested them to continue the noble cause in the future.

Central Bank of India sign MOU with NABARD to manufacture sanitary pads in each district

Central Bank of India and NABFOUNDATION a subsidiary of NABARD, have today signed an MOU for providing working capital finance to woman SHGs for making sanitary pads under the MY PAD MY RIGHT project. The MoU was executed by Shri Sundeeep Gulati, General Manager (ARD-FI) Central Bank of India and Sanjeev D Rohilla, CEO NABFoundation in the presence of Pallav Mohapatra, Managing Director & CEO Central Bank of India and Alok Srivastava, Executive Director Central Bank of India and Ms Rosie Tshering, Country Head Micro Finance NABARD.

Pallav Mohapatra MD & CEO, Alok Srivastava ED and Shri Sundeeep Gulati GM (ARD-FI), Sanjeev D Rohilla CEO NAB Foundation and Ms. Rosie Tshering Country Head Micro Finance NABARD



The project will provide a sustainable livelihood opportunity to over 14700 rural woman SHG members in 3000 villages across India. Through this programme woman will get to earn a living while also be taking care of basic menstrual hygiene. The project will enable rural woman to access pads in a safe accessible and familiar environment through their own network on a regular basis. The project addresses challenges of affordability and local availability comprehensively.

NABARD is providing one machine for making sanitary pads in each district to one SHG. These SHG's need working capital support of Rs.50,000/- to Rs.80,000/- a month, Central Bank Of India in collaboration with NAB Foundation will be providing the required working capital support to the SHG's as per prescribed norms for this programme.

Taapsee Pannu on a Mission to Educate a School Full of Girls in India



Taapsee Pannu

The New Year brings with it new beginnings, new resolutions and for a growing number of us, it is also to give back to society through our time and support. One of India's favourite daughters and film industry superstar - Taapsee Pannu kickstarts 2021 with a stronger push in supporting girl child education through a sustained effort.

Every month she is going to make herself available for a live video call with chosen participants to interact with her. With the expected participation of corporates, businesses and fans, the entire proceeds of the booking for each of the interactions, will go directly to the icons chosen cause - 100% of the amount donated and no deductions in any way or form. This would mean funding the education of 100 girls with every call. Or an entire school full of girls in a year.

Icons for Change - an initiative launched by Tring, India's largest celebrity engagement platform, will feature a number of iconic stars in the country, across various sections of society, who have chosen their respective missions - be it education for girls, women welfare, child protection or other various social causes.

Taapsee Pannu, being the first icon of this initiative, brings with her a distinct personality and wide appeal, that cuts across all sections of society. Her performances in Pink, Badla, Mulk and very recently Thappad have seen her portray a repertoire of roles that pushed her creative abilities. Through Icons for Change, she hopes to inspire people to come forward and make 2021 a year of big changes.

JICA Extends ODA Loan of INR 2,000 Crore for 'The COVID-19 Crisis Response Support Loan for Social Protection'



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has signed an agreement with the Government of India to provide an Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan of 30,000 million Japanese Yen (approximately INR 2,069 Crore) for 'The COVID-19 Crisis Response Support Loan for Social Protection'.

The objective of the project is to contain COVID-19 and mitigate adverse socioeconomic impacts in India, by extending budget support to Government of India implementing emergency response programs

and policy reforms for social protection as countermeasures against the COVID-19, thereby contributing to promoting the social and economic stabilization and development efforts of India.

The ODA loan agreement was signed between Dr. C.S. Mohapatra, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative, JICA India said, "The

outbreak of COVID-19 has adversely affected the underprivileged and vulnerable societies in India. JICA aims to support India in its response to COVID-19 pandemic, by accelerating economic support to the government. The project aims at supporting the government in its endeavor of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY) to empower these disadvantaged groups, whose lives have been hampered with the occurrence of the pandemic. Besides this project, JICA has extended an ODA loan of "COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support" for strengthen the public healthcare system under the Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana (PM-ASBY)." JICA launched "JICA's Initiative for Global Health and Medicine" last year and committed to strengthen its effort to enhance the activities in health sector.

'The COVID-19 Crisis Response Support Loan for Social Protection' has a multi-pronged approach to provide economic support, accelerate social protection, improve existing infrastructure of social protection aimed at households and workers and strengthen integrated policy initiatives in the country. The project aims to strengthen the capability of state and national governments in India to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and from its future crisis. This loan aligns with loans provided by other multilateral and bilateral donor agencies such as World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). DEA is the Executing Agency of the Project.

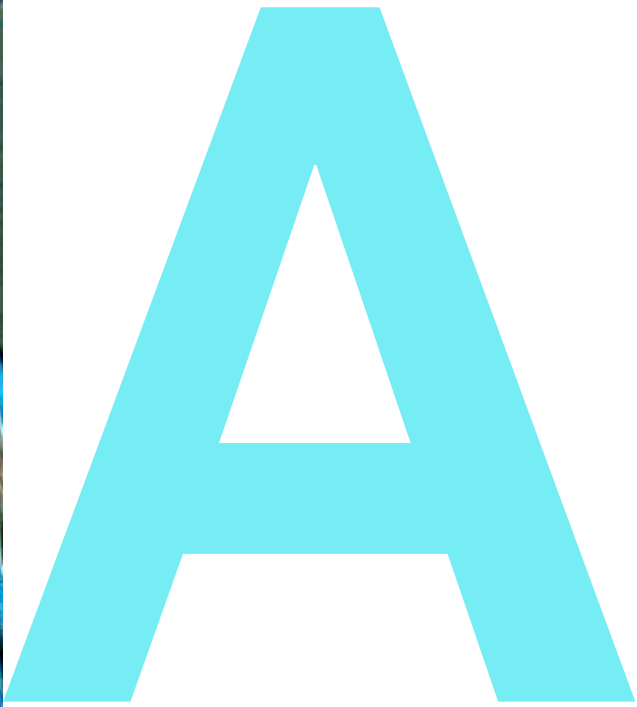
Through this project, JICA aims to partner with the Government of India in bolstering India's response to COVID-19 and fast-tracking India's recovery path.

FOOD FORTIFICATION

**'A powerful tool' to improve
health and power economies**

With nearly 400 million people in Asia suffering from undernourishment, fortifying staple foods such as rice with micronutrients can be a powerful and sustainable way to improve public health.

Food fortification and better farming methods are among the ways to improve public health and resource efficiency.
Image: Bryon Lippincott via Flickr, CC BY-ND 2.0



about 381 million people in Asia are undernourished, making up about 8 per cent of the population, and the Covid-19 pandemic is likely to worsen the situation, according to the United Nations (UN). In recent years, more countries in the region have turned to food fortification, which is the process of adding micronutrients to food, to arrest this and other malnutrition problems and improve citizens' health.

In India, for example, the government plans to make fortification of rice, a staple food of over 70 per cent of residents, compulsory by 2023, to improve their nutrition and reduce the rising rate of anaemia. In 2020, Bangladesh partnered with the UN's World Food Programme (WFP) to start selling subsidised fortified rice to poor households in Dhaka.

Sarwar Mahmud, director general of the Bangladesh government's food directorate, said that food fortification has become especially important in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. "By

fortifying rice, we can provide essential vitamins and minerals to households compelled to compromise their food diversity due to limited access to markets and income opportunities during the Covid-19 crisis," he said.

"It is also a cost-effective way to address nutrient deficiencies in food for disadvantaged urban poor populations," he added.

Global nutrition, health and sustainable living company DSM was part of the rice fortification effort in Bangladesh. It has collaborated with the WFP, UN

COVID-19 deepens healthcare nightmare for India's indigenous people



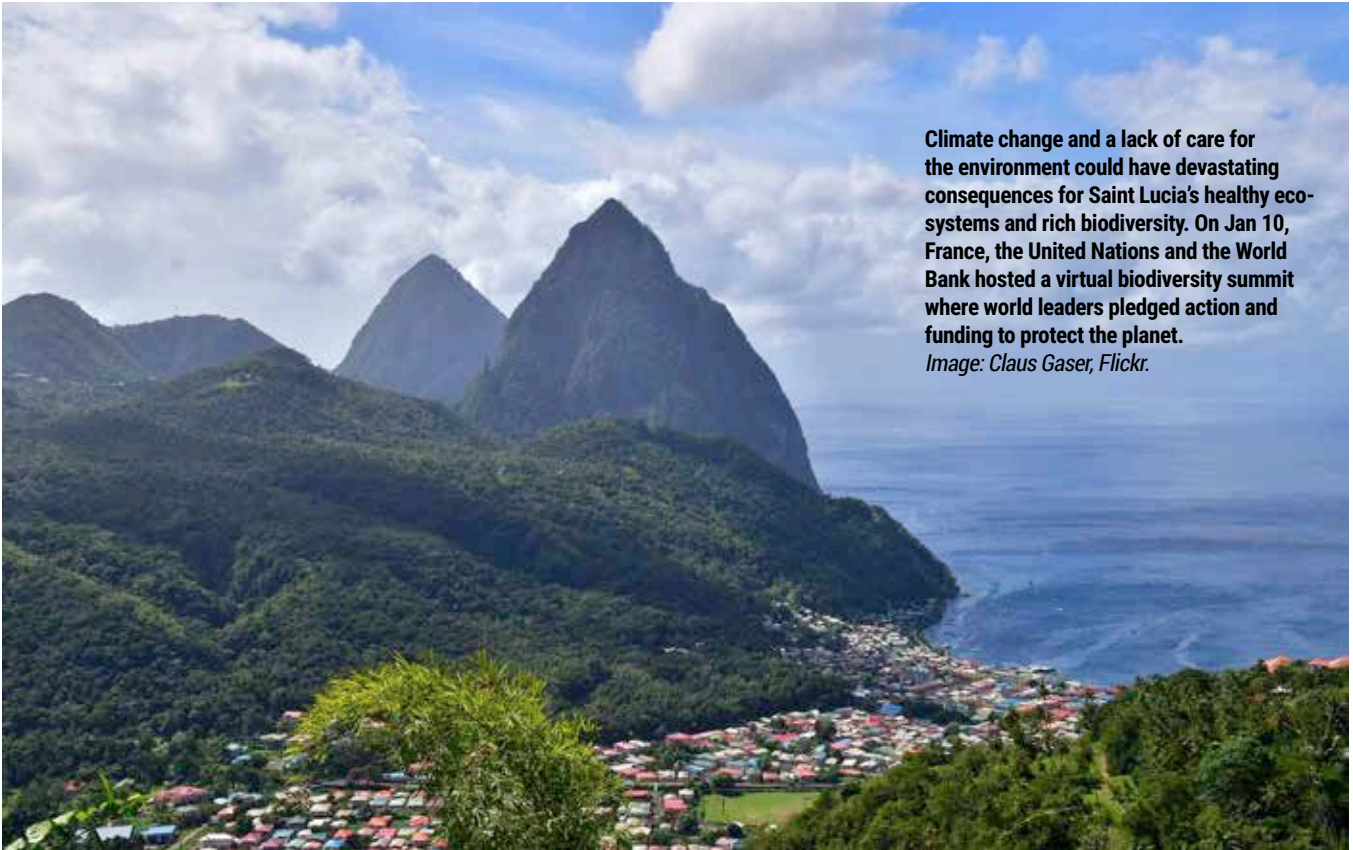
Medical doctor examining health of poor villagers at health checkup camp initiative started by NGO Chinmaya Organization India. Despite policymakers agreeing that there is no comprehensive policy for indigenous healthcare, a solution based on reliable data is still absent. Image: Alamy.

Adivasis were always vulnerable because of poor access to healthcare. But they suffered even more during the pandemic, writes **Sushmita Verma**

As the Covid-19 pandemic ravaged the world and employment opportunities dried up, in many countries including India, indigenous people returned to their intergenerational, ancestral homes, often situated near forests. In the course of the reporting of this story, many of the adivasi (indigenous) community workers from

Jharkhand echoed one sentiment: “If at all we have to die, it’s better to die among our loved ones.”

India announced a nationwide lockdown on March 24. Within a few days of the announcement, the distress among the communities on the margins of society was palpable. Even as indigenous people made long journeys home, some were beaten to death simply for



Climate change and a lack of care for the environment could have devastating consequences for Saint Lucia's healthy ecosystems and rich biodiversity. On Jan 10, France, the United Nations and the World Bank hosted a virtual biodiversity summit where world leaders pledged action and funding to protect the planet.

Image: Claus Gaser, Flickr.

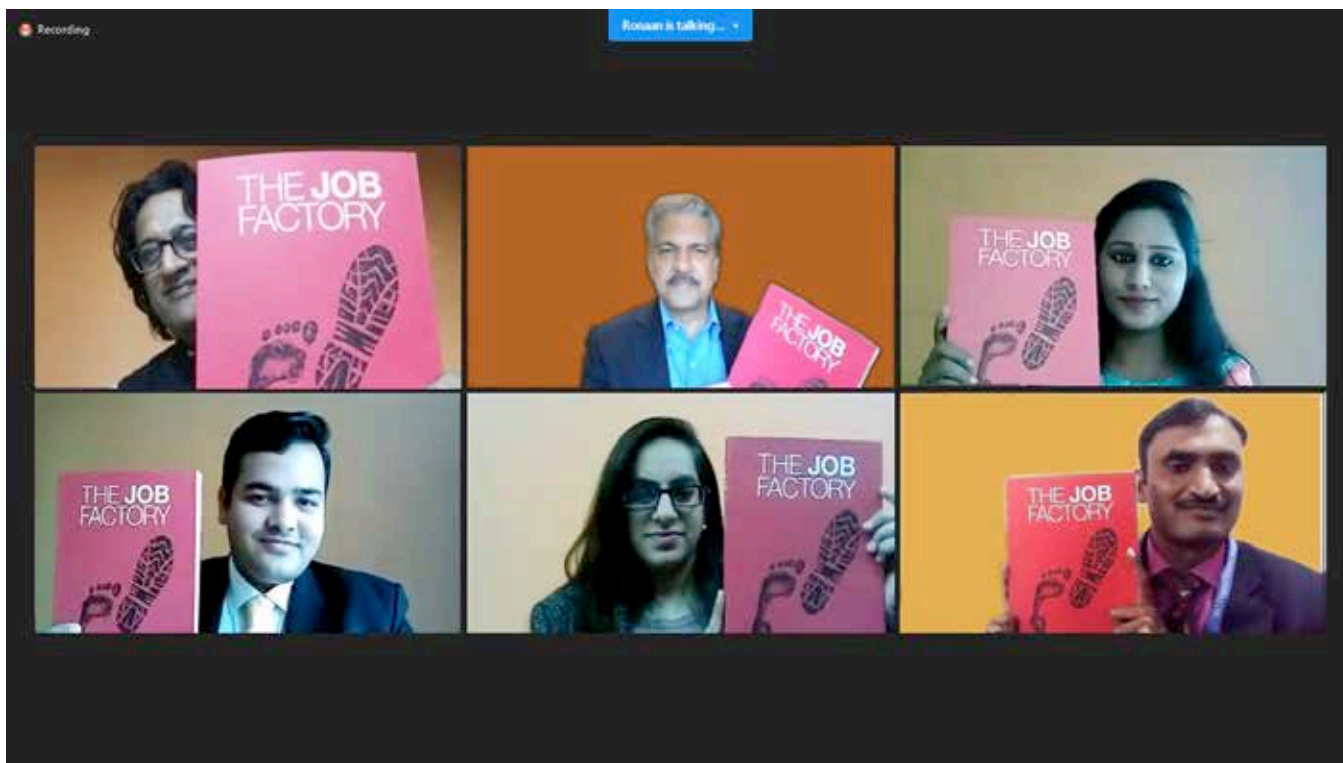
Facing their failure to meet 2020 biodiversity targets, world leaders pledge action and funds

After a decade, world leaders acknowledge their shortcomings and pledge to four main areas for urgent action at the One Planet Summit, hosted virtually by France, the United Nations and the World Bank.

Amid calls from the UN Chief to stop treating the earth 'as if we have a spare one,' French President Emmanuel Macron led world leaders in commitments to protect ecosystems at the One Planet Summit. French President Emmanuel Macron convened the 4th edition of the One Planet Summit for Biodiversity with a concession – that after a decade, the world has failed to take the action needed to stem global biodiversity loss.

The Jan 10 event, hosted virtually by France, the United Nations and the World Bank, focussed on four areas for urgent action; protecting land and maritime species, promoting agroecology, mobilising finance for biodiversity and protecting tropical forests, species and human health.

The French leader said the world is seeing the impacts of overexploitation of natural resources including rising poverty, inequality, public health crises and security concerns. He urged leaders to act decisively,



Mahindra Group Commits to Skilling 1 Million Under-resourced Youth by 2025

It has skilled 500,000 youth and created 100,000 jobs in the last 15 years

Mahindra Group has announced that in its 75th milestone year, its skilling initiatives like Mahindra Pride Schools & Classrooms, SMART ACADEMY, SMART Plus, and Surya Mitra have skilled 500,000 youth and Mahindra Pride School alone has created 100,000 jobs in the

last 15 years. It commits to further skill 500,000 youth in the next 5 years. At an event today, Anand Mahindra, Chairman, Mahindra Group unveiled 'The Job Factory' a coffee table book that chronicles riveting stories of 75 young alumni of Mahindra Pride School. With an aim to spread awareness about skilling for employability, a digital film #SkillHaiTohFutureHai was launched on social media recently.

The protagonists of India's economic growth story are its youth, its demographic dividend. Gainful employment provides under-resourced youth dignity, identity,

empowerment to overcome socio-economic challenges. However, the skill-gap continues to remain a critical challenge. In 2005 on its 60th anniversary, the Mahindra Group had taken a pole position towards affirmative action in youth skilling in presence of Hon. Former President of India Dr. Abdul Kalam and announced the setting up of two Mahindra Pride Schools (MPS) as part of its CSR initiatives. In the wake of the disruptions caused by the pandemic, Mahindra Group with Naandi Foundation as the implementation partner, will re-calibrate the curriculum to impart employ-

A modern road skirts the Royal Belum Rainforest in Perak, Malaysia.

Image: hams Nocete, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



BIG BUILDERS' PLANS THREATEN TO WRECK FOREST SURVIVAL

Plans by corporate power and government investors risk corporate good intentions and national vows for forest survival, says **Tim Radford**, Climate News Network

Forest survival in the world's great conservation targets – the Amazon, the Congo and Southeast Asia, for example – is at risk from not just ranchers, loggers and illegal foresters: it's also under assault from some of the planet's biggest spenders: governments and the big banks, giant mining corporations and road builders.

A new report warns that in the Amazon region alone – across Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador – governments have promised \$27bn worth of investment on 12,000 kms (7,456 miles) of roads over the next five years. If all the promised infrastructure goes ahead, that could mean the loss of 24,000 square kilometres of forest in the next 20 years.

A new EV battery shows big promise

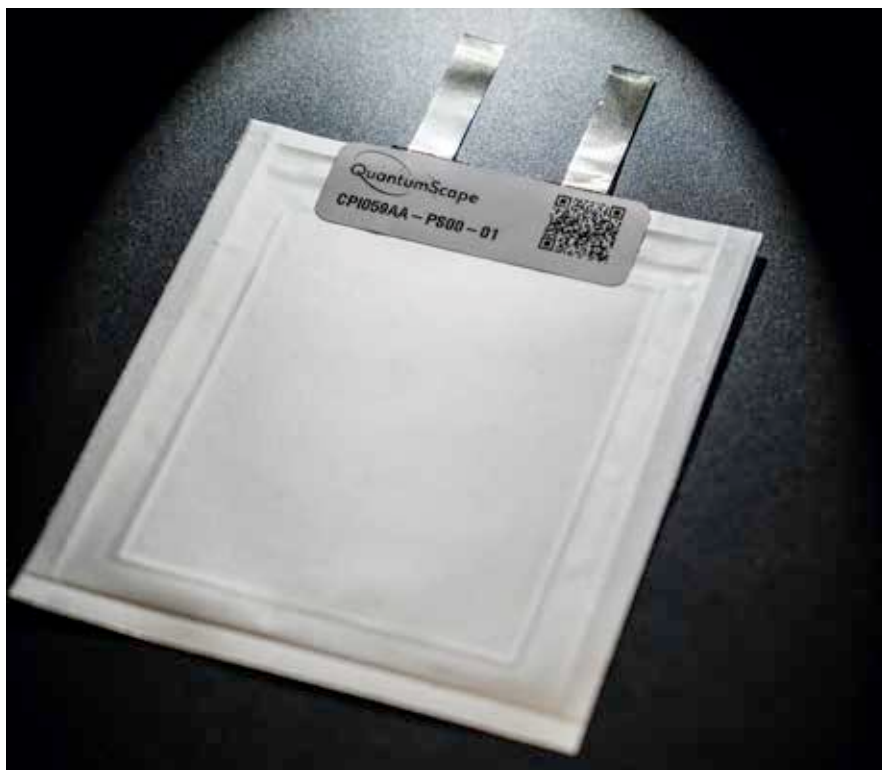
QuantumScape, a battery company that's been in stealth for a decade while its team has worked on developing what the industry calls a solid-state, lithium-metal battery, writes **Katie Fehrenbacher**

For decades, battery researchers have toiled away trying to crack the code for a new battery that could trump lithium-ion batteries — the technology that brought the electric vehicle industry to where it is today.

Now a decade-old startup backed by members of the tech investing elite and global auto giants says it has created working batteries that could lead to electric vehicles with significantly longer ranges, that can be produced at a lower cost, are safer to operate, boast longer lifespans and support faster charging.

Meet QuantumScape, a battery company that's been in stealth for a decade while its team has worked on developing what the industry calls a solid-state, lithium-metal battery. The solid-state moniker refers to the elimination of the liquid electrolyte, which in traditional batteries fills the cell and is used for charging and discharging.

The company was founded by serial entrepreneur Jagdeep Singh



A single battery cell made by QuantumScape



Jagdeep Singh, founder of QuantumScape