

NPSDRR Initiatives to Develop Cluster-Based Model Gram Panchayats(GP) Approved

National Project for Strengthening Disaster Risk Reduction (NPSDRR) Initiatives aims to to integrate disaster risk reduction into local governance through a bottom-up approach.

About NPSDRR

- **Implementation:** Jointly by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) & National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- **Outlay:** ₹507.37 crores
- **Coverage:** Across 20 States and 81 disaster-prone districts with 20 Gram Panchayats each.
- **Cluster based Approach:** GP and Model GP have to be located in a close cluster.
- **Integrated Approach:** It calls for the preparation of Panchayat- and village-level Disaster Management Plans and their integration with local development processes, including Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs).
- **Introduction of Model Gram Panchayat Concept:** One for each of 20 States for six different hazards (one GP for each hazard).
 - ⌚ Model GP will serve as demonstrative templates for integrating disaster resilience into planning, infrastructure and community preparedness.

About Community based DRR

- Community-based Disaster Risk Reduction (CBDRR) is the active engagement of the community in identification, analysis, assessment, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of disaster risks to reduce their vulnerabilities and enhance capacities.
- **Benefits:** Participatory Risk Assessment and Planning, Effective Information Dissemination, Local Knowledge and Contextual Understanding, **Local communities are 1st responders in various stages of disaster management.**
- **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-30)** calls for CBDRR.
- In India **"Aapda Mitra"** is a scheme for Training of Community Volunteers in Disaster Response.

Committee on External Affairs presented 'Future of India-Bangladesh Relationship' report in Lok Sabha

Key Challenges Highlighted in the Report

- **Strategic Realignment:** Collapse of the government in Bangladesh in August 2024 has created **political uncertainty** and a potential **strategic shift in Dhaka away from India.**
- **Security Threats:** Key concerns for India include **illegal migration, cross-border terrorism**, exacerbated by the **864 km of unfenced border** in challenging riverine and mountainous terrain.
- **Economic Barriers and Trade Imbalances:** Bilateral trade (USD 13.46 billion in 2024-25) remains **heavily skewed towards India.**
 - ⌚ Other challenges include **infrastructure constraints at land ports, high congestion, and the influx of third-country goods** (such as Chinese fabrics) under preferential provisions.
- **Water Sharing and Environmental Crisis:** The **Ganga Water Treaty (1996)** expires in December 2026, with no formal renewal discussions underway.
 - ⌚ Also, agreements on **53 shared rivers (including Teesta)** remain **unresolved**, while the **Sundarbans delta** faces threats from **climate-driven sea-level rise.**
- **Other issues:** China's **expanding presence** (e.g. Mongla Port upgrade, submarine base at Pekua), threatens **Siliguri Corridor**; attacks on **religious minorities in Bangladesh**

Strategic Recommendations for the Future

- **Sustained Diplomatic Engagement:** Utilizing **Track II and Track 1.5 diplomacy**, pressing for free, fair, and inclusive elections.
- **Modernizing Border Management:** Priority to **completing border fencing with advanced technologies**, such as **drones, motion sensors, and laser intrusion detection.**
- **Economic Safeguards and Integration:** Accelerate negotiations for a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)** with **strict rules-of-origin verification** to prevent third-party misuse.
- **Proactive Water and Climate Diplomacy:** Renewal talks for the **Ganga Water Treaty** as per current hydrological and climate data, **joint adaptation measures for the Sundarbans**, etc.
- **Other:** Dedicated **Strategic Communication and Perception Management Unit** by the MEA; **Leveraging Regional Forums** (e.g. BIMSTEC) as an alternative to SAARC; emphasis on **people-to-people connections** (e.g. resume normal Visa operations).

Live in Relationship not illegal says Allahabad High Court

The ruling reinforces a rights-based interpretation of Article 21, strengthening jurisprudence on personal liberty and human dignity.

Key Observation of Court on Live-In Relationship

- **Legality:** The Court clarified that live-in relationships between consenting adults are **neither criminal nor prohibited under Indian law**.
- **Autonomy:** It reaffirmed that **adults are free** to make personal life choices, and such autonomy **cannot be restricted merely due to social or familial disapproval**.
- **State Duty:** The judgment emphasised that **denial of police protection** in such cases amounts to a **failure of the State's constitutional obligation** to safeguard life and liberty.
- **Social Morality:** The Court held that **concerns about "social fabric" cannot override fundamental rights** guaranteed under the Constitution.
- **Evidentiary Presumption:** It referred to **Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act / Section 119(1) of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023** which states that if a couple lives together for a significant period of time as husband and wife, they **shall be presumed to be married**.
 - ⊕ The Courts shall apply this presumption to protect the **rights of parties in a live-in relationship, particularly women and children** born out of such relationships.

Related Supreme Court Judgements

- **Lata Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2006):** The Supreme Court directed State authorities to protect adults exercising their choice of partner and strongly condemned honour-based violence and social harassment.
- **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017):** The Supreme Court held that Article 21 protects the right to privacy, dignity, autonomy, and decisional freedom in personal and intimate matters.
- **Shafin Jahan vs. Asokan K.M. And Others, (2018):** SC held that the right to marry a person of own choice is an integral part of Article 21 of the Constitution of India and expression of choice is a fundamental right under Articles 19 and 21.

Action Taken Report on Sixth Report of the Committee on External Affairs "Indian Diaspora Overseas" released.

It presents the committee's observations and recommendations regarding the welfare and conditions of the diverse Indian Diaspora—including NRIs, PIOs, OCIs, and migrant workers.

About Indian Diaspora

- Indian Diaspora is a generic term to describe the people who **migrated from territories that are currently within the borders of the Republic of India**. It also refers to their **descendants**.
- It includes **Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs)** and Migrant Workers.
- The population was about **35.42 million** (January 2024).

Key Issues and Recommendations: Committee on External Affairs (2025–26)



Key Issue	Committee Observations	Recommendations
Data gaps on non-ECR migrants	Migration data is limited to workers going to 18 ECR (Emigration Check Required) countries, excluding skilled professionals, students, and migrants in non-ECR destinations.	Develop a comprehensive Labour Market Information (LMI) database covering all migrant categories (NRIs, PIOs, OCIs) with real-time data on jobs and skills.
Absence of a codified diaspora policy	The existing "4Cs" framework (Care, Connect, Celebrate, Contribute) is informal and lacks strategic direction.	Formulate a specific policy document for Indian Diaspora to guide structured engagement and address diaspora needs and aspirations.
Vulnerability of student migrants	Student migrants form a large group but are excluded from the Emigration Bill and exposed to fraud by agents and institutions.	Include student welfare in the Emigration Bill , regulate recruitment agencies, and mandate Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Missions' student outreach.
Exploitation by private recruiters	Migrants face high costs and unethical practices by private agents; State-run agencies remain underused.	Prioritise State-run recruitment agencies and include at least one such agency in future Bilateral Labour Agreements .
Lack of support for returnees	About 6 lakh emigrants returned (2019–24), but reintegration is treated as a State-only responsibility.	Provide Central grants and soft loans to States for sustainable economic reintegration of returnees.
Delays in transporting mortal remains	Families face inhumane delays due to administrative clearances; Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is underutilised.	Simplify ICWF procedures and give Missions discretionary powers to arrange immediate transport without HQ approval.

India and Oman signed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

In recent years, India has successfully signed similar Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with UK, EFTA, Australia, UAE, etc.

Key highlights of India-Oman CEPA

- **Market Access:** To enhance bilateral trade from USD 10 billion at present,
 - ⊕ Oman will provide **zero-duty access on around 98% of Oman's tariff lines** (~99.4% by value) to Indian goods.
 - ⊕ While India has offered tariff liberalization on around 78% of its tariff lines, excluding sensitive products like **dairy, tea, coffee, rubber, etc.**
- **Services and Investment sectors:** **100% FDI** for Indian companies in major services sector in Oman.
- **Traditional medicines:** 1st-ever commitment on traditional medicine across all modes, opening **opportunities for India's AYUSH and wellness sectors** in gulf.
- **Enhanced mobility for Indian professionals:** Includes increased quotas, liberalizes entry and stay for skilled professionals etc.
- It also addresses **non-tariff barriers**.

Why is India seeking so many FTAs?

- **Export Diversification:** Through new markets for macroeconomic stability, as **exports accounted for 21.2% of India's GDP in 2024.**
- **FTAs attract FDIs:** FTA partners contributed **~30% of India's FDI equity inflows (2000 -2022).**
 - ⊕ FDIs are important for cheaper access to **raw materials, technology, skills and capital goods.**
- **Leveraging Strengths in services sector:** **E.g.,** share of India's exports in Oman's services imports is only 5.31%, indicating **significant untapped potential.**
- **Resilience against global shocks:** **E.g.** they enhance autonomy amid US tariff.

Other measures taken by India to boost exports

- **Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP):** Ministry of commerce and industry reimburses taxes and duties to exporters.
- **Export Promotion Mission:** To enable **affordable trade finance** (particularly for MSMEs), **compliance and certification; international market access**, etc.
- **District as export hub:** Under the Ministry of commerce, it targets export promotion, manufacturing and employment generation at the grassroots level.
- **Foreign Trade Policy (FTP), 2023:** Aims to take India's exports to 2 trillion dollars by 2030.



Also In News



Competition Commission Of India (CCI)

Recently CCI has taken cognizance of Indigo flight disruption to investigate the potential abuse of market dominance.

About CCI

- **Type:** Statutory body established under Competition Act, 2002.
 - ⊕ It was subsequently amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007.
- **Ministry:** Minister of Corporate Affairs(MCA)
- **Composition:** Chairperson and not less than 2 and more than 6 Members to be appointed by the Central Government
- **Role:**
 - ⊕ Prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises
 - ⊕ Regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.
 - ⊕ Give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law
 - ⊕ Protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.



Freshwater Sponges

A recent study by Indian scientists has revealed the **importance of sponge-associated microbes in tackling metal pollution.**

- **Sponges:** Sponges are simple, aquatic invertebrates with **porous bodies that filter water to obtain food and oxygen**, playing important ecological roles in aquatic ecosystems. **E.g.** Bath Sponge (Euspongia), delicate Venus Flower Basket (Euplectella), etc.

Key Findings

- Freshwater sponges were found to host diverse **microbial communities, capable of resisting heavy metals.**
 - ⊕ These sponges accumulate **arsenic, lead, and cadmium** at high levels.
- They can act as **bio-indicators and support bioremediation** of polluted freshwater ecosystems.





Coal Controller's Organisation (CCO)

The process for the disposal of washery rejects has been simplified by the Coal Controller's Organisation (CCO) to improve efficiency and ease of compliance.

Coal Controller's Organisation

- **Ministry:** Subordinate office under the **Ministry of Coal**.
- **Objective:** Ensure **transparency, efficiency, and consumer protection** in the coal sector.
- **Mandate:** Regulates **coal quality, grading, and sampling** under Colliery Control Rules
- **Functions:** Collects coal production **statistics; monitors dispatch and supply**.
- **Regulatory Role:** Oversees mine opening, closure (gives approval on Mining Plan and Mine Closure Plan under MMDR Act 1957), and washery-reject disposal.



Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM)

Recently, CAQM reviewed Municipal Solid Waste Management across Delhi and NCR States.

About CAQM

- **Origin:** It is a **statutory body** under the **CAQM in NCR and Adjoining Areas, Act 2021**.
 - ⊕ Replaced the **Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority (EPCA)**.
- **Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- **Jurisdiction:** National Capital Region (NCR) and adjoining areas (Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh).
- **Powers:** It has **binding powers** to restrict polluting activities, order compensation, investigate, issue directions, prepare guidelines, etc.



Anti-Dumping Duty

India has imposed **Anti-Dumping Duty** on some Steel imports from China.

About Anti-Dumping Duty

- Anti-dumping duty is a **trade remedy that a country imposes when imports are sold below their normal value** in international markets.
 - ⊕ If a company exports a product at a **price lower than the price it normally charges on its own home market**, it is said to be "dumping" the product.
- Such duties are **allowed under the WTO agreements** to protect domestic industries from dumping.



Autophagy

Researchers have uncovered a missing link in **autophagy**, offering potential therapeutic insights for **Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and cancer**.

Autophagy

- Autophagy is a natural cellular process where **cells remove and recycle damaged or dysfunctional components** to maintain health and **homeostasis**.
- It **clears out toxic proteins** and supports **cellular repair**, energy balance, and survival under stress.
- Autophagy is **linked to protection against neurodegenerative diseases and cancer** and is studied for therapeutic potential.
- **Yoshinori Ohsumi** was awarded the **2016 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine** for his discoveries of the mechanisms of autophagy.



Small Modular Reactor (SMR)

Government of India is planning to operationalising at least five indigenously designed SMRs under **Nuclear Energy Mission by 2033**.

Key Features of SMRs

- **Power:** **Up to 300 MW (e) per unit**, which is about **one-third** of traditional nuclear power reactors.
 - **Modular:** Components can be **factory-assembled** and transported as a unit to a location for installation.
 - **Portability & Scalability** due to modular design and small size.
- Significance**
- **Can help target achievement** of 100 GW by 2047 (nuclear energy) from current 8.78 GW.

Issues

- **Higher Cost** per kilowatt-hour of the electricity.



Hate Speech

Karnataka Hate Speech and Hate Crimes (Prevention) Bill 2025 has been passed by Karnataka Assembly.

About Hate Speech

- The bill defines hate speech as **expressions in public view** intended to cause **injury, disharmony, enmity, hatred or ill-will** against a person, group or community, on grounds including religion, race, caste, gender, sexual orientation, language or tribe.
- **Constitutional Provisions:**
 - ⊕ **Article 19(1)(a)** grants **freedom of speech**, but **Article 19(2)** allows "**reasonable restrictions**" for public order, national security, decency, defamation, and incitement to offenses.

Place in News



Netherlands (Capital: Amsterdam)

Recently, Letter of Intent on defence cooperation was signed between India and Netherlands.

Political Features

- **Location:** Northwestern Europe.
- **Boundaries:** Germany (east), Belgium (south),
- **Maritime Boundary:** North Sea (Atlantic Ocean) to the north and west.
- **Institutions:** International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court are situated in Hague.

Geographical Features

- **3 primary features:** Lowlands, The Veluwe and Utrecht Hill Ridge (central part), and The Limburg Hills (South).
- **Water Bodies:**
 - ⊕ **Major lake:** IJsselmeer (largest freshwater)
 - ⊕ **Rivers:** Rhine (empty in North Sea), the Meuse, and Scheldt.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI