

# NEWS TODAY

## Signing of Donor Agreement between Ministry of Ayush, Government of India and WHO

The Donor agreement recognizes the establishment of the **WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (GTMC)** as a key knowledge hub for evidence-based Traditional Complementary and Integrative Medicine (TCIM) aiming to advance the health and well-being of people and the planet.

- ▶ India will donate US\$ 85 million over a period of 10 years (2022-2032) to support the operations of the WHO GTMC in Jamnagar, Gujarat, India.

### About Traditional Medicine

- ▶ Traditional Medicine is the knowledge and practices based on the beliefs and experiences indigenous to different cultures, used in the prevention, diagnosis, or treatment of illness.
  - ⊖ Some traditional medicines are herbal medicine, yoga, Ayurveda, acupuncture etc.
  - ⊖ **More than 80% of the world's population** in over 170 of WHO's 194 Member States currently use some form of traditional medicine.
- ▶ The 2018 **Declaration of Astana on primary health care** acknowledges the need to include traditional medicine knowledge and technologies in the delivery of primary health care.
- ▶ **Concerns**
  - ⊖ **Traditional medicine products can have negative health effects**, especially when used in combination with other medications or in high doses.
  - ⊖ Most of the **Traditional Medicine** products are unregulated.

### Initiatives Taken

- ▶ **National Ayush Mission:** For providing better access to Ayush services by upgrading and establishing Ayush Hospital and Dispensaries.
- ▶ **Ayush Oushadhi Gunvatta Evam Utpadan Samvardhan Yojana:** For development of traditional medicine products.
- ▶ **Ayurwashya:** Financial assistance is provided to eligible individual organizations/institutes for establishing and upgrading research & development activities in Ayush.

## The Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2024 introduced in the Lok Sabha

The Bill seeks to **amend the Disaster Management (DM) Act, 2005** and attempts to **integrate disaster management more effectively** into development plans, **aligning with recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission**.

### Key Features of Bill

- ▶ **Disaster Database:** It provides for **creation of Disaster database at national and state levels**.
  - ⊖ It will include disaster assessments, fund allocation details, expenditure, preparedness and mitigation plans, risk register etc.
- ▶ **Disaster Plan:** It **empowers National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA)** to prepare the disaster plan at national level and state level instead of National Executive Committee and State Executive Committee.
  - ⊖ National plan should be **reviewed every three years** and updated at least once in every five years.
- ▶ **Urban Authority:** Proposes "**Urban Disaster Management Authority**" for State capitals and large cities having Municipal Corporations.
- ▶ **Statutory Recognition:** Statutory recognition to existing bodies – **National Crisis Management Committee** (nodal body to deal with major disasters) and **High-Level Committee** (for approval of financial assistance).
- ▶ **State Force:** Enables state government to constitute **State Disaster Response Force** to strengthen the disaster response capability of states.

### Key provisions of DM Act, 2005

- ▶ **Establishes 3 Tier Institutional Structure:**
  - ⊖ **National Level:** NDMA, headed by Prime Minister.
  - ⊖ **State Level:** SDMA, headed by respective Chief Ministers.
  - ⊖ **District Level:** District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), headed by District Collector or District Magistrate or Deputy Commissioner.
- ▶ Establishes **National Disaster Response Force** (for specialist response) and **National Disaster Response Fund** (for meeting threatening disaster situation).

## National Green Tribunal asks MoEFCC to finalise deadline for declaring western ghats an eco-sensitive zone

In July 2022, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) issued a draft notification on the western ghats as an ECZ to protect the rich biodiversity.

### About Western Ghat

- It spread across 6 states namely **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala & Tamil Nadu**.
- In 2011, Gadgil panel had recommended that the **whole Western Ghats should be declared as "Ecologically Sensitive Area"** because of its dense forests and the presence of a large number of endemic species.
  - ⊕ A second panel led by Kasturirangan reviewed the Gadgil report.
  - ⊕ The Central Government issued a draft notification for declaring the Western Ghats Eco-sensitive Area, following the panel's recommendations.

### Draft Notification, 2022

- **Regulation of Human activities**
  - ⊕ **Activities Restricted:** Mining, quarrying and sand mining, 'Red' category industries, new thermal power projects etc.
  - ⊕ **Regulated:** Hydropower project etc.
  - ⊕ **Unrestricted:** All existing healthcare establishments, agriculture & plantation activity etc.
- **Decision Support & Monitoring Centre for Western Ghats:** To assess and report on status of ecology of Western Ghats.

### Eco-Sensitive Zones

- National Environment Policy (2006) defined the **Eco-Sensitive Zones "as areas/zones with identified environmental resources having incomparable values** which require special attention for their conservation" because of its landscape, wildlife, biodiversity, historical and natural values.
- As per the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016), **Eco-Sensitive Areas (ESAs) are regions located within 10 km of protected areas such as national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.**
  - ⊕ ESAs are notified and regulated by the MoEFCC under the Environment Protection Act, 1986

### Issues

- Draft notification **could harm local residents' livelihoods and development activities.**
- States claim **no scientific survey determined the ESA's size** before the draft was issued.

## World Bank releases the World Development Report 2024: Middle Income Trap

Report provides a comprehensive roadmap to enable developing countries to escape the "Middle-Income Trap".

- **Middle-Income Trap** is a situation in which a **Middle-Income Country (annual GDP per capita in range of \$1,136 to \$13,845)** experiences **systematic growth slowdowns** as it is unable to take on new economic structures needed to sustain high-income levels.

### Key Highlights

- As countries grow wealthier, they usually hit a **trap at about 10% of annual U.S. GDP per person (\$8,000)** and do not grow fast further.
  - ⊕ Since 1990, **only 34 Middle-Income Countries (MICs)** have managed to **shift to high-income** status.
- At end-2023, **108 countries were classified as MICs** with home to 75% of global population and generating >40% of global GDP.
  - ⊕ **Challenges they face** in escaping middle income trap include **rapidly aging populations, rising protectionism** in advanced economies, and need to speed up **energy transition**.
- **India joined club of Lower MICs in 2007** and has remained there since with its present GNI per capita at \$2,540.
  - ⊕ At current trends, it will take India **75 years** just to reach **one-quarter of US income per capita**.

### Key recommendations

- **3I (Investment, Infusion, and Innovation) strategy: First focus on investment;** then add emphasis on infusion of new technologies; and, finally, adopt a **three-pronged strategy** that balances 3I.
- **Reward value-adding firms** to stimulate business dynamism, and deepen capital markets.
- **Enhance social mobility** by providing equal opportunities to women, minorities and disadvantaged groups.
  - ⊕ For instance, **removing barriers to entrepreneurship for women** in India would **raise real income by 40%**.
- **Enhance economic efficiency** by reflecting environmental costs in energy prices.

## Supreme Court allows sub-classification in SC, ST for quota

Supreme Court in the **State of Punjab and Ors Vs Davinder Singh and Ors, 2024** ruled that States can sub-classify Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) to provide additional quotas for more disadvantaged groups within these categories

- Earlier in **EV Chinniah case (2005)**, Supreme Court held that all the castes in the Presidential Order under Article 341(1) formed one class of homogeneous group and the same could not be further subdivided.
  - ⊕ Under Article 341(1), the President of India can officially designate certain groups as Scheduled Castes in any State or Union territory

### Other Key Highlights of Supreme Court Judgment

- **State cannot earmark 100% reservation for a sub-class while allowing sub-classification**
- The governments must conduct an **empirical study before the sub-classification.**
- The State's power to sub-classify is **subject to judicial review.**
- Sub-classification **does not violate the principle of equality enshrined under Article 14 and President's exclusive authority under Article 341 to identify SCs.**
- Supreme Court **expressed the need to exclude the 'creamy layer' among the Scheduled Castes** from the reservation benefits meant for the SC categories.
  - ⊕ Currently, concept of **'creamy layer'** is applicable only to the reservation for Other Backward Classes.

## State visit of Prime Minister of Vietnam to India

India considers Vietnam as a key pillar of its Act East Policy and an important partner in its Indo-Pacific vision.

### Key Outcomes of Visit

- **Adoption of Plan of Action** for implementation of the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** during the 2024-2028 period.
- **MoUs were signed** in fields of customs capacity building, agricultural research and education, legal field, radio and television, and medicinal plants.
- Agreement for extending **US\$ 300 million Line of Credit** by India for defence procurement.
- Vietnam decided to join the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).**
- Both sides stated that they **support evolution and not expansionism** and will cooperate for a **free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific.**

### India-Vietnam Relations

- **Historical:** Established full diplomatic relations in 1972, elevated to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2016.**
- **Development Cooperation:** India is undertaking Quick Impact Projects under **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC).**
  - ⊕ India is undertaking restoration and conservation of **My Son UNESCO World Heritage Site.**
- **Economic:** India-Vietnam trade stood at **USD 14.82 billion in FY24** where Indian exports to Vietnam were US\$ 5.47 billion while Indian imports from Vietnam were US\$ 9.35 billion.
- **Defence cooperation: Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030** was signed in 2022.
  - ⊕ **Joint Military Exercise VINBAX** and Multilateral Naval Exercise **MILAN.**

## Also in News



### Genetic Testing

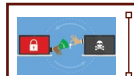
Athletes are turning to genetic testing for **improving their performance.**

#### About Genetic Testing

- Genetic testing **analyzes an individual's DNA to identify genetic variants that may influence various traits**, including athletic performance, health risks, and nutritional needs.
- Genetic tests are performed on a sample of blood, hair, skin, amniotic fluid, or other tissue.

#### Significance of genetic testing:

- **Performance Optimization:** Identifies genetic factors to enhance endurance and strength.
- **Nutritional Guidance:** Tailors diet plans by detecting allergies and nutrient absorption issues.
- **Injury Prevention and Recovery:** Reveals genetic risks for injury and recovery times for tailored care.



### Ransomware

National Payments Corporation of India temporarily suspends payments in banks possibly affected by ransomware attack.

#### About Ransomware

- It is a type of malware that **holds a victim's sensitive data or device hostage**, threatening to keep it locked unless the victim pays a ransom to the attacker.
  - ⊕ **Examples:** WannaCry, NotPetya, etc.
- It attacks by **Phishing, exploiting existing vulnerabilities, Malicious downloads, etc.**

#### Types of Ransoms

- **Crypto ransomware:** Holds victim's data hostage by encrypting it.
- **Leakware/doxware:** Steals sensitive data & threatens to publish it.
- **Wipers:** Threaten to destroy data if victim does not pay the ransom.

## Kindlins

A study has investigated the **influence of Kindlins** in various cancers as targeting it could lead to **new cancer treatments**.

### Kindlins

- Kindlins are **adapter proteins that exist inside the cells** attached to the cell membranes of almost all types of cells in vertebrates.
- They play pivotal role in **conveying extracellular signals** within the cells.
- Kindlins may **undergo mutations** under the influence of innumerable chemical and physical carcinogens like nicotine, ultraviolet rays etc.
- Structural disruptions in these proteins can **disrupt homeostasis** (balanced state) of the body.

## Giant Radio Sources

Indian astronomers discovered **34 new Giant Radio Sources** using **Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT)**.

- Located near Pune, **GMRT** is operated by National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) and consists of **30 fully steerable gigantic parabolic dishes** for research using **metre-wavelengths range** of radio spectrum.

### Giant Radio Sources (GRSs)

- GRSs are **among the largest objects** in the universe and at the heart of GRSs lies a **supermassive black hole**.
- Serving as central engine, black hole **pulls in surrounding matter**, creating jets of hot plasma, and **producing massive lobes of radio emissions**.

## Woody Encroachment

A study reported the **impact of woody encroachment** on open eco-systems.

- Woody encroachment is the **increase of tree and shrub cover** and it is widespread across most ecosystems.
  - It entails the **conversion of open habitats to habitats with greater tree cover** and/or shrub density.
  - It results in **homogenisation of an ecosystem**, meaning a diverse, multi-layered ecosystem turns into a uniform layer of woody plants.
- Woody encroachment in open ecosystems like savannahs and grasslands has **reduced number of native grassland birds**.

## Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS) (Domestic)

- States can purchase rice from **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** under the OMSS Domestic without participating in the e-auction from August 1, 2024.

⊖ It aims to **reduce the huge surplus of stocks** prior to the commencement of the new procurement season.

- OMSS - Domestic refers to offering of food grains (wheat & rice) in the open market at prices **fixed by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution** through e-auction.

⊖ It aims to **control the price in the market** with the aim to curb inflation.

## World Trade Statistical Review (WTSR) 2023

### About World Trade Statistical Review (WTSR) 2023

- It is the **WTO's flagship statistical publication**.
- WTSR 2023 looks into the **latest developments in world trade**, featuring key data on global trade in merchandise and commercial services.
- Key highlights:**
  - India retains **8<sup>th</sup> position in global agriculture exports in 2023**.
  - India ranked **18<sup>th</sup> in merchandise exports and 7<sup>th</sup> in services exports**.
  - China, USA and Germany remained the top three merchandise exporters in 2022.

## Bent-toed geckos

Scientists discover six new lineages of bent-toed geckos from the Northeast.

### About Bent-toed geckos

- They have been discovered from Arunachal Pradesh (Namdapha and Kamlang Tiger Reserves), Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram (Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary).
- Behaviour:** Nocturnal species.
- Habitats:** Found along forest streams, rocks and vegetation in multiple locations.
- Each Northeastern state has **its own endemic bent-toed gecko**
  - 30 species of the group found in the northeast itself.

## Personality in news | Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak

### About Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (23<sup>rd</sup> July 1856 - 1<sup>st</sup> August 1920).

- Born at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra.
- He was a scholar, philosopher, nationalist etc.

### Key Contributions/Work

- Advocated for **Swaraj (self-rule)** and was one of the first leaders to demand **complete independence** from British rule.
- Bal Gangadhar Tilak had established the **Home Rule League** in April 1916 at Belagavi.
  - Annie Besant had also launched a Home Rule League, the two Leagues never merged.
- Founded two newspapers: "**Kesari**" (in Marathi) and "**The Mahratta**" (in English).
- He composed the 'Gita Rahasya'.

**Values:** Patriotism, Courage, Perseverance etc.

