

NEWS TODAY

World's first major act to regulate Artificial Intelligence (AI) passed by European Union (EU) Parliament

- EU's Act aims to ensure that **fundamental rights, democracy, rule of law and environmental sustainability** are protected from high risk AI, while **boosting innovation**.
- **Key highlights of AI Act**
 - ⊕ EU act defines **4 levels of risk- for AI systems**:
 - ◆ **Unacceptable risk (Prohibition)**: Violation of EU Fundamental Rights.
 - ◆ **High-risk (Require conformity assessment and monitoring)**: Impact on health, safety Fundamental Rights, etc.
 - ◆ **Specific Transparency risk (Require Information and transparency obligations)**: Risk of manipulation, impersonation, etc.
 - ◆ **Minimal risk (No specific regulations)**: Common AI systems like spam filters.
 - ⊕ **General-purpose AI models** with systemic risks are mandated to **assess and mitigate risks, report serious incidents, conduct state-of-the-art tests, etc.**
 - ⊕ Use of **real-time remote biometric identification in publicly accessible spaces** (i.e. facial recognition using CCTV) is prohibited with few exceptions.
 - ⊕ **Tackling racial and gender bias**: High-risk systems need to be trained with sufficiently representative datasets to minimise the risk of biases.
- **Steps taken by India to Promote AI**
 - ⊕ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology issued an **Advisory directing all platforms to label any under-trial/unreliable AI models, and secure explicit prior approval from government** before deploying such models.
 - ⊕ **India AI mission** to encourage Development of AI in India.
 - ⊕ **National AI Strategy, 2018.**

Other Steps taken to promote AI Globally

- **Bletchley Declaration** for AI signed by **29 countries including India** and also by EU.
- **Global Partnership on AI (GPAI) New Delhi Declaration** built consensus among GPAI members on advancing safe, secure, and trustworthy AI.
- **Hiroshima AI Process (HAP) by G7** to regulate AI.

International Energy Agency (IEA) released annual Global Methane Tracker 2024 report

- **Key findings**
 - ⊕ **Methane Emissions (ME) from energy sector** remained near a **record high in 2023**.
 - ◆ Production and use of **fossil fuels** (oil, natural gas and coal) **accounted for nearly 120 million tonnes (Mt) and bioenergy accounted for 10 Mt of ME.**
 - ⊕ Around **70% i.e. 80 Mt of ME from fossil fuels** comes from **top 10 emitting countries**.
 - ◆ **United States is largest emitter** of methane from oil and gas operations, followed by Russia. China is highest emitter in coal sector.
 - ⊕ Around **US \$170 Billion is required by 2030** to achieve a **75% cut in ME.**
- **Methane (CH₄) is an Odorless, Colorless, and Flammable gas. It is a greenhouse gas.**
 - ⊕ It is a **second most contributor to global warming** after carbon dioxide and **primary contributor to formation of ground-level ozone.**
- **Initiatives to control Methane emission**
 - ⊕ **Global**
 - ◆ **International Methane Emissions Observatory by UNEP** to provide reliable data to reduce ME.
 - ◆ **Global Methane Pledge** launched at **COP26 (2021)** to cut ME by 30% by 2030.
 - ◆ **Global Methane Initiative** focused on use of methane as a valuable energy source.
 - ⊕ **India**
 - ◆ **GobarDhan** (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) scheme.
 - ◆ **National Biogas and Organic Manure Programme.**

International Energy Agency (IEA)

- **Created in 1974** to help co-ordinate a collective response to major disruptions in oil supply.
- Consists of **31 member countries, 13 Association countries, and 5 accession countries.**
 - ⊕ **India** is one of the **associate members.**
- To be a member, **country should be an OECD member** along with a capacity to **hold a crude reserve for 90 days** of previous year's import.

NITI Aayog released Boosting Exports from MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) Report

Opportunities for MSMEs export highlighted by report

- Wood products and handloom textiles have huge potential because of its **unique aesthetics and cultural appeal**.
- Growing demand for **natural and sustainable products** in other countries.

Challenges in boosting export from MSMEs

- Limited access to finance:** Current supply of credit via commercial banks fulfills only 16% of credit demand of MSMEs, Lack of access to working capital finance etc.
- Limited Market Access:** Limited exposure to global exports market, constraints related to international quality standards, etc.
- Business environment-related challenges:** Numerous regulatory compliances, delays in customs clearance, Shortage of credible and internationally accredited testing labs etc.
- Taxing merchandise export procedure:** High volume of paperwork, requirement of approval from multiple authorities, etc.

Definition of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

Parameters	Micro	Small	Medium
Investment in Plant and Machinery	< 1 Crore INR	< 10 Crore INR	< 50 Crore INR
Annual Turnover	< 5 Crore INR	< 50 Crore INR	< 250 Crore INR

Recommendations from report

- Creating one-stop information channel** for exporters to serve as knowledge base for export procedures, and product-specific regulations.
- Creation of National Trade Network Portal** to improve efficiency of export process and reduce costs.
- Promoting e-commerce exports and ease of merchandise exports** by supporting first-time exporters.
- Better measurement of exports originating from MSMEs** for identifying areas of improvement and evaluations of policy interventions.

Cabinet approves Inter-Governmental Framework Agreement (IGFA) with UAE on India-Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

Aim of the IGFA: To enhance bilateral relations and further strengthen relations between the two countries in the Ports, Maritime, and Logistics sectors.

- It also includes exploring further potential of **future joint investment and collaboration** for development of the IMEC.

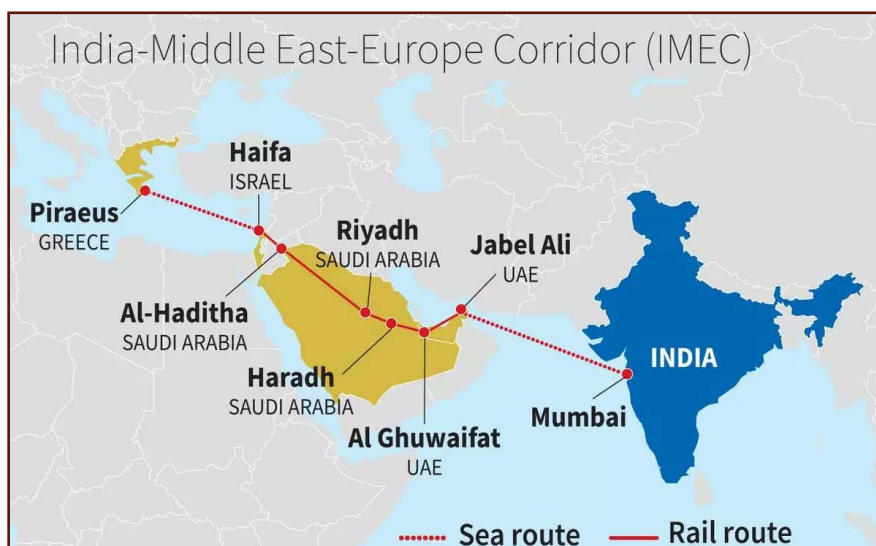
About IMEC

- It is a **proposed transit network** that aims at integration of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.
 - It consists of **railroad, ship-to-rail networks** (road and sea), and **road transport routes** (and networks)
- MoU was signed** between India, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and the US at **New Delhi G20 summit to establish it**.

Significance of IMEC

- Enhancing Prosperity:** Through an increased flow of energy and digital communications.
 - The combined GDP of IMEC nations is about **40 percent of the world's total GDP**.
- It offers an alternative approach to **China's Belt and Road Initiative**.
- It will make the **global supply chain more resilient**.
- Speed up **trade between India and Europe** and help India to increase **strategic engagement with the Arab world**.

- Challenges:** Complex geopolitics of the region (present Israel-Hamas crisis), lack of commitment regarding the financial cost, etc.



Cabinet approves signing of various MoUs between India and Bhutan

- **Signed MoUs areas and their Significance**
 - ⊕ **General Supply of Petroleum and Related Products:** To promote trade in hydrocarbons and to ensure a secured supply of petroleum to Bhutan.
 - ⊕ **Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation:** To assist Bhutan in enhancing energy efficiency in the household sector by promoting star labeling program.
 - ⊕ **Food safety:** To promote ease of doing business by reducing compliance costs.
- **India and Bhutan's Relationship:** The basic framework of the relationship is the **Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation** signed in 1949, which was renewed in 2007.
 - ⊕ **Trade:** Bilateral trade reached \$ **1.42 Billion (2021-22)**, accounting for 80% of Bhutan's overall trade, India is Bhutan's top import and export destination.
 - ◆ **Trade, Commerce, and Transit Agreement (2016)** establishes a free trade regime and allows Bhutan duty-free transit of goods to/from third countries.
 - ⊕ **Developmental:** Scholarships to Bhutanese students, support in Skill development initiatives and sectors like health, agriculture, etc.
 - ⊕ **Hydropower:** India constructed **four major hydroelectric projects in Bhutan.**
 - ⊕ **New areas of Cooperation:** Launch of **RuPay, and BHIM app in Bhutan**, joint development of **India-Bhutan SAT, etc.**
- **Challenges:** Bhutan-China border discussions on the Doklam plateau, Delay in completion of projects by India, etc.

Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand gets the President's assent, becomes law

- Uttarakhand became the **first state in the country** after independence to adopt UCC.
 - ⊕ A common civil code has been in place in Goa since the **Portuguese Civil Code was adopted in 1867.**
- UCC is **set of laws that govern personal matters**, including marriage, divorce, adoption, inheritance, and succession, **for all citizens regardless of religion.**
 - ⊕ **Article 44 of the constitution** endeavors to secure UCC for citizens throughout Indian territory.
- **Key features of the act**
 - ⊕ **Applicability:** to all residents of Uttarakhand, except tribal communities.
 - ⊕ **Regulates live-in relationships:** stipulates registration of live-in relationships.
 - ⊕ **Prohibits bigamy or marriages** with more than one person.
 - ⊕ **Inheritance:** It extends equal property rights for sons and daughters across all classes.
- **Need for UCC**
 - ⊕ **Ensuring Equality:** Presently, different communities are governed by different personal laws.
 - ⊕ **Gender Justice:** It will promote gender justice by removing the inbuilt discriminatory provisions of personal laws.
 - ⊕ **National Integration:** It will separate religion from social relations and personal laws, ensuring equality and thus harmony in society.
 - ◆ Also held by the Supreme Court in **Mohd. Ahmed Khan v Shah Bano Begum (1985)** case.

Challenges in the adoption of UCC

- **Plurality and diversity:** Hugely diversified customary practices make it difficult to evolve consensus on UCC.
 - ⊕ In 2018, the **Law Commission of India** opined that UCC is "**neither necessary nor desirable at this stage**" in the country.
- **Indian Secularism:** which is based on diversity of religion and people.
- **Concerns of Minorities:** Fear of loss of identity and marginalization.
- **Contradictory provisions of the Constitution** as constitution safeguard the local customs of many tribes.

Also in News



Dibang Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project (DMHP)

- Prime Minister has laid the foundation stone for the **DMHP** recently.
- **Capacity:** It will produce around **2,880 MW** of electricity.
- **Location:** **Lower Dibang Valley district** of Arunachal Pradesh.
 - ⊕ Designed as a project under National Hydroelectric Power Corporation and developed over **Dibang River** (a tributary of Brahmaputra)
- To be constructed with **Roller Compacted Concrete (RCC)** technique.
 - ⊕ It will be the **highest RCC dam in the World.**
- It will be **278 meters high** and would be the **highest Concrete-Gravity dam in India.**



Levels & Trends in Child Mortality Report 2023

- The **United Nations Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME)** has released it.
- **Key highlights**
 - ⊕ Global under-five child deaths **drop to historic low in 2022.**
 - ◆ However, at current rates, **59 countries will miss the SDG under-five mortality target.**
 - ⊕ Despite progress, **an estimated 4.9 million children** died before their fifth birthday in 2022.
- **About UN IGME**
 - ⊕ was formed in 2004.
 - ⊕ **Aim:** to share data on child mortality, improve methods for child mortality estimation.
 - ⊕ Led by the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).**

Prasar Bharti - Shared Audio Visuals for Broadcast and Dissemination (PB-SHABD)

- Ministry of Information & Broadcasting launched **PB-SHABD**, websites of **DD News** and **Akashvani News** and updated News on Air mobile app.
- **About PB- SHABD**
 - ⊕ A news sharing service from **Prasar Bharati**.
 - ⊕ Platform is **designed to provide daily news feeds** in video, audio, text, photo and other formats to the subscribers from media landscape.
 - ⊕ Service is offered **free of cost for the first year** and will provide news stories in **all major Indian languages across fifty categories**.

World Monuments Fund (WMF)

- The **Eri (tank) network** in the **Kazhuveli watershed region** in **Tamil Nadu** is to be proposed for **nomination to the World Monuments Fund Watch 2025 program**.
 - ⊕ **The World Monuments Watch** is a nomination-based program that connects local heritage preservation to global awareness and action.
- **About WMF**
 - ⊕ It's the leading **independent organization** devoted to **safeguarding the world's most treasured places**.
 - ⊕ **Headquarters in New York**, also has an office in **India**.
 - ⊕ It has preserved **more than 700 sites** in **112 countries**.

Devin: Artificial Intelligence (AI) software engineer

- US-based applied AI lab has introduced the world's first **autonomous AI software engineer**.
- **About Devin AI:**
 - ⊕ It can **build and deploy apps end-to-end** and can also **train and fine-tune its own AI models**.
 - ⊕ It can **plan and execute complex engineering tasks** requiring thousands of decisions.
 - ⊕ It can **recall relevant context at every step**, **learn over time**, and **fix mistakes**.

Electric Mobility Promotion Scheme (EMPS) 2024

- The **Ministry of Heavy Industries** has launched **EMPS** to **accelerate the adoption of EVs** in the country.
- It is a **fund-limited scheme** with a **total outlay of Rs. 500 crore** for **4 months**.
- **Eligible EV categories** include
 - ⊕ **Two Wheelers** (Private, Corporate, and Commercial Vehicles)
 - ⊕ **Three-wheelers** (including E-Rickshaws and Carts)
- The Scheme aims to **support around 3.7 Lakh EVs** during its tenure
- It applies to **only those vehicles that are fitted with advanced batteries**.

Pradhan Mantri Samajik Utthan evam Rozgar Adharit Jankalyan (PM-SURAJ) portal

- Prime Minister launched one-stop **PM-SURAJ portal** for credit schemes for marginalized sections.
- **About PM-SURAJ Portal**
 - ⊕ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE).
 - ⊕ **Objective:** Uplifting most marginalized sections of society, and **supporting credit assistance to one lakh entrepreneurs** hailing from **disadvantaged communities**.
 - ⊕ **Credit support** will be provided to **eligible persons** across country, facilitated through **banks, Non-Banking Financial Company-Micro Finance Institutions' (NBFC-MFIs)**, and other organisations.

Adopt a Heritage 2.0 Program

- The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** and various agencies have signed **MoUs for monument adoption** under **Adopt a Heritage 2.0**.
- **Adopt a Heritage 2.0 Program:**
 - ⊕ Different **corporate stakeholders** can **adopt a monument or specific amenities** at a monument under the program.
 - ⊕ It clearly defines amenities sought for different monuments as per **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958**.
 - ⊕ **Aim:** to enhance the amenities at the monuments by utilizing corporate stakeholder **CSR funds**.

Personality in News



Bhima Nayak

- Recently, Government paid tribute to Great Tribal Leader **Bhima Nayak**.
- **About Bhima Nayak** (sometimes spelled as **Bhima Naik**)
 - ⊕ Resident of **Dhaba Bawdi** in **Badwani district of Madhya Pradesh**.
 - ⊕ **Prominent leader of Bhils of Nimar**.
 - ⊕ First revolutionary to get **punishment of Kalapani** and died in 1876.
- **Contributions**
 - ⊕ Took part in **Uprising of 1857 against British Raj** raising an **anti-British force** by bringing in men from **Bhil, Bhilala, Mandoi, and Naik tribes**, and **collaborated with Tantia Tope**.
 - ⊕ Known as **Robinhood of Nimar** as he looted British treasury and distributed same amongst poor people.
 - ⊕ Important role in **1857 Ambagani War**.
- **Values:** Courage, Valour, Leadership etc.

