

# NEWS TODAY

## United Nations appoints panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals

- The Panel aims to bring all stakeholders across the entire **critical energy transition minerals** value chain to develop a set of **global common** and **voluntary principles** for energy transition.
  - ⊖ It will address issues relating to **equity, transparency, investment, sustainability** and **human rights**.
- The panel comprises Government and intergovernmental actors including the **European Union, African Union, Australia, Indonesia, Colombia, India**, etc.
- **Critical Energy Transition Minerals** are **essential components** in many of **today's rapidly growing clean energy technologies**, from wind turbines and solar panels to electric vehicles.
  - ⊖ E.g. copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt etc.
- **Challenges/Issues related to Critical Energy Transition Minerals**
  - ⊖ **Geographical concentration:** Few countries have major reserves; it may exacerbate **geopolitical tensions** and **supply chain disruption**.
    - ◆ E.g. **Lithium triangle**- consists of Argentina, Chile and Bolivia
  - ⊖ **Unsustainable Mining and processing:** It can lead to water pollution, destruction of ecosystems, etc., and human rights issues (such as child labour).
  - ⊖ **Growing Demand:** Mismatch in demand and supply.
    - ◆ According to the **International Energy Agency**, demand of critical mineral is set to grow by three and a half times by 2030.

### Other Key Initiatives

#### Global

- **Mineral Security Partnership (MSP)** launched to bolster critical minerals supply chains. India is also part of it
- **Critical Minerals Mapping Initiative**
- **UN Framework on Just Transitions for Critical Energy Transition Minerals** (Expected to be launched by the end of 2024)

#### India

- **Identification of 30 critical minerals** crucial for self-reliance
- **Partnership with Australia** for lithium and cobalt and with Argentina for lithium.
- **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL)**, formed to identify, acquire, process and make commercial use of strategic minerals in overseas locations for supply in India.

## Tamil Nadu Education Department released Guidelines for Elimination of Corporal Punishment (GECP)

- GECP aims to safeguard physical and mental well-being of students and extends to address any form of harassment of students in schools.
- **Corporal Punishment (CP)** is any punishment in which **physical force is used** and **intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort**, however light. e.g., hitting, kicking, etc. [**UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**]
- **Ethical issues with corporal punishment**
  - ⊖ **Physical and psychological harm:** Can cause physical injuries, anxiety, low self-esteem, and other mental health issues.
  - ⊖ **Perpetuation of violence:** May reinforce the idea that violence is an acceptable means of resolving conflicts or asserting authority, contributing to normalization and perpetuation of violence in society.
  - ⊖ **Discrimination and disproportionate impact:** In some cases, CP may be applied disproportionately or discriminatorily based on factors such as gender, race, or socioeconomic status.
  - ⊖ **Ineffective as a disciplinary measure:** It may teach children to fear and avoid punishment rather than promoting positive behavioural changes or moral development.
  - ⊖ **Impact on education:** Can result in higher school drop-outs, poor learning outcomes by creating atmosphere of fear and intimidation in classrooms, etc.

### Measures against Corporal Punishment in India

- **Article 39 of Constitution:** Directs the State to protect childhood and youth against exploitation and moral and material abandonment.
- **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act 2009:** Section 17 of the Act Prohibits physical and mental harassment and makes it punishable offense.
- **NCPCR guidelines for eliminating corporal punishment:** Provides guidelines for positive engagement with children as well as effective remedial measures to address CP such as setting up **Corporal Punishment Monitoring Cells** in every school.

## India's Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) on an Official visit to France

- Visit is aimed to further reinforce the robust defence ties between the two nations, which have gained considerable momentum over last few years.
- **India-France Defense Relations**
  - ⊕ **India's Defense modernization:** France is playing an instrumental role in India's defense modernization through transfer of technology, joint ventures, supply of advanced systems, etc.
    - ◆ e.g., Agreement for transfer of technology for Scorpene class submarines, supply of Rafale aircrafts, etc.
    - ◆ **Indo- France Defense Industrial Roadmap** aims at future collaboration on "co-design and co-development" of military hardware.
  - ⊕ **Space cooperation:** Strategic Space Dialogue, launched in June 2023, to provide strategic guidance and direction across the all aspects of space cooperation
  - ⊕ **Indo-Pacific:** In 2018, both countries agreed on a 'Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region' which aims to establish Indo-Pacific Triangular Development Cooperation Fund.
  - ⊕ **Counter-terrorism:** Agency-level cooperation between National Security Guard (NSG) of India and GIGN (Groupe d'intervention de la Gendarmerie nationale) of France.
    - ◆ Both countries resolved to work together for adoption of Comprehensive **Convention on International Terrorism** (CCIT) in the UN.
  - ⊕ **Joint Defense Exercises:** Varuna (naval), Garuda (Air Force), and Shakti (Army).

### Other aspects of India-France ties

- **Developmental cooperation:** Both countries are collaborating in the domain of smart cities. e.g., India-France collaboration on Chandigarh Smart City project.
- **Climate Change:** International Solar Alliance (ISA) conceived as a joint effort by India and France for deployment of solar energy solutions across the globe.
- **Global Governance:** France continuously reiterated its firm support for India's permanent membership of the UNSC for reformed and effective multilateralism.

## Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) notified alert indicators on anti-money laundering

- Fresh set of alert indicators have been issued for **capital markets, insurance companies, online payment gateway intermediaries, and crypto service providers** to address emerging risks in market infrastructure institutions.
  - ⊕ It has been issued under the provisions of the **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.**
- **Money laundering** is any process or activity connected with the proceeds of crime including its concealment, possession, acquisition or use and projecting or claiming it as untainted property. **(PMLA, 2002)**
- **Key highlights of the indicators**
  - ⊕ Mandates **Stock Exchanges** to consider suspicious cases of mis-utilization of client funds by stockbrokers and analyze cases of "serious anomalies" from the perspective of money laundering and terrorism financing.
  - ⊕ **Alert indicators for virtual digital asset (VDA)** or crypto currency service providers range from directions to register with FIU to carrying out "enhanced due diligence to implementation of travel rule."
    - ◆ **Travel Rule**, extended to crypto companies in 2019 by FATF, requires businesses to collect and share the personal data of participants in a transaction.
- **For credit rating agencies (CRAs)**, new guidelines will ensure timely reporting of suspicious transactions to FIU to identify serious corporate frauds.

### About FIU-IND

- **Established:** In 2004
- **An independent body** reporting directly to **Economic Intelligence Council (EIC)** headed by the Finance Minister
- **Functions:** Central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing and disseminating information relating to suspect financial transactions.
  - ⊕ It is also responsible for **coordinating and strengthening efforts of national and international intelligence**, investigation and enforcement agencies in pursuing global efforts against money laundering and terror financing.

### Other measures to curb Money Laundering and Terror Financing

- **Specialized Agencies:** Enforcement Directorate (ED), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), etc.
- **International Cooperation:** India is a member of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism.

## Significant increase in screen time among children

- In several studies, it has been found that screen time among children is more than 2 hours a day.
- **Reasons for Rise in Screen time among children:**
  - ⊕ **Role Modelling:** Children usually imitate their parents/ other family members and peer group.
  - ⊕ **Educational or recreational purposes:** With the advent of **COVID-19 pandemic, use of Mobile** has witnessed **rapid and widespread acceptance**.
  - ⊕ **Working parents:** They usually provide mobile phones to children's for different purposes such as safety.
  - ⊕ **Increased Accessibility:** Proliferation of smartphones, tablets, computers, and other digital devices in recent times.
- **Concerns:**
  - ⊕ **Mental and Physical Health Issues:** High exposure may lead to anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.
    - ◆ **Sedentary lifestyle** may lead to physical health issues like obesity.
  - ⊕ **Cognitive ability and social skills:** High screen time can hinder the development of important Cognitive, social and emotional skills, such as **empathy**.
  - ⊕ **Cyber Bullying and Child Abuse:** Incidents of bullying and abuses are rising. Young girls are more prone to them.
- **Way Ahead:** Emphasis on physical activities, limiting screen time by creating awareness etc.

### Initiatives Taken to deal with Concerns associated with screen time

- **World Health Organization (WHO)** released guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for children
- **Manodarpan Initiative**, launched by the **Ministry of Education** to provide **psychosocial support** to students for Mental Health and Emotional well-being.
- **Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC) scheme**, initiative of the **Ministry of Home Affairs** to provide a safe and secure online environment for children.

## Corporate Governance Charter for Start-Ups released by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)

- **Corporate Governance** is a dynamic set of **value driven principles** and measures which steers an organization's development in the right direction.
  - ⊕ It is based on the principles like Transparency, Fairness, Accountability etc.
- The charter has been released in the backdrop of significant erosion in shareholders' value in Indian Startups due to governance failure in many high-profile Start-ups in the recent time.
  - ⊕ E.g. BharatPe, GoMechanic etc.
- **Key Highlights of the Charter**
  - ⊕ **Objective:** It will serve as a **self-governing code** for Startups (incorporated under the **Companies Act, 2013**).
    - ◆ It will help start-ups in not **only adding value** but also in achieving stability, growth, resilience, competitiveness and long-term success.
  - ⊕ **Guidelines for different stages of Start-ups:** These include Inception Stage, Progression Stage, Growth Stage and Going Public Stage.
    - ◆ For instance, it provides clear definition of **role and responsibilities** of members of the Board, directors etc. in Progression Stage.
  - ⊕ **Online Self Evaluative Governance Scorecard:** It can be used to measure their current governance status and improvement over time.

### Key Legal Provisions related to Corporate Governance in India

- ⊕ The **Companies Act, 2013** together with the Companies Rules provide a robust framework for Corporate Governance
- ⊕ **Securities and Exchange Board of India** monitors corporate governance of listed companies.
- ⊕ **National Foundation for Corporate Governance** set up by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

## Also in News

### Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

- Prime Minister recently addressed the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the **International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (ICDRI)**.
  - ⊕ ICDRI is an **annual** international conference of the **CDRI**.
- **About CDRI**
  - ⊕ **About:** It is a partnership of national governments, UN agencies, multilateral development banks to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems.
    - ◆ It was launched at **UN Climate Action Summit in 2019 by India**.
  - ⊕ **Strategic priorities:** Technical Support and Capacity-building, Research and Knowledge Management and Advocacy and Partnership.
  - ⊕ **Members:** 39 countries and 7 organizations
  - ⊕ **Key Initiative:** Infrastructure For Resilient Island States (IRIS), Global Infrastructure Resilience Report etc.
  - ⊕ **Governance:** India is the permanent co-chair of the CDRI Governing Council and Executive Committee.
  - ⊕ **Secretariat:** New Delhi

### South-China Sea

- Philippines denied China's claim on agreement over disputed South China Sea's **Second Thomas Shoal**.
- **South China Sea** is a **part of western Pacific Ocean** stretching roughly from Singapore and the Strait of Malacca in the southwest, to the Strait of Taiwan in the northeast.
- **Key Disputes in the South-China Sea**
  - ⊕ **Nine-dash line (imaginary line) of China:** It covers most of the South China Sea and overlaps with the exclusive economic zone claims of **Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam**. It includes
    - ◆ **Paracel Islands:** Controlled by China but also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam.
    - ◆ **Spratly Islands:** Claimed by China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Philippines, and Malaysia.
      - » Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef is located near this Island.
    - ◆ **Scarborough Shoal:** Claimed by China, Taiwan, and Philippines.



### Star Campaigner

- Various political parties have mentioned the list of their star campaigners for the Lok Sabha General Elections.
- **Star Campaigners**
  - ⊖ **Section 77 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951**, deals with expenditure incurred by 'leaders of a political party', also known as 'star campaigners'.
  - ⊖ A **recognised political party can appoint a maximum of 40 star campaigners** while a registered unrecognized political party can appoint up to 20.
  - ⊖ **Expenditure incurred by star campaigners** on account of travel is not deemed to be part of the election expenditure of a candidate of such party.



### Nilgiri Tahr

- Tamil Nadu government is executing a synchronized survey to estimate the population of Nilgiri Tahr.
- **About Nilgiri Tahr (Nilgiri Ixobrycon)**
  - ⊖ **Stocky goats with short, coarse fur** with both sexes having curved horns, which are larger in the males.
  - ⊖ It is the only **Mountain Ungulate (Hoofed Mammal)** in southern India.
  - ⊖ **Habitat:** Open montane grassland habitats of South Western Ghats.
  - ⊖ **Conservation Status:** Listed as **Endangered** under IUCN Red List.
    - ◆ Protected under **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**
  - ⊖ **State animal of Tamil Nadu.**



### Bisphenol A (BPA)

- Negotiations are being under the aegis of UNEP to address plastic pollution across the life cycle including the issue of harmful chemicals such as BPA used in plastic packaging.
- **About BPA**
  - ⊖ Chemical used primarily in production of **polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins.**
    - ◆ **Polycarbonate plastics** are often used in containers that store food and beverages.
    - ◆ **Epoxy resins are used to coat the inside of metal products**, such as food cans, bottle tops, etc.
  - ⊖ Exposure to BPA can have **health effects on brain and prostate gland of fetuses, infants and children.**



### Salmonella

- US authorities have rejected some spice-related exports from an Indian company over **salmonella (bacteria) contamination.**
- **About Salmonella:**
  - ⊖ It is a group of **anaerobic bacteria.**
  - ⊖ These can be **found in a variety of foods**, including **chicken, beef, pork, etc.**
  - ⊖ Humans become infected by bacteria most **frequently through contaminated water or food.**
  - ⊖ They **live in animal and human intestines.**
  - ⊖ **Health Impacts:** Food Poisoning, Diarrhea, etc.



### ISHAN Initiative

- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has started work on **ISHAN (Indian Single Sky Harmonized Air Traffic Management) Initiative.**
- **About ISHAN**
  - ⊖ It involves **Combining India's Flight Information Regions (FIRs) into a single system** overseen from Nagpur.
    - ◆ Currently, Indian airspace is divided into 4 FIRs i.e. Mumbai, Kolkata, Delhi, Chennai, and a sub-FIR in Guwahati, each managed separately.
  - ⊖ Unifying these FIRs under a single authority in Nagpur is projected to **improve efficiency, safety, and seamlessness in air traffic operations.**



### Rampage Missiles

- **Recently, Rampage Missiles** has been inducted by **Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.**
- **About Rampage Missile**
  - ⊖ Long-range, supersonic, Air-to-Surface, precision strike missile.
  - ⊖ Developed by **Israel Aerospace Industries and Israeli Military Industries Systems.**
  - ⊖ **Range:** ~250 kms.
  - ⊖ **Guidance:** GPS/ Inertial Navigation System (INS) navigation with anti-jamming capabilities.
    - ◆ **INS** is an electronic system that is able to detect and measure change in motion of an object.
  - ⊖ Integrated into Russian-origin aircraft fleet, including Su-30 MKI, MiG-29, and Jaguar fighters, and also into Indian Navy's MiG-29K fleet.

## Personality in news



### Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887-1920)

- Great Mathematician S Ramanujan was remembered on his death anniversary.
- **About S Ramanujan**
  - ⊖ **Born in Erode (Tamil Nadu)**
  - ⊖ **He never received any formal mathematics training** and most of his mathematical discoveries were based on intuition.
- **Key Contributions**
  - ⊖ Ramanujan's contributions to mathematical fields include **complex analysis, number theory, infinite series, continued fractions, game theory, etc.**
  - ⊖ 1729 is known as the **Ramanujan number.**
    - ◆ It is the smallest number that could be expressed as sum of two cubes in two different ways, i.e. 103+93 and 13+ 123.
- **National Mathematics Day (December 22)** is observed on his birth anniversary.
- **Values:** Scientism, Perseverance and Dedication, Curiosity, etc.

