

# NEWS TODAY

## Supreme Court issued guidelines for effective implementation of Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA)-2006

SC in **Society for Enlightenment and Voluntary Action v. Uoi** case held that **PCMA (refer to box)** cannot be stunted by **personal laws and traditions**.

### Key SC observations

- SC directed authorities **focus on child marriage prevention** and the protection of minors while **penalising offenders as a last resort**.
- The court stressed the need to **address the root causes of child marriage**, such as **poverty, gender inequality, lack of education**, and entrenched cultural norms.
- Marriages involving children violate the free will to have a life partner of choice.
  - ⊖ Asked Parliament to ban **child betrothals** (promise that a marriage will take place) by amending PCMA.

### Key Provisions of Guidelines

#### ➤ Legal Enforcement

- ⊖ State Governments and Union Territories (UTs) must appoint **Child Marriage Prevention Officers (CMPO)**.
- ⊖ Establishment of a **Specialized Police Unit and State Special Child Marriage Prohibition Unit**.

#### ➤ Judicial Measures

- ⊖ **Empowering Magistrates to take Suo Moto Action** and Issue Preventive Injunctions.
- ⊖ Exploration of Special Fast-Track Courts for Child Marriage cases.

#### ➤ Other

- ⊖ Adoption of the **Child Marriage Free Village Initiative**, in line of "Open Defecation Free Village" model.
- ⊖ Establishing **technology-driven monitoring system** to track daily attendance for school-going girls up to the 12th grade.

### About PCMA , 2006

- **PCMA was enacted by replacing Child Marriage Restraint Act (CMRA) of 1929**, also known as the **Sharda Act** to prevent child marriages in India.
  - ⊖ PCMA defines a child as a male under 21 years of age and a female under 18 years of age.
  - ⊖ **Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2021** aims to amend the PCMA to increase the minimum age of marriage of females to 21 years (recommendation of **Jaya Jaitly committee**).

### Status of Child Marriage in India

- 23% of women and 17.7% of boys between the age of 20 and 24 were married before 18 years of age. (NFHS-5)
- Over half of the girls and women who married in childhood live in five states: Uttar Pradesh (largest contributor), Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. (UNICEF)

## Need for Responsible Capitalism for large Economies highlighted by Union Finance Minister

At the Tech Leaders Roundtable in Mexico, Minister while **emphasizing on need for responsible capitalism** said that for large economies, the **challenge is not just to grow but also to reduce inequality** and create opportunities for everyone.

### What is meant by Responsible Capitalism?

- It can be understood as an **economic approach that integrates ethical values into business practices**.
- It emphasizes **balancing profit with social responsibility**, ensuring businesses contribute to societal well-being, fairness, and environmental sustainability, rather than focusing solely on shareholder returns.

### What's the need for Responsible Capitalism?

- **Addressing global challenges:** It can help companies and governments respond to challenges like sustainability, inequality, and exclusion.
- **Long-term business sustainability:** Purely profit-driven models may not be viable in long-term; responsible capitalism can also help in better adaptation to tech-disruptions like AI, etc.
- **Ethical Governance and Stakeholder Capitalism:** Promotes fairness in decision-making, ensuring stakeholders are treated justly and business operations comply with legal and moral standards.



### Measures taken to promote Responsible Capitalism in India

- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):** Mandated under **section 135 of Companies Act, 2013**.
- **Environmental regulations:** Plastic Waste Management Rules, stricter emission norms for vehicles under BS-VI, etc.
- **Labor reforms:** Code on Wages, Occupational Safety; Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, etc.
- **Financial sector initiative:** RBI's Priority Sector Lending norms, SEBI's Green Bond guidelines, etc.

## Mass bleaching of corals around the world since February 2023 is the most extensive on record: NOAA

As per **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** the ongoing mass coral bleaching event is now the most extensive one and has broken the previous records by **more than 11% in about half the time**.

➤ **Current bleaching** has so far subjected a staggering **77% of the world's coral reef areas** – from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Indian oceans – to bleaching-level heat stress, as climate change fuels record and near-record ocean temperatures across the world.

### About Coral Bleaching

- **Corals** are a marine species having a **symbiotic relationship with microscopic algae (zooxanthellae)** living in their tissues.
- **Coral bleaching** is defined as the process in which **corals expel their symbiotic algae** due to environmental stressors like **changes in temperature, light or nutrients**.
- The current **4th bleaching event** was declared by NOAA Coral Reef Authority in April 2024.
- **First bleaching event** reported in 1998 caused a **loss of 8% of the world's corals**.
- **~14% of the world's remaining corals** were estimated to have died in the previous two global bleaching events (**2010 and 2014-2017**).
- **Impact of Coral Bleaching**
  - ⊕ **Ecological:** Reduced biodiversity, disruptions in food chain, etc.
  - ⊕ **Socio-economic impacts:** Decline in fisheries sector, reduced tourism, etc.

### Initiatives taken to prevent coral bleaching

#### India

- Coral Species are listed under **Schedule -I of Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**
- **Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2019** and **Integrated Island Management Plan:** Prohibits developmental activities and disposal of wastes in the fragile coastal ecosystems.
- **Use of technology: Bio rock** in case of Gulf of Kutch.

#### Global

- **Coral Research & Development Accelerator Platform by G20.**
- **International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)** [India is a member], etc.

## “The Economics of Water: Valuing the Hydrological Cycle as a Global Common Good” Report released

Report, released by **Global Commission on the Economics of Water (GCEW)**, calls for **governance of water cycle as a global common good** and offers recommendations to **value and govern water, enabling food security and human dignity**.

**Why we must govern the water cycle as a global common good?**

- **Interdependence and interconnectedness** of communities, countries, and regions across local and transboundary water systems.
- **Neglect of economic drivers** in governance of water resources.
  - ⊕ E.g., focus on **“blue water”** (rivers, lakes, and aquifers) overlooks **“green water”** (water stored as soil moisture and in vegetation).
- **Intertwined nature of loss of planet's natural capital** due to disruptions to water cycle, climate change, loss of biodiversity.

### Key Findings of the Report

- **Vulnerability: High-population** density hotspots such as **Northwestern India** are particularly vulnerable to challenges associated with water.
  - ⊕ **Poorest 10% of global population** obtain over **70% of their annual precipitation from land-based sources**.
- **Economic losses: GDP losses** from climate change, total water storage, and reduced WASH access to **lower middle income countries such as India** is around **14%**.
  - ⊕ With the current trends, extreme water storage decline could make irrigation unfeasible, leading to a **23% reduction in global cereal production**.

### Key Recommendations

- **Govern hydrological cycle as a global common good** and how water flows through 17SDGs.
- **Shape markets for Mission-oriented innovations** enabling a radical **shift from siloed and sectoral thinking to an economy-wide approach:-**
  - ⊕ E.g., launching new revolution in food systems, establishment of a circular water economy
- **Development of symbiotic partnerships between the public and private sectors** and raising **quantity, quality and reliability of finance**.
- **Build global water governance with an ambition of Global Water Pact (GWP)** to set clear and measurable goals to stabilize hydrological cycle and safeguard world's water resources

## Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence to study India's preparedness to deal with Non-Kinetic Warfare

Recent **Pager blasts in Lebanon** are an example of non-kinetic warfare, also witnessed during Russia-Ukraine, Israel-Palestine Conflicts.

### About Non-Kinetic or Hybrid Warfare

- It is an evolving concept that extends beyond the usual military tactics and involves **electronic warfare, cyber, information, psychological and economic**, and may include **non-military stakeholders as well**.
  - ⊖ It may be **deadlier than traditional methods** and may be won even before a bullet is fired. Ex. **massive cyber or malware attack on critical infrastructure** like power grids; hospitals, etc.
- While in case of **Kinetic warfare**, a range of military weapons to physically destroy targets like Tanks are deployed, Non-kinetic ones use **laser or electro-magnetic waves** to disrupt their operations.

### Emerging Threats that call for Non-Kinetic Warfare Readiness

- **Hostile Neighbours:** Pakistan on the western and China on the Northern and North-Eastern fronts.
  - ⊖ China adopts **three warfares** which include psychological, political and legal tactics to achieve its geopolitical goals.
- **Role of Non-state actors:** Hezobollah have recently deployed such methods.
- **Others: Internal Stability** including Naxal challenges in Central India, **emerging technologies** like Artificial Intelligence, etc.

#### Initiatives taken by India

- **Developing advanced weapons:** Directionally Unrestricted Ray-Gun Array (DURGA)-II Project (Initiated by DRDO), etc.
- **Structural Reforms and establishing Institutions:** Chief of Defense Staff (CDS), Defence AI Project Agency (DAIPA) and a Defence AI Council (DAIC), etc.
- **International Partnerships:** E.g. General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) with USA
- **Other:** Defence indigenisation, etc.

## Supreme Court to review 2022 judgment on Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act (PBPTA), 1988

SC has allowed review petition filed by the Union Government against the 2022 judgment (**Union of India vs M/S. Ganpati Dealcom Pvt. Ltd. Case**) in which certain provisions of PBPTA declared unconstitutional.

- **PBPTA** has been enacted to prohibits benami transactions and provides for confiscating benami properties
  - ⊖ **Benami** transaction refers to transaction where a property is held by or transferred to a person, but has been provided for or paid by another person.

### Key highlights of the 2022 Judgement

- Section 3(2) of the **PBPTA declared** unconstitutional, that prescribed a jail term for entering into benami transactions.
  - ⊖ This provision violates **Article 20(1)** (protection in respect of conviction for offense) of the Constitution due to its arbitrary nature.
- Law did not have a **retrospective application** and the authorities couldn't initiate or continue criminal prosecution or confiscation proceedings for transactions entered into prior to when the legislation came into force.
  - ⊖ **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016** Act did not have any explicit provision allowing its retrospective application.
  - ⊖ The Union had contended that the 2016 Act would be applicable retrospectively.

#### Concerns related to Benami Transactions or Property

- It is considered as a major tool for holding black money.
  - ⊖ It promotes tax evasion which leads to revenue loss for government.
- It distorts the real estate market by artificially inflating property prices.
- **Fraudulent asset diversion** makes tracing of ownership difficult and undermines **integrity** of the financial system.

## Also in News



### Preponderance Of Probabilities

Recently, Supreme Court has observed that courts must apply **principle of preponderance of probability**, in place of a test of proof beyond reasonable doubt, in **motor accident claim cases**.

#### Preponderance Of Probabilities

- It is a **legal standard used in civil cases** in various countries.
- In broad terms, it means the degree of certainty of belief in the mind of a tribunal or the Court by which it is convinced that the **"existence of a fact is more-probable than its non-existence"**.
- While proof on "preponderance of probabilities" followed in civil cases provides a lower standard of proof, **"proof beyond reasonable doubt" followed in criminal cases** provides a higher standard of proof bordering on certainty.



### Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Recently, 149th Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) concluded.

#### About Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

- **About:** Global **organization of national parliaments** (Began in 1889).
- **Objective:** Facilitates parliamentary diplomacy and empower parliaments and parliamentarians to **promote peace, democracy and sustainable development around the world**.
- **Members:** 180 Members (Including India) and 15 Associate Members
- **HQ:** Geneva, Switzerland



### Lady Justice

Recently, a **redesigned statue of Lady Justice** was unveiled by the Supreme Court of India.

➤ Traditional statue, **first constructed in 1872** in Calcutta High Court, had its origin in **Greek and Roman iconography**.

#### About New Lady Justice Statue

➤ **Unimpeded Vision:** Unlike **traditional blindfolded statue** that signified impartiality of vision, the new one represents that Law is not blind and sees everyone equally.

➤ **Constitution instead of Sword:** Sword - represents the punitive power of law, replaced by Constitution- signifies that justice in India is grounded in constitutional principles rather than violence or coercion.

➤ **Indian Attire:** Statue depicts wearing a saree, moving away from Western attire.

➤ **Retains scales of justice in the right hand:** Symbolizing the balance and fairness in Justice.



### Blue Washing

A report titled '**On Track or Off Course? Assessing Progress Toward the 30x30 Target in the Ocean**' showed that the world will not achieve pledges of 30x30 due to blue washing.

➤ **30x30 target** is a global initiative to protect 30% of the world's land and ocean by 2030.

#### About Blue washing

➤ It is a situation where **marine areas are labelled as protected but do not truly safeguard marine life**.

➤ Report states that **8.3% of ocean is designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)**, however, only **2.8 % of oceans are effectively protected**.

**Note:** Another bluewashing term is used in **corporate governance**, which is like greenwashing but focused more on social and economic responsibility rather than the environment.



### Moonlight Programme

Recently, **European Space Agency** has launched the Moonlight Lunar Communications and Navigation Services (LCNS) programme.

#### About Moonlight Programme

➤ **Objective:** To provide services for >400 moon missions planned by space agencies and private companies over the next two decades.

➤ It will be a **constellation of five lunar satellites**.

➤ **Benefits:** Enable precise, autonomous landings and surface mobility, **facilitate high-speed communication and data transfer** between Earth and Moon, **offer coverage at the Moon's South Pole**, etc.

➤ **Initial services are expected to begin by the end of 2028**, and the system is to be fully operational by 2030.



### Locusts

Farmers in Idukki, Kerala are experiencing the menace of locust infestation.

➤ **Previously** reported in 2020 in Western India majorly in Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Madhya Pradesh.

#### About Locusts

➤ **About:**

⊖ **Short-horned insects** similar to **grasshoppers** with highly migratory habits.

⊖ **Capable of forming swarms** varying less than 1 square kilometer to several hundred square kilometers.

⊖ **Exhibit voracious feeding behavior** causing great devastation to natural and cultivated vegetation leading to food and fodder emergency.

➤ **Species:** Four species including Desert, Migratory, Bombay, and Tree locust are found in India.

➤ **Preventive Steps:**

⊖ **Locust Warning Organizations** under Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare,

⊖ Use of **Pesticide like Malathion**



### Yars Missile

Russia recently tested readiness of Yars nuclear missile unit.

#### About Yars Missile

➤ It is a **modified version of the Topol-M missile system** and can be deployed in silos or mounted on mobile launchers.

➤ It is an **intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)** with **range upto 11,000 km**.

⊖ **Ballistic missiles** are rocket propelled self-guided weapons which follow a **ballistic trajectory** to deliver a payload from its launch site to a predetermined target.

➤ It is equipped with **MIRV (Multiple Independently Targetable Reentry Vehicle)** technology which enables it to deliver multiple nuclear warheads, each capable of targeting different objectives.



### Ground- based Broadcasting

Recently, **TRAI** issued a consultation paper on '**Regulatory Framework for Ground-based Broadcasting**'.

#### About Ground-based Broadcasting (GBB)

➤ Also known as **terrestrial broadcasting**, it utilizes a variety of **advanced technologies such as cloudbased platforms, broadband networks, fibre technology**, etc., to transmit and distribute their content efficiently to Distribution Platform Operators.

⊖ **Conventional broadcasting** requires **uplinking and downlinking of television channels through satellite**.

➤ **Existing guidelines from the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** makes it **mandatory for broadcasters to use satellite medium** for uplinking and downlinking of channels.

## Place in News



### Malawi (Capital: Lilongwe)

President of India paid visit to Malawi.

#### Political Features

➤ **Location:** It is a **landlocked country in southeastern Africa**.

➤ **Neighbouring countries:** **Mozambique** (East and South), **Zambia** (West), and **Tanzania** (North).

#### Geographical Features

➤ **Relief:** Occupies a narrow, curving strip of land along the East African Rift Valley.

➤ **Major Lakes:** Lake Malawi (or Lake Nyasa)

➤ **Major Rivers:** Rukuru, Dwangwa, Lilongwe, Bua, etc.

➤ **Highest Peak:** Sapitwa peak (in Mt. Mulanje)



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