

NEWS TODAY

Supreme Court upheld constitutional validity of Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act 2004 (Madarsa Act)

In **Anjum Kadari and another v. Union of India and others**, SC has set aside Allahabad High Court's March 2024 judgement that struck down Madarsa Act.

- It was struck down for **violating principle of secularism (basic structure)** and **Articles 14, 21 and 21-A** of Constitution and was ultra vires **Section 22 of University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956**.
- Section 22 provides that no degrees can be conferred by any institution other than the institutions defined under UGC Act.

Key Highlights of Judgement

- Reverse HC order:** SC held that a statute could be struck down if it violates Fundamental Rights under Part III and not **violation of basic structure** of Constitution.
- Rationale of Madarsa Act:** To **regulate standards of education in Madaras** recognised by Board and State's obligation is to **ensure that students attain level of competency** aiding their active participation in socio-economic setting.
- Legislative competence:** Madarsa Act is **within legislative competence of State Legislature** and traceable to Entry 25 of **concurrent list** (i.e. Education, including technical education, medical education and universities).
- Partially Unconstitutional:** Provisions regulating **Higher Education degrees** like '**fazil**' (post-graduate degree) and '**kamil**' (undergraduate degree) are **unconstitutional** as they are in **conflict with UGC Act**.

Regulation of Minority Education Institutions

- Articles 29 and 30** deal with cultural and educational rights of minorities.
- Article 30(1):** Guarantees **right to establish and administer educational institutions** of their choice to **religious and linguistic minorities**.
- National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI):** Constituted as a **quasi-judicial body by NCMEI Act 2004** to safeguard educational rights of minorities enshrined in Article 30(1).
- It has **adjudicatory, advisory and recommendatory roles** and **power of a civil court** to discharge its functions.

UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and IUCN released Protected Planet Report 2024

It is first report to **assess global status of Protected and Conserved Areas (PCA)** in context of **Target 3 of Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)**.

- Target 3** aims to **expand global network of PCA to 30% coverage** in a way that is equitable and respects rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local communities (IPLC).
- Protected Area** is geographically defined area which is regulated and managed to achieve specific conservation objectives.
- Conserved Areas** are **areas outside Protected Areas** that are managed to conserve biodiversity, ecosystem services, and local values.

Key findings

- Global coverage of PCAs** has reached 17.6% of terrestrial and inland waters and 8.4% of marine and coastal areas.
- Over **two-thirds of Key Biodiversity Areas** are now **partially or fully covered by PCAs**, but 32% remain unprotected.
- Only **8.5% of land is both protected and connected**.
- Data on effectiveness of management is limited with **only 4% of protected areas are governed by IPLC**.

Way ahead

- Recognition and support to Indigenous and Traditional Territories:** These territories cover 13.6% of global land and should be included in conservation efforts.
- Provide international financing to developing countries to fund expansion of PCAs:** Under GBF, countries committed to increase investment in biodiversity from all sources to at least USD 200 billion per year by 2030.

Initiatives Promoting Protected and Conserved Areas

- Five types of protected areas under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Sanctuaries, National Parks, Conservation Reserves, Community Reserves, and Tiger Reserves.
- Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement:** Signed by India to protect ocean life.
- Climate Adaptation and Protected Areas (CAPA) Initiative:** Aims to use nature-based solutions to strengthen climate resilience and protect biodiversity in and around protected areas.

Finance Ministry proposes 4th phase of consolidation of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) as per reports

The proposed merger reduces the number of RRBs from 43 to 28 to make them more efficient.

- Consolidation is also derived from vision of One State-One RRB.

Consolidation of RRBs

- RRBs have been consolidated in a **phased manner** based on recommendations of **Dr. Vyas Committee (2001)**.
 - ⊖ Consolidation began in 2004-05 which resulted in reduction of such institutions from 196 to 43 till 2020-21 through 3 phases of amalgamation.
- **Significance of consolidation:** Minimised **overhead expenses, technology** adoption, enhanced **capital base and area of operation**, and **increased exposure**.

About Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- **Genesis:** Established in **1975** on the recommendations of the **Narsimhan Working Group (1975)**, after promulgation of an ordinance, **which was later replaced by the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976**.
- **Objectives:** To **develop the rural economy** by providing **credit** and other facilities particularly to small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, small entrepreneurs etc.
- **Shareholding:** Government of India (**50%**), State Government (**15%**), and Sponsor Bank (**35%**)
- They are **Scheduled Commercial Banks** (Government Banks) regulated by **RBI** and supervised by **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**.
- Created primarily for rural areas, however, may also set up branches in urban areas.

Other Initiatives Taken to Boost Functioning of RRB

- **Recapitalization of RRBs:** During FY 2021-22, GoI decided to infuse ₹10,890 crore of capital in RRBs during FY 2021-22 and FY 2022-23.
- **Sustainable Viability Plan:** Aimed at credit expansion, business diversification, NPA reduction, cost rationalization, improvement in corporate governance etc.
- **Supervisory Action Framework for Prompt Corrective Action (PCA):** Aimed at financial stability and strengthening the capital structure.

International Solar Alliance (ISA) Hosts Seventh Session of its Annual Assembly in New Delhi

Key outcomes of 7th Assembly of ISA

- India has been re-elected as **President of ISA from 2024 to 2026**, with **France as Vice-President**.
- 3rd edition of **World Solar Report series was released** which consists **4 reports**.

Major Findings of 4 Reports

- **World Solar Market Report 2024**
 - ⊖ **Global Solar Capacity:** Increased from 1.22 GW in 2000 to **~1,419 GW in 2023**.
 - ⊖ **Manufacturing to Exceed Demand:** Solar manufacturing **set to exceed 1,100 GW by 2024** (more than double demand) with significant reduction in prices of solar panels.
 - ⊖ **Solar Jobs:** 16.2 million clean energy jobs worldwide, with **7.1 million in solar alone** (44% increase from 2022).
- **World Investment Report 2024**
 - ⊖ **Energy Investment:** Global energy investments rising from \$2.4 trillion in 2018 to \$3.1 trillion in 2024.
 - ⊖ **Solar Investment Surge:** Solar accounts for 59% of renewable energy investments.
- **World Technology Report 2024**
 - ⊖ **Technological Breakthroughs:** Multijunction perovskite cells emerging as disruptive technology.
 - ⊖ **Cost Reduction in Solar:** Utility-scale solar PV costs dropped by 90% since 2010.
- **GH2 Readiness Assessment for African Countries Report** highlights **GH2 potential to decarbonise industries** heavily reliant on fossil fuels like steel and fertilizer production.

About ISA

- A global intergovernmental organization (**headquartered in India**) dedicated to advancing solar power adoption for a carbon-neutral future.
- Conceptualized on the side lines of COP21 in Paris in 2015.
- Comprises 103 Member Countries and 17 Signatories Countries.
- **ISA Assembly is apex decision-making body**, representing each Member Country and makes decisions regarding implementation of ISA's Framework Agreement.

Asia-Pacific Climate Report Released by Asian Development Bank (ADB)

Report highlighted that India is shifting its focus from an **unsustainable dependence** on **fossil fuel subsidies** to **fostering clean energy**.

Initiatives Facilitating Shift from Fossil Fuels to Clean Energy

- **Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform: "Remove, target, and shift" approach** has been adopted.
 - ⊖ This approach helped in reducing **subsidies in the oil and gas sector** by 85%, from a peak of \$25 billion in 2013 to \$3.5 billion by 2023.
 - ⊖ India gradually phased out the subsidy on petrol and diesel (from 2010 to 2014).
 - ⊖ Approach helped in creating **fiscal space for government support to renewable energy initiatives, critical electricity infrastructure**, etc.
- **Role of Taxation:** From 2010 to 2017, the Government implemented a cess on **coal production** and imports.
 - ⊖ About 30% of the collections from this cess were allocated to a **national clean energy and environment fund**, helped the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** in funding initiatives such as the **Green Energy Corridor scheme**.
 - ⊖ Tax revenues were further boosted by rising **excise duties** on petrol and diesel (2014 to 2017).
- **Major Government Schemes and Programmes:** E.g. National Green Hydrogen Mission, PM-KUSUM scheme, etc.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB) (1966)

- **Objective:** Supports projects in developing member countries that create economic and development impact, etc.
- **Membership:** 69 members including India
- **Largest shareholders:** Japan and United States
- **HQ:** Manila, Philippines

All private properties cannot form part of the material resources of the community: Supreme Court (SC)

In **Property Owners Association v State of Maharashtra**, the SC held that **all private properties cannot form part of the 'material resources of the community'** under Article 39(b) of the Constitution.

- It overruled Judgment in **State of Karnataka v. Ranganatha Reddy (1978)** and **Sanjeev Coke Manufacturing Company vs. Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. and Anr. (1983)** case which held that private properties can be regarded as community resources.

Key Observations

- **Scope of Article 39(b):** Ambit of "material resource of community" must be based on the nature of the resource, the scarcity of the resource, etc.
 - ⊖ The **Public Trust Doctrine** (ensure that everyone gets equal access to all natural resources without any discrimination) can also be applied here.
- **Upheld Keshavananda Bharati verdict (1973):** That allowed for the **judicial review** of the laws enacted as per **Article 31C** (refer to box).
- **Approach for Economic Policies:** The judgment stressed that governments should be allowed to adapt economic policies according to changing needs, rather than imposing a fixed economic doctrine.

About Article 39(b) and Article 31C

- **Article 39(b)** of the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) mandates that the **government should direct policies** to ensure that "material resources of the community" are distributed to best serve public welfare.
 - ⊖ **Material resources of the community'** may include public or private resources for producing goods or services or for producing wealth for the community.
 - ⊖ Private resources can be turned into material resources of the community by means such as **nationalisation, acquisition, operation of law, by purchase by state and owner's donation**.
- **Article 31C:** Inserted by **25th Constitutional Amendment, 1971**, protects laws that give effect to Article 39(b) and (c) from being challenged for violating Articles 14 or 19.

Also in News



IUCN Red List

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) marks the 60th anniversary of the Red List.

About Red List:

- Established in 1964, it is the world's most **comprehensive information source** on the global conservation status of animal, fungi and plant species.
- **Red List include nine categories:** Not Evaluated, Data Deficient, Least Concern, Near Threatened, Vulnerable, Endangered, Critically Endangered, Extinct in the Wild and Extinct
 - ⊖ Assessors place species into List, based on a series of assessment criteria.

About IUCN:

- Created in 1948, the IUCN is a membership union of over 1,400 government and civil society organizations.
- It works to develop best practices and approaches that enable effective conservation.



LignoSat

The world's **first wooden satellite**, developed by Japan, has been launched.

- The satellite will study how wood withstands space's extreme conditions.

About LignoSat

- It is a small, palm-sized satellite made from **honoki wood**, a type of magnolia tree native to Japan.
- It also incorporates traditional aluminium structures and electronic components.
- **Significance:**
 - ⊖ Wooden satellite is part of a plan to use **renewable materials** for space structures.
 - ⊖ Wood can **better withstand space conditions** than metal, as there's no water or oxygen to cause decay.
 - ⊖ When decommissioned, wooden satellites burn up **without releasing harmful pollutants, unlike metal ones**.



Traditional Artisans' Upliftment Livelihood Programme (TULIP)

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has inaugurated 'TULIP' brand - A Digital Platform for Craft and Community Empowerment.

About TULIP

- Its goal is to **empower marginalized artisans** (SCs, OBCs, sanitation workers, and persons with disabilities) by providing them with a platform for global exposure and sales of their products through e-marketing.
- TULIP Digital Platform for e-commerce will **provide a platform for economic self-reliance and global exposure** to artisans via an e-marketplace.

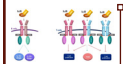


Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki

Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki volcano has erupted.

About Mount Lewotobi Laki-Laki

- Located on **Flores Island** in East Nusa Tenggara province.
- Volcano is **part of twin-volcano system** that local residents perceive as male and female mountains. **Ongoing volcanic eruption** has occurred at **male counterpart of system (Lewotobi Lakilaki)**.
 - Twin volcanoes are in **close proximity to each other and have similar shape and size**.
- Two mountains are classified as **stratovolcanoes** which are the most commonly occurring volcanoes around world. They are **formed by layers of lava** that repeatedly oozes out of crater.



IL-35 Protein

Researchers have discovered a specific protein IL-35 that protects against **type 1** and **autoimmune diabetes**.

- In type 1 diabetes body doesn't produce enough **insulin** while in type 2 diabetes, the body produces insulin, but it's unable to use it effectively.
- Autoimmune diabetes** has characteristics of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

About IL-35-Protein

- Protects the **immune system** by lowering **particular immune cells** that produce inflammatory chemicals.
- It regulates **macrophage activation, T-cell proteins, and regulatory B cells**.
 - Macrophages** form from **monocytes** (type of White blood cells (WBC)), which themselves derive from the **bone marrow**.
 - T cells** and **B cells** are types of WBC called lymphocytes.



Sea Foam

Recently, Sea Foam concept was widely seen in news.

About Sea Foam

- Sea foam in ocean is **created by organic material, wind, and waves**, forming bubbles on beach.
- It is **made up of micelles**, which are **small spheres made of surfactants** surrounding air. These **surfactants are proteins and fats** that came from decaying marine life, like plankton.
 - Surfactants (surface active agents) are found in soaps and detergents, industrial processes etc.
- Algal blooms** are one **common source** of thick sea foams.



Titanium (Ti)

India and Kazakhstan signed an agreement to establish Indo-Kazakh Joint Venture Company- IREUK Titanium Limited for production of Ti Slag in India.

About Titanium

- It is a **hard, shiny, light and strong refractory metal**.
- It is **9th most abundant element** on Earth. It occurs naturally in **chemical combinations, usually with oxygen and iron**.
- Ores of Titanium: Rutile (TiO₂), ilmenite (FeTiO₃).**
- Properties:** Low Density; High strength, Low thermal conductivity, Non-magnetic; offer low level of toxicity; Resists corrosion.
- Uses:** Ti alloys are used in **aircraft, spacecraft, missiles, ships, etc., surgical applications** like joint replacement, **titanium (IV) oxide used in paints, sunscreens, toothpastes etc.**

Personality in News



Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das (1870-1925)

Parliamentarians paid tribute to C. R. Das on his **birth anniversary**.

- Born in **Calcutta**, he studied at the **Presidency College, Calcutta** and studied law in London.

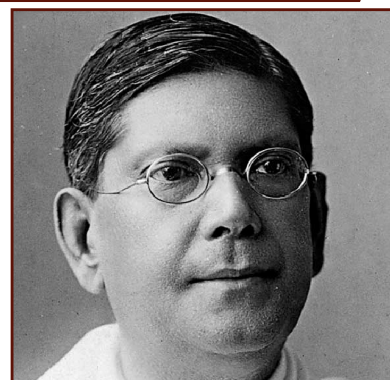
Key Contributions:

- Successfully defended **Aurobindo Ghosh** in the **Alipore bomb case** in 1909.
- Participated in the **Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920**.
- Served as Congress President in Gaya Session (1922)
- Founded the **Swaraj Party** within the Congress with **Motilal Nehru** in 1923.
- Also, he was the **1st elected mayor of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (1924)**.
- Established National University at Dacca (1921).

Literary Work:

- Newspaper-** 'Forward', later named 'Liberty'. (**Subhash Chandra Bose** was the editor),
- Books-** India for Indians, Freedom through Disobedience.

Values: Leadership, courage, etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI