

NEWS TODAY

India contributes half a million dollars to U.N. Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund

- It was announced by Minister of External Affairs during UN Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee meeting, held in 2022 under India's presidency.
 - ⊕ India's contribution would **support UNOCT's global programmes** mainly Countering Financing of Terrorism (CFT) and Countering Terrorist Travel Programme (CTTP).
 - ◆ CFT aims at **strengthening capacity of member-states to understand risks of terrorism.**
 - ◆ CTTP assists beneficiary Member States in building capabilities to detect and counter-terrorists.
- **Challenges in Addressing Terrorism**
 - ⊕ **Lack of universally accepted definition** of terrorism.
 - ⊕ Difficulty in **tracing terror funding due to use of virtual currencies like Bitcoin.**
 - ⊕ Difficulty in **countering Lone-wolf attacks** as these attackers often don't share their plans.
- **Measures taken to Counter- Terrorism**
 - ⊕ **Global**
 - ◆ **UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy** to enhance national, regional and international efforts to counter-terrorism.
 - ◆ **Regional Anti-terrorist Structure** of Shanghai Cooperation Organization for fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism.
 - ◆ **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**, global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.
 - » **India is member of FATF.**
 - ⊕ **India**
 - ◆ **Financial Intelligence Unit – India** for strengthening efforts against money laundering and financing of terrorism.
 - ◆ **National Investigation Agency, Central Counter Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency.**

United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

- Established in 2017.
- **UN Counter-Terrorism Trust Fund** was established in 2009 by Secretary-General and **transferred to UNOCT.**
- **UN Counter Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)** is main capacity-building arm.
- **Functions**
 - ⊕ **Improve visibility, advocacy and resource mobilization** for UN counter-terrorism efforts.
 - ⊕ **Strengthen delivery of UN counter-terrorism capacity-building** assistance to Member States.

CBSE instructed schools to focus on teaching children in their mother tongue

- This was emphasised by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in recent circular which is **in line with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2022.**
 - ⊕ **NEP 2020** advocates for mother tongue education until at least Grade 5, preferably extending to Grade 8 and beyond
 - ⊕ **NCF 2022** has recommended that mother tongue should be the primary medium of instruction for children till eight years of age.
- **Other provisions for Education in Mother Tongue**
 - ⊕ **Article 350A:** Mandates state to provide primary education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups in mother tongue.
 - ⊕ **Section 29 of Right to Education Act, 2009:** As far as possible, medium of instruction in education should be in mother tongue.
- **Importance of Education in Mother Tongue**
 - ⊕ Enhances **cognitive skills, improves learning outcomes and academic performance.**
 - ⊕ Facilitates **comprehension of complex subjects.**
 - ⊕ Empowers learners to express themselves confidently and connect with their heritage.
 - ⊕ Facilitates **better communication and understanding** between teachers and students.
- **Challenges related to Education in Mother Tongue**
 - ⊕ Allocating resources for materials and training teachers.
 - ⊕ Difficulty in standardising curriculum.
 - ⊕ Transition to English-Medium Higher Education is challenging.

Initiatives taken to Promote Education in Mother Tongue

- **India:**
 - ⊕ **National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) Foundational literacy and Numeracy (FLN)** promotes teaching in mother tongue, regional language, and home language.
 - ⊕ **52 entry level primers** (book for teaching children) tailored to various mother tongues and local languages spoken across India.
 - ◆ Launched by **NCERT and Indian Institute of Languages.**
- **Global:**
 - ⊕ **International Mother Language Day (21st February), initiated by Bangladesh** and recognized by UNESCO in 1999.
 - ⊕ **Yuelu Proclamation by UNESCO** for protection and promotion of linguistic diversity.

Amplifying the Global Value of Earth Observation report

- The report released by the **World Economic Forum** delves into the economic potential of **Earth Observation (EO)** technologies across various sectors.
- EO refers to **collecting information** about **activities and characteristics on Earth**, both natural and artificial, including physical, chemical, biological and human systems. EO includes:
 - ⊕ **Remotely-sensed data** which is collected from satellites, piloted aircraft, etc.
 - ⊕ **In-situ data** is gathered from GPS-enabled devices, Internet-of- things sensors, etc.
- **Economic opportunities of EO:** It would contribute **\$3.8 trillion to global gross domestic product** between 2023-2030. **Industries** that would **gain most** from EO–
 - ⊕ **Agriculture:** to reduce consumption through precision agriculture.
 - ⊕ **Electricity and utilities:** to **forecast** the energy potential and operations management for **new solar, wind and hydropower sites**.
 - ⊕ **Mining:** to **search for rare Earth minerals** in old mines and **enhance lithium exploration**.
- **Climate opportunities of EO:** EO applications have the potential to reduce over **2 billion tonnes of CO2 annually by 2030**. Some applications:
 - ⊕ **Early warning:** better characterize wildfire risk and to spot wildfires faster.
 - ⊕ **Environmental impact monitoring:** Satellites and aircraft-borne EO sensors can monitor Greenhouse gases.
- **Challenges:** limited awareness of EO applications, shortage of specialized talent, fragmented standards and difficulty navigating the complex EO marketplace, etc.

Global initiatives for EO:

- **MethaneSAT:** To pinpoint entities responsible for methane emission.
- **Allen coral atlas monitoring tool:** world's first satellite-based global coral reef monitoring system.
- **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR):** for understanding changes in Earth's ecosystems, ice mass, vegetation biomass, etc.

Climate Change can weaken Monetary policy transmission: RBI

- Monetary policy is an **adjustment of the supply of money in the economy** by the Reserve Bank of India(RBI) to achieve a **combination of inflation and output stabilization**.
- **Climate change effects on monetary policy**
 - ⊕ **Directly impacts inflation through adverse weather events** affecting agricultural production and global supply chains.
 - ⊕ **Impact the Natural Rate of Interest (NRI)** due to increasing temperatures and occurrence of Extreme weather events undermining productivity and lowering potential output.
 - ◆ NRI is a real **short-term interest rate consistent** with output at its potential and a stable rate of inflation.
 - » It is one element which helps to define the monetary policy stance (accommodative, neutral or restrictive).
 - ⊕ Impact the financial health of **banks and other financial institutions**, the value of assets, and the economic expectations of individuals and businesses.
- **Way forward**
 - ⊕ **Adopting green taxonomy**, which is a framework to assess the sustainability credentials and possible ranking of economic activity.
 - ⊕ Need to incorporate **climate risk into their modeling frameworks** used for monetary framework.

Steps Taken for Transition to Green Economy

- **Sovereign Green Bonds:** Announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 to fund projects which help in accelerating India's transition to a low-carbon economy.
 - ⊕ **Foreign Institutional Investors(FIIs)** are allowed to participate in future green government securities.
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** up to 100 percent under the automatic route for solar energy projects allowed.
- **Green Climate Fund:** Financial support to shift towards low-emission and climate-resilient development path.
 - ⊕ India engages with GCF on projects like water, clean energy, etc.

SC issued warning to celebrities, influencers for promoting product unethically

- The Supreme Court (SC) also directed the Ministry of Consumer Affairs to **submit measures taken against deceptive advertising**, especially in the food sector.
- **Need for advertisement regulation:**
 - ⊕ Digital platforms and social media increase **the risk of misleading consumers and unfair trade practices**.
 - ⊕ **To promote genuinely healthy and safe products**, especially for children, and **prevent misleading claims**.
 - ⊕ Celebrity endorsements significantly **influence consumer decisions, especially among their followers and youth**.
- **Ethical issues with celebrities endorsement**
 - ⊕ **Conflict of interest:** when a particular ad conflicts with the celebrity's image, principles, interests etc.
 - ⊕ **Lack of transparency:** Endorsing hazardous products through surrogate advertising.
 - ⊕ **Override expert opinion:** when they undermine the opinion of more qualified individuals by false claims.
 - ⊕ **Lack of Authenticity:** when celebrities endorse products without utilizing them.
- **Steps taken by Government against misleading advertisement**
 - ⊕ **The Consumer Protection Act 2019** for protection of the interests of consumers.
 - ⊕ The Department of Consumer Affairs released the guidelines- **Endorsements Know-hows! for celebrities, influencers and virtual influencers on social media platforms**.
 - ⊕ The Department of Consumer Affairs has also launched the portal for registering online complaints for **Grievances Against Misleading Advertisements (GAMA)**.

India became third largest solar power generator

- This is highlighted as per **Global Electricity Review (GER) 2024 report**, released by global energy think tank Ember.
- **Key finding of the report**
 - ⊕ Renewables provided **30% of global electricity** for the first time.
 - ⊕ **Solar was the main supplier** of electricity growth in 2023.
 - ⊕ India saw the world's **fourth-largest surge in solar generation in 2023** behind China, the US and Brazil.
 - ◆ India provided 5.9% of global growth in solar generation in 2023.
 - ⊕ **India's per capita emissions from the power sector** are just over half the global average and even further below the average in Asia.
- **Challenges in power sector:**
 - ⊕ Drought conditions globally resulted in a **record fall in hydropower generation**.
 - ⊕ India's electricity generation is **more carbon-intensive** than the global average.
 - ◆ India also saw the **second-highest increase in coal generation** globally, behind China.
 - ⊕ Despite progress, wind, solar and other low-carbon sources are **not yet growing fast enough to meet India's rapidly growing electricity demand**.

India's targets to decarbonise Power generation

- To reduce the **carbon intensity of the nation's economy** by less than 45% by 2030.
- **Achieve 50 percent cumulative electric power** installed by 2030 from renewables.
- Achieve **net-zero carbon emissions by 2070**.
- Aims for **500 GW of renewable energy** installed capacity by 2030.

Also in News



INTERPOL (International Criminal Police Organization)

- Interpol issues blue colour notice against an absconding MP who faces serious sexual harassment allegations.
 - ⊕ **Blue Notice** refers to **collect additional information** about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a criminal investigation.
- **About INTERPOL**
 - ⊕ Established in 1956 at **Lyon (France)**.
 - ⊕ **General Assembly** is supreme governing body; **meets once a year**; comprises representatives of every member country.
 - ⊕ **196 Member countries** including India.
 - ⊕ Supports national efforts in **combating crimes across four global areas** – Terrorism; Cybercrime; Organized crime; and Financial crime and Anti-corruption.



Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*)

- For the first time, Scientists studying the sperm whales have outlined that they **communicate using bursts of clicking noises**- called codas- **sounding a bit like Morse code**.
- **About Sperm Whale**
 - ⊕ **Characteristics:** **Largest of the toothed whales** and only males tend to be observed closer to poles.
 - ⊕ **Distribution:** Found in **deep open waters**, or **around islands and coastal areas** with deep canyons or very narrow continental shelves.
 - ⊕ Found in **India, Argentina; Bangladesh** etc.
 - ⊕ **Threats:** Vessel Strikes, Entanglement in Fishing Gear, Underwater noise pollution etc.
 - ⊕ **Conservation status**
 - ◆ **IUCN:** Vulnerable
 - ◆ **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule II



Krishi Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC)

- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW) inaugurated a Krishi ICCC at Krishi Bhavan in New Delhi.
- **About Krishi ICCC**
 - ⊕ It is a **tech-driven solution under MoA&FW for informed decision-making in agriculture using technologies** like artificial intelligence, remote sensing, and Geographic Information Systems.
 - ⊕ It **monitors farm sector by consolidating geospatial information from various sources** like sowing data from Digital Crop Survey, Unified Portal for Agricultural Statistics for market intelligence etc.
 - ⊕ **Application:** Customised farmer advisories based on GIS soil mapping and weather data; Proactive drought management, Identification of crop diversification etc.



Aggregate measurement of support (AMS)

- The US and Australia accused India of exceeding the WTO's 10% subsidy limit for developing countries by providing excessive subsidies to sugarcane farmers.
 - ⊕ These subsidies or domestic support are called **aggregate measurement of support (AMS) in trade parlance.**
- **About AMS**
 - ⊕ It calculates annual support provided for **agricultural products.**
 - ⊕ It includes all **product-specific support and non-product-specific support** in one single figure.
 - ⊕ It is used to identify trade distortion subsidies that may need reduction as per the **Agreement on Agriculture.**



Shinku La tunnel

- Border Road Organisation will soon commence the construction of the 4.1-km long Shinku La tunnel.
- **About Shinku La tunnel**
 - ⊕ **Once completed, this tunnel will become the world's highest tunnel at 15,800 ft, surpassing Mila tunnel in China.**
 - ⊕ It will provide all-weather connectivity from **Manali to Leh.**
 - ⊕ It is expected to **streamline the transportation** of heavy machinery to strategic locations such as Kargil, Siachen, etc.



Constructed wetlands

- Constructed wetlands are **engineered structures designed to replicate the functions of natural wetlands.**
 - ⊕ They are composed of **vegetation, soil and water**, orchestrated to facilitate a **seamless process of purification.**
- These wetlands **foster biodiversity**, ranging from microorganisms to aquatic plants and even birds, to engage in the **purification process.**
- **Benefits:**
 - ⊕ It **replicates** the functionalities of natural wetlands.
 - ⊕ Its construction and **maintenance entail minimal energy consumption and lower operational expenses.**
- **Natural wetlands** have often been referred to as **"earth's kidneys"** because of their capacity to filter pollutants.



Batagay Crater

- Newly captured aerial footage of Batagay Crater has revealed that it is growing every year as the frozen ground melts.
- **About Batagay (also spelled Batagaika) crater**
 - ⊕ It is also known as **"Gateway to Underworld"** or **"Doorway to Hell"** and is the **world's biggest permafrost crater.**
 - ⊕ **Located in Siberia, Russia**, it is a **massive, expanding depression in Earth's surface**, formed due to permafrost thaw.
 - ⊕ Since 1960s, its **growth accelerated due to deforestation and climate change.**
 - ⊕ From 1991 to 2018, **the crater area increased by almost three times.**



Rocky Planet

- Researchers have detected **atmospheric gases surrounding 55 Cancri e, a hot rocky exoplanet (planet beyond solar system).**
- **About 55 Cancri e (also known as Janssen)**
 - ⊕ **Classified as a super-Earth:** Larger than Earth, smaller than **Neptune**, and likely similar in composition to rocky planets in solar system.
- **Rocky Planets (Terrestrial Planets)**
 - ⊕ Terrestrial, **meaning earth-like** as they are made up of **rock and metals**, and have relatively **high densities.**
 - ⊕ **Planets include:** Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars.
 - ◆ They lie between **sun and the belt of asteroids.**
 - ⊕ Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are **Jovian (gaseous) planets.**

Places in News



Chad (Capital: N'Djamena)

- **Chad polling to vote for a new president** aimed at ending military rule.
- **Political features:**
 - ⊕ **Landlocked country** in north-central Africa.
 - ⊕ **Land borders:** Libya (north), Sudan (east), the **Central African Republic** (south), **Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger** (west).
- **Geographical features:**
 - ⊕ It is largely a **semi-desert country.**
 - ⊕ **Largest Lake:** Lake Chad.
 - ⊕ **Major River:** The Chari river.
 - ⊕ **Highest Point:** Mount Koussi.

