

The 2024 OPCW The Hague Award conferred upon Indian Chemical Council (ICC)

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Hague award acknowledges ICC contributions to chemical safety, compliance with **Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC)**.

- This is the first time that the Award recognises the efforts of a **chemical industry body**.
- Hague Award was established in 2014 to honor OPCW's contributions to **Chemical Weapons Conventions (CWC)** goals.

About Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC)

- **Genesis:** It came into force in **1997**, and presently has **193 States Parties**.
 - ⊖ India is an original signatory to the Convention.
- **Aim:** To eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction by **prohibiting the development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention, transfer or use of chemical weapons by States Parties**.
- **Implementation:** OPCW is the implementing body, with a mission to achieve a **world free of chemical weapons**.
 - ⊖ OPCW was awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize in 2013**.
 - ⊖ **Chemical Weapon** is a chemical used to cause intentional death or harm through its toxic properties.
 - ◆ **Munitions, devices and other equipment** specifically designed to **weaponise toxic chemicals** also fall under the definition of **chemical weapons**.
- **Implementation in India:** **National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention (NACWC)** is the national responsible for implementing the Convention in India.
 - ⊖ NACWC was established under the **Chemical Weapons Convention Act, 2000**.

About Indian Chemical Council (ICC)

- **About:** Apex national body representing all branches of India's chemical industry, including organic/inorganic chemicals, plastics, and petrochemicals.
- **Genesis:** **Founded in 1938** to support and drive the growth of India's chemical industry.
- **Industry Representation:** Represents over 80% of India's \$220 billion chemical industry

Soaring Water demand and Groundwater depletion caused Earth's axis to tilt by 31.5 inches: Study

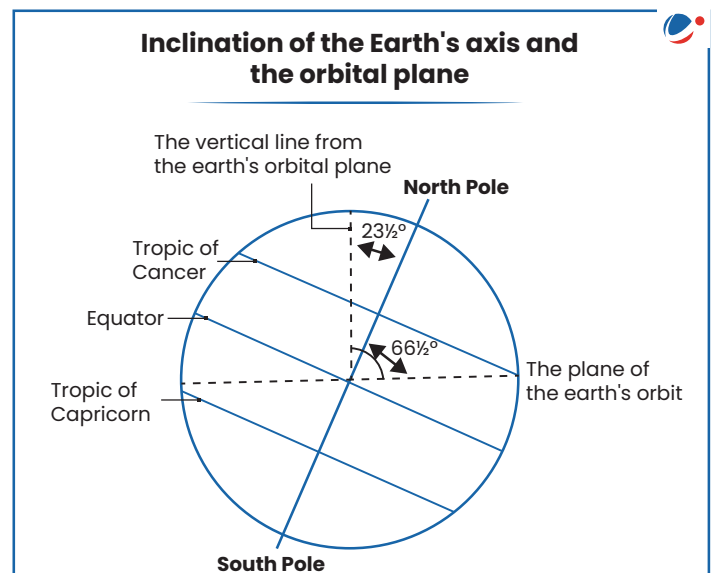
A recent study published in **Geophysical Research Letters** shows that excessive groundwater extraction has shifted Earth's rotational pole, highlighting the impact of human activities on the planet.

Key Findings of the Study

- Between 1993 and 2010, excessive groundwater extraction caused **Earth's rotational pole to shift 80 cm eastward**, which contributed to a 0.24-inch rise in sea levels by altering **planet's mass distribution**.
- Shift in Earth's rotational axis is **driven by movement of groundwater from aquifers to oceans**.
 - ⊖ This shift occurred at a rate of 4.36 cm per year, challenging previous **climate models** that primarily focused on **ice sheet melting**.
- Most of the world's oceans experience an increase of near 10 mm, but there was a **sea level drop observed over the Indian and the Pacific Ocean** adjacent to regions of **groundwater depletion in Northwestern India and western North America**.

About Motion of Earth

- Earth has two types of motions: **rotation** and **revolution**.
- **Rotation** is the movement of Earth around its **axis**, while **revolution** is the movement of Earth **around the sun** in a fixed orbit.
- Earth's axis is an **imaginary line** that is tilted at an angle of **66½° to its orbit**.
 - ⊖ **Effects of the Earth's Inclination**
 - ◆ **Day and night** occur due to Earth's rotation, while **seasons** change because of its revolution.
 - ◆ It also causes variations in **heat distribution**, creating seasons and climate zones.



Union Minister for Women and Child Development Launched 'Bal Vivah Mukh Bharat' Campaign

The campaign calls on **all citizens to actively oppose child marriage** and is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Women and Child Development and various other Ministries.

About the Campaign

- **Focus Areas:** In seven States with high burden of child marriages and in nearly 300 high-burden districts.
- **Collaborative approach:** Call on every State and Union Territory to devise an **action plan aimed at reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.**
- **Child Marriage Free Bharat Portal:** An innovative online platform that enables citizens to report child marriage incidents, file complaints, and access information about **Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs) nationwide.**





Status of Child Marriage in India

- **Reduction in Child Marriage:** As per NFHS-5, Child marriage has decreased from 47.4% in 2005–06 to 26.8% in 2015–16.
- **Variation by household wealth:** According to NFHS-5, 40% of females in the lowest quintile married before the age of 18, compared to only 8% in the highest quintile.
- **States with high prevalence:** West Bengal, Bihar, Tripura, Jharkhand, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Steps taken by government

- **Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (PCMA):** Prohibits child marriages where females are under 18 and males are under 21.
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:** India is a signatory.
- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR):** Runs awareness programs to fight child marriage.

Consequences of Child Marriages

 <p>Physical: It can lead to forced sexual activity and exposure to domestic violence.</p>	 <p>Developmental: It can result in low education and life skills.</p>	 <p>Health: Early and repeated pregnancies damage the reproductive health of girls.</p>	 <p>Human Rights Violations: Child marriage violates the right to a free and joyful childhood.</p>
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Israel and Hezbollah in Lebanon entered into a ceasefire agreement

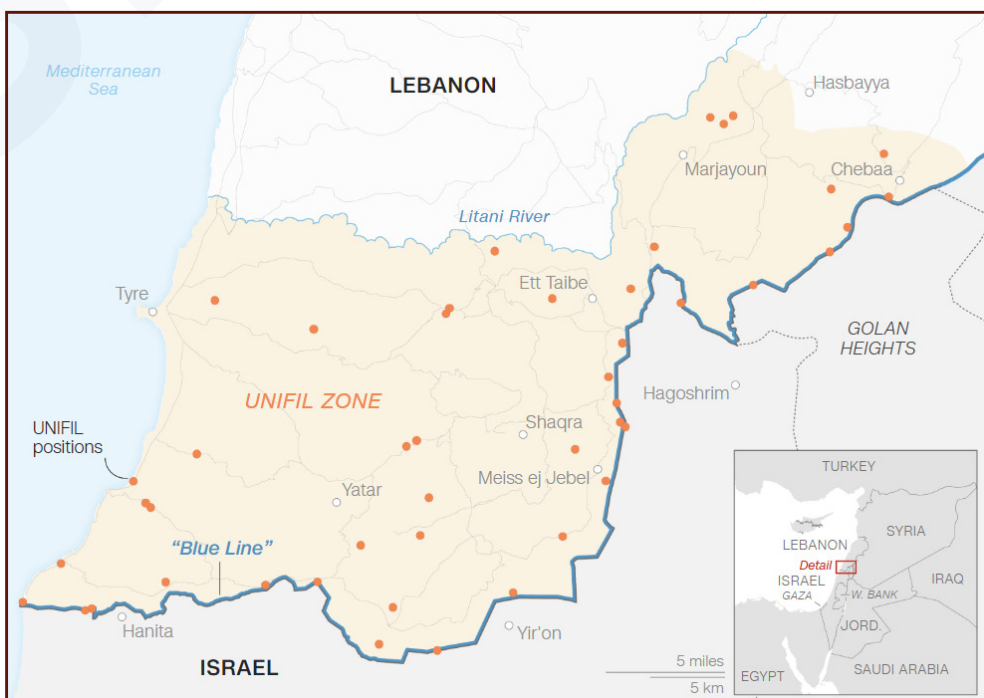
Israel and Lebanon have accepted a **US-backed proposal to end the 13-month border conflict** that spiraled into an all-out war.

About the Agreement

- The ceasefire agreement draws on the provisions of **Resolution 1701 passed by the UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2006.**
- **Israel:** Israel Defense Forces (IDF) withdrawal to the Blue line within 60 days
 - ⊕ The Blue Line was set by the UN in 2000 and serves as a **de facto border between Israel and Lebanon.**
- **Hezbollah:** To remove all fighters and weapons from south of the Litani river.
- **Lebanon:** Lebanese army and United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to replace IDF and Hezbollah in south Lebanon.
 - ⊕ **No foreign forces or supply of arms** without the consent of the government.

About Resolution 1701

- The UN Security Council resolution **ended the Israel-Hezbollah war of 2006.**
- It stipulates that the only armed groups in the area south of Lebanon's Litani River should be the **Lebanese army and UN peacekeeping forces (UN Interim Force in Lebanon – UNIFIL).**



Centre announced "funding and mentorship" for winners of 'Tomato Grand Challenge (TGC)'

TGC seeks **innovative, scalable solutions to stabilize the tomato supply chain.**

- It was launched in 2023 by the Department of Consumer Affairs in collaboration with Ministry of Education (Innovation Cell).
- Tomatoes, along with Onions and Potatoes (collectively referred as (TOPs))** have seen **huge fluctuations** in agriculture commodities among all crops.

About TOPs

- TOPs are the largest cultivated, produced and consumed vegetables in India.**
- TOPs make up more than a third of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) vegetables category.**

Issues associated with wide fluctuation of TOPs prices

- Seasonal production:** Lean seasons cause supply shortages and high prices, while bumper harvests result in low prices.
- Natural Factors:** Weather shocks and pest attacks exacerbate volatility.
- Storage Accessibility:** Limited storage facilities (mostly privately owned) which are concentrated in a few states including U.P, Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat (CII report).
- Unorganised Market:** Lack of robust networks like milk cooperatives to seamlessly connect producers to consumers for TOP.
- Issues in implementing Operation Greens:** Diverse varieties of TOPs and growing conditions complicate marketing interventions.

Initiatives for Price stabilisation of TOP

- Operation Greens:** Under PM Kisan Sampada Yojna to address price volatility of TOPs, later it was extended to other fruits & vegetables (TOP to TOTAL).
- Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs):** Rural haats (village markets) are being developed into Gramin Agricultural Markets (GRAMs) for farmers to directly sell their produce
- Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH):** For holistic development of horticulture and assists with a **low-cost onion storage structure.**
- Other initiatives:** Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure (AMI) for rural godowns, Kisan Rail service, Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF), etc.

Union Government notified Second Phase of PM E-DRIVE Scheme

Recently, **Union Ministry of Heavy Industries** has notified partial modifications in the **PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM EDRIVE)** Scheme to allow subsidy benefits for **L5 category electric 3-wheelers.**

Key Highlights of the Notification

› Incentive Per Vehicle:

- April 1, 2024 – November 7, 2024: **₹5,000/kWh (capped at ₹50,000 per vehicle).**
- November 8, 2024 – March 31, 2026: **₹2,500/kWh (capped at ₹25,000 per vehicle).**

› Maximum ex-factory price to avail incentive: ₹5 lakh.

› Fund Allocation: ₹715 crore.

About PM E-DRIVE Scheme

› **Objective:** To expedite the adoption of EVs by providing upfront incentives for their purchase, as well as by facilitating the establishment of essential charging infrastructure for EVs.

› Time Period: 2024-26.

› Targets

- Support **e-2Ws, e-3Ws, and e-buses.**
- Installation of **fast chargers for e-4Ws, e-buses, and e-2W/3Ws.**

› Nodal Ministry: Union Ministry of Heavy Industries.

› 3 Components

- › **Subsidies:** Demand Incentives for e-2W, e-3W, e-ambulances, e-trucks and other new emerging EV categories;
- › **Grants for creation of capital assets:** e-buses, establishment of network of charging stations & upgradation of testing agencies of MHI; and
- › **Administration of the Scheme including IEC** (Information, Education & Communication) activities and fee for project management agency (PMA).

Also in News



OPEC+

Oil prices continued to rise for both **Brent Crude and West Texas Intermediate (WTI) Crude** in anticipation that OPEC+ may delay a planned increase in oil production in its upcoming meeting.

About OPEC+

- › **Genesis:** In 2016, **Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)** partnered with 10 **additional oil-producing countries**, forming OPEC+.
- › **OPEC, a permanent intergovernmental organization of 12 oil-exporting developing nations, was formed in 1960 by Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Venezuela.**
 - › **Other members include:** Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria, and United Arab Emirates.
- › **Members:** Other than OPEC countries it has **Russia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Malaysia, Oman, South Sudan, and Sudan.**



UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report 2024

Recently, **UNAIDS World AIDS Day Report 2024** titled: "Take the right path to end AIDS" was launched.

Key Findings of the report

- › Of the 39.9 million people living with HIV, 9.3 million people are **still not accessing life-saving treatment.**
- › Last year, **630000 people died of AIDS-related illnesses**, and 1.3 million people around the **world newly acquired HIV.**

About UNAIDS

- › It is the **Joint UN Programme of 11 UN Organizations on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS).**
 - › These organizations include: **UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, and World Bank.**
- › **Vision:** Zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS-related deaths.



Sabal 20 Logistics Drone

EndureAir Systems, a private drone manufacturer, has delivered its innovative **Sabal 20 Logistics Drone** to Indian Army for deployment in the Eastern sectors.

About Sabal 20 Drones

- It is an advanced **electric unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)** designed for aerial logistics, capable of carrying up to 20 kg of supplies over long distances.
- Its tandem rotor and **variable pitch technology**, like the **Chinook helicopter**, offer stability, high-altitude performance, and minimal turbulence, making it perfect for **rugged terrains**.
- Key features:** Vertical take-off and landing (VTOL) technology, a low RPM design for stealth during sensitive military operations, etc.



National Security Guard

The **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** has established a permanent **National Security Guard (NSG)** hub in Jammu City to counter major terror attacks.

About NSG

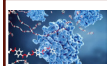
- It was created under the **National Security Guard Act, 1986**.
- It is **Federal Contingency World Class Zero Error Force** to deal with **anti-terrorist activities in all its manifestation**.
- It is equipped to deal with specific situations and is **used only in exceptional cases to prevent major terrorist acts**.
- It was modelled on the pattern of the **SAS of the UK and GSG-9 of Germany**.
- Administrative and operational control:** Union Ministry of Home Affairs.



Solar Projects in Indo-Pacific

A **Project Implementation Agreement** has been signed between the Ministry of External Affairs, India and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) for **Solar Projects in the Indo-Pacific**.

- Projects will be implemented in **Fiji, Comoros, Madagascar, and Seychelles** with the **financial support of \$2 million from India**.
 - It aligns with the **Wilmington Declaration** from the Quad Leaders' Summit (2024).
 - ISA will be the **Project Implementing Agency**.
- About International Solar Alliance (ISA)**
- Joint initiative of India and France** to combat climate change through solar energy solutions.
 - Conceptualized during **COP21 in Paris (2015)**.



Nanozymes

Researchers from the **CSIR-Central Leather Research Institute (CLRI)** are expanding the horizons of nanozymes to use them as catalysts for transforming biomaterials.

About Nanozymes

- They are **nanoparticles with enzyme-like features**, which may be metallic, metal oxide-based, carbon-based or of other types.
- Advantages over conventional enzymes:** high stability, low cost, durability, ease of mass production, controllability and better recovery rates.
- Applications:** Biomedical (Biosensing, Drug delivery, diagnosis and therapy, etc.), Environmental Remediation (Water Purification, Air Purification, etc.).



Network Readiness Index (NRI) 2024

The **2024 edition of the Network Readiness Index (NRI)** has officially launched.

- The theme of this year is **"Building a Digital Tomorrow: Public-Private Investments and Global Collaboration for Digital Readiness."**
- India climbed 11 ranks, securing the **49th position in NRI 2024**.
- The report maps the **network-based readiness landscape** of 133 economies based on their performances in four different pillars: **Technology, People, Governance, and Impact**.
- It is co-published by **Portulans Institute and Saïd Business School, University of Oxford**.



E-Daakhil portal

The **Department of Consumer Affairs** announces the nationwide implementation of the E-Daakhil portal.

About E-Daakhil portal

- It was first launched by the **National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) in 2020**.
- NCDRC is a **quasi-judicial commission** set up under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.
- It is an online platform that simplifies the **consumer grievance process**, allowing consumers to file complaints and track cases without the need to be physically present.
- The portal has been a key tool in promoting **consumer rights** and **delivering timely justice**.

Personality in News



Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675)

Recently, the **'Martyrdom Day'** of **Guru Tegh Bahadur ji** was observed on November 24.

About Guru Tegh Bahadur ji

- He was born in **Amritsar (Punjab)**.
- He was the **9th Sikh Guru** and was a great warrior, spiritual personality and lover of the motherland.

Key Contributions

- He propagated the message of **universal brotherhood and religious freedom**.
- He fought against **superstitions, caste-based discrimination, and untouchability**.
- His teachings inspire to build a strong and vibrant India which is firm up on the pillars of **equality, justice, fraternity and liberty**.
- He founded the town of **Chak Nanki in Punjab**, later enlarged into the city of **Shri Anandpur Sahib**.
- He was crowned with the rare honour of **'Hind Di Chadar'**.

Values

- Valour, Spirituality, Leadership, Determination, etc.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI