

Rising Manosphere is Serious Threat to Gender Equality: UN Women

The manosphere is an umbrella term for a **'network of online communities'** that promote **narrow & aggressive definitions of masculinity**, along with the **false narrative** that feminism & gender equality have harmed men's rights.

- Rooted in **misogyny & anti-feminist rhetoric**, the manosphere weaponizes digital platforms to spread hate, sexist ideologies, and reinforce deep gender bias.

Reasons behind Rising Manosphere

- **Need for Validation:** Increasing social isolation & a desire for belonging drive many young men toward the manosphere, where they seek support, & validation.
- **Digital Anonymity:** Lowers social/legal consequences, making it **easier to spread misogyny & hatred**.
- **Social Media Algorithms:** Amplify harmful & anti-women narratives.
- **Masculinity Influencers:** Many young men follow masculinity influencers who promote regressive gender roles and portray **'men as victims of feminism'**.

Impact

- **Less safety for women & girls in Digital Spaces:** E.g., **Gamergate** was a harassment campaign in which female gamers were targeted by male-supremacists.
- **Undermining Gender Equality** distorting public understanding of **gender issues**, eroding public support for **gender justice & women rights**.
- **Fuels Real-World Harm:** E.g., Verbal harassment, **workplace discrimination, violence** against women.
- **Reduced participation in public spheres:** E.g., **politics, media, academia**, etc.

Initiatives to Counter Manosphere

Global

- **Beijing Platform For Action (1995):** Calls for **balanced & non-stereotypical portrayals of women in media**, including digital spaces.
- **'Making All Spaces Safe' Initiative (UNFPA):** To combat technology-facilitated gender-based violence.
- **EU's Digital Services Act:** Prohibits misogynistic & gender-based hate content on digital platforms.

India

- **Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:** Outlaws indecent/derogatory portrayal of women in digital media.
- **IT Rules, 2021:** Requires social media to remove objectionable content within 24 hours of complaint.
- **Digital shakti: Digitally empowering women & girls in cyberspace**, creating safer online environments for them.

Iran Set to Close Strait of Hormuz Following US's Operation Midnight Hammer

Following the US air strikes at Iranian nuclear facilities under "Operation Midnight Hammer", Iran's parliament approved a proposal to close the Strait of Hormuz.

Operation Midnight Hammer

- **Locations Targeted:** US targeted Iran's nuclear sites-**Natanz**, **Isfahan**, & **Fordow**.
 - ⊕ These sites are central to Iran's nuclear program that accelerated after the US withdrew in 2018 from Iran Nuclear Deal (Joint comprehensive plan of action), 2015.
- **Weaponry Used:** B-2 Stealth Bombers, GBU-57 bunker buster bombs (**Massive Ordnance Penetrator**), & Tomahawk missiles.

The Strait of Hormuz

- It is a crucial maritime passage that connects the **Persian Gulf** with the **Gulf of Oman** & the **Arabian Sea**.
- It Spans about **167 km** & narrowing to just 33 km at its slimmest point.

Implications of Closure

- **Impacts Global Energy Security:** It is critical chokepoint for global energy supplies. Around 20% of global oil & LNG trade passes through the Strait.
- **Strategic Importance:** It is the only viable maritime route connecting major Gulf oil producers like Saudi Arabia, UAE, & Kuwait etc. to international markets.
- **Inflation Risk:** Disruption would spike energy prices, triggering inflation.



Impact on India

- **Energy Security:** About **40% of India's oil** and **nearly 50% of natural gas imports** pass through the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Trade Deficit:** As the **world's 3rd largest oil importer**, energy price spike raises import bills, widening the trade deficit.
- **Economic Risk:** Rising crude prices threaten India's economy, **weaken the rupee**, and strain financial markets.

U.K house of commons approves Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill (Assisted Dying bill)

The bill allows terminally ill adults over age 18, who are deemed to have less than six months to live, to apply for an assisted death.

- A patient choosing to die would need to be of competent mind.

What is Assisted Dying?

- **Assisted dying** refers to situation when a terminally ill patient receives lethal drugs from medical practitioner and **self-administers them to end their own life**.
 - ⊕ On the other hand, in **Euthanasia**, physician deliberately administers lethal drugs to end patient's life, potentially to relieve suffering, even if not terminally ill.

Key Ethical Dilemma associated with the Assisted Dying

- **Respect for patient's dignity vs. Sanctity of Life:**
 - ⊕ **Assisted Dying** recognizes the patient's right to make end-of-life decisions. **JS mill's reflective autonomy** (deliberative and thoughtful choices).
 - ⊕ On the other hand, **religious leaders** believe that life is given by God, and only God should decide when to end it.
- **Medical Ethics Conflict:** Assisted dying contradicts the medical duty to preserve life, creating a moral dilemma for physicians to save lives.
 - ⊕ **Hippocratic Oath** guides doctors to do their best in their job and not use their skill or knowledge to harm or kill their patients.
- **Risk of misuse:** Danger of vested interests (e.g., organ transplantation considerations), etc.
- **Undermining True Voluntariness:** People with disabilities who felt like a burden would feel socio-economic pressure to end their lives.



China, Pakistan and Bangladesh held their first trilateral meeting in Kunming, China

This is the **2nd trilateral dialogue** that China has launched in India's neighbourhood, following a similar meeting between the foreign ministers of **China, Pakistan and Afghanistan**, recently.

- This shows rising influence of China in South Asia. China is cultivating a ring of friendly states along the subcontinent's periphery.

Key Concerns for India

- **Expansion of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) Projects:** Both Bangladesh and Pakistan are key partners of BRI.
 - ⊕ Under BRI, **China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)** has been launched, running through **Pakistan-occupied Kashmir**.
- **Expansion of String of Pearls Policy:** This policy aims to encircle India with Chinese outposts to maintain its dominance on its neighbor.
 - ⊕ China has secured access to key ports along the Indian Ocean, including **Gwadar in Pakistan** and **Hambantota port in Sri Lanka**.
 - ⊕ China may have access to ports in Bangladesh, **national security threat** for India.
- **Parallel Regionalism:** Emergence of **alternate regional platforms** may reduce relevance of India-led regional groupings like **Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)**.
- **Erosion of India's Neighbourhood First Policy:** Trilateral initiative signals a **growing vacuum in regional leadership** that China is actively filling.

Way Forward: Prioritize the friendly and mutually beneficial relations with all its neighbours, Strengthen regional grouping like **BIMSTEC**, etc.



Political Financing in India: Rising Costs, Falling Transparency

According to the **Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR)** report, many parties delayed submitting expenditure statements (by 1 to 232 days), while some parties failed to report altogether after General Elections 2024.

- Political parties are required to submit election expenditure statements to the ECI within 90 days (General elections) and 75 days (Assembly elections) post-election.
- Widespread non-compliance has raised serious concerns about **transparency and accountability** in political financing.

Issue in Political Financing in India

- **Expensive Elections:** The 2024 Lok Sabha Election became the most expensive electoral event in the world, with expenditure reaching ₹1.35 lakh crore.
- **Lack of Transparency:** Approximately 60% of contributions to the six major political parties in India from 2004-05 to 2022-23 came from undisclosed sources.
- **Disparity in Political Funding:** E.g., National parties collected over 93% of total funds, in 2024 general elections raising concerns over unequal financial influence & a level playing field.
- **Electoral Overspending:** Despite ECI's expenditure limits (**₹95 lakh for Lok Sabha, ₹40 lakh for Assembly**), actual spending **exceeds these caps**, often with the help of **third-party campaigners** & loopholes in the **Model Code of Conduct**.
- **Wealth a key factor in electoral success**, limiting opportunities for less affluent contenders.
 - ⊕ E.g. In Madhya Pradesh, 44% of winning candidates declared assets over ₹5 crore.

Recommendations

- **Cap on the expenditure** to be incurred for an election by political parties (Law Commisison).
- **State funding to reduce disparities** in financial resources among political parties (**Indrajit Gupta Committee (1998)**).
- **Expenditure must be limited to transactions via cheque/DD/RTGS** so as to **reduce use of black money (ADR)**.
- **Other:** Observers should monitor party expenditure, and all donor details must be publicly disclosed.



Also In News



Coffee

India's coffee exports have jumped about 125 % to USD 1.8 billion in the last 11 years.

About Coffee

- **Coffee** is a **tropical plant**.
 - ⊕ **Of around sixty different species two dominate world trade - Arabica**, which represents 75% of production; and **Robusta**.
- **Climatic Condition:** It needs an annual rainfall of **150 to 300 cm** and Ideal average **temperatures range between 15 - 24 degree Celsius (Arabica) 24 - 30 degree Celsius (Robusta)**.
- **Key Producer:**
 - ⊕ Brazil is the world's largest coffee producer.
 - ⊕ In India, **Karnataka leads in production**, followed by Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
 - ♦ Coffee is primarily grown in Western and Eastern Ghats.



e-Rakt Kosh

The Ministry of Health is planning to integrate the country's Rare Donor Registry with the e-Rakt Kosh.

- The National Institute of Immunohaematology (ICMR), Mumbai, has created a national **rare blood donor registry** to support patients with uncommon blood types requiring frequent transfusions.

About e-Rakt Kosh

- **Genesis: April 2016**
- It is an online **blood bank management system** under the **National Health Mission**.
- It provides information about blood banks, blood availability, blood donation camps etc.
- e-Rakt Kosh enforces **Drug & Cosmetic Act, National blood policy standards & guidelines**.



Nano Fertilizers

Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) to set up its first overseas nano fertiliser plant in Brazil.

- IFFCO had launched world's first 'Nano Liquid Urea' fertiliser in 2021 & then Nano-DAP in 2023.

About Nano Fertilizers

- Nano fertilizers are nutrients that are **encapsulated or coated within nanomaterial** (measuring 100 nanometres or less).
- It enables **controlled release** and its subsequent **slow diffusion into the soil**.

Benefits

- **Promotes sustainable farming:** Reduces soil and water contamination.
- **Cost Effectiveness:** Improves nutrient absorption, reduce nutrient wastage and lower application frequency provide, etc.



CaTRAT

Wildlife scientist recently highlighted use of CaTRAT to identify Himalayan snow leopards.

About CaTRAT (Camera Trap data Repository and Analysis Tool)

- **Software CaTRAT processes** automated segregation of camera trap photographs of species using artificial intelligence and **neural network models**.

Other technologies used to track big cats

- **Tigers: M-STRIPE (Monitoring System for tigers – intensive protection and ecological status)**, that uses GPS to geotag photo-evidences.
- **Lion:** AI-driven systems like SIMBA, E-GujForest, Alert Generation System etc.



Digital Markets Act (DMA)

Alphabet's Google has proposed changes in its search results in order to comply with **Europeion Union's Digital Markets act**, as per reports.

About Digital Markets act (2022)

- Act ensures that gatekeeper behave in a **fair** way online and leave room for contestability.
 - ⊕ **Gatekeepers** are large digital platforms providing any of a pre-defined set of digital services ('core platform services'), such as online search engines, app stores, and messenger services.
- It ensures that consumers will have more and better services to choose from, more opportunities to switch their provider if they wish so, direct access to services, and fairer prices.



Subarnarekha River

Subarnarekha flash flood creates havoc in Balasore, Odisha.

About Subarnarekha River

- Subarna meaning **gold** and rekha meaning **line**, i.e. literally means **golden line**.
- **Geographical Profile**
 - ⊕ **Origin:** Near Piska village, close to **Ranchi, Jharkhand**.
 - ⊕ **Basin Region:** Jharkhand, Odisha & West Bengal.
 - ⊕ **Mouth:** Into the **Bay of Bengal**
 - ⊕ **Principal tributaries:** Kanchi, the Karkari and the Kharkai.
 - ⊕ **Hundru Falls** is located on it.
- **Significance:** **Subarnrekha Waterway** is declared as **National Waterway-96** as per **The National Waterway Act, 2016**.



Sculptor galaxy / NGC 253

Researchers created a detailed map of the Sculptor Galaxy, using the Multi-Unit Spectroscopic Explorer (MUSE) instrument on ESO's Very Large Telescope.

About Sculptor Galaxy

- Also known as NGC 253 or Silver Coin Galaxy, it is 7.5 million light-years away from the earth.
- Discovered by **Caroline Herschel** in 1783, NGC 253 is a large; almost edge-on **spiral galaxy**.
 - ⊕ Spiral galaxies are surrounded by halos, mixtures of old stars, star clusters, and dark matter.
 - ⊕ Both the **Milky Way** and the **Andromeda galaxies** belong to a subtype known as **barred spirals** which sport ribbons of stars, gas, and dust that cut across their centers.



Gwada negative

A French woman from the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe has been identified as the only known carrier of a new blood type, dubbed "Gwada negative."

About Gwada Negative

- It is **negative blood group system**, officially registered by International Society of Blood Transfusion (ISBT) as **ISBT042**. It is defined by the **absence of the EMM antigen**.
 - ⊕ EMM antigen is normally found on red blood cells and is considered a high-incidence antigen.
 - ⊕ High-incidence antigens are present in nearly all humans.
- It is now the **48th blood group system** in the world.



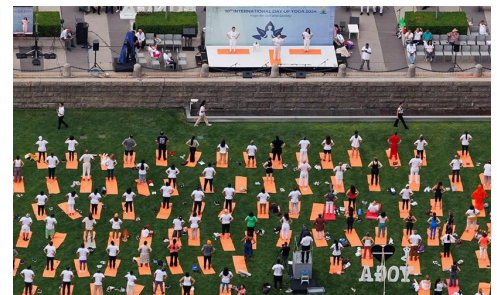
International Day of Yoga

11th International Day of Yoga has been celebrated.

- The theme for yoga day was '**Yoga For One Earth, One Health**'.
- **In Dec 2014**, UNs proclaimed **21 June** as **International Day of Yoga by resolution 69/131**.
 - **Yoga** day aligns with **the Summer Solstice (June 21)**, the **longest day** of the year in **Northern Hemisphere**.

About Yoga

- Yoga word is derived from **Sanskrit root 'yuj'** meaning **to unite**, symbolizing the **unity of mind and body**.
- **Sage Maharshi Patanjali** systematized & codified the then existing practices of Yoga, through his **Yoga Sutras**.
- **UNESCO** inscribes Yoga in the representative list of **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.



AHMEDABAD



BENGALURU



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI