

# NEWS TODAY

## 'From Loneliness to Social Connection: Charting a Path To Healthier Societies' Report Released

This report by the **WHO (World Health Organisation) Commission on Social Connection** highlights the impact of social isolation and loneliness on health, well-being, and society.

### What is Social Connection and Disconnection?

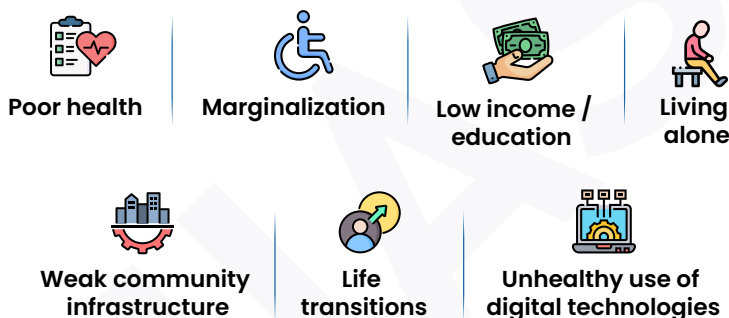
- **Social connection** is about the **many ways we relate to and interact with others** and it includes family, friends, classmates, coworkers, neighbours.
- **Social disconnection** occurs when a person doesn't have enough social contact, doesn't feel supported by the relationships, or have strained or negative relationships. Forms of social disconnection includes:
  - ⊕ **Loneliness** (discrepancy between one's desired and actual experiences of connection) and
  - ⊕ **Social Isolation** (having very few relationships or not seeing people often enough).

### Key Highlights of Report

- **Widespread Social Disconnection: About 1 in 6 people feel lonely** (2014–2023) with young people (ages 13-29) feeling the loneliest.
  - ⊕ Up to **1 in 3 older adults** (between 1990-2022) while about **1 in 4 teenagers** (between 2003-2018) are socially isolated.
- **Disparities:** In **low-income countries**, about **24% of people feel lonely** while in richer countries, 11% feel lonely.
- **Impacts of Social Disconnection:** Physical Health (about **871,000 global deaths (2014–2019)** linked to loneliness), Mental Health (Depression, Anxiety, Dementia etc.), Socio-Economic (Poor Academic Performance and Productivity Loss).

### THE DRIVERS OF SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS:

#### SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS



### Roadmap for Improving Social Connection

- **Policy:** National Policy to encourage social connection as adopted by Eight countries including Denmark, Finland and Germany.
- **Research:** Building global and national research capacity and launch Grand Challenges in Social Connection.
- **Interventions:** Launch an intervention accelerator and strengthen social infrastructure (community spaces and services).
- **Improved Measurement:** Developing a global Social Connection Index.
- **Public Engagement:** Large public campaigns, events, group activities and social prescribing (suggestion by doctors to participate in community activities).

## Iran enacts a law suspending cooperation with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) after conflict with Israel and US

Israel and US launched air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities after **IAEA board voted to declare Iran in violation of obligations** under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

- IAEA has been entrusted with a specific role in NPT as the **international safeguards inspectorate**.
  - ⊕ IAEA **administers international safeguards** to verify the non-proliferation commitment of non-nuclear weapon States party to the NPT.
  - ⊕ IAEA also facilitates **development of applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes** in non-nuclear weapon states party.

Iran suspending cooperation with IAEA is another example in ongoing erosion in the role of international or intergovernmental organizations. Such erosion is evident through:

- **Weakening of International Institutions' Authority:** Manifests in decreased compliance with international law, and withdrawals of commitments. E.g. US exit from Paris Climate Agreement.
- **Crisis of Credibility:** Organizations become dysfunctional on various issues due to lack of consensus and often decisions are influenced by developed countries questioning their independent working.
- **Demonstration of Ineffectiveness:** Lack of enforcement powers, resource crunch, and outdated governance structures are exposed.
- **Loss of Legitimacy:** Such as the UN Security Council's imbalanced composition and the veto power of five permanent members.

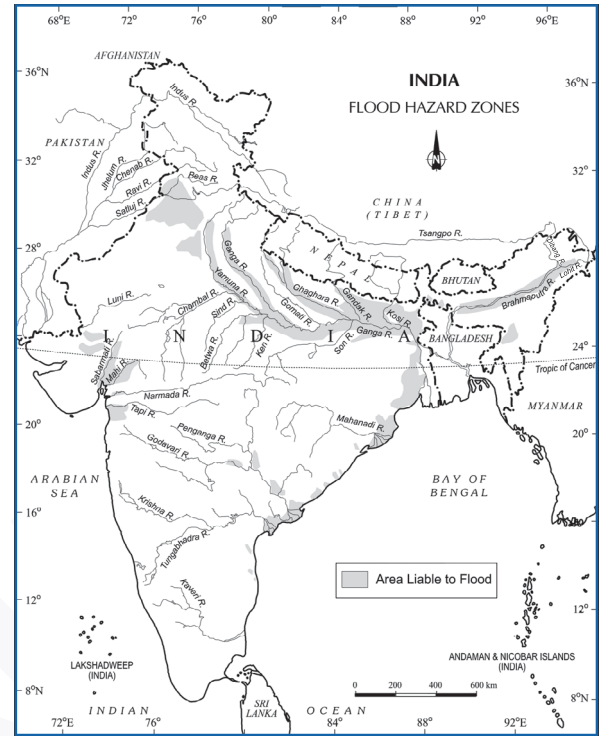
## Union Minister of Jal Shakti inaugurates C-FLOOD, a Unified Inundation Forecasting System

**C-FLOOD** will act as a **unified system integrating flood modelling outputs** from **national and regional agencies**, offering a comprehensive decision-support tool for **disaster management authorities**.

- Over 40 million hectares (mha) (~12% of total area) out of 329 mha is flood prone in India.

### About C-FLOOD

- It is a **web-based platform** providing **2-day advance flood inundation forecasts** up to **village-level**.
  - ⊕ It uses advanced **2-D hydrodynamic modelling** to simulate flood scenarios.
- It offers **flood inundation maps** and **water level predictions** to aid **disaster preparedness**.
- **Jointly developed by:**
  - ⊕ **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, Pune.
  - ⊕ **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, nodal organisation entrusted with the task of **flood forecasting & early flood warnings** in the country.
  - ⊕ the **Department of Water Resources**, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti.
  - ⊕ **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)** has also collaborated in its development.
- **Execution:** Under the **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)**
  - ⊕ **NSM** was launched in 2015 with the aim to empower India in supercomputing capabilities.
  - ⊕ **Jointly steered by** the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.
- **Present Coverage:** Mahanadi, Godavari, and Tapi river basins. Planned to expand to cover **all river basins** across India.
- Forecasts to be integrated with the **National Disaster Management Emergency Response Portal (NDEM)**.



## Critical Minerals Initiative Launched by the Quad

The Quad (United States, Japan, India, and Australia) launched the **Initiative** to strengthen cooperation on priorities such as **securing** and **diversifying reliable supply chains**, and **electronic waste (e-waste) critical minerals recovery** and **re-processing**.

- The Initiative will expand the Quad's cooperation on **supply chain resilience measures** for critical minerals.

### Need for Critical Minerals Initiative

- **Diversifying Supply Chain:** Production and processing of many critical minerals are **geographically concentrated**, making global supply vulnerable to several risks such as political stability, etc.
  - ⊕ E.g., Democratic Republic of Congo supplies ~70% of the world's cobalt.
  - ⊕ China refines 68% of the world's cobalt, 65% of nickel, and 60% of lithium.
- **Economic & National Security:** E.g., In 2024, China banned exports of gallium, germanium, and other key materials to the US (**weaponising critical mineral exports**).
- **Other:** Inadequate recycling infrastructure, etc.

### What are Critical Minerals?

- **About:** Critical minerals are **naturally occurring elements or compounds** including **lithium, cobalt, nickel**, etc.
  - ⊕ These are classified as critical due to **high demand** (diverse applications), **supply risks**, etc.
- **Applications:** **Industry** (Electric Vehicles, Electronics); **Defence** (Radars, Missiles); **Clean Energy** (Battery storage, Solar Modules), etc.

### Other initiatives taken to secure Critical Minerals supply

- **India**
  - ⊕ **Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2023**, enables exploration and mining of critical minerals.
  - ⊕ **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**
  - ⊕ **National Mineral Policy, 2019**
- **International Collaborations & Agreements**
  - ⊕ **Minerals Security Partnership (MSP):** India joined this US-led initiative in 2023.
  - ⊕ **Khanij Bidesh India Limited (KABIL), 2019:** A joint venture company of Ministry of Mines to acquire critical minerals globally.
    - ◆ E.g., **India-Argentina Agreement (2024)** for exploration of **lithium mines**.

## RBI issues advisory to use Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)

RBI directed all Scheduled Commercial Banks, Small Finance Banks, Payments Banks, and Co-operative Banks to integrate the **Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)** developed by Department of Telecommunications (DOT) into their systems.

- It ensures **automating data exchange between banks** and DoT's Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP) through API (Application Programming Interface)-based integration, enabling real-time responsiveness.
  - DIP is an **online secure platform** for sharing of information related to **misuse of telecom resources among the stakeholders** for prevention of cyber-crime and financial frauds.

**What is a Financial Fraud Risk Indicator (FRI)?**

- Launched in May 2025 by DoT's Digital Intelligence Unit (DIU).
- A risk-based metric that **classifies a mobile number** to have been associated with **Medium, High, or Very High risk of financial fraud**.
  - This classification is an outcome of inputs obtained from various stakeholders including reporting on **Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C's) National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP)**, DoT's **Chakshu platform**, and Intelligence shared by banks and financial institutions.

**How will it help banks to prevent Cyber fraud?**

- Banks and financial institutions can use FRI in real time** to take preventive measures such as declining suspicious transactions, issuing alerts or warnings to customers, etc.
- The DIU regularly shares the **Mobile Number Revocation List (MNRL)** with stakeholders, detailing numbers disconnected due to **cybercrime links, failed re-verification**, etc.

## Spain and Brazil proposes higher tax contributions from the super-rich worldwide

Proposed at the **UN's 4th International Conference on Financing for Development** in Sevilla, both nations called for enforcing effective taxation of High-Net-Worth Individuals (HNIs) and taxing the super rich to curb inequality.

- The proposal forms **part of Seville Platform for Action**, which is turbocharging voluntary actions to help reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Both countries also proposed **creating a Global Wealth Registry** for more transparency, accountability, and fairer contributions from the richest.
  - This proposal aims to create a comprehensive international registry of all wealth and assets, along with real beneficial owners.

**Need for Actions to curb Inequality**

- Income Disparity:** The **wealthiest 1%** own more than **95%** of the global population combined.
- Addressing Tax Disparity:** The wealth of the richest 1% has **surged \$33.9 trillion since 2015**, yet billionaires only pay **around 0.3% in real taxes**.
- Achieving SDGs:** Billionaires—roughly 3,000 people—have gained \$6.5 trillion in real terms, **more than the \$4 trillion estimated annual cost of achieving the SDGs**.
- Public-Private Wealth Gap:** Between 1995 and 2023, global private wealth grew by \$342 trillion – eight times more than global public wealth.

**Initiatives to Tackle Inequality**

- Global**
  - Seville Platform for Action:** Supports voluntary international actions toward achieving **SDGs**.
  - G20 Agreement:** G20's 2024 agreement to develop a joint tax agenda for HNIs.
  - Negotiations on UN Convention on Tax.**
- India**
  - Employment Generation Schemes** like MGNREGA, DDU-GKY, etc.
  - Social Security Schemes** like Atal Pension Yojana, Jeevan Jyoti Yojana etc.
  - Financial Inclusion** through Jan Dhan Yojana and **Financial Access** through schemes like MUDRA Yojana.

## Also in News



### PARAKH

**PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan Dissemination Portal** was launched recently.

- It provides **open access to National and State-level data on student performance** and serve as a key resource for States/UTs to design targeted plans to enhance learning outcomes.

**About PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development)**

- Setup as a National Assessment Centre** in 2023 in National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as an independent constituent.
- Objective:** Setting **norms, standards, guidelines** related to **student assessment**.
- Focus Areas:** Capacity Development, Achievement Survey, School Boards Equivalence, Holistic Progress Cards.



### Nutritional Intake in India Report

The **National Statistics Office (NSO)** has released the report on nutritional intake in India.

- Report is based on the **Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys** of 2022-23 & 2023-24.

**Key Findings of the Report**

- Average per capita per day calorie intake** (in 2022-23 and 2023-24)
  - Rural:** 2233 Kcal and 2212 Kcal respectively.
  - Urban:** 2250 Kcal and 2240 Kcal respectively.
- Cereals** continue to be the most important source of protein.
  - However, their contribution to protein intake dropped ~14% in rural and ~12% in urban India since 2009-10, offset by increased egg, fish, meat, milk, etc.
- Expenditure and Calorie intake:** With an increase in the **Monthly Per Capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)**, the average calorie intake also increases.
- Narrowing Gap:** Calorie intake gap between the bottom 5% and top 5% (population ranked by per capita expenditure level) has significantly narrowed in 2023-24.





### Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)

Reserve Bank of India revised the timings Standing of Deposit Facility (SDF) and Marginal Standing Facility (MSF).

#### About SDF

- Under SDF, banks can place surplus deposits with RBI on an overnight basis.
- It absorbs liquidity from commercial banks without collateral.

#### About MSF

- MSF is a window for banks to borrow from RBI in emergency situation when inter-bank liquidity dries up completely.
- Under it, banks borrow by pledging government securities.



### Forest Advisory Committee

Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) has recommended to streamline the forest clearance process for major industry and infrastructure projects in or near forest land.

#### About FAC

- It is a statutory body under the **Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**.
- Role:** To examine and deliberate on **proposals for non-forestry use of forest land, including mining**, and give recommendation to the Government of India.
- Its role is **recommendatory** in nature.



### Transition Bonds

The **International Financial Services Authority (IFSCA)** approved Framework for issuance and listing of transition bonds under the IFSCA (Listing) Regulations, 2024.

#### About Transition Bonds

- It is one of the sub categories of the **'green debt security'** (as per **Securities and Exchange Board of India's (SEBI's)** regulation)
  - Green Debt Security** means a debt security issued for raising funds that are to be utilised for project(s) and/or asset(s) such as clean transportation, Sustainable waste management, etc.
- Objective:**
  - To help **hard-to-abate sectors** (steel, cement,) raise capital for progressive decarbonisation.
  - Mitigating Greenwashing:** Enforced through **transparency, disclosures, and third-party validation**, ensuring **investor confidence**.



### Operation- MED MAX

It was an operation **conducted by Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** for cracking down on illegal pharmaceutical drug trade.

- Under it, NCB **dismantled a transnational drug trafficking syndicate** that smuggled controlled medicines **across four continents**.
- The syndicate used **encrypted digital platforms, drop shipping models, and cryptocurrency** to smuggle the controlled substances.
- The network showcases the growing convergence of digital platforms, cryptocurrency, and transnational logistics in modern illicit trade.



### Green Climate Fund

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved over USD 120 million for new projects.

#### About Green Climate Fund

- It is the **world's largest climate fund**.
- Mandated to support developing countries** raise and realize their **Nationally Determined Contributions ambitions** towards low-emissions, climate-resilient pathways.
- Established at COP 16 of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** held in **Cancun, 2010**.
  - It serves the **Paris Agreement** in accordance with **Article 9**.
- Governance:** Fund is **governed by the GCF Board** and it is **accountable to** and functions under the guidance of the COP, UNFCCC.
- Hq:** Songdo, Incheon City, **Republic of Korea**.



### Male Mahadeshwara (MM) Hills Wildlife Sanctuary

Five tigers found dead in Male Mahadeshwara (MM) Hills Wildlife sanctuary.

#### About MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary

- Located in Southeast Karnataka.
- It forms **connecting corridor** between Biligiri Ranganatha Swamy Temple (BRT) Wildlife Sanctuary and the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Dominated by **dry deciduous forests** and Patches of **Semi-evergreen, Shola forests** at higher altitudes and **scrub forests** in fringe zones.
- Soligas and Lingayats** are the dominant communities in the MM Hills.
- Species include** Tiger, Elephant, Leopard, Wild dog (dhole), Sloth bear, etc.
- Important corridor in the **Eastern Ghats–Western Ghats landscape**.

## Places in News



### Ghana (Capital : Accra)

Indian PM visited Ghana on a State Visit, first such visit in the last three decades.

- He also conferred with Ghana's highest civilian honour "Officer of the Order of the Star of Ghana".

#### Political Features

- Location:** Western Africa, situated on the coast of the Gulf of Guinea.
- Land Boundary:** Ivory Coast / Côte d'Ivoire (West); Burkina Faso (North); Togo (East).
- It was known as **'Gold Coast'** before its independence in 1957.

#### Geographical Features

- Major River:** Volta River, Black Volta, etc.
- Lake:** Lake Volta is the world's largest artificial lake (manmade reservoir) by surface area
- Highest Point:** Mount Afadjato (Afadja)
- Natural Resources:** One of the world's largest producers of gold and cocoa.
- Prime meridian** passes through Ghana



AHMEDABAD



BHOPAL



CHANDIGARH



DELHI



JAIPUR



JODHPUR



GUWAHATI



HYDERABAD



LUCKNOW



PRAYAGRAJ



PUNE



RANCHI



SIKAR