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Facilitating Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals

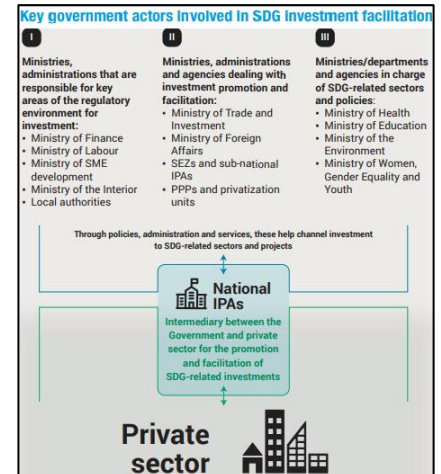
Context: The UNCTAD released a new publication – “Facilitating Investment in the Sustainable Development Goals”.

Key Highlights

- Countries must enhance funding for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by implementing proactive and customized services for investors.
- To achieve the SDGs, developing countries need approximately \$4 trillion annually, which can be facilitated through foreign investments.
- Investment promotion agencies (IPAs) play a crucial role as the central coordinating entities for the government's initiatives to attract and facilitate foreign investments.

Role of IPAs

- Inclusive investment facilitation services are crucial to address the specific needs of SDG-related sectors and investor groups.
- IPAs can help investors by providing information on potential partners and incentive programs for their projects.
- IPAs should establish partnerships with local governments and national ministries involved in SDG-related investments.
- Digital platforms are now widely used by IPAs for promotional and facilitation services, essential for post-COVID-19 digitalized economies.



Investment Promotion vs Facilitation

- Investment promotion focuses on attracting potential investors who have not yet decided on an investment destination.
- Investment facilitation begins once an investor expresses interest in a location and involves assisting them during the pre-establishment phase.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

- It was established in 1964 to address issues related to trade, investment, and development.
- UNCTAD provides research, policy analysis, technical assistance, and capacity-building support to developing countries.
- The organization aims to promote equitable and sustainable development for all nations, with a focus on the needs of developing countries.
- UNCTAD organizes conferences, research publications, and initiatives to foster international cooperation and dialogue on global economic issues.

IMD's Heat Index

Context: The Heat Index has been launched on an experimental basis by the India Meteorological Department (IMD), as stated by the Union Minister of Earth Sciences.

- The system measures the impact of humidity on high temperatures, resulting in a "feel-like" temperature for human comfort, indicating potential discomfort levels.
- It offers guidance on additional precautions individuals should take to alleviate discomfort caused by high temperatures and humidity.
- The Experimental Heat Index uses colour codes to indicate different discomfort levels:
 - **Green:** Experimental heat index less than 35°C.
 - **Yellow:** Experimental heat index in the range of 36-45°C.
 - **Orange:** Experimental heat index in the range of 46-55°C.

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- **Red:** Experimental heat index greater than 55°C.
- The Heat Index is currently implemented experimentally across the entire country, including the State of Andhra Pradesh.
- The heat index is derived using an equation similar to the one used by the National Weather Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the USA.

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is the primary agency in charge of meteorological observations, weather forecasting, and seismology in India.
- It operates numerous observation stations throughout India and Antarctica.
- Regional offices are located in Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Nagpur, Guwahati, and New Delhi.
- IMD is responsible for forecasting, naming, and disseminating warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region, encompassing the Malacca Straits, Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea, and Persian Gulf.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences serves as the nodal ministry for the IMD.

UN Report on Gender Gap and Women Empowerment

Context: A recent United Nations report provides insights into the global status of women's empowerment and gender parity.

- A joint analysis by UN Women and UN Development Programme evaluated 114 countries using the Women's Empowerment Index (WEI) and the Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI).
- The report highlights the urgent need for comprehensive policy action to address gaps and promote a more equitable and inclusive world.

Women's Empowerment Index (WEI)	Global Gender Parity Index (GGPI)
Composite index developed by UN Women and UNDP.	Composite index assessing gender disparities in health, education, inclusion, and decision-making.
Measures women's empowerment across five dimensions: life and good health, education, skill-building and knowledge, labor and financial inclusion, participation in decision-making, and freedom from violence.	Captures women's status relative to men across various contexts and dimensions.
Reflects women's power and freedom to make choices and seize life opportunities.	Reflects the multidimensional and interrelated nature of gender equality.
Milestone in evidence-based policymaking and a baseline for monitoring progress towards SDG5 on gender equality.	Part of the global report "The Path to Equality: Women's Empowerment and Gender Parity in Human Development." Launched in July 2023.

Key Highlights

- Only 1% of women globally reside in countries with high women's empowerment and gender parity.
- Leadership roles and decision-making remain predominantly male-dominated, limiting opportunities for women.
- Women achieve only 60% of their full potential on average, according to the WEI.
- Women lag behind men by 28% across key dimensions of human development, as measured by the GGPI.
- None of the 114 countries analyzed achieved complete women's empowerment or gender parity.
- Over 90% of women worldwide live in countries with low or moderate women's empowerment and gender parity.
- Gender equality challenges persist even in highly developed countries, with over 85 showing low or moderate women's empowerment and gender parity.
- Economic progress alone does not guarantee gender equality.
- India has low women's empowerment and gender parity despite moderate human development.
- Gender equality alone does not ensure women's empowerment; high women's empowerment requires addressing gender gaps.
- About 8% of women live in countries with low empowerment but high gender parity.

UN Women

- UN Women, established in 2010, accelerates progress for women and girls worldwide.
- It supports UN Member States in setting global gender equality standards and collaborates on laws, policies, programs, and services.

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- UN Women's priorities are women's leadership, economic empowerment, ending violence, and peace and security.

Rule 267 and Rule 176 of Rajya Sabha

Context: Monsoon Session's opening was disrupted due to a format disagreement for the Manipur discussion, with the government accepting a short-duration discussion under Rule 176 and the opposition demanding a PM's suo motu statement followed by a discussion under Rule 267.

Rule	Rule 267	Rule 176
Purpose	To suspend any rule's application related to the day's listed business and discuss an urgent issue of public importance.	To allow for a short-duration discussion not exceeding two-and-a-half hours on a matter of urgent public importance.
Process	An Opposition member can give notice under Rule 267, requesting the suspension of all listed businesses for the day to discuss the urgent matter. If the Chairman consents and the motion is carried, the Rajya Sabha can suspend regular business and devote time to address the pressing issue.	A member can give notice in writing to the Secretary-General, supported by the signatures of at least two other members, stating the specific matter they wish to raise. The Chairman, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, will then fix a date and time for the short-duration discussion.
Format	The discussion can suspend all listed businesses, allowing time for in-depth debate.	The discussion is time-bound and limited to two-and-a-half hours.
Voting	No formal motion or voting is required.	No formal motion or voting is required.
Examples	Discussing the Manipur situation and other urgent matters of public importance.	Discussing the rising prices of essential commodities, border issues with China, etc.

National Financial Reporting Authority

Context: The 3rd International Conference on "Financial Reporting and Control: Recent Development and Challenges" was organized by ASSOCHAM.

Constitution:

- The NFRA was constituted as a statutory body in 2018 by the Government of India under Sub Section (1) of section 132 of the Companies Act, 2013.

Functions:

- Recommending accounting and auditing policies and standards for companies' approval by the Central Government.
- Monitoring and enforcing compliance with accounting and auditing standards.
- Overseeing the quality of service of professions related to compliance and suggesting improvements.
- Performing other necessary or incidental functions and duties.

Jurisdiction:

- The NFRA has the authority to investigate Chartered Accountants and their firms in listed companies and large unlisted public companies.
- It investigates the audit of Listed Companies and Unlisted companies with a net worth not less than Rs 500 crore or paid-up capital of not less than Rs 500 crore or annual turnover not less than Rs 1,000 crore as of March 31 of the immediately preceding financial year, and companies having securities listed outside India.
- The Centre further has the power to refer entities for investigation where public interest would be involved. The rest are regulated by ICAI.
- The inherent regulatory role of ICAI as provided for in the Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, shall continue in respect of its members in general and specifically with respect to audits pertaining to private limited companies and public unlisted companies.

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NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

National Disaster Response Force



Recently, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) played a crucial role in responding to a tragic incident in Maharashtra's Raigad district.

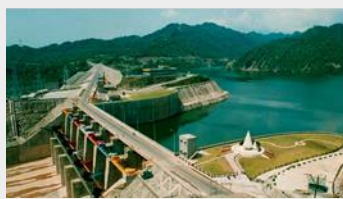
What is National Disaster Response Force?

NDRF is the National Disaster Response Force, a specialized force in India for prompt and effective disaster response and relief operations. It operates under the Ministry of Home Affairs and handles search, rescue and rehabilitation.

Establishment: NDRF was established in 2006 under the Disaster Management Act to respond to natural and man-made disasters.

Specialized Teams: NDRF comprises 12 battalions, each with specific expertise in areas like urban search and rescue, flood rescue, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies.

Ranjit Sagar Dam



Recently, the Ranjit Sagar Dam (RSD) achieved a remarkable record, generating 153.97 lakh units of power in a single day from its four units.

Location: The Ranjit Sagar Dam, also known as the Thein Dam, is situated on the Ravi River in Punjab, approximately 24 kilometers from the international border with Pakistan.

Completion: Constructed to harness the Ravi River's waters, the dam was completed in the year 2000.

Structure: It is a concrete gravity dam with a height of around 162 meters and a length of approximately 518 meters.

Reservoir: The dam creates a vast reservoir called Ranjit Sagar Lake or Thein Lake, with a storage capacity of approximately 0.97 billion cubic meters, regulating water flow for various purposes.

Power Generation: Ranjit Sagar Dam has an installed capacity of 600 megawatts and recently achieved a record of 153.97 lakh units in single-day power generation from its four units.

Ravi River: The Ravi River originates in the western Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh, flows through Punjab in India, and eventually joins the Chenab River in Pakistan. It has a total length of about 720 kilometers, with 158 kilometers in India and 562 kilometers in Pakistan. The river is fed by several tributaries from both countries.

E-cigarette Portal



Recently, in response to continued e-cigarette sales despite the ban, the Health Ministry launched an online portal.

What is e-Cigarette Portal?

The e-cigarette portal is an online platform (www.violation-reporting.in) launched by the Health Ministry to report violations of the ban on electronic cigarettes. It aims to ensure stricter enforcement of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Act (PECA) and protect minors from potential health risks.

Aim: The portal aims for faster action against violations and stricter enforcement of the e-cigarette ban.

What is an e-Cigarette?

E-cigarettes are handheld electronic devices that heat a liquid with nicotine and chemicals to produce inhalable vapor, simulating smoking without burning tobacco.

Chemicals in e-cigarettes: Nicotine, Propylene Glycol (PG), Vegetable Glycerin (VG), Flavorings, and other additives.

Health Risks of Using e-Cigarettes:

- Nicotine in e-cigarettes can be as addictive as conventional cigarettes.
- The power of an e-cigarette to deliver nicotine determines its potential health risks.
- Nicotine, although not a carcinogen, can stimulate tumor growth.
- Some solutions in e-cigarettes and emissions are considered "toxicants" by WHO.

Status of e-Cigarette Use in India:

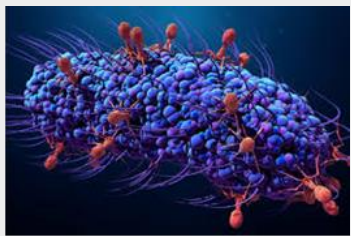
- India banned e-cigarettes through the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes Ordinance 2019.
- E-cigarette imports worth USD 1,91,781 were reported between 2016-17 and 2018-19.
- E-cigarette use increased by 78% among high school students and 48% among middle school students between 2017 and 2018.

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<h2 style="text-align: center;">Ground Penetrating Radar</h2> 	<p>Recently, a Varanasi court directed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to conduct a "scientific investigation" using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) at the Gyanvapi mosque premises.</p> <p>What is Ground Penetrating Radar? Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) is a non-destructive geophysical technique that uses radar pulses to image the subsurface features and detect buried objects.</p> <p>Principle: GPR works on the principle of sending electromagnetic waves into the ground and recording the reflections from subsurface interfaces, revealing changes in soil or material properties.</p> <p>Applications: GPR is used in various fields, including archaeology, engineering, geology, environmental studies and utility detection to locate buried structures, pipes, voids and archaeological artifacts.</p> <p>Geological Applications: GPR helps in geological mapping, identifying stratigraphic layers and assessing groundwater table locations.</p> <p>Archaeological Applications: GPR aids in locating buried ancient structures, tombs, artifacts and unmarked graves without disturbing the archaeological site.</p> <p>Equipment: GPR systems consist of a control unit, antennas and data processing software. Different antennas are used for various depth and resolution requirements.</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Multilingual Education Initiative in CBSE Schools</h2> 	<p>Recently, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) announced its readiness to produce textbooks in 22 Indian languages.</p> <p>NCERT Initiative: The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT), under the Ministry of Education's directions, is producing textbooks in 22 scheduled Indian languages for CBSE schools.</p> <p>Aim: The initiative aims to promote teaching and learning in Indian languages alongside English in CBSE schools.</p> <p>Multilingual Education: The move supports multilingual education, as per the National Education Policy (NEP) guidelines, which emphasize using the mother tongue for facilitating learning.</p> <p>Benefits for Students: The initiative is expected to benefit students from economically weaker sections (EWS) who may find it more comfortable to understand concepts in their mother tongue.</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Bacteriophages</h2> 	<p>Recently, scientists have been exploring the potential of bacteriophages, which have the ability to hunt and kill bacteria, as a possible solution to treat bacterial infections, especially in the context of rising antibiotic resistance.</p> <p>What are Bacteriophages? Bacteriophages, also known as phages or bacterial viruses, are viruses that infect bacteria.</p> <p>Discovery: Bacteriophages were independently discovered by Frederick W. Twort in Great Britain (1915) and Félix d'Hérelle in France (1917).</p> <p>Bactericidal Ability: Félix d'Hérelle coined the term bacteriophage, meaning "bacteria eater," highlighting their ability to kill bacteria.</p> <p>Varieties: Thousands of phage varieties exist, with each targeting specific types of bacteria or archaea.</p> <p>Structure: Phages have a simple structure, consisting of genetic material (DNA or RNA) surrounded by a protein capsid.</p> <p>Mechanism of Action: Bacteriophages attach to bacterial cells, inject viral DNA, replicate inside the cell, and cause the cell to burst, releasing new viral particles.</p> <p>Harmless to Humans: Bacteriophages do not harm human cells, making them a potential alternative to antibiotics for treating bacterial infections.</p>

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Place in News

Louisiana

Recently, archaeologists in Louisiana embarked on a significant mission to protect and preserve ancient artifacts dating back 12,000 years.

Artifact Vulnerability: The artifacts, including stone tools and pottery, were at risk due to natural disasters like hurricanes, flooding, and looting.

Location: Louisiana is a state located in the southeastern region of the United States.

Capital: Baton Rouge

Geography: The state is known for its diverse geography, including swamps, bayous and marshlands, particularly in the southern region.

Mississippi River: Louisiana is bordered by the Mississippi River to the east, which plays a crucial role in the state's economy and transportation.

Multicultural Heritage: Louisiana's population reflects a rich blend of African, French, Spanish, and Native American cultures.

Hurricane Katrina: Louisiana was severely affected by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, resulting in massive destruction and significant recovery efforts.



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