



NEWS TODAY

INDIA-US 5TH COMMERCIAL DIALOGUE HELD

- The dialogue is a **cooperative undertaking encompassing regular government-to-government meetings** that is held in conjunction with **private sector meetings**.
- Aim is to **facilitate trade, and maximize investment opportunities** across economic sectors.

Key outcomes

 Building Supply Chain Resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MoU signed on establishing a semiconductor supply chain and innovation partnership. ➤ Pact is key amid India's Semiconductor Mission & US's CHIPS and Science Act. MoU signed for establishing a Semiconductor Sub-committee under Commercial Dialogue. Increased bilateral strategic and high technology trade under the U.S.-India initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET).
 Facilitating Climate and Clean Technology Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both sides to work together in Global Biofuels Alliance and also in hydrogen technologies. U.S.-India Energy Industry Network (EIN) for facilitating U.S. industry involvement in the Clean EDGE Asia initiative (U.S. government's initiative for clean energy markets throughout Indo-Pacific). US's Clean Energy and Environmental Technology Business Development Mission to visit India in 2024.
 Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery, Especially for SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch of a new Working Group on Talent, Innovation and Inclusive Growth. Re-launched Travel and Tourism Working Group to support travel & tourism SMEs. Launched Standards and Conformance Cooperation Program (Phase III).
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Trade Dialogue to address export controls, tech transfer etc. Developing next generation standards in telecommunications, including 6G.

MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (MEITY) HELD FIRST PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED DIGITAL INDIA ACT (DIA)

- Currently, **Information Technology Act, 2000 (IT Act)** is the **core framework that regulates entities** on Internet.
- However it was **provisioned for nascent IT ecosystem in pre-Digital India** and **faces several limitations** such as:
 - **Lack of adequate principles for data / privacy protection** and provisions on **user rights, trust & safety**.
 - **Limited recognition** of harms and **new forms of cybercrimes**.
 - **Lack of distinct regulatory approaches** for harmful and illegal content.
 - **Absence of adequate regulations** to address regulatory requirements of emerging technology.

Proposed DIA aims to:

- **Address tenets of Digital India** including Open Internet, Online Safety and Trust, Accountability and Quality of Service.
- **Provide for a specialized and dedicated adjudicatory mechanism** for online civil and criminal offences.
- **Be evolvable and consistent** with changing market trends, disruption in technologies, development in international jurisprudence etc.
- **Bring classification** of E-Commerce, digital media, OTTs, gaming, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Adtech intermediaries.
- **Age-gating by regulating addictive technologies** and protection of safety and privacy of children on social media platforms, gaming, and betting apps.

Present Challenges in the Cyberspace - Beyond the scope of IT Act

Internet in 2000	Internet Today
5.5 million Indians on Internet	850 million Indians on Internet - world's largest digitally connected democracy
One type of intermediary	Multiple types of intermediaries - eCommerce, digital media, social media, AI, OTT, gaming etc.
Space for good - allowing citizens to interact	Space for criminalities and illegalities
Traditional forms of User Harms: Cybercrime, Cyber-security, Hacking	New Complex forms of User Harms: Catfishing, Doxing, Cyber stalking, Cyber trolling, Gaslighting, Phishing, etc.
Source of Information and News	Proliferation of Hate Speech, Disinformation and Fake news

JAPAN LATEST COUNTRY TO JOIN MULTI-PARTY INTERIM APPEAL ARBITRATION ARRANGEMENT (MPIA)

- MPIA (formed in 2020) is **an alternative system for resolving WTO disputes** that are appealed by a Member in the absence of a functioning WTO Appellate Body.
 - WTO members can resort to MPIA **under Article 25 of WTO Dispute Settlement Understanding**.
- **Any member can join MPIA** (India not a member yet) by **notifying the Dispute Settlement Body** (composed of **representatives of all WTO Members**).
 - In a dispute between members, MPIA **will supersede the previous appeal processes** and also **apply to future disputes** between members.
- WTO's dispute settlement process **functioning is impacted since 2019** in the backdrop of **USA blocking appointments to Appellate Body**.
- **There are two main ways** to settle a dispute **once a complaint has been filed in WTO**:
 - **Parties find a mutually agreed solution**, particularly during **the phase of bilateral consultations**.
 - **Through adjudication**, including the subsequent **implementation of the panel and Appellate Body reports**.
- **There are three main stages to WTO's dispute settlement process**: consultations between the parties; adjudication by panels and, if applicable, by Appellate Body; and implementation of the ruling.

UNDERNOURISHED AND OVERLOOKED: A GLOBAL NUTRITION CRISIS IN ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND WOMEN REPORT RELEASED BY UNICEF

- Report **examines nutritional status of adolescent girls and women of reproductive age** (15-49 years), and barriers they face in accessing nutritious diets, utilizing essential nutrition services etc.
- **Key Findings**
 - **More than one billion adolescent girls and women** suffer from undernutrition, deficiencies in essential micronutrients and anaemia.
 - **South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa** are home to 68 % of adolescent girls and women with underweight and 60% with anaemia.
 - **No region is on track to meet 2030 global targets** to reduce anaemia in adolescent girls and women by half and low birthweight in new-borns by 30%.
 - **Gender gap in food insecurity more than doubled** between 2019 and 2021.
- **Recommendations**
 - **Protection from ultra-processed foods** through marketing restrictions, compulsory front-of-pack labelling and taxation.
 - **Expand large-scale food fortification** of routinely consumed foods such as flour, cooking oil and salt
 - **Expanding access to social protection programmes** (including cash transfers and vouchers) for the most vulnerable adolescent girls and women.
 - **Elimination of discriminatory gender and social norms** such as child marriage and the inequitable sharing of food, household resources etc.

Status of undernourishment in INDIA

- As per UN report in 2022, prevalence of undernourishment in the total population was **16.3% in 2019-21**.
- **2022 Global Hunger Index** India ranked 107th out of 121 countries.
- **NFHS-5 finds** that around a third of India's children under five years of age are underweight and stunted and 67% children (6-59 months) are anaemic.

Steps Taken For Alleviation of Malnutrition

- Government implements **Anganwadi Services, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana** and **Scheme for Adolescent Girls under the Umbrella Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS)**.
- Use of **AYUSH** systems for prevention of malnutrition and related diseases.
- **Creches for Children of Working and Ailing Women**
- **National Food Security Mission**
- **Food Fortification**
- **Poshan Abhiyaan**

FIRST INDIA-AUSTRALIA ANNUAL SUMMIT HELD

- Both sides discussed **finalisation of a comprehensive trade deal and a migration pact** as well as **ways to boost defence cooperation**.
 - Two countries **signed MoUs on cooperation in sports and audio-visual co-production** and also **exchanged terms of reference for Solar Taskforce**.
- **India-Australia Relations**
 - **Established diplomatic relations** with establishment of India Trade Office in Sydney **in 1941**.
 - Bilateral relationship was **upgraded to a Strategic Partnership (2009)** and later to **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** in 2020.
 - **Economic Cooperation**: Economic Cooperation Trade Agreement (ECTA) came into force from Dec 2022 and has resulted in 0% duty on almost 96% of Indian Exports to Australia.
 - Bilateral trade was US\$ 27.5 billion in 2021 (**India has a trade deficit**).
 - **Defence cooperation**: 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA), joint military exercises like Malabar and AUSINDEX.
 - **Clean energy**: Signed a Letter of Intent on New and Renewable Energy in 2022, Civil Nuclear Cooperation Agreement Cooperation under International Solar Alliance (ISA) etc.
 - **People to people ties**: India is one of the top sources of skilled immigrants, Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Educational Qualifications (MREQ) signed recently.

NITI AAYOG RELEASED TASK FORCE REPORT TITLED “PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION OF ORGANIC AND BIO FERTILISERS WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON IMPROVING ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF GAUSHALAS”

- Report presents a case for **promoting Organic and Bio fertilisers in the country.**

➤ India is the **second highest producer and consumer of chemical fertilisers** in the world. In 2020-21, **subsidy bill** on chemical fertilisers **was around 1.3 lakh crores.**

➤ **Nutrient run-off from farms** laced with synthetic fertiliser adversely **affects land ecosystems.**

- In India, organic fertilisers and bio fertilisers are **regulated by Fertiliser (Inorganic, Organic or Mixed) (Control) Order (FCO), 1985**, under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

➤ Organic fertilisers are **composted/fermented products made from organic wastes (city waste, agro waste, crop residue, livestock waste etc.).**

➤ Bio fertilisers (such as Rhizobium, Azotobacter etc.) **are products containing carrier-based (solid or liquid) living microorganisms** which helps in nitrogen fixation, phosphorus solubilisation or nutrient mobilization.

- Challenges in adoption of Organic and Bio fertilisers**

➤ **Absence of level-playing field** for manufacturers of these fertilisers.

➤ **Limited R&D, quality testing facility and trained personnel.**

➤ **Lack of extension and awareness** among farmers.

- Recommendations:** Digitalization of manufacturing and approval process, R&D on improving the efficiency of Bio fertilisers, Sensitisation among farmers, creating adequate production and testing infrastructure etc.

DIFFERENT SCHEMES BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR PROMOTING ORGANIC PRODUCTION

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana

National Food Security Mission -
Financial assistance is provided for promotion of Bio-Fertilizer

National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm

Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region

Capital investment Subsidy Scheme (CISS) under Soil Health Management Scheme

ALSO IN NEWS



MSME Competitive (LEAN) Scheme

- Minister for MSME **launched the Scheme to enhance Domestic and Global Competitiveness** of MSMEs through the application of various Lean Techniques
- Scheme is **to create awareness about LEAN Manufacturing practices** and incentivize MSME to attain LEAN levels.
 - Under the scheme, **MSMEs will implement LEAN manufacturing tools** like 5S, Kaizen, KANBAN, Poka Yoka etc.
- All MSMEs registered with the UDYAM registration portal** will be eligible to participate.
 - Also open to **SFURTI and Cluster Development Program Schemes.**



High Price Day Ahead Market (HP-DAM) and Surplus Power Portal (PUSHP) launched

- Initiatives were launched **by Ministry of Power.**
- HP-DAM segment**, on power exchanges, **will offer costly power from gas-based and imported-coal-based power plants.**
 - HP-DAM is part of the overall strategy **to ensure that all available power capacity is utilised.**
- PUSHP will ensure greater availability of power during the peak demand season.**
 - It **aggregates excess power generation capacity on a national basis**, offering Discoms a view of the supply and demand scenario.



Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

- Department of Land Resources** is organizing a **National Conference on implementation of ULPIN.**
- Bhu-Aadhaar or ULPIN is a **14-digit alpha-numeric number** generated **based on latitude and longitude coordinates** of each land parcel.
 - It is **part of Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme.**
- ULPIN is an **authoritative source** of information on any parcel of land or property **to provide Integrated Land Services to the citizens.**



OTTs free to stream content of TV news channels

- Over-the-top (OTT) platforms** like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney Hotstar and others can **now stream digital feed of TV news channels** even if they have **100% foreign direct investment (FDI).**
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting stated that **such OTT platforms won't be bound by FDI norms which caps foreign investment in digital media at 26%.**
 - It was argued that **News feed OTT platforms choose to stream will come from news channels which are subject to FDI norm.**



Cyclone Freddy

- **Freddy** (active for 33 days now) is on track to **become the longest-lasting tropical cyclone**.
 - **Current record is held by Hurricane/Typhoon John** (1994) which lasted for 31 days.
- Long life of Freddy is **fuelled by energy provided from warm ocean surface**. Also, there has been **not much land interaction**.
- **Conditions favourable for Tropical cyclone**
 - Large sea surface with **temperature higher than 27° C**.
 - **Presence of Coriolis force**.
 - A **pre-existing weak low-pressure area** or low-level-cyclonic circulation.
 - **Upper divergence** above sea level system.



Indian wolf (Canis lupus pallipes)

- In a first, **Gujarat set to shift 10 Indian grey wolves from a conservation breeding centre to forested areas** in an attempt to check population of wild herbivores.
- Indian wolf is a **subspecies of grey wolf** inhabiting semi-arid and arid areas **extending from Indian subcontinent to Israel**.
- **Threats:** Habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation, retaliatory killing coupled with disease threats.
- **IUCN status:** Least Concern



Multi-Angle Imager for Aerosols (MAIA) missions

- MAIA is a state-of-the-art **satellite instrument producing data that will be used in health studies** to examine the health effects of various types of air pollution.
 - It is a **joint effort between NASA and Italian space agency**.
- Its **measurements of sunlight reflecting off airborne particles** will help determine abundance, size and optical **properties of certain pollutants in the atmosphere**.
- **Three-year mission will focus on several primary target areas including** Los Angeles, Atlanta, Boston, Spain, Beijing, **New Delhi**.



Cloud Computing

- **SEBI unveiled framework for adopting cloud services** by stock exchanges.
 - Aim is to **highlight key risks and mandatory control measures** which Regulated Entities (REs) need to **put in place before adopting cloud computing**.
 - It covers **governance, risk and compliance, selection of Cloud Service Providers**, data ownership, data localization etc.
- Cloud computing is **delivery of computing services**—including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, analytics, and intelligence—**over the Internet** (cloud).
- **Advantages:** Faster innovation, flexible resources, economies of scale etc.
- **Common models of cloud services:** IaaS (Infrastructure-as-a-Service), PaaS (Platform-as-a-Service) and SaaS (Software-as-a-Service).



Mundaka Upanishad

- It is **one of the 108 Upanishads** (mentioned in Mukhtika Upanishad) of Hinduism.
 - Upanishads contain **information regarding the philosophical principles and concepts of Hinduism**, including karma, brahman etc.
- It contains **three Mundakams** (parts).
- It is related to **Atharvaveda**.
- India's National Motto '**Satyameva Jayate**' has been taken **from Mundaka Upanishad**.