

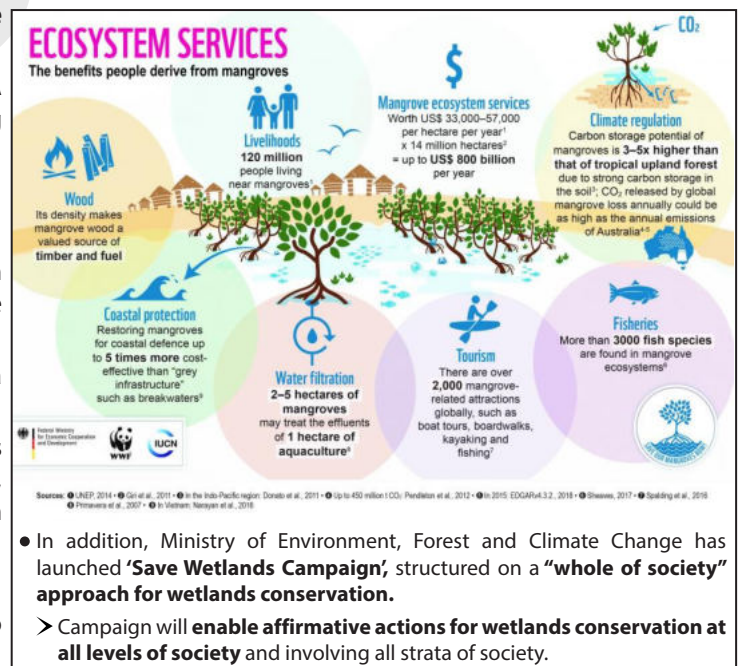
NEWS TODAY

SUPREME COURT (SC) APPOINTED-COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON PROTECTING GREAT INDIAN BUSTARD (GIB) FROM OVERHEAD POWER LINES

- SC had constituted a **3- member committee to determine technical feasibility** of future underground power lines.
 - Committee recommended to **install bird diverters** which are **flaps installed on power lines that work like reflectors** and are visible to flying birds from about 50 metres away.
- In 2021, **SC directed the power companies that all low-voltage power lines** in areas demarcated as **"priority and potential habitats of GIB"** in Thar and Kutch deserts of Rajasthan and Gujarat should be underground.
 - "Priority zones" are areas **where birds are known to live** and "potential regions" are those where conservation programmes, such as breeding birds in captivity, are ongoing.
- However, state governments have not taken steps to comply with SC order as **shifting overhead lines underground is expensive and impractical**, and would **hike the cost of solar power**, undermining India's commitment to green growth.
- **About Great Indian Bustard**
 - **Habitat:** Endemic to Indian Sub-continent (Rajasthan has highest population). **Arid and semi-arid grasslands**, open country with thorn scrub, tall grass interspersed with cultivation.
 - **IUCN Status:** **Critically Endangered**.
 - **Protection:** Listed in **Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, Appendix I of CITES**.
 - **Threats to GIB:** Hunting, habitat erosion, 'greening' projects that transform arid grasslands to wooded areas, etc.

BUDGET 2023-24 ANNOUNCED MISHTI (MANGROVE INITIATIVE FOR SHORELINE HABITATS & TANGIBLE INCOMES) SCHEME

- MISHTI scheme aims at **mangrove plantation along the coastline and on salt pan lands**.
 - It will operate through **convergence between MGNREGS, CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Management and Planning Authority) Fund**, and other sources.
- **Significance of MISHTI scheme**
 - **Prevent erosion and help stabilise** coastline ecosystems.
 - Achieving India's Nationally Determined Contributions to create an **additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tonnes** of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030.
- Mangrove are **Salt-tolerant** plant communities serving as a **transition between marine and terrestrial environments**.
 - They are found in **tropical and sub-tropical intertidal regions** characterized by: **High Rainfall** (between 1,000 to 3,000 mm), **temperature range** (26 degree - 35 degree Celsius) and **calm water with sufficient sediments to set down roots**.
 - **West Bengal have the highest** mangrove cover.
- Tree species that form a mangrove forest are broadly classified into **True Mangroves and Mangroves Associates**.
 - **True mangroves:** Species that specifically grow in **intertidal zones**.
 - **Mangrove associates:** Capable of occurring in **either littoral or terrestrial habitats**.
- **Other initiatives for Mangroves**
 - **India joined Mangrove Alliance for Climate** during COP27.
 - Central Sector Scheme under **National Coastal Mission Programme on Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs**.





SEBI NOTIFIES STRONGER FRAMEWORK FOR GREEN BONDS; INTRODUCES CONCEPT OF BLUE, YELLOW BONDS

- In exercise of powers conferred under SEBI Act, 1992, **SEBI (Issue and Listing of Non- Convertible Securities) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023** amends 2021 regulations to expand the scope of the definition of **Green Debt Securities (GDS)**.
- SEBI defines **"Green debt security"** as a debt security issued for raising funds to be **utilised for projects** like **renewable and sustainable energy, clean transportation, sustainable waste management etc.**
- As per new framework, projects and assets categories under GDS has been expanded to incorporate
 - **Blue bonds:** Comprises **funds raised for sustainable water management** including clean water and water recycling, and sustainable maritime sector including shipping, fishing, ocean energy and mapping etc.
 - **Yellow bonds:** Comprises funds raised for **solar energy generation and upstream industries and downstream industries associated with it.**
 - **Transition bonds:** Comprises funds raised for **transitioning to a more sustainable form of operations**, in line with India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions.
- **Significance of the move**
 - **Gives more clarity** regarding what is considered 'green', thus preventing 'greenwashing'.
 - Help in **attracting sustainable finance.**
 - Aligns extant framework for GDS with **updated Green Bond Principles (GBP) recognised by IOSCO.**

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF SECURITIES COMMISSIONS (IOSCO)

- It is the international body that **brings together world's securities regulators and is recognized as global standard setter** for securities sector.
- **SEBI is a member** of IOSCO Board.

PRESIDENT APPOINTS FIVE NEW JUDGES TO SUPREME COURT (SC) AFTER CENTRE'S APPROVAL

- Accepting the recommendations made by SC collegium, Centre notified the appointment of 5 Judges.
- With these appointments, **working strength of SC will rise to 32** against **sanctioned strength of 34.**
- Sanctioned strength is prescribed by **law made by Parliament (Article 124 (1)).**
- Chief Justice of India (CJI) and Judges of SC are **appointed by President** under **Article 124 (2) of Constitution** on the basis of Memorandum of Procedure (MoP).
- Under MoP, Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs consider the recommendations forwarded by CJI.
- **Collegium system** is the way by which judges of SC and HC are appointed and transferred.
 - SC collegium** is a **five-member body**, which is headed by **incumbent CJI** and comprises **four other senior-most judges** of the court at that time.
- **Collegium system has evolved with Three Judges case**
 - **First Judges Case, 1981 (S P Gupta Case):** SC ruled that recommendation made by CJI to President can be refused for "cogent reasons", thereby giving greater say to executive.
 - **Second Judges Case, 1993 (SC Advocates on Record Association (SCARA) vs Union of India):** CJI only need to consult **two senior-most judges** over judicial appointments and transfers.
 - **Third Judges Case, 1998:** CJIs should consult with **four senior-most SC judges** to form his opinion on judicial appointments and transfers.

GOVERNMENT TO PUSH PRODUCERS TO USE RECYCLED STEEL AS 50% INPUT BY 2047: MINISTRY OF STEEL

- During International Indian Material Recycling Conference, Ministry of Steel stated that it will push primary steel producers to **use 50 percent of their input from scrapped/recycled steel by 2047 to achieve circular economy goal.**

ABOUT STEEL SCRAP RECYCLING POLICY (2019)

- It promotes **6Rs principles of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Redesign and Remanufacture** through scientific handling, processing and disposal of all types of recyclable scraps.
- **Produce high quality ferrous scrap for quality steel production** thus minimizing dependency on imports.

- Currently, **level of recycled steel usage in primary steel production is only around 10 percent.**
- Overall, recycled steel contributes to **22.5 percent of domestic total steel production** of 140 million tonnes.
- **Steel scrap recycling plants are primarily characterised by huge electric furnaces** into which scrap steel is fed for producing high-quality steel.
- **Importance of steel scrap recycling**
 - **Reduces CO2 emissions in steel sector** and promotes circular economy.
 - Circular economy entails markets that give incentives to reusing products, rather than scrapping them and then extracting new resources.
 - **Saves energy and precious natural resources**, ultimately contributing to fight against climate change.
 - Every tonne of steel scrap that is recycled **saves 1.1 tonnes of iron ore, 630 kg of cooking coal and 55 kg of limestone.**
 - Help in **achieving vision of 300 million tonnes per annum (MnTPA) steel production** in India by 2030.
- **Challenges:** Difficult to ensure that **scrap steel meets necessary quality criteria** for reuse; **Difficult in moving and storing** large amounts of steel scrap; Processing steps are **extremely energy-intensive** etc.

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY (IEA) RELEASES THE REPORT TITLED "LIFE LESSONS FROM INDIA"

- Report **examines** how India has **integrated several policies in its energy transition strategy** that are **aligned with LiFE initiative**.

Key highlights

- **Annual global CO2 emissions will fall by 2 billion tonnes in 2030** on adoption of LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) measures.
- LiFE measures would **save consumers globally around \$440 billion in 2030**.
- **India's economy is already 10 percent more energy efficient** than both global and G20 average.
- **India took less time to go from half to full electricity access** than other major economies.
- Around 60% of emissions saving by LiFE measures could be directly influenced or mandated by governments.

- LiFE mission was **launched by Prime Minister of India** at COP 26 in 2021 **to bring individual behaviours at forefront of global climate action narrative**.

- LiFE envisions replacing the prevalent 'use-and-dispose' economy with a **circular economy**.
- Mission plans to create and nurture a global network of individuals, namely '**Pro-Planet People**' (P3), who will have a **shared commitment to adopt and promote environmentally friendly lifestyles**.
- LiFE Mission is **being piloted by NITI Aayog** and implemented by **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**.
- **Tenure: 2022 to 2027**.

INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY

- It was created in 1974 to help **co-ordinate a collective response to major disruptions** in supply of oil.
- Headquarters in **Paris, France**.
- India is an associate member**.

ALSO IN NEWS



Section 69A of IT Act, 2000

- Government has issued orders to **block 232 apps operated by overseas entities, including Chinese** for being involved in betting, gambling and unauthorized loan service.
- Action was taken **under Section 69A of IT Act, 2000**.
- Under Section 69A of Information Technology Act, government has powers to **restrict access** to any content to protect.
 - **Sovereignty and integrity of country; Security of state, Friendly relations with foreign states or Public order.**



Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

- In FY23, government revised expenditure estimates from USOF to 3,010 crore which is **200% less than budgetary estimate** of 9,000 crore.
- USOF is an **attached office of Department of Telecommunications (DoT), Ministry of Communications**.
 - It aims to provide for **quality and affordable mobile and digital services** across rural and remote areas of country.
 - It was set up by an Act of Parliament in 2003 by amending Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.









International Maritime Organization (IMO)

- IMO has adopted a new mandatory International Code of Safety for Ships Carrying Industrial Personnel.
 - **Code will enter into force on 1 July 2024** and enables cargo ships and high-speed cargo craft to transport and accommodate industrial personnel working offshore.
- IMO is a **specialized agency of United Nations** which is responsible for measures to improve **safety and security of international shipping**.
- Currently, it has 174 Member States (including India).
- It was established by **means of a Convention** adopted under auspices of UN in **1948**.



Climate Tipping Points (CTPs)

- 'Teleconnections among tipping elements in the Earth system' report highlighted that Climate tipping elements are remotely correlated, implying that there are no borders in the fight against climate change.
- CTPs occur when change in **large parts of climate system**, known as tipping elements, become **self-perpetuating beyond a warming threshold**.
 - These changes may lead to **abrupt, irreversible, and dangerous impacts** with serious implications for humanity.
 - **Few global tipping points identified** are Greenland, Amazon rainforest, Ocean circulation and temperature etc.

 Global Climate Resilience Fund (GCRF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former US secretary of state Hillary Clinton announced GCRF in partnership with Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCRF will work to tackle challenges faced due to rising temperatures due to climate change. SEWA is the single largest women worker's Central trade union in India founded in 1972, in Ahmedabad by Elaben Bhatt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It has been working to improve the livelihoods of poor self-employed women workers from informal economy through various initiatives using technology, technical training, etc.
 Amorphous ice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientists have created a new type of ice, called medium-density amorphous ice, that matches the density and structure of water. Significance: Helps in studying water's mysterious properties like Ice is less dense than its liquid form — an unusual property for a crystal. Amorphous ice consists of water molecules arranged in a disordered state, with no large-scale regularity to their orientations or positions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This kind of ice is most often found in space, comets, interstellar clouds etc. Crystalline ice consists of water molecules arranged in a geometrically repeating pattern, either cubic or hexagonal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Almost all of the ice in natural environment of Earth (e.g. in snow, in polar caps) is crystalline ice.
 Muons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientists' use muons to examine the fortress wall of Xi'an city. Muons are subatomic particles created when particles in Earth's atmosphere collide with cosmic rays. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> About 10,000 muons reach every square metre of Earth's surface a minute. These particles resemble electrons but are massive 207 times than it. As they are heavy, they can travel through hundreds of metres of rock. Cosmic Rays are clusters of high-energy particles that move through space at just below speed of light.
 Khelo India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports along with Lieutenant Governor of J&K launched the 3rd Khelo India Winter Games Mascot, Theme Song and Jersey. Khelo India was introduced to revive sports culture in India at grass-root level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines will be provided annual financial assistance of INR 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.
 Vishwa Bharti University (Shanti Niketan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Founded by Rabindranath Tagore in 1921, Visva-Bharati University will soon get 'heritage' tag from UNESCO to take distinction of world's first living heritage university. University was inaugurated as a Centre for Culture with exploration into arts, language, humanities, music and these are reflected in diverse institutes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structures in these institutes constitute a myriad of architectural expressions which are as diverse as the Kalo Bari, Mastermoshai studio, etc. University has an open-air education system. World Heritage Sites are cultural and/or natural sites of 'Outstanding Universal Value', which are important across countries and generations.
 Palaeolithic Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latest discovery of stone carvings dating back to Paleolithic period in Gurgaon has added to Aravalis' trove of history. Palaeolithic ('Old Stone Age') makes up the earliest chunk of Stone Age – the large swathe of time during which hominins used stone to make tools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> During Lower Paleolithic (about 2.6 million to 1 million years ago), simple pebble tools and crude stone choppers were made by earliest humans. Middle Paleolithic (250,000 to 30,000 years ago) was characterized by flake tools and widespread use of fire. Upper Paleolithic (50,000–40,000 years ago until about 10,000 years ago) saw emergence of more sophisticated tools.