

NEWS TODAY

RISE OF ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE (AMR) COULD RESULT IN UP TO 10 MILLION ANNUAL DEATHS BY 2050: UN REPORT

• Findings are part of **report by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) on environmental dimensions of AMR**, which already is taking a serious toll on health of humans, animals, and plants, as well as the economy.

➤ AMR occurs **when microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi become resistant to antimicrobial treatments** to which they were previously susceptible.

• Key Findings of the report

➤ Microorganisms (particularly bacteria) can **acquire resistance following contact with resistant microorganisms** that may have **originated or introduced in environment**.

➤ **When antimicrobials are released into environment new AMR can develop by:**

- **Spontaneous mutation, acquisition and transmission** by mobile genetic elements.
- **Horizontal gene transfer events** between environmental and plant, animal or human associated bacteria.

➤ AMR challenges are **closely linked to triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and waste**.

➤ **3 key sectors of AMR development and spread in environment:** Pharmaceuticals and other chemical manufacturing, agriculture and food production, Healthcare.

➤ **Transmission and spread of AMR are not confined to point-sources. Transient and diffuse sources**, which include water agricultural runoff, airborne transmission, wildlife migration etc **can also be important**.

RECOMMENDATIONS IN REPORT

A concerted systems approach like **One Health Approach**.

Integration of **environmental considerations into AMR National Action Plans**.

Create robust national level governance, planning and legal framework.

Increase global efforts to **improve integrated water management**.

Environmental monitoring and surveillance.

RBI'S MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE (MPC) LIFTS LOAN COSTS TO TAME INFLATION

• **MPC increased Repo Rate by 25 basis points (bps) to 6.5%** - targeting high core or underlying inflation.

➤ Repo rate is the **rate at which RBI lends short-term funds to banks**. Increase in repo rate **inhibits banks from borrowing money, reducing amount of money in market** and helps to negate inflation.

➤ Core inflation is change in **costs of goods and services** (except volatile food and energy price).

• Other Key decisions

Payment and Settlement Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to all inbound travelers to India or their merchant payments (P2M) while they are in the country. • To start with, it will be extended to travellers from G-20 countries at select international airports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ UPI is an instant payment system developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), an RBI regulated entity. ➤ It is built over IMPS infrastructure and allows instant transfer of money between any two parties' bank accounts.
Currency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QR Code based Coin Vending Machine (QCVM) pilot project from RBI and leading banks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is a cashless coin dispensation machine to dispense coins against a debit to the customer's bank account using UPI. ➤ QCVM would eliminate need for physical tendering of banknotes and their authentication.

CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECT TAXES (CBDT) REVISES NORMS FOR PROCESSING OF EQUALISATION LEVY (EL)

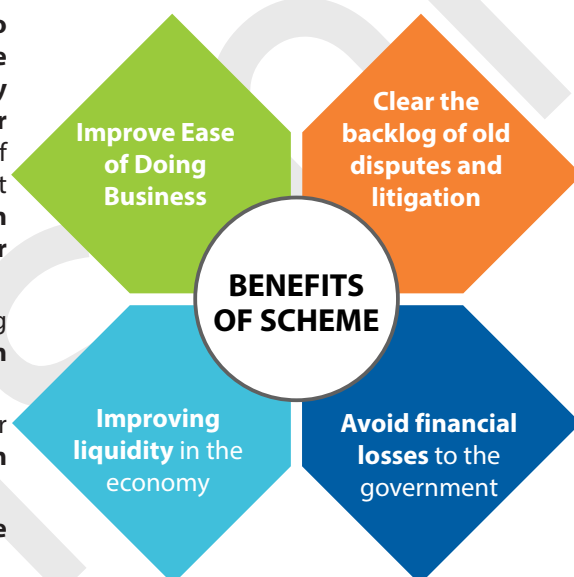
- Provisions are **part of Centralised Processing of Equalisation Levy Statement Scheme, 2023** for processing of statements furnished under **Finance Act, 2016**.
 - Presently, **procedure for processing of EL statements is lacking** which had **created some uncertainty**, especially regarding refund claims made.
- EL, **also known as Google tax**, is a **direct tax** introduced in **2016 to tax digital economy**.
 - Applicable on non-residents e-commerce operators (ECO)**, it was initially (EL 1.0) **levied at 6% of gross consideration** on online advertisements and digital advertising space.
 - In 2020 (EL 2.0), its scope was widened** and new levy **now includes a 2% tax on gross revenues received by a non-resident ECO** from provision of 'e-commerce supply or service' to Indian residents or non-resident companies having a permanent establishment in India.
- Key highlights of revised norms**
 - Centralised Processing Centre** of Income Tax department will **process EL statements electronically**.
 - A new **provision for faceless discussions**.
- OECD has also given a **'Two-Pillar Solution' to address Tax Challenges** Arising from **Digitalisation of Economy**.
 - It is agreed by **nearly 138 countries including India**.
 - Once adopted, it **will replace unilateral measures or levies such as EL** from India.

● **Pillar One:** 25% of the residual profits of about 100 of largest and most profitable MNCs will be reallocated to market jurisdictions where the companies' users are located.

● **Pillar Two:** A global minimum tax of 15% on corporate profits (applicable to MNCs with annual global revenue of over 750 million euros).

DRAFT VIVAD SE VISHWAS-II SCHEME NOTIFIED BY MINISTRY OF FINANCE

- Vivad se Vishwas (No Dispute but Trust) II Scheme** will be a **voluntary settlement scheme for contractual disputes** of government and government undertakings, wherein **arbitral award is under challenge in a court**.
 - Announcement** regarding the scheme was **made in Union Budget 2023-24**.
 - Scheme will cover **disputes up to 30th September 2022**.
- Salient Features of the Scheme**
 - Application:** It will apply to disputes where **one of the parties is either Government of India or its following bodies** (disputes with states govts, another private firm not covered):
 - Centre's autonomous bodies.
 - Public sector banks and financial institutions.
 - All central Public sector enterprises.
 - UTs, including NCT of Delhi, and their agencies.
 - Organizations where the Centre has a 50% stake, like metro rail.
 - Settlement:** It offers a **graded settlement terms depending on pendency level of the dispute**.
 - Implementation:** It will be implemented through **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)**.
 - Proposed to **cover only domestic arbitration** and not international arbitration.



INDIAN FIRM SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRES WORLD'S FIRST 3D-PRINTED ROCKET ENGINE

- Agnikul-Cosmos**, a space-tech startup incubated in IIT-Madras, **has successfully conducted the flight acceptance test for its 3D printed rocket engine "Agnilet"**.
- Unlike other rocket engines, **Agnilet was built in a single step, eliminating thousands of parts that are typically assembled in a conventional rocket engine**.
 - It is a **semi-cryogenic engine**, which uses a **mixture of liquid kerosene at room temperature and super cold liquid oxygen as fuel**.
 - During the test, it **generated sea level thrust of 6 kilo Newton**.
- Agnilet Engine will power the company's launch vehicle, Agnibaan**, which is capable of **carrying payloads of up to 100kg to a low-earth orbit**.
 - Launch of Agnibaan will be the second by a private firm - after Hyderabad-based Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-S**, which took place in November 2022.
- Earlier Agnikul also unveiled India's first privately designed and operated rocket launchpad and mission control centre** (located at Sriharikota).
 - It is specifically built **to support liquid-stage controlled launches** while also **addressing ISRO's need for monitoring key flight safety parameters** during launches.

POOR OF A COUNTRY EMIT LESS, LOSS MORE: CLIMATE INEQUALITY REPORT 2023

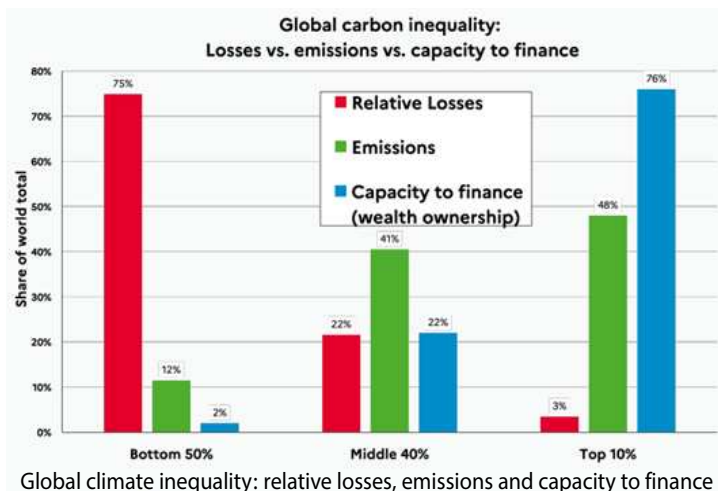
● **Report**, by World Inequality Lab, **aims to shed light on various dimensions of climate inequality** and **suggest pathways** to tackle climate inequalities.

● **Key Highlights of the report**

- **Top 10% of global carbon emitters** generate almost **half of all greenhouse gas emissions**.
- Difference between **carbon emissions of the rich and poor within a country is now greater than** differences in emissions between countries.
- **Climate Change aggravates low agricultural productivity** in poorer countries, as well as water scarcity and security.
- **Carbon budgets required to eradicate poverty** remain relatively **limited compared with global top emitters' footprints**.

● **Suggested pathways**

- **Significant resources** should be invested in **production and collection of climate inequality statistics** in all countries.
- **Step-up efforts to honor climate finance pledges** and further increase international development aid.
- **Windfall taxes on excess profits** could help to fund low-carbon investment.
- **Developing countries** also need to **reform their domestic tax systems to redistribute** more from the wealthy.
- **Systematically investigate** both intended and unintended consequences of climate and development policy across income and wealth group.



ALSO IN NEWS



Motion of Thanks

- **Article 87** deals with **President's special address to houses of parliament** at commencement of first session after each general election and the first session of every fiscal year
- Following this, a **'motion of thanks'** is **moved in two Houses** thanking President for his/her address, which is **then put to vote**.
- **MPs can express their disagreement** by moving amendments to the motion.
- Defeat of 'Motion of thanks' is seen as a **'defeat of the government'**.



Alderman

- Supreme Court said that **Constitution does not allow aldermans of a municipality right to vote** in meetings.
- Alderman **refers to a member of a city council or municipal body**, with exact **responsibilities depending on the location** of its usage.
- According to Delhi Municipal Corporation Act of 1957, **LG** (of National Capital Territory of Delhi) **may nominate ten individuals** who are above age of 25 **to the corporation**.
- Aldermen **play an important role** in the **elections of Standing Committees**, MCD in-house and ward committee meeting.



Global International Biofuel Alliance (GIBA)

- GIBA was **launched by India during India Energy Week 2023**.
- GIBA will help **create a favourable ecosystem for promoting development and deployment of biofuels** with key stakeholders including US, Brazil, EU, IEA etc. **as a clean mobility alternative** under India's G20 Presidency.
- Biofuel is **defined as liquid, solid, or gaseous fuel produced by conversion of biomass** such as bioethanol from sugar cane or corn, charcoal or woodchips, **and biogas from anaerobic decomposition of waste**.



Groundwater Quality

- **Central Ground Water Board** found **the groundwater in parts of Delhi brackish** with high presence of **nitrates and uranium**.
 - **Brackish water is water** that is **saltier than fresh water**, but not as **salty as seawater**.
 - **Nitrate (NO3)** is a **compound** found in nature. **Higher levels** of nitrates are **harmful for health**, especially for babies.
 - Its **permissible limit is 45 mg/l**.
 - **Uranium** is a naturally occurring **radioactive chemical element** that occurs in **low concentrations** in nature. **Uranium presence in drinking water** can **cause nephritis (kidney damage)**.



Dickinsonia

- An alleged **fossil discovered near Bhopal** about 2 years ago and **thought to be of an extinct Dickinsonia** turned out to be an **impression of a decayed beehive**.
- Dickinsonia is **considered to be Earth's oldest animal**, dating back 570 million years ago (late Ediacaran period).
 - It is an **extinct genus of a basal animal** (animals which have radial symmetry in their body plans).
 - It is considered an **integral links between early, simple organisms and then explosion of life in Cambrian Period** that was around 541 million years ago.
 - Dickinsonia has been **found in Australia, Russia, Ukraine, China**.



Youth 20 (Y20)

- Y20 is the **official youth engagement group of G20**.
- It provides a platform that **allows youth to express their vision & ideas on G20 priorities** and to **raise awareness of global issues**, exchange ideas, argue, negotiate, and reach consensus.
- Recently, **Y20 inception meeting concluded with launch of several themes** of Y20 including Future of work, Shared future, Health, Wellbeing & Sports etc.



Personality in News

- Dr Zakir Hussain(1897-1969)**
- **President paid tributes** to Dr Zakir Hussain **on his 126th birth anniversary**.
 - He **served as third President of India** and first Muslim to hold the position.
 - He **helped found the Muslim National University in Aligarh** (later moved to New Delhi and today known as **Jamia Millia Islamia**) and served as its vice-chancellor from 1926 to 1948.
 - He became **chairman of National Committee on Basic Education**, established in 1937 to design a **Gandhian syllabus for school**.
 - From 1956–58 he **served on the executive board of UNESCO**.
 - He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna in 1963**.
 - **Personality traits:** Secular, institution builder.



Places in News

- Fiji (Capital: Suva)**
- Deputy PM of Fiji has expressed hope to **partner with India in meeting climate action goals**.
 - Fiji is an **island nation in Melanesia and an archipelago in Southern Pacific Ocean** consisting of around **330 islands**.
 - It is located in **Oceania** between **Hawaii and New Zealand**.
 - **Two major islands - Viti Levu and Vanua Levu - make up 87% of Fiji's total landmass**.
 - **Geographical Features**
 - **Highest point: Mount Tomanivi**, an extinct volcano.



Grishneshwar temple

- It is **located in the Aurangabad district of Maharashtra**, near Devagiri fort and Ellora Caves.
- It is **one of the 12 Jyotirlinga shrines and the smallest of all**, dedicated to Lord Shiva and has been **mentioned in the Shiva Purana and Padma Purana**.
- Temple is **constructed using red stones** in an interlocking pattern and is composed of a five-tier spire or shikara.
- **Current structure was built by Queen Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore** in 18th century AD.



Ellora Caves

- Ellora caves (6th to 10th century CE) **lie in Charanandri hills in Aurangabad, Maharashtra**.
- Listed by **UNESCO as a World Heritage Site** in 1983 and known for its Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain temples and monuments.
- Group of 34 caves – **17 Brahmanical, 12 Buddhist and 5 Jain**.
- **One of the largest single rock cut monastic cave complexes** in the world.

