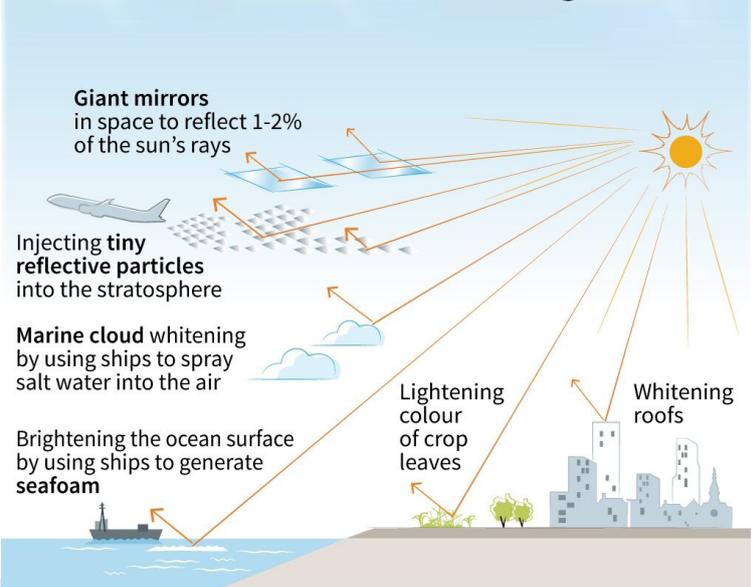


NEWS TODAY

US GOVERNMENT CONSIDERS SOLAR GEO-ENGINEERING TO COUNTER GLOBAL WARMING: REPORT

- White House released a federally mandated **report on Solar Geo-Engineering (SGE)**, aka solar radiation management, to study how blocking sunlight can save Earth from climate change.
- SGE is an umbrella term that **describes methods** (refer image) of **reflecting sunlight away from earth** to cool the atmosphere.
- **Report focuses on two methods of SGE**
 - **Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI):** Releasing particles of sulfur dioxide into upper atmosphere to reflect sunlight away from Earth.
 - **Marine cloud brightening:** To improve reflectivity of certain clouds by injecting sea salt using ships.
- **Other proposed methods of SGE include**
 - **High-albedo crops and buildings:** Increasing albedo of buildings to reflect more sunlight back to space.
 - **Ocean mirror:** Involves using a fleet of sea vessels to add tiny microbubbles on ocean surface to act as a mirror.
 - **Cloud thinning:** By removing cirrus clouds from atmosphere, their absorption of long wavelength radiations can be curtailed.
 - **Space sunshades:** Involves sending a fleet of mirrors into orbit in order to reflect away more sunlight from Earth.
- **Significance of SGE:** Reduce climate impacts such as extreme temperatures, changes in water availability, and intensity of tropical storms; Create employment opportunities for scientists, engineers etc.

Solar Radiation Management



INTERNATIONAL SEABED AUTHORITY (ISA) TO RESUME NEGOTIATIONS TO REGULATE DEEP SEA MINING

- ISA, an **autonomous international organisation** established under **1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, allots 'area' for deep-sea mining.
- Deep-sea mining involves **removing mineral deposits and metals from the ocean's seabed**.
 - There are **three types of such mining i.e.**, taking deposit-rich **Polymetallic Nodules (PMN)** such as nickel, rare earths, cobalt and more) **off the ocean floor**; mining massive seafloor sulphide deposits and stripping cobalt crusts from rock.
 - Countries manage their **own maritime territory** and **exclusive economic zones (upto 200 nautical miles)**, while **High seas and international ocean floor are governed by UNCLOS**.
- **Significance of Deep Sea Mining**
 - Metals extracted from PMN can be used in **electronic devices, smartphones, solar panels etc.**
 - By just **utilizing 10% of PMN reserve** available in allotted area, India can meet its **energy requirements for next 100 years**.
- **Concerns related to Deep Sea Mining:**
 - May cause **unavoidable, irreversible harm** to deep-sea ecosystems.
 - Can have a **deleterious impact** on marine species.
 - Risk of accidents like **leaks and spills of fuel etc.**
- **UNCLOS**, came into force in 1994, lays down a **comprehensive regime of law and order in world's oceans** and seas establishing rules governing all uses of oceans and their resources.



MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (MoWCD) ANNOUNCES SCHEME FOR GIRL CHILD VICTIMS

- Scheme aims to provide integrated support and assistance to girl child victims under one roof.

• Key highlights

- It facilitates immediate, **emergency, and non-emergency access** to various services including **access to education, police assistance, and health care**, including maternity, neo-natal and infant care, psychological and legal support.
- It will **provide insurance cover for minor girl victim (below 18 years) and her new-born** to enable access to justice and rehabilitation.
 - As per NCRB data, 51,863 cases were reported under POCSO Act in 2021, and of them 64% cases were of sexual assault.
- It is **not mandatory for victim to have a copy of First Information Report (FIR)** for availing benefits under scheme.
- It will **operate under aegis of Nirbhaya Fund** (non-lapsable corpus fund) which implements **initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women** in country.
- It will **use administrative structure of Mission Vatsalya** in collaboration with **State governments and Child Care institutions (CCIs)**.
 - Mission Vatsalya, launched in 2021 by MoWCD as **Centrally Sponsored Scheme**, is **focused on protection and welfare of children**.

DEPARTMENT OF TELECOMMUNICATION (DOT) LAUNCHES BHARAT 6G ALLIANCE (B6GA)

- B6GA is a **collaborative platform consisting of public and private companies**, academia, research institutions, and Standards development organizations.
 - It'll **forge coalitions and synergies with other 6G Global Alliances**, **fostering international collaboration** and knowledge exchange.
- **Objectives of B6GA**
 - To enable India to become a **leading global supplier of intellectual property, products and solutions** of affordable 5G and 6G and other future telecom solutions.
 - To **deploy 6G technologies** to act as a powerful force multiplier for India by 2030.
 - To **understand business and societal needs of 6G** beyond technology requirements.
 - To **develop recommendations for Bharat 6G Vision** implementation readiness in India.
- **Other initiatives launched**
 - Two agreements were signed for projects under **Telecom Technology Development Fund (TTDF)**.
 - **TTDF scheme was launched by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in 2022**. USOF is a body under DoT.
 - **5% of annual collections from USOF are available for TTDF for funding R&D in rural-specific communication technology applications** and form synergies among academia, start-ups, and industry to build and develop telecom ecosystem.
 - Under **DCIS (Digital Communication Innovation Square)**, funds were allocated to Start-ups and MSMEs.

- **6G is the successor of 5G** with ability to use **higher frequencies** (Sub-6 GHz and 95 GHz to 3 THz (Terahertz)) with **greater speed** (Up to 1,000 Gbps) and lower latency (1 millisecond).

- **Significance:** Support **high- performance computing, edge computing, Technology Convergence** etc.

MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION'S (MOSPI) PROGRESS REPORT ON PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

- MoSPI's **Twenty Point Programme-2006 Progress Report of April 2022 - December 2022** considered 14 parameters taken for quarterly performance analysis of states and UTs. It categorized the **progress of states and UTs** that met
 - **Less than 80 percent** of targets as **"Poor"**;
 - **80% or above but less than 90%** as **"Good"**;
 - **90% or above the targets** as **"Very Good"**.
- **Key findings**
 - Seven states and UTs, including West Bengal and Maharashtra, failed to reach even 20% of their PMGSY target.
 - **Only 53% of the set target** of around **35,000 km road** was achieved between the period.
 - **Uttar Pradesh and Odisha** were rated **"very good"**.
 - **Andaman and Nicobar** is the worst performer.
- **PMGSY**, launched by **Ministry of Rural Development** in 2000, **promotes rural connectivity** by providing **all-weather access to eligible unconnected habitations** with a population of up to:
 - **500** (Census 2001) in plain area; **and 250 and above in Special category States** (States of North East, Jammu, and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand).
 - It is a **centrally sponsored scheme**.
 - **Funding Pattern:** North Eastern and Himalayan States (90:10). Other States (60:40).

ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA (ECI) LAUNCHES WEB PORTAL FOR POLITICAL PARTIES TO FILE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS ONLINE

- New web-portal facilitates **online filing of Contribution Report, Audited Annual Account and Election Expenditure Statement** to ECI by all Political Parties.
 - This will enhance the level of **compliance and transparency** of finances of political parties. It is a part of ECI's 3C strategy — **Cleanup, Crackdown and Compliance**.
 - Also, it will facilitate political parties in **overcoming the difficulties in physical filing of reports** and **ensure timely filing of financial statements** in the prescribed/standardised format.
 - Submission of financial statements by political parties to ECI is as per provisions of **Representation of People's Act (RPA) 1951**.
- **Need of transparency in financing political parties**
 - **Reduce black money** in politics.
 - **Promote electoral participation of women and other marginalised groups** in elections.
 - **Guarantee independence of parties from undue influence** of big donors and corporates.
- **Issues in political parties finance**
 - Under Section 77 of RPA, 1951 and Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, there are **limits on election expenditure only for candidates**, such a **limit is absent in case of political party expenditure**.
 - **No set limit on corporate donations** paves way for crony capitalism.
 - **Opaque nature of Electoral bond** can compromise free and fair elections.

ALSO IN NEWS



Metallurgical coke

- India has started a safeguard probe against sudden jump in metallurgical coal imports.
- **Metallurgical coke is produced by destructive distillation of coal in coke ovens** at extremely high temperatures.
 - It is **extensively used in iron and steel industry** processes such as blast furnaces, sinter plants, and foundries to reduce iron ore to iron.
 - India produces only a fraction of actual demand and the rest is **imported to meet the needs**.



Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing (SWAMIH) Fund

- **Bengaluru's first project under SWAMIH fund was completed**, providing affordable homes to nearly 3000 families.
- **SWAMIH Fund is a social impact fund specifically formed for completing stressed and stalled residential projects** and was launched in 2019.
 - Fund is **sponsored by Ministry of Finance** and is **managed by SBICAP Ventures Ltd**.
 - It **provides priority debt financing** for completion of stressed, brownfield and Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA)-registered residential project.



Project WAVE

- Indian Bank has unveiled new services under its digital transformation initiative 'Project WAVE (**World of Advance Virtual Experience**)'.
 - It has been introduced in collaboration with **National E-Governance Services Ltd**.
 - Under it, an **electronic bank guarantee (e-BG) service** has been introduced to ease traditional paper-based processes.



National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)

- **NADA India signed a MoU with South Asia Regional Anti-Doping Organization (SARADO)** to increase Regional Cooperation in **anti-doping in sports**.
- **NADA is the national organization responsible for promoting, coordinating, and monitoring the doping control program** in sports in all its forms in the country.
 - It was established in 2009 as an **autonomous agency under Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India**.
 - NADA is provided statutory backing by National Anti-Doping Act, 2022.

 <p>Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists from Bangladesh and Mauritius embarked onboard India's research vessel 'Sagar Nidhi' for joint ocean expedition which is being held under CSC framework between nations of Indian Ocean Region. • CSC was initiated in 2011 by India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mauritius was added as a member, with Bangladesh and Seychelles as observers in 2021. ➤ Secretariat: Colombo, Sri Lanka. ➤ Area of cooperation includes maritime security, countering terrorism, cybersecurity etc.
 <p>Orkney Islands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orkney Islands has proposed its intent to split from U.K. and become a self-governing territory of Norway. • Island is situated on the North-Eastern coast of Scotland. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is an archipelago of nearly 70 islands, of which only 20 are inhabited. ➤ It was under Norwegian and Danish rule until late 15th century after which it came under Scotland. ➤ It houses four UNESCO world heritage sites namely – Skara Brae, Ring of Brodgar, Standing Stones of Stenness, and Maeshowe chambered tomb.
 <p>Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;">  <div style="text-align: center;"> <h3>Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)</h3> <p>HQ:  New Delhi</p> </div> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Genesis: Set up in 2007 under Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 by amending it in 2006.  About: Statutory multi-disciplinary body established by Government of India under Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.  Mandate: To collect and collate intelligence related to organized wildlife crime activities and to disseminate the same to State; establish a centralized wildlife crime data bank, etc. </div>
 <p>Carbon Molecules in Space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientists have claimed that James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has detected a carbon molecule in Orion Nebula. • Detected CH₃⁺ (methyl cation) molecule can react with other molecules to form more complex ones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Its presence in space is an indicator that basic building blocks for life are present there. • JWST is NASA's successor to the Hubble telescope. It is the largest and most powerful space telescope operating in infrared range, currently positioned in Lagrange point L2.
 <p>Startup20 Shikhar Summit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summit was organized by Startup20 Engagement Group under India G20 Presidency in Gurugram. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ This marks the first major milestone of Startup20 Engagement group. ➤ Summit signifies India's commitment to fostering an enabling environment for startups and reinforcing its position as a global leader in innovation and entrepreneurship. • Startup20 is a forum for global start-up stakeholders to discuss macroeconomic concerns with G20 leaders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It aims to release the full potential of start-ups, propelling economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development.
 <p>eSARAS mobile App</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deendayal Antyodaya Yojna- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has launched eSARAS mobile App. • eSARAS an e-commerce mobile app will be used as a more effective platform for marketing of the products made by women of self-help groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ eSARAS fulfillment centre will be used for processing, packaging and shipping of products that customers purchase through eSARAS Portal and eSARAS mobile App. • DAY-NRLM, launched by Ministry of Rural Development, aims to improve living conditions of rural Indians by enhancing livelihoods through SHG ecosystem and providing SHG members' better income.