

# NEWS TODAY

## Prime Minister inaugurated Second edition of World Food India (WFI) 2023

- **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** organised WFI 2023 to celebrate **2023** as International Year of Millets, and **showcase India** as 'food basket of the world'.
  - ⊖ 1<sup>st</sup> edition was launched in 2017.
  - ⊖ 'Exponential Food Processing: Positioning India as Global Hub' is one of the focus pillars of WFI 2023.
- **India's Food Processing Industry (FPI)** emerged as "sunrise sector" and **attracted FDI investments** of about Rs **50,000 crore** in **past nine years**.
  - ⊖ **Processed food segment's contribution to agri exports** has grown to **23 percent**, making an overall **increase of 150 percent** of exported processed foods.
  - ⊖ **Processing Capacity increased to more than 200 lakh metric tonnes**.
- **3 main pillars of India's growth of FPI**
  - ⊖ **Small Farmers:** Effective use of **Farmer Produce Organizations (FPOs)** to increase their participation and profits. **7,000 FPOs** have already been made.
  - ⊖ **Small Industries:** About **2 lakh micro enterprises** are being **organized** to increase Small Scale Industries participation.
  - ⊖ **Women:** More than **9 crore women** are associated with **SHG**. Also, PM **disbursed seed capital assistance** to over **1 lakh SHGs**.

### Initiatives taken to promote Food Processing Industry

- **PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana.**
  - ⊖ **Mega Food Park** is one of its components.
- **One District One Product scheme** giving a new identity to small farmers and small industries.
- **Production Linked Incentive Scheme** for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI).
- **Eat right India movement.**

## Studies find negative impact of air pollution on economic growth

- Conventionally air pollution has been seen as a by-product of economic growth. However, in recent times it is impacting economic growth.
  - ⊖ Both GDP growth and per-capita income levels are impacted by it.
- **Key impacts on various sectors:**
  - ⊖ **Human resource:** 4.5% of India's GDP could be at risk by 2030 due to **lost labour hours** from climate change issues, including extreme heat and humidity (Reserve Bank of India).
  - ⊖ **Agriculture:** High levels of **concentration of pollutants, and particularly of ozone**, reduce crop yields and thus affect agricultural productivity.
  - ⊖ **Manufacturing and Service sector:** Lower consumer footfall in consumption-led services.
  - ⊖ **Health Care services:** There will be surge in **health expenses and welfare allocations**. It will put more burdens on the governments.
    - ◆ Low per-capita GDP states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh will be more vulnerable.
- **Way forward**
  - ⊖ Increased use of **Anti-smog gun** (device that spews fine nebulised water droplets to absorb dust and polluted particles).
  - ⊖ Promotion of **Green building techniques** for energy efficiency.
  - ⊖ **Replacement of conventional fuels with biofuels.**
  - ⊖ Exploration of **Hydrogen based energy systems.**

### Major Initiatives taken in India:

- **National Clean Air Programme (2019)**
- **National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)**
- **System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR)**

## Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) released Ecological Threat Report (ETR) 2023

- **Headquartered in Sydney**, IEP is an independent, non-profit think tank.
- **ETR focuses on four categories of threat** that are **directly related to drivers of conflict**. These include
  - ⊕ **Food Insecurity**: 42 countries facing severe food insecurity and more than 65% of population not able to afford food in past year.
  - ⊕ **Natural Disasters**: High chance that devastating natural disaster will impact over 5% of population.
  - ⊕ **Demographic Pressure**: More than 70% increase in population by 2050, increasing strain on public resources and societal resilience.
  - ⊕ **Water Risk**: No access to clean drinking water to more than 20% of population.
- **Relationship between Ecological Threats (ET) and Conflict**
  - ⊕ **Shifts in ETR scores** are associated with **increased risk of conflict**.
    - ◆ Shift in indicator score of 25% for **food insecurity** increases the risk of conflict by 36%.
  - ⊕ Large scale **natural hazards restrict access to resources and markets** resulting in food insecurity and water risk which further **fuels the conflicts**.
  - ⊕ ET influence conflict in regions with **lower levels of peacefulness, high climatic variability, high poverty, and weak governance** such as Sahel.

### Key Recommendations

- **Building resilience** with functioning institutions and infrastructure.
- **Empowering local communities** for higher level of sustainability.
- **Innovative programs to build water resilience** like sand dams, engineered wetlands etc.
- **Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration** for reclaiming degraded land.

## Senegal hosts first meeting of World Health Organisation's (WHO) initiative Global Onchocerciasis Network for Elimination (GONE)

- GONE, launched in January 2023, empower countries to **accelerate progress towards onchocerciasis targets set in 2030 Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) roadmap of WHO**.
- **Onchocerciasis**, commonly known as "river blindness", is caused by **parasitic worm Onchocerca volvulus** that spreads by the bites of **infected black flies that breed in rapidly flowing rivers**.
  - ⊕ It is the **second leading infectious cause of blindness after trachoma**.
  - ⊕ **Symptoms**: Intense itching, rashes, skin discoloration, visual impairment and permanent blindness.
  - ⊕ **Africa is home to 99% of people at risk of onchocerciasis**; the remaining 1% lives on border between Brazil and Venezuela.
  - ⊕ **Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala and Mexico** have been **verified by WHO for eliminating transmission of disease**.
- NTDs are a **diverse group of 20 conditions** that are mainly **prevalent in tropical areas**, where they affect more than 1 billion people who live in **impoverished communities**.
  - ⊕ **Caused by a variety of pathogens** including viruses, bacteria, parasites, fungi and toxins.
  - ⊕ **NTDs include**: Dengue and chikungunya, Rabies, leishmaniasis; leprosy; lymphatic filariasis etc.
  - ⊕ **India has successfully eliminated certain NTDs** like guinea worm, trachoma, and yaws.

### Initiatives to tackle NTDs

- **London Declaration** on NTDs.
- **30th January** recognised as World NTDs Day.
- **Kigali declaration on NTDs** adopts the targets to eradicate or control NTDs by 2030.
- WHO launched **mobile application** to facilitate diagnosis of NTDs.

## Power Shift: Why we need to wean industrial food systems off fossil fuels Report released

- In report, **Global Alliance for the Future of Food** highlights that **food systems** currently account for at **least 15% of global fossil fuels use annually**, equivalent to 4.6 gigatonnes of carbon dioxide.
  - ⊕ **Main contributor includes** Input production, land use and agricultural production, processing, packaging, retail, consumption, and waste.
- **Key Findings**:
  - ⊕ **Energy intensity** of Food processing, refrigeration, warehousing, storage is increasing as **supply chains get longer**, requiring increased use of packaging.
    - ◆ **Processing and packaging** constitute the highest energy consumption followed by retail, consumption, and waste.
  - ⊕ High fossil fuel usage in fertiliser production, it is expected to further increase significantly through 2050.
  - ⊕ **Large multinational firms** dominate the **agri-food and energy sectors**.
- **Recommendations**:
  - ⊕ Adopting **regenerative** and **agroecological approaches**.
  - ⊕ Promoting **tax credits, subsidies, and loans** to increase production of biofuel.
  - ⊕ **Renewables-based technologies** for cooling, heating, and drying agricultural products.
  - ⊕ Achieve **sustainable food environments** that support plant-rich diets.
  - ⊕ **Promoting collaboration** between different actors in food and energy systems as they are intertwined. It will help in reducing emissions and promoting energy and food security.

## Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) established an institutional mechanism to check film piracy

- Under it, **Nodal Officers** have been appointed from **Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)** and the Ministry to receive **complaints** against piracy.
  - ⊖ Mechanism has been established under the **Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 2023**.
- An **original copyright holder** or any person authorised by them can file complaint. For complaints by non-authorized persons, the officer can hold hearings on a case to case basis to decide its genuineness.
  - ⊖ After directions from officer, the **intermediaries** (digital platform) have to **remove internet links hosting pirated content within a period of 48 hours**.
- To Curb Piracy, **Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 2023** was passed (amended the Cinematograph Act 1952).
  - ⊖ It supports the existing laws viz. the **Copyright Act, 1957** and the **Information Technology Act (IT) 2000**.
- **Key provisions of Act:**
  - ⊖ **Prohibits unauthorized recording and exhibition** of films.
  - ⊖ Offences will be punishable with **imprisonment (3 months to 3 years)** and a fine (**three lakh rupees and 5% of the audited gross production cost**).
- With the proliferation of internet piracy (unauthorized duplication) of films and other related content has increased.
  - ⊖ It results in losses of up to Rs. 20,000 crore every year to the film industry.



### Also in News



#### Amnesty Scheme

- The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs**, Ministry of Finance announced the **amnesty scheme**.
- According to it taxpayers, will now have **additional time** (till January 2024) to **file appeals against demand orders**.
  - ⊖ **Demand orders** are issued under **Section 73 and 74 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017**.
    - ◆ **Sections 73 and 74** apply in cases where the department has identified a tax shortfall, lack of payment, etc.
- Beneficiaries have to pre-deposit 12.5 % of the tax demand.



#### Kawah Ijen Crater Lake

- The **Copernicus Sentinel-2 mission** provided optical images of **Kawah Ijen Crater Lake's** unique natural phenomenon.
- **About Lake:**
  - ⊖ Located in **East Java (Indonesia)** has a **pH < 0.3**.
  - ⊖ It is the **world's largest acidic lake**.
  - ⊖ It is known as '**largest acid cauldron on Earth**' and has a **volcanic origin**.
  - ⊖ It is the source of the extremely acidic and metal-polluted river '**Banyupahit**'.
  - ⊖ It emits hot, flammable sulphurous gases that ignite upon contact with Earth's oxygen-rich atmosphere and burn with an eerie, blue flame.



#### Dated Government securities (G-Secs)

- The government auctioned first **50-year bond (dated G-secs)** which saw **strong demand from investors**.
  - ⊖ Previously, the 40-year bond, was the **longest-duration bond offered by India**.
- Dated G-Secs are securities which carry a **fixed or floating coupon (interest rate)** which is paid on the **face value, on half-yearly basis**.
- The sale of long-term bonds may help the government **elongate the tenure of debt sold and keep its interest costs under control**.



#### Lucy Mission

- NASA's Lucy mission has discovered that the **asteroid Dinkinesh is actually a binary system of two asteroids**.
- Launched in 2021, Lucy is the **first space mission to explore Jupiter Trojan asteroids**.
  - ⊖ Trojans are a **group of small bodies** (remnants of early solar system) that **orbit the Sun** in two "swarms" along the orbit of Jupiter.
  - ⊖ Trojan asteroids are **most likely made of same primordial material** that led to formation of **outer planets** (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune).
- Over its 12 year mission (2021-2023), Lucy will fly past various asteroids like **Eurybates, DonaldJohanson, Polymele, Leucus, etc.**



### National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)

- NDSA team has criticised the Kaleshwaram project's planning and design for Medigadda Barrage's failure.
- **About National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)**

**National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)**

New Delhi

**About:** Statutory authority established under Dam Safety Act 2021.

**Genesis:** Headed by an officer not below the rank of Additional Secretary to Government of India or equivalent to be appointed by Central Government.

**Functions:**

- ◆ Making regulations for maintaining standards of dam safety and preventing dam failures.
- ◆ Maintain national level database of all specified dams and dam failures.
- ◆ Examine cause of any major dam failure or major public safety concern.



### Sterling Engine

- Indian scientists made a micro-scale heat engine (aka Stirling Engine) that has shown 95% efficiency.
  - ⊕ Achieving high efficiency with high power has been considered almost impossible as conversion of heat to energy causes heat loss in the process.
- It is made up of a colloidal bead (a single particle floating in a solution), and a laser beam.
  - ⊕ Laser beam has replaced conventionally used gas for fuel, and functions like a piston. The electric field is then applied to this setup.



### Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBWS)

- Over 50 grass species were identified during a survey on 'Grasses Identification and Grassland Management' at GBWS.
- **About Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary**
  - ⊕ It is a protected area, situated between Kurnool and Prakasam districts in Andhra Pradesh.
  - ⊕ Lies between two hill passes known as "Mantralamma kanuma" and "Nandi kanuma".
  - ⊕ Immediately to the north of this sanctuary is Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve.
  - ⊕ Gundlakamma River flows through it.
  - ⊕ **Forest Type:** Dry mixed deciduous forest, moist dry deciduous, semi evergreen, dry deciduous scrub forest and dry savannahs.
  - ⊕ **Fauna:** Animals Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, Striped Hyaena, Jungle Cat, Grey Langur, Lesser wooly horse-shoe bat etc.



### Formaldehyde (CH<sub>2</sub>O)

- Researchers have found that exposure to formaldehyde caused the loss of methylation of histones, which are proteins that package DNA and control the function of thousands of genes.
  - ⊕ This could further contribute to well-documented carcinogenic properties of formaldehyde.
- Formaldehyde is a colorless, strong-smelling, flammable chemical.
  - ⊕ **Usage:** Manufacture of resins production of plastic, cosmetics industry, household products etc.
  - ⊕ Formaldehyde can be generated within our bodies through metabolism of common dietary substances like the sweetener aspartame.

## Places in News



### Galapagos Islands

- Two new coral reefs and seamounts discovered in Galapagos Islands.
- **Political features**
  - ⊕ Situated in Eastern Pacific Ocean, ~1,000 km from Ecuadorian coast.
  - ⊕ Located at confluence of three ocean currents (Humboldt current, Panama Flow and Cromwell current).
  - ⊕ Consists of 13 major and 6 smaller islands.
  - ⊕ Equator passes through island.
- **Geographical features**
  - ⊕ Formed of lava piles and dotted with shield volcanoes, many of which are periodically active.
  - ⊕ **Largest Island:** Isabela.
  - ⊕ **Highest Point:** Peak of Wolf Volcano (on Isabella Island).
- **Protection Status**
  - ⊕ Galapagos a wildlife sanctuary. Later, sanctuary became Galapagos National Park.
  - ⊕ UNESCO World Heritage site.

