

NEWS TODAY

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RELEASED PERFORMANCE GRADING INDEX (PGI) 2.0 FOR STATES/UTS FOR 2021-22

- PGI 2.0 aims to propel States & UTs towards undertaking **multi-pronged interventions to achieve optimal education outcomes** in terms of **improving quality**.

- PGI 2.0 is **aligned with new initiatives of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, to monitor indicators relating to Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- First PGI was released in 2017-18.**

- PGI 2.0 **classified states/UTs into ten grades, where highest achievable grade is 'Daksh' and lowest grade is 'Akanshi-3'.**

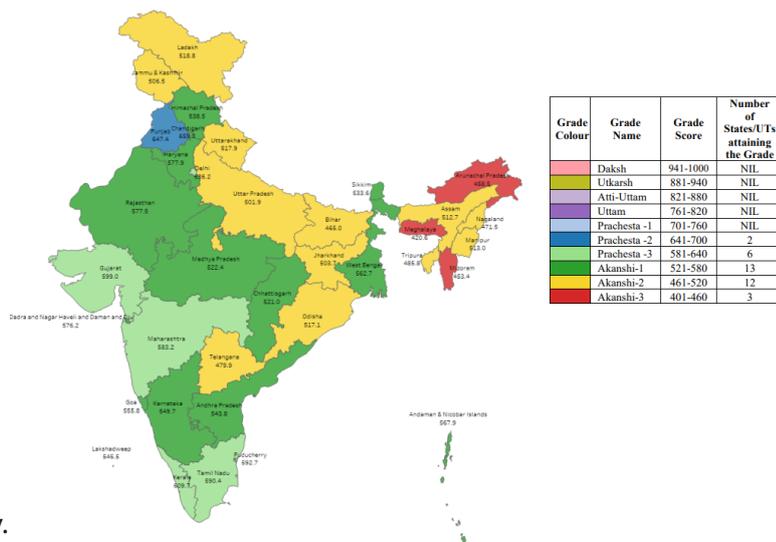
- Grades have been **aligned with the PGI - District** to have uniformity and better comparability.

- PGI structure comprises of **total weightage of 1000 points across 73 indicators**, which are grouped under 2 Categories viz., Outcome and Governance Management (GM).

- These categories are further divided into **6 domains, viz., Learning Outcomes (LO), Access (A), Infrastructure & Facilities (IF), Equity (E), Governance Process (GP) and Teachers Education and Training (TE&T).**

- In PGI 2.0, data for many of the indicators has been sourced from **Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+), National Achievement Survey (NAS), PM POSHAN portal, PRABAND portal and Vidyanjali Portal.**

Grades attained by States/UTs – 2021-22



TRAI RELEASES CONSULTATION PAPER ON REGULATORY MECHANISM FOR OVER-THE-TOP (OTT) COMMUNICATION SERVICES, AND SELECTIVE BANNING OF OTT SERVICES

- In consultation paper, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has asked stakeholders to **send suggestions about regulating OTT communication services.**

- An OTT communication services is **any app or service that provides a product over Internet and bypasses traditional distribution.** For example, WhatsApp, Telegram etc.

- Earlier, Draft **Indian Telecommunication Bill, 2022 recommended** bringing **OTT services** under its ambit by **creating a licensing regime for them.**

- Also, **National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) 2018** provides for creating a policy framework for OTT services to **ensure a holistic and harmonized approach for harnessing Emerging Technologies.**

- Need for Specific Regulatory Framework**

- Telecom service providers in India have to adhere several laws** including Indian Telegraph Act 1885, TRAI Act, 1997 etc. Such requirements are **not applicable on OTT services** currently.

- To **protect the users' right to privacy.**

- OTTs may be **impacting the revenues and profits** of traditional network operator.

- Data consumption** of a WhatsApp message does not generate sufficient network operator revenue to **offset what an SMS would have generated.**

- TRAI is a **statutory body established under TRAI Act 1997** to regulate telecom services in India.

INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION (IMO) ADOPTS REVISED STRATEGY TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING

- During Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 80) meeting, member States of IMO have adopted the **2023 IMO Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse House Gas (GHG) Emissions from Ships**.

- In 2018, an **initial strategy was adopted** that envisaged revision in 2023.
- MEPC addresses environmental issues such as **prevention of ship-source pollution covered by MARPOL treaty**, including oil, chemicals carried in bulk, emissions from ships.

- Maritime shipping is responsible for **3 percent of global anthropogenic GHG emissions** (IPCC 2022 report).

- **Key highlights of 2023 IMO GHG Strategy**

- Maritime countries upgraded their GHG emissions strategy to **reach net zero “by or around 2050”** without specifying a **definite year** (taking into account **different national circumstances**).
- Countries agreed on “indicative checkpoints” of **reducing emissions** from international shipping **by at least 20%**, striving for 30%, **by 2030**; and **at least 70%**, striving for 80%, **by 2040**, both **compared to 2008 level**.
- Reduce CO2 emissions per transport work, as an average across international shipping, by **at least 40% by 2030, compared to 2008**.
- Adopted an **interim guidance on use of biofuel and bio-blends** in shipping industry.

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA PACIFIC'S (UNESCAP) GLOBAL SURVEY ON DIGITAL AND SUSTAINABLE TRADE FACILITATION

- It is a **bi-annual survey** that deals with **trade facilitation measures** taken by individual countries.

- Survey **covers WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement** along with a set of **nearly 60 trade facilitation measures**

which are categorised into 11 sub- groups namely,

- Transparency; Formalities; Institutional arrangement and cooperation, Transit facilitation; Paperless trade; Cross-border paperless trade; Trade facilitation for SMEs; Agricultural trade facilitation; Women in trade facilitation; Trade finance for trade facilitation; and Trade facilitation in times of crisis.

- **Key highlights wrt India**

- **India's score increased to 93.55 percent in 2023** from 90.32 percent in 2021.
- **Best performing country** amongst all countries of South Asia region. **Overall score of India has been greater than many developed countries** including Canada, France, UK, Germany etc.
- **Achieved a perfect score of 100 percent in four key areas** i.e., Transparency, Formalities, Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation, and Paperless Trade.
- **Substantial improvement in Women in Trade Facilitation component** from 66.7 percent in 2021 to **77.8 percent in 2023**.

- **Improvement is mainly due to initiatives** such as Turant Customs, Single Window Interface for Facilitation of Trade (SWIFT), Pre-Arrival data processing, e- Sanchit, Coordinated Border Management, etc.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION

- IMO (HQ: London) is a **specialized agency of United Nations (UN)** which is **responsible for measures to improve the safety and security of international shipping** and to prevent pollution from ships.
- **Membership:** 175 Member States (including India) and three Associate Members.

SEBI RELEASED CONSULTATION PAPER ON CONSOLIDATED CYBERSECURITY AND CYBER RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK (CSCRF) FOR SEBI REGULATED ENTITIES (REs)

- Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a consolidated CSCRF wherein **all REs** (like stock exchanges, brokers, etc.) **need to put in place an up-to-date cyber crisis management plan**.

- The new framework would **supersede nearly 15 circulars issued separately** for various segments

- Framework is based on **five concurrent and continuous functions of cybersecurity** as defined by **National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)** –Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, and Recover.

- **Key highlights**

- **Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs)** like stock exchanges and depository participants will be **required to conduct a cyber-audit twice a year** while all other REs will have to do it once each year.

- **Cyber Capability Index (CCI)** to rate the preparedness and resilience of cybersecurity framework of MIIs.

- REs shall formulate **comprehensive cybersecurity and cyber resilience policy** and **incorporate best practices**.

- **Need for framework**

- **For prevention of damage** to, protection of, and restoration of **computers, electronic communication systems or services, wire communication**.

- Address the **need of uniformity** of cybersecurity guidelines for all REs.

- **Strengthen the mechanism** to deal with cyber risks / threats / incidents.

GOVERNMENT EXTENDS VALIDITY OF COASTAL REGULATION ZONE (CRZ) CLEARANCE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS BY 3 YEARS

- **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** has extended the validity of CRZ clearance to **10 years from present 7 years** (as per a 2019 notification) to **harmonise coastal clearance with environmental clearances**.
 - Validity of CRZ clearance may be **extended by a maximum period of one year, if an application is made by applicant within the period of validity**, along with recommendations of Coastal Zone Management Authority concerned.
- **MoEFCC** also made **CRZ clearance transferrable to another project proponent** and made provisions for CRZ clearance granted for a specific project to be split amongst two or more project proponents.
- CRZ clearance refers to **approval for projects** that fall in the vicinity of coastlines.
- **Coastal Stretches of seas, bays, estuaries, creeks, rivers and backwaters** which are influenced by tidal action up to 500 metres from High Tide Line (HTL) and land between Low Tide Line (LTL) and the HTL, are classified under CRZ.
 - CRZs are **declared by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change** under the **Environment Protection Act 1986**.
 - **CRZ Notification 2019** classifies coastal area into **different zones** to manage infrastructure activities and regulate them. (refer table)

CRZ I	Areas which are ecologically sensitive .
CRZ II	Areas within the existing municipal limits/other urban areas which are substantially built-up.
CRZ III	Relatively undisturbed /do not belong to either CRZ-I or II; This includes coastal zone in the rural areas, areas within existing municipal limits or other urban areas which are not substantially built up .
CRZ IV	Designated to water area from Low Tide Line to twelve nautical miles on sea ward side and inland waters influenced by tide.

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per GAVI, nearly 12 countries in Africa would receive 18 million doses of malaria vaccine (Mosquirix) over the next two years. • Gavi is an international organization (created in 2000), aims to save lives and protect people's health by increasing equitable and sustainable use of vaccines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partner includes WHO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
 <p>Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • US Army's work to destroy the arsenal of chemical weapons is about to finish. • US and the Soviet Union agreed in principle in 1989 to destroy their chemical weapons stockpiles and later the US ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention(CWC) in 1997. • About CWC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is the world's first multilateral disarmament agreement to provide for the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction within a fixed time frame. ➤ It is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). ➤ India is a signatory.
 <p>Variable Rate Reverse Repo (VRRR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserve Bank of India (RBI) pressed ahead with VRRRs auctions to suck out surplus liquidity from the banking system. • VRRR is the subdivision of reverse repo. VRRR auction is undertaken to reduce surplus liquidity in the system by withdrawing existing cash. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reverse repo is a fixed or variable interest rate at which banks lend to RBI. ➤ Rate at which RBI issues loans to commercial banks when there is a shortage of funds is the repo rate.
 <p>Cluster Bombs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA has decided to supply Ukraine with cluster bombs as a part of new military aid package. • Cluster bombs (Cluster Munitions) are canisters that carry tens to hundreds of smaller bomblets, also known as sub-munitions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These canisters can be dropped from aircraft, launched from missiles or fired from artillery, naval guns or rocket launchers. ➤ Canisters break open at a prescribed height, depending upon the area of intended target. ➤ They are fused by a timer to explode closer to or on the ground.

 <p>Geocoding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GST Network (GSTN) has launched geocoding for all states and territories to combat fake registrations and fraudulent tax credit.• Geocoding has been introduced to ensure the accuracy of address details in GSTN records and streamline address location and verification process.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ It converts an address or description of a location into geographic coordinates.➤ GSTN has already geocoded 1.8 crore principal places of businesses.• GSTN, non-profit organization, provides IT infrastructure and services to Central and State Governments, taxpayers and other stakeholders for implementation of GST
 <p>Ubina volcano</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peru has imposed a state of emergency in Moquegua region due to explosions in Ubina volcano.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Recently, Iceland (most active volcanic region due to its presence on the Mid-Atlantic Ridge) has witnessed 2,200 earthquakes in 24 hours.• Ubina is the Peru's most active volcano.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ It is a stratovolcano (tall and cone-shaped) located in Central Volcanic Zone of Andes.➤ It is part of a group of seven volcanoes in southern Peru located within a volcanic zone that extends from southern Peru to northern Chile.
 <p>Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), European non-profit, released a report highlighting the ill impact on human health of NO₂.• NO₂ is one of a group of highly reactive gasses known as oxides of nitrogen or nitrogen oxides (NO_x).<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ NO₂ forms from emissions from cars, trucks and buses, power plants, and off-road equipment.➤ NO₂ exposure can lead to respiratory and circulatory premature death (from both short- and long-term exposure), asthma in children and adults, bronchitis in children.➤ It can also lead to acid rain, causing environmental damage.
 <p>Global Peace Index (GPI), 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is released by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).• GPI ranked 163 independent states and territories according to their level of peacefulness.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ It is calculated using 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators and measures the state of peace across three domains i.e.,<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Level of Societal Safety and Security; Extent of Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict, and Degree of Militarisation.• Key findings<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ India ranked at 126th position. (135th in 2022)➤ Iceland is the most peaceful country in world.➤ Neighbouring countries like Bhutan (17), Maldives (23), etc. performed better than India.
 <p>Garo Tribe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• People of Garo tribe in West Bengal have expressed their concern over lack of developmental effort for them.• Ethnically Garos are a tribe of Tibeto-Burman linguistic family under Mongoloid racial stock.<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ They are concentrated mainly in Meghalaya, Nagaland, and a few districts of Assam and West Bengal.➤ It is one of the matrilineal societies (woman enjoys a higher status in society) of India.➤ Jhum cultivation is the main occupation of the tribe.➤ Wangala festival is a prominent festival.
 <p>Naegleria fowleri (Brain-eating amoeba)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only one species of Naegleria, Naegleria fowleri, infects people when it enters the body through the nose.• It is a single-cell organism found in a warm freshwater environment such as lakes, hot springs and even in poorly maintained swimming pools.• It can only be seen with a microscope. It was first discovered in Australia in 1965.• It causes a rare infection named primary amoebic meningoencephalitis.• Initial symptoms include headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. Symptoms of later stage include a stiff neck, altered mental status (confusion), lack of attention to people and surroundings, seizures, hallucinations and coma.